

---

**CASE SCENARIO**

---

**WENLING CITY, CHINA: INFRASTRUCTURE REFORM**

In Zeguo township, Wenling City, about 300 km south of Shanghai, citizen deliberation was used to help select 10 infrastructure projects from a list of 30 possible options. For local officials, the deliberative method used—Deliberative Polls, developed at Stanford University—offered a transparent, balanced, and representative way to provide public input into the decision-making process. Like many other municipalities, they had previously held Kentan, or “heart to heart,” discussion meetings as a form of local consultation. But these open meetings were dominated by the intensely interested, the self-selected, and the local notables, and they lacked a decision process. The Deliberative Poll, which draws on a random sample of the population, added to perceptions of transparency and legitimacy. As local party leader Jiang Zhaugua observed, “I gave up some power and found that I had more.”

During the Deliberative Polls, all the possible infrastructure projects were represented by experts on panels, and the briefing materials, which provided the agenda for discussion, had arguments for and against each project. When the resulting preferred projects were classified in terms of their contribution to the entire city rather than just one village or another, there was a clear pattern of increasing support for projects of wider collective benefit. In addition, the results have actually been implemented; the public’s preference for sewage treatment plants rather than for more highways and for a people’s park for recreation rather than for a fancy town square have changed the city’s priorities of development.

–Fishkin J., He B. and Siu, A. (2008), Odugbemi S. and Jacobson T. eds,  
Governance Reform Under Real-World Conditions

*The views expressed in this presentation are the views of the author/s and do not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the Asian Development Bank, or its Board of Governors, or the governments they represent. ADB does not guarantee the accuracy of the data included in this presentation and accepts no responsibility for any consequence of their use. The countries listed in this presentation do not imply any view on ADB’s part as to sovereignty or independent status or necessarily conform to ADB’s terminology.*