

The Optimization Path of the Business Environment in the Yangtze River Delta Region from the Perspective of Digital Government

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Abstract

The integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta has put forward higher requirements for the optimization of the business environment in the region as a national strategy, and the construction of a perfect digital government online service platform is an important factor in creating a stable, fair, transparent and predictable business environment. The three provinces and one city in the Yangtze River Delta region have actively taken measures to continuously optimize the business environment in their respective regions and strengthen the construction of digital government, which has achieved good results, greatly improved the overall level of the business environment in the Yangtze River Delta region, and formed experience measures to replicate and promote to the whole country. However, there are also the following three problems: uneven development between regions and lack of synergy in the business environment; Administrative barriers and the phenomenon of "information islands" still exist; The top-level design is not perfect, and the policy implementation lacks uniformity. Therefore, in order to truly achieve the high-quality development of regional integration in the Yangtze River Delta, it is necessary to strengthen the top-level design, further deepen the reform of administrative examination and approval, build an integrated platform for government services, enhance interregional linkage and coordination, break the phenomenon of "information islands", establish and improve long-term mechanisms to promote the optimization of the business environment in the Yangtze River Delta, stimulate market vitality, and better promote the optimization of the business environment in the Yangtze River Delta.

Keywords

Business Environment; Yangtze River Delta Integration; Digital Government.

1. Introduction

A good business environment is conducive to promoting the development of regional economies. For a long time, the central and local governments at all levels have attached great importance to the optimization of the business environment and focused on optimizing government services. In October 2019, the World Bank released the Doing Business 2020 report, which showed that China's Doing Business ranking rose to 31st in the world. This is inseparable from China's active promotion of digital government construction. In China, under the current epidemic, digital government construction has played an irreplaceable role in improving the modernization level of national governance, promoting the innovation of government management and social governance models, and responding to major sudden epidemics. It can be said that digital government is an important starting point for creating a high-quality business environment; It is a powerful means of hedging the economic impact of the epidemic; It is an inevitable requirement for promoting the transformation of government

functions and building new advantages of the system and mechanism that has a promising government, an effective market, a favorable enterprise, and benefits the people.

The 2019 government work report further clarified that the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region was elevated to a national strategy, and the outline of the development plan was prepared and implemented. In the process of regional integration in the Yangtze River Delta, the improvement of the business environment plays an important role in promoting all-round and in-depth cooperation in the Yangtze River Delta region, and the level of business environment integration has also become one of the important factors determining the high-quality development of the Yangtze River Delta region.

2. Literature Review

As one of the regions with the most active economic development, the highest degree of openness and the strongest innovation ability in China, there is no lack of scholars studying it. At present, the relevant research on the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region in academia, from the perspective of research content, mainly includes: the development process and problems of the integration of the Yangtze River Delta, the economic benefits brought by the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta, and the specific path to achieve higher quality integrated development. From the perspective of research focus, it mainly focuses on the two keywords of "high quality" and "integration", including the specific connotation, logic and framework of high-quality development. Specifically, Hu Bin (2019) systematically discusses the background of high-quality integrated development in the Yangtze River Delta and the challenges of achieving high-quality integrated development in the context of the new normal, arguing that the high-quality integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta is conducive to coping with the needs of domestic development transformation and supporting further expansion of opening up, and pointed out the connotation and path of achieving high-quality integrated development in the Yangtze River Delta from the aspects of development momentum, spatial interaction, Shanghai role, and cooperation mechanism[1]. Liu Zhibiao and Kong Lingchi (2019) pointed out that the previous measurement of the integration of the Yangtze River Delta mostly used the method of a single index, unilaterally describing the industrial integration, market integration, spatial structure, economic structure, etc. in the Yangtze River Delta region, and lacked a comprehensive understanding, and their research used composite indicators to comprehensively measure and compare the integrated development level of the Yangtze River Delta region from 2000 to 2018 from 10 dimensions [2]. Li Lu (2019) discusses the important role of promoting the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta from the perspective of activating the vitality of private economic development and the role of market players[3]. Wang Lin (2022) found that the optimization of the business environment has a significant positive enabling effect on the development (expansion and quality improvement) of service trade in services from 16 indicators in four dimensions: government service capacity, industrial transformation and upgrading, regional living environment and talent environment, and by constructing a business environment index system in three provinces and one city in the Yangtze River Delta and measuring the corresponding business environment index[4].

