

Research on the Soft Law Incentive Mechanism for Coordinated Regional Economic Development

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Abstract

Against the backdrop of the in-depth advancement of the regional economic coordinated development strategy and the construction of a unified national market, the traditional hard law governance model is difficult to adapt to the complexity and dynamics of cross-regional cooperation due to its rigid constraints. The soft law incentive mechanism, with its characteristics of flexible constraints and consultative governance, has become an important supplement. Based on institutional economics, soft law governance theory and regional rule of law theory, this article systematically analyzes the theoretical basis and functional value of soft law in reducing transaction costs, promoting consultative co-governance and facilitating the synergy of soft and hard laws. Based on China's practice, it is found that soft law faces practical difficulties in regional economic coordination, such as lagging institutional supply, imbalance in the coordination between soft and hard laws, insufficient coverage of norms, and weak implementation efficiency. The research proposes to promote the transformation of the soft law incentive mechanism in regional economic governance from "form innovation" to "efficiency improvement" through paths such as establishing a predictive formulation mechanism, strengthening the transformation of soft and hard laws, and improving the full-cycle management, providing institutional support for deepening regional coordinated development.

Keywords: regional economy, soft law incentives

1. Introduction

Since the Central Economic Conference in 2014, the significance of coordinated regional economic development has become increasingly prominent and has been frequently mentioned. The report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China has clearly made strategic arrangements, demanding the in-depth implementation of the regional coordinated development strategy, major regional strategies,

and the strategy of main functional zones, among others. The 2024 government work report further emphasizes that the key tasks of "promoting urban-rural integration and coordinated regional development" are "deeply implementing the regional coordinated development strategy, major regional strategies, and the strategy of main functional zones, and advancing new urbanization and the comprehensive revitalization of rural areas." That is, unifying the basic market system,

unifying market infrastructure, unifying the standards of government behavior, unifying market supervision and law enforcement, unifying the factor and resource market, and continuously expanding domestic and foreign opening up, this provides fundamental guidance for coordinated regional development.

However, in the process of practice, problems such as interest barriers, policy conflicts and the lack of cooperation mechanisms among various administrative divisions have seriously restricted the depth and effectiveness of regional coordination. The traditional “hard law” governance model characterized by compulsiveness often falls short in dealing with the complexity, flexibility and adaptability of cross-regional affairs. Although regional fiscal and taxation cooperation has a basis for implementation and has formed typical forms such as regional fiscal compensation cooperation, fiscal input cooperation, tax collection and administration cooperation, and tax sharing cooperation, it is still in the stage of policy guidance as a whole, and the level of legal development is obviously insufficient.

In the process of coordinated regional economic development, the limitations of traditional hard law governance have become increasingly prominent, and there is an urgent need for more flexible and adaptable institutional innovations. Soft law, as a rule system formulated by specific entities, featuring written and open characteristics and not relying on state coercive power for implementation, is gradually becoming an important tool to fill the gap of hard law and enhance regional governance efficiency through governance methods such as flexible constraints, incentive guidance, and multi-party consultation. Its mechanism of action is rooted in the dual drive of economic interest incentives and market reputation constraints. It not only encourages business entities to proactively comply with regulations but also allows them to make moderate adjustments to the rules based on their own characteristics, thereby achieving a balance between governance flexibility and order stability.

This article focuses on the incentive value of soft law in regional economic coordination, deeply analyzes the practical predicaments it faces during operation, such as lagging institutional supply, insufficient binding force, and the absence of coordination mechanisms. It also

systematically explores the improvement paths of the soft law incentive mechanism from dimensions such as optimizing rule design, strengthening implementation guarantee, and improving supervision and evaluation. With the aim of providing theoretical references and practical guidance for promoting the modernization of regional governance.

2. Theoretical Basis and Functional Value of Soft Law Incentive Mechanism

In the process of coordinated regional economic development, problems such as poor cross-regional resource integration, difficulty in interest coordination, and lagging institutional supply have long existed, and the limitations of the traditional hard law governance model have become increasingly prominent. Against this backdrop, the soft law incentive mechanism has emerged as a key element in promoting the modernization of regional governance, thanks to its unique governance advantages. This mechanism is by no means water without a source; rather, it is deeply rooted in the theoretical fertile soil where multiple disciplines such as institutional economics, governance theory, and regional rule of law interweave. By exerting differentiated functional values, it continuously injects institutional impetus into regional coordinated development.

