USAID HELPS IMPROVE VIETNAM'S DIGITAL PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

As the world goes through a period of digital transformation, businesses and institutions are adopting emerging technologies to improve their operations and services. Governments are also expected to follow suit and prioritize the development of e-government initiatives to keep pace with the changing landscape. **In Vietnam, the government has set an ambitious goal to digitize all public services by 2030.**

To kickstart its digitization efforts, the Government of Vietnam (GVN) launched the National Public Service Portal (NPSP) in 2019 to become a centralized online portal for all public services. Through the NPSP, businesses and citizens can access several services, including issuing a driver's license, managing their health insurance, and paying their electricity bills- but the portal is not without its challenges. A host of administrative challenges such as the reliance on signed and stamped documents, and the incomplete implementation of services on the NPSP caused low uptake of the portal by Vietnamese citizens.

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Vietnam Mission conducted an assessment exploring opportunities to improve the digitization of e-government services in Vietnam. Following the assessment, USAID, in partnership with the Administrative Procedure Control Agency (APCA) under the Office of the Government (OOG) worked with DAI's Digital Frontiers project to launch the Vietnam E-government Capacity Building Program.

The program's overall objectives include:

- Helping Vietnam improve the quality of government services to citizens and businesses
- Enhancing the efficiency and transparency of government operations by supporting GVN's effort in promoting e-government deployment

Specifically, the program:

- Supported the operation of the newly launched National Public Service Portal
- Standardized e-government processes
- Provided technical training to key government officials

TECHNICAL APPROACH

To achieve these goals, USAID, together with APCA, identified a list of high priority citizen services, or administrative processes (APs), requiring business process re-engineering (BPR), which is a business strategy that analyzes workflows and procedures. Through BPR, each of the citizen services will be reviewed, revised, and improved before being digitized onto the NPSP.

A series of technical trainings was provided to more than 325 key government staff representing 63 provinces on the steps needed to digitize priority citizen services onto the NPSP and improve their administrative management of the portal. The trainings were given in a "train the trainer" style to ensure replication and sustainability of knowledge beyond the life of the project.

In addition to digitizing the citizen services and improving the capacity of government staff, the portal's interface was redesigned, and a usability test was conducted to improve user experience. These changes were then introduced to relevant stakeholders, through a detailed communications plan that resulted in an increase in the number of services available to the public.

By the end of 2022, 29 citizen services were completed and offered to the public, such as license renewals and participation in voluntary social insurance payment.

Another priority for GVN was the digitization of records and reporting procedures. With support from USAID and Digital Frontiers, a new digitized M&E framework was developed.

The framework includes a digital dashboard presenting a set of real-time indicators that measure the progress and quality of services offered to the public, including indicators on the quality of citizen services delivery, transparency of the system, and the rate of digitization. The data sets are then reported to the Prime Minister and government leaders and are publicly available on the NPSP. This digital dashboard is also a tool for government servants to monitor public service delivery at the provincial level.

These indicators were launched in an official decision by the Prime Minister to drive the government's data-driven governance initiative and serve as a key measurement of Vietnam's digital public service quality.

This new framework also includes a digitization toolkit that creates machine-readable digital copies of paper-based transactions, including past records in existence. The development of the digitization toolkit is aimed at streamlining integration and archiving of physical records and transactions into a centralized system.

MAKING BIG STRIDES FORWARD ON DIGITIZATION

This marks the first time a full set of real-time indicators measuring public service digitization efforts has been developed to inform Vietnam's decision-making processes related to digitizing public service delivery.

"The M&E system promotes a data driven decision making culture in Vietnam's economic governance which eventually will help create a more enabling and predictable business environment", said Chau Nguyen, USAID/Vietnam Digital Development Advisor. "The dashboard and other data analytic tools have effectively enhanced transparency and accountability of GVN in providing public services and consequently, saving cost and time for citizens and businesses."

Through the Vietnam E-government Capacity Building Program, USAID is helping the Vietnam government realize their goal of digitizing public service delivery to improve government efficiency and access to information benefiting citizens and businesses.