



Centre for Community Support
and Development Studies



PAPI

2023

The Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index

Measuring citizens' experiences, 2023

15 Years of Listening to Vietnamese Citizens' Voices

Citation: CECODES, RTA & UNDP (2024). **The Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI): Measuring Citizens' Experiences, 2023**. A Joint Policy Research Paper by Centre for Community Support and Development Studies (CECODES), Real-Time Analytics (RTA), and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Ha Noi, Viet Nam.

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Cover design: Nguyen Thuy Duong – muntoon.com

Lay-out design: Golden Sky Co. Ltd. – www.goldenskyvn.com

Publishing licence No: 759-2024/CXBIPH/2-25/TN and 642/QĐ-NXBTN issued on 15th March 2024

ISBN: 978-604-41-2450-6



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Public Administration Performance Index**

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Centre for Community Support and Development Studies (CECODES)
Real-Time Analytics (RTA)
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)



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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BRVT	Ba Ria-Vung Tau
CECODES	Centre for Community Support and Development Studies
CEPEW	Center for Education and Empowerment of Women
CI	Confidence Interval
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CPII	Citizen Powered Innovation Initiative
CRT	Centre for Research and Training
GSO	General Statistics Office of Viet Nam
HCMA	Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics
HCMC	Ho Chi Minh City
IPS	Institute for Public Policies and Media Development
LURCs	Land use rights certificates
MDRI	Mekong Development Research Institute
NESP	National E-Service Portal
OSS	One-Stop Shop
PAPI	Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index
PESP	Provincial E-Service Portal
PPS	Probability proportional to size
RTA	Real-Time Analytics
TT-Hue	Thua Thien-Hue
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USD	United States dollar
VFF	Viet Nam Fatherland Front
VFF-CRT	Centre for Research and Training of the Viet Nam Fatherland Front
VND	Viet Nam Dong
VSA	Viet Nam Sociological Association

FOREWORD

As its cover page depicts, this edition marks the 15th anniversary of the Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) and its journey to evolve and then consolidate its reputation as the country's largest, annual, citizen-centric and nationwide policy monitoring tool. This has allowed PAPI to play a unique and respected role as a mirror that reflects citizens' assessments of how local governments have delivered on their commitments enshrined in the Constitution, laws, regulations, and national policies on aspects that are close to the everyday lives, needs, and expectations of the Vietnamese people. PAPI's wealth of quantitative data provides important evidence for the policy-making and implementation processes that must involve stakeholders from grassroots to central levels in an inclusive and participatory manner. PAPI also brings together policy-makers, practitioners and citizens to engage and explore how central and local governments can better serve the Vietnamese people and ensure no one is left behind in the country's sustainable development journey.

As such, PAPI has become an integral part of Viet Nam's compelling development story over the past 15 years as it transitioned from a low- to low middle-income nation and faced a complex set of social, economic, and institutional challenges that require transformative solutions. In this dynamic environment, the need for robust and evidence-based policy-making has never been more critical. Transparency and access to information are essential pillars for maintaining public trust and fostering an open, equitable, and inclusive governance climate. Moreover, as the ultimate beneficiaries and end-users of public services and policies, citizens are increasingly demanding higher standards of accountability, effectiveness, and openness from the public system. Additionally, there is a growing call for the public sector to be proactive in promoting equitable and inclusive development, enabling public participation in decision-making, and empowering citizen-led oversight and monitoring mechanisms. These principles are enshrined in Viet Nam's 2013 Constitution, which states: *'All state agencies, cadres, officials, and employees must show respect for the People, devotedly serve the People, maintain close contact with the People, listen to their opinions and submit to their supervision; resolutely struggle against corruption, wastefulness and all manifestations of bureaucracy, arrogance, and authoritarianism'* (Article 8.2).

As a pre-eminent participatory policy monitoring tool, PAPI assists central and local governments in identifying governance challenges and anticipating where central and local governments should focus their energy and resources. With its 15 annual iterations of datasets, PAPI is the largest time-series, independent, and citizen-centric tracker of the public sector's performance. With incisive data, the PAPI Research and Advocacy Programme has evolved to include not only the PAPI survey itself, but also additional key components that include thematic research and advocacy for inclusive governance, citizen-powered innovation initiatives, and technical advice to relevant stakeholders from the central to grassroots levels.

So far, PAPI has collected the views and experiences of close to 200,000 randomly selected citizens. With its objective, rigorous, and state-of-the-art methodology, PAPI has played an instrumental role in shifting central and local governments' mindsets towards an openness to external reviews and citizens' candid feedback on governance and public administration performance. PAPI findings have been used by all 63 provincial governments to guide their action plans to respond to citizen feedback and expectations. Since 2021, this policy-monitoring barometer became even more relevant as the Communist Party of Viet Nam has directed the way forward to "modern and effective national governance reforms", while leaving no one behind, upon the 13th National Party Congress Resolution's approval on 1 February 2021 and thereafter the 2021-2030 Socio-Economic Development Strategy.

PAPI would not have been possible without generous funding from the Government of Australia and the Government of Ireland from 2018 to 2025. During its earlier development stage from 2009 to 2017, PAPI received funding from the Government of Switzerland (2011 to 2017), and the Government of Spain (2009 to 2010). PAPI's emergence and high visibility within the national governance and policy-making discourse would not have been possible without the participation of ordinary Vietnamese citizens from all walks of life, the buy-in from government agencies at multiple levels, support from national and international development partners and the media as well as thematic studies by the research community at large. As PAPI commissioners and implementers, we are committed to ensuring PAPI continues to contribute even more substantively to Viet Nam's efforts in strengthening inclusive and responsive public institutions for all citizens.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This 2023 PAPI Report is a result of the 15th iteration of a deep partnership and close 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, until September, 2023), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Viet Nam. Since 2015, Real-Time Analytics (RTA) has provided technical support to digitize PAPI's data collection processes. The Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics (HCMA) and other research institutions play a crucial role in promoting PAPI findings to central and provincial leaders, through research that supports action and policy advice.

The 2023 PAPI Report is co-authored by Ms Đỗ Thanh Huyền (Policy Analyst, UNDP Viet Nam), Dr Đặng Hoàng Giang (Deputy Director of CECODES), Dr Edmund J. Malesky (Professor of Political Economy at Duke University and a UNDP international consultant on governance measurement), Dr Paul Schuler (Associate Professor of Political Science at the University of Arizona and a UNDP international consultant on research quality control) and Dr Trần Công Chính (Deputy Director of CECODES and a Lecturer at the Faculty of Development Economics, University of Economics and Business, Viet Nam National University).

The 2023 PAPI survey was made possible with diligent guidance from the Viet Nam Fatherland Front (VFF) and its proactive collaboration with local VFF chapters from provincial to grassroots levels. Special thanks also goes to all 19,536 Vietnamese citizens who were randomly selected and participated in face-to-face interviews in 2023. These respondents actively contributed to the survey by sharing their valuable experiences of interactions with local authorities and their perspectives on governance, public administration performance and public service delivery in their localities.

The PAPI Research and Advocacy Programme is guided by the PAPI Advisory Board, which is comprised of 27 national and international members (see the list of board members on page xii). The Advisory Board delivered important insights into Vietnamese public policies and practices as well as knowledge of international standards in the areas of participatory governance and public administration. Board members also played instrumental roles in making PAPI relevant and accountable to different beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The PAPI Research and Advocacy Programme greatly benefited from strategic advice from UNDP Viet Nam, in particular Ms Ramla Khalidi, Resident Representative; Mr Patrick Haverman, Deputy Resident Representative and Ms Sabina Stein, Assistant Resident Representative and Head of Governance and Participation. Ms Nguyễn Việt Lan, UNDP Communication Specialist, has provided substantive communication support since 2009 and Ms Trần Thị Vân Anh, UNDP Communication Officer, manages PAPI communication materials and updates PAPI's website and social media channels.

The longstanding partnership with the HCMA is the result of strong support from HCMA President Dr Nguyễn Xuân Thắng and other HCMA leaders and senior experts (especially Dr Bùi Phương Đình, Dr Đặng Ánh Tuyết, Dr Lê Văn Chiến, Dr Hà Việt Hùng, Dr Trần Quang Diệu and Dr Hoàng Văn Nghĩa). HCMA has been instrumental in disseminating PAPI findings to provinces and has also used PAPI findings in its own executive training programmes over the years.

Warm appreciation is extended to the National Assembly Library for its support in disseminating annual PAPI reports to National Assembly members. This has ensured PAPI findings have been shared and discussed at National Assembly meetings.

For their invaluable work in successfully collecting PAPI data in 2023 and in previous years, special thanks goes to VFF-CRT Director Dr Lê Mậu Nhiệm, senior managers and colleagues. VFF-CRT was instrumental in facilitating engagement with the 63 provincial VFF committees for the 2023 data collection process.

Field controllers also played a critical role in the 2023 PAPI survey, including Mr/Ms Bùi Đức Khanh, Bùi Thị Thanh Hằng, Đặng Phương Giang, Đặng Quốc Trung, Đặng Phương Quý, Đặng Thị Thanh Nhân, Đinh Thu Hằng, Đinh Y Ly, Hoàng Thị Thư, Khang A Tủa, Khuất Thị Hồng Giang, Lê Kim Ngân, Lê Minh Tâm, Lê Văn Lữ, Nguyễn Hoàng Thu Thảo, Nguyễn Thị Như Thùy, Nguyễn Thu Hiền, Nguyễn Văn Hiệu, Nguyễn Văn Khang, Nguyễn Văn Thắng, Phạm Thanh Lương, Phạm Thanh Tùng, Phạm Thị Yến, Phạm Văn Thịnh, Phan Lạc Trung, Quách Minh Vinh, Trần Bội Văn, Trần Đức Ngọc, Trần Lễ Nghĩa, Trần Phương Thảo, Trần Thị Kim Anh, Trần Thị Thường, Trịnh Văn Anh and Vũ Chiến Thắng. These field controllers all deserve a special mention as they ensured the data collection process was fully compliant with strict and upgraded 2023 PAPI procedures and standards throughout the survey period from 18 August to 28 November 2023. Mr Phạm Minh Trí and Dr Trần Công Chính (CECODES), Ms Đặng Phương Thanh, Ms Nguyễn Khánh Linh and Ms Trần Thị Vân Anh (UNDP) conducted spot checks of field surveys in 21 provinces, in addition to daily monitoring through the rtSurvey application by Ms Đỗ Thanh Huyền (UNDP).

The use of the tablet-based survey application and platform called rtSurvey would not have been possible without the technical support and services provided by RTA. Our deep appreciation goes to RTA Director Dr Lê Đăng Trung and his associates, including Ms Trần Thị Phượng and others. The RTA team worked diligently to ensure that the tablet-based platform, fieldwork monitoring website (www.papivn.rtsurvey.com.vn), and real-time data collection operated smoothly and that field support services were available during the survey.

In addition, the hard work and patience of 302 enumerators, selected from 634 university student and graduate applicants across Viet Nam, are warmly acknowledged. Without these young and enthusiastic interviewers, the 2023 PAPI data collection process could not have been completed. In particular, CECODES collaborators Ms Nguyễn Phương Lan and Ms Phạm Thị Mến Thương are thanked for their support in recruiting the enumerators, following a rigorous selection process to meet strict PAPI research requirements.

The work of Mr Đặng Hoàng Phong, Ms Phạm Thị Minh Nguyệt, Mr Trần Bội Văn, Ms Trần Thị Phương Anh, Ms Trần Thị Thường, and other interns at CECODES is also recognized, particularly their pivotal roles in facilitating implementation of the fieldwork, providing logistical support, and effectively coordinating with provincial VFF committees during the data collection process. Mr Phạm Minh Trí (CECODES) followed up on the design of the 2023 tablet-based questionnaire and collaborated with the RTA team when required.

Mr Simon Drought, UNDP communication consultant, edited the English version of this report. W.G. Technology Solutions supported the development of the interactive www.papi.org.vn website. The report cover page and infographics were designed by Ms Nguyễn Thùy Dương. The 2023 PAPI Report was designed and printed by Goldensky (Richbrand) Company, which has worked on PAPI publications since 2009.

Finally, special thanks go to the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) of Australia for its significant support and co-funding of the PAPI Research and Advocacy Programme from 2018-2025, the Embassy of Ireland in Viet Nam for co-financing PAPI from 2018-2025, and UNDP in Viet Nam for its funding support since 2009.

2023 PAPI ADVISORY BOARD

Mr **Bế Trung Anh**, a standing member of the Ethnic Council of the National Assembly

Mr **Bùi Đăng Dũng**, Former Vice Chairman, Committee on Finance and Budget, National Assembly, Member of the Kien Giang Provincial National Assembly Delegation

Mr **Bùi Phương Đình**, Director, Viet Nam Institute for Sociology and Development, Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics

Ms **Doãn Hồng Nhung**, Senior Lecturer, College of Law, Viet Nam National University in Ha Noi

Mr **Đặng Nguyên Anh**, Former Vice President, Viet Nam Academy of Social Sciences

Mr **Đinh Văn Minh**, General Director of the Legislative Department, Government Inspectorate

Mr **Đinh Xuân Thảo**, Former President, Institute of Legislative Studies, National Assembly Steering Committee

Mr **Đỗ Duy Thường**, Vice Chairman of the Advisory Board on Democracy and Law, Viet Nam Fatherland Front Central Committee

Mr **Conor Finn**, Deputy Head of Mission, Embassy of Ireland in Viet Nam

Ms **Hoàng Thị Vân Anh**, Former Director of the Legal Department, Land Administration Agency of Viet Nam, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment

Ms **Ramla Khalidi**, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme in Viet Nam

Mr **Lê Văn Lân**, Former Vice Commissioner, Central Commission of Internal Affairs

Mr **Ngô Hải Phan**, Head of the Administrative Procedure Control Agency, Government Office

Mr **Nguyễn Anh Trí**, National Assembly Delegate, the National Assembly's Committee for Social Affairs

Mr **Nguyễn Đình Cung**, President of the Central Commission for Economic Management

Mr **Nguyễn Minh Hồng**, President of the Viet Nam Digital Communication Association

Mr **Nguyễn Quyết Chiến**, General Secretary, Viet Nam Union of Science and Technology

Mr **Nguyễn Sĩ Dũng**, Vice President of Viet Nam-Japan Friendship Association

Ms **Nguyễn Thị Kim Thoa**, Former General Director, Department of Criminal and Administrative Legislation, Ministry of Justice

Ms **Nguyễn Thanh Cẩm**, Standing Member, National Assembly's Committee for Social Affairs

Ms **Nguyễn Thuý Anh**, Former Division Head, Communist Party Magazine, Central Party Committee, Viet Nam Communist Party

Mr **Nguyễn Văn Quyền**, President, Viet Nam Lawyers' Association

Ms **Phạm Chi Lan**, Senior Economist and former Vice President, Viet Nam Chamber of Commerce and Industry

Mr **Phạm Duy Nghĩa**, Director of the Masters in Public Policy Programme, Fulbright University

Mr **Jonathan Pincus**, Senior International Economist, United Nations Development Programme in Viet Nam

Ms **Cherie Russell**, Development Counsellor, Australian Embassy to Viet Nam

Mr **Thang Văn Phúc**, (Advisory Board lead), former Vice Minister of Home Affairs, President of the Viet Nam Institute of Development Studies

(Note: The list is in alphabetical order by family name)

SNAPSHOT OF PAPI FROM 2009-2023

PAPI

The Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index

SNAPSHOT

AIMS

PAPI aims to generate information that can improve the performance of local governments in meeting their citizens' needs by:

01

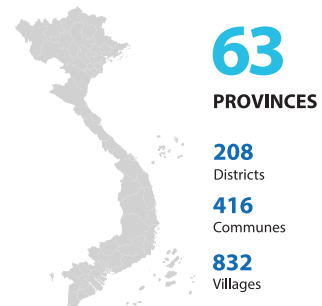
enabling citizens to benchmark their local government's performance and advocate for improvement;

02

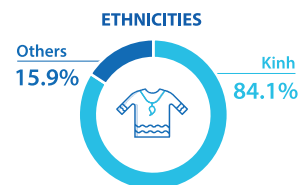
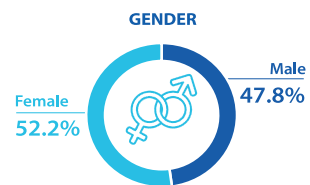
creating constructive competition and promoting learning among local authorities.

APPROACH

Citizens are at the heart of Viet Nam's development. As end users of public administration and public services, they are fully capable of assessing the performance of the State and local authorities.



19,536
RESPONDENTS TO 2023 PAPI SURVEY



More than **500** substantive questions about Viet Nam's policy matters



45-60 minutes

Face-to-face interviews
Computer-assisted personal interviews conducted on tablets

197,779
respondents from 2009 to 2023





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This edition marks the 15th anniversary of the Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI). The 2023 report features **the voices of 19,536 respondents from across Viet Nam**, who shared their experiences of local government performance in governance, public administration and public service delivery during the year through the PAPI survey conducted from August to November in 2023. The respondents represent a broad spectrum of Vietnamese citizens, aged 18 years and above, from various demographic backgrounds who were randomly selected from villages, communes, districts and sampled through a clustering approach using the probability proportion to size (PPS) method.

The primary objective of PAPI is to enhance government performance, ensuring it aligns more effectively with the evolving and multifaceted needs of citizens from a nation witnessing rapid socio-economic development. PAPI tracks how local governments have delivered on commitments enshrined in the Constitution, laws, regulations, and national policies on needs and issues that are part of the everyday lives and expectations of the Vietnamese people. PAPI aims to achieve this by promoting responsiveness, transparency, and accountability within public institutions. Additionally, it seeks to safeguard fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression, access to information, and the provision of quality basic services available to all citizens, no matter their gender, ethnicity, wealth, migration status, level of disability or sexual orientation. Gathering evidence directly from citizens as end users who interact with governments and utilize their services, PAPI also builds on its surveys by conducting follow-up thematic and action-oriented research and advocacy. Through these efforts, PAPI identifies policy gaps, informs policy-making agencies, provides policy advice, and fosters substantial enhancements in government performance.

PAPI, as a governance index, is a quantitative measurement tool that paints a comprehensive picture of how central and provincial governments have performed on an annual basis. PAPI provides data and evidence that reflect eight dimensions of government performance: (i) Participation at Local Levels, (ii) Transparency in Local Decision-making, (iii) Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens, (iv) Control of Corruption in the Public Sector, (v) Public Administrative Procedures, (vi) Public Service Delivery, (vii) Environmental Governance and (viii) E-Governance. These dimensions emphasize the participatory, inclusive, and people-centric nature of good national governance and the importance of involving citizens – in addition to State and public service providers – in every stage of the policy cycle, to ensure that citizens’ rights and obligations as provided in Viet Nam’s Constitution as well as laws and policies are protected and facilitated by the State. Looking ahead, PAPI aims to assist State and non-State stakeholders to understand how governance and public administration performance changes over time at multiple levels, and to suggest ways to address bottlenecks and challenges that impact Viet Nam’s equitable and sustainable development.

Over the course of its impactful 15-year journey, PAPI has remained dedicated to promoting evidence-based governance and public administration reforms in Viet Nam. It has been utilized by various central State bodies, including the Viet Nam Communist Party Politburo, National Assembly, and Government of Viet Nam, which have referenced PAPI findings in their official reports and provincial visit conclusions, as well as by provincial and local governments of all 63 provinces. In 2023, PAPI data and reports were extensively used by central and local governments, development partners, numerous social, political and professional organizations, the media, and research community in Viet Nam and internationally. PAPI has played a significant role in facilitating a shift towards evidence-based governance and public

administration reforms, contributing to tangible improvements in public services and the overall well-being of Vietnamese people.

As 2023 marks the third year of the 2021-2026 government term, this 2023 PAPI report provides key insights into how citizens perceived socio-economic conditions during the year, their concerns, how local authorities performed in the past 12 months and compared to their previous years' levels of performance, and how they are expected to better serve their citizens in the year(s) ahead. The following sections highlight important findings and implications from the report.

Governance and Public Administration Performance in 2023 and 2021-2023 Trends: Transparency in the Spotlight

Chapter 1 focuses on trends in PAPI indicators from a national perspective. Overall, 2023 was a year of mixed progress in these eight dimensions. From 2022 to 2023, the dimensions of Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (Dimension 4) and E-Governance (Dimension 8) showed improvements, while Public Service Delivery (Dimension 6) and Environmental Governance (Dimension 7) remained largely unchanged. However, the four remaining dimensions showed declines. Participation at Local Levels (Dimension 1), Transparency in Local Decision-making (Dimension 2), Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens (Dimension 3), and Public Administrative Procedures (Dimension 5) all regressed.

Transparency in local decision-making emerged as an area of significant concern. The biggest source of decline was reduced transparency in commune budgets and expenditure as well as transparency in poverty lists. Regarding publicity of budgets and expenditure, between 2018 and 2022, 44 to 47 percent of respondents said worksheets were publicly available within each year. This tumbled to 39 percent in 2023, the lowest since 2016. Regarding poverty lists transparency, the decline reflects a trend evident since 2019, when only 30 percent of citizens said there were eligible households missing from the list compared to 37.6 percent in 2023. Transparency is key to effective governance as it enables proactive government-citizen dialogues

on matters essential to citizens' lives. However, the indicators on transparency of poverty lists and of commune budgets and expenditure in 2023 indicated weaknesses that require an urgent response from all levels of government.

This report also goes into greater detail on the important issue of corruption. Although the Party's national anti-corruption campaign has accelerated since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago, the Party has acknowledged that the problem remains stubborn. As noted in previous PAPI reports, Control of Corruption in the Public Sector is the dimension most strongly correlated with PAPI's Overall Satisfaction with Government indicator from citizens' perspectives. On a positive note, in terms of areas of improvement, fewer respondents said that connections were required for appointments to civil service positions, such as land registrar officers, justice officers or people's committee staff since 2016. Still, in 2023, more respondents (36.7 percent) perceived that informal payments were needed to secure a job in State employment than in 2021, when viewing the change for every two years. Additionally, fewer respondents reported requiring bribes for public services. Another area of concern was that fewer respondents in 2023 said that national and local governments were serious about dealing with corruption than in 2022.

Issues of Greatest Concern from Citizens' Perspective in 2023: Public Sentiment Buffeted by Economic Headwinds

Each year since 2015, the PAPI survey asks citizens an open-ended question to assess the issue of greatest concern they think the national government should prioritize in the coming year. This question also allows policy-makers to identify issues for remedial action. Chapter 1 reveals that poverty, employment and economic growth were the top three issues, reflecting the headwinds encountered by Viet Nam's economy in 2023. Among the top 10 issues of greatest concern consolidated from more than 40 specific issues identified by citizens, poverty and hunger were cited by 22.39 percent of all respondents as the most important issue the State should address, while jobs and employment were selected by 12.79 percent of respondents. Economic growth was third at 9.2 percent. Public services in the form of roads

and education came next at 6.85 and 6.38 percent, respectively. Corruption ranked sixth at 5.25 percent. The environment was outside the top 10.

Additional analysis shows that the biggest shift in 2023 was overall concern with economic issues. Each year, since 2017, has seen an incremental increase in respondents concerned about economic issues. The number has steadily risen from 23 percent in 2017 to 33 percent in 2023. A key reason may be concern about household economic prosperity in 2023, as reflected by the 26 percent of respondents who reported their economic situation had worsened in the past five years – the highest-ever percentage since 2013, aside from the 2021 pandemic year. Similarly, the percentage of respondents saying Viet Nam’s overall economy was “good” dropped from 66 percent in 2022 to 54 percent in 2023 – a steep 12 percentage point decline. These indicators suggest that citizens in 2023 were largely pessimistic about the economy and turning to the State to address the issue.

With the surge in concern about the economy and households’ ability to make ends meet, other issues like the environment took a backseat. With that said, citizens did still exhibit an overall preference for green energy. One question, asking whether citizens would support the construction of coal or renewable power plants, showed that 91 percent of respondents supported the construction or maintenance of renewable plants – more than 15 percentage points higher than those who preferred coal plants. Nonetheless, a large proportion of the respondents preferred the construction of either type of power plants, particularly given the increased degree to which citizens in 2023 were impacted by power outages compared to 2022. More than 70 percent experienced blackouts at some point in 2023, an increase of nearly 7 percent from 63.5 percent in 2022. This suggests that, in addition to the economy, energy reliability was an important concern within society.

As Chapter 1 highlights, having improved employment opportunities is one of two primary drivers of internal migration considerations in 2023, second only to family reunions. This was in line with citizens’ heightened anxiety over the economic situation during the year. Although concerns about climate change-related natural disasters were overshadowed, a better natural environment was

the third key driver for those wishing to move from their provinces of origin. Specifically, citizens in the Mekong River Delta increasingly experienced greater salinization of their farmland, while Central Coastal region residents faced floods more frequently.

These findings are significant as Viet Nam faces increasing pressure to meet commitments to reduce reliance on coal power, while simultaneously increasing power capacity to meet growing demand for socio-economic activities. They point to a challenging situation where Viet Nam must balance the need for economic growth with the international commitments and aspirations for climate adaptation to protect citizens and their livelihoods in areas most vulnerable to intensifying climate change-driven disasters.

Electronic Governance and E-Services in 2023: a Digital Divide Looms Large

Chapter 2 turns its attention to how citizens experienced access to the internet, e-government, and online public services since 2016, when PAPI started measuring e-governance performance through the ‘E-Governance’ dimension. From 2020 to 2022, Viet Nam and its leadership has instituted a wave of policies and decrees aimed at bringing public policy information and administrative procedures online. Some objectives of these policies are reducing bureaucratic discretion and corruption, improving transparency, and enhancing government efficiency. Chapter 2 pulls back the curtain to explore these efforts from service users’ perspectives.

One area of clear success is increased internet access. Those accessing the internet at home continued a steady rise, jumping from 75 percent in 2022 to 80 percent in 2023. This represents a remarkable increase from 31 percent in 2016. With that said, a digital divide is apparent in access to the internet at home, personal computers and smartphones to facilitate citizens’ participation in effective e-governance. In terms of access to the internet, while women and men were increasingly logging on, a persistent 5-10 percentage point gap has favoured men over the years. Similarly, ethnic minorities had a constant 10-20 percentage point lower level of access compared to the Kinh majority. Regarding access to personal computers, PAPI findings from 2018 to 2023 reveal constantly

larger gaps between urban and rural residents, Kinh and non-Kinh citizens as well as permanent and non-permanent residents at the national aggregate level when compared with the divide in internet access. In particular, when comparing access to personal computers between permanent and non-permanent resident respondents in destination provinces, the percentage of the former group was 13 percent higher than the latter in 2023.

While the vast majority (90.8 percent) of respondents in the 2023 PAPI survey reported they had smartphones, it is important to spotlight any gaps in smartphone ownership. The 2018-2023 PAPI survey findings show that, among the three connection conditions (internet connection, personal computers and smartphones) that can be used for online news and e-services, the level of smartphone ownership tends to be equally distributed across each of the four population groups examined by PAPI and has been on a converging trend towards 2023. The largest smartphone ownership gap is seen between the Kinh majority (92.96 percent) and ethnic minorities (86.88 percent). Permanent and non-permanent residents in destination provinces were virtually indistinguishable in their level of smartphone access. Smartphones, considering their availability and wide use by different segments of society, can be utilized to enhance the use of public e-services by Vietnamese citizens.

While a rising percentage of the population is now online, this progress is not matched by improvements in completion of administrative procedures online. Since 2020, there has been a steady climb in respondents saying that forms for certification procedures or land use rights certificates (LURC) are available online. However, only a small number reported being able to complete the procedures fully online. About 12 percent said they completed certification procedures, while 5 percent reported they could process some part of the LURC application procedures online. Online service for criminal records were a bright spot, with about 28 percent processing applications for criminal records online. In general, citizens' experience was better in urban than rural areas. Five centrally-run municipalities (Can Tho, Da Nang, Ha Noi, Hai Phong and Ho Chi Minh City) reported the highest number of respondents completing applications online. With that said, in

centrally-run municipalities, as in other areas, most procedures still had to be finalized in person even when started online.

One area of encouraging improvement was the National E-Service Portal (NESP). In 2023, nearly double the number of citizens reported visiting the portal and setting up an account compared to 2022. Passport processing is one of the most popular procedures that citizens favour being handled by the NESP. The growing traction of the NESP provides promise that there is demand for online procedures if they are made efficient and easy-to-use.

Assessing Provincial Performance in 2023: Identifying Priorities for Immediate Action to Close Gaps

Chapter 3 highlights the key 2023 findings regarding provincial performance in the eight dimensions of governance and public administration that PAPI measures, as well as provincial performance in the aggregate 2023 PAPI. Because the index structure was largely unchanged in 2023 compared to 2021, while 2023 is the third year of the 2021-2026 government term, findings can be compared at indicator, sub-dimension and dimension levels, except for two new indicators in the E-Governance dimension. Where necessary, time-series perspectives of key indicators are presented to show meaningful trends over 2021 and 2023, allowing provincial governments to identify areas for improvement and strive for better performance in the coming years. As in previous PAPI reports, to help provide readers and stakeholders with a visual break-down of performance within each dimension, PAPI groups scores under four quartiles: High, Mid-High, Mid-Low and Low, with 25 percent of 63 provinces in each group. It should be noted that two provinces (Binh Duong and Quang Ninh) are not included in this report because of their poor data integrity.

Participation at Local Levels: Participation in political, social, and economic life is a constitutional right for all Vietnamese citizens aged 18 years and above. Such participation is crucial for citizens to exercise their democratic rights and contribute to improving local governance. The PAPI dimension of Participation at Local Levels measures citizens' awareness of their right to political participation,

how they participate in elections and local decision-making, as well as how local governments facilitate citizens' rights to participation in accordance with the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation.

- **All provinces scored between 3.69 and 5.91 points on the 1-10 point scale, showing little improvement in their performance in citizen participation at local levels compared to 2021.** When compared with 2021's findings, 24 provinces made positive and significant changes in 2023, while only eight provinces saw scores decline markedly. The remainder of the 27 provinces did not experience significant changes. Substantial gaps to fill emerged for all provinces with respect to enhancing citizens' knowledge of important policies, ensuring inclusive village head elections, and securing citizens' participation in decision-making in local infrastructure projects.
- **In most provinces, citizens have not been informed or are unaware of important laws,** including the 2016 Law on Access to Information and the 2018 Law on Anti-Corruption. In 2023, the score range for Civic Knowledge was 0.72-1.32 points on a scale of 0.25 to 2.5 points. Analysis from the new question about knowledge of the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation reveals that between 14.23 to 45.97 percent of respondents across 61 provinces have heard about the law.
- **There was regression in local governments' performance in engaging citizens' participation in decision-making to start or reconstruct a local project and in project implementation oversight in 2023 compared to 2021.** The percentage of respondents who reported participating in decision-making to start or reconstruct a local infrastructure project ranged between 15.14 to 63.16 percent, with 45 provinces posting proportions below 50 percent, 10 provinces more than in 2021. Also, a significant number of local infrastructure projects did not benefit from citizens' oversight, as the percentage of respondents noting that local Community Investment Supervision Boards were in place to monitor projects with citizens' voluntary contributions was below 50 percent in 58 provinces, a larger number of provinces than found in 2021 and 2022.

Transparency in Local Decision-making: PAPI measures how local governments facilitate access to government information and respond to civic rights to understand how public policies impact citizens' lives and livelihoods across four sub-dimensions: (i) Access to Information, (ii) Transparency in Poverty Lists, (iii) Transparency in Commune Budget and Expenditure, and (iv) Transparency in Local Land Use Planning and Pricing.

- **All provinces scored between 4.31 to 5.88 points on the 1-10 point scale, a significant decrease in the score range compared to 2021.** Twelve provinces took steps forward in 2023 compared to 2021, while 23 provinces saw significant year-on-year declines and 24 saw little change. As in previous years, provinces in northern regions tended to perform better than southern peers in this dimension. Five provinces in the North Central and Central Coastal region, four in the Red River Delta region, and three in Northern Mid-land and Mountainous Region are among 15 provinces in the High quartile. Meanwhile, among 16 provinces in the Low quartile, eight provinces are from the Mekong River Delta region, three from the Central Highlands and three from the Southeastern region.
- **Of the four sub-dimensions, Transparency of Poverty Lists saw the highest score ranges** (1.30 to 2.02 points), on a scale of 0.25-2.5 points, while Communal Budget and Expenditure and Transparent Land-Use Plan/Price Frames saw lower ranges (1.03 to 1.53 points, and 1.06 to 1.52 points, respectively). Access to information about State policy and legislation remains the weakest sub-dimension of the four, with provincial scores ranging from 0.7 to 1.05 points.
- **Citizens' access to information about local land plans and official land price frames in 2023 remained limited in all provinces.** The percentages of respondents gaining awareness of local land plans ranged from 6 to 31 percent in 59 provinces with comparable scores over time, among which 14 provinces had a proportion exceeding 20 percent. In another key area of interest, the percentages of respondents aware of where they could access local governments' official land price frames ranged from 17 to 66 percent in the 59 provinces in 2023. Of the provinces, 23 saw a significant rise of above 5 percent in 2023 compared to 2021.

Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens: This dimension consists of three sub-dimensions: (i) Interaction with Local Authorities, (ii) Government's Responsiveness to Citizen Appeals, and (iii) Access to Justice Services. Together, they reflect how local governments respond to citizens' requests, proposals, denunciations, complaints and petitions and examines citizens' trust in courts and judicial agencies.

- **All provinces scored below 4.66 points on the 1-10 point scale. Overall, there was no improvement in scores in this dimension over the three years in 44 provinces.** Only five provinces (Cao Bang, Dien Bien, Lai Chau, Soc Trang and Son La) made significant progress in 2023 compared to 2021. Meanwhile, 10 provinces (Ben Tre, Ca Mau, Dong Nai, Dong Thap, Hai Duong, Hai Phong, Hau Giang, Long An, Quang Nam and Thanh Hoa) saw declines of more than 5 percentage points from 2021 scores.
- **Local authorities' performance in interactions with citizens remained tepid,** as provinces' scores ranged from 1.65 to 2.24 points on a scale of 0.33-3.34 points. Of the four positions surveyed in the Interactions with Local Authorities sub-dimension (village heads, commune government officials, People's Council members and mass organization members), the level of confidence in village heads who were the first person, at the grassroots level, that citizens would report to and request assistance with an issue of concern remained the highest in 2023, although it declined in 44 provinces compared to 2021 survey results. When encountering a problem, such as a civil dispute or disagreement with a local public official, citizens tended to approach Commune People's Committee officials rather than elected representatives at Commune People's Councils to report and request assistance, as evidenced across all 61 provinces.
- **Handling citizens' petitions and proposals was the poorest-performing aspect for all provinces in 2023.** Less than half of all respondents in all provinces sent petitions, complaints or proposals to their local governments. Of those who did send complaints, less than half were satisfied with the resolution outcome. Provinces where more than two-thirds of petitioners were comfortable with

the resolution outcomes were Quang Binh and Quang Tri. Complaint-makers in An Giang, Hai Phong, Long An, Tien Giang and Tra Vinh were the least satisfied. Meanwhile, non-court mechanisms for civil dispute resolutions have yet to gain the trust of most citizens in all provinces. Similar to previous years' findings, respondents reported a preference for local courts rather than local mediation groups when engaged in a civil dispute. More than 20 percent of respondents expressed trust in local mediation groups in Ben Tre, Ca Mau, Can Tho and Hau Giang, while a moderate level (46 to 57 percent) said they would use local courts in these provinces.

Control of Corruption in the Public Sector: This dimension is comprised of four sub-dimensions: (i) Limits on Corruption in Local Governments, (ii) Limits on Corruption in Public Service Delivery, (iii) Equity in State Employment, and (iv) Willingness to Fight Corruption. They measure the performance of public institutions and local governments in controlling corruption in the public sector and reflects citizens' tolerance of corrupt practices.

- **Provincial scores in this dimension varied greatly, ranging from 5.86 to 8.15 points on a 1-10 point scale.** Unlike previous years, 2023 saw more provinces from the North Central and Central Coastal region (five provinces) and the Northern Mid-land and Mountainous region (five provinces) emerge in the top-performing High quartile in this dimension. In contrast, four out of five provinces from the Central Highlands (except for Dak Lak, which is in the mid-low quartile group) descended into the low-performing group in 2023, as did four out of 11 provinces in the Red River Delta region.
- **Equity in State Employment remains the weakest of all four sub-dimensions,** with provincial scores ranging from 0.95 to 1.71 points on a scale of 0.25-2.5 points in 2023, much lower than ranges across the other three sub-dimensions. Bribes for employment in the public sector remain common, both in poor and better-off provinces, as was evident in previous years. The three poorest performers include Binh Phuoc, Dak Nong and Hai Phong, with the first two worse off and the last significantly better off in terms of economic development. Furthermore, personal

relationships remain important for five public positions at commune level (land registrars, judicial officers, police, public primary school teachers and Commune People's Committee staff) in every province. Gia Lai and Ha Nam are two provinces where personal relationships to gain State employment were perceived as most profound in 2023.

- **Bribery for land use rights certificates (LURCs) remained a common practice**, as the proportions of applicants for LURCs who paid a bribe ranged from 19 to 81 percent in 61 provinces, with the lowest seen in Tay Ninh and the highest in Lam Dong. The good news is that the number of respondents who had to pay a bribe for LURCs reduced in 34 provinces, with nine (Ca Mau, Cao Bang, Dien Bien, Ha Tinh, Hau Giang, Hung Yen, Soc Trang, Tay Ninh and Tuyen Quang) seeing a decline by more than 20 percent compared to 2021. In contrast, the number jumped by more than 20 percent in four provinces (Da Nang, Hoa Binh, Lam Dong and Quang Tri) over the three years.
- **Informal payments for better care at district public hospitals remains a problem in many provinces.** The proportions of users of district public hospitals who paid a bribe in 2023 ranged from 40 to 80 percent in 40 provinces in 2023. The proportions are the lowest – but still between 20-30 percent – in Ben Tre, Da Nang and Kon Tum. Compared to 2021, fewer incidences of bribegiving were found in 32 provinces, with Bac Kan, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Binh Dinh, Gia Lai, Ninh Binh and Thai Binh seeing reductions of more than 20 percent.

Public Administrative Procedures: This dimension reflects the quality of three public administrative services: (i) Certification Services by Local Governments, (ii) Application Procedures for LURCs and (iii) Application Procedures for Personal Documents handled by Commune Governments. It examines how professional and responsive government staff from provincial to commune levels are in providing public administrative services.

- **Provincial scores in 2023 ranged from 6.68 to 7.64 points on a scale from 1-10 points, lower than the range in 2021.** Five provinces made significant improvements over the two years, with Ba Ria-Vung Tau and Tien Giang making the most

impressive progress with growth rates of 10.4 and 9.6 percentage points, respectively. However, as many as 49 provinces posted little change, while four provinces (Hai Duong, Hai Phong, Vinh Phuc and Thua Thien-Hue) each regressed more than 5 percentage points over the three years.

- **Procedures and administrative services for LURCs remained more problematic than those for local government certification and personal papers in 2023, as was the case in previous years.** Provincial scores ranged from 1.98 to 2.57 points on a scale of 0.33-3.34 points, wider and lower than those for government certification and personal paper services. Applicants in most provinces had varied assessments by four criteria, especially in terms of meeting deadlines. Cao Bang, HCMC, Quang Binh and Vinh Long provinces had the lowest total quality scores, while Bac Lieu, Hung Yen, Ninh Thuan, Tra Vinh and Thua Thien-Hue had the highest – but still a significant gap from achieving a perfect score. In most provinces, missed deadlines to return LURCs to applicants was a common issue. On a positive note, LURC applicants were less commonly required to engage with more officials than stipulated during the processing of paperwork in 38 provinces compared to 2021.
- **Government certification services provided by public officials from provincial to commune levels were rated highly in all provinces.** Provincial scores ranged from 2.20 to 2.63 points on a scale of 0.33-3.34 points. Over the three years, a slight improvement in total quality of services was noted in 34 provinces, with the increase in Ba Ria-Vung Tau most significant (by 0.62 points).
- **Administrative services for personal papers handled by commune governments were rated highly**, with provincial scores ranging from 2.28 to 2.59 points on a scale of 0.33-3.34 points. Similar to 2021's findings, applicants in most provinces had similar experiences with the total quality of public administrative services for personal papers at commune one-stop shops – except for Kon Tum, Lam Dong and Phu Yen – where users gave lower scores for services. In most provinces, the lack of publicly displayed fees for services at one-stop shops is an issue that requires urgent remedial action.

Public Service Delivery: This dimension looks at four public services: (i) public health care, (ii) public primary education, (iii) basic infrastructure and (iv) law and order. To explore this dimension, citizens were asked about their direct experiences with the accessibility, quality and availability of these services.

- **Provincial scores in 2023 ranged between 6.76 to 8.30 points on the 1-10 point scale, lower than seen in 2021 for this dimension.** Provinces in the High quartile are mainly found in the Red River Delta (seven out of 11 provinces), while each of the two regions of the Northcentral and Central Coast as well as the Mekong River Delta contributes three provinces. However, seven Mekong Delta provinces also featured in the Low quartile, while the Northern Mid-land and Mountainous provided four provinces. Strikingly, Dien Bien posted significantly higher scores in 2023 than 2021, while 17 provinces saw large declines. Also, as many as 41 provinces retained the status quo with little movement over the three years.
- **Primary Education saw the largest difference in provincial performance across the four public service sub-dimensions,** with provincial scores ranging from 1.02 to 2.21 on a scale of 0.25-2.5 points. Looking deeper into citizens' assessment of public primary schools, among eight service quality criteria that PAPI measures, teachers' favouritism towards students attending extra classes remained constant across all provinces, with Dak Lak, Hai Phong, Phu Yen, Quang Ngai and Thai Binh having considerable room for improvement. The next criterion that requires the primary education sector's attention is on public primary school class sizes (below 36 students per class by the national standard), especially to address the situation in Ha Noi, HCMC, Lam Dong and Thai Binh.
- **Public district hospitals in all provinces were viewed as demonstrating a need for upgrades when rated against the 10 service quality criteria that PAPI measures.** Especially, respondents in Ca Mau, Cao Bang, Da Nang, Ha Noi and HCMC gave extremely low scores for their respective public district hospitals. Users of hospitals at top-performing provinces – like Ha Tinh, Hau Giang

and Hoa Binh – still complained about bed-sharing, unclean restrooms, waiting times to be attended by healthcare workers, and healthcare workers' priming of private pharmacy outlets.

- **The quality of roads near respondents' homes and frequency of garbage collection varied greatly between poor and well-off provinces.** Better quality roads, such as those covered with asphalt or concrete, were found in more affluent provinces such as Bac Ninh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Hai Phong and HCMC, while roads of sub-optimal quality (covered with gravel or dirt) were common in poorer provinces such as Cao Bang, Dak Nong, Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan and Quang Ngai. Likewise, garbage pick-up frequency is clearly higher in urbanized provinces than rural ones. Once-a-week or daily garbage pick-ups were reported in 14 provinces (such as Bac Ninh, Da Nang, Ha Noi, Hai Phong and Vinh Phuc) while much less frequently provided in poorer provinces like Bac Kan, Binh Phuoc, Dien Bien, Ha Giang, Kon Tum, Quang Ngai and Yen Bai.
- **Law and order regressed in 36 provinces due to the rising number of victim break-ins, robberies, thefts or instances of physical violence in 2023 compared to 2021.** The five provinces that witnessed the largest jump in the number of law-and-order crime victims at grassroots level in 2023 were Binh Thuan, Hau Giang, Lai Chau, Lam Dong and Vinh Phuc.

Environmental Governance: This dimension reflects citizens' assessment of environmental aspects of air and water quality, as well as the integrity of local governments and businesses in protecting the environment. It sets some baselines to assist local governments in understanding citizens' environmental concerns over time.

- **All provinces scored below 4.3 points on the 1-10 point scale in 2023, below the national highest score of 4.73 points in 2021.** Eight provinces (Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Bac Lieu, Dien Bien, Ha Giang, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Soc Trang and Tra Vinh) made significant improvements over the past three years, while 26 provinces scored lower in 2023 than 2021. As found in previous years, hubs of environmental concern remain in the Red River Delta and Southeast regions, where

more industrial provinces are located, and the Central Highlands. Among 16 provinces in the Low quartile, six are from the Red River Delta and four each from the Southeast and Central Highlands regions. The Mekong River Delta was more highly rated than other regions, with eight out of 13 provinces in the High quartile.

- **Local governments’ perceived lack of commitment to environmental protection and the poor quality of domestic water sources are drivers of low provincial scores.** Up to one-fifth of respondents in all provinces agreed that companies in their localities gave bribes to local governments to bypass environmental regulations. The good news is the proportions in agreement increased in 24 provinces, higher than in 2022, but still declined in 35 provinces compared to 2021. The largest year-on-year drops in percentages of respondents who believed their local governments did not accept bribes from companies to avoid enforcing green regulations (by more than 18 percent) were seen in Hai Phong, Phu Tho, Quang Binh, Thai Binh, and Thanh Hoa.
- **Shining a light on government responses to citizen reports of local environmental problems, more respondents in 25 provinces said their local governments responded immediately to such reports in 2023 compared to three years ago.** Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Binh Phuoc and Tien Giang provinces had the highest increases (of more than 20 percent) in reporters with positive feedback in 2023. In contrast, An Giang, Dak Lak, Lang Son, Nam Dinh, Quang Nam and Yen Bai saw the largest drops (by more than 20 percent).

E-Governance: This dimension presents citizens’ assessment of the key ingredients for e-government: that is the availability, accessibility, user-friendliness and responsiveness of online public services. The dimension provides information on the availability of local government online portals for citizens to access policy information and public services, and whether citizens have internet access—the enabling environment to participate in e-government. It also assists local governments to more effectively interact with citizens via online platforms at every stage of the policy cycle—from policy-making and policy implementation to policy monitoring and evaluation.

