

How to Improve the Quality and Effectiveness of Budget Performance Supervision by Local People's Congresses: Based on the Perspective of People's Democracy in the Whole Process

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Abstract. From the perspective of whole-process people's democracy, this paper discusses how to improve the quality and efficiency of budget performance supervision by local people's congresses. It briefly explains the intrinsic connection between whole-process people's democracy and the strengthening of budget review and supervision by the NPC, analyzes the current situation of performance supervision by local people's congresses and the existing problems, and puts forward suggestions in terms of strengthening the concept of budgetary performance supervision, improving the system of budgetary performance supervision and enriching the talent team of the NPC system in the light of the connotations and requirements of whole-process people's democracy in order to promote the improvement of the quality and efficiency of budgetary performance supervision by the local people's congresses.

Keywords: People's Democracy in the Whole Process; Local People's Congresses; Budget Performance Supervision.

1. Introduction

The development of people's democracy throughout the entire process is an essential requirement for Chinese-style modernization. The development of people's democracy in the whole process should adhere to the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics, take the people as the center, improve the democratic mechanism, safeguard the people's rights, and give full play to the role of the masses, and be realized through a sound system, especially the system of the National People's Congress (NPC), whose budgetary review and supervision is an important way of practicing people's democracy in the whole process.

Budget performance supervision is an important responsibility given to the NPC by the constitution and laws, and a new requirement for the NPC's budget supervision work in the new period. [1] As an important part of the NPC's budget supervision framework, budget performance supervision integrates the basic principles and core concepts of performance evaluation into all stages and specific aspects of the NPC's budget supervision. It carries out a series of supervisory activities with performance as the core guiding principle. This practice not only fully embodies the advantages of the people's congress system, but is also an important practice of actively practicing the concept of people's democracy throughout the process. Through budget performance supervision, the NPC can accurately reflect the scientificity, rationality and implementation effect of the government's budgeting, effectively assess the realization and implementation of budgetary objectives, and continuously improve the overall effect and level of the NPC's budget supervision. With the gradual deepening of the concept of comprehensive implementation of performance management, the Opinions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council on the Comprehensive Implementation of Budget Performance Management, as well as the Guiding Opinions on Expanding the Focus of the NPC's Budgetary Review and Supervision to Expenditure Budgets and Policies, and other important normative documents have been issued one after another. Local people's congresses have been actively exploring in the field of budget performance supervision, using performance as a tool to implement and judge the implementation of budget supervision, accumulating a wealth of experience and forming distinctive local practice models. [2] However, from the perspective of the problems found in recent years in budget supervision by local people's

congresses, budget units face a series of problems in budget preparation, implementation and pre-final performance evaluation, which need to be further standardized and improved.

2. Current Situation and Problems of Performance Monitoring by Local People's Congresses

At present, localities are actively introducing the concept of performance into the budget supervision work of their people's congresses, continuously enhancing the effectiveness of budget performance review and supervision work, and reflecting useful exploration in the development trend, content and methodology of budget performance supervision.

First, budget performance supervision is a comprehensive trend throughout the entire budget process. In the process of promoting the reform of budget performance supervision, local people's congresses in Shanghai, Henan Province, Shandong Province and many other regions actively embrace performance orientation. For example, the Standing Committee of the People's Congress of Heze City, Shandong Province, has implemented a strategy of tracking and supervising the results of performance evaluation for key projects, so as to identify potential problems in a timely manner and provide feedback to promote improvement. A study of the Regulations on Budgetary Supervision and Review, the Implementing Opinions on Shifting the Focus of NPC Budgetary Supervision and Review to Expenditure Budgets and Policies, and the Decision on Strengthening Budgetary Supervision and Review, reveals that “performance” has become a central theme running through the entire process of NPC budgetary supervision. Specifically, the term “performance” is explicitly mentioned in the normative documents of more than 20 provinces, covering various levels of budgeting, budget adjustment, budget information disclosure, budget execution, and supervision and accountability. It is noteworthy that some provincial normative documents further emphasize and strengthen the importance of budget performance supervision. The formulation and improvement of these local regulations and policy documents have provided a solid institutional foundation for the practice of budget performance supervision. This has further enhanced the role of budget performance supervision in financial management.

