

## POLICY REVIEW

# Rating system planned for govt services

State Council guideline says online system will enable evaluation of administrative performance

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The State Council has decided to establish a government service rating system nationwide to spur authorities at various levels to improve their work style and make administrative services more accessible to businesses and the public.

The General Office of the State Council said in a guideline published on Dec 17 that an online integrated evaluation system covering all government service windows, systems, telephone hotlines and terminals will be set up before the end of next year.

The goal is to ensure that each administrative service can be evaluated, while each administrative service provider and platform will be subject to review, the guideline said. It also called on businesses and individuals to share authentic reviews of access to administrative services, and pledged that unfavorable feedback found to be legitimate would lead to rectification of criticized services.

To enable easier access to government services, the guideline said procedures will be further streamlined and administrative information systems and resources will be better integrated. The functions of one-stop services will be further improved and speeded up.

A national standard on the rating of administrative systems will be developed to enable detailed indexes and rating methods, the guideline said.

Zhu Lijia, a professor of public management at the Chinese Academy of Governance, said the evaluation system would accelerate the transformation of government functions and prevent dereliction of duty and abuse of power.

"The mechanism will also help garner opinions and feedback and improve the work style of officials," he said.

However, it was important to ensure the feedback gathered was objective and truthful, he said, adding that the development of information technology would enable better oversight of services.

"The ultimate goal is to enable authorities to respond to public concerns in a timely manner," he said.

The guideline said administrative service bodies must set up evaluation terminals or QR codes to allow the public to access the rating system and provide reviews, which could include ratings such as very good, good, average, bad and very bad.

Businesses and individuals will also be able to leave feedback on whether guidance is clear and procedures are convenient enough, and suggest further improvements.

The authorities must gather public opinion about the level of awareness of new policies and the level of satisfaction with the services being offered.

Administrative units that receive an unfavorable review must respond as soon as it is received, contact the party that submitted it and make appropriate corrections if the criticism is valid, the guideline said.

It called for data technologies to be



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used to summarize difficult administrative services procedures and analyze public expectations.

The guideline also highlighted the importance of protecting the rights of those giving evaluations and those subject to reviews, saying that coercion or interference with businesses and individuals providing feedback must be prohibited and their privacy must be protected.

Civil servants whose services are evaluated will be given the right to gather evidence, offer explanations

and appeal against unfavorable ratings, it added.

Ma Liang, a public administration professor at Renmin University of China in Beijing, said he was pleasantly surprised to see the authorities borrow from practices commonly used in the e-commerce sector.

However, for the system to achieve its intended outcome, it would be important to conduct the ratings in a detailed manner to make government services more traceable and offer clues for further improvement.

In the meantime, it was important to make sure businesses and individuals had the courage to assess government services and administrative bodies were willing to accept assessment.

"The government should make full use of the large amount of data accumulated in the process, and find problems and take due measures required to rectify them," he said. "Thus we need to make the rating system applicable, easily accessible and truly count."



SHI YU / CHINA DAILY

## Policy digest

### Transparent grassroots government promoted



Ways to promote transparent grassroots government were put forward at a State Council executive meeting on Wednesday that Premier Li Keqiang presided over.

Implementing the Regulation on Government Information Disclosure and further enhancing local governments' disclosure of information were important steps for improving the business environment, the meeting heard.

It was decided at the meeting that governments at county, district, town and subdistrict levels should work toward standardized disclosure of their services.

Local government affairs concern the interests of the people, and all such affairs that can be disclosed should be disclosed, the meeting was told.

Grassroots governments should expand the public's participation in administrative decision-making, and clarify and publicize areas where public participation is permitted and the ways the public can be involved.

When dealing with items that directly affect people's interests, governments should seek public advice through hearings and discussions. They should also respond to public concerns in a timely manner when implementing decisions.

Governments should also finish compiling their lists of items subject to information disclosure, and make sure the whole process is transparent and results are openly available.

