



Exploration and practice in promoting Shanghai municipal open government information

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1. Introduction

I am very happy to be exploring today, together with all the domestic and international experts and practitioners in open government information present, this global question about which we all share concern. Implementing open government information and establishing transparent government are important routes to enhancing the transparency of government work, advancing the construction of political civilization, and building a service-based government, a responsible government, and a law-abiding government. All this has vital significance for fully safeguarding the rights of citizens. In what follows, I seek mainly to introduce the situation in Shanghai and some considerations relating to open government information, and to share our explorations and practices.

2. Spurring open government information centering on the establishment of “responsible government, service-based government, and law-abiding government”

On January 20, 2004, Shanghai promulgated the Shanghai Municipal Provisions on Open Government Information in the form of government rules. We determined that official implementation of open government information would begin as of May 1, 2005. In the eight months up until today, our work in all areas has been active and stable and has achieved solid advancements and preliminary results. The main points about our situation include:

First, we have clarified the foundational points of open government information, unceasingly raised administrative capacity, and increased the level of convenience for the public in acting on

their right to know. We promulgated and implemented the Shanghai Municipal Provisions on Open Government Information to optimize the Shanghai government's public information resources and represent an important action to continuously raise government service levels. Our basic considerations, under the condition of developing a socialist market economy in our country and joining the World Trade Organization, and based on the background of implementing the Administrative Licensing Law, are how to achieve the goals of enhancing the level of government public service, strengthening government's social management function, and enlarging the government's capacity for legal administration. We are treating unobstructed channels for open government information as a point of breakthrough, enabling government service to take the role it should in the social and economic activities which are opening up daily. The Provisions also offer the public legal and orderly channels and methods for understanding and obtaining all sorts of government information (and for realizing their right to know, right to participate, and right to supervise), advancing society's ability to broadly participate in and supervise government decision-making and major matters and promote scientific decision-making by the government, enhance working efficiency and quality, and continuously stimulate public enthusiasm for participation in political affairs, thus strengthening society's capacity for self-rule.

At the same time, open and transparent government information is advantageous to society and to public supervision of government administrative behavior, helping contain corruption at its source. Therefore, the Shanghai government's basic position on open information is to put the people first, to address their demands, to perfect administrative management systems, to promote the transformation of government functions, and, in these ways, to better serve society by means of open government information.

Second, we have strengthened our overall organizational coordination to carry out open government information work in an orderly way. In advancing our work, we have paid special attention and emphasis to five links in the procedural chain:

In terms of organizational systems, we have established a citywide Municipal Government Joint Conference on Open Government Information, with the Mayor and various Vice Mayors in charge of bringing together members, to be composed of personnel from ten relevant government departments. We have determined that the Municipal Informatization Committee will have specific responsibility for organizing, leading, and promoting this Joint Conference, and for clarifying the working responsibilities of each district, county, and municipal government department.

In terms of work strategy, we decided on key pilot projects to promote open government information within fifteen departments to which the public pays great attention, which are strongly involved with the public welfare, and which represent strong areas of public rights, including the Municipal Departments of Education, Real Estate, Civil Administration, Industry and Commerce, Personnel, Public Security, and Health and Labor Security. At the same time, in accordance with the Provisions, we set May 1 and November 1 of 2004, and March 31, 2005, as important dates for reviewing our work goals in stages.

In terms of open information content, in order to avoid inappropriately providing information and, by so doing, harming the good faith image of the government, we have requested that when making information public, relevant departments, on the one hand, carry

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