

Original Paper

The Practical Path of Implementing the Spirit of the Eight-point Decision of the CPC Central Committee in the New Era

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Abstract

The Eight-point Decision on Improving Party and Government Conduct, like a refreshing breeze, have swept across China since 2012, cleansing the Party and government conduct while ushering in a renewed social ethos. The spirit of the Eight-point Decision has taken root with the determination to build trust, these provisions have “advanced comprehensive strict governance of the Party and improved conduct in political, administrative, and social spheres.” (Note 1) This paper examines current Party conduct improvement practices. Building on an understanding of the Eight-point Decision, it proposes a five-pronged approach for their implementation in the new era: ideological cultivation, supervisory mechanisms, institutional refinement, integrated governance of corruption and integrity, and cultural development. These coordinated efforts will ensure thorough and sustained enforcement of the provisions, providing robust support for Party building.

Keywords

Spirit of the Central Eight-point Decision, Party Conduct Construction, Practical Path

The Central Eight-point Decision has promoted a “great change” with a “small incision”, opening a new journey of Party conduct construction in the new era. Over the past decade, Party and government conduct has been revitalized, and the unity between the Party and the people has been strengthened. The notion that “the Eight-point Decision has transformed China” has become an indisputable fact. However, we must soberly recognize that the root causes of formalities, bureaucratism, hedonism, and extravagance persist despite superficial changes, with covert and mutated phenomena occasionally emerging. Violations of regulations in dining have shifted to hidden venues like “green curtains” and “one-table meals”, while the exchange of gifts and cash has been disguised under new forms such as

“courier-delivered gifts” and “digital red envelopes”. Formalism and bureaucracy still exist to varying degrees at the grassroots level. These issues remind us that improving conduct is an ongoing process, requiring exploration of more systematic and effective practical approaches to ensure the long-term effectiveness of the ironclad rules and rigid standards established by the Eight Provisions.

1. The meaning of the Central Eight-point Decision

On December 4, 2012, to implement the spirit of the 18th National Congress of the Communist Party of China and champion its fine traditions while strengthening ties with the people, the Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee reviewed and approved the “Eight-Point Decision of the Political Bureau of the 18th CPC Central Communist on Improving Maintaining Close Ties with the People.” This decision is the first important inner-Party regulation formulated since entering the new era. Comprising just over 600 characters (excluding detailed provisions), it establishes clear guidelines across eight key areas: enhancing research capabilities, streamlining meetings, reducing official documents, standardizing official visits, improving security protocols, optimizing media coverage, regulating publication standards, and promoting frugality. It profoundly expounds on how the Party’s style of work should be carried out in the new era, and serves as the entry point for strengthening and intensifying Party governance and discipline.

Improving investigative research and practicing frugality are fine traditions of the Communist Party of China, serving as behavioral guidelines that Communists must always follow and overarching requirements in Party-building practices. By delving into grassroots communities and staying close to the people, we gain authentic understanding of real-world conditions to provide practical foundations for scientific decision-making. Embracing thrift and upholding the spirit of hard struggle among Communists ensures rational use of limited resources to better serve the people. Streamlining meetings, reducing documents and briefings, standardizing official visits, improving security protocols, and strictly regulating publications—all these measures aim to rectify Party conduct, meeting culture, and academic ethos, carrying universal significance for Party development. This harmonious blend of tradition and modern innovation allows the Eight Provisions to maintain the Party's political essence while infusing new vitality into style-building efforts for the new era.

The institutional innovation of the Eight-point Decision is not only reflected in the rigid constraints on specific behaviors but also in the macro-value orientation transmitted through specific norms. As President Xi Jinping emphasized: “While implementing the Central Committee’s Eight Provisions may seem like minor tasks, they reflect a profound spirit.” (Note 2) This represents a transformation from institutional frameworks to ethical principles, addressing critical issues like food waste, corruption in transportation, and unhealthy practices in private clubs, while tackling formalism and bureaucratic excess. The streamlined meeting protocols have fostered pragmatic work styles, while simplified official travel requirements have driven behavioral reforms. These provisions are subtly reshaping the Party’s conduct, transforming comprehensive strict governance into an instinctive action for cadres.

“Since we have established regulations, we must strive for stricter standards and take real action. Superficial or lukewarm measures are empty slogans that fail to deliver results – it would be better not to implement them at all.” (Note 3) When the Party Central Committee with Comrade at its core formulated the Eight-point Decision of the Central Committee, it demonstrated firm resolve to treat these provisions as enduring ironclad rules and rigid benchmarks, determined to see them through with the perseverance of hammering nails. In the new era, the thorough implementation of the spirit of the Central Eight-point Decision has continuously consolidated achievements in work style improvement, providing powerful momentum for the development of the Party and the nation’s cause, while establishing a robust defense line for the Party’s conduct in the new era.

