

Management Response

UNDP Management Response

Mid-Term Review of the Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) Research and Advocacy Programme for the period from November 2019 - October 2023

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Evaluation recommendation 1: “PAPI team should develop a sounder results framework, transitioning from an output-focused approach, such as the mere number of reports or events, to a results-oriented one that measures tangible effects on governance improvements. Additionally, the team should develop a well-articulated theory of change to map how PAPI’s outputs, such as data and reports, directly contribute to intended outcomes, such as improvements in governance and social inclusion.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note that the PAPI Programme’s outputs have been included in UNDP CO’s CPD to be both as indicators for measurement of Outcome 3.4. We also note that the PAPI Programme’s annual work plans highlight key outcomes in the UNDP CO’s CPD that it contributes to.
- We note the importance of a well-articulated theory of change and have developed it but have not called it “a theory of change,” but a workflow that result in outputs and developmental outcomes for specific groups of people (for all) as provided in our annual progress reports. We can strengthen this part to make the theory of change more explicitly in our upcoming cycle if PAPI programme is continued after 2025.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
1.1. Link PAPI results to UNDP’s CPD result framework in annual progress reports	30 January 2024, 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team	Initiated
1.2. Draft a well-articulated Theory of Change for PAPI when developing the 2025-2030 project document	30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 2: “To ensure PAPI’s data quality and assessment neutrality, PAPI team should maintain high vigilance around potential interference in PAPI’s data collection process. PAPI will benefit from Viet Nam Fatherland Front (VFF) becoming a strong advocate for data integrity, given VFF’s

role in the data collection process. UNDP’s leadership should engage national VFF leaders more directly on the importance of safeguarding the integrity of data collection on the ground from potential interference by officials at lower levels in the provinces. Also, UNDP and PAPI team should institute regular consultative meetings with provincial officials around the data integrity issue to build support and prevent interference.”

Management response: Agreed

- We will work further with the Consortium of CECODES-VFF to engage the VFF and VFF-Center for Research and Training more deeply to talk about how to mitigate potential interference from local authorities in PAPI’s data collection process as recommended.
- We will continue our reiteration of the importance of the data integrity issue during our meetings with provincial authorities to prevent their potential interference in our data collection processes during the National Launch and during our diagnostic workshops with provinces. Regular meetings with local authorities only on the matter of potential interference will not be feasible.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
2.1. Discuss with international experts and the PAPI Advisory Board, with VFF representatives as members as well, on a set of recommendations to avoid potential interference in PAPI’s data collection process to be applied in 2024 PAPI data collection processes.	15 March 2024	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team	Initiated
2.2. Advise provincial focal points on the negative impact of provincial interference in data collection on anticipatory governance through national launches and provincial diagnostic workshops	Throughout 2024 and 2025, with the ending date in June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team together with CECODES and relevant Advisory Board members	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 3: “To better communicate PAPI research data and reports, the PAPI team should simplify the language and formats used in PAPI and thematic reports without compromising the analytical quality. This will make PAPI’s insights and messages more accessible and comprehensible to general audiences and enhance impact.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note that our research work involves innovative and novice research methodology that may be little known among non-statistical readers. We also note that the annual PAPI reports are laid out professionally but economical in terms of the number of pages to make the reports lean and light.
- We can simplify the language used in and the formats of our PAPI and thematic reports for the targeted audience who are policymakers and provincial authorities, while keeping the annual PAPI reports inclusive of all types of readers (including policymakers, provincial authorities, the media, the academia and the public).

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
3.1. Reduce the use of technical terms in executive summaries of each report to serve policymakers and provincial authorities, while putting methodological parts in annexes for interested technical readers	Throughout 2024 and 2025, with the ending date in June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team	Initiated
3.2. Hire professional copyeditors in both languages (English and Vietnamese) to review PAPI and thematic reports	Throughout 2024 and 2025, with the ending date in June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 4: “PAPI team should actively seek avenues to further integrate PAPI’s insights and evidence into existing national policy frameworks and governmental planning/review processes. By bringing PAPI closer to internal oversight systems, its impact will be ingrained into the iterative process of policy formulation and review, moving beyond its current role as an external assessment.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note the importance of continuing our efforts in advocacy for PAPI’s insights and evidence to be further integrated into existing national policy frameworks, while noting also that PAPI and its follow-up action research are to provide external sources of data and information for the Government of Viet Nam to actively refer to and use. In fact, some PAPI indicators have been included in the Government’s SDG monitoring indicators. But more work can/should be done to have PAPI data and information officially recognized by the Government’s administrative data systems.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
4.1. Advocate for PAPI data to be further used in Viet Nam’s SDG monitoring system	Throughout 2024 and 2025, with the ending date in June 2025	UNDP SM and UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team	Initiated
4.2. Keep advocating for PAPI data and information to be officially recognized by the Vietnam General Statistics Office’s administrative data systems	Throughout 2024 and 2025, with the ending date in June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 5: “There is also an opportunity for PAPI to organize regular policy dialogues that include a diverse range of stakeholders such as academics, policymakers, and civil society

