

NON-STATE ACTORS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN DEVELOPMENT -
ACTIONS IN PARTNER COUNTRIES (MULTI COUNTRY) FOR NON-STATE ACTORS

Best Practice Lang Son: Public Institutional Innovation

- short version -

Thematic Area: Institutional Governance

Country of Origin: Vietnam

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DELGOSEA



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A Project implemented by the consortium: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., Thailand Environment Institute (TEI), Local Government Development Foundation Inc. (LOGODEF), United Cities and Local Governments for Asia and Pacific (UCLG-ASPAC), Association of Indonesian Regency Governments (APKASI), Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN), and National League of Communes/Sangkats of the Kingdom of Cambodia (NLC/S).



ABOUT DELGOSEA

The Partnership for Democratic Local Governance in Southeast-Asia (DELGOSEA) was launched in March 2010 and is co-funded by the European Commission and the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) of Germany through the German Ministry of Development Cooperation.

DELGOSEA aims to create a network of cities and municipalities to implement transnational local governance best practices replication across partner countries: Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. It supports the role of Local Government Associations (LGAs) in providing and assisting the transfer and sustainability of local governance best practices replication by local governments. Most importantly, through the exchange of best practices in the region, DELGOSEA intends to contribute to the improvement of living conditions of disadvantaged groups in Southeast-Asia by helping increase their participation in local planning and decision-making.

In the first phase of project implementation, an intensive research was done to determine Best Practices (BP) in local governance in each of the five participating countries. A consortium of international local governance experts and representatives from the LGAs reviewed and selected 16 BPs out of the submitted 27 BPs.

The project concentrated on the following four thematic areas while selecting best practice examples from the five countries:

1. Peoples' participation in planning and decision-making;
2. Institutional governance;
3. Inclusive urban public services;
4. Fiscal management and investment planning.

The following short descriptions BP is one of the selected 16 BPs in the area of institutional governance, provided by Lang Son in Vietnam.

Starting in January 2011 through August 2012, DELGOSEA will continue to collaborate with LGAs and local governments to transfer best practices replication. The pilot cities/municipalities could modify or improve the original best practice to their local context. The LGAs in the five participating countries will closely consult and guide the selected pilot local governments on the transfer and implementation of BP replication.



Country	Vietnam
Local Government:	Lang Son City
Type:	Municipality
Best Practice:	Public Institutional Innovation
Aspect of Governance:	Institutional governance
Reported by:	Prof Do Hau, Nguyen Ninh Thuc and Nguyen Bao Lam

Summary

Following the master program for administrative innovation for 2001-2010, Lang Son City aimed at developing innovative models to improve administrative services and people's participation, as follows:

- Simplify administrative procedures;
- Strengthen administrative and institutional structures, as well as policies that are in line with the requirements of industrialization and modernization of the country;
- Promote a democratic system by encouraging people to participate in improving laws and regulations;
- Identify clear responsibilities of public organizations, so public agencies can decentralize services and works to the private sector and to civil organizations;
- Use information technology in implementing innovations.

The following results were achieved:

- The "One Stop Shop Reception and Return Department" is set up and functioning by combining the different state administrative agencies into one integrated counter. The city successfully offers services, such as business and land registration, permits for housing and construction, as well as the transfer of rights of houses and land use, in a convenient and transparent manner.
- Re-organisation and adjustment of the organizational and personnel structure of the different state agencies, in accordance with functions, tasks, and conditions;
- A communication plan and cooperation agreements have been developed and set up ensuring the involvement of the media, civil society, other departments and the private sector in the innovation process;

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- Enhanced public servants' capacity and performance through professional training, adherence to responsibility, working compliance, and reward mechanism;
 - IT application model is set up and fulfils the Public Administrative Services in accordance with one stop shop mechanism;
 - A quality control system is applied for the operation of the State administrative agencies in Lang Son province;
 - An e-portal connecting the wards' and communes' Departments and Units under the municipal People's Committee is functioning.
 - The financial management and urban services have been transferred from the city government to the district people's committee. The project has improved the land certification process and reduced conflicts in land use rights.