2.1 Theoretical Basis

From the perspectives of economics, governance theory, regional rule of law, etc., soft law can achieve a balance of multi-level legal structures, specifically including the following three aspects:

Firstly, by drawing on the theories of institutional economics, especially the transaction cost theory and the incentive compatibility theory. From the perspective of transaction cost theory, administrative barriers, policy differences and information asymmetry among regions often make inter-governmental cooperation accompanied by high negotiation, implementation and supervision costs. Soft law can significantly reduce these institutional frictions by formulating standardized cooperation agreements, building information sharing platforms, and establishing collaborative management mechanisms. The theory of incentive compatibility further explains how soft law can reconcile the conflicts of interest among regions. In regional economic cooperation, local governments naturally have the demand to

maximize their own interests. If there is a lack of effective institutional guidance, they are very likely to fall into the “tragedy of the Commons” or the “Prisoner’s dilemma”. Soft law, through ingenious rule design, organically integrates individual interest demands with regional public interests, enabling local governments to automatically achieve the goal of overall coordinated regional development in the process of pursuing their own growth.

Secondly, by leveraging the theory of soft law governance. The coordinated development of regional economies often involves multiple stakeholders and is confronted with challenges such as a volatile market environment and the frequent emergence of new business forms. The rigid constraints of traditional hard laws are difficult to respond quickly. The “consultative governance” model advocated by the soft law governance theory can precisely break through this predicament. Soft law does not rely on the coercive power of the state. Instead, it uses flexible means such as reputation mechanisms, self-discipline constraints, resource allocation preferences, and policy benefits to guide all parties to actively participate in governance. It not only respects the existing rules and systems of all parties, but also provides guidance for financial business innovation, greatly promoting the integration of regional financial markets. This governance approach based on consultation and aimed at reaching consensus has made soft law an important tool for flexibly responding to complex situations and balancing multiple interests in the coordinated development of regional economies.

Thirdly, draw on the theory of regional rule of law. Regional rule of law theory breaks through the limitation of traditional rule of law that overly relies on hard laws, emphasizing “coordinated governance of both soft and hard laws”, providing a macro theoretical support for the role of soft laws in the coordinated development of regional economies. This theory holds that in the process of regional economic integration, complex governance demands can no longer be solely achieved through hard laws. Only by establishing a multi-level and diversified rule system can the stable development of the regional economy be guaranteed. In the practice of coordinated regional economic development, governance scenarios such as maintaining cross-regional market order and the free flow of factors have

put forward dynamic and refined requirements for the rule of law. Although hard laws are authoritative and stable, and can establish the basic framework and principles for regional development, they have inherent flaws such as cumbersome formulation procedures and long revision cycles, making it difficult to respond promptly to the governance demands of emerging fields. Soft laws, with their flexible formulation and convenient adjustment, can promptly fill the gaps left by hard laws in the supervision of emerging business forms and regional policy coordination.

From the perspective of regional rule of law theory, the synergy and complementarity between soft law and hard law have demonstrated powerful effectiveness in practice. The flexibility of soft law enables regional cooperation to quickly adapt to market changes and innovative demands, while the enforceability of hard law provides a solid legal guarantee for regional cooperation. The two complement each other and jointly promote the steady and far-reaching development of regional economies on the track of the rule of law, fully demonstrating the practical value of a balanced multi-level legal structure under the guidance of regional rule of law theory.

2.2 Functional Value

The soft law incentive mechanism, with its flexibility, inclusiveness and adaptability, plays an irreplaceable functional value in the coordinated development of regional economies and has become a key institutional innovation for promoting the modernization of regional governance and facilitating the process of regional integration. Its value is specifically reflected in the following four core dimensions.

2.2.1 Fill Institutional Gaps and Drive Innovative Practices

During the rapid transformation of regional economies, new industries are constantly evolving and cross-border integration models are emerging. Traditional hard laws, due to their long formulation cycles and cumbersome revision procedures, are difficult to respond promptly to governance demands. Soft rules, with their advantages of simple formulation processes and flexible adjustments, have become the forefront for filling institutional gaps and incubating innovative paradigms. Take Zhuhai as an example. Relying on the legislative power of the special economic zone, it has introduced a

series of “small-scale” legislations in response to the cross-border cooperation demands of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area. Zhuhai was the first to achieve mutual recognition of professional qualifications in fields such as construction, tourism, and healthcare. These soft law practices not only promptly resolved the institutional obstacles to the flow of professional talents in the three regions, but also accumulated practical experience for the subsequent improvement of hard laws, forming an innovative model of “testing soft laws first and establishing hard laws later”. Since the implementation of the relevant soft law norms, the number of professional service cooperation projects between Zhuhai and Hong Kong and Macao has increased significantly, providing a solid legal support for the “soft connectivity” of the Greater Bay Area and fully demonstrating the role of soft law as a “test field” in institutional innovation.