organizations. These forums could be utilized to dissect complex policy issues, using PAPI’s empirical evidence as a basis for targeted interventions.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note the importance of regular thematic policy dialogues and thematic discussions that involve a diverse range of stakeholders as recommended. In fact, we have proactively convened such dialogues and discussions on various PAPI-related topics with also in-depth research findings through action-oriented studies every quarter and have engaged all types of relevant stakeholders including policymakers, practitioners from provinces, civil society organizations and the academia.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
5.1. Keep convening thematic policy discussions following the National Assembly’s Legal and Legislative Development Agendas to feed data and information for topical issues that PAPI covers or should cover to inform the policy and report in the final PAPI project report	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 6: “PAPI team should continue and expand the recent practice of complementary research and advocacy that goes beyond mere assessment to propose tailored community-level solutions for specific localities. The team should promote complementary research that identifies good practices from high performing provinces that can be replicated across Vietnam.”

Management response: Agreed

- With additional funding from DFAT and Ireland since 2020, we have been able to convene complementary research and advocacy activities as well as to support for community-level innovation initiatives. Such complementary research has helped identify also good practices from several provinces to advocate for upscaling in other provinces.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
6.1. Explore key points for in-depth complementary research and advocacy as follow-ups to PAPI findings and good practices in inclusive governance and participation at the local level to provide technical support and to advocate for upscaling	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team; national counterparts and development partners	Initiated

Evaluation

recommendation 7: “PAPI team should explore options to engage more actively in creating avenues for the empowerment of women. This could include leadership training programmes, mentoring networks with

existing female officials, and media campaigns specifically designed to build confidence and encourage political participation among women.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note the importance of gender equity in governance and participation, so over the past 15 years, we have been active in advocating for the role of women in elected agencies and in politics. The support has been precisely on what the MTR is recommending. However, we will/can do more to work towards gender equity in governance, especially in politics and local governance, primarily towards 2026 National Elections if/when we secure funding for such activities from 2024 onwards.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
7.1. Keep advocating for women in politics using PAPI findings through thematic discussions	30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team; national counterparts and development partners	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 8: “PAPI team could also intensify partnerships with civil society and other relevant stakeholders to leverage PAPI data for targeted advocacy campaigns promoting gender equality, especially for LGBTIQ+ inclusion, in provinces. As PAPI works towards inclusive governance, the promotion of the participation and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ in local governance should be a priority to build on what has been done in 2023. Also, in preparation for 2026 Elections, the promotion of women in politics, including representatives of women with disabilities, should be continued as a focus in PAPI advocacy activities towards 2026.”

Management response: Agreed

- We have always emphasized the role of civil society and other relevant stakeholders in governance and participation work, so the PAPI research and advocacy programme has always conducted with the direct and indirect participation of civil society organizations and ordinary citizens, including persons with disability (PwDs), ethnic minorities and the LGBTIQ+ community. The PAPI data and findings have been the evidence for such work to be done.

