

**THE CENTRAL ORGANISATION
DEPARTMENT OF THE
CHINESE COMMUNIST PARTY**

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Executive Summary

1. Dubbed “the largest human resources department in the world”, the Central Organisation Department (COD) of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is a pillar of CCP power. It plays a key role in maintaining the integrity of China’s governing system and helps the CCP rule by controlling the nation’s vital human resources.
2. The COD manages the appointments and assignments of 5,000 provincial-ministerial level officials to various positions in the government, business firms, non-profit and other types of organisations. It also compiles detailed, confidential reports on potential leaders of the Party.
3. The COD not only matches talents with positions as in ordinary human resource functions, it also ensures the loyalty of appointees to the Party, safeguards the integrity of the cadre corps, and runs programmes of cadre grooming and training. It is the COD’s job to see that the cadre corps is always in good shape in terms of age structure, education level, right mix of expertise and work experiences etc.
4. An equally important part of the COD’s work is putting together viable leading teams for various organisations (*peibanzi*) and localities, ensuring that individuals in the leadership team of a local government, a ministry, a state-owned enterprise (SOE) or a university etc. are compatible and can work together effectively.
5. The COD stress-tests promising officials by rotating them through jobs in diverse parts of the country and in different administrative units, before hauling them back to Beijing if they pass the test. Xi Jinping had served in various positions in five provinces, from county level to provincial party secretary for four decades before becoming the president.
6. The COD arranges cadres for full-time studies periodically at the Central Party School. It is also in charge of dispatching tens of thousands of cadres abroad each year to attend executive training programmes in places such as Harvard,

Cambridge and Singapore to gain global perspective. It plays an important role in modernising the cadre corps and enhancing the governing capacity of the CCP.

7. Personnel issues are at the heart of Chinese elite politics and the COD is inevitably caught in the middle. Politburo members, factional groupings, the centre and the provinces etc. all struggle to place their people into positions of influence. How to serve its principals while preserving its professional integrity has always been a challenge for the COD.
8. The COD director is only a junior member in the Chinese leadership. He does not directly make personnel decisions but wields considerable influence over the process. COD recommendations have been overruled and its investigative reports ignored by more powerful leaders, a reason why the political system is infested with corruption.
9. In recent years the COD has made efforts to become more open and is operating more like a headhunter organisation. It identifies and recruits talents worldwide to fill positions in financial institutions and SOEs at the deputy level. From the early 1990s, the COD has introduced competition to the cadre selection process.