2.2.2 Break down Cooperation Barriers and Build a Collaborative Network

In traditional regional cooperation, the rigid constraints of hard laws often make local governments cautious about cross-regional cooperation due to concerns over responsibility risks and imbalance of interests. The non-coercive nature of soft law has broken this deadlock. Through flexible rules of consultation and dialogue as well as interest coordination, it has lowered the threshold for cooperation and stimulated the enthusiasm of local governments to participate in collaborative governance. Take the inter-provincial cooperation mechanism of the Yangtze River Economic Belt as an example. The provinces and cities along the route have signed soft law nature cooperation agreements such as ecological compensation and industrial transfer, clarifying the rights, responsibilities and interests of all parties. On the basis of respecting local autonomy, they have built a collaborative network of resource sharing and risk sharing. According to statistics, after the implementation of the relevant soft law agreements, the ecological joint prevention and control of cross-regional industrial cooperation projects in the Yangtze River Economic Belt has achieved remarkable results. This consultative governance model based on soft law has effectively resolved potential conflicts among regions and promoted the formation of a new pattern of cooperation that has shifted from

“passive response” to “active coordination”.

2.2.3 Stabilize Market Expectations and Stimulate Economic Vitality

In terms of optimizing the regional business environment and stimulating market vitality, the Soft Law, by formulating industry standards, best practice guidelines and other normative documents, provides clear behavioral guidance for market entities and enhances their confidence in cross-regional investment and operation. Zhuhai has passed the “Regulations on the Administration of the Registration of Market Entities in the Zhuhai Special Economic Zone”, clearly stating that it will cooperate with service institutions in Hong Kong and Macao to achieve “cross-border processing” for the registration of market entities, significantly reducing the time for Hong Kong and Macao enterprises to settle in Zhuhai. The district (comprehensive) legal affairs zone established in Shifang City, Deyang, has adopted soft law measures such as releasing enterprise compliance guidelines and forming a legal service alliance. Providing full life-cycle legal support for enterprises effectively reduces their operational risks. Data shows that after the establishment of the Legal Affairs Zone, the number of contract disputes among enterprises in Shifang City has dropped significantly, and the satisfaction with the business environment has greatly improved. It has attracted a large number of enterprises to invest and settle down, effectively playing the role of soft law in stimulating market vitality.

2.2.4 Reconcile Differences in Rules and Promote Regional Integration

In regions with significant differences in rule systems, such as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, soft law has become an important bridge to eliminate institutional barriers and promote rule integration. Through soft law interaction mechanisms such as industry association exchanges and expert think tank discussions, market entities and regulatory authorities from different jurisdictions have been able to communicate deeply and gradually reach a consensus on rules. In the field of intellectual property protection, the Greater Bay Area has unified patent examination standards and trademark registration processes through soft law measures such as formulating joint standards and establishing mediation and

collaboration mechanisms, significantly shortening the cross-regional intellectual property dispute resolution cycle. In terms of data flow, the Soft Law has promoted the establishment of a mutual recognition mechanism for data security assessment in the Greater Bay Area, facilitating the orderly circulation of data elements. This continuous dialogue and integration of rules not only promotes the free flow of factors within the region but also lays an institutional foundation for building a unified and open regional market, accelerating the process of regional integration.

3. The Practical Forms and Predicaments of Soft Law Incentives in Regional Economic Synergy in China

Under the new normal of the economy characterized by “medium-high growth, deep structural adjustment and innovation-driven development”, China’s regional economic coordinated development strategy is undergoing a profound transformation from local breakthroughs to all-round linkage. The soft law incentive mechanism, with its flexible and consultative characteristics, plays a significant role in regional cooperation. However, many deep-seated contradictions have also been exposed in practical exploration. These predicaments not only restrict the effectiveness of the regional coordinated development strategy but also put forward urgent requirements for institutional optimization. Specifically, they can be analyzed from two aspects: structural defects at the institutional formulation level and functional obstacles in the implementation process.

