

## Chinese government mulls enhanced transparency in decision making

China is mulling an interim regulation that would improve transparency in the drafting of major administrative policies.

According to the draft regulation, released Friday, all major policies regarding people's vital interests or having big influences on their rights and obligations should be made available for public solicitation.

The draft, released by the Legislative Affairs Office of the State Council, dedicated an entire chapter to "Public Participation," which specified the requirement on such procedures.

Such participation could be carried out in various forms including public hearings, questionnaires, surveys and interviews, according to the draft.

It also noted that the period of soliciting public opinion should be no less than 30 days.

Feedback is required on key issues brought up by the public, according to the draft.

Currently, there is still insufficient public participation in some cases, which has harmed the credibility of the government, said the office in an explanatory note.

The draft also highlighted the role of feasibility studies and risk evaluation procedures in decision making.

The public can submit their opinions at [chinalaw.gov.cn](http://chinalaw.gov.cn) before July 8.

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## Weibo launches online video editing program

Social media giant Weibo rolled out an online video editing program Friday.

Jian.weibo.com is a partnership with video platform miaopai.com and video subtitle and translation service provider easub.com. It features video editing tools and release channels. It is currently only available to media organizations and video production companies, according to a statement from Weibo.

The move aims to facilitate short video content production and communication

on new media platforms like Weibo, which boasted about 340 million monthly active users as of the end of March and has witnessed soaring popularity of short-videos on its platform.

The program also has a large pool of video clips, the statement said.

China's short video market had about 153 million users in 2016, which is expected to grow 58.2 percent in 2017 to reach 242 million users, according to a report from domestic data analysis provider iMedia Research.

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## **China continues yellow alert for storm**

The national observatory renewed its yellow storm alert Saturday morning as it expects heavy rain to continue sweeping across the country's eastern and southern regions.

From Saturday to 8 a.m. Sunday, parts of Anhui, Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Jiangxi, Hunan and Guizhou provinces will experience storms, with up to 140 millimeters of rain, the National Meteorological Center said.

The center warned that some of the above mentioned regions will likely see severe weather, such as thunder or hail, predicting hourly precipitation of up to 60 millimeters, or even over 80 millimeters per hour in some areas.

Local authorities should take emergency measures, suspend outdoor activities and guard against potential disasters including mountain floods and landslides, it said.

China has a four-tier color-coded weather warning system, with red representing the most severe warning, followed by orange, yellow and blue.

A level-four emergency response was initiated by China Meteorological Administration Friday evening, the lowest in the country's four-grade emergency response system, which requires monitoring and timely reports.

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## **3 detained for industrial waste water discharge**

Three suspects are in custody after industrial waste water containing 180 times the maximum safe level of zinc was discharged directly into a river in east China's Zhejiang Province.

The three, detained on Wednesday, will be charged with polluting the environment, according to an environmental official in the city of Linhai Saturday.

A plant manufacturing tools for auto repair was found to be dumping unprocessed waste water into a waterway 50 meters away during an inspection in Linhai.

The inspectors said the waste water was a byproduct of metal polishing and surface treatment.

Excessive levels of zinc, bronze and nickel were detected in the water, and the zinc level was more than 180 times over the maximum allowed amount, said the official.

Police arrested the factory owner and two managers. Like other parts of the country, Linhai City this year initiated the "river chief" system, with leading officials being the major responsible people in addressing water pollution.

Those convicted of polluting the environment can be sent to prison for up to seven years.

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## Government use of data

I was asked about government data in the election, so I thought today I would share with you my reply:

I entirely agree that we need to improve the skills of our nation in handling and using data. The government is planning more emphasis on science, maths and data, which will be covered by new T levels as well.

I also agree that new policies should be underpinned by evidence. That is the approach I have always adopted as policy adviser and as someone involved in the national debate over major concerns.

There are issues both over the quality of data available to government and over the way some choose to interpret or use it. I myself use a lot of the economic data for the interventions I make in the national debate on public spending, economic growth and taxation. All too often the basis of a series is changed making comparison over time more difficult. There are regular changes to the back data, long after the intense political debate about the numbers has passed on. We often find the sharp political exchanges have attacked and defended wrong numbers.

The current changes being put through on inflation are an example of the complexity, with RPI giving way to CPI now giving way to a new index which

includes a proxy for owner occupied housing costs which may not capture the reality. This is an example of an important index which has consequences for people's lives, as benefits are uprated and index bondholders rewarded by reference to one or other of these indices.

In some of the important figures for debate the independent officials make forecasts which can have great political significance. For example, the OBR forecast poor revenues for the almost completed 2016-17 year in the November Autumn Statement, only to have to put back £8bn of revenue they left out from the November forecast in the March update. It is a good job the government did not respond to the November figures by cutting spending or increasing taxes to keep the deficit on target, as it turns out it was not off target as I argued at the time. There are always dangers in official figures that require judgements or rely on models which have not in the past accurately reflected what has happened.

The UK economic figures are subject to revision for many years after the date to which they apply. It reminds us that decision takers often do have to make judgements without access to proper data. That is another area where a democratic system has its advantages. If the decision takers are in touch with those most affected, they will know qualitatively about the problem and the solutions which can help avoid a mistake based on partial, inaccurate or misunderstood data.

You can rest assured I will continue to highlight problems, working to our shared goal of more accurate numbers used intelligently and fairly to underpin policy.