



Science Diplomacy 2.0: collaboration with non-likeminded countries – the case of China

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SCIENCE DIPLOMACY TRAINING FOR COST ACTIONS

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Science diplomacy and China - Content

- Official EU position towards China in the “Global Approach to Research and Innovation” (2021)
- China’s interpretation of STI cooperation and science diplomacy
- STI collaboration risks with China (see above)
- Mitigation of STI collaboration risks
- The role of science diplomacy in mitigating risks, incl. availability of SD approaches and instruments

Official EU position towards China in the Global Approach

- “Open strategic autonomy”: EU aims to become less dependent on other parts of the world but at the same time adheres to openness in areas strengthening EU competitiveness, such as STI
- China is a scientific partner, economic competitor and systematic rival: EU-27/China research collaboration is rapidly increasing (8% of global international publications in 2021, from 5% in 2016)
- The first two years of this approach are currently under interim evaluation (e.g. Council of the EU “Intl. R&I cooperation in a geopolitical world: Global approach two years on”)
- Notion towards R&I cooperation with China as a “risk” is growing: Official EU position “Tackling R&I foreign interference” (2022)
- Major global challenges cannot be tackled without (STI) cooperation with China therefore the main objective of a new EU-China strategy is to “de-risk” China relations by a more targeted and transactional STI engagement model

China's interpretation of STI cooperation and science diplomacy

- 14th 5-year plan (2021-25) aims for a 7% annual growth in R&D expenses and highlights importance of STI
- The FYP also introduces the concept of “dual circulation” development strategy which places technological self-sufficiency and the control of emerging tech at the core of (STI) policy objectives
- Science diplomacy is defined and used in the same framework
- “Belt and Road Initiative”
 - ✓ Digital silk road: infrastructure projects with STI components
 - ✓ People-to-people exchanges: Thousand Talents programme, Confucius Institutes
 - ✓ Policy coordination: Chinese Science & Technology diplomats
- “Made in China 2025” (& “Internet Plus”) aims to upgrade 10 high-tech industries through STI, such as aviation and aerospace, electrical power, next generation IT, rail transport, marine technology

The inherent tension in STI cooperation with China

- The Global Approach places a strong emphasis on level-playing field, respect for values and principles and reciprocity
- Chinese actors follow a practice-oriented approach and tend to interpret collaboration in non-reciprocal terms
- The challenge is to safeguard the European open innovation ecosystem without Chinese actors extracting sensitive knowledge and technology with non-reciprocal actions
- *The way forward:*
 - Mapping and upgrading independent knowledge on China (EU-KNOC 2.0, ReConnectChina, DWARC) & pooling of existing resources and knowledge on China to build a critical mass
 - Ongoing negotiations on the Joint Roadmap for the future of EU-China cooperation in STI – role of science diplomacy? (European Science Diplomacy Agenda)
 - More harmonized and coordinated EU action: Chinese entities are excluded from Innovation Actions of Horizon Europe but cooperation is encouraged in areas with clear common (EU) interests, such as climate change, agri-food, biodiversity

Examples for STI collaboration risks with China

- Data and technology acquisition by illicit means: academic espionage, theft, fraud, coercion, violation of IP rights, data leaks
- Knowledge security: DREAMS Lab case where Huawei funded the research of two NL universities on AI use to optimize search engine functionality raised the issue of using research results in unethical or dual-use purposes
- Research collaborations functioning as cover for (geo)political agendas: China in the Arctic & CN professor in Copenhagen conducting research with CN military on new drugs to prevent brain damage at high altitudes
- Academic institutes serving for political purposes: Confucius institute at the Palacky University Olomouc closed in 2023 due to suspected 'propaganda' courses
- Misleading and non-transparent data collection and provision: anomalies in R&D expenditure and personnel data reported to OECD

The way forward: mitigating STI collaboration risks

The national MS level

- Also EU MS start to recalibrate their approach to R&I cooperation with China

Examples

- The Netherlands: Consultation of stakeholders, development of national guidelines, implementation of guidelines by setting up a decentralised knowledge security screening (research officers at each HE institution + joint desk at the governmental level)
- Germany: Consultation of stakeholders (stakeholder conference in Berlin on May 22); Now local actors seem to move quicker than the government (HNC³ project: “Hamburg Network on Compliance in Cooperation with China”)
- Austria: Science Ministry launched a study to collect and get feedback from R&I stakeholders on past cooperation with China (potentially this is the preceding exercise to have a stakeholder conference afterwards)
- More information needed for Southern or Eastern Europe

