

**CHINA'S NEW INITIATIVES IN
"SOCIAL MANAGEMENT"**

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Executive Summary

1. As a response to heightening social tensions, the Chinese government has attempted to go beyond the traditional strategy of “maintaining social stability,” and pursue a new way of state-society interaction called “social management.”
2. This move reflects the government’s concern for an expanding civil society and rising protests. It covers almost all government-society dealings such as police functions, maintaining social stability, food safety, social security, community services, workplace safety, and social organizations. Officials are required to find ways to reduce social unrest.
3. The new Chinese Communist Party (CCP) leaders after assuming office from late 2012 to early 2013 have made social management one of their central focuses, with much progress being made since.
4. First is the reform of the leadership organ of social management, the political and legal system. The Central Commission of Politics and Law has been reduced to a lower rank through leadership change. Provincial or municipal commission leaders also do not hold concurrent posts as police chief.
5. Second is the relaxation of registration rules on four types of social organizations. The government attempts to shift part of its functions in public services to organizations and increase procurement of services such as medical care, health, education, culture, and community services from them.
6. Yet the government is still in firm control. Performance evaluation and service purchase have become an important tool for regulating social organizations. The government is also promoting pivotal organizations to oversee various kinds of social organizations in different fields.

7. Third is the growing sophistication of social control mechanism. Through internet management, the authorities are capable of not only censoring politically sensitive information, but also guiding public opinions in a more skillful way.
8. Some repressive institutions of control have been reformed or abolished. Beijing has promised to reform the notorious system of “re-education through labor”.
9. Through these new policy initiatives the CCP leaders hope to tackle problems without substantial political reform. Yet whether this new system can deliver regime stability in the long run remains unclear, especially when China enters an era of slower economic growth.