



## Press Release

### Incremental improvement in governance led to increased public trust and effective COVID-19 response

**Ha Noi, 14 April 2021** – The 2020 Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) Report, released today, shows an incremental improvement in national governance and public administration performance during the 2016-2021 government term, with Control of Corruption in the Public Sector showing the strongest improvement. Since 2018, PAPI has been co-funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia, the Embassy of Ireland and UNDP in Viet Nam.

The report, which assesses citizen experiences with national and local government performance in governance, public administration, and public service delivery, shows that the Control of Corruption in the Public Sector dimension has improved significantly each year since 2016. The dimension on Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens also steadily improved during the 2016-2021 term, mainly because an increasing number of citizens have contacted local officials, in particular village heads and People's Council delegates. Dimensions that show declines include Participation at Local Levels (Dimension 1) and Public Administrative Procedures (Dimension 5).

*“New features of the 2020 PAPI Report include insightful findings on: the performance of local governments across two terms (2011-2016 and 2016-2021); experience of internal migrants with accessing services in receiving provinces; and voter perception of women in leadership roles,”* UNDP Resident Representative in Viet Nam **Caitlin Wiesen** said in her opening remark. *“As the Government embarks on a new term, PAPI provides rich and deep datasets on citizens’ perception of local government achievement in each of the 63 provinces and important metrics to review and further improve their performance across eight key dimensions of governance”.*

Analysis in the 2020 PAPI Report shows that citizen engagement and anti-corruption efforts have a positive correlation with Viet Nam’s ability to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Australia’s Ambassador to Viet Nam, Ms. **Robyn Mudie**, noted: *“I am delighted to see that there has been an improvement in provincial governance and public administration performance. This improvement may have contributed to Viet Nam’s successful response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Findings from the 2020 PAPI Report show that there is a correlation between good governance and effective pandemic responses. In other words, good governance matters. Looking ahead, improving governance will prove extremely useful in managing other unexpected emergency situations in Viet Nam.”*

Looking ahead to the 2021 National Assembly and People’s Council elections, the 2020 PAPI Report includes a section analyzing voter’s preferences of candidates at national and provincial level. The findings indicate that voters prefer men over women candidates, particularly for village head positions. In addition, while voters prefer men candidates with families, women candidates are less likely to win support if they have families.

The report also demonstrates that women have different areas of concern from men, with women far more concerned about poverty reduction, health care and education than men. In addition, women are less engaged in local decision-making and have less access to the Internet and e-government services. These differences highlight the need for equitable representation in elected bodies.

Picking up on this theme, Mr. **John McCullagh**, the Ambassador of Ireland to Viet Nam, commented: *“Women’s leadership in the public sector is essential as it is important to have women’s perspectives and voices involved in the decision-making process. We hope Vietnamese women will have a more equal footing with men in politics so that they can represent women’s interests. Gender equality and women’s empowerment are key thematic priorities of the Embassy of Ireland in the process of building partnerships with the Vietnamese government, multilateral organizations and civil society.”*

Over 14,700 citizens were interviewed for the 2020 PAPI Report. This is the largest number of citizens to participate since the survey was first conducted nationwide in 2011. For the first time, the survey also gathered responses from citizens with temporary residence registration status. Nearly 300 migrants were surveyed in six centrally governed municipalities and provinces (Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, Bac Ninh, Da Nang, Dong Nai and Binh Duong).

Responses by non-permanent residents provided a better understanding of the effect of internal migration on provincial performance in governance and public administration. The analysis shows that migrants tend to be poorer and have fewer household assets and less income than permanent residents and they tend to be women. Correspondingly, there is a significant gap in migrants’ experience with governance compared to permanent residents in the same village. This data is critical for the design of inclusive governance solutions in which the migrant population is not left behind.

*“In order to narrow these gaps, provinces receiving internal migrants need to focus on addressing the information needs and expectations of both permanent and non-permanent residents. The current efforts to create national database systems on population and issue digitized citizen identification cards are steps in the right direction. Having a universal identification number will enable citizens to access governance and public services equally regardless of their place of residence within the country,”* Ms. **Caitlin Wiesen** said.

Similar to previous years, the 2020 PAPI Report presents detailed findings on how provinces performed across the eight PAPI dimensions (Participation at Local Levels, Transparency in Local Decision-making, Vertical Accountability, Control of Corruption in the Public Sector, Public Administrative Procedures, Public Service Delivery, Environmental Governance, and E-Government), as well as in the aggregate PAPI scores. In 2020, none of the 63 provinces were in the top performing group across all eight dimensions.

In addition, the 2020 PAPI Report provides detailed findings within sub-dimensions and indicators. Deeper dives into these findings, rather than just comparing aggregate dimension scores, are key for those provinces that wish to respond to their citizens’ concerns and expectations effectively.

Speaking at the report launch, Dr **Nguyễn Hữu Dũng**, Vice President of the Central Committee of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front said: *“We hope that PAPI will continue to serve as a reliable policy monitoring tool that helps promote government accountability and reforms, thereby furthering modern governance. We also hope that PAPI will continue to provide valuable independent data and information for our oversight and social feedback functions at the Viet Nam Fatherland Front so that we can be more inclusive, constructive, science-based and empirical.”*./.

**Notes for editors:**

*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:*



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