

## The Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index

### National Trends from 2011-2015

In 2015 there were declines in five out of the six dimensions measured by PAPI, with the 'Control of Corruption' and 'Transparency' dimensions falling the most. There were also significant declines in the 'Participation at Local Level' and 'Vertical Accountability' dimensions. In addition, there was a slight decrease in the performance of the 'Public Administrative Procedures' dimension. On a positive note, scores for the 'Public Service Delivery' dimension continued to increase modestly.

Out of the six dimensions the most substantial drop was in the transparency index, which fell more than 7%. This decline is partly because of less public awareness of local lists of poor households and less confidence in the accuracy of the information provided in the lists. In addition, fewer citizens were aware of the commune budget and expenditure information and did not feel confident that the information provided in the budget is correct.

#### Corruption in the Public Sector

Despite efforts to control it, citizens continue to view corruption as an endemic problem. At the national level the corruption dimension decreased by 3%. This decline is repeated across all the sub-indicators, with respondents more pessimistic about corruption in the public sector and in public service delivery, more worried about corruption and nepotism in public sector employment and more concerned about the government's willingness to control corruption.

Compared to 2014, there has also been a noticeable spike in bribes paid for land use rights certificates. Findings show that the estimated number of respondents who paid bribes for obtaining land use rights certificates increased to more than 44% in 2015, up from 24% in 2014. In contrast, the number of respondents reporting they paid bribes for health-care services held steady at 12%.

Finally, about 37% of respondents believe that their local government is serious about curtailing corruption, down from 39% in 2014. As in previous years, those who were aware of the Anti-Corruption Law were more likely to see their local government as serious compared to those unfamiliar with it.

These findings suggest that new and effective anti-corruption measures are needed, in addition to increased willingness by public officials and civil servants to substantially curb corruption.

### **Satisfaction with Economic Situation**

As in previous years, the 2015 survey asked citizens whether or not they are satisfied with their current economic situation, whether it has improved and whether they expect it to improve in future. The answers to these questions show remarkable stability. In 2015, slightly more individuals thought their situation was worse than five years ago and slightly fewer thought it the same. However, the number of people saying that their situation has improved remains stable at about 60%.

### **Most Important Issues**

The 2015 survey featured a new question on what respondents think are the three most important issues facing the country. Poverty and hunger was identified as by far the most important issue, with 18% saying it is the most concerning issue. Not only is poverty important nationally, it is also important relatively evenly across all provinces. Only in the Red River Delta was it not the top issue. Jobs and employment, roads, corruption and law and order were also seen as critical issues.

Breaking down the issues by gender shows that female respondents in general are more interested in economic issues and public service delivery. For example, women were about 8% more likely than men to cite poverty as an important issue. Women were also about 5% more likely to cite education as a top concern. Issues that concerned men more than women were the East Sea dispute, corruption and roads. These gender differences highlight the importance of ensuring that both women's and men's voices are listened to and included in decision-making processes.

### **Land Seizures and Compensation**

In 2015 there was a slight increase in the number of respondents reporting they had land taken as compared to 2014. This is still a decrease from previous years though. The majority of those reporting that their households had land seized said they received monetary compensation. However, more than one fourth of respondents (27.5%) said they received no compensation. As with the 2014 findings, there is no clear explanation for why land is being taken without compensation being offered.

Further analysis shows that land is a particularly important concern for ethnic minorities. While ethnic minorities were no more likely than Kinh majority respondents to report having land seized, they were, however, far more likely to have land taken without receiving any compensation. More than 26% of ethnic minority respondents who lost land said they received no compensation, compared with only 15% of Kinh respondents. Further research is needed to assess the reasons for this difference.

### **Political Participation**

In July 2016 the revised Law on the Promulgation of Legal Documents will take effect. One of the stipulations of the law is that citizens can be consulted during a law-making process. To provide a baseline for assessing the impact of the law, the 2015 survey asked several questions about citizens' participation in decision-making.

More than 86% of respondents correctly reported that the government is required to publicize draft laws. However, only 13% said that their local government had asked them to participate in a meeting on a draft government regulation.

Further analysis shows that individual factors determine who participates in legislative consultations. Party membership is by far the most important factor, while mass organization membership and education levels also matter to some extent. For example, party members with a high school degree or more have a 35% chance of being asked to contribute to a law, while party members without a degree have only an 18% chance. On the other hand, respondents that are not affiliated with the party or a mass organization have a less than 3% chance of being asked to participate in a consultative meeting on a draft regulation if they have a degree, and a less than 1% probability if they do not have a degree. These results demonstrate the need to equalize who is asked to participate in law-making processes.

The 2015 PAPI survey also looked at participation in elections. The results here show that gender, ethnicity, mass organization membership and education directly influence voter participation. Women, ethnic minorities, those who are less educated and those who are not members of mass organizations are in general less likely to vote. For the upcoming elections it is therefore important to increase the awareness of and interest in politics of these groups and encourage them to actively take part in the elections.

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The Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) is a policy monitoring tool that assesses citizen experiences and satisfaction with government performance at the national and sub-national levels in governance, public administration and public service delivery.

PAPI measures six dimensions: participation at local levels, transparency, vertical accountability, control of corruption, public administrative procedures and public service delivery. The survey has been implemented nationwide each year since 2011. For the 2015 PAPI Report, 13,955 randomly selected citizens were surveyed.

PAPI is a collaboration between the Centre for Community Support and Development Studies (CECODES), the Centre for Research and Training of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front (VFF-CRT) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The full 2015 PAPI Report and more in-depth analysis can be found at: [www.papi.vn](http://www.papi.vn).