AN OVERVIEW OF CHINESE GOVERNMENT APPARATUS RELATED TO TCM

China and Norway are collaborating within the field of health and medicine, and in Norway The National Research Center in Complementary and Alternative Medicine (NAFKAM) has been assigned the task of administering the scientific and professional aspects of the section of the collaboration regarding traditional Chinese medicine (TCM). In order to gain an understanding of the Chinese government apparatus and who are responsible for what when it comes to permissions, funding, agreements, etc. in connection with the collaboration, NAFKAM invited Dr. Chen Yong-Ning, First Secretary at the Office of Science and Technology, Embassy of P. R. China in Oslo, Norway to a meeting where he gave an overview of the Chinese government apparatus and answered our many questions.

Before coming to Norway in 2003, Dr. Chen Yong-Ning worked as a Consul at the Consulate-General of P.R. China in New York from 1995-1998, and from 2000 to 2003 he was MOST's liaison at the Hong Kong University in relation to inland China in the field of TCM.

Report from a meeting with Dr. Chen Yong-Ning
NAFKAM, Tromsø, 9 June 2006

A plan for the modernization of Traditional Chinese Medicine was issued 10 October 2002. This was a result of the collaboration between eight different units:

1. Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST)*
2. State Development and Reform Commission (previously State Planning Commission)*
3. Ministry of Commerce (previously State Economic and Trade Commission)*
4. Ministry of Health*
5. State Food and Drug Administration**
6. State Intellectual Property Office**
7. State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SATCM)
8. Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS)***

A more detailed description of each unit:

1. Ministry of Science and Technology

- One of two main sources for funding of research both within TCM and other areas. Funding is administered by separate departments within the ministry.
- The Office of Biomedicine in the Department of Social Development is in charge of, or coordinates projects related to TCM.
- Website: www.most.gov.cn

2. **State Development and Reform Commission**
    - Is responsible (gives permission) for industrial projects in China within TCM and other areas.
    - Website: www.sdpc.gov.cn

3. **Ministry of Commerce**
    - Is responsible for trade and business related to export of TCM (not relevant for research).
    - Website: www.mofcom.gov.cn

4. **Ministry of Health**
    - Is in charge of SATCM (State Administration of TCM – see #7).

5. **State Food and Drug Administration**
    - Is responsible for regulatory issues when TCM herbal remedies are administered as drugs or health-food.
    - Can be compared to FDA in USA.
    - Website: www.sda.gov.cn

6. **State Intellectual Property Office**
    - Is responsible for patent affairs related to TCM.
    - Website: www.sipo.gov.cn

7. **State Administraion of TCM (SATCM)**
    - Is organized as a unit within the Ministry of Health but functions relatively independently.
    - Receives funding directly from the Ministry of Finance of the Chinese Government.
    - The director of SATCM is also a Vice Minister of Health.
    - Is responsible for
        - 42 TCM universities and colleges
            - E.g. Beijing University of TM and Shanghai University of TCM.
        - 3716 TCM hospitals .
            - E.g. XiYuan and Guang An Men, both in Beijing
                - Hospitals can apply for some (small!) research funding from SATCM.
        - 97 research institutes in TCM (one of these is China Academy of TCM).
            - SATCM provides funding for the administration of some of the research institutes.
            - The research institutes can also apply for funding from MOST, the National Natural Science Foundation, and other units.
    - Is responsible for several aspects of international TCM collaboration.
    - International TCM collaboration with Chinese TCM educational institutions and hospitals must go through SATCM.
    - SATCM is not relevant for research activities.
    - Website: www.satcm.gov.cn
        - Annual reports in Chinese – the latest is from 2004.

8. Chinese Academy of (Natural) Sciences (CAS)
(different from Chinese Academy of Social sciences)

- Performs research.
- Provides human resources for high level research.
- 11 branches
- 110 institutes
  - E.g. Shanghai Institute of Materia Medica and Kunming Institute of Botany.
- CAS must apply for research funds from MOST, National Natural Science Foundation and other units.
- Website: www.cas.cn

A ninth important unit in TCM research:

National Natural Science Foundation (NNSF)***

- Provides funding for research.
- Website: http://english.gov.cn/2005-08/07/content_21039.htm

Collaboration with China in the field of TCM

The main issues in any collaboration with China in the area of TCM will be an expression of intent, finding partners and funding within research, education or clinical practice. Collaboration often starts with a more or less planned contact with one person or representatives of one institution in China. It is often difficult to know what resources and "authority" they represent. We hope the list given above will aid non-Chinese professionals in understanding how the Chinese system around TCM is built up and who the relevant partners and authorities are.
Even if a partnership has been formed with one or more Chinese partners, it is important to know who to contact in all matters concerning a possible collaboration.

Who to contact

- ***Research***
  - *Human resources / partners*
    The Chinese Academy of Sciences, individual universities, and research institutes can be approached if the intent is to find Chinese researchers as potential research partners.
  - *Funding*
    The primary funder of TCM research is the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST). Applications for funding can also be directed to the National Natural Science Foundation (NNSF), the provincial departments of Science and Technology or other minor funders. It is preferable that the Chinese partners of the collaboration contact the funding institutions, and this is best done through the International Office of each institution.
- ***Education***
  Any cooperation with educational institutions in TCM needs to be authorized by the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SATCM).
- ***Practice***
  Any cooperation with clinical institutions in TCM needs to be authorized by the State Administration of Traditional Chinese Medicine (SATCM).

* One of the ministries and commissions under the State Council

http://english.gov.cn/2005-08/05/content_20741.htm
** One of the organizations directly under the State Council
http://english.gov.cn/2005-08/05/content_20790.htm
*** One of the institutions directly under the State Council
http://english.gov.cn/2005-08/07/content_21039.htm

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