In terms of the practice of achieving high-quality integration in the Yangtze River Delta region, existing studies mainly involve a variety of specific paths and measures such as strengthening the top-level design and supporting mechanism design of integrated development and strengthening regional cooperation. However, looking at the current research results, more focus is on the industrial and regional levels, and there is insufficient research on the business environment in the Yangtze River Delta region.

The term "Doing Business" comes from the World Bank Group's International Finance Corporation (IFC) Doing Business project survey, which examines and assesses the regulatory environment for businesses in various countries. At present, the academic community has not formed a unified definition of the business environment, and only interprets it from different angles [5]. Benn Eifert et al. believe that the business environment is the policy, institution, infrastructure, human resources, geographical environment, etc. that affect the operational efficiency of different industries and enterprises. Francis Munier conducted research on the business environment in China, and proposed that "GUANXI" (relationship) is an important part and influencing factor of the business environment, and enterprises and governments and enterprises communicate and establish contacts through "relationships". Domestic scholars Wei Shuyan and Sun Feng (2017) proposed that the investment business environment is an organic and mutually influencing dynamic system including political system, economy and market, social culture, policies and regulations[6]. Zhang Guoyong and Lou Chengwu (2018) elaborate that external factors such as policies, cultures, institutions, and laws other than material conditions are soft environments from the perspective of hard environment and soft environment, among which the soft environment with greater change is regarded as the business environment[7]. Song Linlin (2018) believes that the business environment can be understood as the organic complex of various environments such as the political environment, economic environment, legal environment and international environment created by the government of an economy to improve the domestic economy and stimulate foreign trade in a certain period of time through systematic reforms in various fields such as politics, economy, rule of law and opening up to the outside world[8].

From the above discussion, it can be seen that the theoretical community basically agrees that the business environment is in fact a combination of various external environmental factors. Among them, enterprises, as the main body of business activities, are the living bodies of survival and development in the ecology of the business environment, but the real shaping and improvement of the business environment depends on the management and service organization that controls the establishment and development of various social systems - the government. Therefore, this paper will start from the main government of business environment optimization, and discuss the significance and path selection of digital government construction for the optimization of business environment in the Yangtze River Delta region under the background of digital economy.

3. Theoretical Basis

3.1. Governance Theory in the Digital Age

Governance theory in the digital age is based on the decline of new public management and the development background of information technology, belongs to the category of governance theory, is an important branch in the jungle of post-new public management theory, and is also the latest development of governance theory, which embodies the organic combination of governance theory and information technology [9]. Governance in the digital age is not exactly digital transformation, but an overall movement of society in the digital age, the core of which is governance. The main content of the digital age governance theory proposed by British scholar Patrick Dunleavy is threefold. First, reintegration, which involves nine aspects: reverse departmentalization and fragmentation, collaborative governance, re-governmentalization, network simplification and reshaping the supply chain supporting public affairs, centralized procurement and specialization; Second, demand-based holism, which includes seven elements: interactive search and provision of information, customer- and function-based organizational restructuring, one-stop service, database, results-oriented services, flexible government processes, and sustainability; Third, digital transformation, including electronic service

delivery, network-based utility processing, state-directed centralized information technology procurement, new forms of automated processes, reduction of middle layers, channel diversion and customer segmentation, reduction of controlled channels, strengthening of self-management and moving towards open management[10].

Although there are many different expressions of the theory of governance in the digital age, for example, some scholars use the terms Digital Era Governance, Digital Governance, E-governance, and Digital Government as the same concept. However, under the background of big data, with the support of a new generation of information technology, reshape the government information management structure, business architecture and technical architecture, further optimize and adjust the organizational structure, operating procedures and management services within the government by building a new mechanism driven by big data, and comprehensively improve the government's ability to perform its duties in the fields of economic regulation, social governance, public services, market supervision and other fields. This article will find a suitable path to promote the optimization of the business environment in the Yangtze River Delta region from the perspective of digital government governance.