4. Practical Predicament: The Dual Challenges of Institutional Supply and Implementation Effectiveness

4.1 The Deep-Seated Contradictions in the Formulation of Regional Coordinated Development

(1) Insufficient forward-looking and lagging dynamic adaptation

Against the backdrop of the accelerated iteration of regional development strategies, the soft law normative system shows a significant lag. At present, the vast majority of regional soft law agreements are still concentrated in traditional infrastructure, energy cooperation and other fields, while the supply of rules for emerging industries such as digital economy, green finance and cross-border e-commerce is seriously insufficient.

(2) Structural imbalance in the coordination mechanism between soft and hard laws

In the governance of regional economy in our country, soft laws and hard laws have not yet formed a virtuous interactive ecosystem. On the one hand, the absence of a review mechanism for normative documents has led to frequent occurrences where soft laws overstep their bounds or conflict with hard laws. For instance, a certain western province has, in its regional industrial support policies, added local protection provisions in the form of soft laws that are contrary to the Anti-Monopoly Law, thus undermining the fair market competition environment. On the other hand, in emerging fields where hard law is absent, soft law has failed to fully play its role as a “testing ground”. In cutting-edge fields such as artificial intelligence ethics and carbon footprint accounting, the practice of soft laws mostly remains at the level of principle-based advocacy and fails to promote the improvement of hard laws through effective transformation, thus missing the golden window period for institutional innovation.

(3) Deficiencies in the coverage and formal rationality of the normative system

There are obvious problems of “incomplete coverage of fields” and “process discontinuity” in the soft law norms of regional economy. From the perspective of the field dimension, the norms for industrial chain collaboration mostly focus on the production and manufacturing links, with insufficient coverage of upstream and downstream links such as R&D and design, supply chain management, and after-sales operation and maintenance, resulting in breakpoints in regional industrial collaboration. From the perspective of process, key links such as project approval and operation supervision lack systematic design. For instance, in the construction norms of industrial parks, detailed rules for ecological protection during the construction process and operation performance evaluation are generally absent. At the same time, the norms themselves have the drawbacks of ambiguous expression and loose logic. Although the logistics collaboration agreement of a certain region proposed “promoting information sharing”, it did not clearly define the data interface standards, sharing scope and security responsibilities, which made it difficult for the information systems of enterprises to be interconnected and weakened the operability of

the rules.

4.2 Practical Obstacles in the Implementation of Regional Coordination

4.2.1 Non-Enforceability Leads to a Performance Crisis

The non-coercive nature of soft law poses a severe test to it in the game of interests. In the field of regional fiscal and taxation cooperation, the number of disputes over the performance of soft law agreements has grown rapidly on average over the past three years, with the vast majority of them stemming from the absence of liability clauses for breach of contract. A certain energy supply guarantee agreement in the western region failed to clearly define a price fluctuation compensation mechanism. When the market price of coal rose, the supplier unilaterally defaulted, causing three listed companies downstream to suspend production and resulting in significant direct economic losses. This highlights the fatal impact of low default costs on the stability of cooperation.

4.2.2 Fragmented Practices Dissolve the Synergy Effect

The current soft law mechanism shows a significant feature of “isolation”. During the process of transportation integration in the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei region, although the railway, highway and aviation departments have signed 28 cooperation agreements, due to the lack of a unified dispatching platform, the efficiency of multimodal transport connection is far lower than that of developed countries, and at the same time, the logistics cost has increased compared with expectations. This governance model of “each managing its own section” makes it difficult for soft laws to form a policy synergy, and the efficiency of regional resource integration is greatly reduced.

4.2.3 The Absence of a Benefit Compensation Mechanism Weakens the Impetus for Cooperation

The contradiction of interest redistribution in regional collaboration has become increasingly prominent. In the industrial transfer of the Yangtze River Economic Belt, the average industrial tax revenue of the transferring-out areas was lost due to the relocation of enterprises. However, the receiving areas generally failed to establish a tax-sharing and employment compensation mechanism, resulting in an increase in cases where the

transferring-out areas set up hidden barriers to hinder the relocation of enterprises compared with the previous year. The contradiction in the field of ecological compensation is more acute. The upstream provinces invest over 100 billion yuan annually in environmental protection, but the transfer payments received by the downstream are relatively low, which directly affects the enthusiasm for ecological protection.

