# **Fact Sheet: National Overview of PAPI Results**

## **Core PAPI Performance Trends: 2011-2020**

In order to be responsive to Viet Nam’s governance and public administration reform efforts, PAPI indicators have been added, updated or dropped each year of the PAPI research programme’s 12 years of existence. The research team therefore created the ‘Core PAPI’ measure in 2018 to allow for an analysis of PAPI over time. This measure is comprised entirely of indicators that have remained unchanged between 2011-2020 and is used to assess the long-term trends in governance reforms highlighted below.

The analysis shows that while the aggregate PAPI score remained constant over the 2011-2016 government term, the score has increased incrementally since 2016. In other words, there has been a small improvement at the national level in governance and public administration performance during the 2016-2020 government term. The progress was driven by 60 provinces that have all recorded positive average growth in their PAPI score since PAPI first began tracking provincial performance nationwide in 2011.

Looking at the six core dimensions[[1]](#footnote-1), shown in Figure 1, the strongest improvement is in Dimension 4: Control of Corruption in the Public Sector, which has improved significantly each year since 2016. Dimension 3: Vertical Accountability has also steadily improved during the 2016-2020 term.



**Figure 1: Core PAPI Dimensions over Time, 2011-2020**

Dimensions that show declines include Dimension 1: Participation at Local Levels and Dimension 5: Public Administrative Procedures. For Dimension 1, the decline is largely attributed to a drop in voluntary contributions to local construction projects (more on this below). For Dimension 5, there seems to be a continued concern that public administrative procedures and services for citizens have not been streamlined and are not as user-friendly as those enjoyed by businesses.

## **Participation at Local Levels**

As mentioned above, the Participation at Local Levels dimension declined in 2020. In particular, the sub-dimension on participation in voluntary contribution projects, which has increased each year since the new government term in 2016, declined substantially in 2020.

This likely reflects the fact that with the more challenging economic conditions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, local officials proposed fewer projects and were less likely to request contributions from citizens. While this leads to a lower overall score for the dimension, it may actually reflect responsive local governments that are less willing to burden citizens with projects they cannot afford. In this sense, the decline in Participation at Local Levels scores may not reflect a decline in governance quality, but instead, responsiveness to the economic plight of citizens in 2020.

## **Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens**

On the Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens dimension, there has been a steady improvement since 2011 in the sub-dimension on Interactions with Local Authorities. This measures the frequency of citizens’ contact with local authorities at different levels when they have concerns or lodge a complaint. It also measures how satisfied citizens are with local authorities’ response.

The findings show that there was a spike in 2020 in the number of citizens contacting local officials, in particular village heads and People’s Council delegates. From an average of about 23 percent of citizens contacting village heads in previous years, about 29 percent of respondents said they contacted their village head in 2020 to seek a solution to a problem they had with their family, neighbours or local authorities. A similarly significant increase, although smaller, is seen in the percentage of citizens contacting People’s Council delegates.

## **Control of Corruption in the Public Sector**

Another area of improvement during the 2016-2021 government term is the control of corruption dimension. From the citizen perspective, the anti-corruption campaign driven by the Communist Party of Viet Nam seems to have permeated local level officials. As a result, the percentage of respondents agreeing that bribes are necessary for state employment, public health-care services, land use rights certificates, fair treatment by primary school teachers and the granting of construction permits continued the decline seen since 2016.

However, when it comes to citizen feedback on bribery based on respondents’ actual experience of accessing specific public services, the picture is less rosy. In 2020, more than 32 percent of respondents said they paid a bribe to obtain a land use rights certificate, compared to just over 22 percent in 2019. The divergence between perceptions of and the actual experience with bribes could be due to positive impressions amongst those who did not pay bribes, driven by anti-corruption campaigns. Alternatively, it is possible that the size of bribes has decreased, thereby creating more positive perceptions. Future evidence is needed to clarify this disparity.

In terms of the importance of personal connections for government positions, the 2020 PAPI Report shows a continued decline in this indicator, although the importance levels remain high. Across a range of positions, the number of citizens suggesting that connections were important in hiring for those positions is at its lowest since the survey began 2011.

## **Demographic Differences**

The 2020 PAPI Report also looks at differences between men and women, and between the Kinh majority and ethnic minorities, in their experience of governance.

Men and women experienced similar levels of governance quality across several dimensions. However, in the Participation at Local Levels, Transparency in Local Decision-making, Vertical Accountability and E-Governance dimensions, there are disparities. Women are less likely to contact village officials and vote in village elections. Women are also less likely to access the Internet. Each of these factors could hinder government responsiveness to women’s concerns and women’s ability to access government resources.

There are also differences in the experiences of the Kinh majority and ethnic minority groups. With the exception of the Environmental Governance dimension, respondents from ethnic minority groups reported a lower quality of provincial performance than Kinh respondents across all dimensions. The perceptions are particularly different in the Participation at Local Levels, Transparency in Local Decision-making and Vertical Accountability dimensions. This suggests that more should be done to involve minorities in policymaking and to facilitate contacts between public officials and members of minority groups.

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| *The Vietnam 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. Following the initial pilot in 2009 and a larger survey in 2010, the PAPI survey has been implemented nationwide each year since 2011. For the 2020 PAPI Report, 14,732 randomly selected citizens were surveyed. In total, 146,233 Vietnamese citizens nationwide have been directly interviewed for PAPI since 2009.*  *PAPI measures eight dimensions: participation at local levels, transparency, vertical accountability, control of corruption, public administrative procedures, public service delivery, environmental governance and e-government.*  *PAPI is the result of 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), Real-Time Analytics and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).*  *During its 12 years of existence, PAPI has been generously funded by the Government of Spain from 2009 to 2010; the Swiss Agency for Cooperation and Development (SDC) from 2011 to 2017; the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia from 2018 to 2025; the Embassy of Ireland from 2018 to 2021; and the United Nations and UNDP in Viet Nam since 2009.*  *The full 2020 PAPI Report and more in-depth analysis of the findings are available at:* [*www.papi.org.vn*](http://www.papi.org.vn)  *Scan the QR code to download the 2020 PAPI Report to your smartphone:*  **#PAPIvn #PAPI2020**  For more information, contact:  Nguyen Viet Lan UN Communications Team Tel: (+84 4) 38 500 158 Mob: (+84) 91 4436 769 Email: nguyen.viet.lan@undp.org |

1. These are: Participation at Local Levels, Transparency in Local Decision-making, Vertical Accountability, Control of Corruption in the Public Sector, Public Administrative Procedures and Public Service Delivery. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)