

Governance for Equitable Development (GED) – Strengthening Rule of Law and Civil Society Participation in China

The Challenge

Economic transition and development has stimulated rapid growth in China, which has helped to bring about dramatic reductions in poverty and greatly improved people's living standards. However, growth has also led to great disparities and inequalities, which brings the need for rule of law, social justice and equitable public services through legal reform and a robust civil society to the forefront. With the emphasis on more people-centered development and the construction of a harmonious society, the Chinese government is increasingly recognising the need for increased popular participation in governance processes, improved accountability and transparency in the management of public affairs, and for enhancing the rule of law to promote social, legal and judicial equity. Although great challenges remain in all these fields, the government is committed at the highest levels to furthering these crucial issues.

The Response

Balanced and equitable development based on broad popular participation and the rule of law is necessary to ensure that China's development is sustainable, that society remains stable and that the Millennium Development Goals are reached. This project, Governance for Equitable Development (GED), is co-funded by the European Commission and UNDP, partners with three key national government partners; the National People's Congress Legal Affairs Commission (NPC), the Supreme People's Court (SPC) and the Ministry of Civil Affairs (MoCA), as well as civil society organizations (CSOs). The objectives are to support the process of governance towards more transparency and accountability, and strengthening the emerging institutions of the judiciary, the NPC and civil society with a specific focus on urban-rural balances, gender issues and vulnerable groups. Project activities will be implemented in Beijing and selected localities across China.

GED will build bridges between governmental institutions and civil society through project activities based on broad participation, improved communication, cross sector capacity building, piloting of joint initiatives, and promoting strategic partnerships.

Achievements

Over project duration from 2007 – 2010, the project will raise awareness, build capacities, and stimulate creative participatory solution processes in order to achieve the following outcomes:

1. *The law and policy-making system is improved:* Institutionalise participatory process for law-making, enhance capacities for law-making and public engagement, and improve law harmonization;
2. *Access to justice is increased:* Enhance the capacities of the SPC and local courts to deliver fair and transparent justice, and increase the transparency in court decision-making;
3. *Civil society involvement is broadened:* Improve the policy and legal environment of CSOs and enhance perceptions of CSOs' role in development; build government capacities to involve CSOs in policy-making and public service delivery; improve co-ordination and communication between CSOs and between CSOs and the government; develop the institutional and professional capacities of CSOs.

At A Glance

Start Date: September 2007
End Date: December 2010
Implementing Partner(s): China International Center for Economic and Technical Exchanges (CICETE)
Project ID:

UNDAF Goal: Social and economic policies are developed and improved to be more scientifically-based and human-centered for sustainable and equitable growth
CPAP output: 4.1: Poor and disadvantaged groups empowered to seek remedies for injustices, and justice institutions enabled to be responsive to claims, consistent with international human rights norms., 3.1: Relevant laws and regulations for registration, funding and participation in consultations revised, and 3.2: Increased participation of civil society in the design and implementation of development policies/programmes

Total Budget:	US\$ 10,500,000
UNDP:	US\$ 2,000,000
EC:	US\$ 8,000,000
Government:	US\$ 500,000

Project location(s): Beijing
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Last update: July 2007

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