The meeting also decided that governments should fully disclose their administrative services and the procedures that need to be taken to access them, both online and offline.

### Eligibility for science and tech prizes clarified

A draft revision of the Regulation on State Science and Technology Prizes was passed at the State Council executive meeting on Wednesday.

It says natural science projects should be forward looking and theoretical to qualify for the prizes, and those who conduct basic research, in fields such as mathematics, should enjoy better chances of winning the prizes.

Scientific and technological inventions and advances should be closely related to the country's major strategies and development needs to qualify for the prizes, the draft says.

Individuals and organizations that have violated ethics or committed misconduct in their work must not be nominated for or granted the prizes, and the review of nominations must be open, fair and just, it says.

WANG QINGYUN

## POLICY RESPONSE

# Quality inspections stepped up as licensing requirements for manufacturers slashed

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Several ministry-level departments, including those responsible for development and reform, and civil affairs, have recently responded to issues of public concern.

### Measures make life easier for manufacturers

China has significantly reduced the number of industrial products that companies need a license to make, an official from the State Administration for Market Regulation said.

Only 10 categories of products now require such licenses, down from 60 in early 2017, Zhang Wenbing, director of the ministry's product safety and quality department, told a news conference on Dec 17.

The time required to get a license has also been shortened to an average of eight workdays, he said.

One measure taken by the administration to accelerate the process

has been the cancellation of product tests by the licensing authorities. Instead, companies are now required to include certificates issued by qualified institutes in their license applications.

The administration has also abolished a large number of tests that companies previously had to go through, and focused on examining on companies' key equipment for making and testing their products, Zhang said.

The administration has strengthened quality inspections of products that do not require production licenses, and will continue to do so, he said.

It had conducted random tests on more than 7,000 batches of products made by about 5,000 companies this year, with about 9 percent failing to meet standards.

### Economy remains on track for steady growth

China's economy will continue to grow steadily, National Development

and Reform Commission spokeswoman Meng Wei said on Dec 17.

The National Bureau of Statistics said the country's manufacturing purchasing manager's index stood at 50.2 in November, up by 0.9 from October. Meng told a news conference that it was a relatively positive sign for the economy.

A PMI reading above 50 signifies an expansion in factory production from the previous month.

In the first three quarters of this year, China's GDP grew by 6.2 percent year-on-year. Though growth had slowed, Meng said China still enjoyed the fastest growth among economies with a GDP of more than \$1 trillion.

The consumer price index in November was up 4.5 percent year-on-year, with Meng saying the main cause was higher pork prices.

In general, there was a solid base for prices to remain stable, she said, adding there was an abundant supply of industrial and agricultural

products, and pig production was recovering.

### Companies encouraged to support 'left-behind' kids

The Ministry of Civil Affairs and five other bodies have issued a guideline on ways labor-intensive companies can enhance their support for "left-behind" children and other underprivileged children in rural areas.

The guideline, issued on the State Council's website on Wednesday, aims to improve the guardianship of children in rural areas by parents working for such companies.

According to a document issued by the State Council in 2016, "left-behind" children are those under 16 whose parents are away from home and working as migrant workers, or who have one parent working away from home and a parent at home who is not a competent guardian.

The companies should hold lec-



tures and courses for their workers and help them better understand their responsibility for their children. They should include lectures on laws related to child protection and development, and training to improve parents' ability to communicate with their children.

The companies should also keep improving employees' working and living conditions to better support

them in carrying out their family duties.

The guideline encourages companies to hire social workers to offer services such as psychological counseling and empowerment to workers and their children, and to provide with affordable phone and video chat services so parents can keep in contact with their children.

It also encourages companies to gradually move their plants to Central and West China, so that parents can work in or near their hometowns.

In addition, companies should set up programs to offer regular support to "left-behind" children and other underprivileged children in rural areas and try to establish like-minded social initiatives and charities.

They should also take into account China's plan to eliminate poverty and its rural vitalization strategy, and focus on improving the lives of children in poverty-stricken areas, the guideline says.