4.2.4 Loopholes in Full-Cycle Management Hinder the Iteration of the System

The problem of the lack of closed-loop management in the formulation and implementation of soft laws is serious. During the formulation stage, the participation rate of the public and enterprises was insufficient. As a certain science and technology innovation cooperation agreement in the Greater Bay Area failed to incorporate the opinions of small and medium-sized enterprises, most of its provisions were difficult to be implemented in practice. The implementation stage is even more lacking in a dynamic monitoring system. A certain inter-provincial innovation fund, due to the lack of setting assessment indicators for the transformation of scientific and technological achievements, has had an insufficient utilization rate of fiscal funds for three consecutive years, yet it has been unable to adjust policies in a targeted manner, resulting in an inefficient cycle of “formulation—failure—re-formulation”.

5. The Path to Improving the Soft Law Incentive Mechanism in the Coordinated Development of Regional Economies

5.1 Solutions to Challenges at the Institutional Supply Level

5.1.1 Establish a Regional Development Frontier Trend Monitoring Center

Integrate resources from universities, think tanks, and industry associations, continuously track technological evolution and business model innovation in emerging fields such as the digital economy, green industries, and artificial intelligence, and regularly release the “White Paper on Rules and Demands for Regional Coordinated Development” to provide forward-looking guidance for the formulation of soft laws.

Promote “rolling” soft law planning: Change the fixed medium and long-term planning model and implement a rolling revision mechanism of “three years of core provisions + two years of

dynamic adjustment”. The implementation effect and applicability of the soft law agreement are evaluated annually, and the revision process is initiated in a timely manner to ensure that the system is in line with economic dynamics.

Prioritize the implementation of “soft law pilot projects” in emerging fields: For areas not yet covered by national hard laws such as cross-border data and artificial intelligence ethics, encourage pilot regions (such as free trade zones and new areas) to take the lead in introducing detailed soft law guidelines, accumulate experience, and provide “local samples” for national legislation.

5.1.2 Addressing the Structural Imbalance in the Synergy Mechanism of Soft and Hard Laws

Establish dual channels for soft law compliance review and hard law conversion: Set up a soft law filing and review mechanism. All soft law agreements signed between regions must be submitted to the superior legislative body (such as the Standing Committee of the People’s Congress) or relevant central government functional departments (such as the National Development and Reform Commission and the Ministry of Justice) for filing and compliance review to ensure that they do not conflict with higher-level laws (such as the Anti-Monopoly Law), and to prevent “overreach of soft law” from the source.

Establish a “soft law—hard law” transformation and certification mechanism: For soft regulations that have been tested in practice, proven effective and have a high degree of consensus, establish mature recognition and transformation procedures. The core content is absorbed and refined by the superior legislative body, and then transformed into local regulations, departmental rules or even national laws through legal procedures, thus breaking through the “last mile” of institutional innovation.

5.1.3 Promote the Rule Design of “Full Industrial Chain” and “Full Life Cycle”

Expand the breadth of rule coverage: When formulating the soft law for industrial collaboration, it is required to cover the entire chain of “R&D—design—production—supply chain—marketing—after-sales service”, especially to make up for the shortcomings such as R&D cooperation, intellectual property sharing, supply chain resilience, and unified after-sales service standards.

Deepen the depth of rules and processes: For project approval, operation supervision and other links, issue supporting detailed implementation rules and standard contract texts. For instance, in the construction norms of industrial parks, it is mandatory to incorporate environmental protection provisions, energy consumption standards, performance evaluation methods and exit mechanisms.

Enhance the accuracy of soft language texts: Promote the use of standardized, indexed, and quantified protocol languages. Avoid using vague words such as “strengthen”, “promote” and “improve”, and clearly define the subject, standards, procedures, time limits and responsibilities. For instance, “promoting information sharing” should be specified as “sharing [a certain type of data] within [a specific scope] based on [specific international/national standards] API interfaces, and the [designated party] assumes the responsibility for data security.”

5.2 Solutions to Challenges at the Implementation Efficiency Level

5.2.1 Innovate the Soft Law Performance Guarantee Mechanism

Introduce “flexible constraints” tools: Generally, include terms such as breach of contract guarantee, reputation notification, and loss of priority cooperation rights in the agreement. Establish cross-regional credit files for enterprises and local governments, incorporate major breach of contract behaviors into credit records, and link them to fiscal transfer payments, project approval, official performance evaluations, etc. Promote “standardized + personalized” agreement templates: Led by the central government, standard agreement templates should be formulated for high-frequency cooperation areas such as energy supply security and ecological compensation. These templates must include price linkage mechanisms, risk-sharing clauses, and clear methods for determining liability for breach of contract and calculating compensation.