3.2. Service-oriented Government Theory

The important basis of the service-oriented government theory is the needs of the public, and its main responsibility is to protect the rights and interests of citizens and the public, to administer according to law, to optimize the service process through the use of modern management concepts and methods, and to provide convenient and efficient infrastructure for the society. Its characteristics are reflected in the following aspects: first, taking the needs of the public as the main guide and meeting the needs of the masses; Second, take administration according to law as the code of conduct and improve the accountability mechanism; Third, ensure that citizens have the right to participate in social affairs; Fourth, reasonably clarify the rights and responsibilities of the government and the market; Fifth, be able to respond to public demands in a timely and effective manner, actively solve problems, and have a strong sense of responsibility. From the above explanation, it can be seen that the functions of service-oriented government include creating a good business environment for market players.

3.3. Theory of Administrative Efficiency

Administrative efficiency mainly refers to the integration of government agencies and staff in strictly performing their statutory duties and giving play to their own service roles. With the continuous development of the social economy, the requirements for administrative efficiency are also increasing, so the government needs to continue to innovate its working methods, mainly including: first, establish a "sunshine government", widely solicit suggestions from social market entities, respond in a timely manner, answer questions, and ensure openness and transparency; Second, establish a service-oriented government, provide comprehensive services, and maintain a fair and just market competition environment; Third, establish a performance government, use competition and incentive mechanisms, and conduct regular performance appraisals; Fourth, strengthen the reform of "decentralization, management and service" to ensure the rationality of decentralization; Fifth, establish a "digital" government and an innovative government to continuously improve the level of public services; Sixth, strengthen the construction of a rule-of-law government, ensure administration according to law, and establish a sound supervision mechanism and accountability mechanism. From the above content, it can be seen that the construction of digital government and service-oriented government is in line with the requirements of "simplifying administration and delegating power, combining management and management, and optimizing services", which can improve the efficiency of government administration and government services, play an irreplaceable role in creating a high-quality business environment in the country and various regions, and

are of great significance for realizing the modernization and development of the governance capacity of the national governance system.

4. Explore Practices

4.1. Work Effectiveness

4.1.1. Construction of Government Online Service Platform

In recent years, under the vigorous promotion of provinces and cities in the Yangtze River Delta region, the business environment in the Yangtze River Delta region has been greatly improved, especially in the construction and use of government online service platforms. The "one-net-to-office" proposed by Shanghai, the "non-meeting approval" proposed by Jiangsu Province, and the "running at most once" proposed by Zhejiang have greatly simplified the process of enterprises, shortened the work time and improved the work efficiency.

Taking Shanghai's "One Network Office" as an example, the Shanghai Municipal Party Committee and Municipal Government proposed that to build an excellent global city, it needs to match the government services. The general portal of Shanghai government affairs "One Network Office" built in 2018 can achieve all online and offline service matters for enterprises and the masses, so that it can be accepted by one network, only run once, and completed at one time. Since the departments of the Shanghai Municipal Government carried out e-government earlier and had a strong technical foundation, the implementation of "one-net-to-office" government services has a solid foundation. For example, from the end of January 2019, real estate registration in Shanghai has been reduced from 41 calendar days to 5 working days. In addition, in addition to achieving the phased goal of improving the business environment, in the long run, the "one-net-to-office" and smart government construction will provide a key support system for Shanghai to achieve high-quality development. Shanghai focuses on the prominent problems reflected by market entities, benchmarks against international advanced, and adopts a series of reform measures to form a number of typical experience and practices, which have been affirmed by the State Council and replicated and promoted throughout the country.

4.1.2. Streamlining of Approval Matters and Processes

Since the reform of "decentralization, management and service", the State Council and local governments have issued a series of policy documents to relax market access around the needs of market entities, and continue to optimize the access environment to achieve the purpose of "nesting and attracting phoenixes". The first is to delegate and cancel administrative licensing matters, streamline the approval process, and remove the preconditions for mutual restraint. In 2019, Shanghai optimized the business environment in the field of engineering construction, streamlined 11 approval links, and reduced the time required to complete procedures from 169.5 days to 50 days, realizing the three-in-one of "reducing time, reducing costs and improving quality". In 2020, Shanghai issued the "Several Measures on Further Deepening the Reform of the Administrative Examination and Approval System and Accelerating the Construction of Major Projects", proposing 23 measures to simplify administrative approval and "grab" back the construction progress affected by the epidemic by accelerating the approval procedures of the whole process of project construction. Second, the time limit for examination and approval has been compressed, local governments have benchmarked against the World Bank and national business environment assessment standards, and many cities have entered the "1 era" of starting businesses. The third is to simplify the examination and approval requirements. The examination and approval department uses information technology to obtain materials, minimize unnecessary approval requirements, and eliminate non-statutory requirements. The fourth is to reduce the cost of enterprises, clean up and reduce a number of administrative fees such as trademark registration. The implementation of these