- **All provinces scored below four points on the 1-10 point scale, similar to results from 2020 to 2022.** Up to 39 provinces made encouraging year-on-year improvements, while three provinces (Ha Nam, Lam Dong and Nghe An) saw dramatic declines from 2021. Among 15 provinces in the High quartile, five are from the Red River Delta and three from Northcentral and Central Coastal regions. Three centrally-governed municipalities (Da Nang, Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City) also feature in the top bracket. Meanwhile, poorer performing provinces were concentrated in the Central Highlands and Mekong River Delta.
- **Poor results in Access to E-government Portals and Government Responsiveness through E-government Portals were attributed to the overall poor performance in e-government services, while the Access to Internet sub-dimension excelled.** Citizens’ experiences in 2023 indicated a constant large divide between access to the internet and e-government portals for e-services seen over the past three years. Differences of greater than two points between the Access to the Internet and the Access to E-government Portals sub-dimensions are evident in 11 provinces, with Da Nang, Ha Noi, Hai Duong and HCMC seeing the widest gaps (2.22 to 2.37 points of difference). Meanwhile, there is great potential for increased access to e-services in 38 provinces, where the Access to the Internet sub-dimension inched up 0.15 to 0.92 points over the three years.
- **The lack of attention to the user-friendliness of provincial government portals remains a weakness in all provinces.** Fewer than 40 percent of respondents familiar with their provincial websites in 61 provinces said the portals were user-friendly in 2023. Users in 42 provinces rated their provincial government portals more poorly in 2023 than 2021. The number was higher in 2023 compared to 2021 in 14 provinces, with the largest increases in Lai Chau and Soc Trang.
- **The attractiveness of provincial e-service portals for administrative services is still to catch the attention of citizens at large.** Findings from the two new indicators (‘Percentage of Respondents Having Used Online Government Service Portals’ and ‘Percentage of Users Being

Able to Pay for Services Online’) show that, in all provinces, fewer than 17 percent of respondents undergoing administrative procedures in 2023 used their respective province’s online government service portal. In 17 provinces, fewer than 5 percent used e-services (with the lowest found in An Giang, Ben Tre, and Tien Giang), while in 29 provinces the proportions ranged from 5 to less than 10 percent. In 15 other provinces, the proportions of e-service users were 10.5 to 16.5 percent (the highest in Ha Giang, Thai Nguyen and Vinh Phuc). Among the few users in Hai Duong and Tuyen Quang, almost all said they could pay online for e-services. While in Gia Lai, Hau Giang and Tra Vinh, none of the users could pay online.

Aggregate 2023 PAPI at the Provincial Level: As an aggregate index, calculated by adding up each province’s scores in the eight PAPI dimensions, PAPI serves as a dashboard that shows a province’s governance and public administration performance in a certain year in a holistic manner. The 2023 PAPI findings reveal that:

- **Provincial performance did not differ greatly across provinces when considering the 2023 aggregated PAPI scores for 61 provinces.** The 2023 gap between the lowest and highest possible provincial scores (38.97 points and 46.04 points, respectively) is 7.07 points, smaller than the divides in 2021 and 2022 (10.84 and 9.07 points, respectively). This means that provincial scores became more convergent, implying that provincial governments should not pay too much attention to the aggregated scores.
- **Northern and central provinces tend to outperform their southern peers.** Among 15 provinces in the High quartile, five are from the Northcentral and Central Coastal region and four from the Red River Delta. Among 16 provinces in the Low quartile, seven are from the Mekong River Delta and three from the Central Highlands.
- **The number of improvers in provincial performance by dimension matters because they indicate which provinces have acted upon previous years’ PAPI findings in which areas.** Compared to 2021’s findings, 24 provinces did significantly better in Participation at Local Levels (Dimension 1), 12 provinces in Transparency

in Local Decision-making (Dimension 2), five provinces in Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens (Dimension 3), 12 provinces in Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (Dimension 4), and 39 provinces in E-Governance (Dimension 8). Meanwhile, only six provinces posted a higher score of significance (with a 5 percent increase or greater) in Public Administrative Procedures (Dimension 5), one province in Public Service Delivery (Dimension 6), and eight provinces in Environmental Governance (Dimension 7), respectively. In contrast, 19 provinces poorly performed in Dimension 4, 17 provinces in Dimension 6, and 26 provinces in Dimension 7, respectively.

- **Local governance and public administration has not been inclusive for short- and long-term non-permanent residents in destination provinces.** The 2023 survey findings reveal profound differences between Dak Nong, Quang Nam, and Thai Nguyen and nine other provinces and centrally-governed municipalities (Bac Giang, Bac Ninh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Can Tho, Da Nang, Dong Nai, Ha Noi, HCMC and Long An). In Dak Nong and Thai Nguyen, non-permanent respondents had a more positive assessment overall than permanent respondents. In contrast, non-permanent residents had much poorer experiences in interacting with local governments in receiving provinces in Dong Nai and Long An than in Bac Giang, Bac Ninh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Can Tho, Da Nang, Ha Noi and HCMC.

As previous PAPI reports have reiterated, PAPI is a collection of data points that provincial authorities should explore to understand their citizens’ feedback and expectations. As an aggregate index, PAPI serves as a dashboard that shows a province’s performance in a certain year in a holistic manner and highlights gaps from the expected maximum scores. However, to understand what can be done to improve a province’s performance, provincial leaders are strongly advised to examine the findings of all indicators that make up the PAPI dimensions and review their performance trends. The rich information contained in more than 120 PAPI indicators will help provinces prioritize their focus areas and assign responsibilities to relevant local government agencies to increase citizen satisfaction with their performances in 2024 and beyond.



15 Years of Listening to Vietnamese Citizens' Voices



INTRODUCTION

What is PAPI?

The Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) is the country's largest, annual, citizen-centric, nationwide policy monitoring tool. PAPI captures citizens' experiences and perceptions to benchmark the performance and quality of policy implementation and service delivery of all 63 provincial governments in Viet Nam. Importantly, it advocates for and contributes to a more effective and responsive State apparatus in Viet Nam in the immediate and medium terms.

PAPI's ultimate goal is to realize gains in government performance to better meet citizens' evolving and multi-faceted everyday needs, the responsiveness, transparency, and accountability of public institutions and ensure basic human rights in terms of freedom of expression, access to information as well as quality basic services. With evidence collected from citizens as the end-users of government services, not only through PAPI surveys but also follow-up thematic and action-oriented research and advocacy, PAPI helps identify policy gaps, informs policy-making agencies, provides policy advice and encourages robust improvements in government performance. Eventually, PAPI aims to assist State and non-State stakeholders to understand how governance and public administration performance changes over time at multiple levels, and to suggest ways to address bottlenecks and challenges that impact Viet Nam's equitable and sustainable development.

Since 2009, PAPI has collected the views of **197,779** citizens randomly selected through state-of-the-art sampling methods to ensure they are representative and reflect the diverse demographic backgrounds of the Vietnamese population (see Appendix B). For the 2023 PAPI survey, a record **19,536** respondents shared their reflections on how they perceived and

have experienced local governments' performance in governance, public administration and public service delivery. Upon removing "noisy data" from two provinces,¹ this report presents the voices of 18,940 respondents in most of the analysis of national and provincial trends. The 2023 sample also includes 992 non-permanent residents² as part of an effort to understand how such non-permanent residents (or internal migrants) assess their host provinces in terms of governance performance and public service delivery.

What does PAPI Measure?

PAPI, as a governance index, is a quantitative measurement tool that paints a comprehensive picture of how central and provincial governments have performed on an annual basis. PAPI provides data and evidence that reflect eight dimensions of government performance: (i) Participation at Local Levels, (ii) Transparency in Local Decision-making, (iii) Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens, (iv) Control of Corruption in the Public Sector, (v) Public Administrative Procedures, (vi) Public Service Delivery, (vii) Environmental Governance and (viii) E-Governance. The first six dimensions have been included in PAPI to track local governments' performance since 2009, while the last two were added from 2018 to provide evidence for gauging progress in these important areas of governance in Viet Nam. These dimensions emphasize the participatory, inclusive, and citizen-centric nature of good national governance and the importance of involving citizens – in addition to State and public service providers – in every stage of the policy cycle, to ensure that citizens' rights and obligations as provided in Viet Nam's Constitution as well as laws and policies are protected and facilitated by the State.

Numerous national citizen-centric, human-development, and sustainable development-related strategies and legislation have informed

1 As stated in Chapter 3, analytical results for Binh Duong and Quang Ninh were not included because data from surveys in these two provinces (a total sample of 596 respondents) contained a high degree of "data noise" that caused z-scores larger than two standard deviations in almost every dimension, also with sufficient evidence of respondent priming before the actual PAPI fieldwork in these two provinces.
 2 Non-permanent residents were from 11 provinces with positive net ratios of internal migrants as per the 2019 Census (General Statistics Office, 2019) and Bac Giang as a newly added province for its expanded non-permanent population.

PAPI's indicators, post-PAPI thematic discussions and technical support to several local governments to promote better and inclusive governance and public administration. However, two critical legal documents that have guided PAPI's development over the past 15 years are Ordinance No. 34/2007/PL-UBTVQH on the Implementation of Grassroots Democracy at the Commune Level, and the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation, which replaced the ordinance.

All these directions, policies, and legal reform intentions are important building blocks to advance further institutional reforms that engage citizens politically, socially, economically and signpost a pathway towards a more open, transparent, responsive, strong, and inclusive State apparatus and government system in the next decade as Viet Nam has envisioned in its development strategies and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030. Moreover, these policy directions and commitments will assist in building citizens' trust while strengthening public institutions when there are well-consulted, well-evidenced, and fully enforced. PAPI serves as key indicators to gauge the implementation of such policies and legislation, while promoting better governance and citizen-centric public administration in Viet Nam.

PAPI serves as a means of verification for better governance and public administration at the local level, while also informing the central level policy cycle in Viet Nam. With the index and its follow-up thematic policy research and discussions, the PAPI Research and Advocacy Programme aims to provide timely data, information, and suggestions for relevant government agencies to review their performance and develop policies and action plans. PAPI emphasizes inclusive governance and public services, encompassing voters who are women, men, ethnic minorities, internal migrants, persons with disabilities, and persons with diverse gender identity and sexual orientation as both participants in and beneficiaries of the policy process in Viet Nam.

How was 2023 PAPI Data Collected?

As presented in Appendix B, in 2023, the research team used 2019 Census data to resample districts, communes, villages, and permanent respondents using PAPI's clustering sampling approach, probability

portion to size (PPS) and randomization—all procedures that PAPI has adopted since 2010.³ Also, since 2021, migrants have become part of the population sampled and surveyed in PAPI, building on the insightful 2020 and 2021 surveys of non-permanent residents in provinces with positive net in-migrant rates (Ha Noi, Ho Chi Minh City, Da Nang, Binh Duong, Dong Nai, Bac Ninh, Can Tho, Long An, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Dak Nong, Thai Nguyen and Bac Giang, by order of largest to smallest) based on the 2019 Census⁴ and the latest development of internal migration in Bac Giang (which from 2023 replaced Lai Chau).

The 2023 PAPI survey has maintained its approaches and steps as adopted in 2011.⁵ As soon as the 2023 questionnaire was updated and finalized, data collection was rolled out from 18 August to 28 November 2023. All questions were designed to capture citizens' experiences in 2023, and additional questions were included to collect their views of local land governance, grassroots democracy implementation and access to online public services. Also, the research team adopted questions and techniques to counter local governments' priming of respondents to screen out unreliable data.

What are PAPI's Highlights in 2023?

Over the course of its 15-year journey, PAPI has remained dedicated to promoting evidence-based governance and public administration reforms in Viet Nam. PAPI has been utilized by various central State agencies, including the Viet Nam Communist Party Politburo, National Assembly, and Government of Viet Nam, which have referenced PAPI findings in their official reports and provincial visit conclusions. In 2023, PAPI data and reports were extensively used by central and local governments, development partners, numerous social, political and professional organizations, the media, and research community in Viet Nam and internationally. As the 2023 Mid-Term Review⁶ stated, PAPI has played a significant role in facilitating a shift towards evidence-based governance and public administration reforms, contributing to improvements in public services and the overall well-being of Vietnamese people.

Notably, PAPI delivered a highly successful hybrid launch of the 2022 PAPI Report on 12 April 2023,⁷ which attracted more than 500 participants at the venue in Ha Noi, about 200 online attendants as well

3 See PAPI methodology since 2010 at: <https://papi.org.vn/eng/hoi-dap/>.

4 See General Statistics Office (GSO) (December 2019), p. 105.

5 See the nine steps to success of the annual PAPI survey iteration at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P32aurA9V6k&t=100s>.

6 See the Final Mid-Term Review of the PAPI Research Programme at: <https://erc.undp.org/evaluation/evaluations/detail/13569?tab=documents>.

7 See the official launch of the 2022 PAPI Report at: <https://www.youtube.com/PAPIVietNam>.

as tens of thousands of virtual views and reviews within one month of the launch. In addition, the National Assembly Library, as in previous years, shared this latest PAPI report with National Assembly members to ensure its findings could be discussed during the May-June 2023 National Assembly session.

In 2023, PAPI findings from 2022 were shared at numerous thematic workshops hosted by different international, national, and provincial conveners. In particular, 36 provinces organized PAPI diagnostic workshops to disseminate 2022 PAPI findings and solutions to thousands of public officials and civil servants in their respective provinces. Such events were captured and reported in quarterly PAPI bulletins in 2023.⁸ Importantly, 62 provinces renewed commitments to improve their respective local government's performance in response to PAPI findings.⁹

Upon review of Viet Nam's 2023 legislative and policy agenda¹⁰ and the need for inclusive governance and improved public services for all, a series of novel policy research papers, advocacy activities and initiatives inspired by PAPI findings over time were rolled out by UNDP and its national partners. In 2023, 16 policy and action research papers and knowledge products were commissioned, covering 10 of PAPI's focus areas: (1) access to e-services in three ethnic minority populated provinces of Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan and Binh Phuoc, (2) budget transparency at the national and provincial levels, (3) second review of local governments' performance in disclosure of 2022 district land plans, (4) first review of user-friendliness and accessibility of all 63 provincial e-service portals, (5) second assessment of disability inclusion in local governance and public administration in 2023, (6) good practices in promotion of women in politics in Viet Nam, (7) promotion of citizen participation in environment governance in Ha Noi, (8) internal migration and its impacts on local governance in the Red River and Mekong River deltas, (9) gender equity in leadership and management in the context of digital transformation and (10) an overview of international good practices to ensure personal and property rights of transgender people. Also, two public sector innovation initiatives were completed in Ha

Giang and Tay Ninh provinces and one innovation project was initiated in Quang Tri province. Figure 1 highlights key PAPI achievements in 2023 with knowledge products available at www.papi.org.vn.

How does PAPI Fit in Viet Nam's 2023 Context and 2024 Policy Focus?

As 2023 marks the third year of the 2021-2026 government term, PAPI's 2023 survey findings provide key insights into how citizens perceived socio-economic conditions during the year, their concerns, how local authorities performed in the past 12 months, and how they are expected to better serve their citizens in the year(s) ahead. Therefore, it is important to contextualize the PAPI indicators within the 2023 national socio-economic development picture.

As presented in this report, the 2023 PAPI survey reflects how citizens feel about the turbulent socio-economic development status of Viet Nam during the year. As described by Viet Nam's economic reports,¹¹ 2023 was full of risks, uncertainty and caution, partly due to slow global growth as reflected in the World Bank's Global Economic Prospects (2024)¹² and because of institutional bottlenecks (fragmented public institutions with overlapping jurisdictions and weak coordination) constraining the country's growth and development.¹³ According to Viet Nam's General Statistics Office (GSO) in December 2023,¹⁴ the country's annual gross domestic product (GDP) grew at 5.05 percent, with the first three quarters at a slower pace (3.41, 4.25 and 5.47 percent in the first, second and third quarters, respectively) than the fourth one (6.72 percent). GDP growth was much lower than 2022's 8.02 percent and fell short of the government's 2023 target of 6.5 percent. Meanwhile, the unemployment and underemployment rates were at 2.28 percent and 2.01 percent, respectively, slightly lower than 2.32 and 2.21 percent, respectively in 2022. In 2023, Viet Nam's total population reached 100.3 million people, with 51.3 million reported to be employed and 38.1 percent living in urban areas. The 2023 consumer price index increased by 3.25 percent compared to 2022. Also, according to the GSO, Viet Nam's average monthly income increased to USD288, nearly 7 percent higher than in 2022.

8 See quarterly PAPI bulletins at: <https://papi.org.vn/eng/category/thu-vien-en-eng/>.

9 See the full list at: <https://papi.org.vn/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/List-of-Official-Documents-Referring-to-PAPI-in-2023.pdf>

10 See Law Library (2023).

11 See VN Economy (11 January 2024).

12 See the World Bank (2024).

13 See UNDP (2023).

14 See General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (29 December 2023).

In 2023, PAPI included key indicators to baselines for tracking implementation of the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation, which came into effect from 1 July 2023 to realize its fundamental citizen-centric mottoes of “*people know, people discuss, people do, people monitor, people verify, and people benefit*” and “*all State belongs to the people*”. PAPI also provided evidence for policy discussions on land transparency and land use rights for the 2013 Land Law amendment, not approved by the National Assembly in 2023 as planned in its legislative agenda,¹⁵ but will be carried over into 2024.

The year 2023 also witnessed an increased government focus on national digital transformation.¹⁶ PAPI has been monitoring how electronic and digital public services are being implemented from citizens’ experiences to inform central and local governments on how their plans for e-government and digital government towards 2025 are proceeding on the ground.¹⁷ Thus, PAPI’s data and thematic research in this area since 2021¹⁸ have delivered key insights into challenges that local authorities and citizens – especially those working and living in remote, mountainous areas and those with disabilities – encounter on their journey towards more modern, effective, and digitally savvy government-citizen interactions. The government’s commitment¹⁹ to the application of artificial intelligence and virtual assistance in its operations and the provision of public services will pose both challenges and opportunities for citizens in the digital era. PAPI will continue to keep track of this commitment during 2024.

2023 PAPI Report Structure

As with previous years’ PAPI reports, this 2023 edition is comprised of three chapters:

- **Chapter 1** presents the overall national performance in 2023 in the areas of governance and public administration. It takes a closer look at findings from the two dimensions of Transparency in Local Decision-making and Control of Corruption in the Public Sector, which are vital enablers of transparent, clean, and efficient government operations. The chapter also reveals issues of greatest concern to citizens during a turbulent 2023 and suggests areas that State agencies should prioritize in the near term.

It concludes by analyzing key drivers of internal migration in 2023 that governments of origin and destination provinces should examine.

- **Chapter 2** spotlights the survey findings of citizens’ perceptions and experiences with electronic governance (e-governance) in 2023, compared to 2021 and 2022. The data provides valuable evidence for gauging Viet Nam’s endeavours in digitalizing the government and society, thanks to a deep dive into citizens’ experiences with electronic governance in terms of availability, accessibility, user-friendliness, and completeness. The chapter also reveals digital divides that face citizens most likely to be left behind and what the State should address to narrow the gaps in the move towards a digital government and society.
- **Chapter 3** provides detailed 2023 findings, including analysis at the dimensional, sub-dimensional and indicator levels, for provincial governments to review and reflect on what they promised at the start of the 2021-2026 government term. The chapter concludes with a comprehensive dashboard summarizing the performance of each province across all dimensions, giving provincial leaders and practitioners a clear understanding of their past achievements and areas for improvement to better meet the needs and expectations of their citizens in 2024 and beyond.

The report also includes three appendices. First, Appendix A presents findings at dimensional, sub-dimensional and indicator levels for all indicators used to construct the 2023 PAPI and put them in a comparative perspective with the previous three years. Second, Appendix B provides key information about PAPI’s sampling strategy and demographic features of PAPI respondents in 2023 and over time since 2009. Finally, Appendix C presents a map of provinces with responses to PAPI findings in 2023.

This report is accompanied by the website www.papi.org.vn, which includes more information about the demographics of the 2023 survey samples, as well as data showing how Viet Nam has performed in terms of implementing the 2030 Agenda for the Sustainable Development Goals based on indicators that PAPI measured from 2020-2023. The website also provides updates on provincial PAPI profiles, policy responses and PAPI thematic research papers.

¹⁵ See Law Library (2022).

¹⁶ See Viet Nam News (10 October 2023).

¹⁷ See Viet Nam Law (2020; 2022).

¹⁸ See the series of studies on e-governance at: <https://papi.org.vn/eng/thematic-research-reports/?title=quan-tri-dien-tu>.

¹⁹ See Viet Nam Investment Online (29 December 2023).

Figure 1: 2023 Remarkable PAPI Results



2023 KEY RESULTS



PAPI SURVEY

19,536 from all 63 provinces
responded to 2023
PAPI survey
citizens



PROVINCIAL RESPONSES TO PAPI

62 provinces renewed their commitments to PAPI

36 provincial diagnostic workshops

convened by provinces to inform public officials, civil servants and elected representatives about their provincial performance from citizens' perspectives

10 PAPI FOCUS AREAS IN 2023



01. Access to e-services in three ethnic minority populated provinces of Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan and Binh Phuoc
02. First review of budget transparency at the national and provincial levels, with case studies in Dien Bien and Ba Ria-Vung Tau
03. Second review of local governments' performance in disclosure of 2022 district land plans
04. First review of the user-friendliness and accessibility of all 63 provincial e-service portals
05. 2023 assessment of disability inclusion in local governance and public administration
06. Good practices in promotion of women in politics in Viet Nam
07. Promotion of citizen participation in environment governance in the riverine areas of Chuong Duong ward of Hoan Kiem District of Ha Noi
08. Internal migration and its impacts on local governance in two deltas of the Red River and the Mekong River
09. Gender equity in leadership and management in the context of digital transformation
10. An overview of international good practices to ensure personal and property rights of transgender people

PUBLICATIONS



16 policy and action research papers and advocacy products in both English and Vietnamese languages

TRAINING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS

- 07 training events on building capacity and legal knowledge for persons with disabilities
- 01 workshop to promote rights and inclusion for transgender persons
- 01 youth parliamentary simulation on gender equity and LGBTQI+ inclusion



INITIATIVES

- Improving access to public administrative services for people in remote and ethnic minority areas in Ha Giang
- Enhancing access to public administrative services for ethnic minority communities in Quang Tri
- Mining Tay Ninh's digital citizen query database for better public services





CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF GOVERNANCE AND PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION PERFORMANCE AND CITIZENS' PRIORITIES IN 2023

This chapter examines the performance of governance and public administration in Viet Nam in 2023 and compares it to previous years. It also provides an overview of key issues of greatest concern and expectations from citizens during this third year of the 2021-2026 government term.

In the first section, the chapter starts by highlighting national trends in all eight PAPI dimensions from 2020 to 2023 to compare how they shifted from the last year of the 2016-2021 government term to the mid-term of the current one. Then it delves into the shifts in indicators that constitute the two dimensions of Transparency in Local Decision-making (Dimension 2) and Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (Dimension 4). These two are focused on as they are vital enablers of a transparent, clean and effective functioning government.

The second section of this chapter reflects citizens' issues of most concern in 2023 and over the past seven years. As 2023 was a challenging year for Viet Nam in terms of economic growth, this section further examines how citizens perceived their household and national economic situations. Since power outages occurred more often during the summer in many parts of the country affecting economic activities, citizens' energy source preferences are also teased out. In addition, this section provides snapshots of citizens' assessment of climate-related disasters and explores whether they would be a driver of internal migration, an important part of PAPI reports over the past three years.

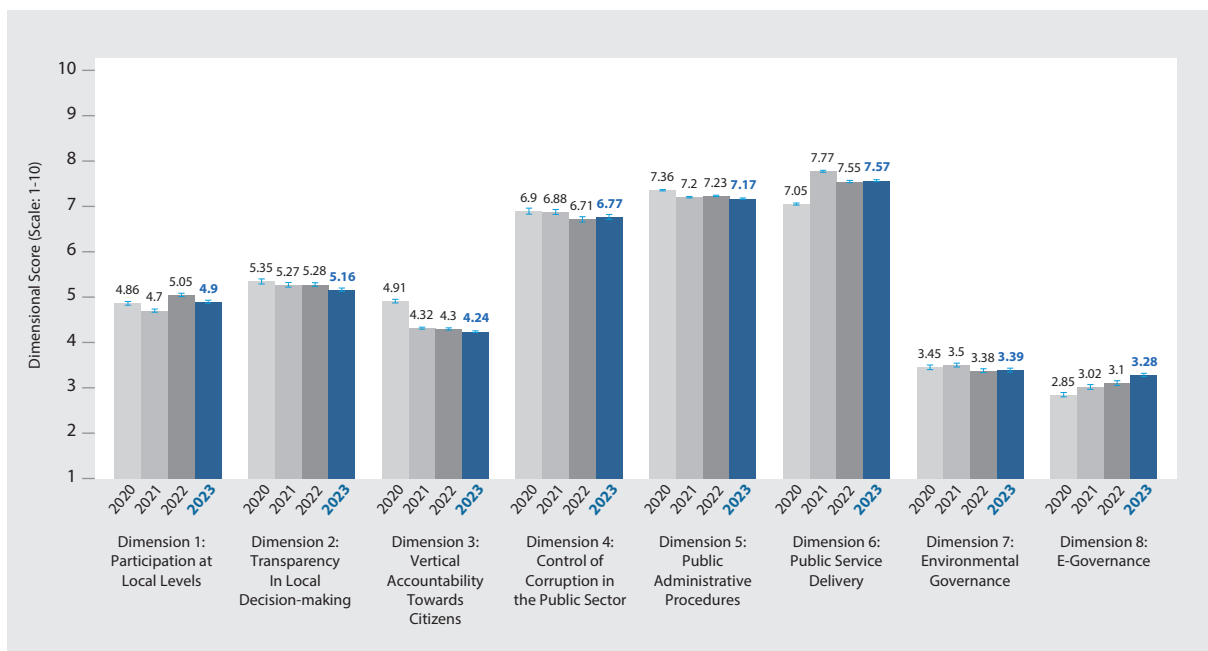
The chapter concludes by summarizing key findings of immediate interest for different stakeholders involved in governance and public administration in Viet Nam. It also points to policy implications relevant for policy-makers and practitioners in Viet Nam in 2024 and beyond.

Governance and Public Administration Performance in 2023

This section provides a summary of the key findings and implications from the analysis of the 2023 PAPI survey results, with a focus on the performance of national level governance and public administration from a comparative perspective. First, it brings forward time-series comparisons of dimensions consistently measured since 2020 to 2023. Second, it examines in greater detail the two dimensions of Transparency in Local Decision-making (Dimension 2) and Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (Dimension 4) which are critical to overall citizen satisfaction with government performance at different levels.

Figure 1.1 provides an overview of the changes in the eight PAPI dimensional scores since 2020. It illustrates that 2023 was a year of mixed progress in these eight dimensions, as seen in the previous two years. Notably, from 2022 to 2023, the two dimensions of Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (Dimension 4) and E-Governance (Dimension 8) showed improvements, with the former seeing a slight increase from 6.71 to 6.77 points, and the latter significantly up from 3.1 to 3.28 points, on a scale of 1 to 10 points each, respectively. The two dimensions of Public Service Delivery (Dimension 6) and Environmental Governance (Dimension 7) remained largely unchanged, with scores across the two years ranging from 7.55 to 7.57 points, and from 3.38 to 3.39 points, respectively. However, the four remaining dimensions showed declines, with Participation at Local Levels (Dimension 1) down from 5.05 to 4.9 points, Transparency in Local Decision-making (Dimension 2) from 5.28 to 5.16 points, Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens (Dimension 3) from 4.3 to 4.24 points, and Public Administrative Procedures (Dimension 5) from 7.23 to 7.17 points, all on a scale from 1 to 10 points each.

Figure 1.1: Overall PAPI Score Changes Over Time, 2020-2023



To assess the roots of these changes, this section drills down further into the two dimensions of Transparency in Local Decision-making (Dimension 2) and Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (Dimension 4). Dimension 2 comes under the spotlight as it showed the sharpest drop in 2023, especially in budget and expenditure transparency—given its importance in State budget and public investment transparency. Conversely, Dimension 4 is examined in light of its upward trend from 2022 after a constant decline in recent years. Also, Dimension 4 is most strongly linked with overall satisfaction of government performance and is possibly influenced by the national high-profile anti-corruption campaign accelerated from 2016. The significant increase in Dimension 8 ‘E-Governance’ will be further discussed in Chapter 2 to assess the effectiveness of government efforts to provide e-services and expand digital government nationwide.

Transparency in Local Decision-making Saw a Significant Decline in 2023

As discussed in previous PAPI reports, transparency in local decision-making is critical as it can reduce corruption by exposing potential malfeasance. Citizens can only hold local officials accountable if they have access to accurate information. Additionally, transparency facilitates participatory governance as citizens are better able to offer

feedback on budget and land use if they are informed about current government plans and activities in these areas. Therefore, PAPI measures transparency in local decision-making to inform policy-makers and practitioners of local governments’ performance in specific public-facing areas that citizens have a right to know, discuss and verify as provided in the 2016 Law on Access to Information and the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation.

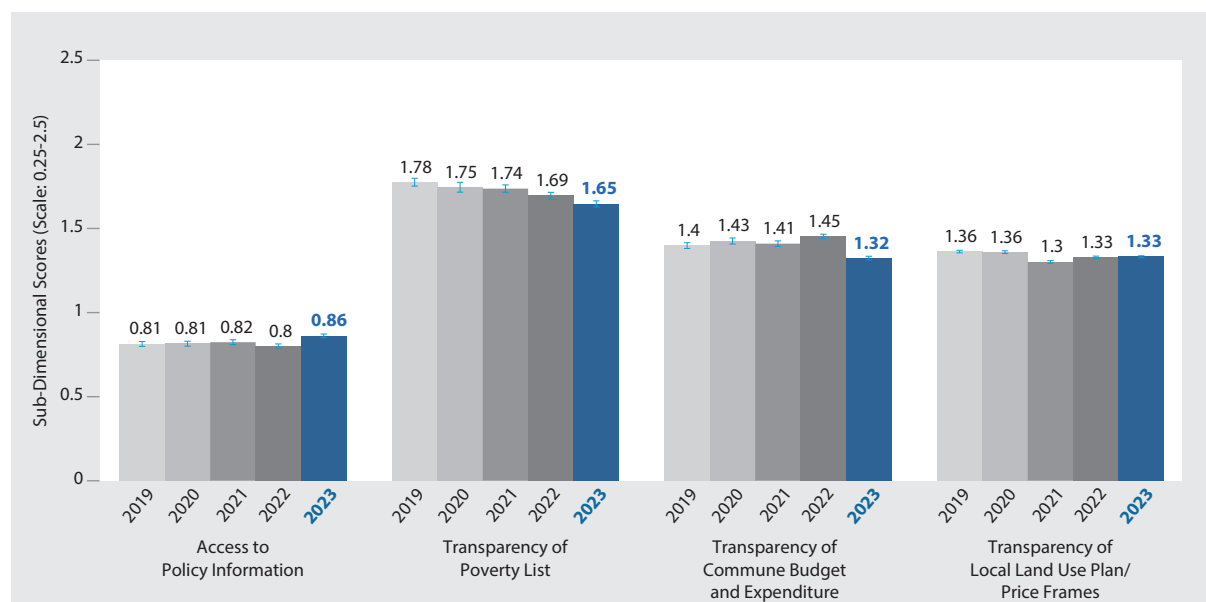
This section focuses on Dimension 2 given its decline in 2023 and this being the first year of the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation coming into force. The dimension comprises four sub-dimensions that capture different components of local transparency: (i) Access to Information, (ii) Poverty Lists Transparency, (iii) Commune Budgets Transparency and (iv) Transparent Land Use Plans/ Price Frames. They provide insights into how local governments perform in terms of access to information, budget transparency, transparency of poverty lists and land transparency at provincial, district and commune levels (See Table A.2 in Appendix A for information about indicators for each of the four sub-dimensions).

Figure 1.2 shows the overall trends in Dimension 2. It reveals that the biggest source of dimensional score declines in 2023 was reduced transparency in commune budget and expenditure, from 1.4 points

in 2019 to 1.32 points in 2023. Similarly, transparency in poverty lists also provided downward pressure from 1.78 points in 2019 to 1.65 points in 2023. On a positive note, the sub-dimension Access to Information posted a rise from 0.80 to 0.86 on a scale

of 0.25 to 2.5 points. Meanwhile, there was no change in the sub-dimension Transparent Land Use Plans/ Price Frames over the past two years, as the 2023 score remained at 1.33 points, a positive change from 1.3 points in 2021.

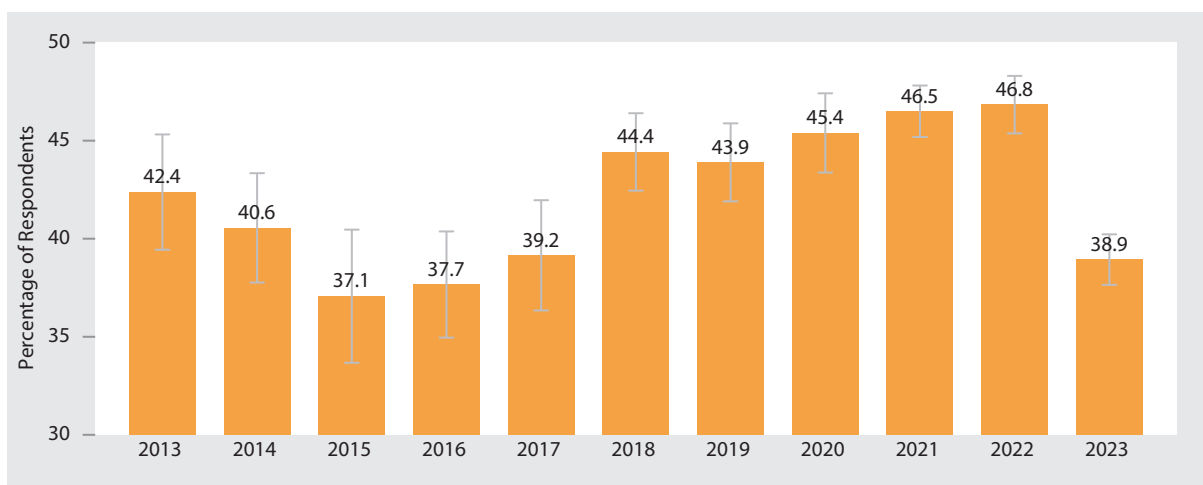
Figure 1.2: Changes in Transparency in Local Decision-making Scores (Dimension 2), 2019-2023



Publicising and being accountable for budgets and expenditure at the grassroots level are essential mandates for commune-level governments, as required not only by the 2016 Law on Access to Information – but also the 2015 Law on State Budget and the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation. Open budgets may reduce corruption by increasing the likelihood that disparities in budget and actual expenditures can be identified. Making local government public officials accountable for State budgets and expenditure will help prevent embezzlement.

With Figure 1.2 showing a drop in the sub-dimension Commune Budgets Transparency, Figure 1.3 reveals the primary reason: far fewer respondents reported that commune governments disclosed the commune budget and expenditure worksheets for residents to be informed in the past 12 months. Between 2018 and 2022, 44 to 47 percent of the respondents said the worksheets were publicly available within each year. This tumbled to 38.9 percent in 2023, the lowest since 2016.

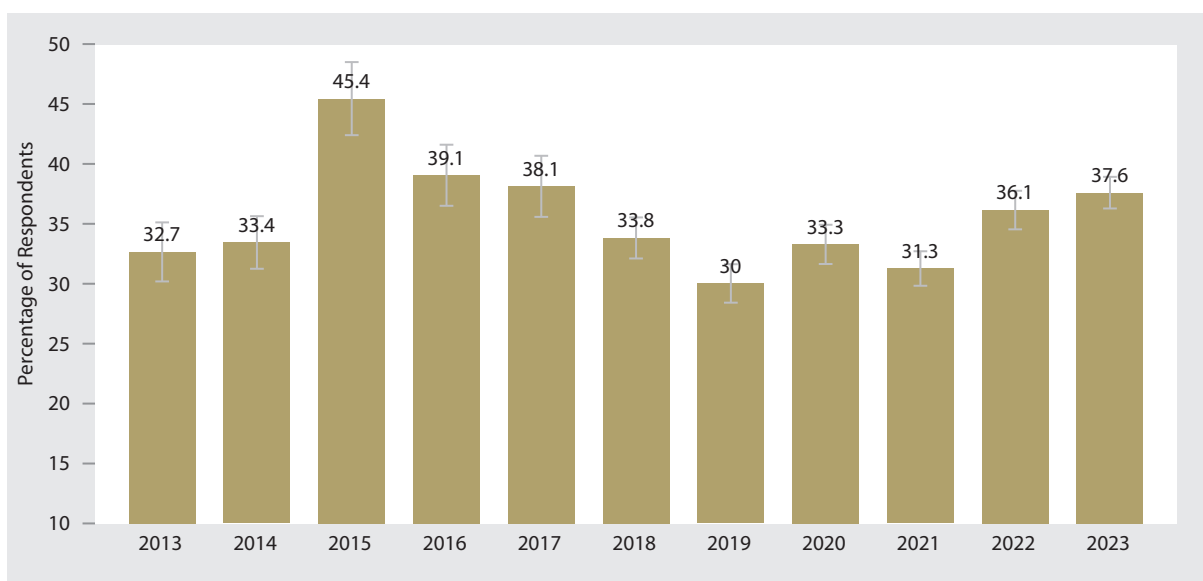
Figure 1.3: Disclosure of Commune Budget and Expenditure Lists, 2013-2023



Regarding poverty lists transparency, the decline reflects a trend evident since 2019. As Figure 1.4 shows, in 2019 only 30 percent of citizens said there were eligible households missing from the list

compared to 37.6 percent in 2023. This view is highest amongst those at the lowest end of the income scale, as tracked in the PAPI surveys.

Figure 1.4: Eligible Households Missing from Local Poverty Lists, 2013-2023



As Table 1.1 further elaborates, 43.57 percent of those with the lowest amount of household monthly income, as captured in the PAPI surveys, perceived that suitable people were not on the poverty list.²⁰ Addressing this issue is important for improving

overall satisfaction with government. Deeper regression analysis shows that those spotting perceived errors in poverty lists have a much lower level of satisfaction with government, particularly village and commune leaders.

²⁰ The poverty lists (or the poor lists) are lists of low-income households whose income falls below the poverty lines proposed by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs on a five-year basis for urban and rural populations. For the period 2021 to 2025, the poverty line is VND2 million per month in urban areas and VND1.5 million per month in rural areas (see Government of Viet Nam, 27 January 2021). It is important to note that measuring income for workers outside the formal sector, comprising most of the poor, is challenging. Therefore, local authorities have considerable discretion in compiling lists of the poor. They must also ensure that the lists conform to budgets, so income is not the only criterion. Nonetheless, citizens’ participation in nominating the poorest households in their communities is prescribed by law.

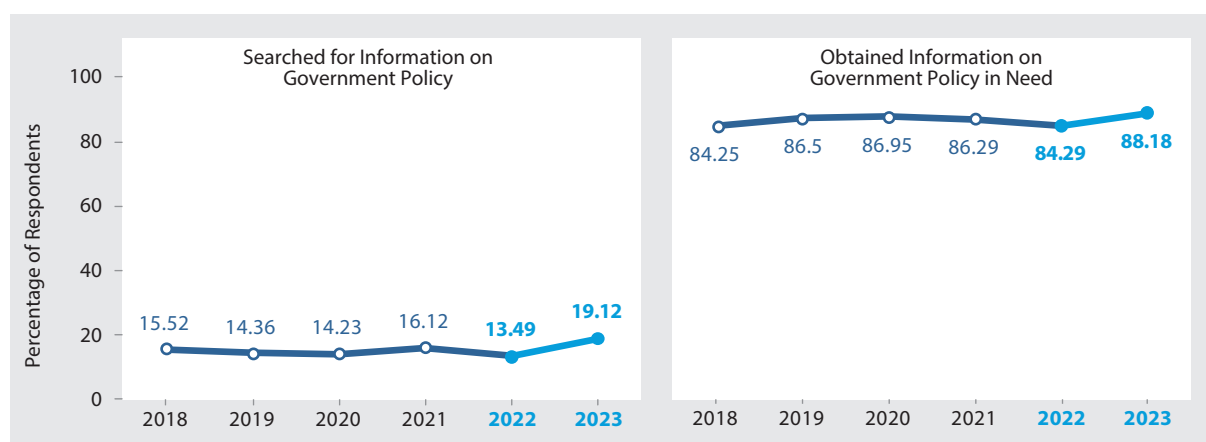
Table 1.1: Perception of Missing Households by Income

	Bottom Quartile	2 nd Quartile	3 rd Quartile	Top Quartile
No One Missing from the List	56.43%	61.29%	68.48%	73.07%
Some Missing from the List	43.57%	38.71%	31.52%	26.93%

Note: The bottom quartile includes those with households making less than VND6 million per month based on the PAPI responses, the second VND6-12 million per month, the third from VND12-20 million per month, the top quartile exceeds VND20 million per month. The results are from question d202a, which asks whether there are poor households in the village/ residential group who are missing from the list of poor households eligible for special subsidies.

Finally, looking at the ease of accessing information, Figure 1.5 shows a significant rise in the number of people who searched for information on government policies (19.12 percent) compared to previous five years (up from 15.52 percent in 2018 to 13.49 percent in 2022) as well as the number of those successful

with their search (88.18 percent in 2023 from 84.29 percent in 2022). This is a positive trend given the essence of public awareness of important laws relating to their rights and obligations as provided for by the State.

Figure 1.5: Searched for Information on Government Policy vs. Obtained Information on Government Policy in Need, 2018-2023

In short, transparency is key to effective governance. However, the indicators on transparency of poverty lists and of commune budgets and expenditure in 2023 revealed areas of concern. Nonetheless, there were some improvements in access to information about State policy, while transparency in land use plans and land price frames need to improve.

Control of Corruption in the Public Sector Improved in 2023

Each year, the PAPI report addresses the 'Control of Corruption in the Public Sector' indicators in detail. It does so because corruption is possibly the issue of greatest concern from both the Party and citizens' perspectives. Although the Party's national anti-

corruption campaign has accelerated since the end of the COVID-19 pandemic two years ago,²¹ the Party recently acknowledged that corruption is still a constant problem and reflects the poor morality of public officials.²² In the meantime, as noted in previous PAPI reports, Control of Corruption in the Public Sector is the dimension most strongly correlated with PAPI's Overall Satisfaction with Government indicator from citizens' perspectives. It is also a dimension that has remained static since 2019.

The sub-dimensions that collectively comprise Dimension 4 are Limits on Corruption in Local Government, Limits on Corruption in Public Services, Equity in State Employment, and Willingness to Fight

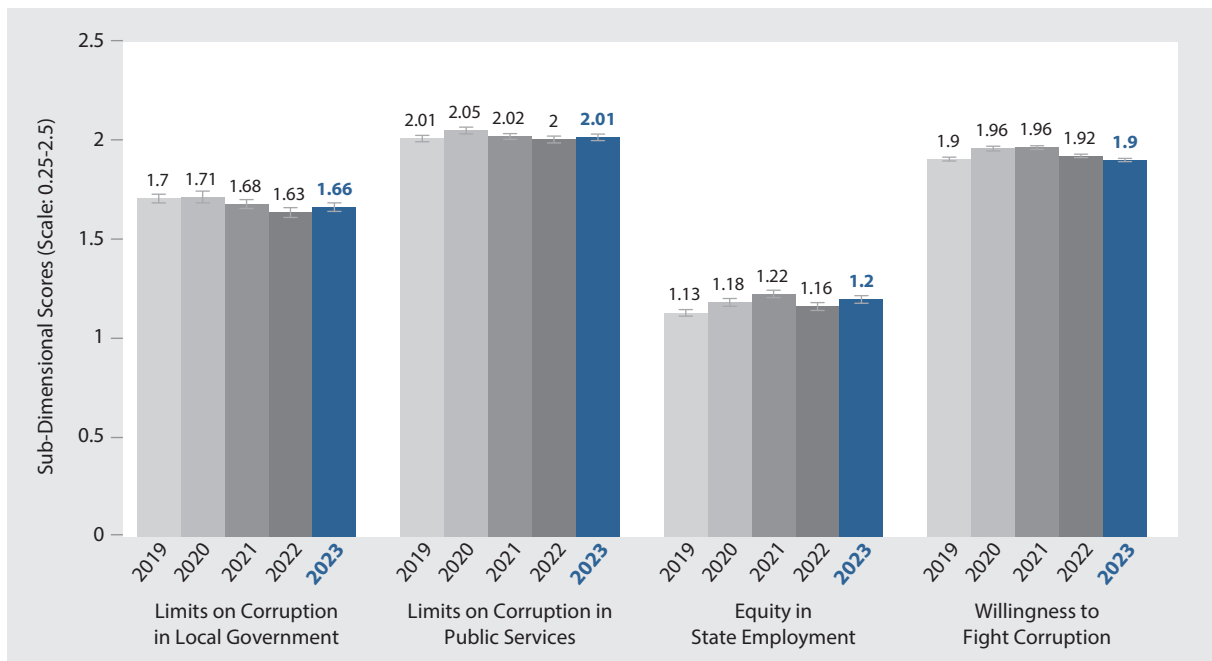
²¹ See Voice of Viet Nam (3 July 2023).

²² See The People (29 December 2023).

Corruption. As Figure 1.1 shows, there was a slight improvement in this dimension compared to 2022. Looking within the components of this dimension, Figure 1.6 paints a mixed picture of citizens' assessment of the public sector's performance in anti-corruption during the year. While there were

slight improvements in the sub-dimensions on Limits on Corruption in Local Government, Limits on Corruption in Public Services and Equity in State Employment, there was a slight drop in the Willingness to Fight Corruption sub-dimension.

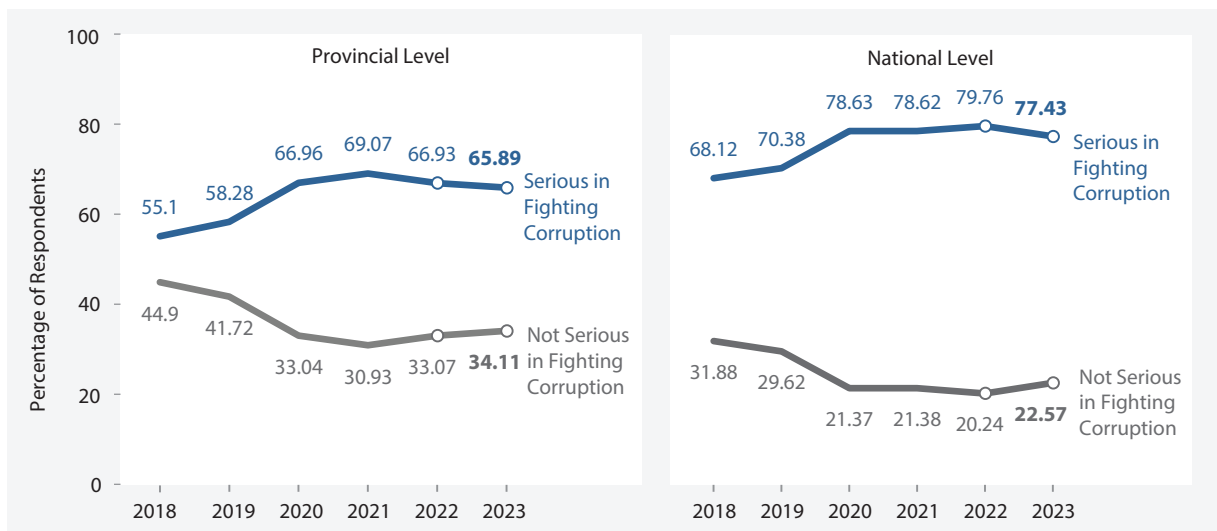
Figure 1.6: Changes in Control of Corruption in the Public Sector Sub-Dimensions, 2019-2023



Reflecting the downward trend in the fourth sub-dimension on Willingness to Fight Corruption, Figure 1.7 reveals declines in those saying province-level governments and the national government are serious about addressing corruption. While 79.76 percent of respondents said the central government

was serious about fighting corruption in 2022, this percentage fell to 77.43 percent in 2023. Similarly, the percentage of respondents who agreed that their provincial governments were serious about fighting corruption decreased from 69.07 percent in 2021 to 65.89 percent in 2023.