Secondly, the content of budget performance supervision highlights the tilting towards key areas and the macro-guidance of policies. In recent years, local people's congresses at all levels have refined their supervision methods in budget performance supervision, targeting key areas, key sectors, major expenditures, and core policies, so as to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of supervision. Specifically, when carrying out budget performance supervision, local people's congresses at all levels prioritize areas, policies and projects that are closely related to public welfare. In Beijing's Haidian District, for example, 2023 district-level NPCs have carried out thematic deliberations centered on key areas such as the construction of the Zhongguancun Science City, the creation of a national compulsory education high-quality and balanced development zone, the construction of cultural heritage protection demonstration zones, environmental protection work, the creation of a national forest city, the advancement of urban regeneration, and the development of modern agriculture. [4] At present, Beijing has established a comprehensive performance review and supervision mechanism for the entire budget cycle from planning to final accounts, covering all major and key projects. Similarly, in Ningbo, Zhejiang Province, budget performance supervision centers on key projects and ensures the strict implementation of budget performance objectives through rigorous review and regular stage evaluation. These practices show that local people's congresses at all levels have effectively enhanced the pertinence and influence of budget performance supervision by pinpointing key areas. This has provided a strong guarantee for the efficient use of financial funds.

Third, the form of budget performance supervision is diversified. In the practice of budget performance supervision, local people's congresses have actively explored and innovated to promote the diversification of supervision methods. Local people's congresses have not only constructed a strict system, but also significantly improved the effectiveness of budget performance supervision through diversified supervision methods. For example, in 2020, the Yunnan Provincial People's

Congress promulgated the Measures of the Standing Committee of the Yunnan Provincial People's Congress on Strengthening the Supervision of Budget Performance (for Trial Implementation), which built a systematic institutional framework for budget performance supervision. [5] For its part, the Standing Committee of the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress has continued to push forward reforms in the area of budget performance supervision for many years, and has constructed a scientific and reasonable evaluation system through the introduction of third-party organizations to participate in performance evaluation. Specifically, the Guangdong Provincial People's Congress has adopted a public selection method to determine the third-party evaluation organization, and explored the performance evaluation mode of "led by the People's Congress, coordinated by government departments, and implemented by the third party", while incorporating expert opinions and public satisfaction assessment into the evaluation mechanism. [6] In Nanhu District, Jiaxing, Zhejiang Province, the NPC conducted an in-depth investigation into the state-owned assets of institutions through a special study, accurately identified potential problems, and adjusted financial expenditures accordingly. Minhang District in Shanghai, on the other hand, organized performance hearings for key construction projects, and conducted satisfaction evaluations of the implementation of the hearing results to ensure the effectiveness of supervision. The Chengdu Municipal People's Congress made full use of the resources of expert think tanks, selected a group of deputies with high comprehensive quality and strong professional level, and absorbed excellent financial and tax experts from universities in Chengdu to form a team of nearly 30 budget review experts to focus on the review of the budget and final accounts, which has significantly improved the accuracy and effectiveness of budget review and supervision. [7]

Although the localities have shown many characteristics and highlights in the process of implementing the NPC budget performance supervision, in general, there is still a gap between the goal of perfecting the NPC budget review and supervision system and establishing a sound NPC budget supervision system.

First, the concept of performance has not yet been fully popularized. With the continuous promotion of the NPC's budget performance supervision, the performance-oriented principle has gradually penetrated into all aspects of budget supervision. Although many local people's congresses have repeatedly mentioned the concept of "performance" in their budget review and supervision documents, and even set up special chapters detailing the content of performance review and supervision, the concept of performance has not yet been implemented to carry out budget review and supervision. At present, some deputies and their staff have insufficient initiative and innovation to carry out the whole process of performance supervision, and it is difficult to effectively promote the implementation of the relevant work.

