



Beijing 2012

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24th REFORM Group Meeting, August 24-28, 2020

Understanding Environmental Information Disclosure in China



Presentation Outline

- Blue Map
- Puzzle
- Major Development of EID in China –MEID
- Implementation of MEID
- Research Question
- Motivations --Actors and Interests
- Limitations
- Implications

Blue Map



PITI

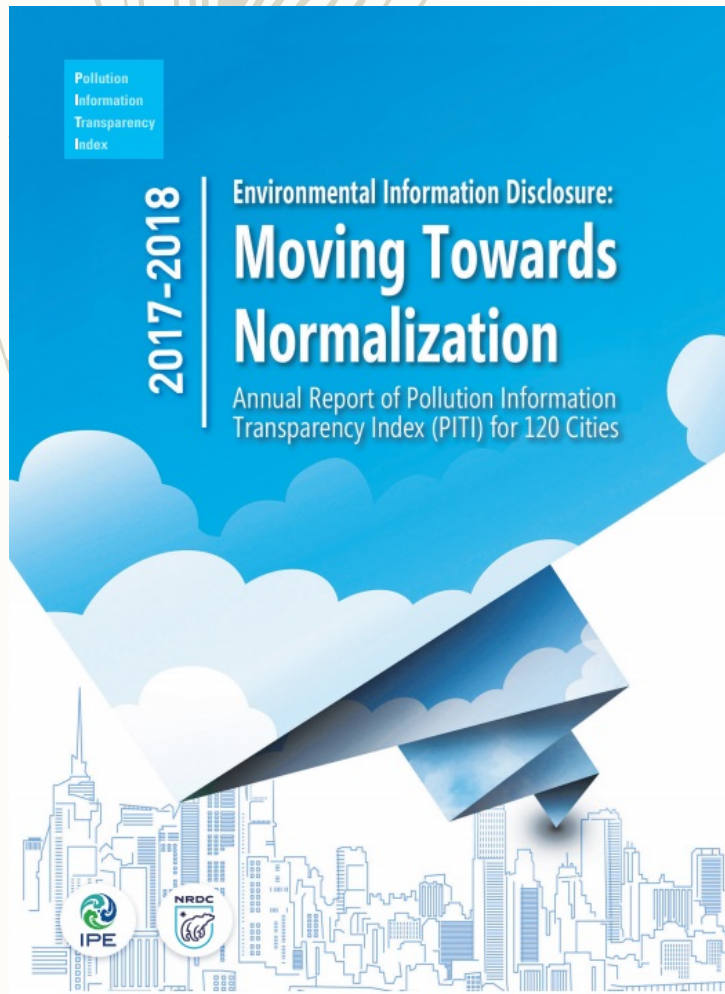
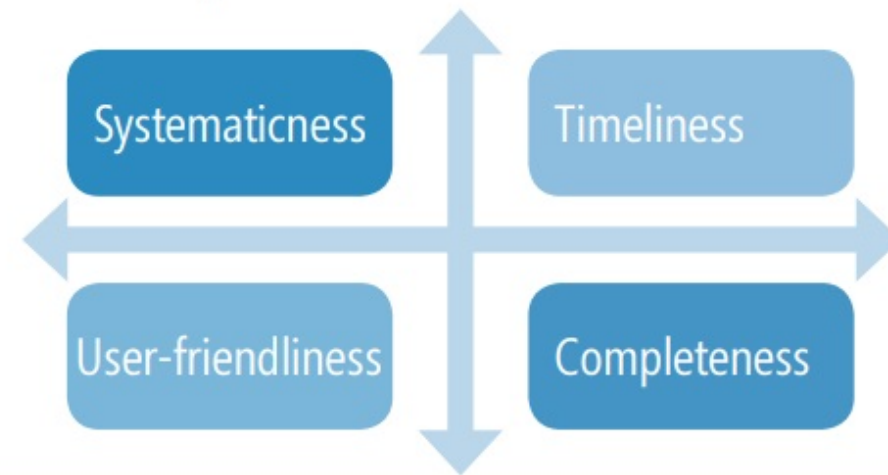