5.2.2 Build an Implementation Framework for “Holistic Governance”

Establish a substantive and permanent regional coordination body: Go beyond the “joint conference” model and set up a permanent office with certain administrative coordination and resource allocation powers (such as the “Office for Coordinated Development of the

Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei Region”), responsible for coordinating the implementation of various soft laws and coordinating the resolution of cross-departmental and cross-regional conflicts.

Build a unified digital collaborative platform: Create a regional “digital hub” covering functions such as multimodal transport, data sharing, and environmental monitoring. It is mandatory for all signatories to integrate relevant data and processes into the platform, breaking down “islands” through technical means to achieve the automation and visualization of business collaboration.

5.2.3 Design a Scientific and Reasonable Interest Balance and Compensation System

Establish a “horizontal fiscal transfer payment” system: In industrial transfer, calculate the tax-sharing ratio between the transferring-out area and the receiving area based on a clear formula (for example, share a certain proportion of the taxes generated by the relocated enterprises in the first five years). The provincial or central government is responsible for the transfer of funds to ensure their implementation.

Improve the market-oriented and diversified ecological compensation mechanism: Comprehensively utilize various tools such as fiscal transfer payments, off-site development rights transactions, water resource transactions, and green financial products. Establish an accounting system based on the value of ecosystem services to match the compensation standards with the protection costs and benefits, ensuring that the upstream regions have a sense of “gain”.

5.2.4 Improve the Closed-Loop System of “Formulation—Implementation—Evaluation—Revision” for Soft Laws

Strengthen multi-party participation in the formulation process: It is mandatory to stipulate that the formulation of soft laws must go through procedures such as public announcement, hearing, and expert argumentation, especially to involve small and medium-sized enterprises, industry associations, and public representatives. The participation situation should be one of the preconditions for the effectiveness of the agreement.

Establish a quantitative performance monitoring and dynamic evaluation mechanism: Set key performance indicators (KPIs) for each important soft law agreement, such as the

efficiency of fund utilization, project implementation rate, and enterprise satisfaction. The assessment report is regularly evaluated by a third-party institution and publicly released.

Establish a rigid feedback and iterative mechanism: Based on the assessment results, for the agreement terms with poor implementation effects, it is stipulated that the revision process must be initiated within the prescribed time limit (such as within half a year), forming a virtuous cycle of “assessment—feedback—revision—re-implementation”, and eliminating the phenomenon of “only formulating but not managing”.

6. Conclusions

The coordinated development of regional economies is an important engine for high-quality economic development in China in the new era, and the improvement of the soft law incentive mechanism is the key path to solving the problems in regional governance. From a theoretical perspective, soft law has constructed a three-dimensional analysis framework of “cost—benefit—rule of law” through the integration of multi-disciplinary theories, providing a governance logic distinct from that of hard law for regional collaboration. From a practical perspective, although the current application of soft law still faces the dual challenges of institutional supply and implementation efficiency, in emerging fields such as data element circulation and ecological compensation, soft law has demonstrated its unique value in filling institutional gaps.

Looking to the future, the governance of regional economic soft laws needs to achieve three breakthroughs: First, in terms of rule supply, it should shift from “passive response” to “forward-looking guidance”, and enhance the adaptability of soft laws to cutting-edge fields such as the digital economy through dynamic monitoring and rolling revision mechanisms. Second, in terms of governance logic, it shifts from “single soft law” to “soft and hard synergy”, and builds a clearly hierarchical regional legal system through compliance review and transformation certification mechanisms. Third, in terms of implementation efficiency, it shifts from “fragmented governance” to “holistic collaboration”. Through digital platforms and benefit compensation mechanisms, soft regulations are transformed into tangible regional cooperation

momentum.

With the in-depth advancement of the “Five unifications and One Opening-up” requirements, the soft law incentive mechanism will play a more crucial role in breaking down administrative barriers, promoting the flow of factors, and fostering a unified market. This requires not only a continuous deepening of the understanding of the laws of soft law governance at the theoretical level, but also the transformation of the advantages of soft law into governance effectiveness through institutional innovation in practice. Ultimately, it aims to form a regional economic collaborative soft law governance model with Chinese characteristics, providing an institutional innovation sample for global regional governance.

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