The way forward: mitigating STI collaboration risks

The US context

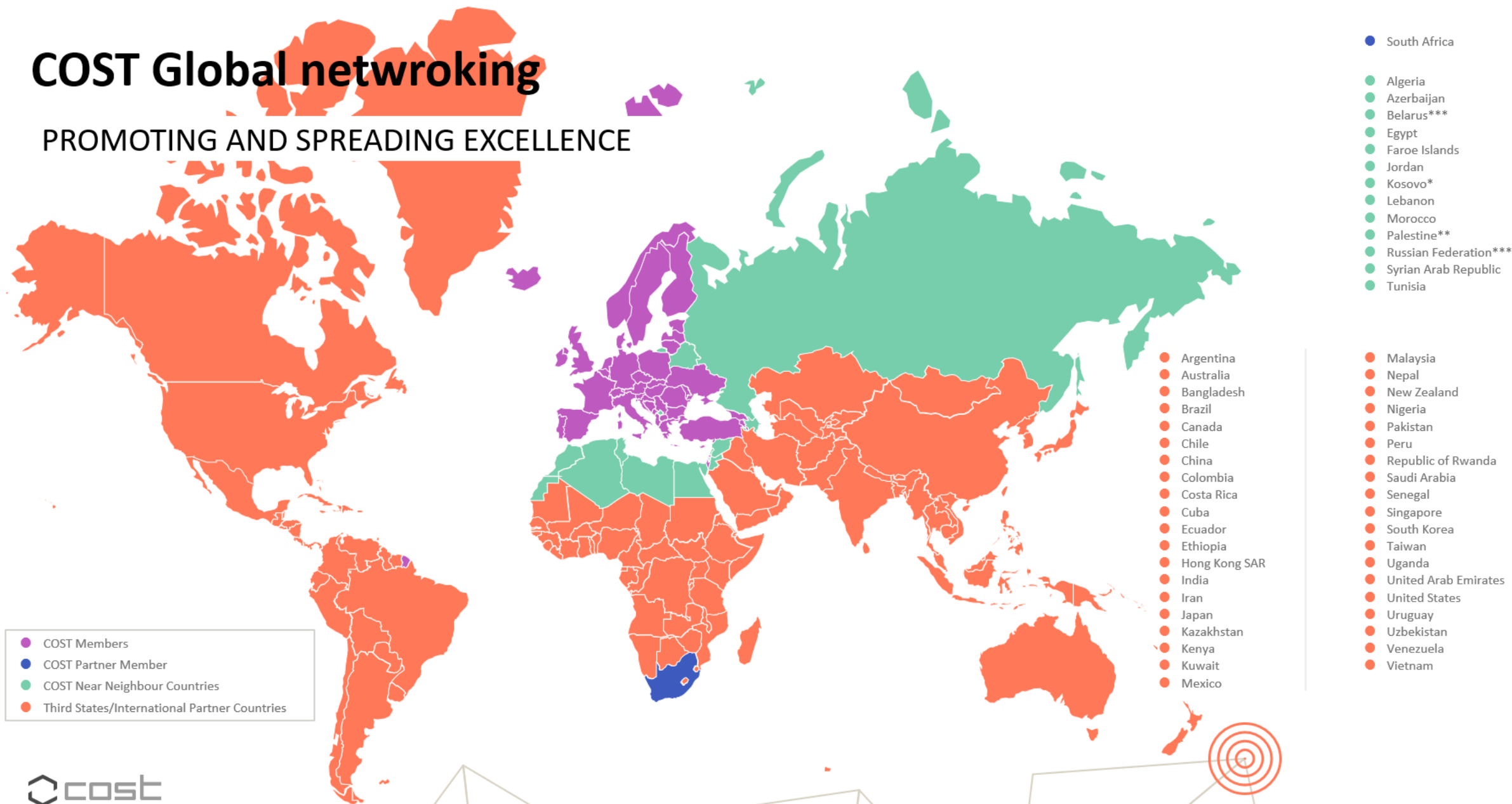
- The US rhetoric on R&I cooperation with China has become very harsh and warnings from governmental officials about China as a “threat to national security” are predominating. Private actors and HE institutions are following up with new studies and guidelines
- The MIT approach falls not short of warnings about the risks while simultaneously underlining that not all cooperation activities of China are of malign intent and that Chinese scholars have and will always contribute to MIT’s success
- Differentiation on purpose: The EU still tries to strike the right balance between openness and restrictions in STI cooperation with China (as mentioned: open, but closed; reciprocity instead of unilaterality) whereas China in the US governmental administration is usually labeled as a “threat”

