

Flexible working hours on trial in Guizhou

Based on the outcome of a trial in one of its cities, Guizhou province may ask its employees to work on a more flexible timetable, according to a notice released on its website.

The idea, which was brought up and first implemented by the city of Qingzhen, offers employees two options.

Some can work consecutively for 22 days and then rest for eight days, while others follow cycles of 11 days of work and four days of rest. The total monthly working days cannot be lower than 22.

The working patterns will be adopted by civil servants within departments responsible for administrative work relating to people's daily lives, such as the bureau of civil affairs and the family planning office.

These employees account for more than 80 percent of all civil servants in Qingzhen.

The trial run started on Nov 1 and will end on May 31.

"The adjustment aims to benefit the majority of customers, who usually have to work on weekdays. Using this rotating schedule, we can improve efficiency by ensuring our office is open every day except legal holidays," said Li Zhengfei, deputy head of the organization department of Qingzhen's CPC committee.

According to Li, most of the officials in the city often sacrifice their weekends for emergency work and can't get their holidays back.

So the rotation system not only benefits customers but also guarantees that civil servants can enjoy their holidays without being disturbed.

"To see whether this reform of the timetable system will carry on successfully, we should ensure that it has a good purpose and is achieved by reasonable means," said Wang Xixin, a professor of administrative law at Peking University.

"Moreover, the adjustment must comply with existing laws."

A guideline issued by the State Council said that employees should normally work eight hours per day, 40 hours per week.

However, enterprises or authorities in some industries can adjust working hours as needed in special situations.

"Though there is still no document drafted related to this reform, three towns have put the flexible timetable into practice with encouraging

results," Li said.