- We note the importance of the promotion of the participation and inclusion of LGBTIQ+ people in local governance as well as women’s and PwDs’ political participation. Therefore, in our PAPI programme towards 2025, we have planned research and advocacy activities on these key areas. We hope we can secure more funding for such activities from 2024 onwards and that the civil society environment in Viet Nam will be more open.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
8.1. Continue using PAPI data as pointers for policy advocacy to promote the roles of PwDs, women and LGBTIQ+ people in local governance and politics	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team; national counterparts and development partners	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 9: “PAPI team should proactively share relevant PAPI data with government report writers for human rights mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review, SDGs and the Voluntary National Review. PAPI team should continue to leverage e-governance research and initiatives to expand vulnerable groups’ access to digital public services.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note the importance of incorporating PAPI findings in the Government’s and UN/DP’s reporting, so we have actively provided such data and information upon requests from all parties. In fact, PAPI has proactively generated data for tracking SDG indicators, and over the years, the data points have been incorporated into Viet Nam’s voluntary national review of SDG implementation. PAPI data have also been used effectively by relevant civil society organizations in their contribution to Viet Nam’s Universal Periodical Reviews of human rights commitments.
- We expect to leverage inclusive e-governance research and initiatives to expand vulnerable groups’ access to digital public services if/when we secure funding for such activities from 2024 onwards.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
9.1. Continue our active work in promoting inclusive e-governance through local initiatives to expand vulnerable groups’ access to digital public services	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team; provincial and national counterparts	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 10: “PAPI team has an opportunity to expand the provision of specialized training and capacity building for provincial government departments, especially in key sectors such as health and education, to effectively interpret and utilize PAPI data for sectoral strategies, planning and budgeting. A focused effort should be made to incorporate PAPI findings and research into local authorities’ annual planning and budgeting processes, thus facilitating more targeted governance reforms. The team explore collaborative capacity building with agencies like the Departments of Home Affairs.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note the importance of such collaborative capacity building because we have been engaged by provinces in such work. But if/when we secure funding for such activities from either the provinces themselves or from our interested donors, we can do more of it.
- We emphasise, however, provincial authorities’ proactiveness in and ownership of incorporating PAPI’s findings and recommendations from our thematic research in their local planning and budgeting processes.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
10.1. Support provincial authorities in incorporating PAPI’s findings and recommendations in local planning	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team; provincial and	Initiated

and budgeting processes (analysing PAPI data and capacity building as requested by local authorities).		national counterparts	
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Evaluation recommendation 11: “The PAPI team should further partnerships with media and journalists to produce in-depth reports that utilize PAPI’s granular data to advocate for reforms in local-level governance. The PAPI team should increase the turnover of regular PAPI-based content (op-eds, policy briefs) for dissemination across print, broadcast and digital media to expand public awareness. The PAPI team should offer customized data analytics support to media outlets to strengthen reporting on local governance issues.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note the essence of communicating and disseminating PAPI and thematic research findings and recommendations to policymakers, practitioners and the public, so we have proactively engaged with the media and journalists in producing op-eds, long-form articles and media interviews to deliver on our advocacy messages over the past 15 years. We have also actively provided customized data analytics upon requests from the media and the journalists over the years.

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
1.1. Continue working closely with the media and journalists to communicate and disseminate findings and recommendations from PAPI and thematic studies	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team; provincial and national counterparts	Initiated
11.2. Regularly write up articles, op-eds and long-form articles in Vietnamese for better outreach to the public	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team; provincial and national counterparts	Initiated

Evaluation recommendation 12: “PAPI team should explore ways of strengthening coordination and cooperation with other governance surveys in Vietnam, without jeopardizing the independence and integrity of the initiative. There is an opportunity to strengthen cooperation with PCI through joint dissemination events and publications to maximize reach and provide multi-dimensional insights into governance. To this end, it will be useful to institute regular consultative meetings between PAPI and PCI teams to identify collaboration opportunities on operations and stakeholder engagement.”

Management response: Agreed

- We note the importance of the correlation between different indexes on governance in Viet Nam (e.g., the PAR-Index, the PCI, the SIPAS and the VDI), as it will provide insights for policymakers into areas of strengths and weaknesses from different angles and levels of government. In fact, we have worked together with agencies in charge of those indexes, especially VCCI in charge of PCI, during our diagnostic workshops with provinces over the past 15 years. The PCI and the PAPI teams have one technical advisor in common as well.

- What can be done more may be to share questions and run correlation of findings between PCI and PAPI so that we can offer central and provincial governments useful suggestions on ways forward to strengthening local governance for both businesses and citizens towards even the commune levels, rather than just at the provincial level (since PCI focuses more on the provincial-level governance).

Key action(s)	Completion date	Responsible unit(s)	Tracking Status* (initiated, completed or no due date)
12.1. Continue discussing with government agencies such as the Ministry of Home Affairs, the Ministry of Information and Communication and the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry to strengthen the complementary values of existing governance assessment tools, reflected in meeting minutes.	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team in collaboration with relevant national partners at MOHA, MOIC, VCCI, etc.	Initiated
12.2. Collaborate with VCCI in designing survey questionnaires of PAPI and PCI to have several common themes but assessing from both businesses' and citizens' perspectives to provide insightful advice to provincial leaders to improve performance in both economic and social governance pillars; and produce correlation graphs and analysis and have these featured in both PCI and PAPI reports or policy briefs.	Throughout until 30 June 2025	UNDP/GPT/PAPI Team in collaboration with relevant national partners at VCCI	Initiated

* Status of implementation is tracked electronically in the ERC database.