The role of science diplomacy in relations with China

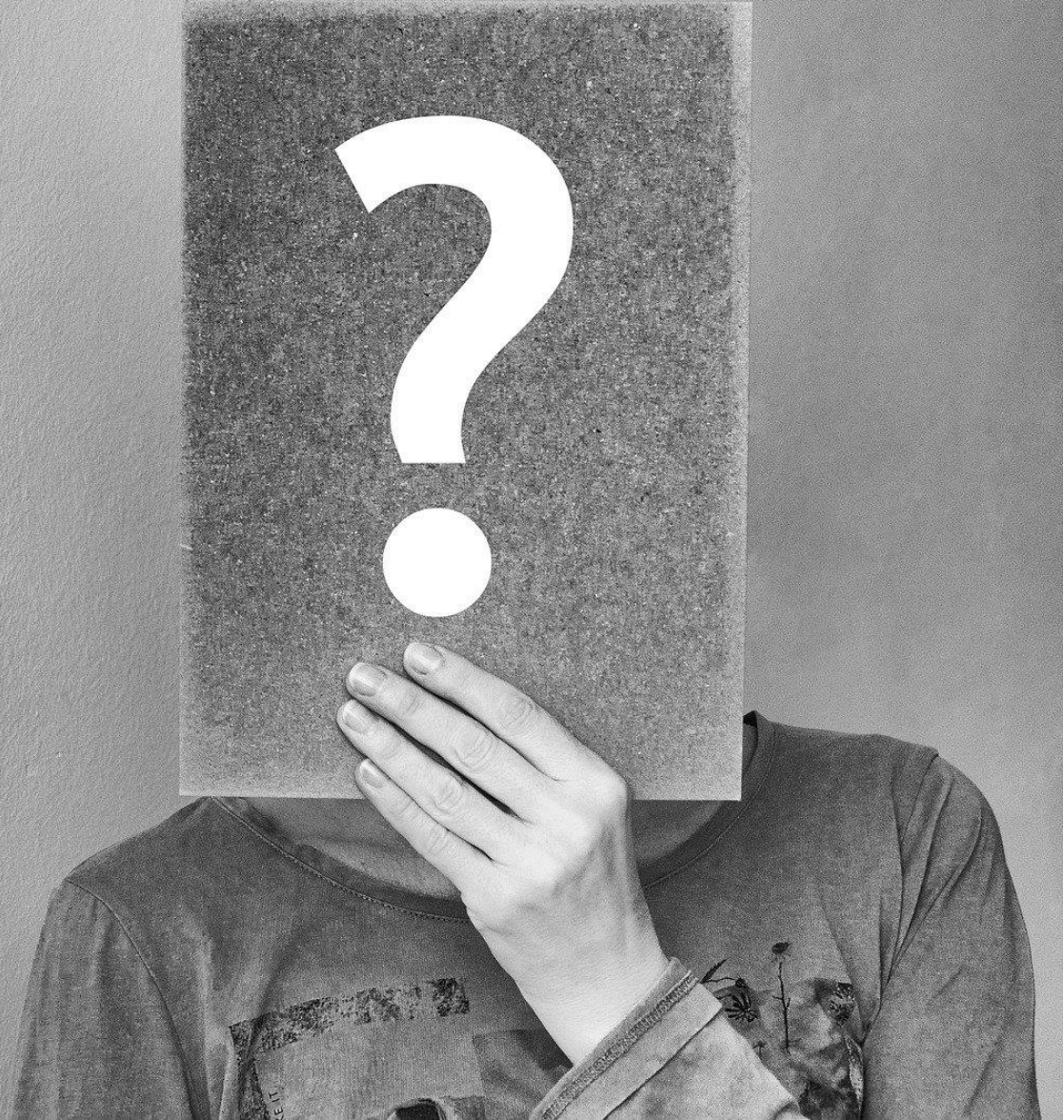
- SD needs to be used as a soft power tool to pursue the core EU values and principles (openness, inclusivity, transparency, reciprocity, academic freedom, research ethics and integrity) and safeguard strategic assets, interests and security
- SD is key to build a collective vision and strategic response in the EU-China-USA STI triangle intertwined with economics, politics and security in previously unprecedented ways
- SD needs to support balance risk management with open science by providing tools to identify and regulate common areas of interest in EU-China STI cooperation

COST Global networking

PROMOTING AND SPREADING EXCELLENCE



World Café: Risks and Opportunities of SD Actions



RISKS

- ETHICS & INTEGRITY

DUAL-USE

- D/FF. ^{MS} ~~MS~~ ATTITUDES ^{NOT ALWAYS HARMFUL} _{EU AGENDA}

↳ PROMOTING POLITICAL AGENDA

- POLITICS _{AGENDA} → COLLABORATION OPTIONS
INFLUENCED

TR-GR

ASIA → ISRAEL

YUGOSLAVIA

STIGMA: WITH WHOM TO COLLABORATE?
WHAT TOPICS? HOMOSEX. CHINA
AGAINST ACADEMIC FREEDOM

↓
- ALIGNING WITH INTERESTS/OBJECTIVES OF FINANCIERS

- D/FF. WORKING & LIFE STYLES

OPPORTUNITIES

- Diaspora communities

- Identify other key partners in the global landscape

- Cultural & Diversity literacy
Heritage

- Linguistic challenges/opportunities.

- Policy making takes into consideration
national context

- Sharing knowledge.

- Broader education

- Personal relationships

- Communicate to the wider society
about overview of COST mission & activities.



Thank you very much for your active participation!