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# Management Innovation or Techno-cadre's Game?

Collaboration among Government,  
Market, and Society: Forging Partnerships  
and Encouraging Competition

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# Presentation Outline

- Introduction
- Research question
- Case study
- Discussion
- Conclusions



# Performance management in China

- Performance management has been considered a mechanism to attain accountability of governments in most countries, including China.
- China's performance management reform has been utilized as an instrument for building state capacity, ensuring policy compliance, and enforcing top-down inter-governmental political control (Collins & Chan, 2009; Gao, 2009; Burns & Zhou, 2010).



# Research agenda

- Performance management of government agencies has been largely ignored in the literature. Moreover, most existing literature has been focused on studying written policies and regulations, with inadequate attention paid to the process of making these policies and regulations and key stakeholders involved in the process.



# Research purpose

- As stressed by Moynihan (2008) “while there is promise in the future of performance management, its potential will best be achieved if governments rethink what it means, offer realistic expectations rather than hyperbole, and focus on the agency level factors that induce performance success rather than government wide systems” (p. 189).

# Agency-level performance reform

- They face narrower performance targets and more identifiable service clientele than general-purpose governments.
- They tend to have more autonomy to initiate, design, and implement rather sophisticated performance management systems and policies.
- They are more likely to engage external or international participants.



# Research question

- (1) what is the most recent department-level performance management reform and its drives in China?
- (2) Which parties are involved in the development of such a system and how do they interact?
- (3) How would this case shed light on the latest performance management reform in China?



# Introduction to the case







# Project initiation

- DOFHP sought to establish a department-wide performance management system to effectively monitor the operation of the department, enhance operational efficiency, and improve employees service capacity with the assistance of a generous World Bank's Technical Assistance Program of China Economic Reform Implementation Project (TCC5) fund.



# Program development stages

## Stage I: Program Initiation (August 2010-March 2011)

- Collected information on all offices
- Completed job description questionnaire for all positions
- Went on international field trip to conduct comparative studies
- Held expert review meeting to specify responsibilities and tasks

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## Stage II: Program Design (April 2011-September 2011)

- Completed field studies on functional and field offices
- Drafted trial evaluation plan
- Invited third-party external review for the trial plan (*further explained below*)
- Conducted staff training for implementation

## Stage III: Program Implementation (October 2011-April 2012)

- Implemented trial performance evaluation for selected offices
- Provided department-wide intensive training for further implementation
- Collected feedback from the trial run
- Revised evaluation measures