Figure 2. Assessment Indicators

Indicators	Environmental Supervision Information (30 points)		Pollution Source Self-Disclosure (26 points)		Interactive Response (15 points)		Enterprise Emission Data (14 points)	EIA Information (15 points)
	Disclosure of Excess Emissions and Other Daily Violation Records	Disclosure of Enterprise Environmental Performance/Credit Ratings	Disclosure of Automatic Monitoring Data	Disclosure of Key Polluting Entities Information	Disclosure of Central Environmental Supervision and Complaints	Disclosure Upon Request	Disclosure of Emission Data of Key Enterprises	EIA Information
Score Distribution	25%	5%	20%	6%	7%	8%	14%	15%

Each indicator is measured from four dimensions: systematicness, timeliness, completeness, and user-friendliness.

Figure 3. PITI Indicator Assessment Dimensions



Developed by IPE and NRDC (Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) Since 2009

PITI

Assessment Results

Figure 4. Top 12 Cities

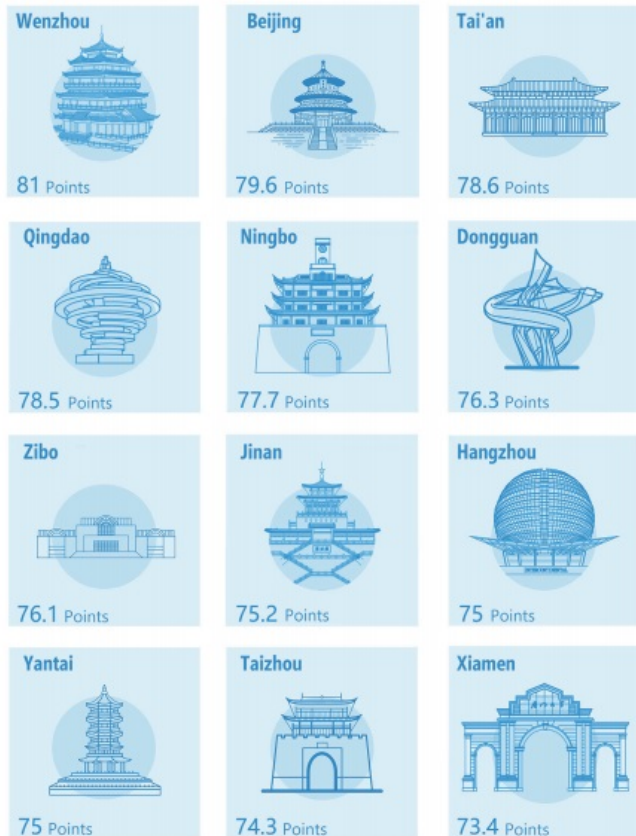


Figure 5. 2017-2018 PITI Assessment Results and Rankings for 120 Cities

Ranking	City	Score	Ranking Change	Ranking	City	Score	Ranking Change
1	Wenzhou	81	→ 0	31	Shijiazhuang	63.7	↑ 16
2	Beijing	79.6	↑ 1	32	Quanzhou	63.7	↑ 24
3	Tai'an	78.6	↑ 24	33	Zhengzhou	63.6	↑ 28
4	Qingdao	78.5	→ 0	34	Huzhou	63.4	↑ 4
5	Ningbo	77.7	↑ 9	35	Rizhao	62.3	↓ 13
6	Dongguan	76.3	↑ 7	36	Nantong	61.9	↓ 2
7	Zibo	76.1	↑ 12	37	Zaozhuang	61.8	↑ 5
8	Jinan	75.2	→ 0	39	Tianjin	60.4	↓ 13
9	Hangzhou	75	→ 0	38	Lianyungang	60.4	↑ 3
10	Yantai	75	↑ 13	40	Zhenjiang	59.9	↑ 17
11	Taizhou	74.3	↑ 10	41	Suzhou	59.5	↓ 31
12	Xiamen	73.4	↓ 5	42	Changsha	59.5	↑ 33
13	Wuxi	72.8	↑ 26	43	Luoyang	59.4	↑ 28
14	Zhongshan	71.6	↓ 8	44	Tangshan	59.1	↑ 44
15	Shaoxing	70.8	↓ 3	45	Mianyang	57.9	↑ 44
16	Changzhou	70.3	↑ 15	46	Jiaozuo	57.4	↑ 59
17	Baoding	69.9	↑ 33	47	Yangzhou	56.3	↑ 12
18	Jining	69.4	↑ 18	48	Yancheng	56.2	↓ 20
19	Handan	69.1	↑ 6	49	Shenyang	55	↓ 44
20	Weifang	68.7	↑ 20	50	Nanchang	55	↓ 15
21	Foshan	68.4	↓ 5	51	Zhanjiang	54.7	↑ 1
22	Guangzhou	67.5	↓ 21	52	Zhuhai	53.8	↓ 19
23	Jiaxing	67.5	↓ 7	53	Dalian	53.6	↓ 33
24	Shanghai	66.4	↓ 13	54	Wuhu	52.9	↓ 6
25	Fuzhou	66.3	↑ 19	55	Xuzhou	52	↓ 23
26	Shenzhen	65	↓ 9	56	Qijing	52	↑ 20
27	Weihai	64.9	↑ 24	57	Zigong	51.4	↑ 27
28	Nanjing	64.5	↑ 2	58	Anyang	51.1	↑ 50
29	Chengdu	64.3	↓ 5	59	Yan'an	50.6	↑ 48
30	Hefei	63.7	↓ 13	60	Qinhuangdao	49.8	↓ 6



Puzzle

China as an authoritarian state

Vs