Background and Objectives

Faced by issues that had constrained economic development in the country, Vietnam's Communist party, in party conference IX, acknowledged the need for administrative innovation in April 2001. Following party guidelines, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 136/QĐ-TTĐ, approving the master program for administrative innovation for 2001-2010. All the provinces and cities in the country adopted several administrative innovations, resulting in remarkable economic development, especially in the fields of investment and land procedures. However, there's room for more institutional innovations.

Lang Son is one of the middle- and small-sized cities of Vietnam that have seen good investments and economic development due to institutional innovations. The city area is about 79.18 square km and divided into eight administrative units (five wards and three communes). It has close proximity to the national border gate, where trade, tourism and other services can be promoted. The city is populated with over 10,000 people in 104 villages; population growth rate has been stable at 0.9% annually.

The project aims to:

- Simplify administrative procedures.
- Have an administrative and institutional structure, as well as policies that are attuned to the requirements of industrialization and modernization of the country.
- Promote a democratic system by encouraging people to participate in improving laws and regulations.

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- Identify clear responsibilities of public organizations, so public agencies can decentralize services and works to the private sector and to civil organizations.
 - Use information technology in implementing innovations.

The project was funded by the State budget and sources of Lang Son City. Additional financial support for the set up of the e-portal was provided by the German Company net-Com AG. Overall implementation costs: VND 2.497 billion.

A. Innovative Elements

The government introduced several innovative approaches in the way it manages and improves administrative services delivery and public participation. Reforming public administration services with One-Stop Shop policy; an inter-sectoral services delivery mechanism by different State administrative agencies (divisions) through one integrated counter to receive queries called Reception division and to return results to the public as Return division. For this policy to work efficiently, the local government ensured the following requirement were fulfilled:

- Guidelines for administrative procedures were set up.
- Assessment for the ISO-9001-2000 process was completed.
- Information technology is used in management and operations.
- A division for receiving and returning results were established.
- Adjusting the responsibility and functions of administrative organizations.
- Enhancing public servants' capacity and performance through professional training, adherence to responsibility, working compliance, and reward mechanism as stated by the Decision No 11/1998/QĐ-TCCP-CCVC of the Minister Head of the Governmental Personnel Department.
- Decentralization of financial management and urban services from the city government to the district people's committee.

The project has improved the land certification process and reduced conflicts in land use rights. Funds for the institutional innovation system come from the state budget and fees collected from local government procedures.



B. Involvement and Activities

The central and all provincial and city governments of Vietnam are involved in efforts to put in place institutional innovations. Civil society serves as people's link to the public and city organizations. Several activities of the public are:

- Completing the master plan on the urban spatial development and socio-economic development.
- Setting up the "one gate transaction" mechanism to facilitate personnel identification, issuance of building permits, registration of land use rights, and trading registration.
- Establish the flow or sequences on the Reception and Return divisions to operate One-Stop Shop mechanism.
- Setting up regulations and administrative procedures in a simple and transparent manner.
- Monitoring and reporting schedules to address possible challenges or hindrance in the administrative reform project.
- Setting up the electronic information port which is managed by the office of the People's Committee-People's Council.
- Provided training courses for Lang Son's city editorial team to manage web content.
- Provided technology-based equipment for government offices
- Contributing financial and human resources.

C. Sustainability and Replication

Institutional innovation in Lang Son City has improved procedures in economic transactions, established good relationship between the city government and the people, paved the way for public-private sector partnership—all leading toward sustainable development. The sustainability of Lang Son's public administrative reform lies on the following factors, among others:

- Clear-focused guidelines from the authority.
- Intensive information dissemination and campaign to government officials and the community on public administrative reform's effort and target.
- Commitment from all stakeholders—from the Party's Committee to the residents to implement guidelines.
- Mobilization of civil organizations to take part in the implementation and monitoring process.



This model can be replicated by other Southeast Asian cities as some socio-economic characteristics are shared, with reasonable budget and human resources. Most of cities in Vietnam cities have been adopting the same institutional innovation policies prescribed by the central government, even though each city has a different geography, demography, and economic conditions. So this model should be flexible enough to suit the character and requirements of other cities in Vietnam as well as in Southeast-Asia.

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