

**CHALLENGES IN MARINE AFFAIRS
MANAGEMENT UNDER THE
NEW CHINESE LEADERSHIP**

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Executive Summary

1. The new Beijing leadership has launched new measures targeting the restructuring of current marine affairs administration. A new task force dedicated to high-level coordination and policy promulgation among various ministries and agencies was set up in the second half of 2012.
2. New proposals on restructuring the State Oceanic Administration have also been laid out. Businesses formerly under the purview of ministries of agriculture, public security and general custom administration will be merged thereunder.
3. The China Maritime Police Bureau, a new agency to conduct a united implementation of maritime law enforcement on the sea, will be established along with a high-level consultative and coordinating body, the State Oceanic Commission, to formulate oceanic development strategies and coordinate important oceanic affairs.
4. The 2012 China Ocean Development Report indicates that there are up to 17 governmental agencies handling the different dimensions of marine affairs management. The huge bureaucracy results in fragmented authority and exacerbates institutional competition among various agencies.
5. The State Oceanic Administration is the incumbent agency for the general administration of marine affairs management. However, it cannot intervene in the business of other agencies due to its low ranking in the governmental structure and limited resources and personnel.
6. The marine law enforcement mechanism has also been plagued by a similar problem. Of the five governmental agencies overseeing maritime law enforcement, the Bureau of Fishery Administration and the China Marine Surveillance are the two agencies that play major roles.

7. China now relies on civilian law enforcement to maintain maritime order and stability. Civilian law enforcement appears less intrusive, but it also runs the risks of prioritizing institutional interests to national ones.
8. The reform has been triggered by the maritime territorial scraps between China and its neighboring countries since 2009. New initiatives such as the establishment of the Sansha city in Hainan province and the regular patrols in the South and East China seas after 2008 were to enhance governmental capacity in maritime skirmishes and policy consistency and efficaciousness.
9. Reform prospects are not optimistic. The central-local implementation conflict and the urge to outperform other agencies are likely to dampen Chinese relations with its neighbors and further impede restructuring plans. Coordination among various agencies and redundancy resulting from a huge bureaucracy constitute the most challenging ones.
10. Political determination and stamina from the central leadership are a sine qua non to a successful reform of current marine affairs administration.