Environmental information disclosure

- Why China discloses environmental information?
- Why China discloses information?
- Why authoritarian states disclose information?



Major Development EID in China

2008 Measures on Environmental Information Disclosure

(MEID)

- Scopes of disclosure for environmental protection departments specified
- Enterprise disclosure requirements specified (Mandatory + Voluntary)
- “Rights and interests of citizens, legal persons and other organizations” and the promotion of “public involvement” highlighted
- Citizens’ request for Information
- Administrative and Legal Remedies

Full Text:

https://www.eu-china.net/upload/pdf/nachrichten/08-07-18_open_environmental.china2008.pdf



Implementation of MEID

- **+ Progressive achievements**

- increased number of viewers of governmental websites with mandatory disclosed environmental information
- growing environmental information requests received and answered
- more information items being disclosed

- **- Problems and failures**

- Slow, incomplete and sometimes unwilling implementation by EPBs and polluting companies, often using Article 8 of OGIR
- No sanctions on lack of implementation or violations of EIDM reported



Research Question

Why has China been adopting environmental information disclosure reform?

- Motivations
- Limitations

What are the policy processes involved?

Motivations —Actors and Interests

- Interest convergence of actors (Wang, 2018)

Party-State leaders

- *EID as a tool for economic transformation*
- *EID as a tool to prevent social unrest*
- *EID as a means of increasing public supervision to strengthen environmental enforcement*

Citizens and Civil society

- *Citizens to protect their own health and assets from heavy industrial pollution*
- *Environmental advocacy groups or NGOs recognizes information as an important foundation for their advocacy*





Motivations —Actors and Interests

Environmental Regulators

- *Under-resourced MEP: EID as a useful tool to expand environmental enforcement capacity and tackling environmental risks*
- *Local regulators: EID as a tool for maintaining stability and managing bureaucratic risks; EID as a regulatory tool*

International actors

Local governments and Enterprises

- *EID as a tool to solves local governance challenges; respond to public demand and attract international investment*



Limitations

How is China dealing with the risks associated with ID?