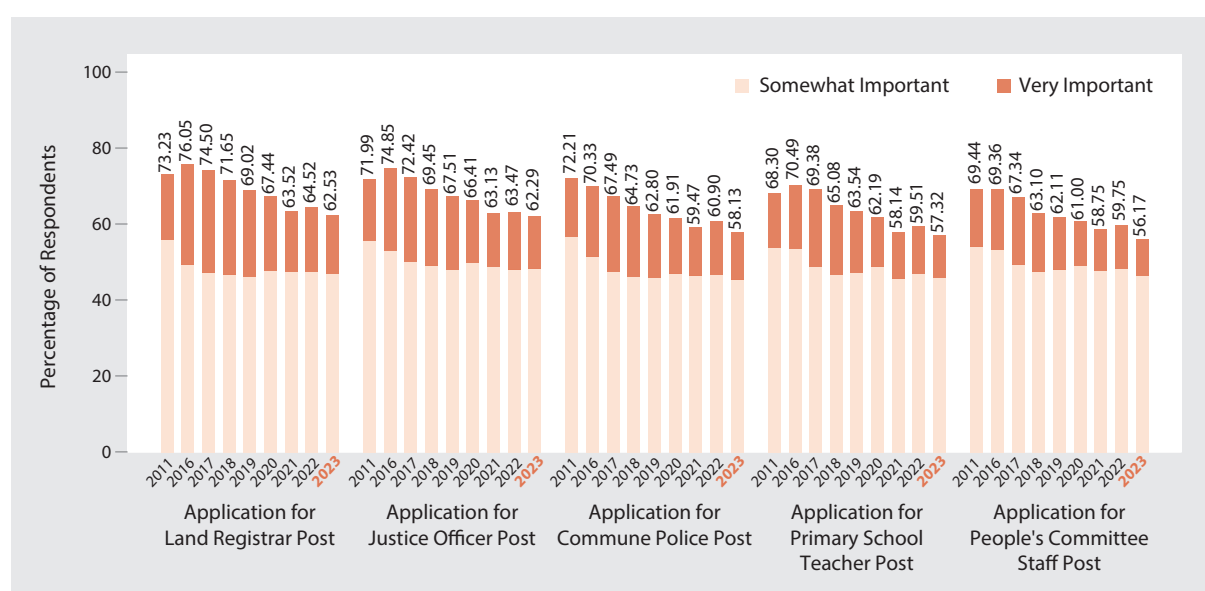
Figure 1.7: Perception of Government Efforts to Reduce Corruption, 2018-2023



The PAPI survey also asks a series of questions regarding respondents' perceptions of corruption from their everyday interactions with local governments. As Figure 1.8 shows, the proportion of respondents who believed that connections with authorized persons in the State apparatus are important to get a public office position (i.e., land registrars, justice officers, police officers, primary school teachers, and People's Committee staff at commune level) has almost continuously dropped since 2016 when the anti-corruption campaign

accelerated. Still, Figure 1.8 shows a high level of citizen concern about the importance of personal connections required when applying for one of the five positions, with the percentages of respondents seeing nepotism as the key success factor ranging from 56.17 to 62.53 percent. In particular, the highest levels of concern about nepotism are focussed on land registrar and justice officers, with more than 62 percent of all respondents saying connections were important.

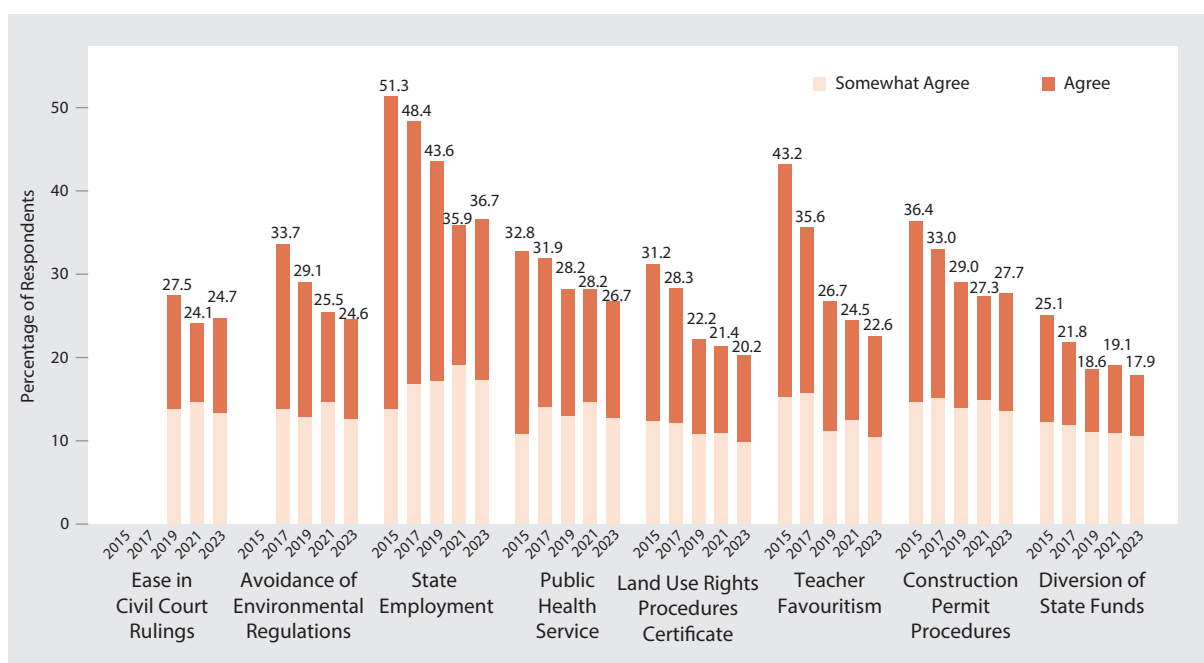
Figure 1.8: Importance of Connections for Different Civil Service Positions, 2011-2023



Citizens' perceptions of the eight different types of corruption assessed by PAPI show improvement. Those indicators are about whether respondents witness or experience bribery for ease in civil court rulings, avoidance of environmental regulations, State employment, better public health service, or teachers' favouritism for children at primary schools; for greasing the wheels when handling land use rights certificate procedures, or construction permit procedures, and public officials' diversion of State funds for private interest. As shown in Figure 1.9, citizens perceived five types of corruption across as

declining over the past eight years. Still, in 2023, more respondents (36.7 percent) perceived that informal payments were needed to secure a job in State employment than in 2021, when viewing the change for every two years. The good news is the percentages of those who anticipated that payment of a bribe was necessary to get a land use rights certificate (LURC) and for better care at public district hospitals were slightly lower in 2023 than in the previous two years. Also, the percentages of those who perceived that bribes were necessary for teacher's favouritism and avoidance of environmental regulations had decreased.

Figure 1.9: Corruption as Perceived by Citizens Biannually, 2015-2023



These trends are mostly backed up by experiential indicators that use more sophisticated and complex survey techniques. Each year, PAPI uses state-of-the-art survey techniques to ask citizens sensitive questions about bribery without requiring them to directly answer whether they engaged in such practices. The survey does this through a so-called “list experiment”, also known as an unmatched count experiment. The list experiment presents half of the respondents (the control group) with a list of three innocuous activities. It then asks how many of those activities the citizens engaged in during the past 12 months. For another half of the respondents (the treatment group), the same list is provided with one difference: the list now contains the sensitive bribery questions. By comparing the average number of activities by the control group compared to that of the treatment group, researchers can infer the percentage of respondents that likely engaged in a sensitive activity.

Table 1.2 shows the results from estimating the number of citizens that engage in giving a bribe when applying for LURCs, obtaining better treatment at public district hospitals, or obtaining teachers’ favouritism for citizens’ children attending public primary schools. They reveal that the incidences of bribery for LURCs and better healthcare results shrank in 2023 compared to the previous two years, in line with previous findings. Regarding informal payments for teachers’ favouritism, there was less movement.

Overall, most indicators measuring the public sector’s performance in control of corruption showed an improvement in anti-corruption efforts in 2023. This may be a result of impacts of the anti-corruption campaign underway since 2016.

Table 1.2: Changes in Experiences with Bribery, 2021-2023

	2021	2022	2023
Bribes for Land Use Rights Certificate	25%	21%	15%
Bribes for Better Health Care	12%	10%	3%
Bribes for Teachers’ Favouritism	10%	12%	14%

Note: The percentages come from different numbers of activities between the control and treatment groups in a “list” experiment question.

Issues of Greatest Concern in 2023 and Trends in Citizen Priorities

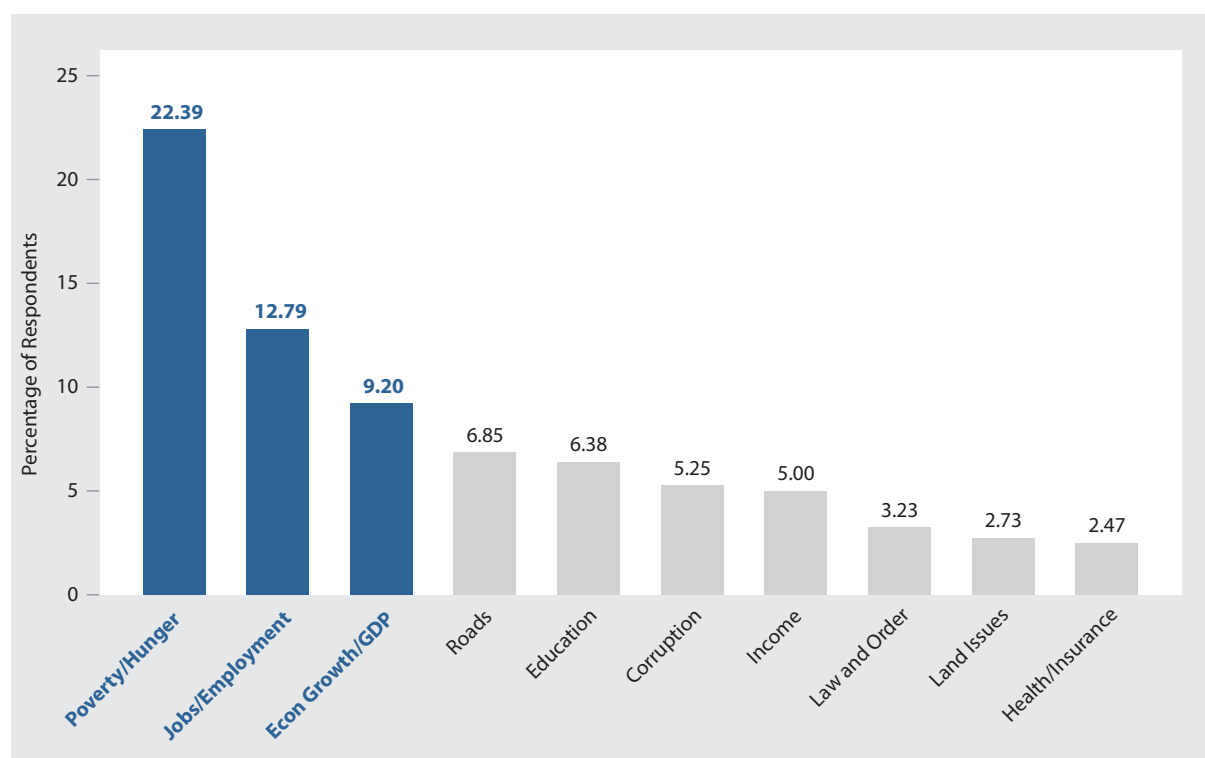
This section explores the overall shifts in issues of greatest public concern over time from 2015 to 2023. It also captures citizens' assessments of household economic conditions in 2023, also with a time-series perspective from 2013. The findings are important as they provide context to analyze the shifts in important PAPI scores in this report. They also provide a snapshot of which key policy priorities the central and local governments should address in the following year from citizens' perspectives.

Top 10 Issues of Greatest Concern for Citizens in 2023 and Changes Over Time

Each year since 2015, the PAPI survey asks citizens an open-ended question to assess the issue of

greatest concern they think the national government should prioritize in the coming year. This question also allows policy-makers to identify issues for remedial action. Figure 1.10 displays 10 issues with the largest percentages of respondents prioritizing issues that require State action. As it shows, poverty, employment and economic growth were the top three, reflecting the economic and employment challenges Viet Nam faced in 2023. Among these, poverty and hunger was cited by 22.39 percent of all respondents as the most important issue the State should address, while jobs and employment were selected by 12.79 percent of respondents. Economic growth was third at 9.2 percent. Public services in the form of roads and education came next at 6.85 and 6.38 percent, respectively. Corruption ranked sixth at 5.25 percent. The concern about environmental pollution was outside the top 10.

Figure 1.10: Ten Most Important Issues from Citizens' Perspectives in 2023



In terms of the changes in issues of greatest concern from 2022 to 2023, as Figure 1.11 shows, the largest rise was in the percentage of respondents selecting jobs and employment as a top priority issue, with a 2.7 percentage point increase. Next came income and education, with 1.3 and 1.1 percentage points

greater than 2022, respectively. Corruption, on the other hand, dropped by 1.1 percentage points from 2022, reflecting the trend seen in Figure 1.1. Concerns about health and health insurance diminished most significantly from 2022, with a 2.39 percent drop.

Figure 1.11: Changes in Issues of Greatest Concern, 2022-2023

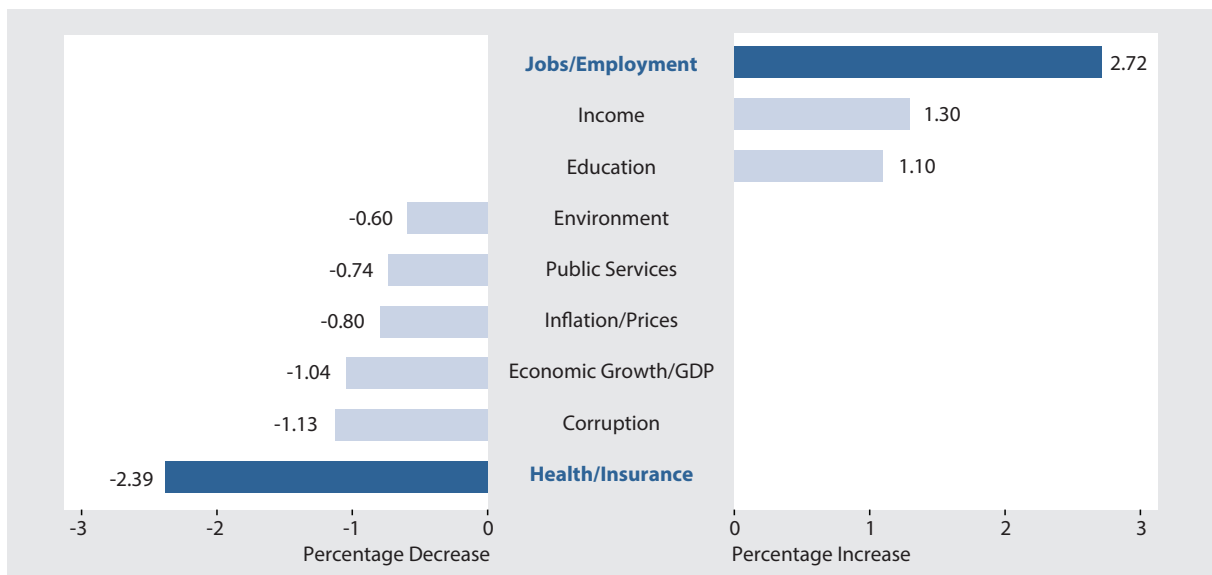
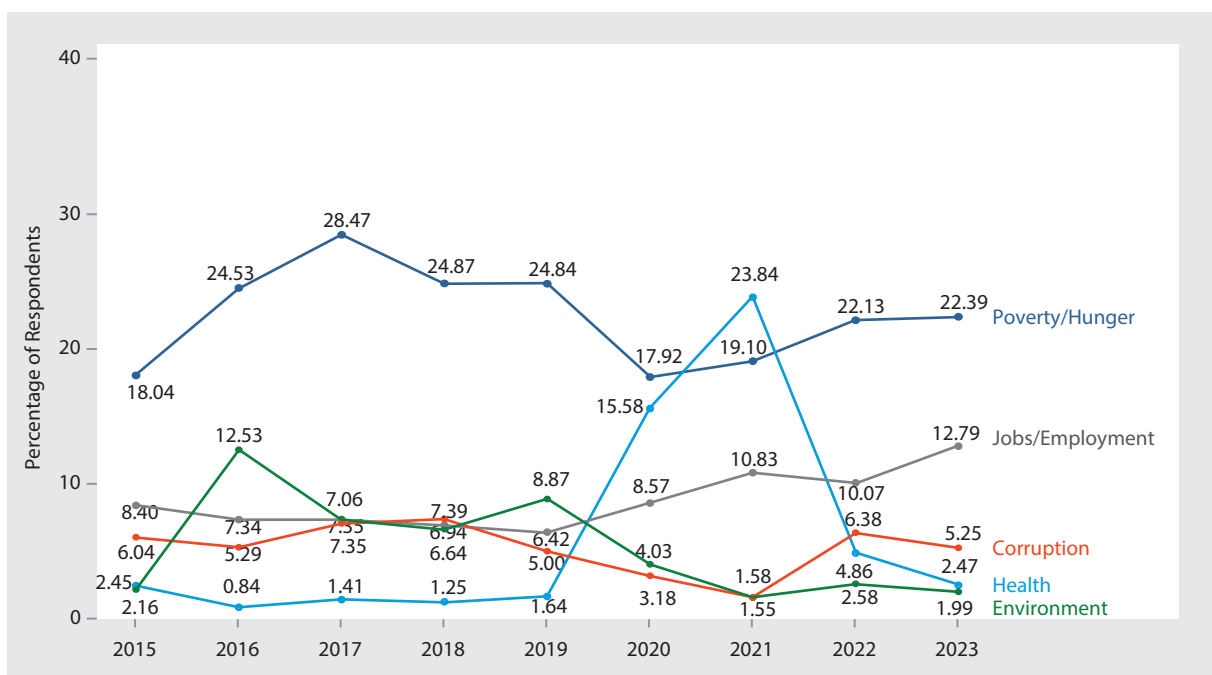


Figure 1.12 shows the trend in citizen priorities from 2015, when the question was first asked, to 2023. As it shows, poverty was consistently the top concern, except for 2021 when health concerns took over at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The figure also shows that environment and health concerns dropped substantially since their peaks in 2016 (after the mass fish deaths in north-central Viet Nam in 2016²³) and 2021 (during the pandemic), respectively.

Figure 1.12: Changes in Selected Issues of Greatest Concern, 2015-2023



23 See the timeline of the incidence of mass fish deaths along the central coast of Viet Nam due to chemicals discharged by the Formosa Plastics Group into the sea offshore of four provinces (Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri and Thua Thien-Hue): <https://vietnamnet.vn/en/panoramic-view-of-mass-fish-death-in-central-vietnam-E155823.html> and on Voice of Viet Nam (1 October 2016) at: <https://english.vov.vn/en/society/over-19000-vietnamese-jobs-lost-to-formosa-mass-fish-deaths-332561.vov>.

Deeper analysis reveals a general overall increase in citizens' concern with the economy over time. Figure 1.13 shows the results from the aggregation of key categories of greatest concern from more than 40 issues cited as citizens' priorities (see Table 1.3 for several categories). The four categories are: (1) economic governance and conditions (including issues such as GDP growth, income, jobs and economic-related policy), (2) public services (health, education, roads), (3) governance (participation, corruption, election quality and public administrative procedures) and (4) poverty (poverty and hunger, which stands alone as a sole economic concern for analysis purposes). As shown in Figure 1.13, comparison of survey results under these four aggregated categories reveals that non-poverty

related economic issues have constantly grown since 2017 (when 23.11 percent of respondents selected these issues as priorities for the State to address) to become the most important cluster of concerns in 2023 (33.58 percent of respondents viewing these issues as pressing concerns). Public services also gained traction from 2019, peaking in 2021 due to COVID-19, but plunged behind economic concerns in 2022 and 2023. The figure also suggests that, while concerns about public sector governance remain high, economic governance and public services were of greater importance from citizens' perspectives, possibly because of Viet Nam's slower economic growth and public investment, especially in the first nine months of 2023.²⁴

Figure 1.13: Changes in Aggregated Issues of Greatest Concern, 2015-2023

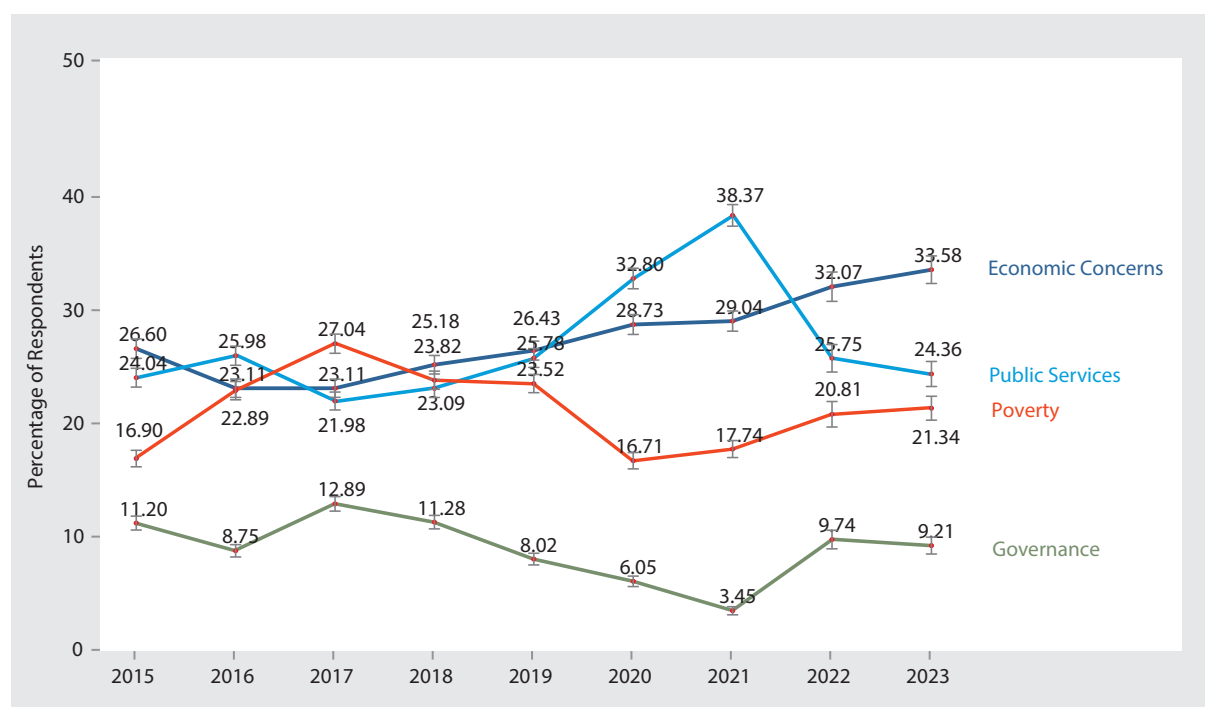


Table 1.3: Several Issues Aggregated from PAPI Survey Question about Issues of Greatest Concern

Categories	Issues Included
Poverty	Poverty and Hunger
Economic Governance and Conditions	Jobs, Employment, Bank Loans, Agriculture Policy, GDP Growth, Inflation, Living Expenses, Access to Housing, Taxes, etc.
Public Service Delivery	Food Hygiene, Roads, Health Care, Clean Water, Irrigation, Education, Environment, Law and Order, Traffic Safety, Internet Access, etc.
Public Sector Governance	Corruption in the Public Sector, Participation in Policy-making, Transparency, Quality of Officials, Election Quality, Administrative Procedures, etc.

²⁴ See Viet Nam Plus (14 October 2023).

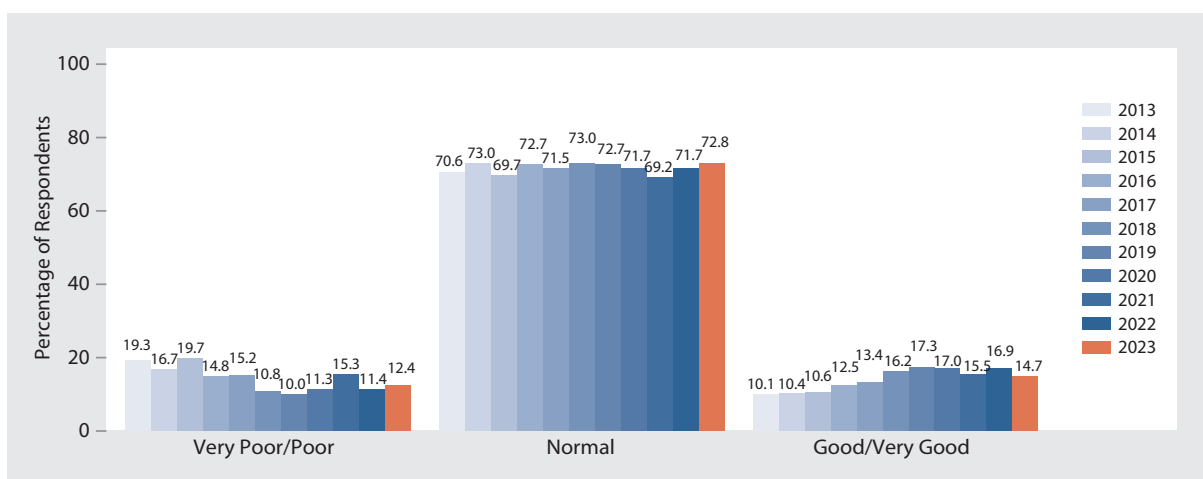
Citizens' Assessment of Household and National Economic Situations in 2023

A key 2023 PAPI survey focus is reflecting citizens' assessment of Viet Nam's socio-economic development, especially in the year's first three quarters. According to the General Statistics Office (GSO),²⁵ the country's GDP growth rates in the first nine months (3.41 percent in quarter 1, 4.25 percent in quarter 2, and 5.47 percent in quarter 3) were at a slower pace than in the last three months (6.72 percent). As the survey took place from August to November 2023, respondents' rising concern about the economic situation over time as illustrated in Figure 1.13 needs further examination. This section, therefore, goes into a deeper analysis of how citizens perceive their household and national economic health.

Each year, the PAPI survey asks respondents how they rate their current household economic situation, how it has changed compared to five years ago, and how they assess Viet Nam's economic situation at the time they are asked the question. These different indicators are necessary because the first two assess so-called "pocketbook" considerations, while the third assesses "sociotropic" concerns or the national mood. While both types of questions are concerned with the economy, a large body of research shows that there is only a weak correlation between how an individual evaluates their own condition and how they evaluate the national economy.²⁶

As shown in Figure 1.14, more respondents indicated that their household economic situation was poor or very poor in 2023 compared to the survey results between 2017 to 2022. The only exception was 2021 during the depths of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Figure 1.14: Citizen Assessment of their Current Household Economic Situation, 2013-2023



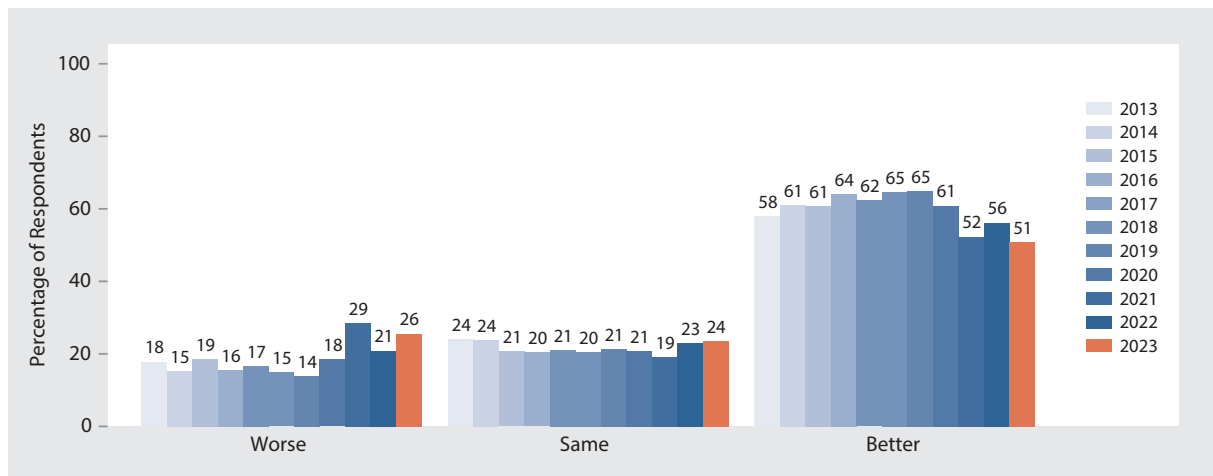
More concerning are citizens' perceptions of the relative change in their economic situation compared to five years ago. Figure 1.15 shows that the highest ever percentage of respondents (26 percent)

recorded by PAPI said their household economic situation (in 2023) had become worse compared to five years ago, except for 2021 at the peak of the pandemic.

²⁵ See GSO (29 December 2023).

²⁶ One of the main reasons for the divergence is that respondents may not associate their own personal economic condition with the general economic situation in the country. See Kiewiet, D. Roderick, and Michael S. Lewis-Beck (2011).

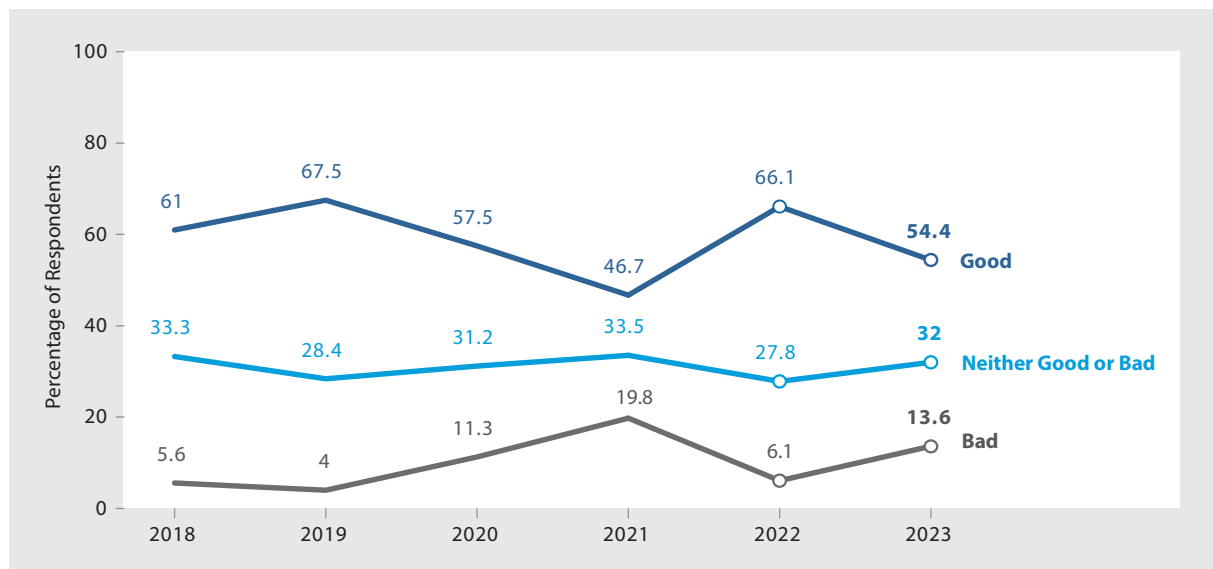
Figure 1.15: Change in Household Economic Conditions in Past Five Years, 2013-2023



With citizens' assessment of the national economy, as Figure 1.16 illustrates, there was greater pessimism among respondents, which reflected concern over Viet Nam's economic situation in 2023. Aside from 2021, the year 2023 saw fewer respondents (54.4

percent, nearly 12 percent lower than in 2022) perceiving that the national economy was "good" and more respondents (13.6 percent) saying it was "bad" since 2018 when this question was first asked.

Figure 1.16: Citizens' Assessment of Viet Nam's Overall Economy, 2018-2023

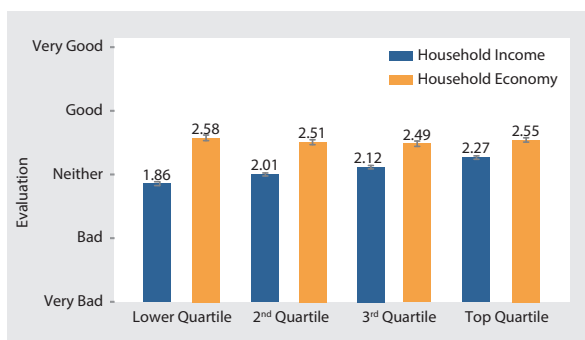


In terms of who is most concerned about the national economy, this perspective depends on whether respondents consider their household or national economic situation. Figure 1.17 shows that wealthier individuals, as one would predict, evaluated their household income as better than poorer individuals.²⁷ However, this does not translate to views on the overall Vietnamese economy, as there is little relationship between income and

an evaluation of the national economic situation within a year. The poorest and richest individuals viewed the national economy essentially the same. In general, the perceptions of the national economy were more positive than perceptions of household economic situations for all income levels of 2023 PAPI respondents. However, the divergence is smaller for higher income groups.

²⁷ These results are the marginal effects of an ordinary least squares regression where economic satisfaction is the dependent variable.

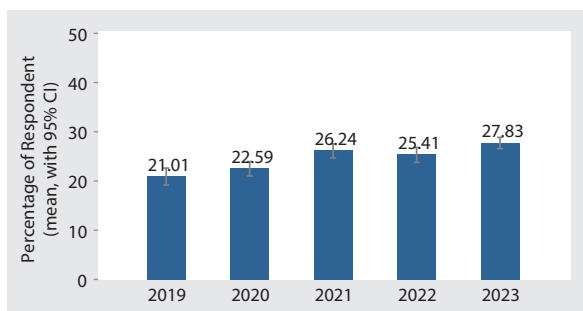
Figure 1.17: Relationship between Household and National Economic Satisfaction, 2023



Note: The lower quartile includes those with households in PAPI survey making less than VND6 million per month, the second VND6-12 million per month, the third from VND12-20 million per month, the top quartile exceeds VND20 million per month.

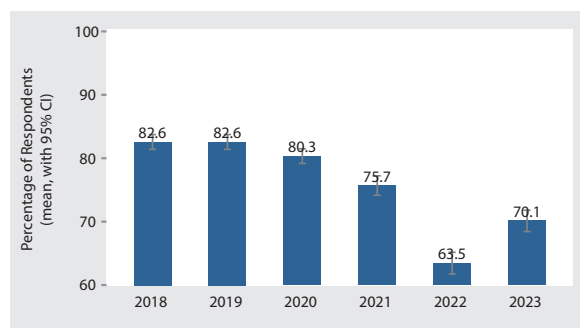
These economic concerns have key policy implications. One of the most important is a debate over early lumpsum withdrawals from Viet Nam’s Social Insurance Fund.²⁸ While this money is meant for retirement, for some laid-off workers it is doubling as unemployment insurance.²⁹ This has led to debates about whether limits should be placed on the ability of workers to withdraw their savings as a lumpsum.³⁰ PAPI results suggest that these reserves are important to citizens during difficult economic times. It must also be noted that even social insurance withdrawals, if allowed, cannot fully mitigate economic pressures. As Figure 1.18 shows, with an informal sector still evident in Viet Nam, many citizens do not have access to social insurance in the first place. While the percentage of citizens with social insurance has slowly increased since PAPI first started measuring it in 2019, it is still less than 30 percent. This suggests that addressing social insurance issues will be of great importance as the country faces potentially stronger economic headwinds.

Figure 1.18: Citizens with Social Insurance, 2019-2023



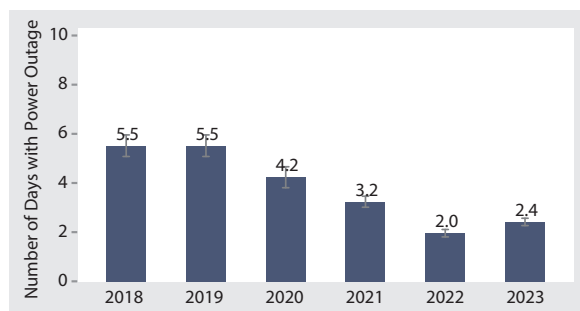
In terms of factors hindering economic growth in 2023, one concern was electricity grid pressures. Reports suggested that energy production was insufficient to meet demand during the year.³¹ To assess whether this impacted citizens, every year, the PAPI survey asks citizens about their experiences with power outages over the past six years. As findings in Figure 1.19 reveal, 2023 was worse than a year earlier, with 70.1 percent reporting a power outage, up from 63.5 percent in 2022.

Figure 1.19: Percentage Experiencing Power Outages, 2018-2023



Similarly, when asked about the number of days without power, respondents reported an average 2.4 days of blackouts, a 0.4 day increase from 2022 (Figure 1.20). Figure 1.21 shows that the outages were concentrated in provinces surrounding Ha Noi and the Mekong Delta. Indeed, this reflects the rolling blackouts across many provinces during the 2023 summer.³² Nevertheless, while 2023 saw a rise in the number of blackout days from 2022, there have been improvements in power access since 2018 when these questions were first asked, as shown in Figure 1.19. While the short-term trend is in the wrong direction, access to power still represents an overall improvement over the longer term.

Figure 1.20: Number of Days Power Out, 2018-2023



28 See some of the policy discussions on Viet Nam News (14 June 2023) at: <https://vietnamnews.vn/society/1549745/amended-social-insurance-law-expected-to-solve-lump-sum-withdrawal-problem.html>.

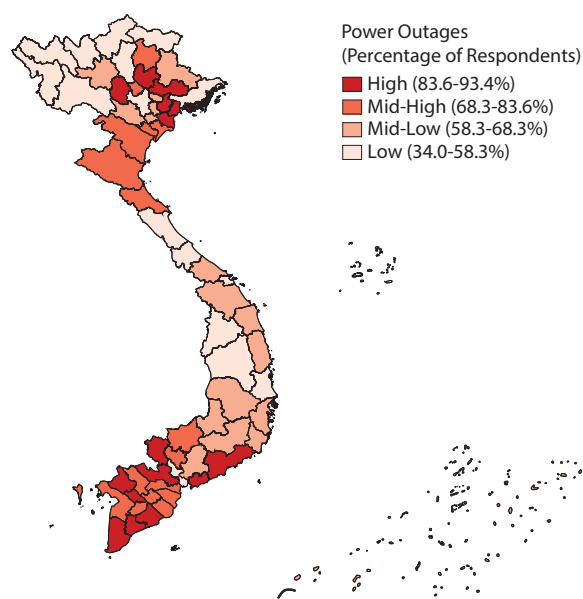
29 Suiwah Leung (12 January 2024).

30 Tu Phuong Nguyen (17 October 2023).

31 See East Asia Forum (14 December 2023).

32 See the National Assembly’s Portal (12 June 2023).

Figure 1.21: Percentage of Respondents Experiencing Power Outages by Province in 2023



Related to overall energy concerns is the source of power. In May 2023, Viet Nam unveiled its Eighth National Power Development Plan for 2021-2030, with a vision towards 2050 (PDP VIII),³³ which specifies how Viet Nam aspires to boost its power generation capacity to meet increasing demand³⁴ and shift towards renewable energy. With this in mind, PAPI 2023 asked citizens if they would support constructing or maintaining more renewable or coal power plants if either of the two types would reduce power outages by half in their provinces. It did so by dividing respondents into two groups: the first was asked if it would support development of coal plants, and the second group was asked if it would support development of renewable plants. The results revealed that 91 percent of respondents would support construction of renewable plants compared to 75 percent asked about coal plants. This shows a strong preference for renewable power. At the same time, a large population still supported the construction or maintenance of coal plants. Coupled with their concern about power supply reliability, the responses show that citizens are generally supportive of increasing power generation capacity, whether it comes from non-renewable or renewable sources.

Drivers of Internal Migration in 2023

Over the past three years, PAPI has tracked drivers of migration within Viet Nam by asking citizens

whether they would move to another province and the reasons behind such a choice.³⁵ This section examines drivers of internal migration and discusses the potential impacts of climate change-related disasters on citizens' migration motivations.

Internal Migration Motivations

In the footsteps of the previous two PAPI reports, this section reveals who would move from their home provinces and why. Figure 1.22 shows the percentages of those who said they would move in the next few years by province. On average, only 0.95 percent of respondents reported being willing to move in 2023, about 0.65 percent lower than those in 2021 and 2022. A larger number of respondents who expressed a willingness to move were from the northern mountainous provinces of Dien Bien and Lai Chau and the central province of Quang Binh, where floods were also experienced (see Figure 1.29). Those from the northwest provinces of Dien Bien and Lai Chau commonly said they hoped to move to Ha Noi.

Next came the Mekong River Delta provinces of Ca Mau and Dong Thap and the south-central provinces of Binh Thuan and Ninh Thuan, with each province having more than 2 percent of respondents expressing an interest to migrate to another province. About 40 percent of those in the Mekong willing to move said they wished to move to HCMC and another 20 percent to Can Tho.

In the meantime, when asked about where they wished to move to, the top three destinations in order of preference were HCMC, Ha Noi and Da Nang, as shown in Figure 1.23. Can Tho and Lam Dong came next, similar to the survey results in 2021. Meanwhile, the least preferred destinations in order were Tra Vinh, Dien Bien, Bac Kan and Ben Tre, to which fewer than 0.2 percent of respondents nationwide wished to move.

Regarding the reasons why people wished to migrate in 2023, Figure 1.24 shows that reuniting with families is a primary motivation for many respondents (40.68 percent in 2023), similar to survey results from 2020 to 2022. Better jobs and natural environment were the second and third most important reasons (21.8 and 17.4 percent, respectively). Meanwhile, natural disasters were the driver of internal migration for 1.39 percent of respondents.

³³ See Law Library (2023).

³⁴ See Mark Barnes (5 December 2023).

³⁵ See the 2021 and 2022 PAPI Reports by CECODES, VFF-CRT, RTA and UNDP (2022, 2023).