2. Practical Paths for Implementing the Spirit of the Central Eight-point Decision in the New Era

In the new era, implementing the spirit of the Central Eight-point Decision requires coordinated efforts from multiple aspects, including ideological construction, supervision system, institutional improvement, simultaneous governance of work styles and corruption, and cultural cultivation, and constructing practical paths from multiple dimensions.

2.1 Deepening the Ideological Construction Project and Consolidating the Foundation of Work Styles

Thought is the forerunner of action. Implementing the spirit of the Eight-point Decision must start from the source of thought. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out: “We should deeply understand the essence of the Central Eight-point Decision, develop the awareness of being cautious at the beginning, being self-disciplined when alone, and being careful with small matters, be able to resist temptations, control small matters, and take every step of life well.” (Note 4)

To implement targeted education, we must first conduct comprehensive Party-wide learning initiatives. Key components include integrating General Secretary Xi Jinping's critical discourse on work style improvement, the Central Committee's Eight Provisions and their implementation guidelines into theoretical studies and branch-level “the Three Meetings and One Lecture” sessions. By analyzing historical examples of work style development in Party history, we clarify the fundamental logic of “why to address these issues,” “what to focus on,” and “how to implement solutions.” Concurrently, through centralized learning sessions, thematic seminars, and individual self-study programs, Party members and cadres will clearly recognize disciplinary boundaries while gaining a profound understanding that “work style problems are essentially problems of Party spirit.” Secondly, leveraging digital platforms like “Learning Power” and the Party Building App, we deliver bite-sized content such as micro-videos, case analyses, and knowledge quizzes to enable self-directed learning during fragmented time slots. Finally, by dynamically updating educational materials and developing customized plans tailored to the actual conditions of Party members across different fields and hierarchical levels, we achieve precision education rather than adopting the one-size-fits-all approach. Strengthening warning education. First, avoid the “one-size-fits-all” education mode and carry out precise education according to the job risks and high-incidence points of violations of discipline of

different groups. For example, focus on interpreting typical cases of political discipline violations, organizational discipline breaches, and covert manifestations of the Four Malfeasances among key leadership figures to achieve effective deterrence. For young cadres, combine with their growth characteristics, through forms such as “old leading new” integrity talks, new employee integrity training, and young cadre violation case analysis meetings, fasten the first button of integrity. Second, enhance engagement through visits to integrity education bases, viewing warning documentaries, and analyzing real cases. These immersive methods allow cadres to directly perceive the risks behind “a meal” or “a trip,” deepening their understanding of the Central Eight-point Decision. Finally, establish a case disclosure mechanism to expose violations, creating a powerful deterrent that reinforces the principle of “deterrence against corruption.”

Cultivating conscious awareness. Integrating learning and education into daily work is key to internalizing the spirit of the Central Eight-point Decision as voluntary actions. First, conduct criticism and self-criticism through special democratic life meetings and organizational activities to identify shortcomings in work style. Second, incorporate the implementation of the spirit of the Eight-point Decision into the whole process of work planning, promotion, and acceptance, deepen the understanding of the Central Eight-point Decision in daily work, and make the construction of work styles a “touchstone” for work quality. Third, optimize practical mechanisms like the “challenge list” system to address young cadres' lack of practical experience. Focus on addressing prominent work style bottlenecks raised by the public by creating targeted challenge lists, guiding young cadres to hone their work style through hands-on practice and transform disciplinary awareness into voluntary actions. Finally, establish benchmarks for practical action. Select exemplary models and promote their achievements through storytelling sessions and experience-sharing platforms, providing cadres with role models to learn from and clear guidance to follow.

2.2 Constructing a Precise Supervision System and Solving Rectification Problems

“Strictness” is the eternal tone of implementing the spirit of the Central Eight-point Decision. Only by maintaining a high-pressure posture of supervision and accountability can we make it normal for people to “dare not violate”.