measures has opened up a fast lane for enterprise start-up, saving time and economic costs, and improving operational efficiency.

4.1.3. Digital City Construction Benefits People's Livelihood

As an economically developed region, the degree of digitalization in the Yangtze River Delta is also a leading position in China. In 2022, Shanghai will further strengthen the construction of smart city, and Jiangsu Province will accelerate the development of digital economy and upgrade industrial modernization as one of the key tasks, involving medical, eldercare, transportation, tourism, digital government, digital security and other fields. Zhejiang Province will make efforts in scientific and technological innovation and building a global advanced manufacturing base, while Anhui Province will continue to promote the reform of "one network one at a time" with "Internet + government services" and "Internet + supervision" as the starting point, continuously improve government efficiency, comprehensively use new technologies and new means such as big data and artificial intelligence, and explore and launch a new model of Anhui smart government affairs of "smart affairs, smart approval, and smart supervision". In addition to helping the real economy strengthen the transformation and upgrading of the manufacturing industry, the information industry construction in the process of integration of the Yangtze River Delta will put more energy into benefiting people's livelihood through digital means, and strive to let the people feel the convenience and benefits of digitalization.

4.2. Problems

Under the current strategic background of the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region, the business environment in the Yangtze River Delta region should achieve greater development, promote interregional cooperation in technology, capital and talent through innovative government governance methods, improve the operation and management level of the Yangtze River Delta region, and achieve optimal allocation of resources in a larger range. However, from the current development status, there are still the following three problems:

4.2.1. Development is Uneven Across Regions

Generally speaking, the human, material and financial resources that can be mobilized in central cities and economically developed areas are relatively sufficient, and the level of business environment governance is significantly higher than that in remote areas and underdeveloped areas. Over time, this imbalance in development between regions will widen. In the Yangtze River Delta integration strategy, Anhui Province is in a relatively underdeveloped area. At present, Anhui Province has successively introduced various industrial policies in promoting high-quality economic development and the healthy development of the private economy, and has provided financial support and specific measures in terms of industrial funds, industrial guidance and industrial support. However, as far as the integration of policies is concerned, there is a lack of effective industrial connection with Shanghai, Jiangsu, Zhejiang and other regions, and a policy reciprocal and mutually beneficial mechanism has not yet been established, so the characteristics of "regionalization" are obvious, especially in terms of joint construction and sharing and industrial dislocation development, and the awareness of effective integration of resources has not been established, one-sided focus on traditional industrial projects, and insufficient attention and attraction to the "four new economy" industrial policy. Moreover, the synergy between cities in the province also needs to be improved, the reform of "one network one at a time" in the province has not yet been completed, compared with Shanghai's "small two" model, Shanghai, Jiangsu and Zhejiang's "one network office" mechanism, Anhui has not yet formed an interconnected business service environment.

4.2.2. Administrative Barriers Still Exist

Due to the great differences in public services between the Yangtze River Delta region, the existence of administrative barriers not only means that talents, capital, technology and other production factors cannot yet achieve cross-regional free flow, but also means the closed nature of the regional market, resulting in the Yangtze River Delta enterprises in different regions will face different government functions, market rules and policy systems, thereby increasing the operating costs of enterprises and hindering the development process of regional integration in the Yangtze River Delta.

Government departments in various regions develop their own information systems and data centers, resulting in scattered and not centralized government data resources, and more static data than dynamic data. At present, there are common problems in government data sharing: "unwilling to share", "dare not share" and "cannot share". The emergence of "information islands" is nothing more than the following three reasons: first, the possession of data is still regarded as an important component of organizational competitiveness, and it is unwilling to share due to the concept of departmental power; Second, some government departments dare not share their managed data with other departments based on risk considerations; Third, without the support of standard systems, the existing data exchange methods are relatively inefficient, and it is difficult to efficiently support the rapid coordination of government affairs.