Secondly, the performance supervision mechanism has not been perfected. From the perspective of the actual operation of budget performance supervision by local people's congresses, there are obvious differences in the construction of the system and implementation strategies at different levels and regions. More successful practical exploration is mainly concentrated at the provincial or municipal level, while the budget performance supervision of grassroots people's congresses at the county and township levels has not yet been fully developed. [8] Even if certain places have achieved success in practice, it is difficult to generalize it on a wider scale. There is a lack of synergy and cooperation between relevant subjects, and an effective linkage system for performance supervision has not been formed.

In addition, there are deficiencies in the construction of talent teams for performance supervision. Because of its complexity and systematic nature, the performance supervision work of the NPC is in urgent need of professional talents to ensure effective implementation. However, at the local level in China, there are differences in the professional capacity of the relevant staff, and the degree of participation in budget performance training and learning also varies, which to a certain extent affects the smooth progress of the work. Especially at the grass-roots level of the National People's Congress, the shortage of professionals is particularly prominent, and has become a key obstacle to the development of performance monitoring work.

3. Regulation of Performance Supervision of Local People's Congresses by People's Democracy in the Whole Process

Performance supervision by local people's congresses is a requirement for budget supervision by the people's congresses under the system of people's congresses in the new situation, and is also a vivid practice of local characteristics in implementing people's democracy in the whole process. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out in the report of the 20th Party Congress that people's democracy in the whole process is an essential attribute of socialist democratic politics, and it is the broadest, the most authentic and the most functional democracy.

And in the budget supervision of the NPC, the people's nature always runs through the entrusted agent relationship of budget supervision in China. In our country, the people's congress accepts the people's commission to supervise and regulate the government's budget revenue and expenditure, with the help of the people's congress budget supervision and review, the people's nature through the financial budget of the role of national governance can be manifested. [9] The concept of "performance" has been introduced into the whole process of the NPC's budget review and supervision and the formation of the "NPC's performance supervision", and it is also necessary to give directional guidance to the local people's congress budget performance supervision with the "people's democracy in the whole process". It is also necessary to use "whole process people's democracy" to give directional guidance to the local people's congress budget performance supervision, and to judge the implementation effect of local people's congress budget performance supervision by practicing the proper connotation and meaning of "whole process people's democracy".

People's democracy in the whole process realizes the unity of directness and indirectness of democracy, the unity of electoral democracy and consultation democracy, formal democracy and substantive democracy, process democracy and result democracy. To practice whole-process people's democracy to guide and judge the budget performance supervision of local people's congresses, that is to say, it is required that the performance supervision should realize "all-round, all-process, and all-coverage" in the scope, and the will of the people should be fully concentrated and embodied in the links. Performance monitoring is also required to focus on the key areas of people's livelihoods, and whether budget execution and adjustments reflect the "broadest, truest and most effective" democracy.

4. Suggestions for Improving the Quality and Effectiveness of Performance Monitoring by Local People's Congresses

4.1 Deepening the Concept of Budget Performance Supervision of the National People's Congress and Enhancing the Awareness of Performance Supervision

In the process of promoting the strengthening of budget performance, the concept of people's democracy in the whole process should be fully embodied and penetrated. Specifically, at the level of system construction, not only should the concept of budget performance be explicitly written into policy documents, but also the opinions of NPC deputies and the public should be widely solicited, so as to ensure that the formulation and implementation of budget performance supervision can be in line with the interests and expectations of the people. In terms of theoretical research, in addition to inviting authoritative experts and scholars to provide theoretical support, communication and interaction with NPC deputies and the public should also be strengthened to ensure that the practice of performance monitoring can truly reflect the people's wishes and aspirations. In terms of practical exploration, when designing the performance monitoring module of the budget networking system, full consideration should be given to the public's participation and monitoring needs, so as to ensure that the whole process of budget performance monitoring is subject to the people's attention and supervision. In addition, when establishing a specialized budget performance supervision body, the participation of deputies of the National People's Congress and the public should be included to ensure that the composition and work of the body fully reflect the will and interests of the people. [10] In the