Constructing an all-round supervision. First, strengthen the leading role of intra-Party oversight. Clarify supervisory responsibilities for top Party officials and leadership teams at all levels; leverage the specialized oversight function of disciplinary inspection agencies to focus on emerging trends and variants of the Four Malfeasances. Implement targeted measures through special inspections, random checks, and cross-checks to swiftly investigate and expose violations, reinforcing deterrence. Activate grassroots Party organizations' supervisory “nerve endings” by mobilizing resources like discipline inspection commissioners to closely monitor public receptions, official vehicle usage, and holiday benefits, achieving full coverage. Second, build a multi-dimensional supervision system. Integrate forces from disciplinary inspection, internal auditing, public oversight, and big data monitoring. Target critical periods like holidays and project approvals using a combination of online screening and offline

investigations to precisely identify and resolve hidden variants of the Four Malfeasances. Third, expand supervision channels. Establish a three-dimensional network combining intra-Party, public, and media supervision. Optimize reporting platforms including letters, visits, online channels, and telephone services. Simplify reporting procedures through tools like the “Snap-and-Speak” platform and government transparency boards, making public oversight a “thousand-mile eye” for detecting misconduct. Simultaneously, strictly protect whistleblower information to boost public participation. Finally, guide orderly public opinion supervision. Support media in objectively exposing typical violations while enhancing verification and feedback of media-supervised leads.

Refining Supervision Quantification Metrics. First, establish concrete data measurement standards. For key areas such as official receptions, public vehicle usage, and meeting organization, set clear data benchmarks to transform abstract requirements of work style improvement into actionable, traceable, and objectively verifiable metrics. This completely replaces the previous extensive supervision model that relied on subjective perceptions and past experiences, making oversight results more convincing. Second, specific quantitative indicators provide clear benchmarks for supervision practices. Precise data metrics allow supervisors to have specific reference points during operations, effectively avoiding the inefficiency of “comprehensive coverage without focus.” This reduces implementation difficulties and significantly enhances operational feasibility. Finally, data-driven approaches boost supervision effectiveness. By conducting horizontal and vertical comparisons of quantified data across different periods and departments, we can visually demonstrate the achievements and shortcomings in work style improvement. This not only provides objective evidence for precise evaluation of supervision quality but also offers data references for optimizing strategies and improving institutional systems. Meanwhile, it's crucial to adhere to scientific and rational principles when setting quantitative indicators, accurately gauging the scale based on actual work conditions to prevent excessive pursuit of data precision from falling into the trap of formalism.

Innovate technological supervision methods. Utilize big data and artificial intelligence to enhance oversight precision, such as screening suspicious courier activities through big data monitoring to effectively combat “courier gift delivery” practices. Simultaneously, promote data sharing to break down information barriers between disciplinary inspection departments, tax authorities, and courier companies, enabling automatic early warnings for covert and evolving issues.

We will strengthen accountability. We will adhere to the principle of “investigating both cases and leaders”, not only by severely punishing those who violate discipline despite the wind, but also by reviewing whether leading officials have fulfilled their oversight responsibilities, so that failure to fulfill their responsibilities will be questioned and accountability will be strictly enforced.

2.3 Subhead Improving the Institutional Guarantee System and Strengthening Normalization and Long-term Effectiveness

construction of style must rely on the solidification of institutional achievements, build a “system complete and effective” system, and realize the combination of “immediate reform” and “long-term

establishment”.

First, refine targeted institutional regulations. Focus on prominent issues like improper banquets and public-funded tourism, introduce new specialized management guidelines, detail supporting systems, and plug regulatory loopholes. Second, improve the supervision mechanism with error tolerance and correction. Clarify oversight boundaries and fault-tolerant scenarios to ensure both strict investigation of violations and protection of officials' initiative in undertaking work, achieving a balance between supervision constraints and incentive safeguards. Additionally, strengthen enforcement rigidity. Establish an assessment mechanism for system implementation, incorporating the implementation of the Eight Provisions into annual evaluations for leadership teams and officials, directly linking it to commendations, promotions, and appointments. Simultaneously, promptly issue rectification proposals for identified institutional loopholes, promoting “rectify one case to standardize an area.” Enhance supervision of implementation by strictly holding accountable those who discount or circumvent regulations, using rigorous accountability to drive compliance. Third, consolidate existing systems. Conduct a comprehensive review of scattered regulations across departments and periods, merge duplicate content, revise conflicting clauses, and abolish outdated provisions to prevent inconsistent standards across multiple departments, eliminating execution deviations caused by fragmented or conflicting rules at the source. Fourth, improve operational clarity. Replace vague terms with specific standards, making it clear what is permissible, prohibited, and how to implement. Fifth, establish an execution ledger. Implement list-based management of system implementation, regularly compile unit performance data, and provide “point-to-point” reminders for lagging units. Finally, build a long-term mechanism to reduce burdens at the grassroots level. We will continue to combat formalism, introduce a “negative list” for documents and meetings, and formulate task lists for grassroots assistance, so that grassroots officials have more time to do practical things.