Figure 1.22: Percentage of Respondents Who Want to Move Out of their Provinces, 2023

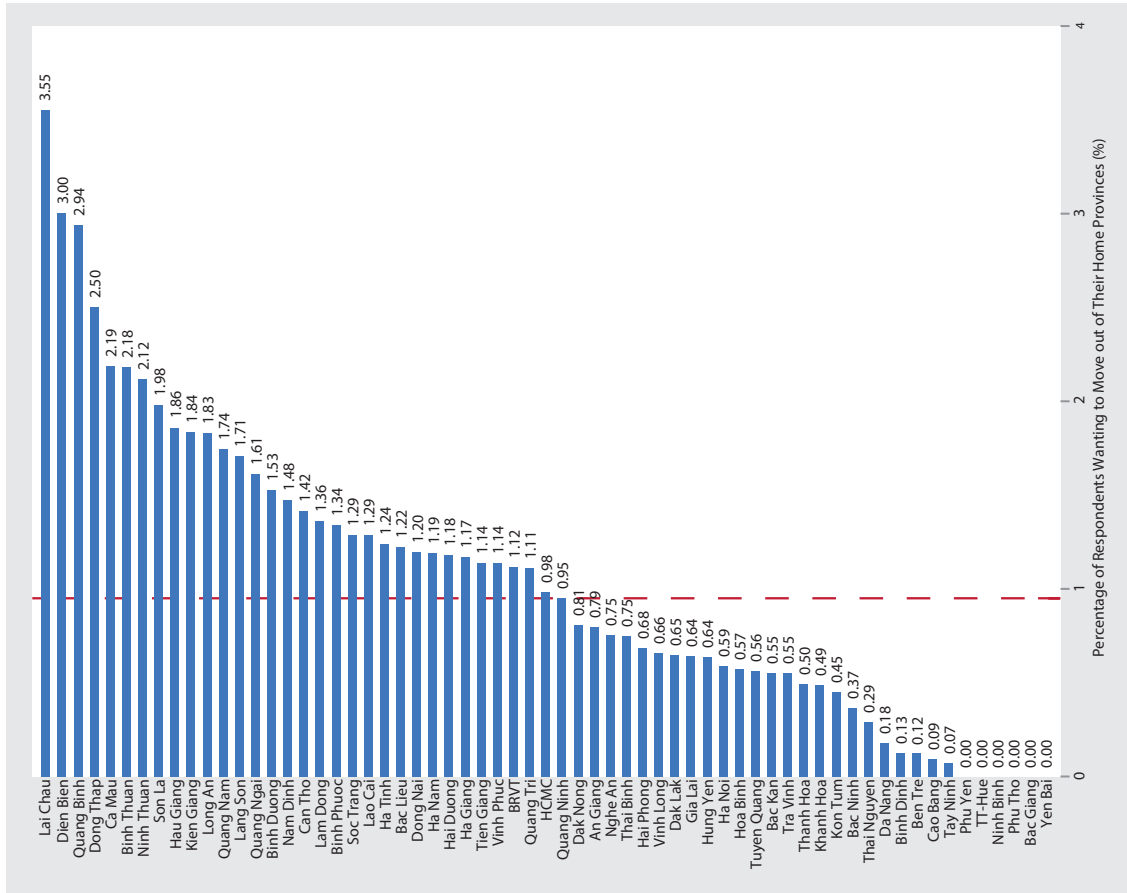


Figure 1.23: Preferred Destinations by Percentage of Respondents Wanting to Move, 2023

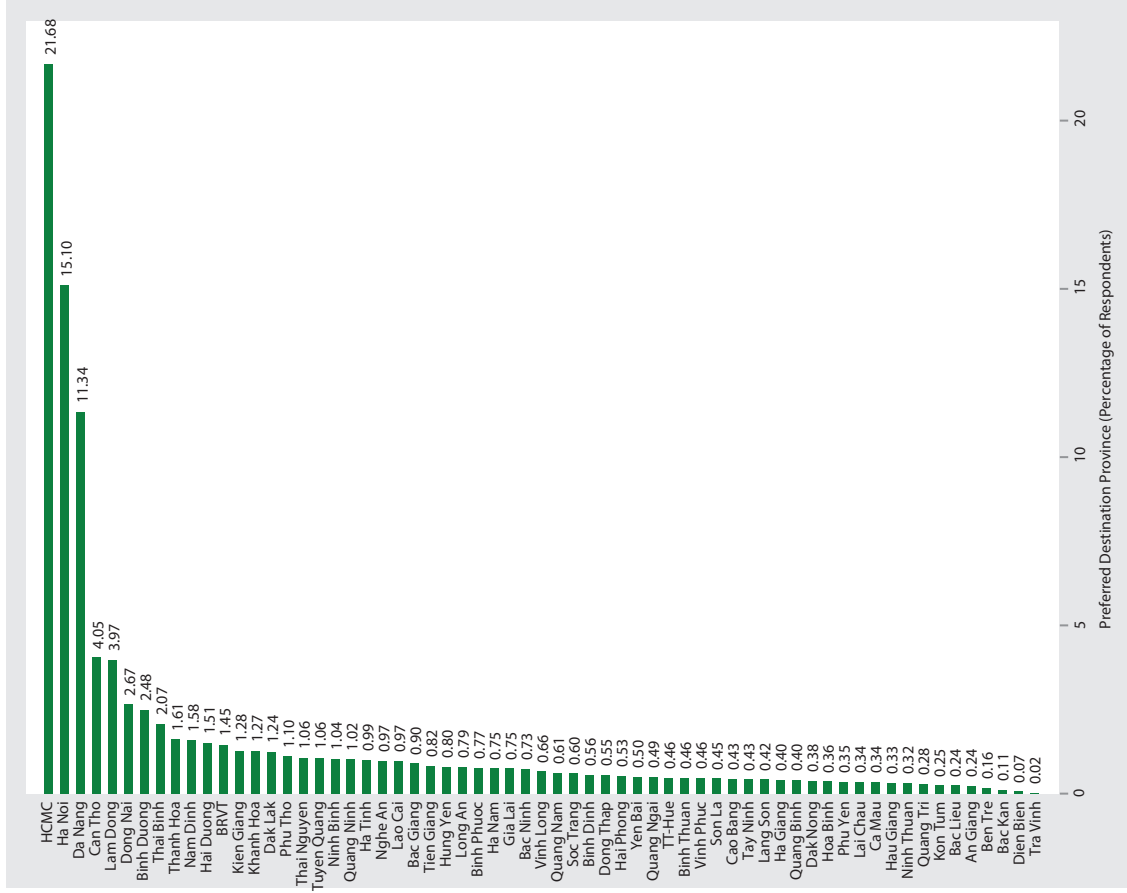


Figure 1.24: Reasons for Wanting to Move from 2020-2023

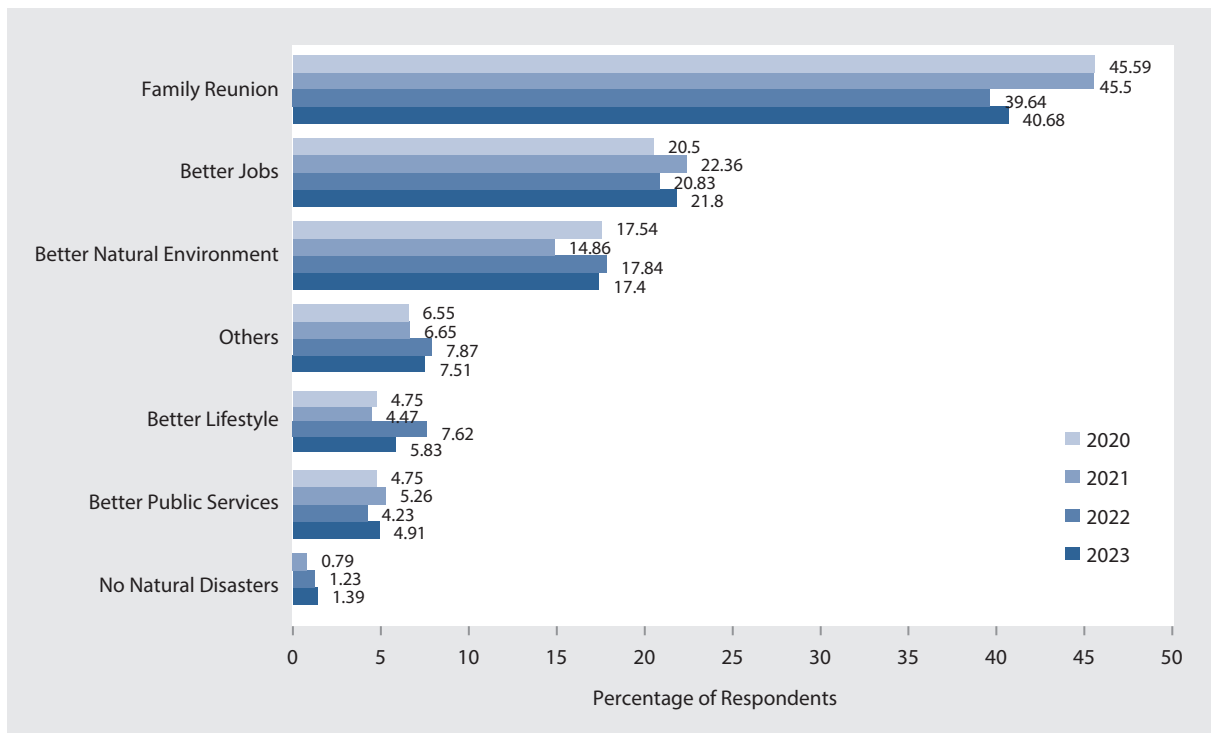
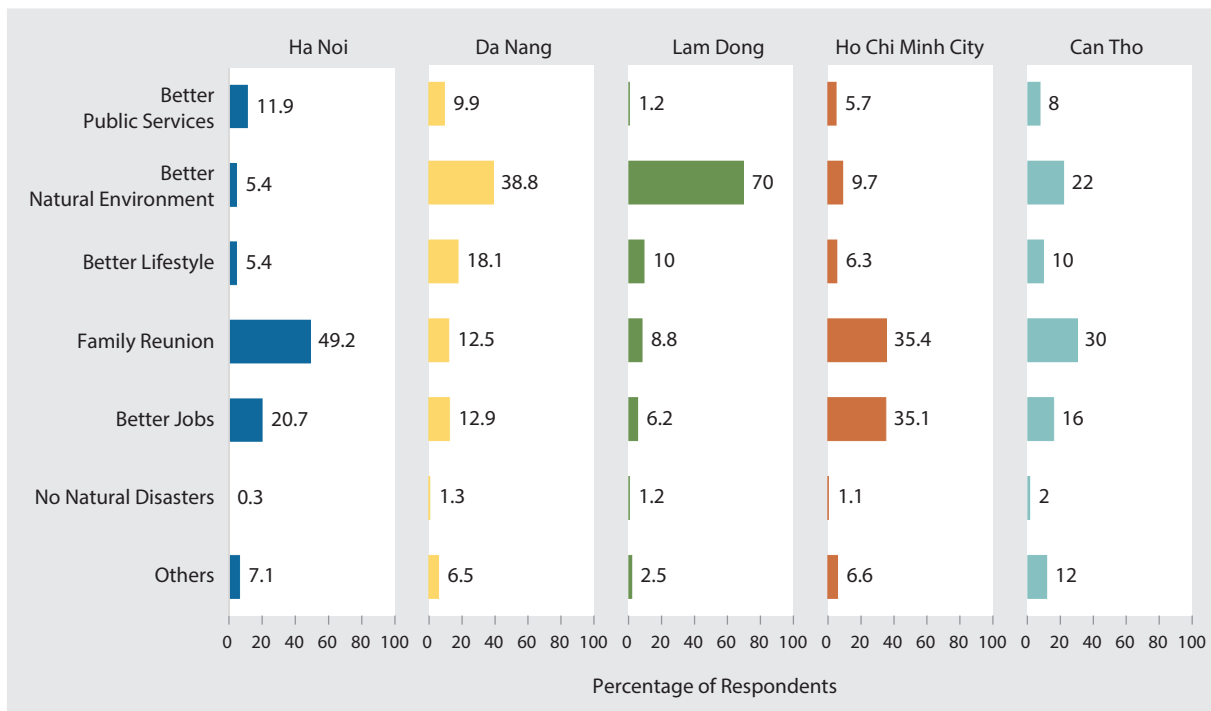


Figure 1.25 presents the motivations for moving by top-five preferred destinations in 2023. It shows similar trends seen from 2020 to 2022. Family reunions were the primary reason for moving to Ha Noi and HCMC for 49 and 35 percent of those who wished to migrate to the municipalities, respectively.

Can Tho was also a place for family reunions for 30 percent of those willing to move. Lam Dong (70 percent) and Da Nang (nearly 40 percent) were attractive destinations for those concerned about environmental conditions.

Figure 1.25: Preferred Destinations by Reasons for Wanting to Move, 2023



Effects of Climate Change-Related Disasters on Internal Migration Motivations

Given the increasing concern about climate change at both policy levels (such as Viet Nam’s roadmap to realize its commitments at the 26th Conference of the Parties (COP26)³⁶ and natural disasters at community level, this sub-section looks at how climate-related natural disasters may influence the migration decisions of citizens.

One of the most concerning effects of climate change is the salinization of agricultural areas, particularly in the Mekong River Delta. Salinization is the result of several conditions, including drought, rising sea levels, and upstream damming on the Mekong River. As Figure 1.26 shows, salinization has become an increasingly alarming problem facing citizens in Viet Nam’s key agricultural area. From 2021 to 2022, more than twice as many respondents in Mekong River Delta provinces said they experienced salinization in their fields during the previous year. The number also increased by nearly a percentage point from 2022 to 2023. The percentages of respondents in Ben Tre and Tien Giang provinces saying salinization occurred in their localities exceeded 41 percent in 2023, while those in Bac Lieu, Ca Mau, Hau Giang, Kien Giang, Long An and Vinh Long climbed over the three years (Figure 1.27).

Figure 1.26: Total Percentage of Citizens Experiencing Salinization in Mekong River Delta, 2021-2023

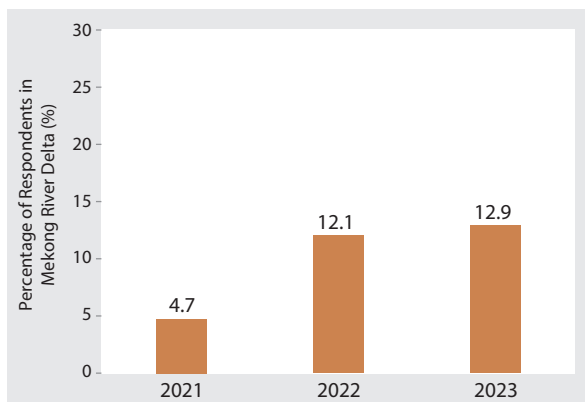
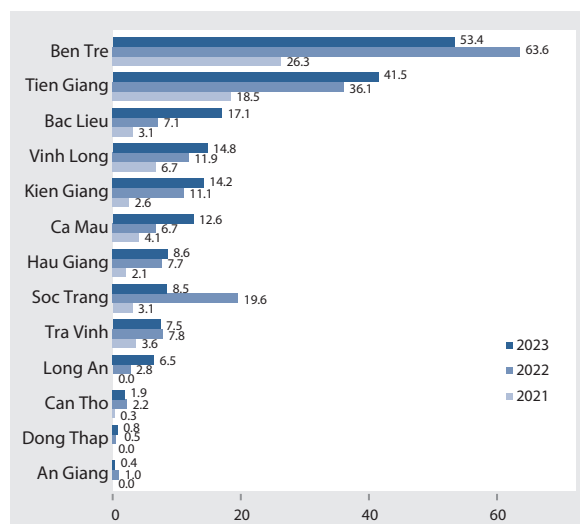


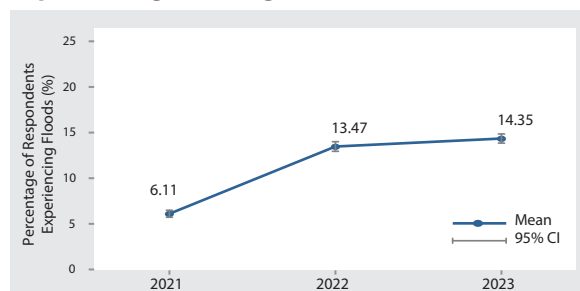
Figure 1.27: Percentage of Citizens Experiencing Salinization by Province in Mekong River Delta, 2021-2023



The relative impact across the provinces generally matches the proportions found in a scientific study,³⁷ which shows Ben Tre, Kien Giang and Tra Vinh to be the most impacted provinces. The PAPI findings may be different from the actual ecological conditions due to the clustered sampling strategy. By chance, sampled districts in Ben Tre may be more impacted by salinization than other Mekong Delta provinces. Having noted that, the shift over time across the region acutely demonstrates how this climate-driven phenomena is increasingly affecting the lives of local farmers.

Salinization of farming land is not the only natural disaster impacting citizens. In many parts of Viet Nam, citizens reported increased incidences of flooding in 2023. Figure 1.28 shows the rise in the numbers of respondents experiencing flooding from 6 percent in 2021 to more than 13 percent in 2022 and 2023. As Figure 1.29 illustrates, these experiences in 2023 were concentrated more in the central and northern regions.

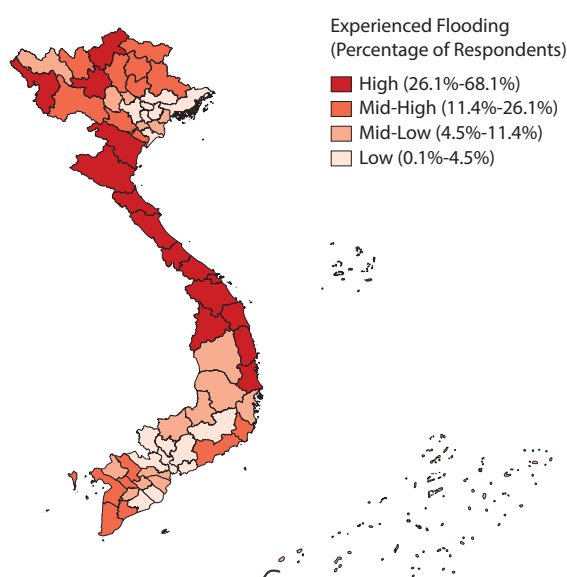
Figure 1.28: Total Percentage of Citizens Experiencing Flooding, 2021-2023



36 See The People Online at: https://special.nhandan.vn/lotrinhcop26_en/index.html.

37 See Nguyen et. al. (2020).

Figure 1.29: Percentage of Citizens Experiencing Flooding across Viet Nam, 2023



Conclusions and Policy Implications

This chapter has presented a mixed picture of performance in governance and public administration within the eight dimensions that PAPI measures at the national aggregate level in 2023. It has also highlighted areas of citizens' greatest concern, particularly regarding their household and the national economic situations, which reflect Viet Nam's challenging socio-economic conditions during the year. Finally, the chapter indicated key reasons why citizens would want to migrate from their provinces of origin. All these findings have important policy implications and suggest the need for short-term and medium-term actions from all levels of government.

The findings from the eight PAPI dimensions indicate that from 2022 to 2023, the dimensions of Control of Corruption in the Public Sector and E-Governance saw some improvement, while Public Service Delivery and Environmental Governance remained stable. However, the four remaining dimensions (Participation at Local Levels, Transparency in Local Decision-making, Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens, and Public Administrative Procedures) saw declines. Further examination of survey results on Transparency in Local Decision-making revealed that transparency in areas of citizens' interest is crucial to effective citizen-centric public governance. However, the indicators on transparency of poverty lists and of commune budget and expenditure in 2023 revealed areas that require further attention from central and local government agencies. Additionally, while some improvements in access to State policy information was evident,

transparency in land use plans and land price frames requires a stronger boost in 2024 and beyond to move away from the status quo of the past two years. In the meantime, the important Control of Corruption in the Public Sector dimension did see some steps forward.

Furthermore, in terms of both issues of greatest concern and the overall sentiment of household and national economic situations, more Vietnamese citizens felt anxious about the economic picture in 2023 than before, aside from 2021. While the overall sentiment of the economy remains optimistic, increasing numbers of respondents viewed their household economic situations negatively in 2023, while a high number implied that poverty reduction, job creation and higher economic growth should be prioritized by the State. Additionally, fewer experienced improvements in their household economic conditions, particularly ethnic minorities and the poorest segments of the population. Even respondents with higher income levels were more pessimistic than in the past. This negativity is manifested in an overall increasing sentiment that economic growth was one of the top three issues for the national government to address in the year(s) to come. This finding is important because perceptions of the national economy are more correlated with satisfaction of government than of household economic situations. While people may attribute their household economic situation to a mixture of luck and policy, the overall economy may be more linked to government performance in citizens' eyes.

As this chapter has highlighted, improved employment opportunities were one of the two primary drivers of internal migration considerations in 2023, second only to family reunions. This was in line with citizens' heightened concerns over the economic situation during the year. Although concerns about climate change-related natural disasters were overshadowed, a better natural environment was the third key driver for those wishing to move from their provinces of origin. Specifically, citizens in the Mekong River Delta increasingly experienced greater salinization of their farmland, while Central Coastal region citizens experienced floods more frequently. Meanwhile, the demand for power from any source was high among citizens. This is significant as Viet Nam faces increasing pressure to meet commitments to reduce reliance on coal power, while simultaneously increasing power capacity to meet growing demand. These findings point to a challenging situation where Viet Nam must balance the need for economic growth with the aspirations for climate adaptation to ensure citizens' livelihoods in areas most affected by climate change-driven disasters.



15 Years of Listening to Vietnamese Citizens' Voices



CHAPTER 2

E-GOVERNANCE PERFORMANCE IN 2023 AND THE NEED TO CLOSE THE DIGITAL DIVIDE

This chapter provides insights into how citizens have experienced access to the internet, e-government, and online public services since 2016, when PAPI started measuring e-governance performance. The findings from the 2023 survey, which form PAPI's Dimension 8 'E-Governance', are important considering the government's recent push to expand digital government and citizenship. Upon issuance of the "National Digital Transformation Programme by 2025, with orientations toward 2030"³⁸ in 2020, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 06/QD-TTg³⁹ on approving a scheme for the application of population data, e-identification and e-authentication as part of the national digital transformation during 2022-2025 (with a vision by 2030) in January 2022. In June 2022, the government issued Decree No. 42/2022/ND-CP⁴⁰ regulating the provision of information and public services online by regulatory agencies.

The decree requested central and local government agencies to digitalize different public administrative procedures and urged citizens and businesses to use central or provincial e-service portals. The government even introduced a monitoring system, the National Online Public Service Portal (or the National E-Service Portal – NESP), officially launched in December 2019 and now linked with all 63 provincial e-service portals, to track local governments' performance in delivering e-services.⁴¹ Also, under the 2023 National Digital Transformation Action Plan,⁴² Viet Nam aimed to bring 50 percent of administrative procedures online, complete the information system for managing administrative procedures in all ministries, provinces and integrate it into the NESP and increase the proportion of online payments for administrative procedures through

NESP to 60 percent by the end of 2023. All these endeavours are expected to reduce bureaucratic discretion and corruption, improve transparency, and enhance government efficiency.

This chapter provides an overview of e-governance performance at the provincial level in 2023, comparing it with the previous three years. It then presents citizens' assessment of the – NESP and Provincial Online Public Service Portal (or Provincial E-Service Portal – PESP) from their own experiences, before examining the existence of the 'digital divide'⁴³ in citizen access to e-services at central and provincial levels among different population groups. This will help inform central and local governments on who is left behind in their digital transformation endeavours.

Overview of E-Governance Performance at the Provincial Level in 2023

This section presents key findings from citizens' assessment of e-governance performance in 2023 with a comparative perspective of such views since 2019, when the NESP was launched, for two primary reasons. First, as Chapter 1 indicates, one area that witnessed significant improvement in PAPI's dimensional scores in 2023 was 'E-Governance' (Dimension 8). Second, e-governance is a potential force multiplier for better governance. If a province can improve its e-governance performance, this could enhance transparency, reduce corruption, and expedite administrative procedures. Transparency in local decision-making may be facilitated by improvements to e-governance platforms, including government information portals and provincial

38 See Viet Nam Law (2020).

39 See Law Library (2022).

40 See Law Library (2022).

41 See the Government's Index on Provincial Performance in Handling Administrative Procedures and Services for Citizens and Businesses at: <https://dichvucong.gov.vn/p/home/dvc-index-tinhthanhpho-tonghop.html>

42 See the Ministry of Information and Communications (24 April 2023).

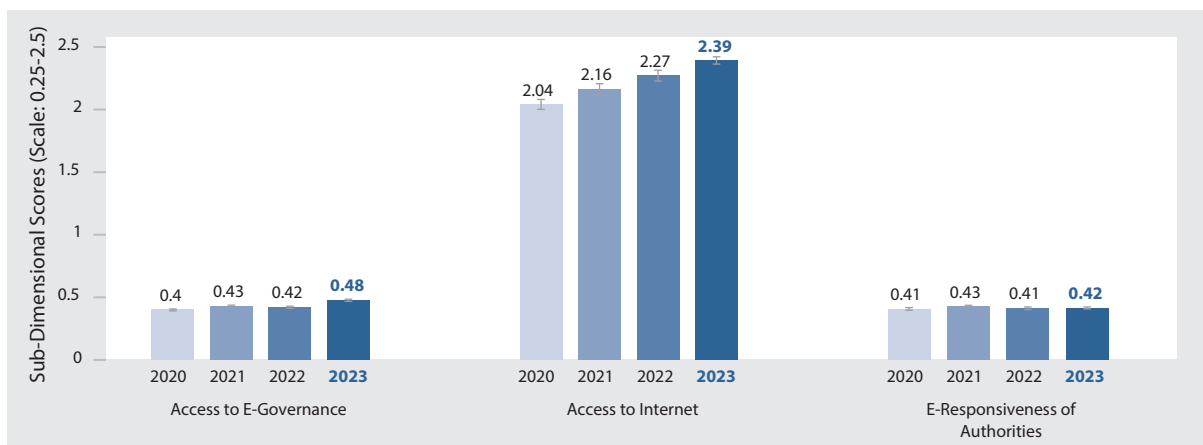
43 'Digital divide', in this report, refers to inequalities between individuals, households, or groups of population of different demographic and socio-economic levels in access to information and technology and in the knowledge and skills needed to effectively use the information gained from internet connections and internet-based platforms as provided by governments.

e-service portals. E-governance is critical to allow citizens to bypass cumbersome red tape that can impede smooth access to government services.

Results from the 2023 PAPI survey saw improvements in the E-Governance dimension compared to the previous three years from 2020 to 2022. As Figure 2.1 shows, the two sources of improvements at aggregate level are increased access to the internet and enhanced access to provincial e-governance portals.

On a scale from 0.33 to 3.34 points, the sub-dimensional score for Access to Internet increased from 2.04 in 2020 to 2.39 in 2023. On the same scale, the sub-dimension Access to E-Governance saw a rise from 0.4 to 0.47 points, although at a much lower pace compared to the Access to Internet sub-dimension. Nonetheless, the sub-dimension E-Responsiveness of Authorities (about how local governments respond to citizens' feedback and requests online) remained constantly low over the four years.

Figure 2.1: Changes in E-Governance Scores (Dimension 8), 2020-2023



Each year since 2016, PAPI has measured citizens' access to the internet at home and access to news from the internet through a computer or smartphone. As Figure 2.2 reveals, more citizens have gained access to the internet and news online over the years. In 2023, nearly 80 percent of PAPI survey respondents said they had access to the internet at home, more than double the percentage of 31 percent in 2016. Similarly, the percentage of respondents reading news from online sources almost tripled after eight years, from 23 percent in 2016 to nearly 59 percent in 2023.

Is there a 'digital divide' in access to the internet demarcated by gender, living areas, ethnicity or migrant status? Figures 2.3a, b and c explore citizens' access to the internet at home, personal computers and smartphones by different demographic features from PAPI surveys from 2016 to 2023. They reveal real divides in access to all these essential connection facilities and devices within each group. In terms of internet access (Figure 2.3a), while men and women had increasing access to the internet, a persistent 5-10 percentage point gap favours men over the years. Similarly, ethnic minorities had a constant 10-20 percentage point lower level of access compared to the Kinh majority. One area of convergence in 2023 was between rural and urban areas. Whereas the urban and rural gap exceeded 25 percentage points in 2016, it had shrunk to 9 percentage points in 2023. The fourth panel in Figure 2.3a compares internet access at home between non-permanent residents in the 11 largest recipient provinces of internal migrants (destination provinces) against permanent residents in these same provinces. It shows that although both groups overwhelmingly had such access, the number of permanent residents with access was about 5 percent greater than non-permanent migrants over the three years from 2021 to 2023.

Figure 2.2: Access to News Online and Access to Internet at Home, 2016-2023

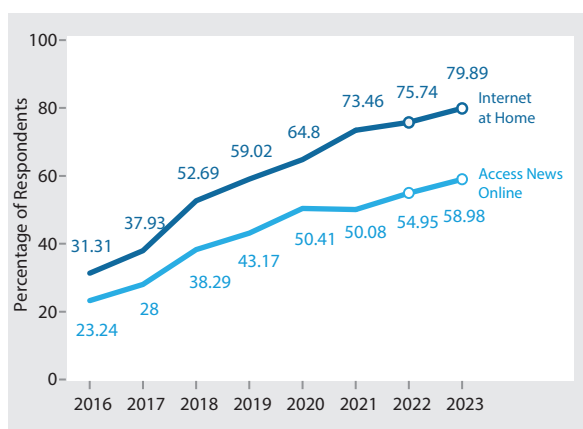
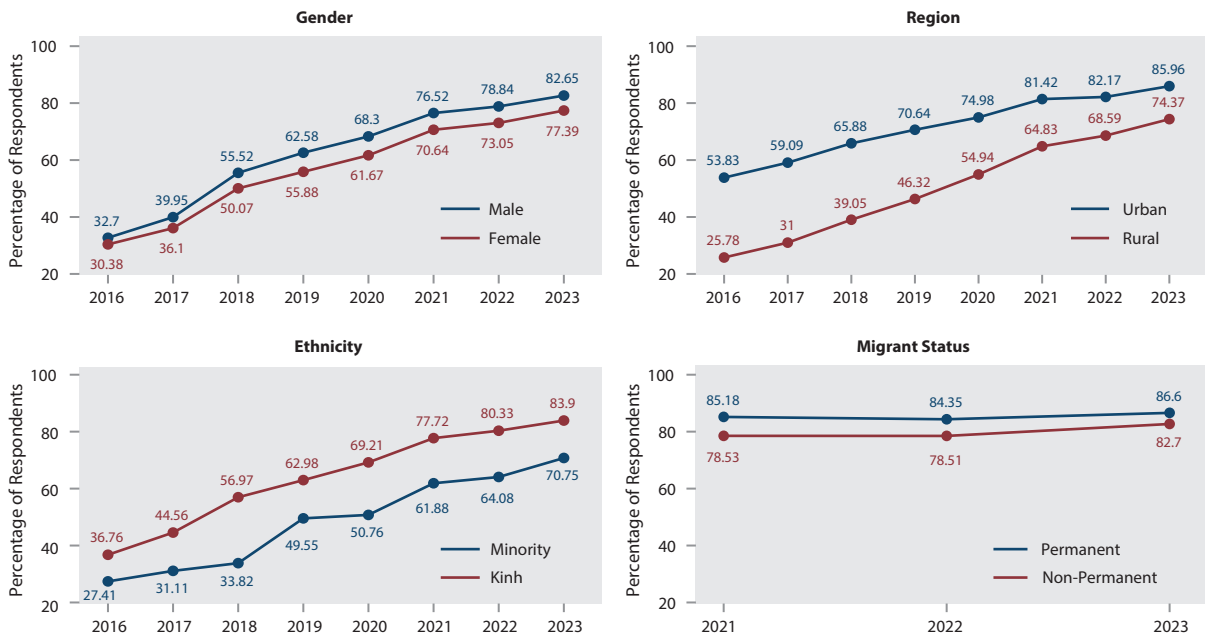


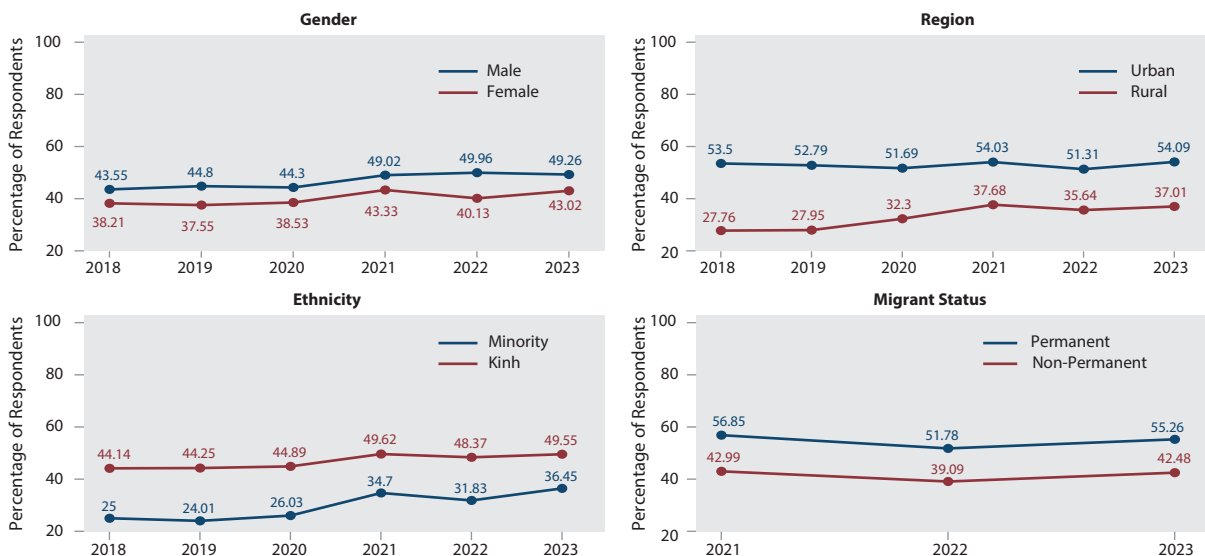
Figure 2.3a: Gap in Access to Internet at Home by Gender, Living Areas, Ethnicity and Migrant Status, 2016-2023



Regarding ownership of personal computers such as desktops or laptops at home, Figure 2.3b reveals that there have been constantly larger gaps between urban and rural residents, Kinh and non-Kinh citizens as well as permanent and non-permanent residents at the national aggregate level, despite some converging trends towards 2023. The divide between women and men in ownership of a personal computer remains, although smaller compared to other three groups under discussion. When comparing access to personal computers between permanent and non-permanent respondents in destination provinces, Figure 2.3b

shows that the percentage of the former group was 13 per cent higher than the latter group in 2023. It is apparent, however, that the gaps are wider than those regarding access to the internet. Meanwhile, personal computers still play an essential role in facilitating access to e-services as both national and provincial e-service portals require that users of most administrative services fill in and sign application forms offline before scanning and uploading online—a process that needs to be done on a personal computer that is connected with a printer, a scanner and the internet.

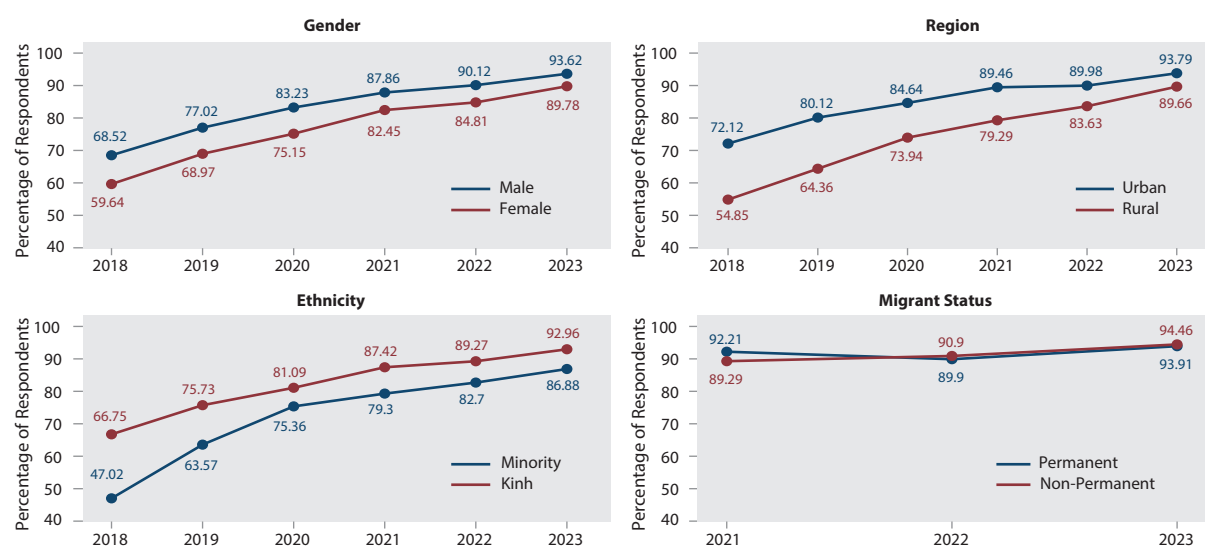
Figure 2.3b: Gap in Access to Personal Computers by Gender, Living Areas, Ethnicity and Migrant Status, 2016-2023



With 90.8 percent of respondents in the 2023 PAPI survey reporting they had smartphones, it is important to spotlight any gaps in smartphone ownership. The 2018-2023 PAPI survey findings show that, among the three connection conditions (i.e., internet connection, personal computers and smartphones) that can be used for online news and e-services, the level of smartphone ownership tends to be equally distributed across each of the four population groups being examined and has been on a converging trend towards 2023

(see Figure 2.3c). Permanent and non-permanent residents in destination provinces were virtually indistinguishable in their level of smartphone access. The largest smartphone ownership gap is seen between the Kinh majority (92.96 percent) and ethnic minorities (86.88 percent). Smartphones, therefore, can be utilized to enhance the use of public e-services among Vietnamese citizens considering their national coverage. Growth rates in smartphone ownership have been impressive, particularly in rural areas and more difficult-to-access locations.⁴⁴

Figure 2.3c: Gap in Access to Smartphones by Gender, Living Areas, Ethnicity and Migrant Status, 2016-2023

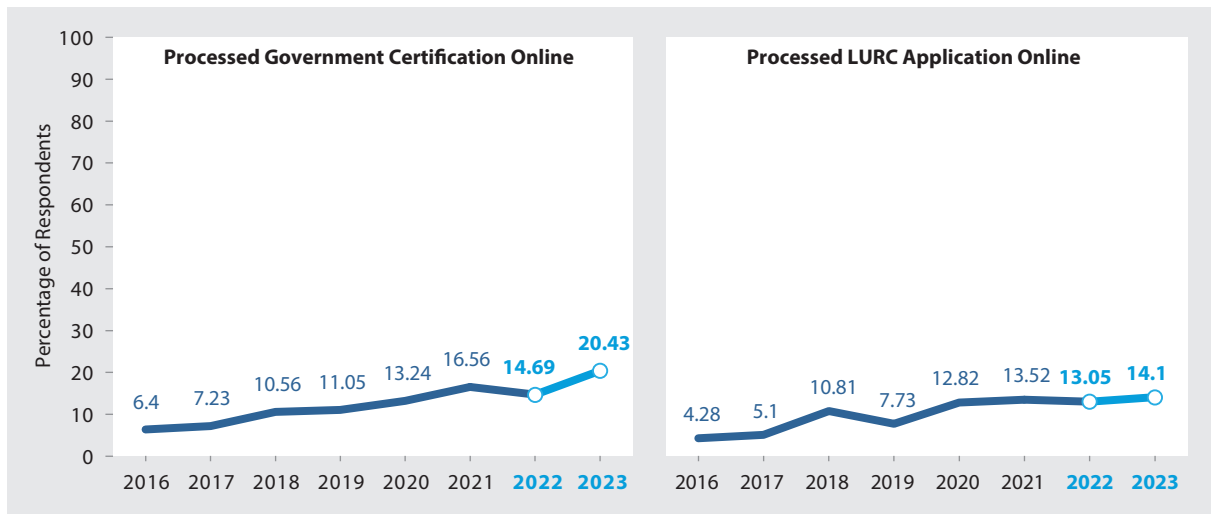


The second area of improvement was in access to information about citizen-centric administrative procedures, including government certification and land use rights certificates (LURCs) on public e-service portals that PAPI has measured since 2016. This sub-dimension explores whether citizens can find information about administrative procedures and application forms required to obtain government certification services or LURCs from local governments' online portals. Figure 2.4 shows

an increase in the number of respondents who applied for government certification services and could find some information about procedures and forms from online local government portals from 2016 to 2023. Particularly, there was a significant leap from 14.6 percent in 2022 to 20.4 percent in 2023. Access to information from local government platforms for LURC application procedures was more constrained and stagnated at around 12-14 percent from 2020 to 2023.

⁴⁴ See the analysis of ownership growth rates of different assets, including internet at home and smartphones, by PAPI respondents from 2011-2022 at: https://papi.org.vn/wp-content/uploads/2023/04/2022-PAPI-Asset-Ownership-Rate_VIE_ENG.pdf.

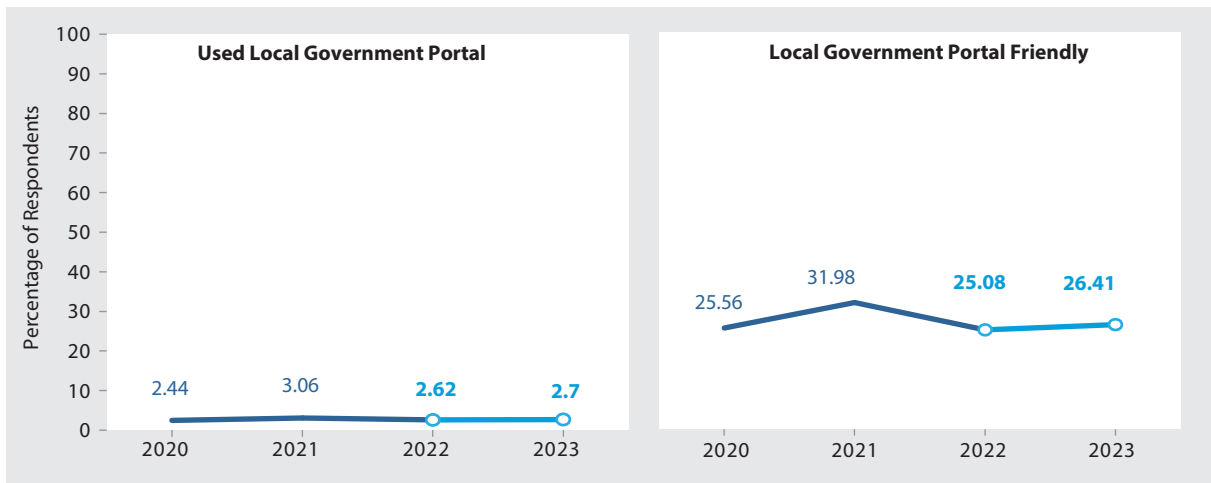
Figure 2.4: Access to Information and Forms for Government Certification and Land Use Rights Certificates on Online Local Government Portals, 2016-2023



An e-governance service with much less improvement is local government information portals. While these portals are mandated to act as information gateways for citizens, findings from PAPI surveys from 2020 to 2023 as presented in Figure 2.5 show extremely low proportions of users. Only 2.44-3.06 percent of respondents reported using

local government information portals, even during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021. Among those who used the portals, only 26.4 percent found them user-friendly in 2023, lower than nearly 32 percent also in 2021, when citizens possibly used the portals to search for local government COVID-related guidance or policy updates.

Figure 2.5: Users and Users' Assessment of Local Government Portals, 2020-2023

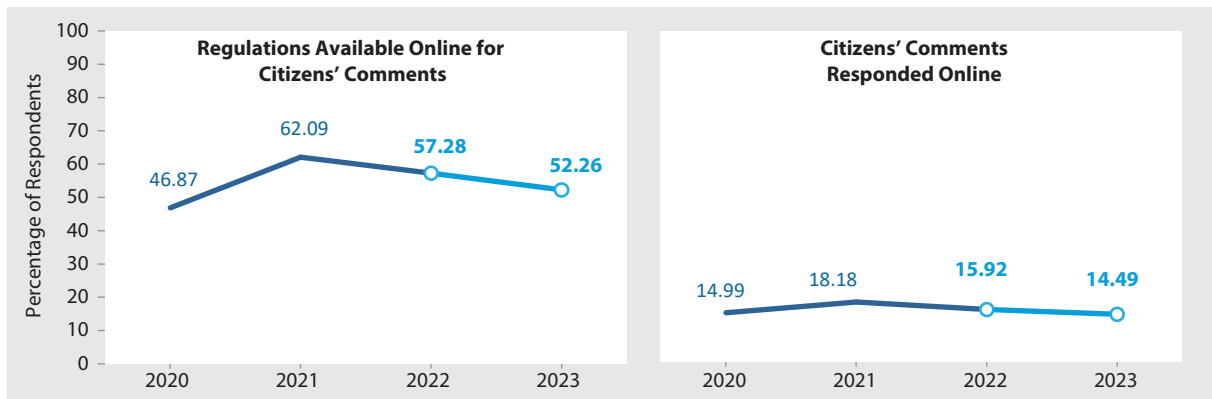


Accessing information and forms for public administrative procedures via online local government portals makes up only one level of e-governance, that is the transmission of information and forms. For effective e-governance, it must involve citizens in online discussions of draft policies via government portals as regulated in the 2015 Law on Promulgation of Normative Documents.⁴⁵ Since 2020, PAPI has asked citizens if their local

governments publicised draft policies on provincial government portals for comments and if they were received in each year's survey. Figure 2.6 reveals a declining percentage of citizens saying the draft documents were online for public consultation. The number dropped from a peak of 62 percent in 2021 to 52 percent in 2023. The number of those saying their comments were responded to remained steady at around 14 percent after four years.

⁴⁵ See Law Library (22 June 2015).

Figure 2.6: Government’s Publication of Draft Regulations and Responses to Citizens’ Comments Online, 2020-2023



How is improved e-governance linked to enhanced public administrative service delivery? Further analysis to explore the correlation between the E-Governance dimension with the seven other dimensions shows that it (Dimension 8) has the strongest positive correlation with Public Administrative Procedures (Dimension 5) than any other dimension. As Figure 2.7 shows, a one-unit shift in a Dimension 8 score is correlated with about a 0.1-unit shift in a Dimension

5 score after controlling for the other dimensions. A one unit increase in e-governance is also correlated with more than a 0.1-unit shift in Dimension 2 (Figure 2.8). These correlations suggest that improving the accessibility and user-friendliness of provincial e-service portals and information gateways may have a knock-on effect on increasing performance in other governance dimensions as well.