daily work, it is necessary to enhance the awareness of budget performance supervision of relevant personnel, and at the same time, enhance the understanding and participation of the National People's Congress deputies and the public in budget performance supervision, and create a favorable atmosphere for the whole society to jointly supervise. Through these initiatives, budget performance supervision can not only improve the efficiency of financial funds, but also highlight the value and connotation of the whole process of people's democracy.

4.2 Improve the Budget Performance Monitoring System and Optimize the Performance Monitoring Mechanism

In the process of promoting the top-level design of the budget performance monitoring mechanism, full attention should be paid to communication and interaction with NPC deputies and the public to ensure that the formulation of the relevant laws, regulations and normative documents can truly reflect the people's interests and aspirations. On this basis, the formulation of supporting measures and implementation guidelines also requires extensive consultation with NPC deputies and the public to ensure that the focus and direction of performance monitoring is consistent with the people's wishes. Through this democratic participation, a solid foundation can be laid for the science and effectiveness of the budget performance monitoring mechanism. In improving the performance supervision mechanism of final accounts and auditing, the government should be required to regularly submit special budget performance supervision reports to the National People's Congress, and focus on openness and transparency, so that the public can promptly understand the specifics and final results of budget performance. This transparent mechanism not only enhances public trust in the use of financial funds, but also promotes the government's sense of responsibility and efficiency in budget management. In addition, in the process of establishing the NPC ad hoc committee's supervision of departmental budget performance as well as the NPC Finance and Economy Committee's review and supervision mechanism of the government's budget performance, special attention should be paid to the participation of NPC deputies and the public. [11] By extensively incorporating the opinions and suggestions of NPC deputies and the public, the impartiality and effectiveness of the supervision work can be ensured, so that budget performance supervision can truly become an important means of reflecting the people's will and safeguarding the people's interests. This whole-process democratic participation mechanism can not only enhance the quality of budget performance supervision, but also further promote the standardization and scientification of budget management, and provide a strong guarantee for the realization of efficient and transparent financial governance.

4.3 Strengthening the Human Resources of the NPC System and Enhancing the Capacity for Performance Monitoring

In the process of forming a team with strong professionalism and high business level, a wide range of representative talents of various kinds, such as deputies to the National People's Congress, experts from think tanks and professionals from third-party evaluation organizations, should be recruited. Such a team can not only bring together wisdom and experience in many fields, but also ensure that the team's decisions and actions can fully reflect the people's interests and demands, and provide solid intellectual support for budget performance supervision. In the training work to enhance the capacity of professionals, it is necessary to strengthen communication with the NPC deputies and the public, and gain a deep understanding of their needs and expectations. In this way, we can ensure that the contents and methods of training can accurately meet the actual needs and effectively improve the professional level and practical ability of performance supervision, so as to better serve the interests of the people. In addition, when technical staff are introduced to enhance the use of networked budget monitoring, emphasis should be placed on interaction and feedback with NPC deputies and the public. Through this open communication mechanism, it is ensured that the whole process of budget performance supervision can be widely noticed and effectively monitored by the people, so that the application of technical means can truly serve the people's right to know and their right to supervise. At the same time, when training existing personnel in budget networking, emphasis should be placed

on cultivating their democratic awareness and participation capacity. This not only helps to improve the comprehensive quality of professionals, but also enables them to better fulfill their duties of budget performance supervision in their work, ensuring that the supervision work always focuses on the interests of the people, and promoting the development of budget performance supervision in a more democratic and scientific direction.

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