4.2.3. The Top-level Design is Not Perfect

The 2019 government work report clearly proposed that the integrated development of the Yangtze River Delta region should be elevated to a national strategy. For this national strategy to be vigorously promoted from top to bottom, although the central and local governments have successively issued and effectively implemented a series of relevant policies and regulations to improve the business environment and government online services in the Yangtze River Delta region, it has played a great role in promoting the construction of government online services to optimize the business environment. However, the top-level design to promote this work is still being explored, and the implementation of corresponding institutional mechanisms, service standards and sample guidance has not yet been implemented, which also leads to uneven development of local governments in construction. In addition, due to the long-term differences in resources between the three provinces and one city in the Yangtze River Delta, there are different standards and qualifications for local governments to determine that enterprises enjoy preferential policies, and it is difficult to form consistent standards and equal implementation in both the province and the Yangtze River Delta region. The inconsistency of enterprise development policies will also lead to the inability to achieve effective convergence of industrial development directions between regions, thereby restricting the level of technical exchanges and division of labor and cooperation of enterprises between regions.

5. Path Selection

5.1. Strengthen the Construction of Government Affairs Platforms

In order to improve the "one-stop" service capability of digital government construction and realize the role of promoting the optimization of the business environment on a larger scale, the top-level design should be further optimized and the integrated construction of public support and comprehensive guarantee of China's government services should be accelerated. First, promote infrastructure integration and intensive construction, give full play to the role of the national government service platform as the overall hub of public entrances, public channels and public supports, and prevent duplicate construction and waste of investment; Second, accelerate the sharing and exchange of government affairs data resources across regions, levels, and departments, accelerate the construction of basic, thematic and operational information resource catalogs, and further clarify the scope of unconditional, conditional, and

non-sharing; The third is to shift the allocation of government affairs resources from segmentation to global deployment, comprehensively promote "one-network handling", except as otherwise provided by laws and regulations or involving state secrets, all government service matters are included in the platform for handling, and the standard coordination of service matters and handling procedures is promoted nationwide.

5.2. Deepen the Reform of Administrative Examination and Approval

Since 2018, the National Development and Reform Commission has organized and formulated the first batch of data sharing responsibility lists of State Council departments, and has continuously expanded the depth and scope of data sharing, eliminating "information islands" from the source and promoting online handling of government services. To further promote "Internet + government services", realize government digitalization, provide enterprises and the masses with more quality and efficient services, and build a service-oriented government that is satisfactory to the people, it is necessary to further realize the "one-network office" of online administrative approval, ensure "network communication, data communication, and business communication", and take new measures and make new breakthroughs in easing the blockages of the masses.

The establishment of the "One Netcom" government service platform facilitates data sharing and resolves the contradiction between the integrity of the public and enterprises and the fragmentation of government functions. Optimize discrete or serial approval processes into parallel business processes to form a flat and networked government service platform, which can improve the integrity and coordination of government services. Specifically, it is manifested in the following two aspects: first, strengthen the horizontal collaboration of departments and solve the cooperation between different functional departments in the administrative examination and approval process; The second is to strengthen the vertical linkage between governments, strengthen communication and cooperation between different levels of government, and straighten out the relationship between superiors and subordinates through Internet technology, forming a multi-level linkage mechanism of "province-city-county (city, district)-town (street)-community".

5.3. Enhance the Top-level Design

To ensure that the digital government strategy takes root and build an integrated digital governance operation model led by the government and participated by society, the central government should strengthen top-level guidance and top-level design. First of all, based on the overall development framework of digital transformation, we should optimize the allocation of strategic development resources, and strive to build an integrated data governance system, a coordinated data sharing consortium and a simple and efficient data exchange and sharing mechanism, so as to prevent local governments from abusing their power to temporarily start or duplicate construction. Second, it is necessary to guide local government departments to sign data sharing and information disclosure agreements step by step, clarify the responsibility for operation and maintenance management in the later stage of digital governance innovation, and expand informal participation channels and cooperation spaces for new media such as networks and mobile communications.