Figure 2.7: Correlation Between E-Governance and Administrative Procedures, 2023

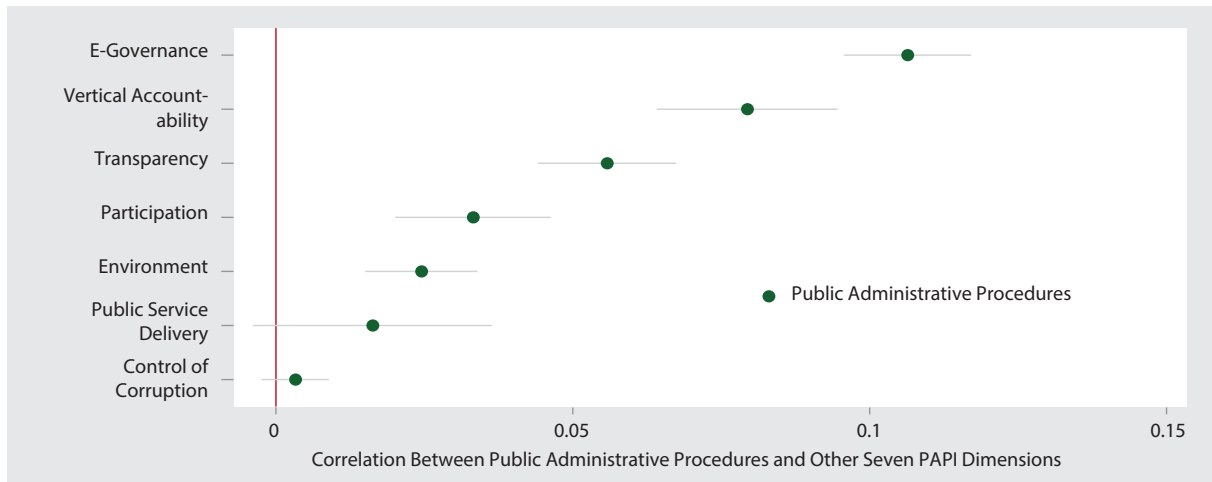
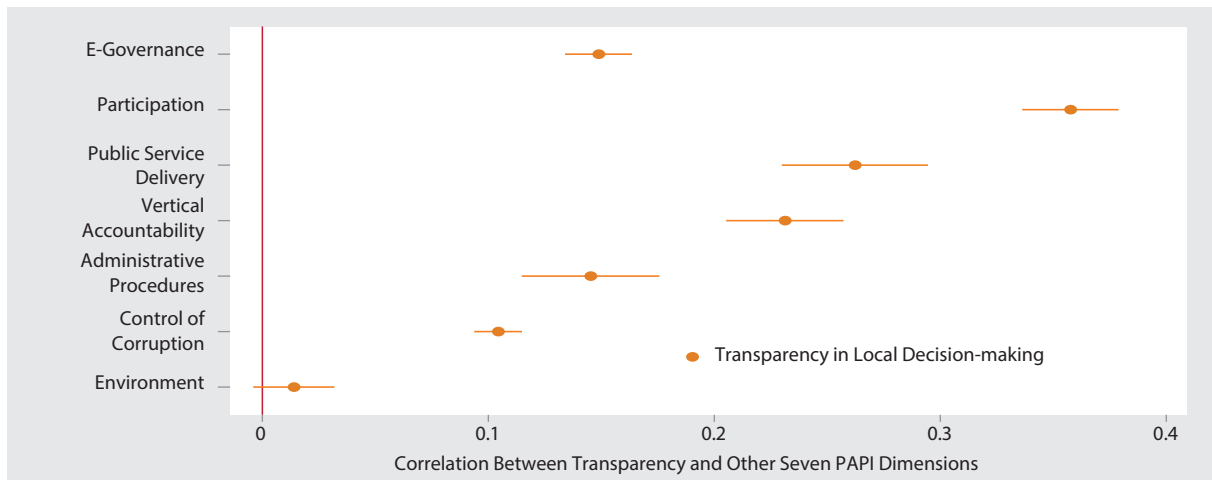


Figure 2.8: Correlation Between E-Governance and Transparency, 2023



In summary, the findings indicate that, despite some improvements in e-governance performance indicators, the pace of online services provision for citizen-centric administrative procedures has been much slower than of internet development. Nevertheless, the positive correlations between the E-Governance dimension with the Public Administrative Procedures and Transparency in Local Decision-making dimensions hold promise for further strengthened e-governance to realize streamlined public administrative procedures and improved transparency by facilitating access to information for citizen-users, in line with international findings on the effects of e-governance transformation.⁴⁶

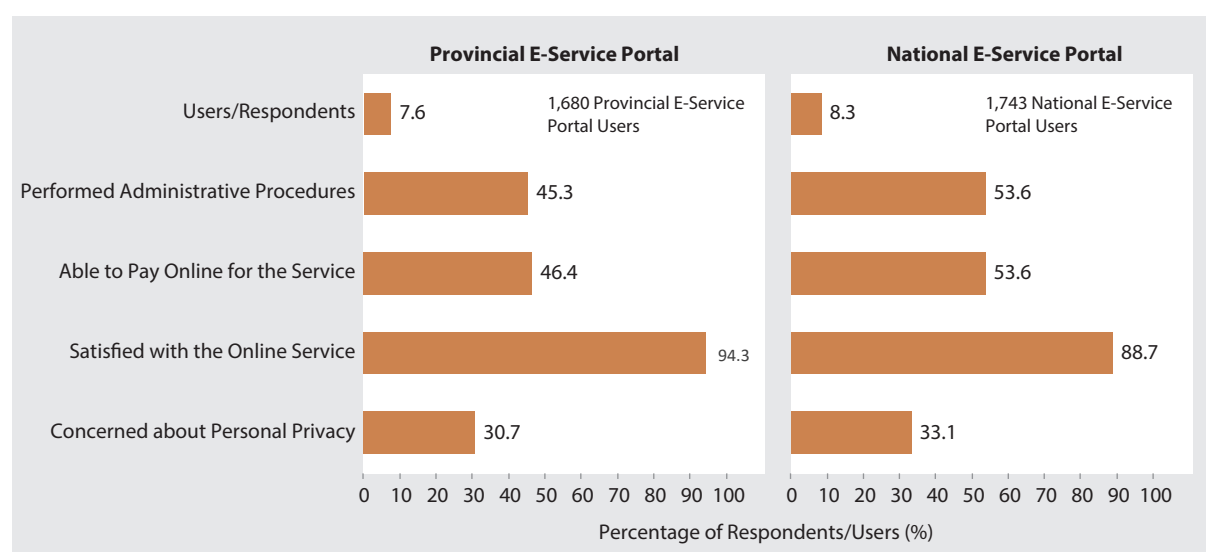
Provincial and National E-Service Portals: Levels of Performance and Emerging Digital Divide Issues

As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, after the launch of the National Online Public Service Portal or National E-Service Portal (NESP) in late 2019, and the government's push for strengthened and NESP-linked e-services through Provincial E-Service Portals (PESPs) at the provincial level, PAPI has been measuring citizens' experience with the NESP and the PESPs since 2020. In fact, as presented in the previous section, several e-service functions have been included in the PAPI survey since 2016.

Now that all 63 provinces have a designated PESP that should be linked with the umbrella NESP since 2022, it is important to review their performance and accessibility from users' experience. Thus, this section presents key findings on what citizens as users had to say about their experiences with the NESP and PESPs in 2023. It also reveals an important digital divide facing groups of users with different demographic backgrounds that central and provincial governments should address.

As shown in Figure 2.9, out of 18,919 respondents in the 2023 PAPI survey who responded to the questions about NESP and PESPs, the number of NESP users was 1,743 (8.3 percent) and that of PESP users from 61 provinces with qualified data totalled 1,680 (7.6 percent). Given the small numbers of users, it is important to track how NESP and PESPs perform in the interest of users as citizens from every walk of life. Among those who said they used NESP during the year, 53.6 percent performed administrative procedures for themselves or their families. The percentage of PESP users for handling administrative procedures was 45.3 percent. The satisfaction levels for both national (NESP) and provincial (PESP) portals were high at 88.7 and 94.3 percent, respectively. It is necessary to note that users of NESP are also users of PESPs because the NESP plays the role as the landing page to connect with PESPs.

Figure 2.9: Users of and their Experiences with National and Provincial E-Service Portals, 2023



⁴⁶ See Kaifeng Yang and Seung-Yong Rho (2007).

Full, all-rounded e-services allow citizens to complete processes for handling administrative procedures entirely online. This allows citizens to expedite the processes of acquiring needed certifications, while allowing them to circumvent red tape and bribery that too often occur during in-person interactions with civil servants. Figure 2.9 also indicates that, among those doing administrative procedures online, 53.6 percent could pay for the service online on NESP, while only 46.4 percent of PESPs users could. These percentages fell short of the 2023 target of 60 percent as committed in the 2023 Action Plan of the National Steering Committee for Digital Transformation.⁴⁷

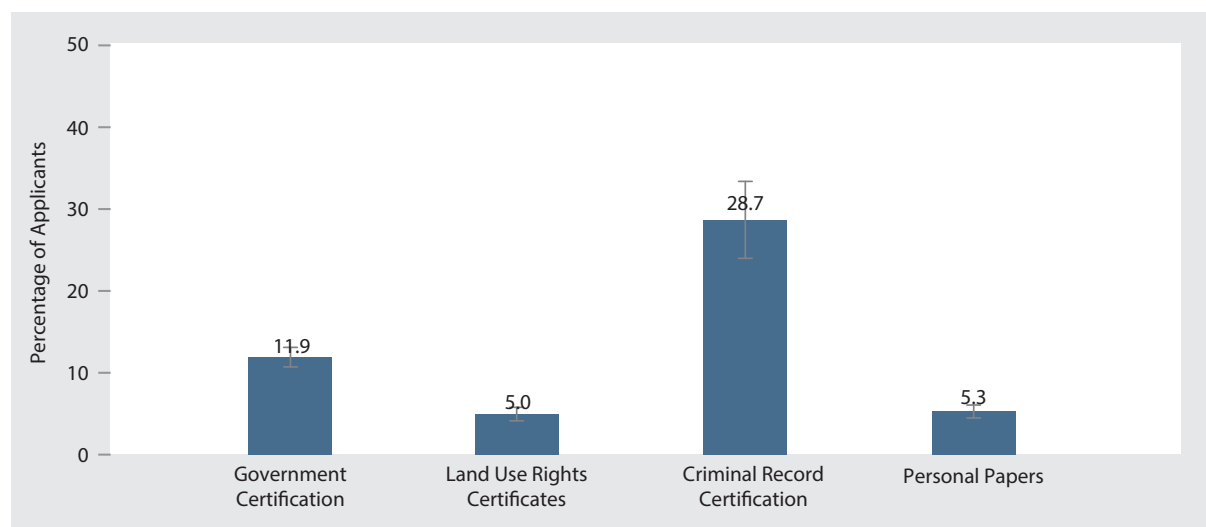
Apart from sub-optimal online payment facilities offered by NESP and PESPs, another reason for the low numbers of users was their privacy concerns, as expressed by one-third of users of NESP (33.1 percent) and PESPs (30.7 percent). Indeed, this further consolidates findings from the 2022 IPS and UNDP review, which revealed local governments' substandard performance in personal privacy protection on government-citizen interaction interfaces.⁴⁸ Hence, protecting users' personal privacy and emphasizing it publicly are areas that need further strengthening from the central government to promote use of this modern platform.

Moreover, there are other areas to address, including accessibility and user-friendliness of the government e-service portals and their functions as suggested in the series of e-governance research studies from 2021 to 2024 by UNDP and national partners.⁴⁹

Citizens' Experiences with Processing Administrative Procedures via Provincial E-Service Portals

For the first time, the PAPI survey in 2023 asked whether citizens could process applications for the four public administrative procedures (government certification, LURCs, criminal records, and personal papers) through PESPs. Figure 2.10 shows the percentages of those handling the four procedures and submitting applications through PESPs. It reveals that those applying for criminal records (processed by provincial-level government departments of justice) were most likely to submit applications through PESPs (28.7 percent), while only 11.9 percent applied for government certification. LURCs (processed at district-level governments) and personal papers (such as birth, death and marriage certificates processed by commune-level governments) were still largely paper-based, with around 5 percent saying they could submit applications through PESPs for each procedure.

Figure 2.10: Percentage of Respondents Able to Submit Applications for Administrative Procedures on Provincial E-Service Portals, 2023



47 See the Ministry of Information and Communications (24 April 2023).

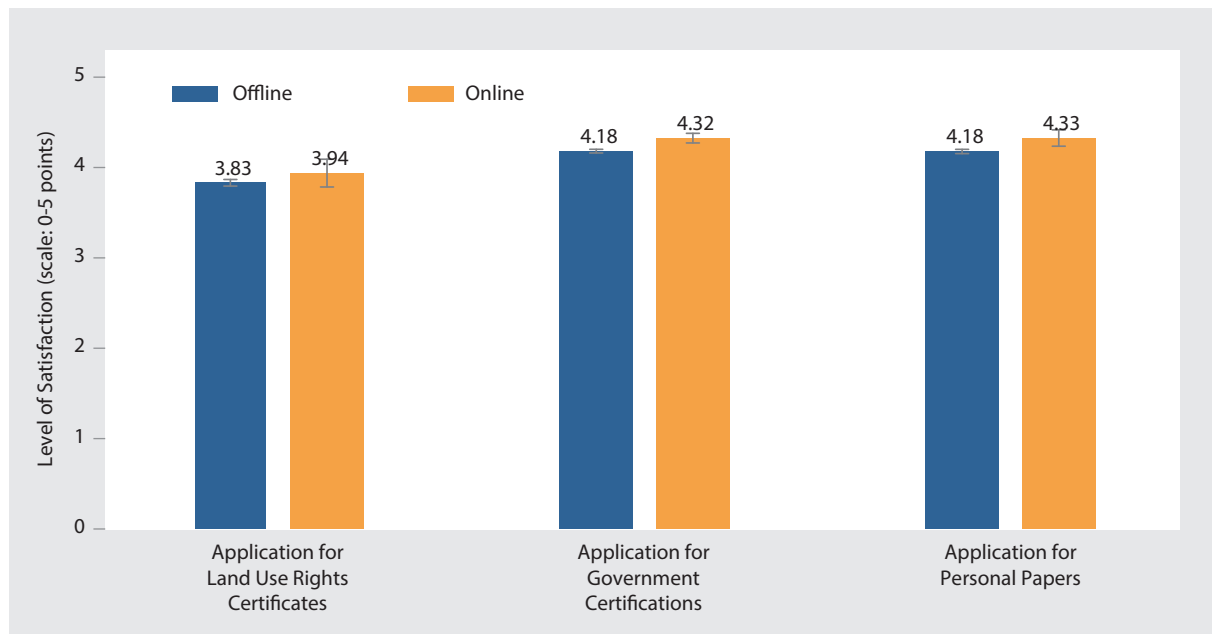
48 See IPS and UNDP (2022).

49 See the series of thematic research on e-governance and privacy protection commissioned by UNDP and national partners from 2021 to 2024 at: <https://papi.org.vn/eng/thematic-research-reports/?title=quan-tri-dien-tu>.

How satisfied were those who used online services rather than traditional in-person methods? It is generally hypothesized that applicants who can do any of the three procedures of government certification, LURC and personal papers online are more satisfied with the service. Figure 2.11 presents the findings from questions on the levels of satisfaction with government certification, LURC

and personal paper application processes. Those who did some or all procedures online were more satisfied than those who completed them offline. Each difference is significant with at least at a 90 percent level of confidence, indicating that moving to e-services seems to be associated with greater satisfaction with the administrative service for each of the three procedures.

Figure 2.11: Differences in Levels of Satisfaction with Online vs. Offline Services for Land Use Rights Certificate, Government Certification and Personal Procedures, 2023

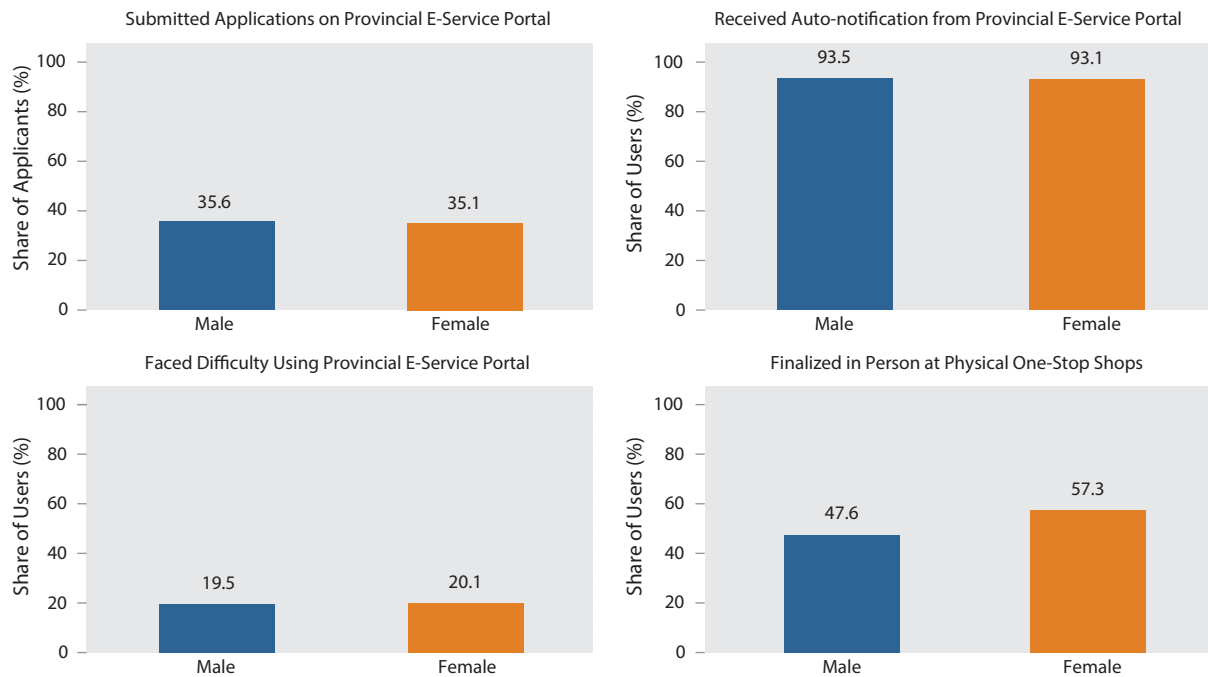


Apart from the nationally aggregated percentages of those submitting applications through PESPs as part of the four administrative procedures in focus and their levels of satisfaction, it is important to know who used the portals. Is there a digital divide according to gender, age, ethnicity, or region? After all, Figures 2.3a-c show that women are less likely to access the internet, personal computers and smartphones. In this case, are women also less likely to action administrative procedures online? Are there other gaps that reflect different levels of development and digital access between different groups of population or between regions across the country?

Figure 2.12 presents an analysis of the gender divide in applicants' use of PESPs. It shows the

percentages of men and women completing any of the four procedures (government certification, LURCs, criminal records, and personal papers) on PESPs. It also reveals whether applicants received auto-notifications from PESPs after submitting applications, whether they faced any difficulty in doing the procedures online, and whether they had to ultimately go in person to a One-Stop Shop (OSS) to complete the procedures. As the figure reveals, there was no substantial difference between men and women in the first three indicators, aside from getting the paperwork completed at OSSs. The survey results showed that women applicants were 10 percent point more likely than men to come in person to complete procedures.

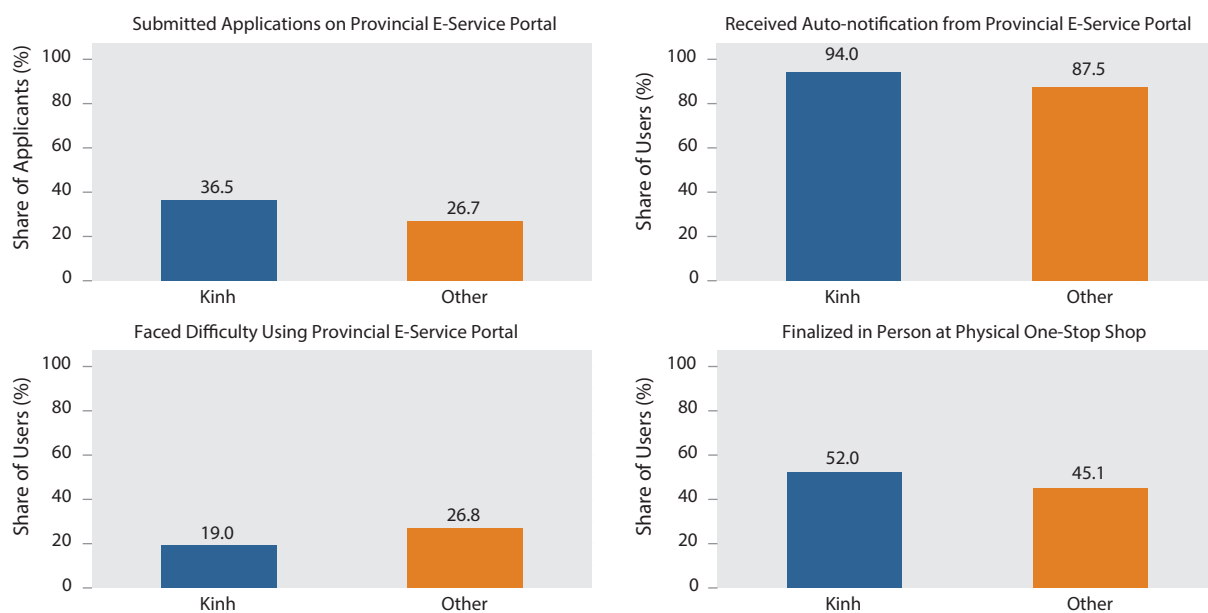
Figure 2.12: Users’ Experience with Application for Administrative Procedures on Provincial E-Service Portals by Gender, 2023



Starker differences emerge with respect to ethnicity. Figure 2.13 shows that ethnic minorities were far less likely to submit applications through PESP and receive auto-notifications from the portals. They were also more likely to face difficulties when using PESP, but less likely to finalize procedures in person at the OSS, which needs to be further studied. All

these variations, also evidenced through the series of empirical action research from 2021 to 2023 by UNDP and the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics (HCMA),⁵⁰ suggest that more needs to be done to ensure that e-services reach ethnic minority citizens, who commonly have a more acute need because of their distances to physical OSSs in commune centres.

Figure 2.13: Users’ Experience with Application for Administrative Procedures on Provincial E-Service Portals by Ethnicity, 2023

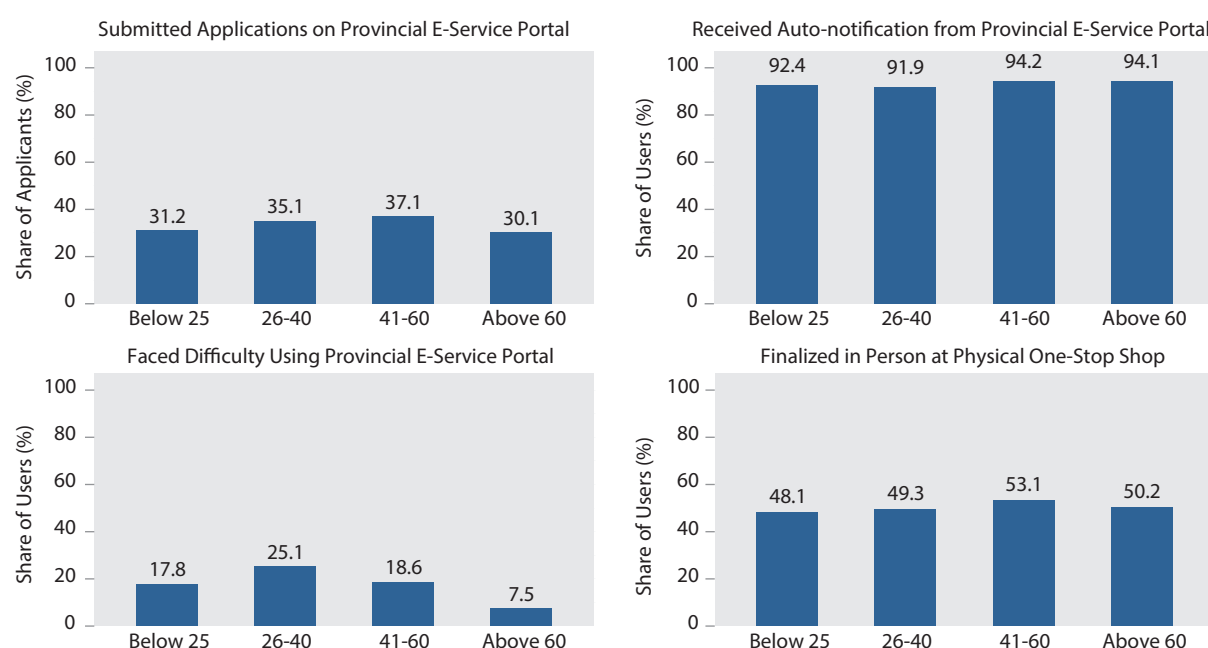


50 See the series of empirical research by HCMA and UNDP (2021, 2022) and HCMA, VSA and UNDP (2023) at: <https://papi.org.vn/eng/thematic-research-reports/?title=quan-tri-dien-tu>.

The survey also assesses how age impacts the use of e-services. It is hypothesized that younger users are more comfortable with administrative services online. Interestingly, the 2023 survey results reveal that age does not impact use linearly. Figure 2.14 shows that, among 1,680 respondents who used PESPs in 2023, upon aggregated by age brackets, the oldest respondents (above 60 years old) were somewhat less likely to submit applications online. However, those in the oldest bracket who submitted applications through PESPs were less likely to face difficulties, possibly because they received direct

support from OSS civil servants. The youngest respondents (below 25 years old) were also less likely to submit procedures online than the middle two age brackets (26-40, and 41-60 years old). However, younger ones more commonly faced difficulties. This suggests that the above 60-year-old users may have received more support from civil servants, youth unions or village digitalization support teams as part of the on-going policy to support older e-service users⁵¹ when processing administrative procedures, while younger citizens were left to process e-services themselves.

Figure 2.14: Users' Experience with Application for Administrative Procedures on Provincial E-Service Portals by Age, 2023



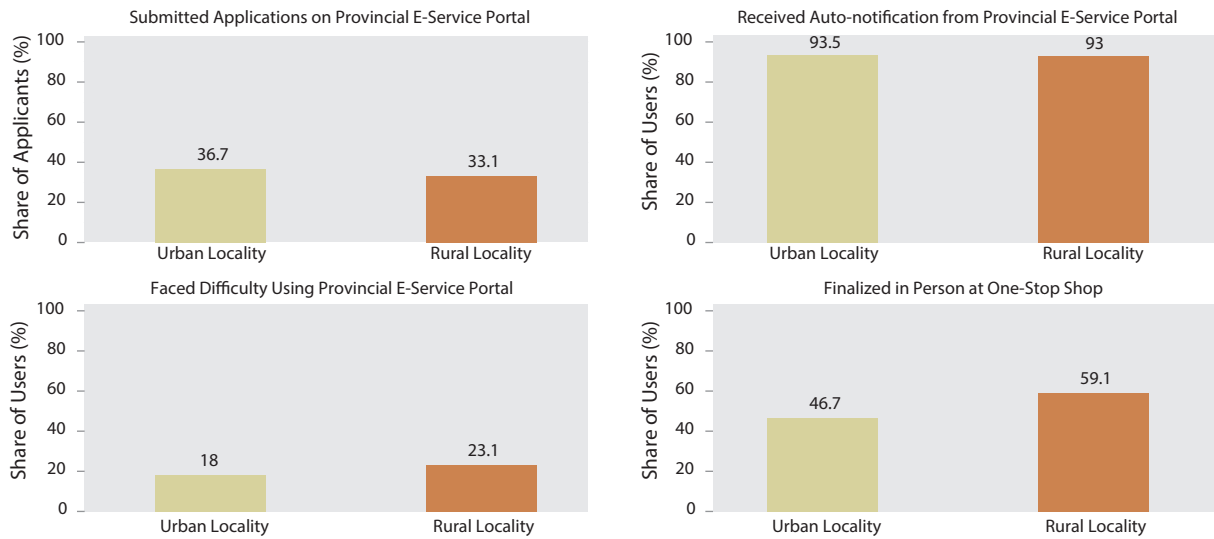
Finally, Figure 2.15 assesses the degree to which rural residency impacts citizens' access to PESPs. It reveals a rural-urban digital divide, although it is small. About 3 percentage points fewer rural users (33.1 percent) than urban users (36.7 percent) could submit applications for administrative services online. Rural users (23 percent) were also about 5 percentage points more likely to face difficulty when processing procedures through PESPs than urban residents (18 percent). Moreover, more rural

applicants (59.1 percent) eventually came in person to finalize paperwork at OSSs than urban applicants (46.7 percent). This resonates the divide in access to information and communication facilities, such as personal computers and smartphones (see Figure 2.3c), aside from internet access (as shown in Figure 2.3a) between urban and rural residents as found in annual PAPI surveys, while up to 61 percent of Viet Nam's population lived in rural areas by 2022 statistics.⁵²

51 As found in HCMA and UNDP (2021, 2022) and HCMA, VSA and UNDP (2023) empirical research in nine provinces (Binh Phuoc, Dien Bien, Gia Lai, Ha Giang, Hoa Binh, Ninh Thuan, Quang Tri, Soc Trang and Tra Vinh).

52 See World Bank Data at: <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS?locations=VN>.

Figure 2.15: Users’ Experience with Application for Administrative Procedures on Provincial E-Service Portals by Rural-Urban Areas, 2023



Considering the small number of PESP users, it makes more sense to see the digital divide from a regional than a provincial perspective. Thus, further disaggregation of user experience with PESPs by six economic regions (Northern Mountains, Red River Delta, Central Coast, Central Highlands, Southeast and Mekong River Delta) and a separate group of five

centrally-governed municipalities (Ha Noi, Hai Phong, Da Nang, HCMC and Can Tho, which are excluded from their respective regions in this analysis) as shown in Figure 2.16 is necessary to understand the digital divide facing users from different socio-economic and geographical conditions.

Figure 2.16: Users’ Experience with Application for Administrative Procedures on Provincial E-Service Portals by Region, 2023



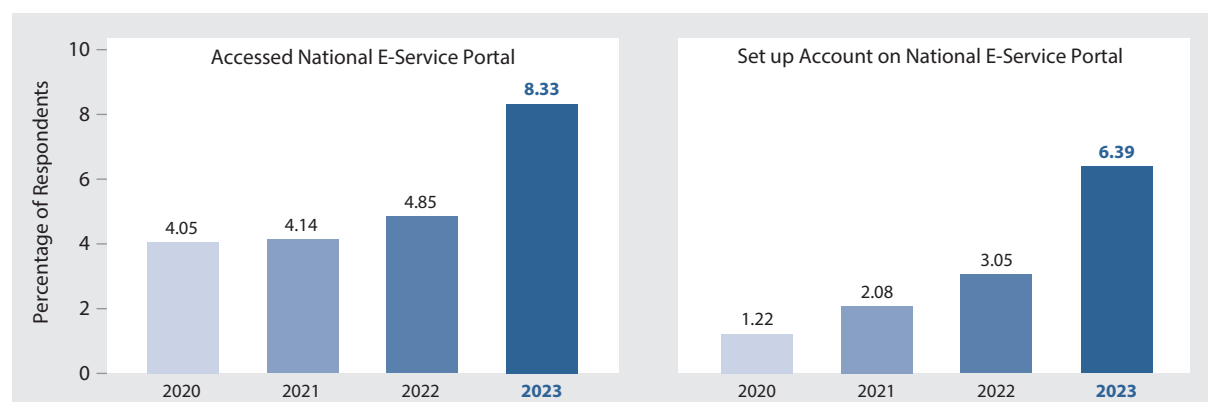
Figure 2.16 shows that the five centrally-run municipalities had the highest percentage of PESP users, although users also faced difficulty at a rate comparable to users in other regions. Among the six regions, PESP users were likely more used in the Southeastern region (with 42.7 percent of those who visited PESP submitting applications for administrative procedures via provincial portals) than in the other five regions. However, the percentages of users from both centrally-run municipalities and the Southeast region having to visit OSSs to finalize procedures in person were also the highest. In contrast, the percentage of PESP use in the Central Coastal region was the lowest (27.2 percent), the reasons for which needs to be further studied. Still, among these few users, 43 percent had to visit OSSs in person. The positive aspect of PESP is the auto-notification receipt of online applications by citizen-users in all these regions, except in Central Highlands provinces.

Citizens' Experiences with Processing Administrative Procedures on the National E-Service Portal

The previous sub-section reveals local governments' performance in delivering online services and the gaps that need to be filled to assist citizens from various demographic backgrounds to access and use available e-services. This sub-section presents 2023 PAPI survey results on citizen assessment of access to the National E-Service Portal (NESP),⁵³ which is the national online OSS for citizens and businesses to access public administrative procedures. Apart from requesting local governments to provide more services online, the government has invested in the NESP since 2019.

Figure 2.17 shows an increasing number of citizens accessing and setting up user profiles on the NESP, although still at a slow pace. As shown in Figure 2.9 as well, about 8.3 percent of 2023 PAPI respondents accessed the NESP in 2023, almost doubling the percentage in 2022. Also, the percentage of those who set up accounts on the NESP doubled, from 3.05 percent in 2022 to 6.39 percent in 2023.

Figure 2.17: Access to National E-Service Portal, 2020-2023



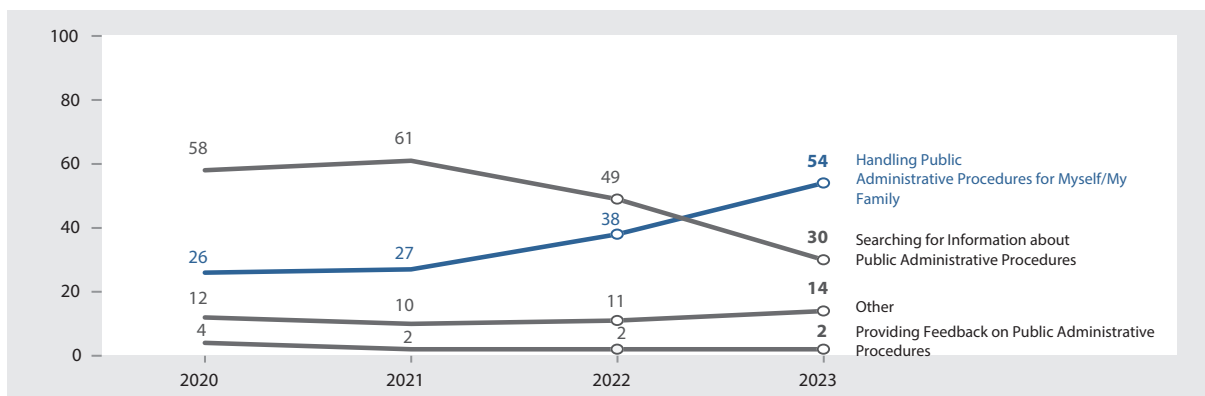
The 2-percentage point difference between those who visited the NESP and those setting personal accounts for future use, therefore becomes significant, as it indicates that not all visited the national portal for e-services but also for other purposes.

As in previous years, the 2023 survey asked respondents about their purposes for using the NESP. Figure 2.18 shows that, among those who

accessed the portal, 54 percent used it for handling administrative procedures, a significant increase from 38 percent in 2022. Meanwhile, the percentage of users who searched for information in 2023 has fallen by a half from 61 percent in 2021. One important function of the portal is to collect users' feedback. However, this only attracted 2 percent of users over the past three years.

⁵³ The National E-Service Portal can be accessed at: <https://dichvucong.gov.vn/p/home/dvc-trang-chu.html>.

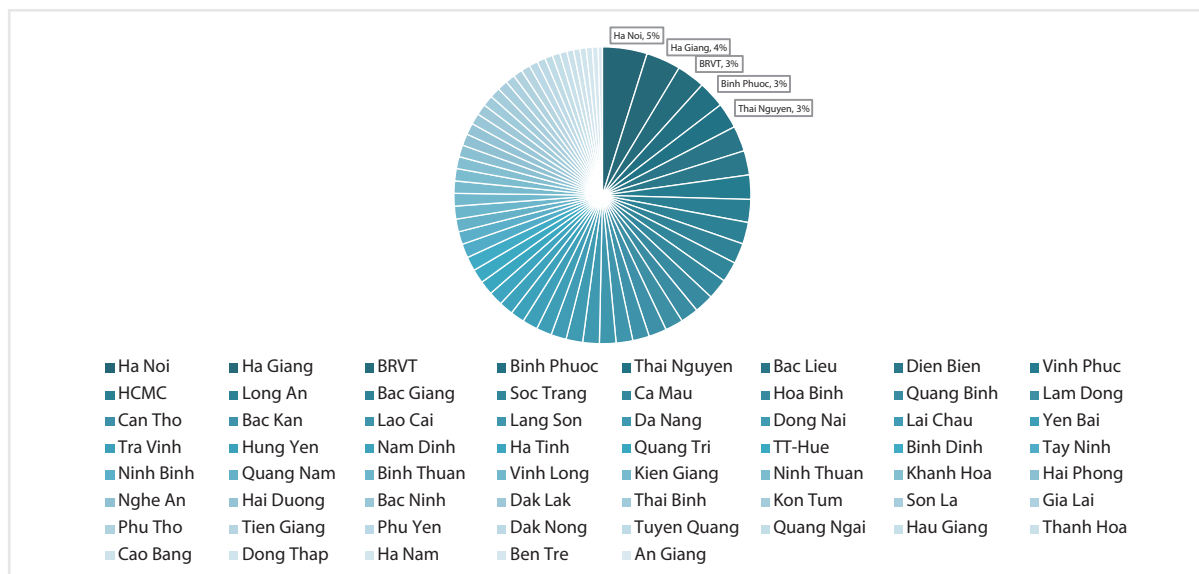
Figure 2.18: National Mean Percentage of Users of National E-Service Portal by Purpose, 2020-2023



In terms of the share of total user proportion of the NESP (8.33 percent, as presented in Figure 2.19) by province, Ha Noi had the largest share with 5 percent of the total, followed by Ha Giang (4 percent). Ba Ria-Vung Tau (BRVT), Binh Phuoc and Thai Nguyen each

shared 3 percent, respectively in 2023. Provinces such as An Giang, Ben Tre, Cao Bang, Dong Thap, Ha Nam and Thanh Hoa had the lowest shares (0.03 and 0.05 percent).

Figure 2.19: Share of Percentage of Users of the National E-Service Portal by Province, 2023



What were the most frequently processed public administrative procedures on the National E-Service Portal in 2023? Among the 941 respondents who conducted public administrative procedures via the NESP in 2023, as shown in Table 2.1, the top three procedures with the largest percentage of users

were application for new or renewed passports (16 percent), birth certificates for their children (10.3 percent), and vehicle registration (10.1 percent). Other administrative procedures accounted for fewer than 10 percent of applicants.

Table 2.1: Percentage of Users of the National E-Service Portal for 15 Most Frequently Processed Public Administrative Procedures, 2023

	Administrative Procedures	Percentage of Applicants
1	Ordinary passport	16.0%
2	Birth registration	10.3%
3	Vehicle registration	10.1%
4	Registration of permanent residency	9.1%
5	Government certification of personal papers	6.2%
6	New/renewed land use rights certificates	5.7%

	Administrative Procedures	Percentage of Applicants
7	Business registration	3.9%
8	Criminal records	3.8%
9	Personal Identity Number	3.8%
10	Temporary residency registration	3.6%
11	Certification of marital status	3.4%
12	Marriage registration	2.4%
13	Driving license	1.9%
14	VNeID registration	1.7%
15	Social insurance	1.3%

The 2023 PAPI questionnaire further asked NESP users on which procedures they actioned and whether the service was fully-fledged (contactless interactions on NESP from application to receipt of final results). This was double-checked by a follow-up question on whether they could pay online for the service. Among NESP users, nearly 69 percent said they could complete their applications online, interestingly higher than the percentage of those who said they could pay for the service on the portal (53.6 percent). This may imply that users may not be able to distinguish between fully-fledged or partial online services. Of the procedures, application for new/renewed passports had the highest rate of online payments (90 percent).

Conclusions and Policy Implications

Overall, this chapter presents a somewhat optimistic view of e-governance progress based on the 2023 PAPI survey findings compared with previous years, particularly in terms of internet access and use of e-service portals for citizen-centric public administrative procedures. However, it also highlights the limited progress made in governments' engagement of citizens in policy-making on government information portals and responding to citizens' feedback online.

As the chapter reveals, although there was a significant increase in the number of national and provincial e-service portal users over 2022 and 2023, the percentage of citizens who used the portals for handling administrative procedures remained low. Furthermore, half of online service users could not pay for the service via portals and had to physically attend a physical one-stop shop to finalize their applications. Users' concerns about personal privacy when using national and provincial e-service portals remained prevalent. These weaknesses are suboptimal for any online service that aims to facilitate convenience for users, especially for those who live far from one-stop shops. Nevertheless,

a promising aspect of e-services is that applicants for public administrative services online reported a higher level of satisfaction with the services.

Importantly, PAPI has highlighted areas of a prevalent digital divide between different population groups and provinces with different socio-economic conditions. The findings indicate the need for central and local governments to work towards narrowing gaps in terms of access to e-government and e-services within gender, age, ethnicity, living area, and residential status at either the national or provincial level or both. With nearly one-fifths of the population not having access to the internet, more than two-fifths of the population not having personal computers at home, and about 10 percent not having smartphones, while e-services have not proven friendly on a single device like smartphones yet, central and provincial governments still need to address the basic connection infrastructure to facilitate internet and mobile phone coverage and provide internet-connected computers to one-stop shops in rural, mountainous, remote, and ethnic minority residential areas.

The chapter eventually suggests that, despite recent efforts to push the electronic and digital government agendas ahead, which have also been appreciated by PAPI respondents who have used online public services, central and provincial governments need to make substantial improvements to National E-Service Portal, Provincial E-Service Portals and government information portals to make them more accessible, user-friendly, convenient and inclusive for all citizen-users. A practical measure that central and provincial governments should take to promote the use of NESP and PESPs is to design and adopt a single-device approach to the online public service portals, so that users can access them from anywhere with their smartphones. In the meantime, traditional one-stop shops should receive further investment to provide offline and online services for those who do not have smartphones or access to electricity and internet yet.



CHAPTER 3

PROVINCIAL PERFORMANCE IN 2023 AND GAPS TO BE FILLED TOWARDS 2026

This chapter presents an analysis of provincial performance in the eight PAPI dimensions of governance and public administration, as well as provincial performance in the aggregate 2023 PAPI, by introducing a series of maps and dashboards summarizing performance by dimensions and sub-dimensions in 2023. Since 2018, PAPI has consisted of eight dimensions, including six core ones (Participation at Local Levels, Transparency in Local Decision-making, Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens, Control of Corruption in the Public Sector, Public Administrative Procedures and Public Service Delivery) and two new dimensions (Environmental Governance and E-Governance).

The 2023 PAPI report provides data for measuring the performance of local governments in the third year of the current 2021-2026 government term. Since there has been a change to Dimension 8 'E-Governance' in 2023, with two new indicators added to Sub-dimension 8.1 'Access to E-Government Portals', the 2023 E-Governance dimensional score should be viewed alone, and the over-time comparison should be done with unchanged indicators only. However, findings at all levels of data from Dimensions 1-7 can be compared. Where deemed appropriate, this chapter also provides time-series perspectives on indicators that show meaningful trends for provincial governments to see how they progressed over the period from 2021 to 2023, while the comparison with 2022's findings can be examined through provincial profiles posted in the section on Provincial Profiles at: <https://papi.org.vn/eng/ho-so-tinh/>. It should be noted that any comparison should consider the

resampling of districts, communes and villages in 2023 as presented in Appendix B.

For ease of reading and similar to previous PAPI reports, this chapter is structured by dimensions and concludes with an overview of the aggregated 2023 PAPI dimensional and sub-dimensional scores. Boxes 3.1-3.9 highlight key findings about provincial performance in each dimension. Also, provincial findings at the dimensional and aggregated levels are illustrated through nine coloured maps (Maps 3.1-3.9), with each of the four colours representing provinces' score ranges, which vary by each dimension, within each quartile. In particular, blue is for 15-16 provinces with scores (x) within the High quartile ($75^{\text{th}} \leq x \leq 100^{\text{th}}$ percentiles), green is for 15-16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile ($50^{\text{th}} \leq x < 75^{\text{th}}$ percentiles), orange is for 15-16 provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile ($25^{\text{th}} \leq x < 50^{\text{th}}$ percentiles), and light yellow is for 15-16 provinces with scores within the Low quartile ($0^{\text{th}} \leq x < 25^{\text{th}}$ percentiles). The differences between these quartiles are marginal, sometimes at a 0.001-point estimate as shown in the maps and Table 3.9. Therefore, the split between provinces on the margin of each quartile is relative rather than absolute.

Moreover, Figures 3.1-3.9 compare 2021 and 2023 provincial scores by dimension and the aggregate PAPI scores, enabling provinces to review their efforts during the first three years of the current government term. Tables 3.1-3.8 summarize 2023 provincial performance against expected maximum

scores at sub-dimensional and indicator levels. It should be noted that data presented in these tables and on Maps 3.1-3.9 are rounded to four decimals to show that the differences between provincial scores by quartiles or province are marginal most of the time. Figures showing aggregate and disaggregate findings by provinces are also included to help local authorities review their performance towards the indicator level. In addition, Appendix A provides scales for measurement and mean scores for all dimensions, sub-dimensions and indicators at the provincial level from 2020 to 2023 and for the 2021-2026 term governments to review their performance against the year of the previous term (2020). Provincial profiles with details by each province can be accessed at www.papi.org.vn.⁵⁴

As always, PAPI is a collection of data points that provincial authorities should explore to understand their citizens' feedback and expectations. As an aggregate index, PAPI serves as a dashboard that shows a province's performance in a certain year in a holistic manner and highlights gaps from the expected maximum scores. However, to understand what can be done to improve provincial performance, provincial leaders are advised to examine the findings of all indicators that make up the PAPI dimensions and review their performance trends. The rich information contained in more than 120 PAPI indicators will help provinces prioritize their areas of focus and assign responsibilities to relevant local government agencies to increase citizen satisfaction with their performance in 2024 and beyond. As highlighted in previous PAPI reports, provincial rankings and comparisons of provinces are not emphasized in this report since each of Viet Nam's 63 provinces has unique socio-economic, demographic, and geographic circumstances. However, provinces with similar backgrounds can still learn about their peers' performances.

PAPI emphasizes the essence of research rigor and data reliability to assist central and local governments in understanding citizens' experiences, expectations and preparing concrete actions to improve their performance. Where there are better data to inform development policies, there are better lives. Therefore,

if intentional manipulation of respondents prior to PAPI surveys is found with collected evidence, citizen feedback, and large standard deviations in collected data, the research team will remove unreliable data points. In this chapter, analytical results in 2023 for Binh Duong and Quang Ninh were not included because data from surveys in these two provinces (with a total sample of 596 respondents) contained a high degree of "data noise" that caused z-scores larger than two standard deviations in almost every dimension, also with sufficient evidence of respondent priming. It should also be noted that data from Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Bac Giang, Binh Dinh, Binh Thuan, Ha Giang, Ha Noi, Long An, Ninh Thuan, Soc Trang, and Son La should be treated with care when used, due to their recorded data noise because of respondent priming prior to PAPI surveys in some localities, although at below two standard deviations.

2023 Provincial Performance by Dimension

Dimension 1: Participation at Local Levels

Participation in political, social, and economic life is a constitutional right for all Vietnamese citizens aged 18 years and above. Such participation is crucial for citizens to exercise their democratic rights and contribute to improving local governance. The PAPI dimension of Participation at Local Levels measures citizens' awareness of their right to political participation, how they participate in elections and local decision-making, as well as how local governments facilitate citizens' rights to participation in accordance with the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation.⁵⁵

The following is an overview of provincial performance in engaging citizens at local levels in 2023. First, Box 3.1 presents key 2023 findings from this dimension. Then, Map 3.1 presents aggregate dimensional scores for the 61 provinces by four quartiles: (i) from 5.33 to 5.91 points (labelled as 'High'), (ii) from 4.96 to 5.32 points (labelled as 'Mid-High'), (iii) from 4.64 to 4.94 points (labelled as 'Mid-Low'), and (iv) from 3.69 to 4.61 points (labelled as 'Low'). Figure 3.1 provides a 2021-2023

⁵⁴ See provincial PAPI profiles at: <https://papi.org.vn/eng/ho-so-tinh/>.

⁵⁵ The 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation came into effect on 1 July 2023, replacing the 2007 Ordinance on Grassroots Democracy Implementation at the Commune Level.

