

MISSION REPORT

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Location: Guiyang, capital city of Guizhou Province

EU-CHINA SPRP:

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Main Goal:

Recognizing practical arrangements of social assistance system in one of China's less developed provinces as well as the institutional support (benefits and service delivery) for vulnerable groups.

Guizhou carries out its social assistance works on the basis of basic living allowance (in Chinese term *Dibao*). *Dibao* is implemented by township authority, managed by county government and supervised by provincial government. Guizhou government strives to achieve a transparent *Dibao* system through implementing a strict identification mechanism. For the most vulnerable group in rural area, there is scheme called Five Guarantees, which is taken as the fundamental social assistance by Guizhou government and its implementation is merged with care-taking service for senior citizens. Medical assistance is taken as a measure of implementing the anti-poverty plan.

Identified challenges: in order to achieve a transparent *Dibao*, every application is put under maximize exposure around neighbourhoods at large, while being a throughway for means testing, this practice may risk to put the applying household or individual at discomfort. The digitization of social assistance work in Guizhou shall be enhanced. There are also demands for more professionalized staff and infrastructure.

Detailed report:

Guizhou Province, located in southwestern China, is composed of six regions and three minority's autonomous regions. By 2014, Guizhou has a population of 43 million. Guizhou's social assistance system is based on *Dibao* and further spans out to specific schemes like Five-Guarantees¹, Food Assistance, Medical Assistance and Temporary Assistance, and supplemented by Mutual Aid in Society. *Dibao* system is managed by county governments with discretion under one principle "to guarantee all that are eligible in accordance with certain standards". In order to secure a fair and just *Dibao* system, identification mechanism is designed to be highly transparent with thorough means testing.

Officials from counties, towns and villages, at the proportion of at least 1 official for each village in Guizhou Province, conduct means testing to new and existing applicants mainly during the first quarter of the year. The civil servant in charge of investigation will be hold accountable for the authenticity of the applicant's data. The soliciting of public opinions (in Chinese term *democratic evaluation*) is organized by town government, but implemented in village. At least 20 people participate in the democratic evaluation, among which over half of the representatives are without political title. Representatives can express their opinions to means testing result and decide whether the applicant is eligible or not. As for the publication, *Dibao* policy, applicant's household economic

¹ Five Guarantees (in Chinese term *Wubao*): Refers to the social assistance provided to citizen who live in rural areas of China and without working ability nor secured livelihood, namely, to guarantee their eating, clothing, housing, health-care and funeral service.

situation, democratic evaluation result and a telephone number for inquiry and complaints must be publicized on the bulletin of rural and urban affairs.

Following up the strict identification process, there is a supervision mechanism. The civil affairs department of the county's government is required to conduct selective examination in collaboration with inspection department and finance department after receiving the investigation materials. Over 30% new applications are picked out for review. Though Dibao is implemented by township authority and managed by county government, the provincial government supervises Dibao administration by using Dibao as an indicator to evaluate the performance of local authorities and officials. Social assistance bureau, as a sub-region or sub-county level authority is set-up in every region and county.

Dibao standard enjoys a consecutive yearly increase from ¥237 /month/person in 2010 to ¥398 in 2014 for urban beneficiaries and from ¥1288/year/person in 2010 to ¥2125 in 2014 for rural beneficiaries. In addition, since January 2011, the standard of Dibao benefit is adjusted according to Consumer Price Index, so when the monthly growth rate of CPI reaches 3% or above for three months, subsidies will be provided to Dibao beneficiaries.

Based on Dibao program, the government makes efforts in identifying people with different types of difficulties and provides extra subsidies. Such practice enables Guizhou Province's social assistance to be more targeted. For example, in 2011, Guizhou established *Assistance System for Seasonal Food Shortage*. From 2011 to 2014, around 3.36 million people in total have received government food supply during June to August each year when crops are difficult to grow.

Beneficiaries of the Five Guarantees for rural area are the most vulnerable group. Guizhou takes this scheme as its fundamental social assistance works and merges it with nursing houses. Since 2011, financial support to Five Guarantees scheme increase continuously. By 2014, Guizhou has 1136 nursing houses in total with 63,000 nursing personnel. 45% of the nursing houses are registered as a corporate body. The government launches a contest among nursing houses aiming to encourage them in improving their services.

Established in 2011, the Medical Assistance System provides extra financial support to cover certain proportion of the expenditure that was outside the premium of Basic Medical Insurance System and Catastrophic Disease Insurance System. In 2014, all counties of Guizhou initiated the "one-stop" payment service at appointed hospitals.

In the future, the social assistance work in Guizhou needs to complete the digitization of Dibao, further the efforts in means testing of Dibao applicant via coordination of different departments with shared multi-tier information. In regards to assisting beneficiaries with extreme poverty, the administration staff shall be reinforced, more infrastructure serving such purpose (i.e. nursing houses) shall be built. Equal importance shall be attached to both material and psychological assistance. Issues on providing services to beneficiaries shall be addressed. Contests launched by government among nursing houses as an efficient method to improve service shall be continued.

The field visits to Wudang Innovation Community of Guiyang City and Service Center of Qiandong Community of Yunyan District enabled the delegation to observe Guiyang social assistance policies in real practices and through actual case handling.

Wudang Innovation Community is established in 2011 as a comprehensive community integrated of business, cultural, financial and living functions with 11,845 registered households. Besides following the social assistance policies, the community pays attention to raise people's awareness of the policies. While the population of the Service Center of Qiandong Community is nearly half of

Wudang's size. Cases are demonstrated to the delegation, one of which tells how the community strives to enhance the assistance capacity on temporary problems. Case shows a 15-year-old teenager Luo Zerui was suffering from lymphocytic leukemia and pneumonia. The treatment for Luo Zerui costed the entire saving of his family 100,000 Yuan (around 13.2K Euro). Being aware of their difficulty, the community has submitted a report to Civil Affair Bureau of Yunyan District, and has applied for an emergency assistance benefit of 10,000 Yuan (around 1320 Euro) as well as a medical assistance benefit of 30,000 Yuan (around 3970 Euro). The community also took initiative in launching projects as "Charity for Study", "Golden Autumn Plan" etc, where third-party non-governmental forces are involved in providing social assistance. It is in the local government's plan to improve their social assistance staffs and officials' professional knowledge and working behaviour.

**Information collected and drafted by Marzena Breza, C3 RE SPRP*