

**CHINA'S LEADING GROUP FOR
COMPREHENSIVELY
DEEPENING REFORMS**

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Executive Summary

1. Since taking over the reins, Chinese President Xi Jinping has engineered a massive power recentralization, superimposing his personalized rule over the entire political establishment and extending his reach to all areas of state affairs.
2. Xi set up a number of powerful “leading groups” (LG, 领导小组) on top of the existing political structures. Of these, the one with potentially far-reaching consequences is the Leading Group for Comprehensively Deepening Reforms (LGCDR) because of its all-inclusive portfolio.
3. The high-powered LGCDR claims four of seven PBSC members and 14 of 25 Politburo members. There are six working groups respectively in charge of economic and environmental reforms, political and legal system reforms, cultural system reforms, social system reforms, party-building reforms, and discipline-inspection system reforms.
4. In part LGCDR is a response to fragmented authority and the entrenchment of status quo interests as a result of three decades of state-led economic growth. There are high expectations for it to end the decade-long drought of major reforms and take bold measures to restructure the Chinese system. But LGCDR faces enormous challenges.
5. The challenges include overcoming resistance from status quo interests, especially within the Party-state establishment, establishing the “new norm” and making the CCP’s rule compatible with the new reality to achieve long term sustainability.
6. Given its scope and depth, the reform package enacted at the Third Plenum will need broad-based support and active participation of the entire cadre corps. These however may not be forthcoming since the reforms tend to undermine their interests. In addition, the ferocious anti-corruption campaign is immobilizing many cadres.