

Accountability and Transparency in China's Five Year Plan



Overview

China's new 11th Five Year Plan (FYP) (2006-2010) was developed using a participatory process. For the first time, the FYP incorporates a monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework with outcome indicators and targets. It includes a commitment to conduct a mid-term review and report to the National People's Congress.

Highlights

Premier Wen Jiabao's strong leadership commitment prompted citizen involvement in the development of the 11th FYP and its call for a mid-term review of progress towards objectives. Young and old participated in the plan development process; and 60 citizens were rewarded for their suggestions, including a 12-year-old migrant child. The M&E framework is both specific and comprehensive. This is the first FYP to include both baseline information as well as outcome indicators and input-output effectiveness targets. It is guiding a more balanced and sustainable development pattern.

Results

After only six months under the 11th FYP, the first monitoring results were released. They presented an honest picture. Publicly, Government acknowledged that some targets were not met due to the momentum of the previous growth pattern. This level of transparency on plan implementation is unprecedented in China. The publicity surrounding the publication of plan results has stimulated open discussions among policy makers, experts and media on the causes for the initial failures and measures needed for going forward. Following the incentives set by the central government, provincial governments have developed performance criteria for high-ranking officials. A public opinion poll—with questions on environment, energy and support to the poor—was chosen as one of the four means to evaluate these officials.

Lessons Learned

Essential for the introduction of results-based national plans and transparent outcome monitoring systems are *political commitment from the top leaders of the country* and a *strong and well-located champion*, which in the case of China has been the Development Planning Department of the National Development and Reform Commission, the agency which prepares the Five Year Plan. An ability to access *international experience*, which China was able to do through a project supported by a World Bank Institutional Development Fund, is also important, and in China's case facilitated its introduction to an internationally recognized "ten step" model upon which it was able to draw.

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