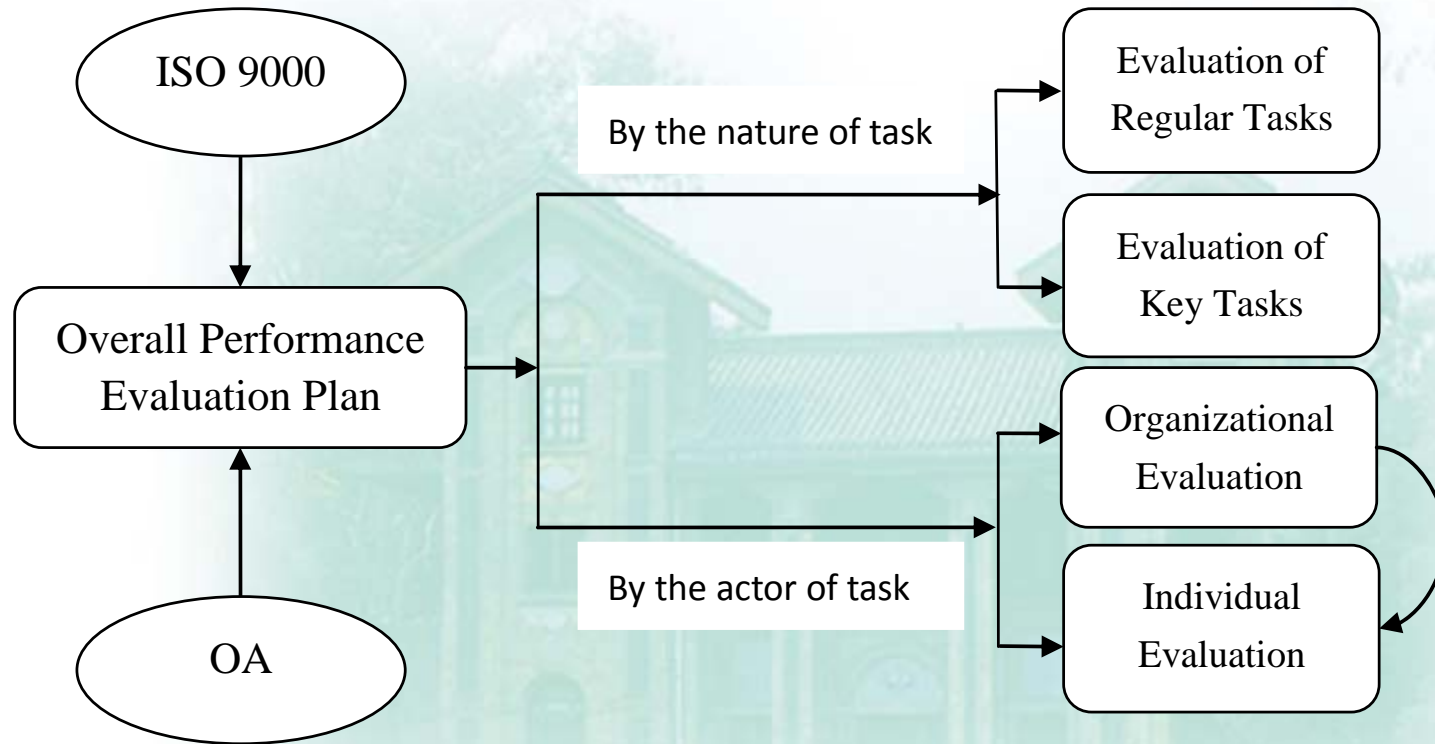
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## Stage IV: Program Finalization and Completion (May 2012-June 2012)

- Finalized the “1+4” evaluation scheme (*further explained below*)
- Integrated the performance management scheme with the ISO 9000 and OA systems
- Submitted the detailed evaluation package to DOFHP and World Bank
- Completed the project



# The designed system





# Analysis of the case

- The essential criteria an effective performance measurement system should possess include validity, legitimacy, credibility, functionality, and accessibility (Bouckaert, 1993; Moynihan & Ingraham, 2003; Streib and Poister, 1999).
- This case study finds that performance management in individual government agencies reflects a more technical nature.

# Findings

- Domestic and international technical partners, such as the World Bank and two key universities in China, assumed an important role in providing the department with leading performance ideologies and models and ample financial resources to develop a state-of-art performance management system.



# Problematic issues

- The involvement of “third-party” expertise is hard to guarantee independence.
- Little effort was found to make the evaluation outcomes available for the public to monitor or even know about.
- Such project is often used to showcase department’s effort/achievement and to receive favorable commendation from the senior governments.



# Discussion

- Chinese performance management has been used as a strategy to resolve particular problems faced by Chinese reformers at different stages of reform.
- It is found that performance management is being used more strategically to improve government agency's efficiency, adopting western models and adapting to the Chinese bureaucratic features.



# A techno-cadre's game?

- However, the present situation seems similar to Lagerkvist's (2005) analysis of China's e-government movement: “it is hard to avoid the idea that e-government is all about installing a machine that will enhance the productivity of a slow-moving bureaucracy” (p.197).





# Conclusion

- Without adequately addressing the intrinsic technical and political issues of the reform, including the openness, objectivity, fairness, and applicability of the system, the goal of applying performance management to build a more accountable government in China will remain as a techno-cadre's game and not easy to achieve its fundamental goals.



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Thank you.

Questions or comments?

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