- Selective Disclosure
- Data manipulation
- Tight Control of civil society and media



Implications

- EID cannot be seen as a form of political liberalization in terms of policy drives and current implementation situation
- EID is to boost regulatory efficiency and hence legitimacy of the government
- ID does provides more opportunities for advocacy and public participation in a cautiously controlled environment



Thank you!

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E Information Disclosure Reform in China

- 1989 Environmental Protection Law
 - Government officials required to release air pollution data and forecast for major cities
- 2000 Air Pollution Prevention and Control Law
 - Information Disclosure clauses
- 2002 Cleaner Production Law
 - A clause enabling the publication of the names of polluting companies
- 2005 “State Council Decision Regarding Implementing the Scientific Development Concept and Strengthening Environmental Protection”
 - Provincial government must provide regular information on city air quality and noise level, drinking water source quality, river and coastal water quality



E Information Disclosure Reform in China

- 2008 Measures on Environmental Information Disclosure
 - Scopes of disclosure for environmental protection departments specified
 - Enterprise disclosure requirements specified (Mandatory + Voluntary)
 - “Rights and interests of citizens, legal persons and other organizations” and the promotion of “public involvement” highlighted
 - Citizens’ request for Information
 - Administrative and Legal Remedies
- 2012 Ministry of Environment’s Circular: “local authorities should be more transparent when providing information related to environment”



E Information Disclosure Reform in China

- 2014
 - “Real-time” disclosure of PM2.5 data in 179 Chinese cities required
 - Top 65 percent of polluting facilities to disclose hourly data on air and water pollution releases required
 - Emphasized “Information Disclosure and Public Participation” in the amended Environmental Protection Law
 - Further administrative measures on firm information disclosure and environmental public participation
- 2016 Importance of environmental disclosure highlighted on State Council’s policy guidance



Other Literature

- Content of the MEID (Zhang, Mol and He, 2016)
- Implementation Assessment (Lei Zhang et al., 2010; Zhang, Mol and He, 2016)
- NGOs and MEID—Responses and implications (Johnson, 2011; Zhang, Mol and He, 2016)
- Implications for Green Growth (Li and Li, 2012)
- Future Outlook (Zhang, Mol and He, 2016)
- Ma Jun and IPE’s works (Moustakerski, 2014)



Literature Gap

- OGI (Chinese governance and Administrative Reform) and EID
- Diffusion
- Policy processes
- Casual Mechanism



Method

- Grounded theory
 - inductive
 - strives to explain the main concern of participants and to find out how they resolve or process this main concern.
 - Data Collection → ← Review of theories → ← Analysis
- Process Tracing
- Data collection
 - Reviews of academic literature, policy documents, news reports, published interviews, published analysis, meeting minutes
 - Interviews



Tentative Analysis

- EID development has to be understood in the context of OGI development in China
- OGI Regulation provided an window of opportunity for the adoption of the MEID
- The role of policy community
- The role of diffusion and the conditions for effective diffusion
 - *Domestic demands*
 - *Framing*

Tentative Analysis

- The role of ID in sustaining authoritarian regimes
 - As administrative and regulatory tool for administrative efficiency
 - Anti-corruption
 - Economic development
 - WTO requirement and international integration
- Regime legitimacy





Tentative Analysis

- How is China dealing with the risks associated with ID?
 - Selective Disclosure
 - Data manipulation
 - Tight Control of civil society and media
- Implications?
 - Not a form of political liberalization in terms of policy drives and current implementation
 - ID does provides more opportunities for advocacy and public participation



Reference

- Alex Wang, 2018. Explaining Environmental Information Disclosure in China. In *Ecology Law Quarterly*, 44.
- Thomas Johnson, 2011. Environmental information disclosure in China: policy developments and NGO responses. In *The Policy Press*, 39:3.