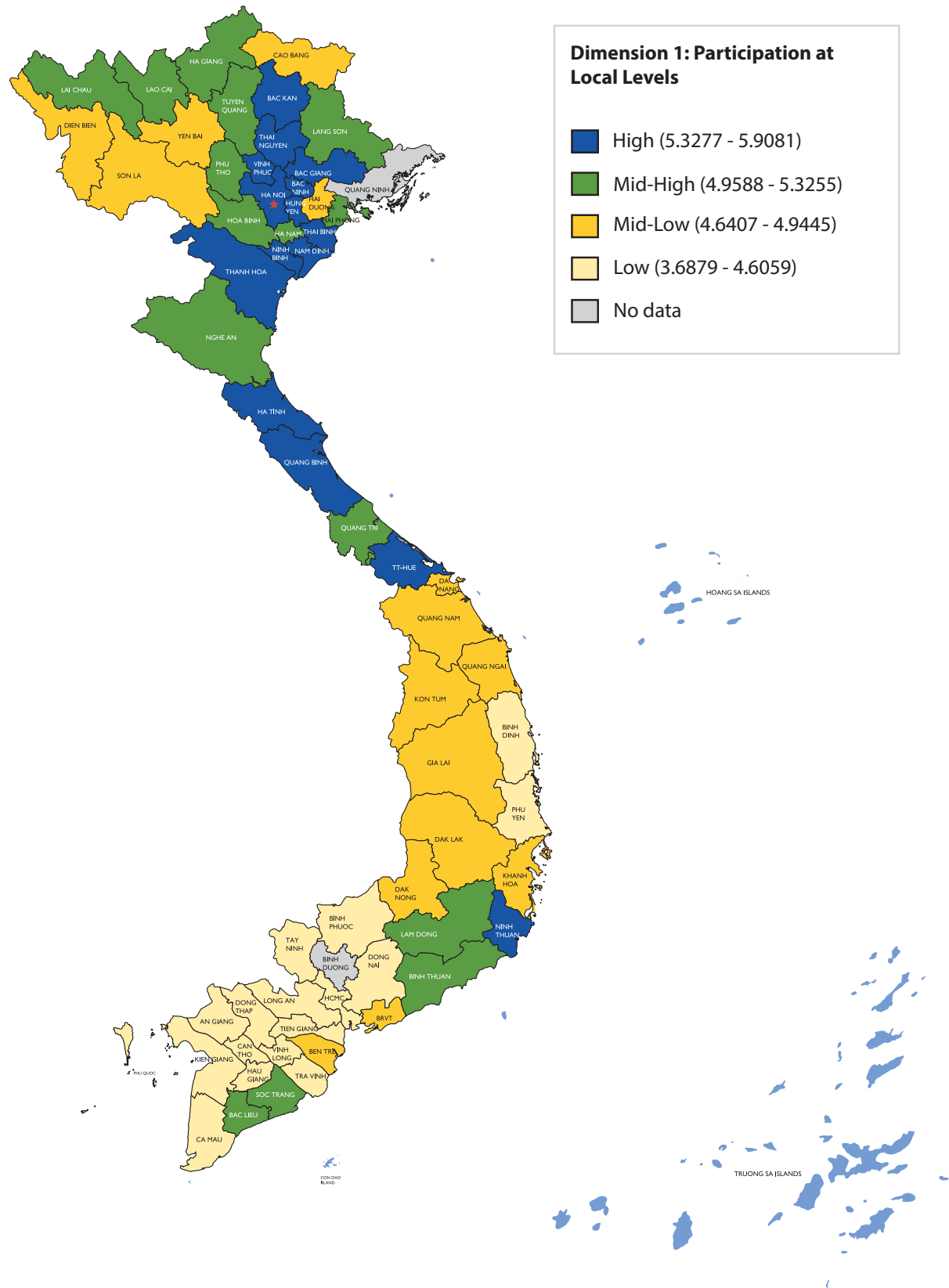
comparison so provinces can understand whether they performed better or worse in 2023 compared to 2021, the first year of the current 2021-2026 government term. Table 3.1 presents a dashboard summarizing 2023 provincial performance at

dimensional and sub-dimensional levels. Finally, the series of Figures 3.1a-d provide detailed findings in several indicators for provinces to gain a comparative perspective with 2021 baselines and in 2023 alone.

Box 3.1: Key Findings from Dimension 1: Participation at Local Levels in 2023

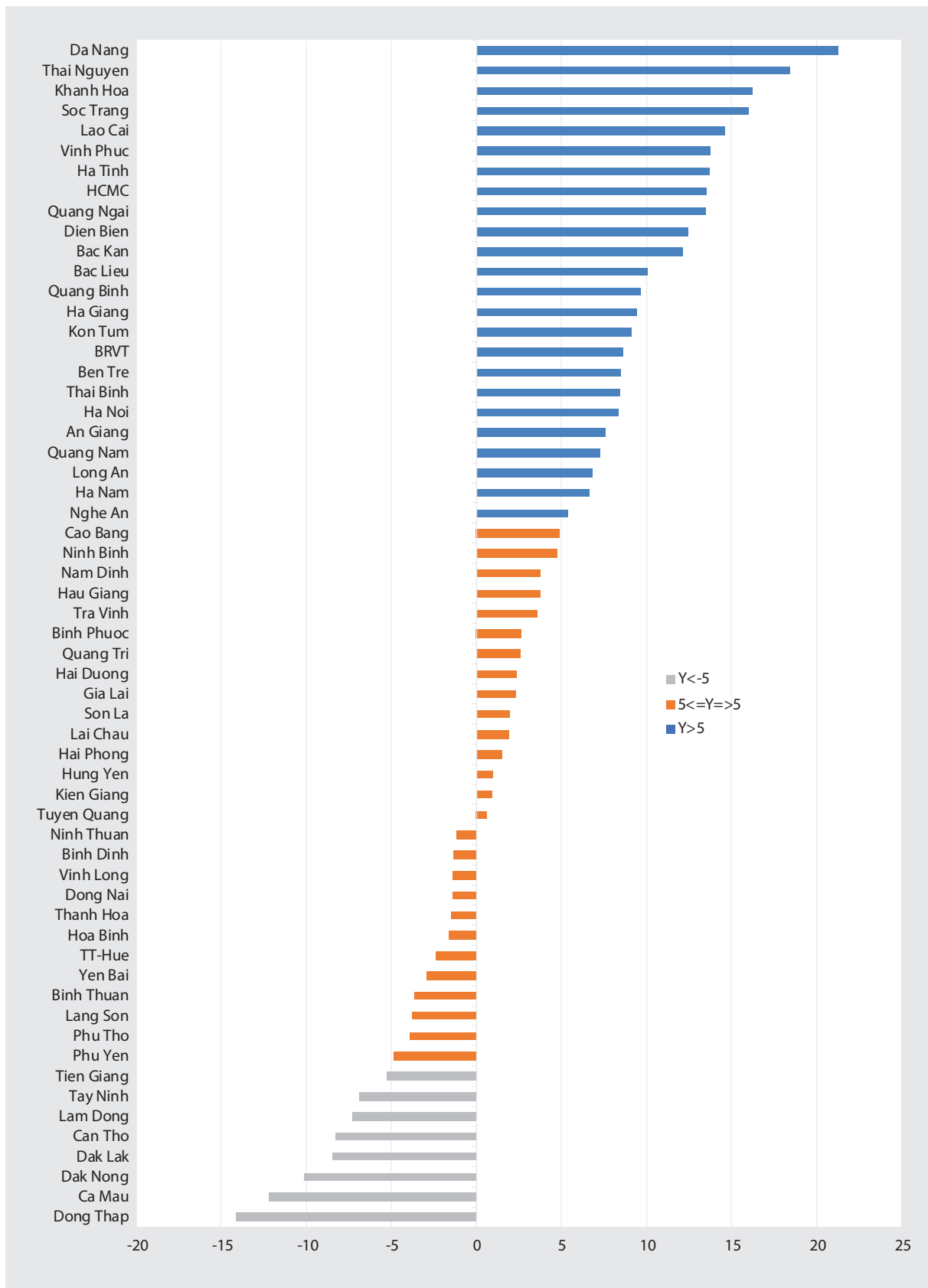
- As with previous years, provinces in the north tended to perform better in this dimension than those in the south. Seven provinces in the Red River Delta and five provinces in the North Central and Central Coastal regions are among the 15 provinces in the High quartile, in contrast to 10 provinces in the Mekong River Delta region and four provinces in the Southeastern region in the Low quartile (Map 3.1).
- When compared with 2021's findings, 24 provinces made positive and significant changes in 2023, while only eight provinces saw scores decline markedly (Figure 3.1). The remainder of the 27 provinces did not experience significant changes.
- Significant gaps to fill emerged for all provinces with respect to enhancing citizens' knowledge of important policies, ensuring inclusive village head elections, and securing citizens' participation in decision-making in local infrastructure projects, as shown in Table 3.1. All provinces scored between 3.69 and 5.91 points on the 1-10 point scale (Table 3.1), showing little improvement compared to the range in 2021 (from 3.80 to 5.85 points). Also, as illustrated in Figure 3.9b, provincial scores tended to be further divergent in their performance in Dimension 1 when compared with 2021's values.
- In most provinces, citizens have not been informed or are unaware of important laws, including the 2016 Law on Access to Information and the 2018 Law on Anti-Corruption in 2023 as the score range for Civic Knowledge was 0.72-1.32 points on a scale of 0.25 to 2.5 points (see Table 3.1). Figure 3.1a also shows that, compared to 2021's findings, fewer respondents in 40 provinces said they knew of these two laws. Analysis from the new question about knowledge of the 2022 Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation as shown in Figure 3.1b reveals that between 14.23 to 45.97 percent of respondents across 61 provinces have heard about the law.
- There was regression in local governments' performance in engaging citizens' participation in decision-making to start or reconstruct a local project and in project implementation oversight in 2023 compared to 2021. The percentage of respondents who reported participating in decision-making to start or reconstruct a local infrastructure project ranged between 15.14 to 63.16 percent, with 45 provinces posting proportions below 50 percent (Figure 3.1c), 10 provinces more than in 2021.
- Similar to 2021's findings, a significant number of local infrastructure projects did not benefit from citizens' oversight, as the percentage of respondents noting that local Community Investment Supervision Boards were in place to monitor projects with citizens' voluntary contributions was below 50 percent in 58 provinces (Figure 3.1d), a larger number of provinces than found in 2021 and 2022.

Map 3.1: Provincial Performance in Participation at Local Levels by Quartiles, 2023



Note: Blue is for provinces with scores within the High quartile (75th ≤ x ≤ 100th percentiles), green is for 16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile (50th ≤ x < 75th percentiles), orange is for provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile (25th ≤ x < 50th percentiles) and light yellow is for provinces with scores within the Low quartile (0th ≤ x < 25th percentiles). Gray (No data) is for provinces from which collected data is not qualified (with an estimated value for an indicator larger than 2 standard errors and with field evidence) for use. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between quartiles are.

Figure 3.1: Changes in Performance in Participation at Local Levels (2021-2023)



Note: Y = percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of ±5% defined as statistically significant. 2021 data from Bac Giang and Bac Ninh, and 2023 data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Table 3.1: Dashboard of Provincial Performance in Participation at Local Levels, 2023

Province	1: Participation at Local Levels	1.1: Civic Knowledge	1.2: Opportunities for Participation	1.3: Quality of Local Elections	1.4: Voluntary Contributions
Ha Noi	5.4275	1.3239	1.6227	1.4708	1.0101
Ha Giang	5.2831	1.0216	1.7100	1.5104	1.0411
Cao Bang	4.7730	0.9374	1.4929	1.4591	0.8836
Bac Kan	5.4484	1.0848	1.8081	1.5727	0.9828
Tuyen Quang	4.9680	1.0041	1.4500	1.5184	0.9955
Lao Cai	5.0013	0.9571	1.5245	1.4569	1.0627
Dien Bien	4.6964	0.8473	1.4541	1.6435	0.7515
Lai Chau	4.9664	0.9262	1.6663	1.4589	0.9150
Son La	4.8918	0.9472	1.5077	1.5471	0.8898
Yen Bai	4.7348	0.9821	1.3822	1.5251	0.8454
Hoa Binh	5.1577	0.9177	1.6940	1.6288	0.9171
Thai Nguyen	5.9081	1.2066	1.7005	1.6116	1.3894
Lang Son	5.3092	0.9272	1.8494	1.4256	1.1069
Quang Ninh*					
Bac Giang	5.5787	1.1566	1.6618	1.5368	1.2235
Phu Tho	5.3255	1.0336	1.7217	1.5111	1.0592
Vinh Phuc	5.3734	1.1692	1.6184	1.4967	1.0891
Bac Ninh	5.5334	1.2673	1.5794	1.5868	1.0999
Hai Duong	4.9445	1.0132	1.6147	1.3131	1.0035
Hai Phong	4.9757	1.0128	1.5804	1.5756	0.8070
Hung Yen	5.4553	1.0396	1.6675	1.6478	1.1005
Thai Binh	5.3641	1.1921	1.6405	1.5340	0.9976
Ha Nam	5.0680	1.0041	1.4685	1.4955	1.0999
Nam Dinh	5.4363	1.0995	1.7641	1.5259	1.0468
Ninh Binh	5.4982	1.1996	1.6324	1.6074	1.0588
Thanh Hoa	5.7695	1.1485	1.7854	1.5886	1.2470
Nghe An	5.0856	1.0419	1.5394	1.4507	1.0536
Ha Tinh	5.7635	1.2743	1.6246	1.6442	1.2205
Quang Binh	5.3277	1.1799	1.5360	1.5432	1.0686
Quang Tri	5.0971	1.0141	1.6552	1.4907	0.9371
Thua Thien-Hue	5.3435	1.0435	1.7716	1.6197	0.9086
Da Nang	4.9304	1.2503	1.3121	1.5248	0.8432
Quang Nam	4.8030	0.9613	1.5824	1.4379	0.8213
Quang Ngai	4.7072	0.9568	1.3084	1.4430	0.9989
Binh Dinh	4.5581	1.0445	1.3282	1.4150	0.7704
Phu Yen	4.3751	0.8270	1.2977	1.3467	0.9038
Khanh Hoa	4.8979	1.0837	1.3148	1.4060	1.0933
Ninh Thuan	5.3349	1.1000	1.5720	1.4444	1.2185
Binh Thuan	5.1865	0.9551	1.4240	1.3661	1.4412
Kon Tum	4.9030	0.8760	1.2435	1.6301	1.1534
Gia Lai	4.7472	1.0540	1.3895	1.4894	0.8143
Dak Lak	4.7562	0.9923	1.3826	1.5368	0.8445
Dak Nong	4.6512	0.8194	1.3301	1.5146	0.9870
Lam Dong	4.9879	1.0276	1.5768	1.5605	0.8229
Binh Phuoc	4.5280	0.8643	1.3813	1.5356	0.7469
Tay Ninh	3.9292	0.8103	1.3078	1.1395	0.6716
Binh Duong*					
Dong Nai	4.3364	0.9336	1.1963	1.2767	0.9298
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	4.6407	1.1149	1.2170	1.3366	0.9722
Ho Chi Minh City	4.6059	1.1070	1.0999	1.3515	1.0474
Long An	4.5727	0.9891	1.3476	1.1780	1.0580
Tien Giang	3.6879	0.7655	1.0623	1.0186	0.8416
Ben Tre	4.6710	0.9795	1.2123	1.2983	1.1810
Tra Vinh	3.9348	0.8033	0.9258	1.3438	0.8619
Vinh Long	4.1784	1.0602	1.1755	1.1260	0.8167
Dong Thap	3.9250	0.7265	1.0086	1.0471	1.1429
An Giang	4.3381	0.8549	1.1553	1.1446	1.1833
Kien Giang	3.9487	0.8054	1.1276	1.2394	0.7764
Can Tho	3.8642	0.8465	0.8593	1.1562	1.0022
Hau Giang	4.3388	0.7363	1.0559	1.3152	1.2313
Soc Trang	4.9588	1.0301	1.1362	1.4152	1.3773
Bac Lieu	5.0213	1.2459	1.3133	1.3384	1.1237
Ca Mau	3.8049	0.8187	1.0692	1.1826	0.7344

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the first column), and a scale of 0.25-2.5 points for the sub-dimensional levels (the other four columns). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes, not their scores. The longer the bar, the higher the score. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Figure 3.1a: Percentage of Respondents Knowing about Important Laws Concerning Citizens, 2021-2023

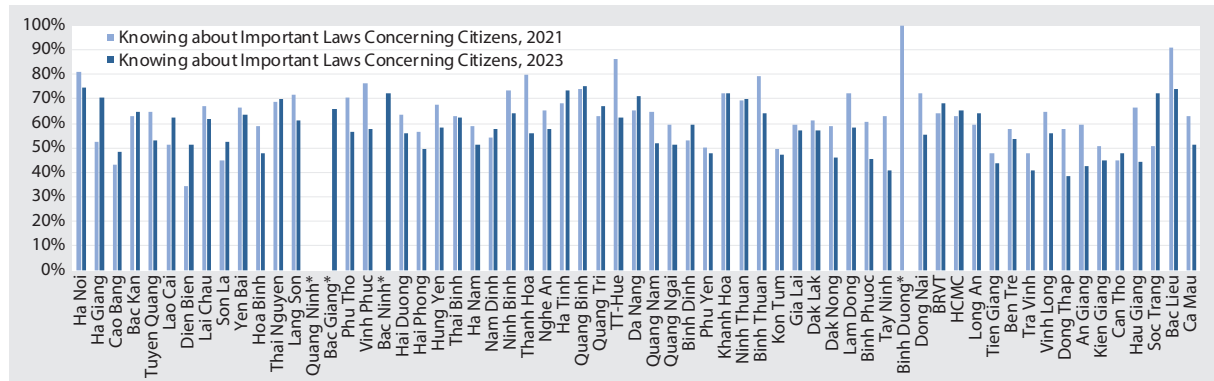


Figure 3.1b: Percentage of Respondents Knowing about the Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation, 2023

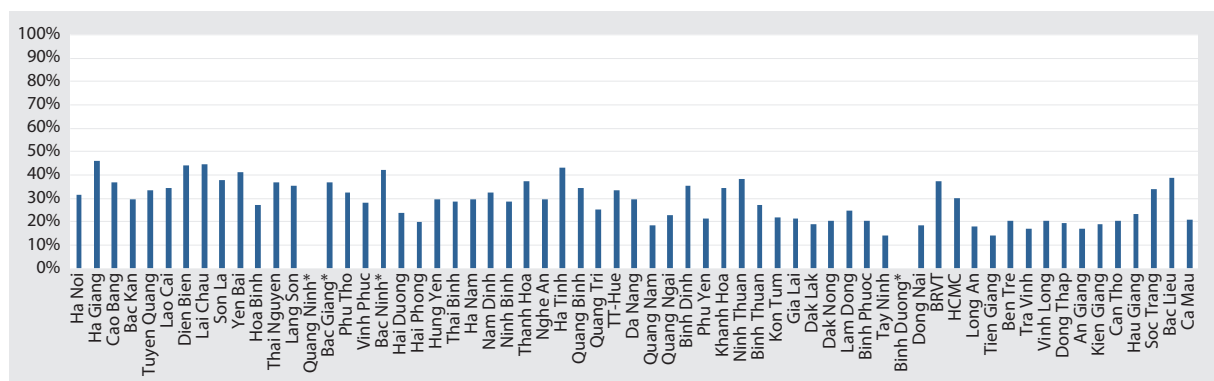


Figure 3.1c: Percentage of Citizens Participating in Decision-making to Start a Local Basic Infrastructure Project, 2021-2023

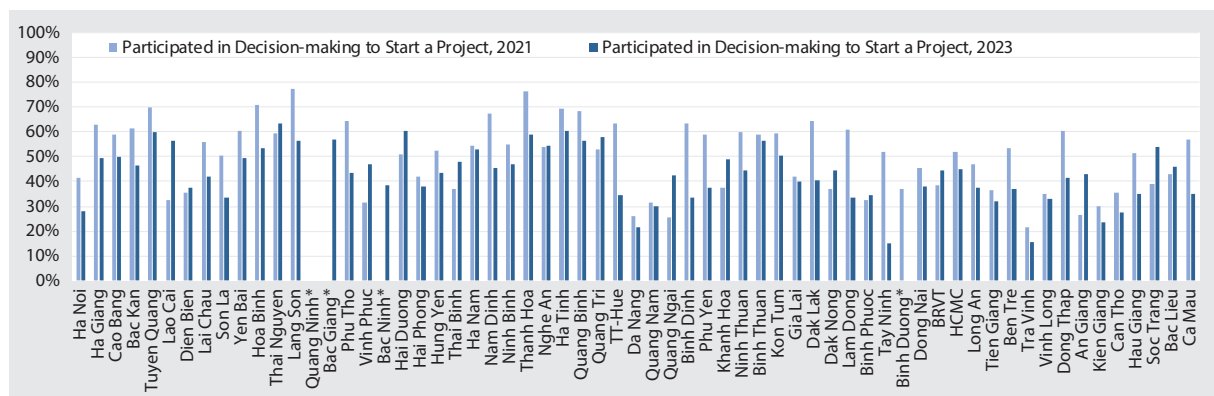
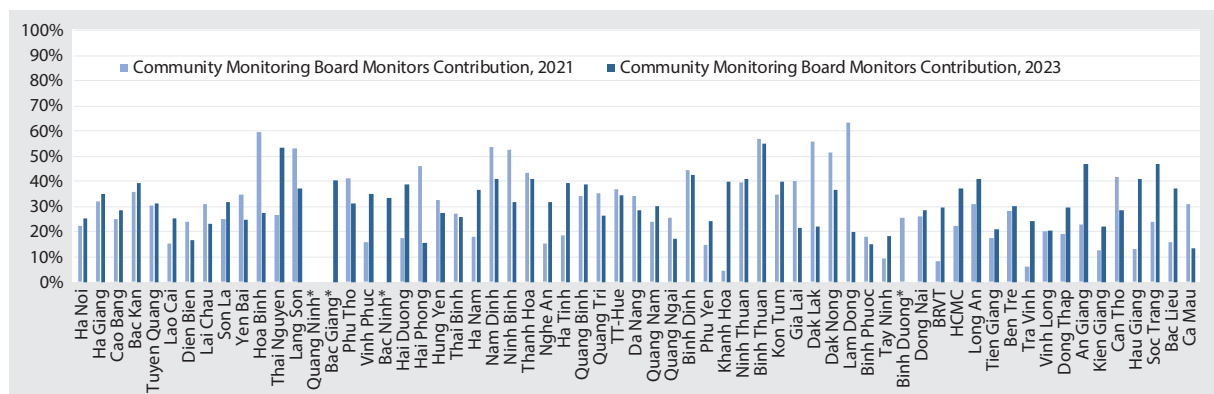


Figure 3.1d: Percentage of Respondents Agreeing that Community Investment Supervision Boards Monitor Projects, 2021-2023



(*) 2021 and 2023 data from these provinces are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Dimension 2: Transparency in Local Decision-making

PAPI measures how local governments facilitate access to government information and respond to civic rights to better understand how public policies impact citizens' lives and livelihoods. The focus of PAPI's second dimension is Transparency in Local Decision-making, as measured by four sub-dimensional areas: Access to Information, Poverty Lists (listings of poor households), Commune Budget and Expenditure Lists, and Local Land Use Planning and Pricing. Information about government policy and any matter relating to poverty, budgets and land must be transparent and made publicly available so citizens across the country can exercise their legitimate rights to know, discuss, do and verify, as stipulated by the Law on Grassroots Democracy Implementation (2022), Land Law (2013), State Budget Law (2015), and Law on Access to Information (2016).

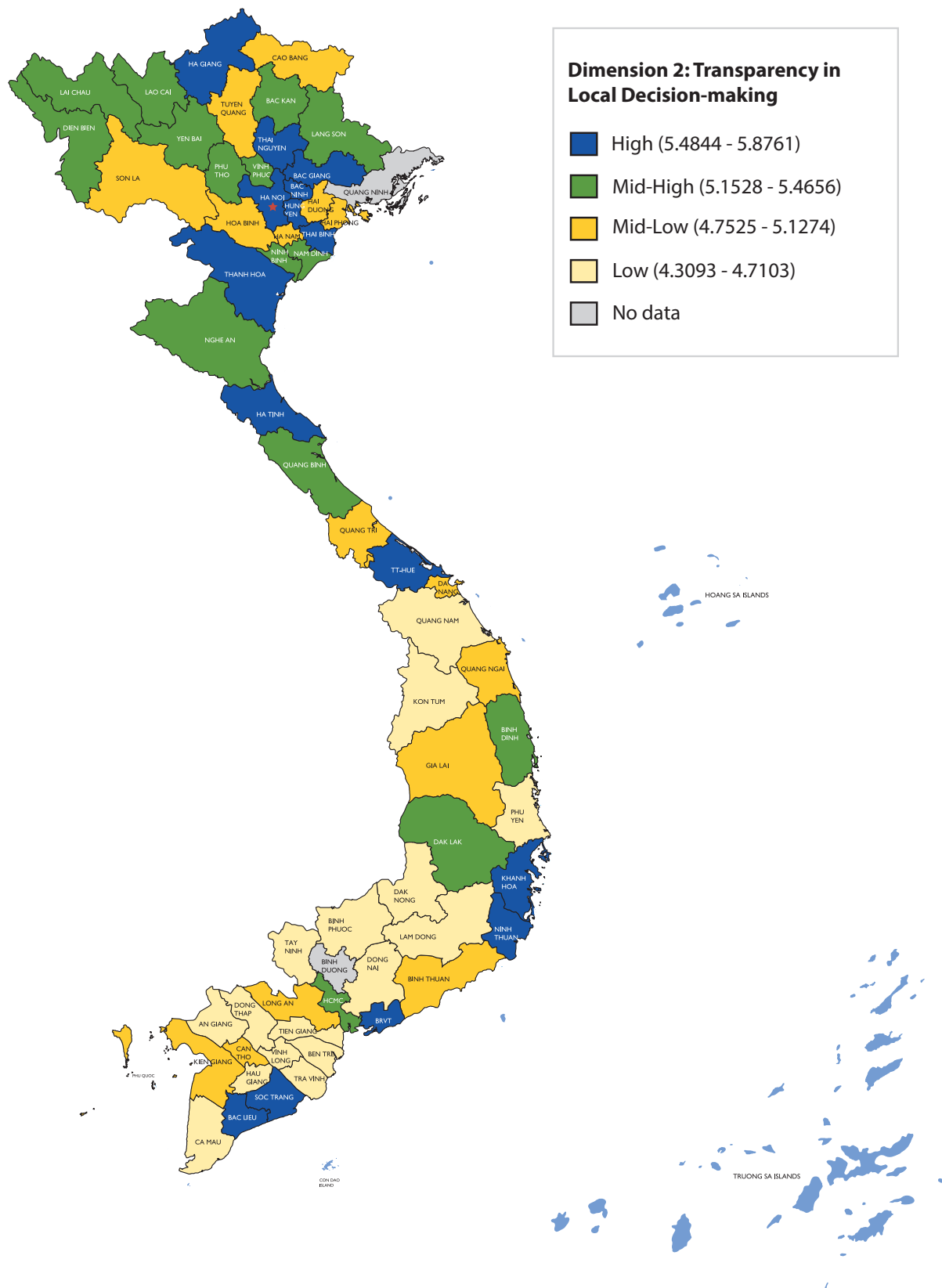
The following summary outlines the key findings of provincial performance in Dimension 2 at dimensional and sub-dimensional levels in 2023. First, Box 3.2 presents key 2023 findings from this dimension. Second, Map 3.2 presents aggregate dimensional scores for 61 provinces by four quartiles: (i) from 5.48 to 5.88 points (High), (ii) from 5.15 to 5.46 points (Mid-High), (iii) from 4.75 to 5.13 points (Mid-Low), and (iv) from 4.31 to 4.71 points (Low). Third, Figure 3.2 provides an opportunity for provinces to understand whether they performed better or worse in 2023 compared to 2021. Table 3.2 presents a dashboard of 2023 provincial performance at dimensional and sub-dimensional levels. Finally, Figures 3.2a-b provide 2023 findings to track local governments' performance in the transparency of land plans and price frames compared to 2021 as some examples of Dimension 2's indicators.

Box 3.2: Key Findings from Dimension 2: Transparency in Local Decision-making in 2023

- As in previous years, provinces in northern regions tended to perform better than southern peers in Dimension 2. Five provinces in the North Central and Central Coastal region, four in the Red River Delta region, and three in Northern Mid-land and Mountainous Region are among 15 provinces in the High quartile. Meanwhile, among 16 provinces in the Low quartile, eight provinces are from the Mekong River Delta region, three in the Central Highlands and three in the Southeastern region (Map 3.2).
- Compared to 2021's dimensional scores, 12 provinces made improvements in 2023, while 23 provinces saw significant year-on-year declines and 24 saw little change (Figure 3.2). All provinces scored between 4.31 to 5.88 points on the 1-10 point scale (Table 3.2), a significant decrease in the score range compared to 2021 (see also Figure 3.9b at the end of this chapter).
- Access to information about State policy and legislation remains the weakest sub-dimension of the four, as shown in Table 3.2. Provincial scores ranged from 0.7 to 1.05 points on a scale of 0.25-2.5 points. Of the four sub-dimensions, Transparency of Poverty Lists saw the highest score ranges (1.30 to 2.02), while Communal Budget and Expenditure and Transparent Land-Use Plan/Price Frames saw lower ranges (1.03 to 1.53 points, and 1.06 to 1.52 points, respectively).
- As in 2021, citizens' access to information about local land plans in 2023 remained limited in all provinces.⁵⁶ The percentages of respondents gaining awareness of such information ranged from 6 to 31 percent in 59 provinces with comparable scores over time, among which 14 provinces had a proportion exceeding 20 percent (Figure 3.2a). Nevertheless, there was some significant improvements (by 5 percent or more) in 21 provinces compared to 2021.
- Knowing where the local governments post official land price frames is important for citizens, especially when their land is subjected to State seizures. As shown in Figure 3.2b, the percentages of respondents aware of where they could access local governments' official land price frames ranged from 17 to 66 percent in 59 provinces with comparable scores in 2023. Of the provinces, 23 saw a significant rise of above 5 percent in 2023 compared to 2021.

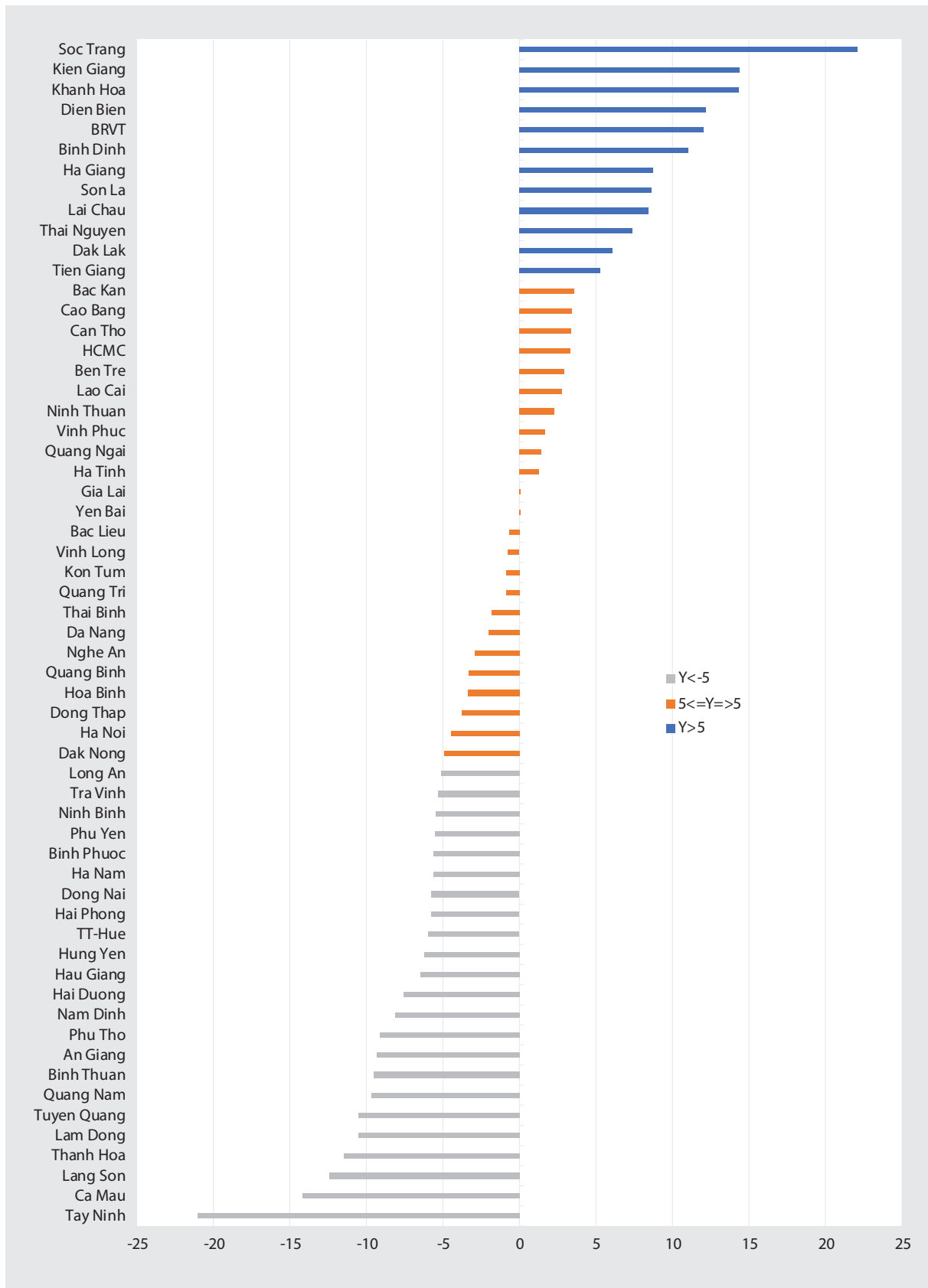
⁵⁶ The findings resonate with the results from the review by UNDP, CEPEW and RTA from 2022 to 2024 at <https://congkhaithongtindatdai.info/>.

Map 3.2: Provincial Performance in Transparency in Local Decision-making by Quartiles, 2023



Note: Blue is for provinces with their scores within the High quartile (75th ≤ x ≤ 100th percentiles), green is for 16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile (50th ≤ x < 75th percentiles), orange is for provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile (25th ≤ x < 50th percentiles) and light yellow is for provinces with scores within the Low quartile (0th ≤ x < 25th percentiles). Gray (No data) is for provinces from which collected data is not qualified (with an estimated value for an indicator larger than 2 standard errors and with field evidence) for use. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between quartiles are.

Figure 3.2: Changes in Performance in Transparency in Local Decision-making (2021-2023)



Note: Y = percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of ±5% defined as statistically significant. 2021 data from Bac Giang and Bac Ninh, and 2023 data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Table 3.2: Dashboard of Provincial Performance in Transparency in Local Decision-making, 2023

Province	2: Transparency in Local Decision-making	2.1: Access to Information	2.2: Transparency of Poverty Lists	2.3: Communal Budget and Expenditure	2.4: Land-Use Plans/Price Frames
Ha Noi	5.6707	0.9837	1.8164	1.4431	1.4275
Ha Giang	5.8120	1.0171	1.9035	1.4327	1.4588
Cao Bang	4.9857	0.7733	1.6277	1.2969	1.2878
Bac Kan	5.3958	1.0041	1.7251	1.3144	1.3523
Tuyen Quang	5.0237	0.7921	1.6334	1.2456	1.3527
Lao Cai	5.3572	0.8816	1.8245	1.3258	1.3253
Dien Bien	5.2514	0.9193	1.6700	1.2626	1.3996
Lai Chau	5.4656	1.0099	1.7531	1.4205	1.2820
Son La	5.1034	0.8718	1.6603	1.2562	1.3152
Yen Bai	5.1596	0.9178	1.5792	1.3371	1.3256
Hoa Binh	5.1274	0.9218	1.6600	1.2978	1.2478
Thai Nguyen	5.8433	1.0121	1.9091	1.4461	1.4760
Lang Son	5.2937	0.8327	1.7500	1.3611	1.3499
Quang Ninh*					
Bac Giang	5.6870	0.9376	1.8965	1.3837	1.4692
Phu Tho	5.3108	0.8219	1.8652	1.3093	1.3144
Vinh Phuc	5.2837	0.9103	1.7631	1.2918	1.3186
Bac Ninh	5.8234	0.8805	2.0130	1.4534	1.4765
Hai Duong	5.0398	0.7660	1.7603	1.2483	1.2651
Hai Phong	5.1073	0.8844	1.5997	1.2406	1.3825
Hung Yen	5.4960	0.8666	1.7604	1.3486	1.5204
Thai Binh	5.6726	0.9015	1.8387	1.5041	1.4283
Ha Nam	5.0235	0.8003	1.6466	1.2673	1.3093
Nam Dinh	5.2143	0.8670	1.7442	1.3056	1.2975
Ninh Binh	5.3995	0.8620	1.7535	1.3502	1.4339
Thanh Hoa	5.4915	0.8480	1.8648	1.3487	1.4300
Nghe An	5.2890	0.7937	1.8266	1.2718	1.3968
Ha Tinh	5.7491	0.9613	1.9273	1.4475	1.4130
Quang Binh	5.2466	0.8935	1.7730	1.3376	1.2425
Quang Tri	5.0076	0.8785	1.5158	1.3030	1.3103
Thua Thien-Hue	5.8356	0.9307	2.0273	1.5277	1.3499
Da Nang	4.9587	0.8230	1.5821	1.3110	1.2426
Quang Nam	4.5627	0.8059	1.4190	1.2026	1.1352
Quang Ngai	4.9118	0.7705	1.5669	1.2789	1.2955
Binh Dinh	5.4563	0.8542	1.7245	1.4171	1.4605
Phu Yen	4.6415	0.7580	1.4430	1.2467	1.1938
Khanh Hoa	5.8761	0.9540	1.9022	1.5073	1.5126
Ninh Thuan	5.5838	0.9135	1.8386	1.4770	1.3548
Binh Thuan	4.9966	0.8509	1.4330	1.3694	1.3433
Kon Tum	4.7103	0.7727	1.5092	1.2252	1.2033
Gia Lai	4.8494	0.8177	1.5920	1.2342	1.2055
Dak Lak	5.3089	0.8405	1.6777	1.2791	1.5116
Dak Nong	4.3093	0.8258	1.3901	1.0322	1.0612
Lam Dong	4.7018	0.9011	1.3956	1.2290	1.1760
Binh Phuoc	4.5631	0.9033	1.3795	1.1780	1.1023
Tay Ninh	4.3770	0.7038	1.3492	1.1488	1.1752
Binh Duong*					
Dong Nai	4.5910	0.8381	1.3458	1.1800	1.2272
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	5.6430	0.9280	1.7848	1.4882	1.4420
Ho Chi Minh City	5.1528	0.8775	1.5948	1.4029	1.2776
Long An	4.8038	0.8760	1.4369	1.3037	1.1871
Tien Giang	4.5152	0.6955	1.3903	1.2406	1.1888
Ben Tre	4.5919	0.7419	1.4200	1.2286	1.2014
Tra Vinh	4.4062	0.7163	1.3009	1.1734	1.2157
Vinh Long	4.7011	0.7862	1.3241	1.2231	1.3677
Dong Thap	4.6667	0.8124	1.3356	1.2096	1.3090
An Giang	4.5846	0.7330	1.4790	1.1114	1.2613
Kien Giang	4.8033	0.8197	1.3715	1.3197	1.2925
Can Tho	4.7525	0.8059	1.3997	1.2559	1.2910
Hau Giang	4.4485	0.7347	1.3737	1.1224	1.2177
Soc Trang	5.4844	0.8481	1.7785	1.4539	1.4039
Bac Lieu	5.5018	1.0530	1.5506	1.3747	1.5236
Ca Mau	4.4119	0.7429	1.2561	1.1747	1.2383

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the first column), and a scale of 0.25-2.5 points for the sub-dimensional levels (the other four columns). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes, not their scores. The longer the bar, the higher the score. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Figure 3.2a: Percentage of Respondents Aware of Local Land Plans, 2021-2023

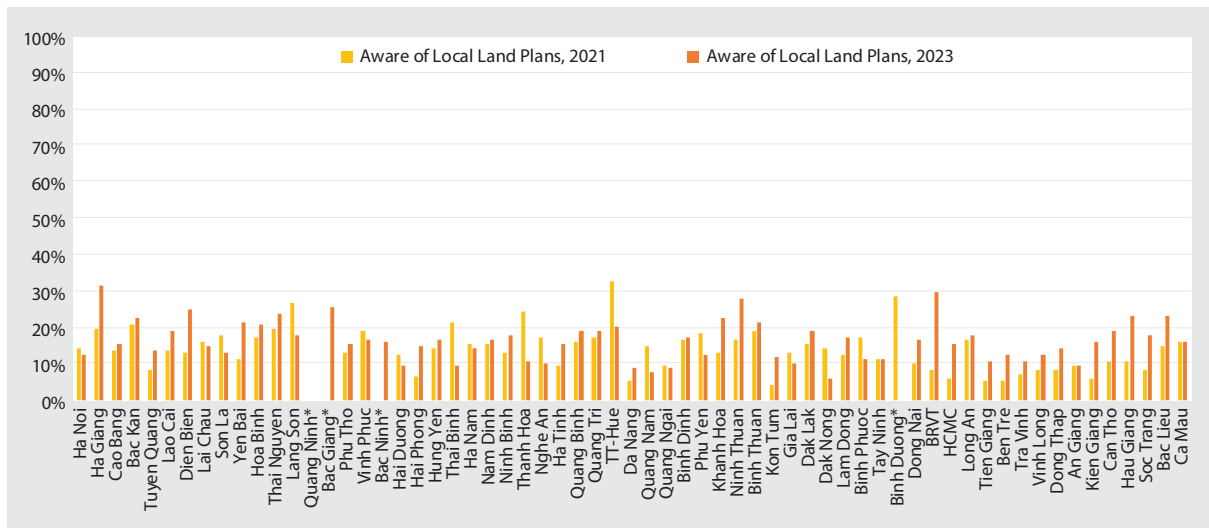
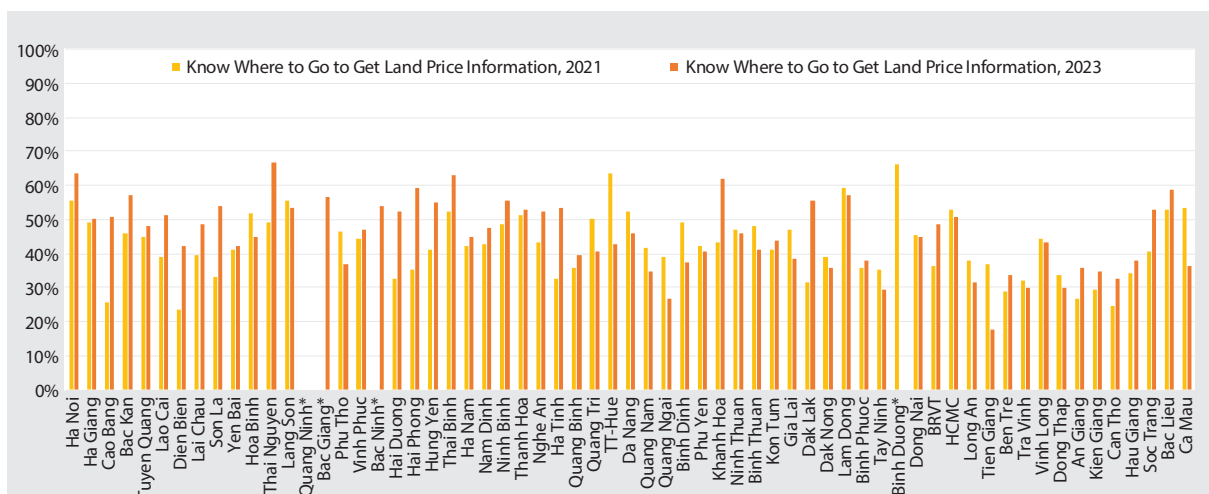


Figure 3.2b: Percentage of Respondents Agreeing that Compensation for Land Seized Was Close to Market Value, 2021-2023



(*) 2021 and 2023 data from these provinces are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Dimension 3: Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens

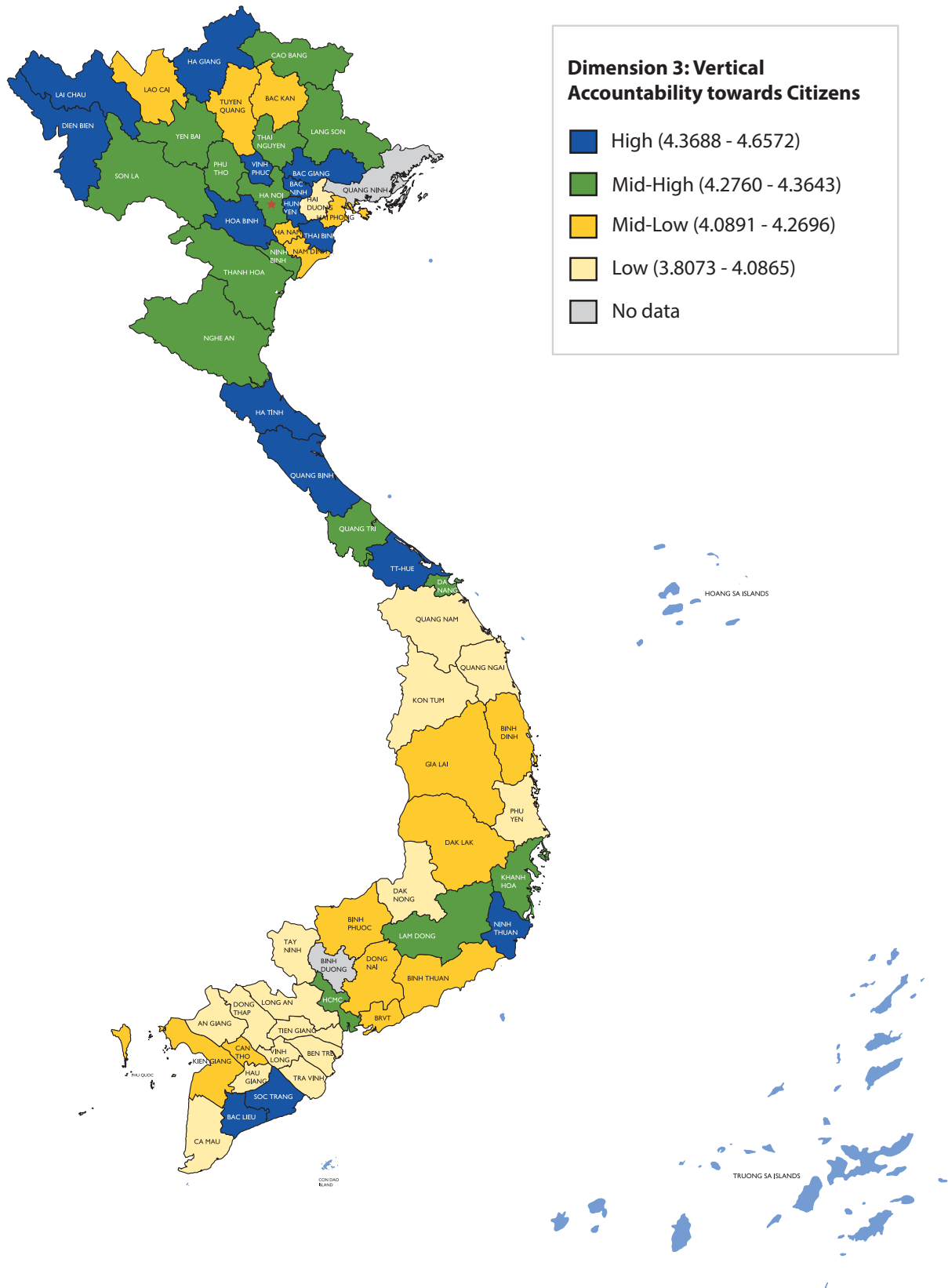
This dimension consists of three sub-dimensions: Interaction with Local Authorities, Government's Responsiveness to Citizen Appeals, and Access to Justice Services. The sub-dimensions reflect how local governments respond to citizen requests, proposals, denunciations, complaints, and/or petitions. They also aim to gauge the effectiveness of the Law on Complaints (2011) and the Law on Denunciations (2011). In addition, the indicators in the Access to Justice Services sub-dimension examine levels of trust in courts and judicial agencies, and access to local courts and non-court mechanisms when citizens have civil disputes.

