

FROM "INTERNET + GOVERNMENT SERVICES" TO "INTERNET + SUPERVISION": HOT ISSUES AND MAJOR POLICY OBJECTIVES OF CHINA'S DIGITAL GOVERNANCE CONSTRUCTION

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Within the vocabulary of informatization and smart city construction, "Internet+" was a concept first invented by the Chinese. The concept of "Internet+" was first mooted in 2012 to broad support in China's IT circles. "Internet+" subsequently became the core strategy for internet solutions in many industries and sectors. In the field of digital governance, "Internet+ government services" mainly refers to the use of the internet to provide faster and more convenient e-governance services to a wider population.

In 2016, the Chinese central government officially proposed the concept of "Internet+ government services" for the first time, and regarded it as the main policy goal in building and implementing e-governance. "Internet+ government services" became an important task for all levels of government in their informatization drive, as well as their efforts to build and apply e-governance. There was a need for greater integration of infrastructure, data and processes to promote "Internet+ government services".

As a result, the central government issued a special document in 2018 requesting all levels of government to accelerate the construction of a comprehensive and integrated online service platform. This platform would serve to break down information barriers between different departments and application systems, creating the conditions needed for the implementation of "Internet+ government services".

Even though much progress has been made in building a framework of digital governance – particularly with a focus on "Internet+ government services" – there remain numerous institutional barriers such as entrenched rules and regulations that hinder market development and the realization of public rights in this regard. The central government therefore still faces insurmountable obstacles in its market-oriented optimization reforms of the current environment, as well as its more ambitious efforts to modernize state governance capacity and the overall governance system.

In order to address these issues and expand the implementation and applicability of "Internet+ government services", the central government issued a document in June 2016 regarding the deployment and

construction of a nationwide, integrated online government service system. The goal of this system was to achieve collaborative governance and public service provision that transcended administrative levels, regions, systems, departments and operations. The aim was to build a one-stop online platform for businesses and the public (i.e. a unified online platform for all services); create a "single door" system for offline service provision (i.e. allowing the public to approach any government office for any government service); and to ensure that the public would not have to make more than one trip to any government office for any government service.

It is a requirement that by end-2018, no less than 80% of services provided by provincial governments must be available online, and no less than 50% of city and county-level government services must be available online. In addition, the ratio of city and county-level government affairs offices to integrated government service offices must not be below 70%, while more than 50% of government services must fall within the "one stop" category." Finally, materials provided by businesses and the public for the provision of government services must be reduced by at least 30%, and provincial, city and county-level governments must achieve the "one visit" policy goal in 30 highly utilized services.

By end-2019, key areas and frequently utilized services should have fully implemented this "one site, one stop, one visit" policy. Regarding the "one site" policy, no less than 90% of services provided by provincial governments must be available online, and no less than 70% of city and county-level government services must be available online. Additionally, aside from services that require the public to go to a specific location for processing, the integrated government service offices must on the whole, accept all cases that should be accepted, while more than 70% of government services must fall within the "one stop" category." Finally, materials provided by businesses and the public for the provision of government services must be reduced by at least 60%, and provincial, city and county-level governments must achieve the "one visit" policy goal in 100 of highly utilized services.

In order to achieve the goals set out above, the central government has led the construction of an online system that will allow the public to access all national, provincial

and municipal government services with a single login. This system includes access to the website of the Central People's Government of the PRC, government affairs disclosure information, and data sharing information:

1. With the website of the Chinese government as the portal to the Chinese government, the national integrated online government service platform will serve as a channel for the public to access and obtain support for public services across the country. Furthermore, the platform will also contain a unified real-name identification system so that the public can access nationwide services with a single verification on the platform.

2. All government services at every level – except those prohibited by law – are to be included in the online government service platform, so that actions such as enquiries, reporting, feedback and service provision can be done entirely online.

3. A national multi-level, integrated and interconnected data sharing platform will be established to achieve data

scheduling across administrative levels, regions, systems, departments and operations. On top of this, the government will also create a data sharing authorization mechanism, improve and enhance the government database, improve data quality, expand areas where shared data is available, and improve service availability of government data.

On top of paying particular attention to the provision of e-government services, from October 2018, the central government has begun considering construction and implementation issues related to the deployment of the internet to strengthen government supervision and enhance supervision effectiveness. Given this trend of large-scale digital governance construction, it is expected that "Internet + supervision" will soon be the next policy slogan and the next hot topic in digital governance construction and implementation once the goals of "Internet+ government services goal have been realized.