From the perspective of digital government, in order to optimize the business environment of the three provinces and one city in the Yangtze River Delta, the development of an integrated digital governance platform should be promoted in accordance with local conditions, effectively solve problems such as internal information barriers and insufficient governance capabilities of local governments, and enhance the innovation initiative of local governments. On the one hand, local governments can set up special digital transformation service departments and comprehensive coordination leading groups and other organizational systems, build an information integration system across levels and departments based on cloud management

technology and cloud platforms, and create a dynamic data security assurance system that integrates information sharing. On the other hand, local governments can rely on information communication channels and portals such as websites, media, and software platforms to promptly disclose various governance resources, governance effect assessment results, and supervision and reporting channels, and collect public suggestions and personalized service needs.

5.4. Improve the Level of Public Basic Services

At present, the construction of digital government online service platforms in the Yangtze River Delta region, such as Shanghai's "one-net-to-office", Jiangsu Province's "no meeting for approval", and Zhejiang's "running at most once" have been well implemented within their respective regions, and in the future, we should focus on exploring how to promote and apply on a larger scale to realize the transformation of "mass errands" to "data errands". For enterprises with relatively close business contacts in the Yangtze River Delta region, especially small and medium-sized enterprises, explore the establishment of a public government affairs platform covering three provinces and one city in the Yangtze River Delta region, so as to make more data run and enterprises run less errands, make full use of the existing big data center and data sharing and exchange foundation in three provinces and one city, unify data standards, establish a shared exchange platform and integrated database, and build a shared and shared Yangtze River Delta data center. At the same time, it is suggested to combine innovative measures of public basic service systems and mechanisms such as "access to electricity", transportation cards, and social security interconnection, so that market entities can feel a better business environment and let the people get more convenience.

6. Conclusion

The integration of the Yangtze River Delta in the new era and new pattern should be based on the region, look at the world and face the future, and build a community of symbiosis, consultation, construction, win-win and sharing of interests in the Yangtze River Delta region based on the principle of shared responsibility and benefit. Building a digital government online service platform for the business environment is a long-term project, and it is necessary to change the concept and reverse the idea that online services only move the physical government online. Through the construction of an integrated government service platform, we will enhance interregional linkage and coordination, break the phenomenon of "information islands", strengthen top-level design, give full play to the initiative of local governments, continue to maintain and improve the level of public basic services, establish and improve long-term mechanisms to promote the optimization of the business environment in the Yangtze River Delta region, stimulate market vitality, and promote the sustainable development of the integrated economy in the Yangtze River Delta. Achieve the goal of building the Yangtze River Delta region into a leading demonstration area for the implementation of new development concepts, an Asia-Pacific gateway for global resource allocation, and a world-class city cluster with global competitiveness.

Continuously optimizing the level of business environment by improving digital governance capabilities is of great significance to achieving high-quality economic and social development in the Yangtze River Delta. To further improve the level of the business environment through digital governance, we need to focus on the following three points: First, accelerate the digital construction of government services and create an efficient and coordinated digital government. Further promoting the digitalization of government services is an inevitable requirement for continuously optimizing the business environment. The efficient and convenient digital government service is of significant significance for further reducing the transaction costs of market entities and improving service quality. Promote the online handling

and digitalization of government affairs, and continuously improve the digital level of governance. Second, expand the coverage of mobile government apps and improve the facilitation of government services. In the era of mobile Internet, smartphone applications have become important government service terminals. On the basis of the existing provincial mobile government apps, continuously improve their coverage and further open up the data connection between the application and the government platform website, which can effectively improve the efficiency of license processing for market entities, save the time and energy of enterprises in obtaining licenses, and effectively improve the quality of the business environment. Third, promote digital governance in depth and effectively reduce bureaucracy and formalism. Bureaucracy and formalism will have a serious negative impact on the interaction process between government and enterprises, and serious bureaucracy will invisibly increase the institutional transaction costs of enterprises. Therefore, to continuously optimize the business environment, it is necessary to continuously promote the digital transformation of government governance, reduce bureaucracy and formalism through digital governance, and reduce the institutional transaction costs of enterprises.

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