Below is an overview of provincial performance in ensuring vertical accountability towards citizens in 2023. First, Box 3.3 presents key 2023 findings from this dimension. Then, Map 3.3 presents aggregate dimensional scores for 61 provinces by four quartiles: (i) from 4.37 to 4.66 points (High), (ii) from 4.27 to 4.36 points (Mid-High), (iii) from 4.09 to 4.26 points (Mid-Low), and (iv) from 3.80 to 4.08 points (Low). Next, Figure 3.3 allows provinces to gain a 2021-2023 comparison to gauge whether they stepped forward or regressed in 2023 compared to 2021. Table 3.3 presents a dashboard of 2023 provincial performance at dimensional and sub-dimensional levels. Finally, Figures 3.3a-d provide snapshots of local governments' performance in responding to citizen requests, feedback and complaints, as well as how frequently local courts or non-court mechanisms were used in 2023.

Box 3.3: Key Findings from Dimension 3: Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens in 2023

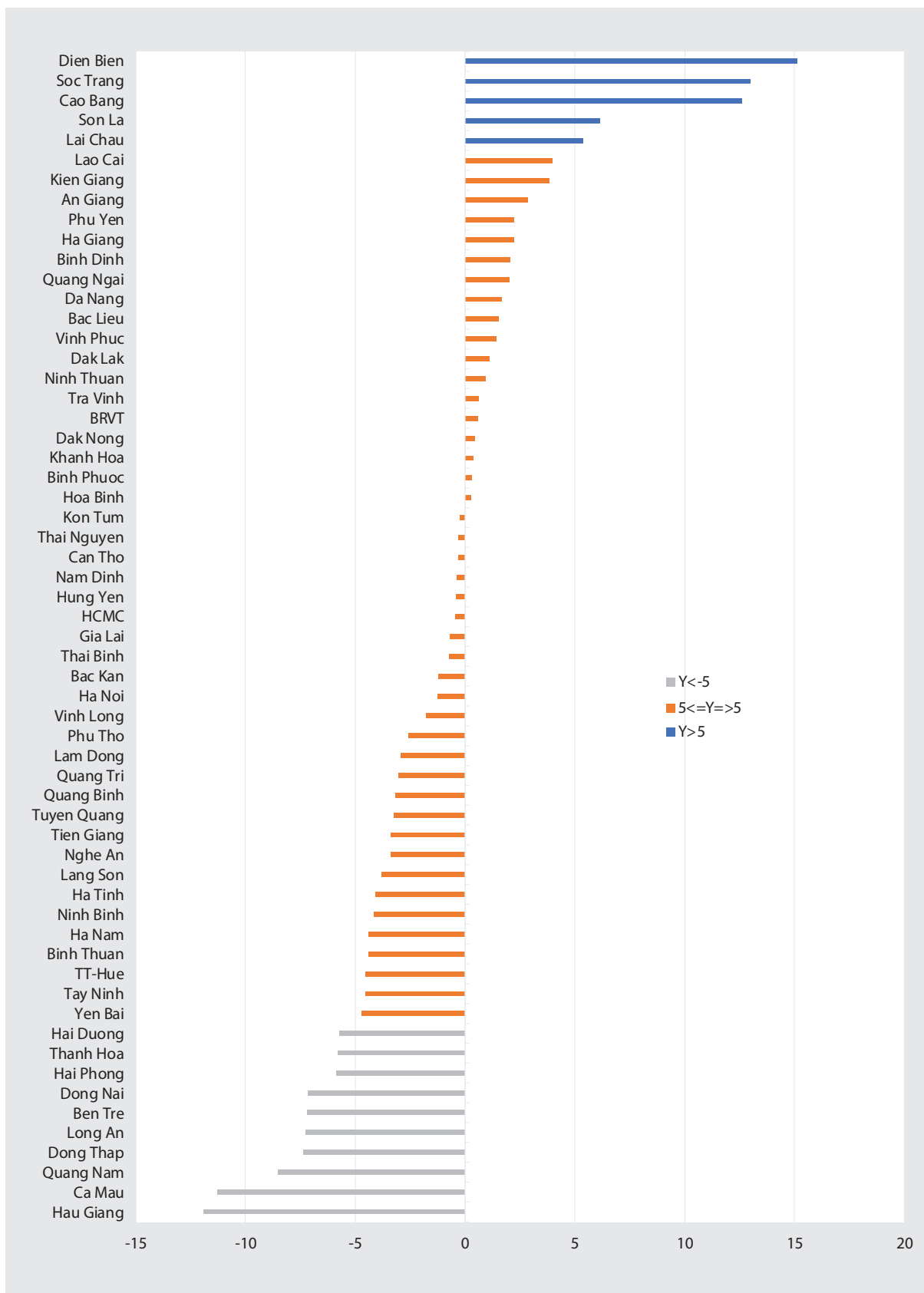
- Similar to the findings in 2021, better-performing provinces are still concentrated in the north, as illustrated in Map 3.3. Among the 15 provinces in the High quartile in 2023, five are from the Northern Midland and Mountainous region and five from the Northcentral and Central Coastal region. In contrast, nine out of 13 Mekong River Delta provinces are found in the Low quartile.
- All provinces scored below 4.66 points on the 1-10 point scale (Table 3.3). As shown in Figure 3.3, overall, there was no improvement in provincial scores in this dimension over the three years in 44 provinces. Only five provinces (Cao Bang, Dien Bien, Lai Chau, Soc Trang and Son La) made significant progress in 2023 compared to 2021. Meanwhile, 10 provinces (Ben Tre, Ca Mau, Dong Nai, Dong Thap, Hai Duong, Hai Phong, Hau Giang, Long An, Quang Nam and Thanh Hoa) saw declines of more than 5 percentage points from 2021 scores.
- The Interactions with Local Authorities sub-dimension gained the highest score of the three composing Dimension 3, with provincial scores ranging from 1.65 to 2.24 points on a scale of 0.33-3.34 points. Of the four positions surveyed (including village heads, commune government officials, People's Council members and mass organization members), the level of confidence in village heads who were the first person, at the grassroots level, that citizens would report to and request assistance with an issue remained the highest in 2023, although it declined in 44 provinces compared to 2021 survey results (Figure 3.3a).
- Similar to previous years' findings, when having a problem, such as a civil dispute or disagreement with a local public official, citizens tended to approach Commune People's Committee officials rather than elected representatives at Commune People's Councils to report and request assistance. This trend is evidenced across all 61 provinces (Figure 3.3b).
- The poorest performing aspect for all provinces in 2023 was handling citizens' petitions and proposals (Table 3.3), similar to previous years' findings. As Figure 3.3c shows, less than half of all respondents in all provinces sent petitions, complaints, or proposals to their local governments. Among respondents who sent complaints, less than half were satisfied with the resolution outcome. Provinces where more than two-thirds of petitioners were comfortable with the resolution outcomes were Quang Binh and Quang Tri. Complaint-makers in An Giang, Hai Phong, Long An, Tien Giang and Tra Vinh were the least satisfied.
- Non-court mechanisms for civil dispute resolution are yet to be trusted by most citizens in all provinces (Figure 3.3d), despite being a means to remediate differences at an early stage before any lawsuit. Similar to previous years' findings, respondents reported a preference for local courts rather than local mediation groups when engaged in a civil dispute. More than 20 percent of respondents expressed trust in local mediation groups in Ben Tre, Ca Mau, Can Tho and Hau Giang, while a moderate level (46 to 57 percent) said they would use local courts in these provinces.

Map 3.3: Provincial Performance in Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens by Quartiles, 2023



Note: Blue is for provinces with their scores within the High quartile (75th ≤ x ≤ 100th percentiles), green is for 16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile (50th ≤ x < 75th percentiles), orange is for provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile (25th ≤ x < 50th percentiles) and light yellow is for provinces with their scores within the Low quartile (0th ≤ x < 25th percentiles). Gray (No data) is for provinces from which collected data is not qualified (with an estimated value for an indicator larger than 2 standard errors and with field evidence) for use. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between quartiles are.

Figure 3.3: Changes in Performance in Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens (2021-2023)



Note: Y = percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of ±5% defined as statistically significant. 2021 data from Bac Giang and Bac Ninh, and 2023 data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Table 3.3: Dashboard of Provincial Performance in Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens, 2023

Province	3: Vertical Accountability	3.1: Interactions With Local Authorities	3.2: Local Government's Response to Citizens' Appeals	3.3: Access to Justice Services
Ha Noi	4.2760	1.9001	0.4157	1.9601
Ha Giang	4.3854	2.0766	0.5213	1.7875
Cao Bang	4.3219	1.9439	0.4303	1.9477
Bac Kan	4.1974	1.9080	0.4651	1.8243
Tuyen Quang	4.2456	1.9380	0.4542	1.8533
Lao Cai	4.2258	1.9073	0.4969	1.8216
Dien Bien	4.4288	2.0494	0.5158	1.8636
Lai Chau	4.5131	1.9836	0.4951	2.0344
Son La	4.3282	1.9984	0.4785	1.8513
Yen Bai	4.3356	1.8676	0.5183	1.9497
Hoa Binh	4.4621	2.0337	0.5148	1.9136
Thai Nguyen	4.3562	1.8353	0.5240	1.9968
Lang Son	4.3401	1.9396	0.4445	1.9560
Quang Ninh*				
Bac Giang	4.3875	1.9207	0.5301	1.9367
Phu Tho	4.3579	1.9967	0.4524	1.9088
Vinh Phuc	4.4806	2.0295	0.4976	1.9536
Bac Ninh	4.5467	1.9886	0.5557	2.0023
Hai Duong	3.8955	1.6475	0.4294	1.8186
Hai Phong	4.1539	1.8660	0.4107	1.8772
Hung Yen	4.4015	1.9540	0.5120	1.9356
Thai Binh	4.5241	2.0255	0.4799	2.0188
Ha Nam	4.2112	1.9321	0.4810	1.7981
Nam Dinh	4.2632	1.9904	0.4977	1.7751
Ninh Binh	4.3643	2.0571	0.4545	1.8528
Thanh Hoa	4.2973	1.7631	0.5200	2.0142
Nghe An	4.3177	1.9326	0.4933	1.8918
Ha Tinh	4.5042	2.0630	0.5422	1.8990
Quang Binh	4.4084	1.9986	0.6396	1.7702
Quang Tri	4.2810	1.9181	0.6130	1.7499
Thua Thien-Hue	4.3688	1.9837	0.5083	1.8768
Da Nang	4.3450	1.9333	0.4262	1.9854
Quang Nam	3.8587	1.8145	0.4825	1.5617
Quang Ngai	4.0592	1.7393	0.5083	1.8117
Binh Dinh	4.2454	1.8428	0.4900	1.9126
Phu Yen	4.0020	1.8331	0.4642	1.7048
Khanh Hoa	4.3181	2.0421	0.4505	1.8254
Ninh Thuan	4.4239	2.1233	0.4609	1.8397
Binh Thuan	4.2166	2.0780	0.4283	1.7103
Kon Tum	4.0865	1.8997	0.4527	1.7341
Gia Lai	4.1498	1.8529	0.5163	1.7806
Dak Lak	4.2091	1.8716	0.4616	1.8759
Dak Nong	4.0599	1.7926	0.4773	1.7899
Lam Dong	4.3124	2.0255	0.4415	1.8454
Binh Phuoc	4.1880	1.9405	0.4356	1.8119
Tay Ninh	4.0106	1.8742	0.4097	1.7267
Binh Duong*				
Dong Nai	4.1376	1.9738	0.4258	1.7380
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	4.2696	2.0513	0.4328	1.7856
Ho Chi Minh City	4.3042	2.0013	0.4330	1.8699
Long An	3.8661	1.8271	0.4039	1.6351
Tien Giang	3.9365	1.9220	0.3958	1.6187
Ben Tre	3.8073	1.8621	0.4190	1.5262
Tra Vinh	4.0087	1.8929	0.3885	1.7273
Vinh Long	3.9901	1.9368	0.4096	1.6437
Dong Thap	4.0032	1.9919	0.4693	1.5420
An Giang	4.0608	1.9297	0.4105	1.7206
Kien Giang	4.2508	2.1224	0.4438	1.6846
Can Tho	4.0891	2.0753	0.4250	1.5887
Hau Giang	3.9288	1.9948	0.4582	1.4759
Soc Trang	4.4934	2.0749	0.4869	1.9316
Bac Lieu	4.6572	2.2390	0.5195	1.8987
Ca Mau	4.0719	2.0439	0.4374	1.5906

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the first left column), and a scale of 0.33-3.33 points for sub-dimensional levels (the other three columns). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes, not their scores. The longer the bar, the higher score. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Figure 3.3a: Percentage of Respondents having Contacted Village Heads When Having Issues to Report, 2021-2023

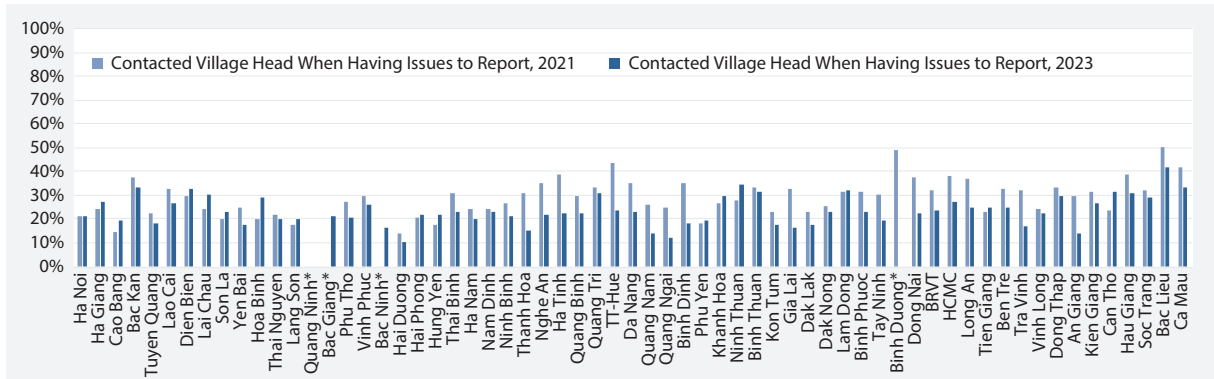


Figure 3.3b: Commune People’s Committees vs. Percentage of Respondents Having Contacted Commune People’s Councils When Having Issues to Report, 2023

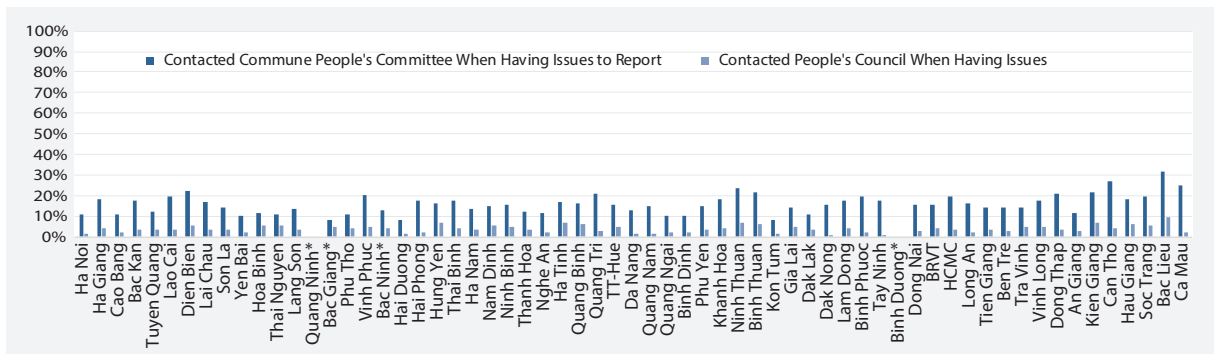


Figure 3.3c: Percentage of Respondents Having Taken Actions (Sending Petitions, Complaints or Proposals) vs. Percentage of those Confirming their Actions were Successfully Responded, 2023

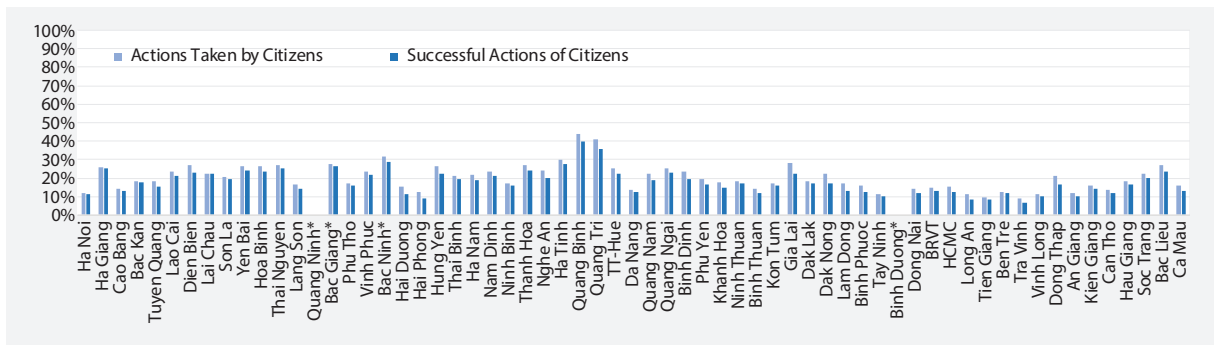
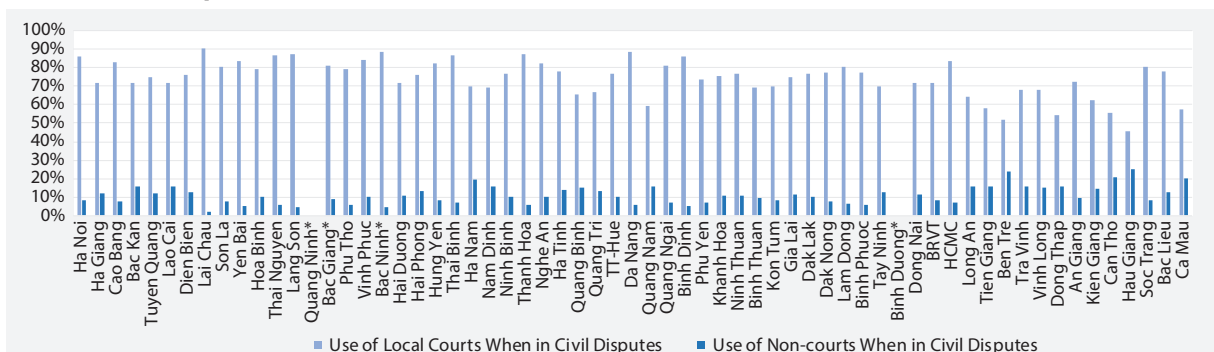


Figure 3.3d: Percentage of Respondents Saying They Would Use Local Courts or Non-Court Mechanisms When in Civil Disputes, 2023



(*) 2021 and 2023 data from these provinces are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Dimension 4: Control of Corruption in the Public Sector

The Control of Corruption in the Public Sector dimension measures the performance of public institutions and local governments in controlling corruption in the public sector. It also reflects the level of tolerance among citizens for corrupt practices as well as the willingness to curb corruption by local governments and citizens. The dimension comprises four sub-dimensions: Limits on Corruption in Local Governments, Limits on Corruption in Public Service Delivery, Equity in State Employment, and Willingness to Fight Corruption.

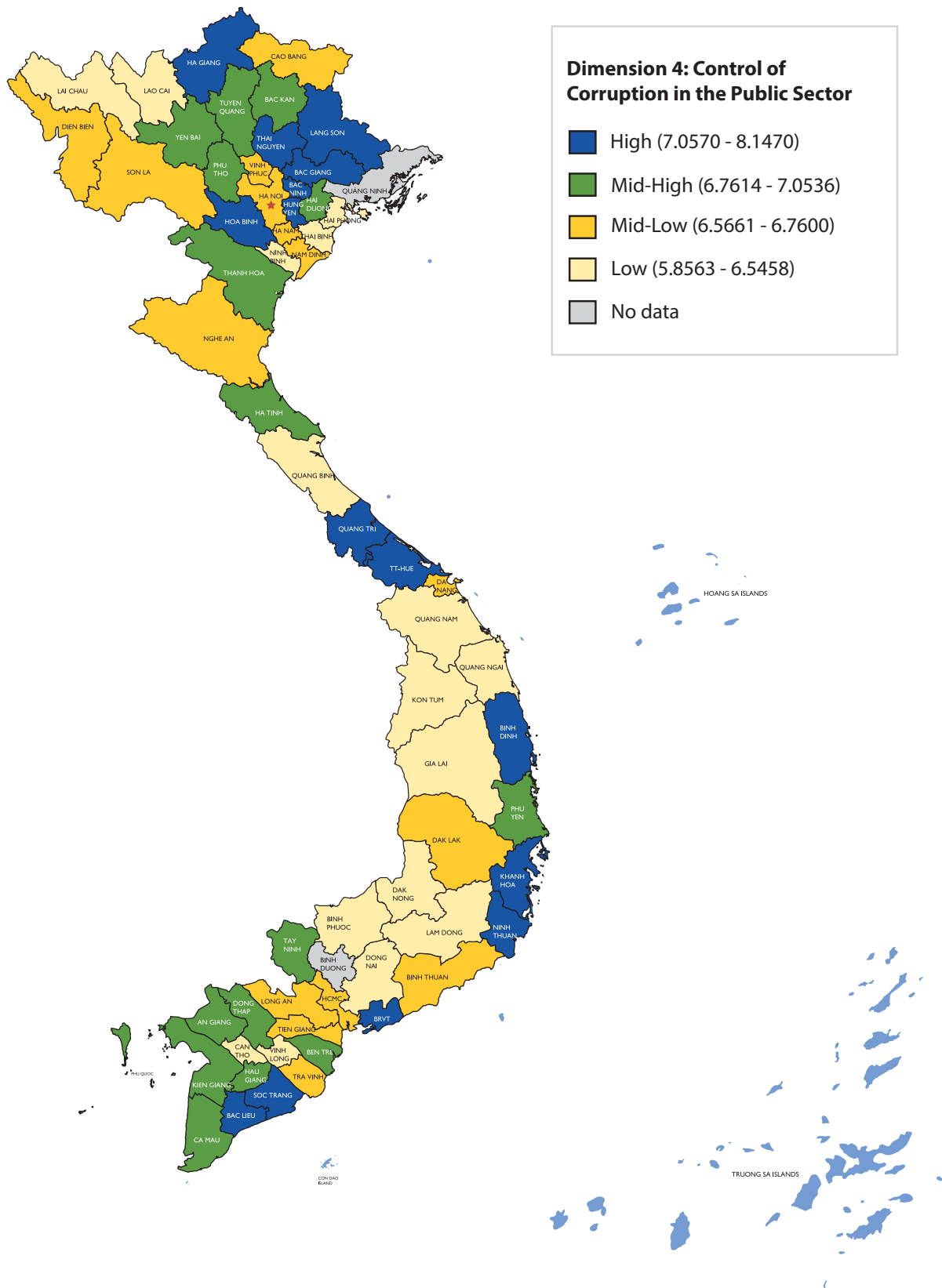
The following section provides a snapshot of key findings in terms of provincial performance in controlling corruption in the public sector in 2023. First, Box 3.4 presents key 2023 findings from

this dimension. Map 3.4 then displays aggregate dimensional scores for all provinces by four quartiles: (i) from 7.06 to 8.15 points (High), (ii) from 6.76 to 7.05 points (Mid-High), (iii) from 6.56 to 6.76 points (Mid-Low), and (iv) from 5.86 to 6.55 points (Low). Then, Figure 3.4 provides a 2021-2023 comparison to inform provinces whether they progressed or regressed in 2023 compared to 2021. In addition, Table 3.4 presents a dashboard of 2023 provincial performance at dimensional and sub-dimensional levels. At the indicator level, Figures 3.4a-b illustrate citizen assessment of the prevalence of corrupt behaviours and nepotism for jobs in State agencies by province in 2023, while Figures 3.4c-d provide a comparative perspective of how serious bribe-taking is when citizens apply for land use rights certificates (LURCs) or use public district hospital services in 2023 compared to 2021.

Box 3.4: Key Findings from Dimension 4: Control of Corruption in the Public Sector in 2023

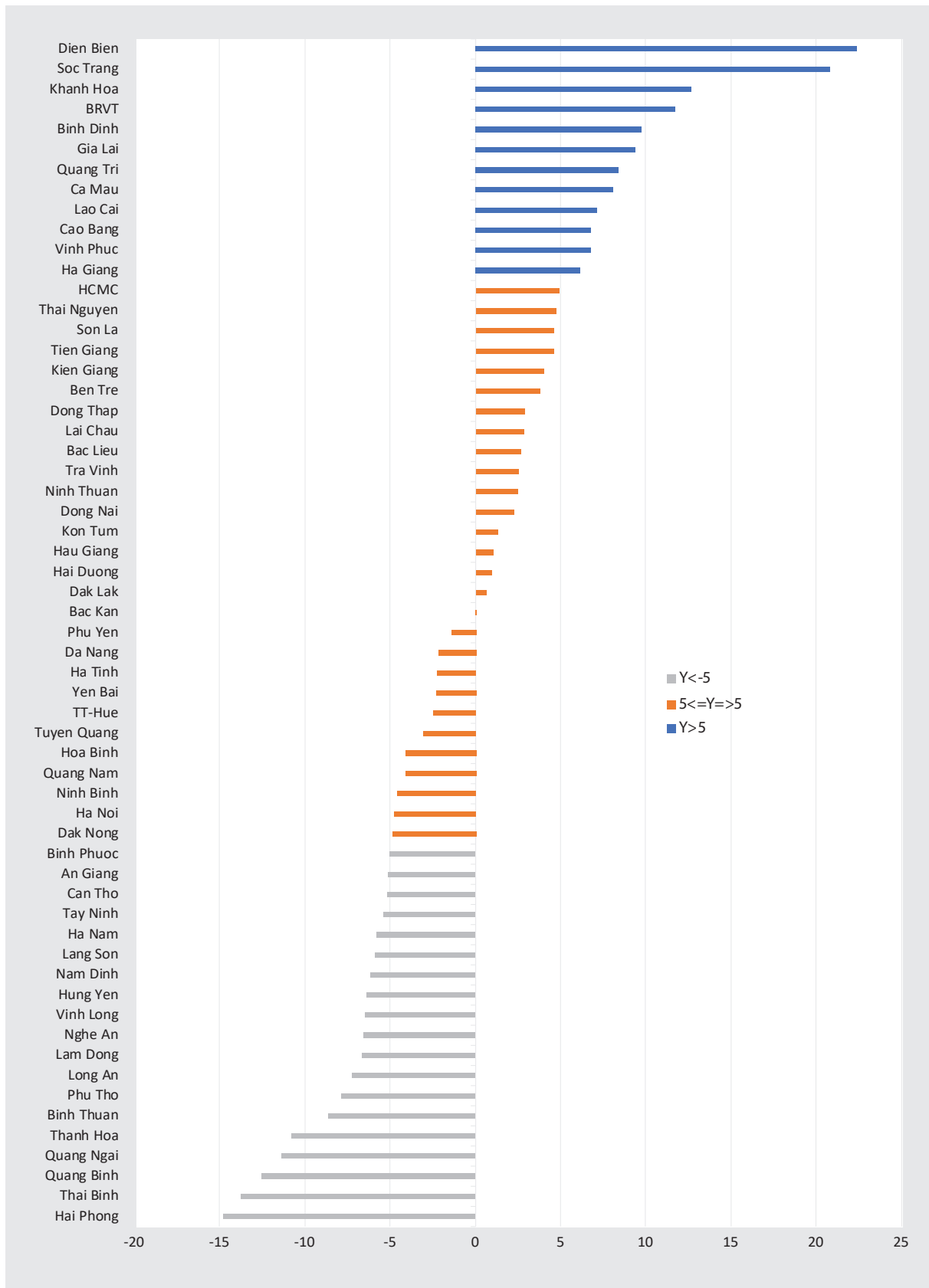
- Unlike in previous years, 2023 saw more provinces from the North Central and Central Coastal region (five provinces) and the Northern Mid-land and Mountainous region (five provinces) emerge to the High quartile in this dimension. Meanwhile, four out of five provinces from the Central Highlands (except for Dak Lak, which is in the mid-low quartile group) joined the Low-performing group in 2023, as did three out of 11 provinces in the Red River Delta region (Map 3.4).
- Provincial scores in this dimension ranged from 5.86 to 8.15 points on a 1-10 point scale (Table 3.4). Twelve provinces made significant progress in 2023 compared to performances in 2021, with the most significant growth of 22.3 percent by Dien Bien (Figure 3.4). Meanwhile, 19 provinces saw declines of more than 5 percentage points over the two years, with the largest drop of 14.78 percent seen by Hai Phong. Some 28 provinces saw little change in 2023 compared to 2021 performances.
- Equity in State Employment remains the weakest sub-dimension of all, with provincial scores ranging from 0.95 to 1.71 points on a scale of 0.25-2.5 points in 2023, much lower than ranges across the other three sub-dimensions (Table 3.4). As shown in Figure 3.4a, bribes for employment in the public sector remain common, both in poor and better-off provinces, as in previous years. For instance, the three poorest performers include Binh Phuoc, Dak Nong and Hai Phong, with the first two worse off and the last significantly better off in terms of economic development. Furthermore, personal relationships remain important for five public offices at commune level (land registrars, judicial officers, police, public primary school teachers and Commune People's Committee staff) in every province. Gia Lai and Ha Nam are two provinces where personal relationships to gain State employment were perceived as most profound in 2023 (Figure 3.4b). Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Thua Thien-Hue and Soc Trang performed better in State employment equity than the other provinces, although their scores are below 2.5 on a scale of 0-5 points for this indicator.
- The proportions of applicants for LURCs who paid a bribe ranged from 19 to 81 percent in 61 provinces, with the lowest seen in Tay Ninh and the highest in Lam Dong in 2023 (Figure 3.4c). The number of provinces with more than 40 percent of applicants bribing for LURCs fell from 43 in 2021 to 32 in 2023. The good news is that the number of respondents who had to pay a bribe for LURC reduced in 34 provinces, with nine provinces (Ca Mau, Cao Bang, Dien Bien, Ha Tinh, Hau Giang, Hung Yen, Soc Trang, Tay Ninh and Tuyen Quang) seeing a decline by more than 20 percent over the three years to 2023. In contrast, the number increased by more than 20 percent in four provinces (Da Nang, Hoa Binh, Lam Dong and Quang Tri) over the three years.
- The proportions of users of district public hospitals who paid a bribe in 2023 ranged from 40 to 80 percent in 40 provinces, similar to 2021's trends (Figure 3.4d). The proportions are the lowest – but still between 20-30 percent – in Ben Tre, Da Nang and Kon Tum. Compared to 2021, fewer incidences of bribe-giving were found in 32 provinces, with Bac Kan, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Binh Dinh, Gia Lai, Ninh Binh and Thai Binh seeing a reduction by more than 20 percent.

Map 3.4: Provincial Performance in Control of Corruption in the Public Sector by Quartiles, 2023



Note: Blue is for provinces with scores within the High quartile (75th ≤ x ≤ 100th percentiles), green is for 16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile (50th ≤ x < 75th percentiles), orange is for provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile (25th ≤ x < 50th percentiles) and light yellow is for provinces with scores within the Low quartile (0th ≤ x < 25th percentiles). Gray (No data) is for provinces from which collected data is not qualified (with an estimated value for an indicator larger than 2 standard errors and with field evidence) for use. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between quartiles are.

Figure 3.4: Changes in Performance in Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (2021-2023)



Note: Y = percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of ±5% defined as statistically significant. 2021 data from Bac Giang and Bac Ninh, and 2023 data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Table 3.4: Dashboard of Provincial Performance in Control of Corruption in the Public Sector, 2023

Province	4: Control of Corruption in the Public Sector	4.1: Limits on Public Sector Corruption	4.2: Limits on Corruption in Service Delivery	4.3: Equity in State Employment	4.4: Willingness to Fight Corruption
Ha Noi	6.7348	1.5995	1.9141	1.1505	2.0707
Ha Giang	7.1751	1.7907	2.2080	1.2332	1.9431
Cao Bang	6.7454	1.5892	2.0618	1.1380	1.9564
Bac Kan	6.8537	1.6950	2.0422	1.2080	1.9085
Tuyen Quang	6.8629	1.7571	2.0916	1.2116	1.8026
Lao Cai	6.3806	1.5353	1.9261	1.0770	1.8423
Dien Bien	6.6271	1.6328	1.9612	1.0797	1.9534
Lai Chau	6.4826	1.5727	1.9804	1.0548	1.8746
Son La	6.6088	1.6317	1.9494	1.0998	1.9279
Yen Bai	6.7614	1.6730	2.0684	1.1090	1.9110
Hoa Binh	7.2309	1.8205	2.1234	1.2988	1.9882
Thai Nguyen	7.2045	1.8450	2.1301	1.2634	1.9660
Lang Son	7.0990	1.7979	2.1400	1.2440	1.9170
Quang Ninh*					
Bac Giang	7.1515	1.8201	2.1416	1.2245	1.9653
Phu Tho	6.8925	1.7311	2.1251	1.0972	1.9391
Vinh Phuc	6.6689	1.5543	2.0766	1.1486	1.8894
Bac Ninh	7.1588	1.8070	2.1321	1.2319	1.9880
Hai Duong	6.9967	1.7307	2.0566	1.2265	1.9830
Hai Phong	6.3267	1.4395	1.8641	1.0808	1.9422
Hung Yen	7.0570	1.8916	2.1030	1.1684	1.8941
Thai Binh	6.2523	1.5128	1.8750	1.0719	1.7925
Ha Nam	6.6085	1.6718	1.9687	1.0056	1.9624
Nam Dinh	6.5661	1.6950	1.9719	1.1349	1.7644
Ninh Binh	6.3939	1.5460	1.9375	1.0852	1.8252
Thanh Hoa	6.9686	1.7920	2.0782	1.1966	1.9019
Nghe An	6.6789	1.7289	2.0135	1.1155	1.8210
Ha Tinh	7.0536	1.7876	2.0959	1.1957	1.9744
Quang Binh	6.2326	1.6493	1.8739	0.9542	1.7552
Quang Tri	7.1662	1.9317	2.1531	1.2114	1.8699
Thua Thien-Hue	7.5740	2.1044	2.2620	1.4411	1.7666
Da Nang	6.6289	1.5925	2.0451	1.1087	1.8826
Quang Nam	6.5458	1.5558	2.0459	1.1454	1.7987
Quang Ngai	5.8563	1.6365	1.9352	1.1792	1.1055
Binh Dinh	7.4530	1.9135	2.1484	1.4570	1.9341
Phu Yen	6.8087	1.6826	2.0599	1.1772	1.8891
Khanh Hoa	7.3734	1.9245	2.1570	1.4001	1.8918
Ninh Thuan	7.3609	1.8460	2.1347	1.4114	1.9689
Binh Thuan	6.7600	1.5515	2.0149	1.2543	1.9394
Kon Tum	6.2617	1.4474	1.9348	1.0086	1.8710
Gia Lai	6.4906	1.5783	1.9977	1.0232	1.8913
Dak Lak	6.6173	1.6859	1.9770	1.1633	1.7912
Dak Nong	5.9589	1.3037	1.7989	0.9776	1.8786
Lam Dong	6.1929	1.4532	1.9432	0.9984	1.7981
Binh Phuoc	6.1097	1.3791	1.9112	0.9466	1.8728
Tay Ninh	6.8288	1.6432	2.0035	1.3000	1.8821
Binh Duong*					
Dong Nai	6.4840	1.4389	1.9890	1.1315	1.9246
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	7.2181	1.7789	2.1228	1.4032	1.9132
Ho Chi Minh City	6.6335	1.5212	1.9458	1.1849	1.9817
Long An	6.7088	1.6176	2.0179	1.2195	1.8538
Tien Giang	6.6372	1.6373	1.9412	1.3149	1.7438
Ben Tre	6.7834	1.7251	2.0250	1.2937	1.7396
Tra Vinh	6.6237	1.5940	1.9041	1.2314	1.8942
Vinh Long	6.3796	1.5356	1.9414	1.1395	1.7631
Dong Thap	6.9578	1.7130	2.0262	1.3456	1.8731
An Giang	6.8861	1.7035	2.0390	1.3191	1.8246
Kien Giang	6.8893	1.6668	2.0458	1.2887	1.8879
Can Tho	6.4232	1.6221	1.9073	1.2191	1.6748
Hau Giang	7.0010	1.6750	1.9933	1.3435	1.9891
Soc Trang	8.1470	2.0741	2.3003	1.7121	2.0605
Bac Lieu	7.6585	1.9605	2.1579	1.4578	2.0824
Ca Mau	6.8578	1.6896	2.0131	1.2115	1.9435

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the first left column), and a scale of 0.25-2.5 points for sub-dimensional levels (the other four columns). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes, not their scores. The longer the bar, the higher the score. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Figure 3.4a: Citizens' Assessment of Corruption Prevalence by Province, 2023

(Branch size = percentage of respondents agreeing to provided positive statements; Perfect = 100% agreement)

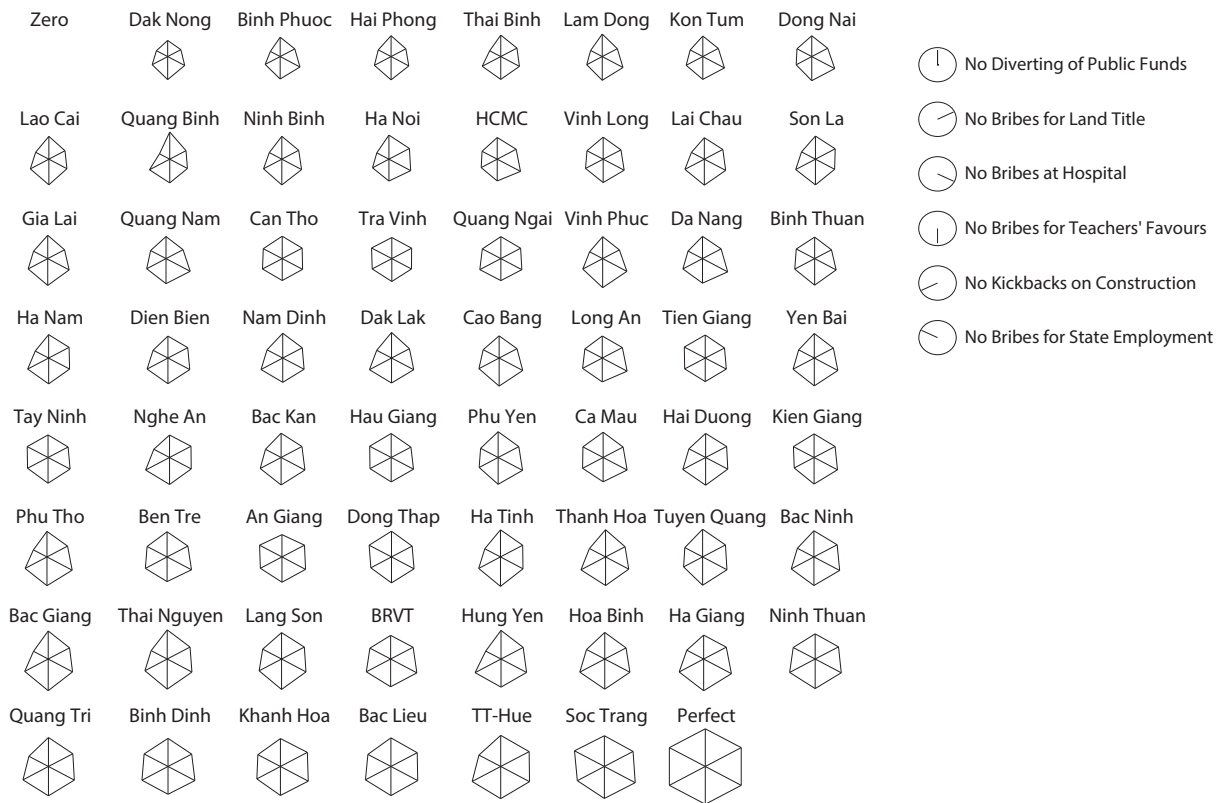


Figure 3.4b: No Relationship Needed When Applying for State Employment Positions by Province, 2023

(Branch size = percentage of respondents agreeing to provided positive statements; Perfect = 100% agreement)

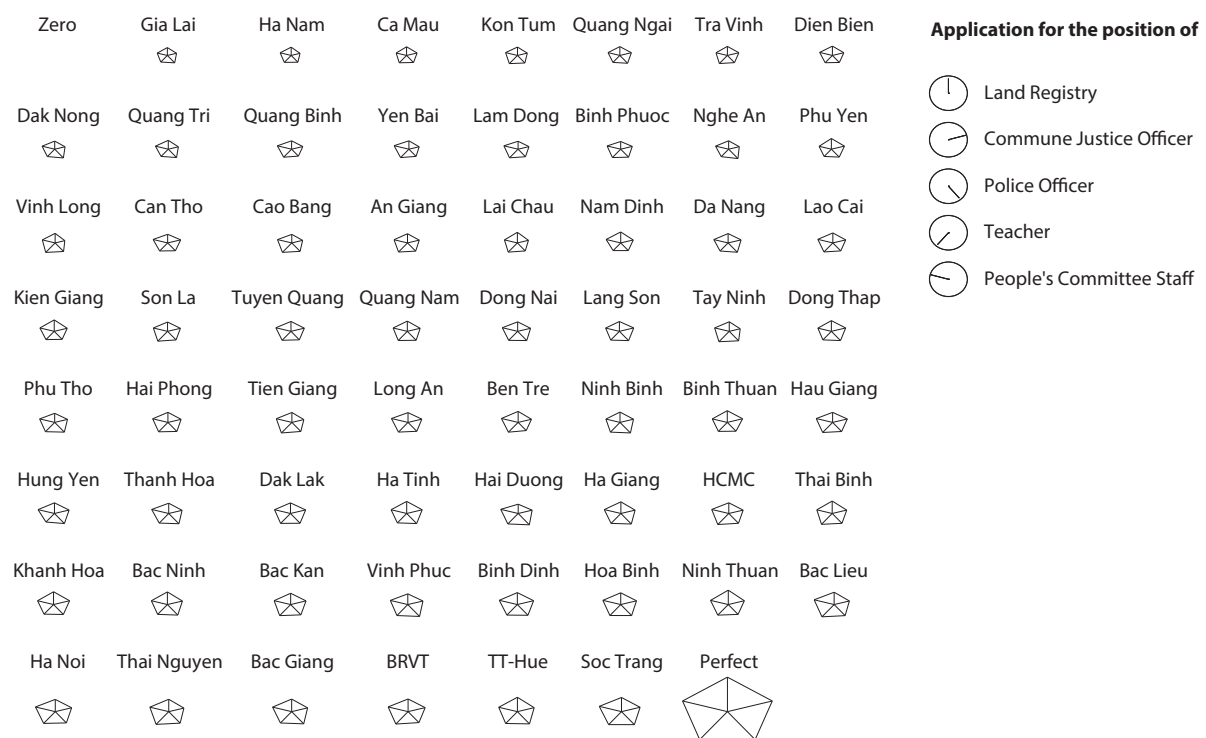


Figure 3.4c: Percentage of Applicants for Land Use Rights Certificates Experiencing Bribe-taking, 2021-2023

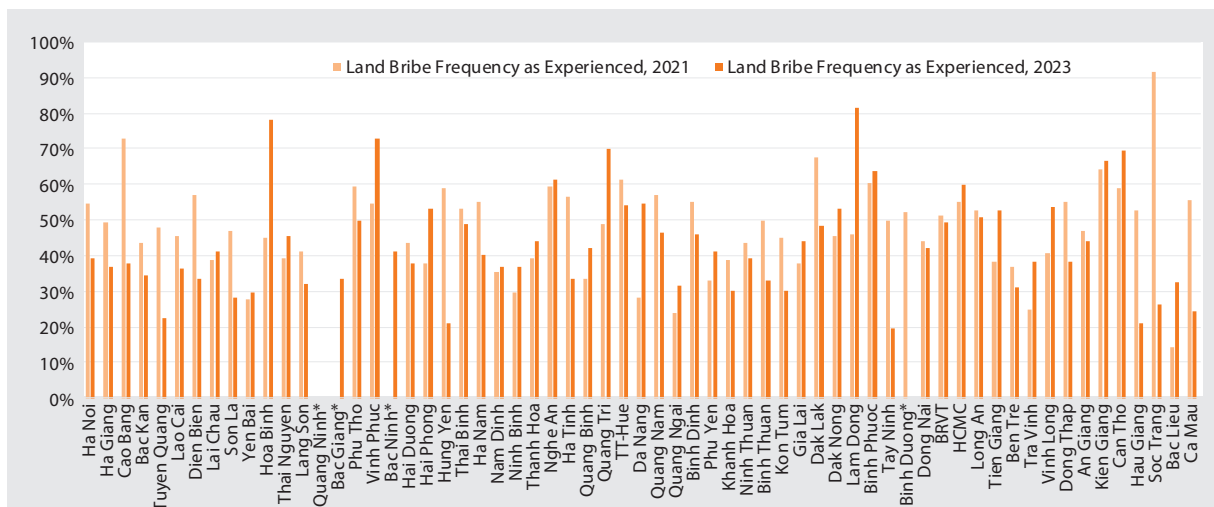
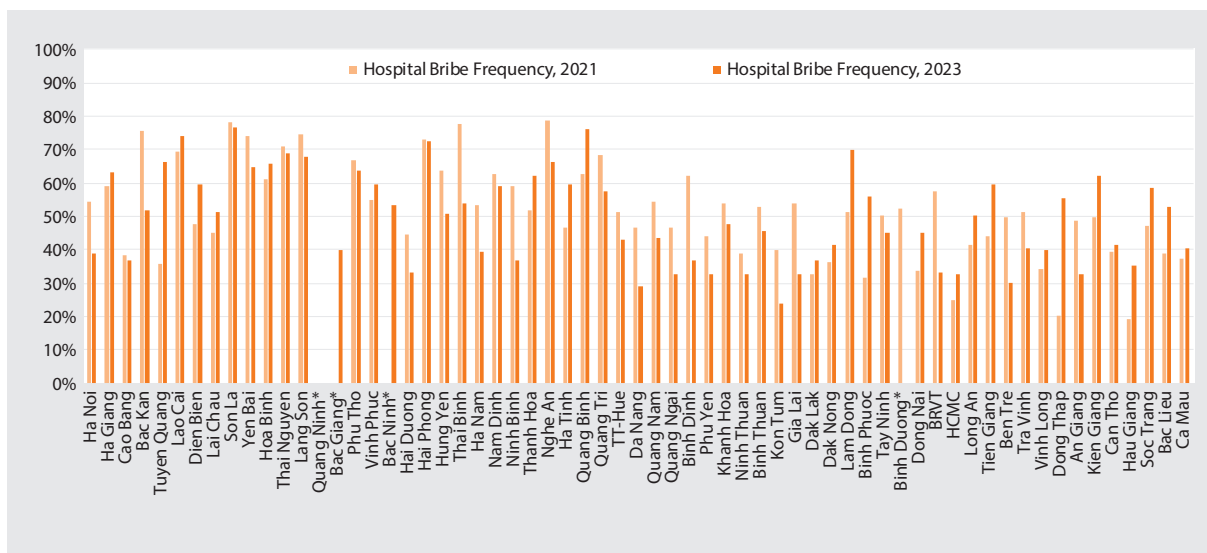


Figure 3.4d: Percentage of Users of Public Health Facilities Having to Pay Informally for Better Attention and Care, 2021-2023



(*) 2021 and 2023 data from these provinces are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Dimension 5: Public Administrative Procedures

The Public Administrative Procedures dimension reflects the quality of public administrative services in areas important to citizens. It covers three sub-dimensions: (i) Certification Services by Local Governments, (ii) Application Procedures for Land Use Rights Certificates at the District Level, and (iii) Application Procedures for Personal Documents Handled by Commune Governments. In particular, it examines how professional and responsive government staff are, from provincial to commune levels, in providing public administrative services.

