

# More Officials Appointed to Lead Film and Media Authorities in China

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Regulatory and Public Policy  
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On May 24, 2018, China filled the top positions at the State Bureau of Film (Film Bureau) and State Administration of Press and Publication (SAPP). Both appointments fill vacancies created by the dismantling of the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television (SAPPRFT) and continue apparent Communist Party of China (CPC) efforts to assert greater control over the film and media industries.

## Propaganda Department Officials to Lead Film Bureau and SAPP

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Mr. Wang Xiaohui has been appointed to lead the Film Bureau, while Mr. Zhuang Rongwen will lead SAPP. These developments follow the earlier appointment of Mr. Nie Chenxi, who ran SAPPRFT prior to its elimination earlier this year, to lead the State Administration of Radio and Television (SART).

With these appointments, all three leaders of China's principal film and media authorities (Wang, Zhuang, and Nie) now concurrently hold positions in the Propaganda Department of the CPC. The same is true of Mr. Shen Haixiong, the top official for the Central Station for Radio and Television (CSRT). Such dual postings for these officials, and the government reorganization in March, appear indicative of CPC efforts to more tightly regulate and exert influence over these key industries. These appointments and reforms are likely to manifest in a number of ways moving forward, perhaps including tighter censorship of films and other media and stricter adherence to Party ideology.

## Background on Reform of Film, Television, and Related Authorities

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Among other substantial institutional reforms initiated in March, Chinese authorities eliminated SAPPRFT and announced a major restructuring of government oversight over film, radio and television, and press and publishing at the national level. Such reforms resulted in three new authorities in lieu of SAPPRFT:

- **SART:** SART was established as a new agency directly under the State Council to regulate radio and television matters other than broadcast news. However, as such radio and television oversight was under the State Council before the restructuring, SART's similar organizational placement may indicate possible continuity of the regulation of such radio and television matters.

The agency will be responsible for functions including drafting and overseeing implementation of policies for the radio and television industry, managing content review and censorship of radio, television, and online audiovisual programs, supervising the importation of radio and television programs, and coordinating and promoting the exposure of Chinese radio and television programs worldwide. The foregoing applies whether such content is live action or animated.

- **Film Bureau:** Rather than the prior approach that placed theatrical film-related authorities within an agency directly under the State Council, the newly-formed Film Bureau is now within the Propaganda Department of the CPC. For reference, another example of a state function that is somewhat analogously under the direct control of the CPC is Internet/cybersecurity regulation.

Following the government reorganization, the Propaganda Department will be responsible for theatrical film-related functions such as managing film administrative affairs, guiding and supervising film production, distribution, and exhibition, coordinating content review and censorship of films (both live action and animated), arranging festivals and other film events of national significance, and carrying out international cooperation including film co-productions.

- **SAPP:** Similar to changes implemented for film, the press and publishing functions of SAPP are now within the Propaganda Department and will be carried out by the newly-established SAPP. This office also takes the title National Copyright Administration of China (NCAC).

Press and publishing-related functions of the Propaganda Department now include drafting and overseeing implementation of policies for the press and publishing industry, coordinating content review and censorship of publications (including those containing cartoons), and supervising the importation of such publications.

Copyright-related functions of the Propaganda Department include registering certain copyrights at the national level and administration of related matters. Specifically, works (excepting software) owned by non-mainland Chinese parties are registered at the national level, while such works owned by mainland Chinese parties are registered locally. The Copyright Protection Center of China or its local offices will handle copyright registrations relating to software.

Additionally, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism (MOCT) will continue to have a role in coordinating content review and censorship of online games. MOCT will also continue to regulate music that is produced for or disseminated over the Internet. However, other forms of music fall within SAPP's purview. Industrial policy for the animation industry also remains under MOCT's management and supervision.

Radio and television broadcast news was previously regulated by several authorities. Such oversight is now carried out by the newly-formed CSRT. CSRT's organizational placement is somewhat unique among the authorities discussed in this client alert: while established directly under the State Council (like SART and MOCT), CSRT reports to the Propaganda Department (like SAPP and the Film Bureau). This hybrid approach is not without precedent. For example, the Cyberspace Administration of China (an agency established under the State Council) has reported to the CPC's Office of the Central Leading Group for Cyberspace Affairs for some time.

## Local Implementation

Chinese authorities have not yet released their plans for implementing these reforms at the local level. Until those plans are finalized and made public (likely late in 2018), we anticipate continued uncertainty about the current and future organizational structure of local authorities. For example, some national level authorities have identified information about local branches on their respective websites (e.g., SART, NCAC). In other instances, some local authorities have advised that the longstanding organizational structure (which groups functions relating to press, publication, radio, film and television all together) remains intact at the local level.

## Overview Chart

The following chart summarizes at a high-level certain details about the foregoing agencies, current as of the date of this alert:

<u>AGENCY NAME</u>	<u>NAME OF CHIEF OFFICIAL</u>	<u>CONCURRENT CPC POSTING</u>	<u>ORGANIZATIONAL PLACEMENT</u>	<u>RELEVANT SPHERE OF OVERSIGHT</u>
SART	Mr. Nie Chenxi	Deputy Minister, Propaganda Department	State Council	Regulate radio and television matters other than broadcast news
Film Bureau	Mr. Wang Xiaohui	Deputy Minister, Propaganda Department	CPC Propaganda Department	Theatrical film-related oversight, including film co-productions
SAPP/ NCAC	Mr. Zhuang Rongwen	Deputy Minister, Propaganda Department	CPC Propaganda Department	Press and publishing-related oversight; National-level copyright registrations and administration
MOCT	Mr. Luo Shugang	n/a	State Council	Content review and censorship of online games; Regulate Internet music

CSRT	Mr. Shen Haixiong	Deputy Minister, Propaganda Department	Hybrid (under State Council, but reports to CPC Propaganda Department)	Regulate radio and television broadcast news
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