

China in Europe Research Network (CHERN) - CA 18215

Chinese Urban Real Estate Investments in Europe: Scoping Study STSMs 2/3

Basics

Host Organization: University of Cambridge, UK

Host Organizations's representative: Elia Apostolopoulou

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The tentative length of the STSM: 3 weeks

Call's description and objectives

Chinese real estate investment in overseas markets is a significant global phenomenon, with purchases of commercial and residential property from mainland Chinese investors alone reaching \$120 billion in 2017. It also appears clear that a number of European cities are major destinations for these flows.

In broader terms, property prices across much of Europe have risen precipitously in recent years, driven in large part by the growing attractiveness of real estate as a relatively high-yielding class of investments. In many cities these shifts are transforming the urban landscape and substantially raising the cost of living.

However, the relative significance of Chinese inflows in relation to these processes, as compared to those from other sources, remains relatively unknown. We also have only a piecemeal grasp of the vectors driving Chinese inflows and how they may be patterned across European cities and regions. Some Chinese property purchases are related to migration- for educational purposes, or linked to 'golden visa' schemes, for example. In other cases investments may be wholly profit-driven- including development schemes, commercial property acquisitions, or pure speculation. In many instances some mix of these motivations may be involved.

The CHERN Real Estate Group has been set up in order to conduct a three stage collaborative project investigating the above issues and through this to build a more comprehensive understanding of Chinese real estate flows into Europe. The group consists of scholars with

relevant expertise from across Europe and beyond, who will participate in and consult on the project as it progresses.

These 3 STSMs comprise scoping studies which together will constitute Phase I of the project. Each of these three Phase I STSMs will be charged with investigating one of three European sub-regions. In addition to producing an overview of the sub-region, each Phase I STSM will also focus on two particular case cities, with the participant undertaking short field visits in each. The exact geographical scope of each sub-region, as well as the choice of case cities, is subject to negotiation between hosts and participants, in consultation with the CHERN Real Estate Group. Suggested case cities for each of the three sub-regions are given in brackets below:

- Region 1: West (Lisbon, Barcelona)
- Region 2: East (Athens, Budapest)
- Region 3: Central (London, Amsterdam)

Each of the three Phase I STSMs will comprise three stages (i) review of existing literature and data, identification of major trends and selection of case cities; (ii) fieldwork in case cities, including interviews with key informants and establishing contacts for Phase II STSMs; (iii) analysis of findings and production of outputs.

These Phase I STSMs are intended to produce standalone outputs (both individually and collectively with the two other STSM teams). They will also lay the groundwork for a small number of follow up Phase II STSMs in a later funding round, consisting of single city case studies. Phase III of the project (scheduled for 2023) will then build on findings from these two rounds of STSMs in order to produce further major outputs (e.g. a journal special issue, conference panel, grant bids).

Objectives:

Each of the three STSMs will involve a collaborative effort between the host and visiting researcher, who will be expected to coordinate their efforts with the two other STSM teams and consult with CHERN's Real Estate Group. Each STSM will:

- Conduct a review of existing literature and data sources on Chinese real estate investments in a given European sub-region.
- Identify two case study cities based on analysis of regional trends and availability of data
- Conduct short (7 day) periods of fieldwork in two case study cities, with the goal of (i) conducting a small number of interviews with key informants; (ii) making contacts and finding sources of data in order to lay the groundwork for future research (Phase II)
- Produce a scoping study of Chinese real estate investments in the sub-region, with more detailed analysis of the two focus countries gleaned from field research and primary data where possible

Call's specific requirements

In addition to COST requirements (see **Practical details** below), the applicant should have:

- PhD in social sciences discipline or currently enrolled in PhD programme
- Competency in English and Chinese language and familiarity with Chinese social media (e.g. WeChat)
- Competency in local languages in sub-region is an advantage but not required
- Experience conducting fieldwork (especially interviews) is an advantage

Results

In addition to COST requirements (scientific report) the STSM will results in:

- A policy report on Chinese real estate investment in the sub-region
- Participate with other reserachers working on the opic in an academic article synthesising the findings from the three STSMs, incorporating fieldwork findings, targeted at e.g. *Urban Studies, Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space, International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*
- Participate at an online workshop open to all CHERN members and the general public, to be held summer 2022, at which each STSM will present their findings
- Participate in recommendations to feed into a further round of Phase II STSMs comprising individual city case studies (including case selection, data sources etc.)
- Blog post for CHERN website

Practical details

All applicants must carefully read the [STSM basic facts](#) on CHERN's website before applying.

Potential pandemic restrictions would mean that initial meetings and activities would be done remotely. The exact dates and timing of the mission shall be determined jointly by the Host and the selected applicant.

Deadlines

Deadline for applications to be submitted: **March 25 2022**

Notification of application outcome: **April 5 2022**

Period of STSM: Spring to Summer 2022 (exact dates to be determined together with the host)

Submitting the reports: **30 days** after completing the STSM (and no later than October 15th)

Accepting/ rejecting the reports: **within 2 weeks** after submission of the report

Execution of the payment of the grant: **within 4 weeks** after submission of the report

More information

For more information please contact:

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