2.4 Promoting the Simultaneous Investigation and Governance of Work Styles and Corruption and Cutting off the Transmission Chain

We will continue to promote work style building and the fight against corruption in a coordinated way, and build a governance system that integrates investigation and correction and addresses both symptoms and root causes.

First, establish a mechanism for integrated investigation of conduct and corruption. Clarify the requirement that disciplinary inspection and supervision authorities “must thoroughly investigate conduct issues when handling corruption cases, and must thoroughly investigate corruption clues when investigating conduct issues,” deeply integrating the rectification of the Four Malfeasances with investigative work to achieve dual breakthroughs. Focus on issues like “taking from superiors” and “exploiting subordinates,” thoroughly investigating underlying corrupt practices such as political-business collusion and interest exchange to sever the intertwined chains of conduct and corruption. Second, strengthen collaborative governance capabilities. Establish a coordination mechanism among disciplinary inspection, auditing, and finance departments to form synergy in fund

supervision and clue transfer. Deepen case-driven reforms to address institutional loopholes exposed by cases, prompting relevant departments to strengthen shortcomings and curb interest transfers. Finally, reinforce primary responsibility. Urge Party committees (Party groups) at all levels to shoulder the primary responsibility for conduct improvement, incorporating integrated investigation and governance of conduct and corruption into the list of responsibilities for comprehensive strict governance of the Party. Establish a “dual accountability” mechanism for leadership team members, strictly holding accountable those who fail to manage or overlook conduct issues in their respective fields, thereby forming a cohesive governance force.

2.5 Cultivating a Clean Culture System and Nurturing a Clean and Upright Atmosphere

In the final analysis, style building depends on cultural infiltration. We should build a clean culture system that “values integrity and thrift, and strives for good”, so as to correct and establish both.

First, we must carry forward the Party’s fine traditions of hard struggle and thrift. Through Party history education programs featuring scenario-based courses and field studies, we can explore the experience of style-building from revolutionary predecessors, enabling Party members and cadres to draw nourishment and ensuring these traditions are passed down through generations. Organizing diverse theme activities will help government agencies embrace disciplined living. Second, we should establish a culture of integrity. By creating dedicated columns on WeChat official accounts and websites, interactive Q&A sessions and online quizzes can enhance communication effectiveness. Offline educational bases should be developed to transform typical cases into warning materials, reinforcing deterrent effects. Finally, we need to guide social ethos transformation. Leveraging the exemplary role of Party members and cadres, we should foster a virtuous society embracing frugality and moral integrity. We must address unhealthy practices like competitive gift-giving and extravagant waste, extending these achievements into family education and cultural development. Through the exemplary conduct of Party members and cadres in family ethics, we can drive improvements in social customs and public morals.

The implementation of the spirit of the Central Eight Provisions is a vivid practice of comprehensive and strict Party governance in the new era, demonstrating the CPC Central Committee's firm determination that “to forge iron, one must be hard oneself”. The improvement of work style is an ongoing process. Only through in-depth study and education and continuous refinement of practical approaches can the spirit of the Eight Provisions take root and the Party's conduct and government ethics continue to improve. In this new era and journey, we must follow the guidance of the Eight Provisions, focusing on consistency and longevity, rigor and practicality, depth and meticulousness. We will continuously polish the “golden card” of work style improvement, uphold our original aspirations and missions, courageously shoulder responsibilities, and harness excellent conduct to gather powerful momentum for advancing the cause of the Party and the nation. This will provide a robust ethical guarantee for comprehensively building a modern socialist country and advancing the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation, striving to realize the dream of national rejuvenation!

Note(s)

Note 1. Edited by the Institute of Party History and Literature of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. A Compilation of Discourses on Improving Party Conduct by Xi Jinping, Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2025,70.

Note 2. Edited by the Institute of Party History and Literature of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. A Compilation of Discourses on Improving Party Conduct by Xi Jinping, Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2025,67.

Note 3. Edited by the Institute of Party History and Literature of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. A Compilation of Excerpts of Xi Jinping's Discourses on Exercising Rule-Based Governance over the Party, Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2022,111.

Note 4. Edited by the Institute of Party History and Literature of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. On the Party's Work Concerning Youth, Beijing: Central Literature Publishing House, 2022, 39.