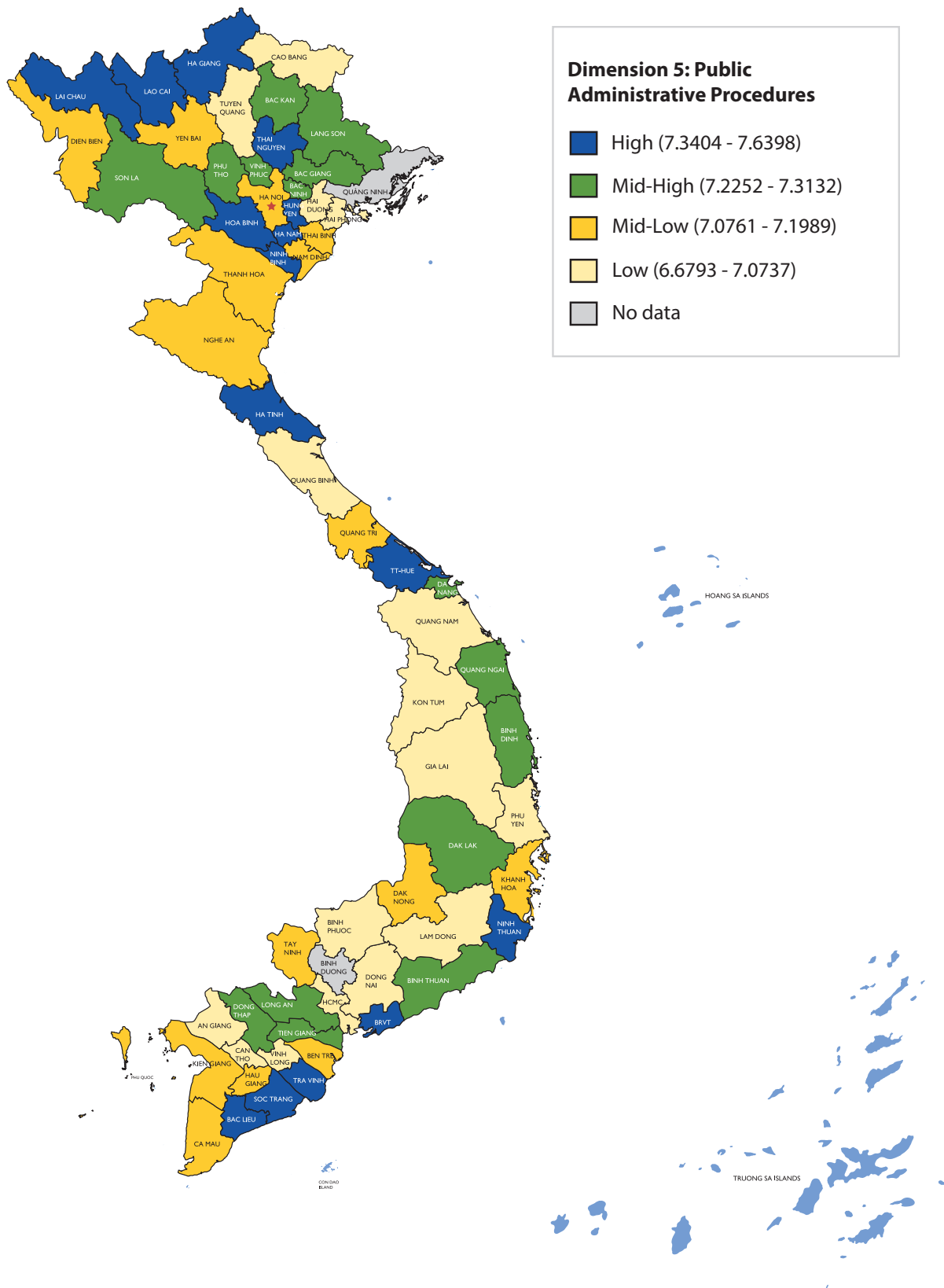
The following section presents an overview of provincial performance in the provision of

administrative procedures and services for citizens in 2023. First, Box 3.5 outlines key 2023 findings from this dimension. Then, Map 3.5 displays aggregate dimensional scores for the 61 provinces by four quartiles: (i) from 7.34 to 7.64 points (High), (ii) from 7.22 to 7.31 points (Mid-High), (iii) from 7.08 to 7.20 points (Mid-Low), and (iv) from 6.68 to 7.07 points (Low). In addition, Table 3.5 presents a dashboard of 2023 provincial performance at dimensional and sub-dimensional levels. Finally, Figures 3.5a-d present 2023's findings on several indicators, such as the quality of commune-level public administrative services, land use rights certificates (LURCs) at district-level one-stop shops, and local governments' certification services at all levels against their 2021 baselines.

Box 3.5: Key Findings from Dimension 5: Public Administrative Procedures in 2023

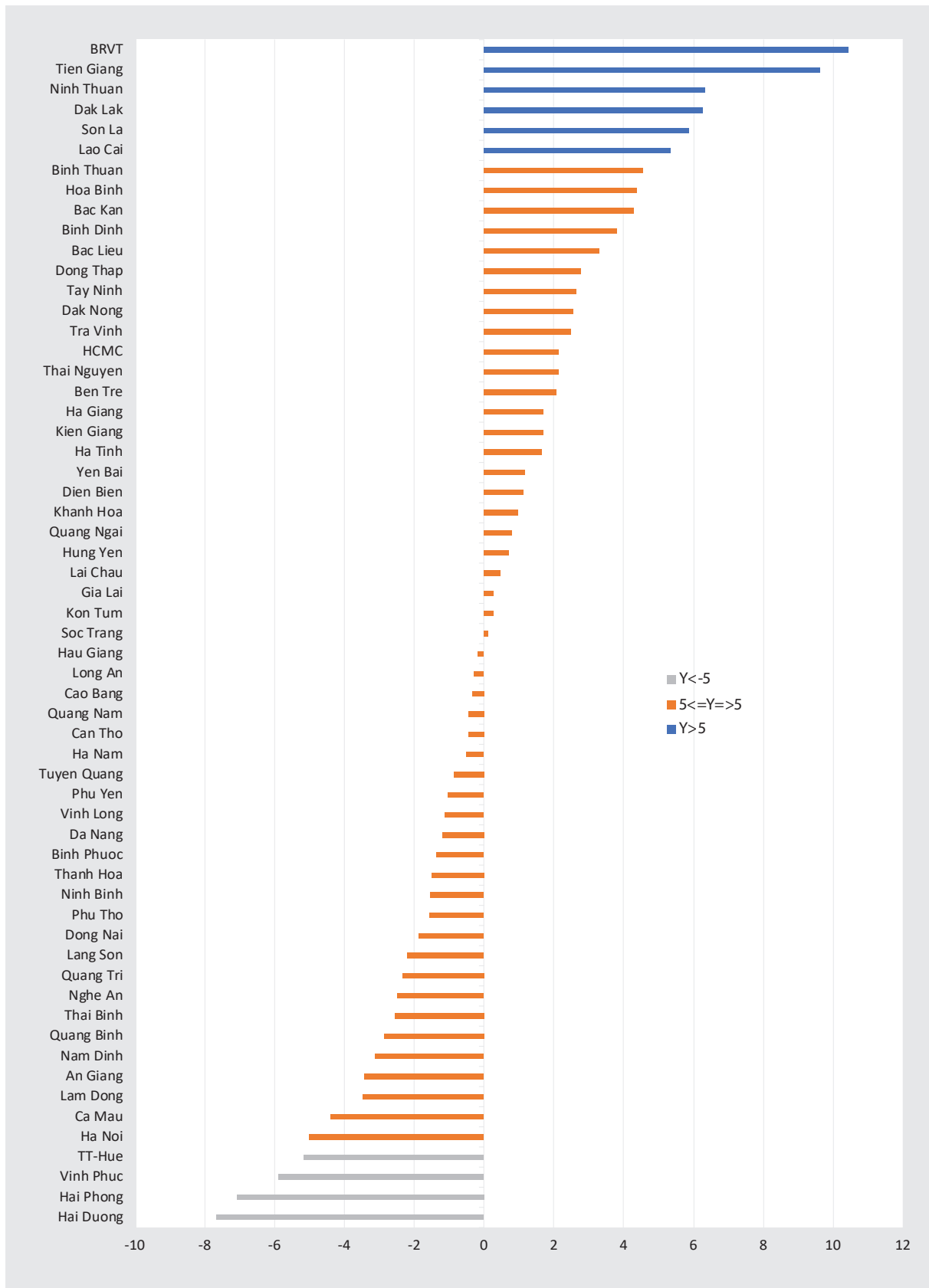
- There was a diverse distribution of provinces in the High quartile in this dimension, with five provinces from the Northern Mid-land and Mountainous region, and three provinces each from three regions: the Red River Delta and Northeastern Coast, North Central and Central Coast and the Mekong River Delta. In contrast, three out of five provinces each in the Central Highlands and Southeastern regions were in the Low quartile (see Map 3.5).
- Provincial scores in 2023 ranged from 6.68 to 7.64 points on a scale from 1-10 points (Table 3.5), lower than the range in 2021 (Figure 3.9b). Five provinces made significant improvements over the two years, with Ba Ria-Vung Tau and Tien Giang making the most impressive progress with growth rates of 10.4 and 9.6 percentage points, respectively. However, as many as 49 provinces posted little change, while four provinces (Hai Duong, Hai Phong, Vinh Phuc and Thua Thien-Hue) regressed greater than 5 percentage points each over the three years.
- As with previous years, procedures and administrative services for LURCs remained more problematic than those for local government certification and personal papers. As shown in Table 3.5, the provincial scores ranged from 1.98 to 2.57 points on a scale of 0.33-3.34 points, wider than ranges for services of the other two procedures (2.20 to 2.63 points for certification, and 2.28 to 2.59 points for personal procedures).
- Similar to 2021's findings, applicants in most provinces had similar experiences with the total quality of public administrative services for personal papers at commune one-stop shops – except for Kon Tum, Lam Dong and Phu Yen – where users gave lower scores for services (Figure 3.5a). In most provinces, the lack of publicity of fees to pay for services at one-stop shops was a common problem.
- Regarding the total quality of public administrative services for LURCs, as shown in Figure 3.5b, applicants in most provinces had varied assessments by the four criteria, especially in terms of meeting deadlines. Cao Bang, HCMC, Quang Binh and Vinh Long provinces had the lowest total quality scores, while Bac Lieu, Hung Yen, Ninh Thuan, Tra Vinh and Thua Thien-Hue had the highest total quality scores – but still a significant gap from the perfect score. In most provinces, missed deadlines to return LURCs to applicants was a common issue. On a positive note, LURC applicants were less commonly required to engage with more officials than stipulated during the processing of paperwork in 38 provinces compared to 2021 (Figure 3.5c).
- Certification services provided by public officials from provincial to commune levels were rated highly in all provinces, from 3.56 to 4 points on a scale of 0-4 points. Over the three years, a slight improvement was noted in 34 provinces, with the increase in Ba Ria-Vung Tau most significant (by 0.62 points) (Figure 3.5d).

Map 3.5: Provincial Performance in Public Administrative Procedures by Quartiles, 2023



Note: Blue is for provinces with their scores within the High quartile (75th ≤ x ≤ 100th percentiles), green is for 16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile (50th ≤ x < 75th percentiles), orange is for provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile (25th ≤ x < 50th percentiles) and light yellow is for provinces with scores within the Low quartile (0th ≤ x < 25th percentiles). Gray (No data) is for provinces from which collected data is not qualified (with an estimated value for an indicator larger than 2 standard errors and with field evidence) for use. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between quartiles are.

Figure 3.5: Changes in Performance in Public Administrative Procedures (2021-2023)



Note: Y = percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of ±5% defined as statistically significant. 2021 data from Bac Giang and Bac Ninh, and 2023 data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Table 3.5: Dashboard of Provincial Performance in Public Administrative Procedures, 2023

Province	5: Public Administrative Procedures	5.1: Certification Procedures	5.2: Land Title Procedures	5.3: Personal Procedures
Ha Noi	7.1611	2.4157	2.3498	2.3956
Ha Giang	7.3943	2.6253	2.2856	2.4835
Cao Bang	6.8293	2.3284	2.1057	2.3952
Bac Kan	7.2522	2.5721	2.2493	2.4309
Tuyen Quang	7.0660	2.5152	2.0893	2.4615
Lao Cai	7.4679	2.5744	2.3887	2.5047
Dien Bien	7.1951	2.4597	2.3381	2.3972
Lai Chau	7.3947	2.4568	2.5327	2.4052
Son La	7.3132	2.4457	2.4831	2.3844
Yen Bai	7.1989	2.5311	2.3280	2.3398
Hoa Binh	7.3462	2.5333	2.3791	2.4338
Thai Nguyen	7.4420	2.4842	2.4725	2.4853
Lang Son	7.2880	2.5043	2.3262	2.4575
Quang Ninh*				
Bac Giang	7.3001	2.4239	2.3665	2.5096
Phu Tho	7.2723	2.4816	2.3594	2.4313
Vinh Phuc	7.3103	2.4231	2.3966	2.4906
Bac Ninh	7.2747	2.3663	2.4089	2.4995
Hai Duong	6.7793	2.1957	2.1638	2.4198
Hai Phong	6.9351	2.3515	2.1908	2.3928
Hung Yen	7.5595	2.4643	2.5268	2.5684
Thai Binh	7.0967	2.4001	2.2710	2.4256
Ha Nam	7.4572	2.5143	2.3511	2.5918
Nam Dinh	7.1895	2.3756	2.3208	2.4932
Ninh Binh	7.5158	2.5108	2.4665	2.5384
Thanh Hoa	7.1907	2.3562	2.3036	2.5309
Nghe An	7.0761	2.3383	2.3163	2.4215
Ha Tinh	7.5358	2.6007	2.3828	2.5523
Quang Binh	6.8270	2.2529	2.1351	2.4390
Quang Tri	7.1043	2.3764	2.3120	2.4158
Thua Thien-Hue	7.3418	2.5266	2.3761	2.4391
Da Nang	7.2374	2.3540	2.4091	2.4743
Quang Nam	6.9010	2.3790	1.9841	2.5379
Quang Ngai	7.2627	2.2640	2.5319	2.4668
Binh Dinh	7.2301	2.3994	2.4646	2.3661
Phu Yen	6.6793	2.2091	2.1516	2.3186
Khanh Hoa	7.1770	2.4094	2.3637	2.4039
Ninh Thuan	7.5599	2.4574	2.5685	2.5340
Binh Thuan	7.2866	2.3604	2.4149	2.5114
Kon Tum	6.8741	2.2472	2.3454	2.2815
Gia Lai	6.9227	2.2915	2.3193	2.3119
Dak Lak	7.2269	2.4634	2.3761	2.3874
Dak Nong	7.0977	2.3718	2.3244	2.4015
Lam Dong	7.0737	2.3450	2.2963	2.4324
Binh Phuoc	7.0298	2.3806	2.3328	2.3163
Tay Ninh	7.1959	2.3325	2.4010	2.4624
Binh Duong*				
Dong Nai	7.0263	2.3722	2.2946	2.3596
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	7.4515	2.4794	2.4784	2.4936
Ho Chi Minh City	7.0510	2.4135	2.2248	2.4127
Long An	7.2252	2.3637	2.3870	2.4746
Tien Giang	7.2813	2.3758	2.4504	2.4551
Ben Tre	7.1337	2.3778	2.3477	2.4083
Tra Vinh	7.3404	2.4611	2.4198	2.4595
Vinh Long	6.9903	2.3390	2.1928	2.4584
Dong Thap	7.3098	2.3908	2.4517	2.4672
An Giang	7.0038	2.2814	2.3190	2.4034
Kien Giang	7.1431	2.3679	2.2763	2.4990
Can Tho	7.0732	2.3566	2.3024	2.4142
Hau Giang	7.1214	2.3409	2.3281	2.4524
Soc Trang	7.4360	2.5092	2.4170	2.5099
Bac Lieu	7.6398	2.6335	2.4353	2.5709
Ca Mau	7.1274	2.3992	2.2152	2.5130

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the first left column), and a scale of 0.33-3.33 points for sub-dimensional levels (the other three columns). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes, not their scores. The longer the bar, the higher score. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Figure 3.5a: Total Quality of Commune-level Public Administrative Services by Province, 2023

(Branch size = percentage of respondents agreeing to provided positive statements; Perfect = 100% agreement)

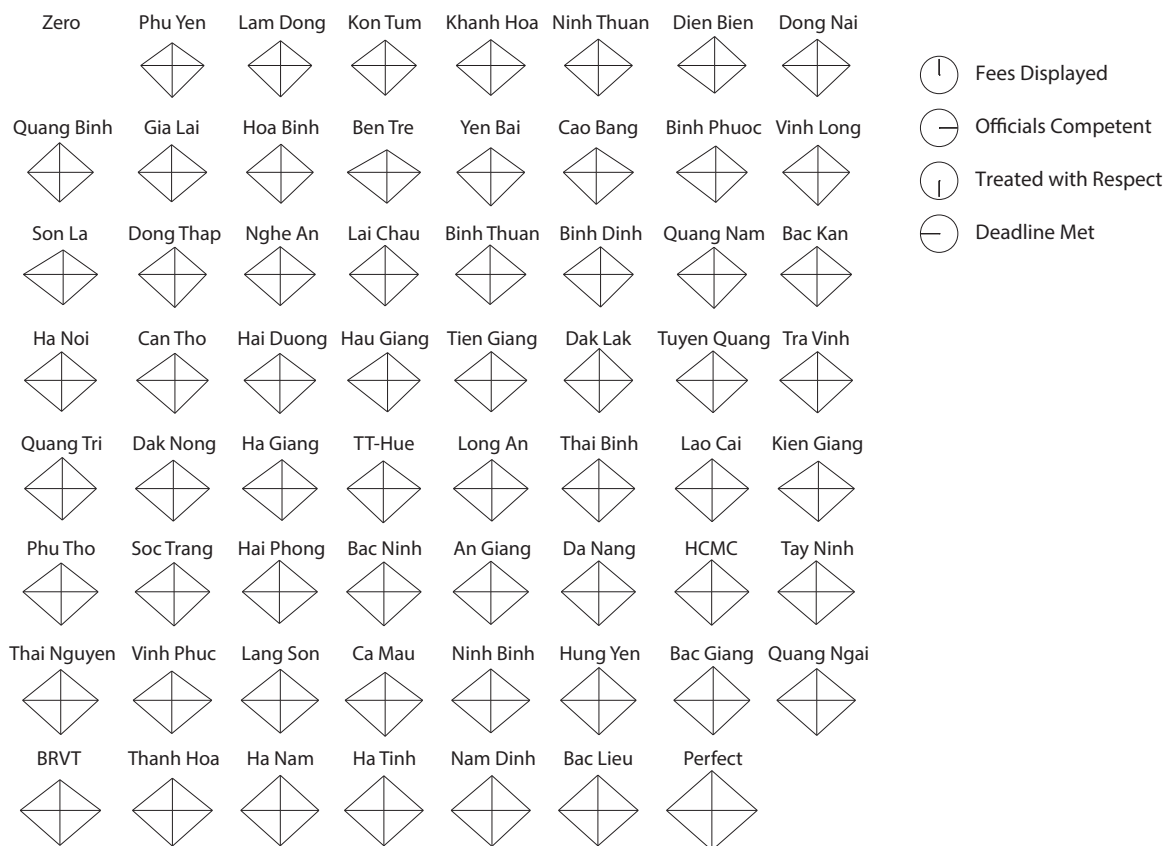


Figure 3.5b: Total Quality of Public Administrative Services for Land Use Rights Certificates by Province, 2023

(Branch size = percentage of respondents agreeing to provided positive statements; Perfect = 100% agreement)

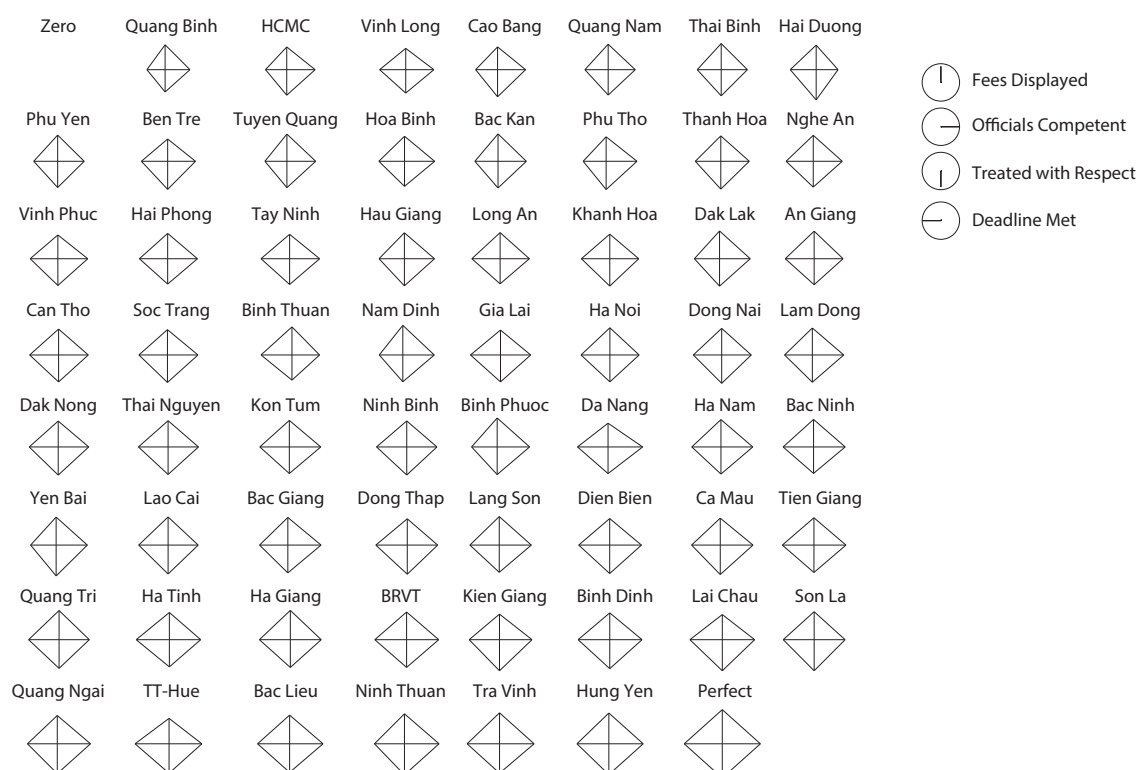


Figure 3.5c: Percentage of Applicants Who Said They Did Not Have to Go to Many Windows (Meet Many Government Officials) to Have Land Titles Processed, 2021-2023

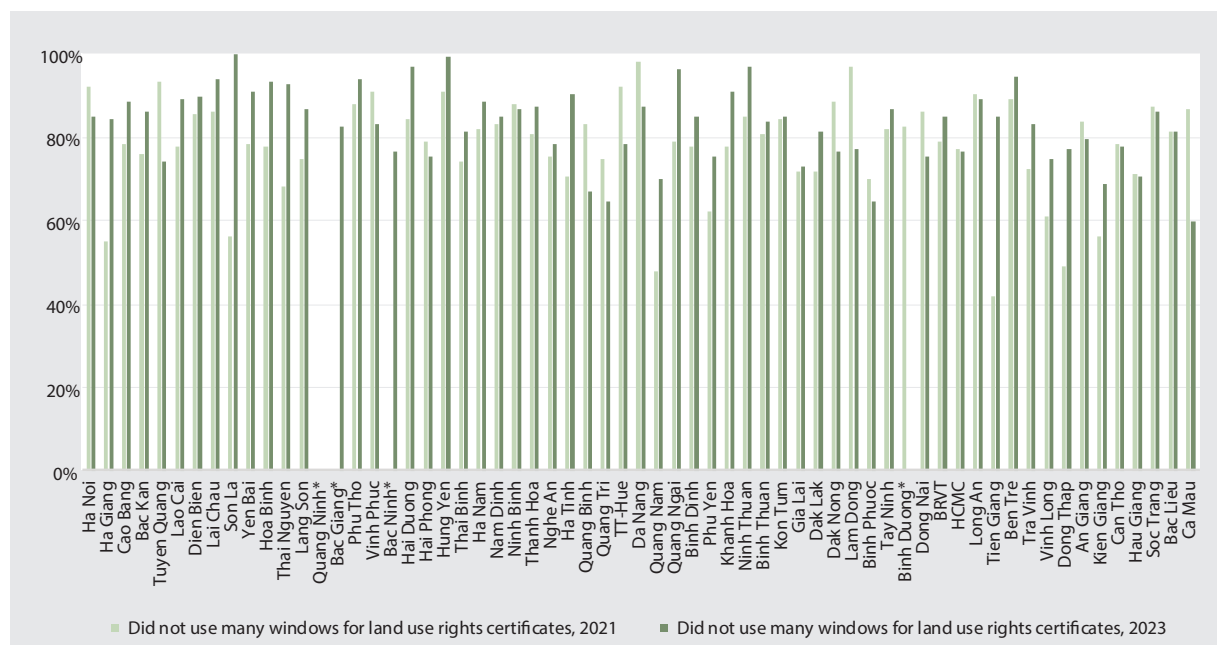


Figure 3.5d: Total Quality of Local Government’s Certification Services, 2021-2023



(*) 2021 and 2023 data from these provinces are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Dimension 6: Public Service Delivery

The Public Service Delivery dimension examines local governments' performance in delivering four public services: health care, primary education, basic infrastructure, as well as law and order. To explore this dimension, citizens were asked about their direct experiences with the accessibility, quality and availability of these public services.

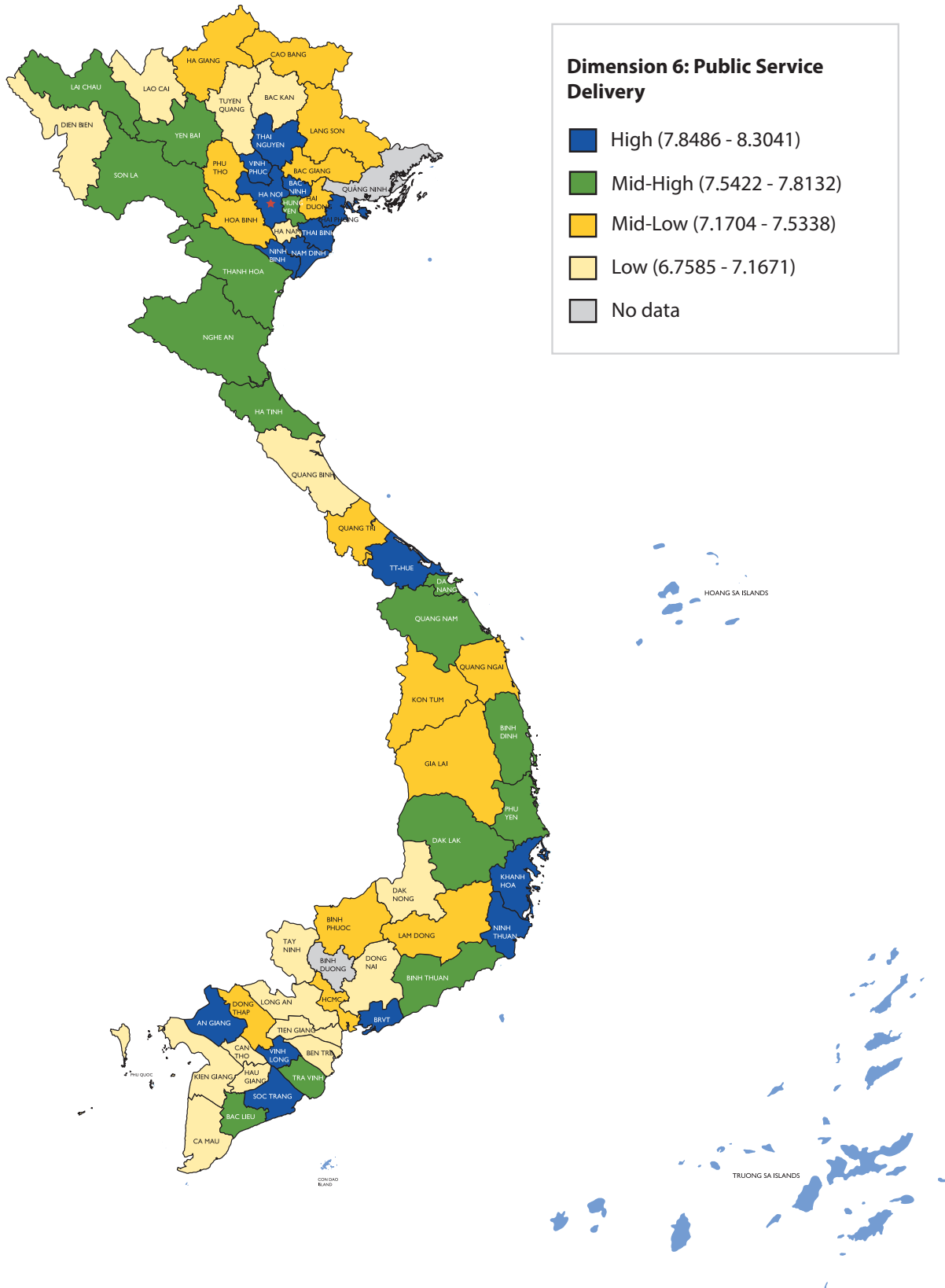
The following section outlines the performances of provinces in providing public services to citizens in 2023. First, Box 3.6 presents key 2023 findings from this dimension. Map 3.6 then displays the aggregate dimensional scores for the 61 provinces by four quartiles: (i) from 7.84 to 8.30 points (High), (ii) from 7.54 to 7.81 points (Mid-High), (iii) from 7.17 to 7.53 points

(Mid-Low), and (iv) from 6.76 to 7.16 points (Low). Next, Figure 3.6 provides a 2021-2023 comparison so provinces can understand whether they performed better or worse over the three years. Table 3.6 presents a dashboard summarizing 2023 provincial performance at dimensional and sub-dimensional levels. In addition, Figure 3.6a depicts the total quality of public primary schools, and Figure 3.6b illustrates the total quality of public district hospitals in 2023 by province, based on national standards. Figures 3.6c-d present findings on citizens' assessment of the quality of roads near their homes and the frequency of garbage pick-ups for households over the period 2021 to 2023. Finally, Figure 3.6e illustrates how citizens feel about the level of safety in their localities in terms of law and order, also with a three-year comparative perspective.

Box 3.6: Key Findings from Dimension 6: Public Service Delivery in 2023

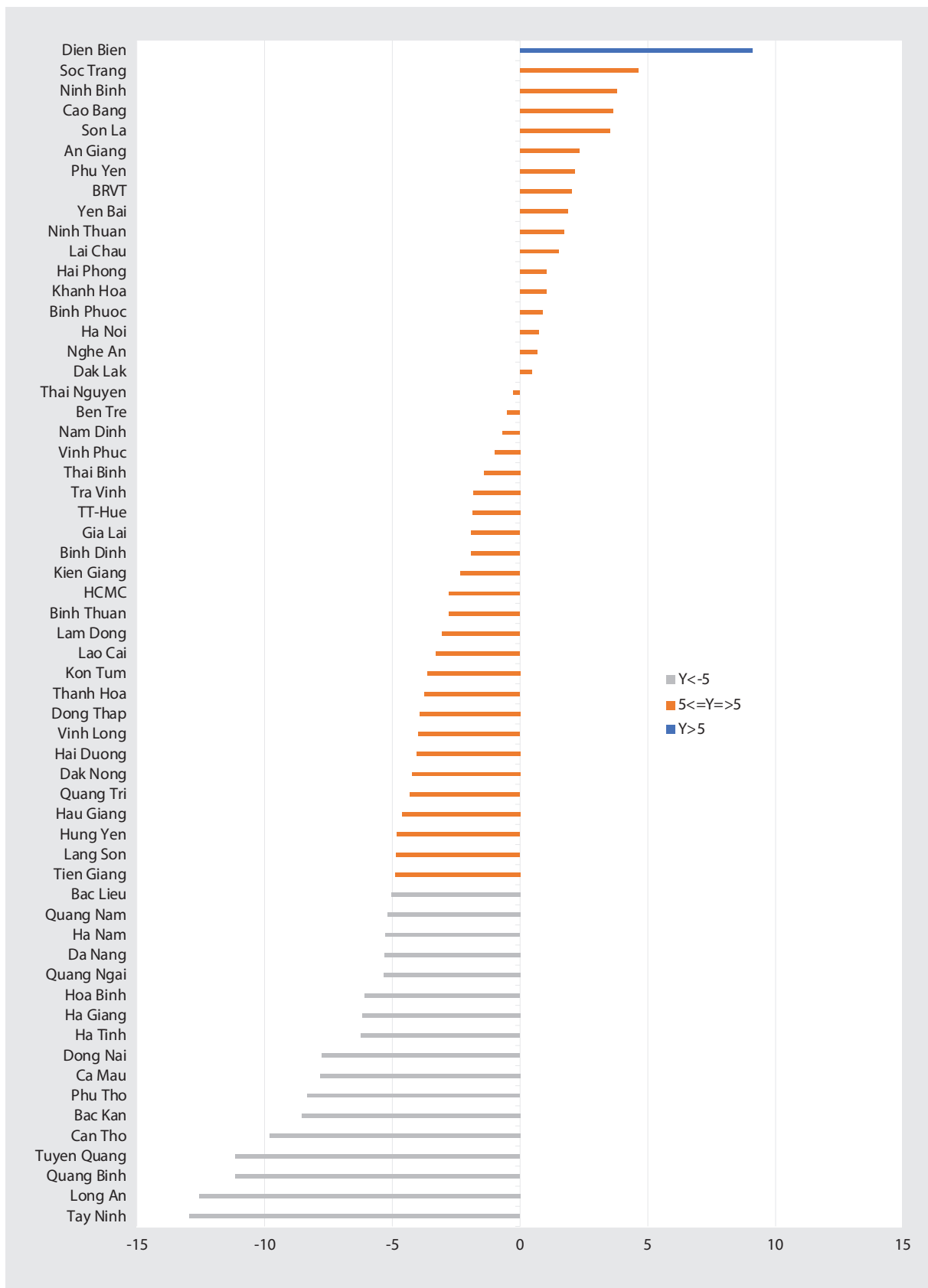
- As Map 3.6 demonstrates, provinces in the High quartile in this dimension are mainly found in the Red River Delta (seven out of 11 provinces), while each of the two regions of the Northcentral and Central Coast as well as the Mekong River Delta contributes three provinces. However, the Mekong River Delta region also contributed seven provinces to the Low quartile, while the Northern Mid-land and Mountainous region provided four provinces.
- Provincial scores in 2023 ranged between 6.76 to 8.30 points on the 1-10 point scale, lower than in 2021 for this dimension (Table 3.6). Strikingly, as shown in Figure 3.6, only one province (Dien Bien) posted significantly higher scores in 2023 than 2021, while 17 provinces saw large declines. Also, as many as 41 provinces did not see any significant change over the three years.
- The largest difference in provincial performance of four public service sub-dimensions (Public Healthcare, Primary Education, Basic Infrastructure and Law and Order) was witnessed in Primary Education, with the scores ranging from 1.02 to 2.21 points on a scale of 0.25-2.5 points (Table 3.6). Looking deeper into citizen assessment of public primary schools, among the eight criteria on quality as shown in Figure 3.6a, teachers' favouritism towards students attending extra classes remained constant across all provinces, with Dak Lak, Hai Phong, Phu Yen, Quang Ngai and Thai Binh having considerable room for improvement. The next criterion that requires the primary education sector's attention is on public primary school class sizes (below 36 students per class by the national standard), especially to address the situation in Ha Noi, HCMC, Lam Dong and Thai Binh.
- Similar to 2021's findings, public district hospitals in all provinces were viewed as demonstrating a need for upgrades when rated against the 10 criteria (Figure 3.6b). Especially, respondents in Ca Mau, Cao Bang, Da Nang, Ha Noi and HCMC gave extremely low scores for their respective public district hospitals. Users of hospitals at top-performing provinces – like Ha Tinh, Hau Giang and Hoa Binh – still complained about bed-sharing, unclean restrooms, waiting times to be attended by healthcare workers, and healthcare workers' priming of private pharmacy outlets.
- The quality of roads near respondents' homes varied greatly between poor and well-off provinces. As shown in Figure 3.6c, better quality roads, such as being covered with asphalt or concrete, were found in more affluent provinces such as Bac Ninh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Hai Phong and HCMC, while roads of sub-optimal quality (covered with gravel or dirt) were found in poorer provinces such as Cao Bang, Dak Nong, Dien Bien, Ninh Thuan and Quang Ngai. Some minor improvements in the quality of roads were reported from 22 provinces, with roads in Cao Bang, Dien Bien, Hung Yen, Ninh Thuan and Son La rated higher in 2023 than 2021.
- As shown in Figure 3.6d, garbage pick-up frequency is clearly higher in urbanized provinces than rural ones. Once-a-week or daily garbage pick-ups were reported in 14 provinces (such as Bac Ninh, Da Nang, Ha Noi, Hai Phong and Vinh Phuc), while once-a-year and once-a-month frequencies were seen in eight poorer provinces: Bac Kan, Binh Phuoc, Dien Bien, Ha Giang, Kon Tum, Quang Ngai and Yen Bai.
- Compared with 2021, law and order regressed in 36 provinces due to the rising number of victim break-ins, robbery, thefts or physical violence (Figure 3.6e). Among these, five provinces that witnessed the largest jump in the number of law-and-order crime victims at grassroots level in 2023 were Binh Thuan, Hau Giang, Lai Chau, Lam Dong and Vinh Phuc.

Map 3.6: Provincial Performance in Public Service Delivery by Quartiles, 2023



Note: Blue is for provinces with their scores within the High quartile (75th ≤ x ≤ 100th percentiles), green is for 16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile (50th ≤ x < 75th percentiles), orange is for provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile (25th ≤ x < 50th percentiles) and light yellow is for provinces with scores within the Low quartile (0th ≤ x < 25th percentiles). Gray (No data) is for provinces from which collected data is not qualified (with an estimated value for an indicator larger than 2 standard errors and with field evidence) for use. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between quartiles are.

Figure 3.6: Changes in Performance in Public Service Delivery (2021-2023)



Note: Y = percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of ±5% defined as statistically significant. (*) 2021 data from Bac Giang and Bac Ninh, and 2023 data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Table 3.6: Dashboard of Provincial Performance in Public Service Delivery, 2023

Province	6: Public Service Delivery	6.1: Public Health	6.2: Public Primary Education	6.3: Basic Infrastructure	6.4: Law and Order
Ha Noi	7.8486	1.7029	1.9570	2.2548	1.9339
Ha Giang	7.1704	2.0531	1.4387	1.7372	1.9414
Cao Bang	7.4801	1.9008	1.9677	1.7319	1.8798
Bac Kan	7.1279	1.9933	1.4148	1.8536	1.8662
Tuyen Quang	6.9125	1.9475	1.2585	1.7667	1.9398
Lao Cai	7.1670	1.9401	1.4336	1.8735	1.9198
Dien Bien	6.9334	1.9827	1.3984	1.6847	1.8675
Lai Chau	7.7201	2.0169	1.9162	1.9380	1.8491
Son La	7.5906	1.8384	1.9619	1.9061	1.8843
Yen Bai	7.5827	2.0376	1.7437	1.9078	1.8936
Hoa Binh	7.1872	1.9933	1.4121	1.8074	1.9744
Thai Nguyen	8.0022	1.9684	2.0428	2.0251	1.9659
Lang Son	7.3537	1.8922	1.4529	2.0457	1.9628
Quang Ninh*					
Bac Giang	7.4286	1.9547	1.4157	2.1518	1.9064
Phu Tho	7.2370	1.9201	1.4126	1.9704	1.9339
Vinh Phuc	8.0307	1.9498	1.9764	2.1608	1.9437
Bac Ninh	8.2568	2.0065	2.0623	2.2201	1.9678
Hai Duong	7.4842	1.9186	1.4627	2.1742	1.9287
Hai Phong	7.9911	1.7686	1.9551	2.3302	1.9372
Hung Yen	7.6117	2.0331	1.4481	2.1154	2.0151
Thai Binh	8.1182	1.9955	1.9050	2.2962	1.9216
Ha Nam	7.0903	1.9649	1.3746	1.7705	1.9804
Nam Dinh	7.8585	1.9532	1.9119	2.0705	1.9229
Ninh Binh	8.2925	2.0047	2.2129	2.0210	2.0539
Thanh Hoa	7.7652	2.0306	1.7583	1.9791	1.9972
Nghe An	7.7858	1.9712	1.9404	1.9796	1.8946
Ha Tinh	7.7079	2.1404	1.6629	1.9536	1.9510
Quang Binh	7.0959	1.9652	1.3757	1.8292	1.9258
Quang Tri	7.2982	2.0342	1.4329	1.9204	1.9106
Thua Thien-Hue	8.3041	2.1334	2.0056	2.1515	2.0136
Da Nang	7.8132	1.9113	1.7118	2.2540	1.9361
Quang Nam	7.6957	1.9025	1.9616	1.8868	1.9448
Quang Ngai	7.4281	1.9459	1.8822	1.7057	1.8944
Binh Dinh	7.7623	1.9301	1.9724	1.8869	1.9729
Phu Yen	7.7044	1.8635	1.9712	1.9060	1.9637
Khanh Hoa	8.0790	1.9687	2.0194	2.1378	1.9530
Ninh Thuan	8.2286	1.9950	2.1505	2.1064	1.9767
Binh Thuan	7.6413	1.9330	1.7616	2.0586	1.8880
Kon Tum	7.2821	1.8044	1.9204	1.6590	1.8983
Gia Lai	7.3842	1.8719	1.8999	1.6998	1.9126
Dak Lak	7.5422	1.8676	1.8951	1.8336	1.9459
Dak Nong	6.8387	1.8524	1.3792	1.7394	1.8678
Lam Dong	7.4171	1.7217	1.9675	1.8216	1.9064
Binh Phuoc	7.3238	1.6508	1.9456	1.8612	1.8662
Tay Ninh	6.7686	1.6655	1.3421	1.9005	1.8606
Binh Duong*					
Dong Nai	6.9986	1.7247	1.3716	2.0182	1.8842
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	8.1626	1.9552	1.9727	2.2859	1.9488
Ho Chi Minh City	7.5338	1.7523	1.7192	2.1851	1.8772
Long An	6.7585	1.8532	1.0219	1.9945	1.8887
Tien Giang	7.1419	1.8283	1.3972	2.0984	1.8181
Ben Tre	7.1583	1.9110	1.4332	1.9120	1.9020
Tra Vinh	7.8111	1.9050	1.9320	2.0996	1.8744
Vinh Long	7.8559	1.8602	1.8945	2.2150	1.8861
Dong Thap	7.2535	1.8872	1.3995	2.0918	1.8751
An Giang	8.0471	1.8495	1.9738	2.3140	1.9098
Kien Giang	7.1671	1.9561	1.4323	1.8442	1.9344
Can Tho	6.8072	1.7166	1.0525	2.1600	1.8781
Hau Giang	7.1376	1.8784	1.3660	2.0140	1.8791
Soc Trang	7.8981	1.9568	1.9001	2.0728	1.9684
Bac Lieu	7.6164	2.0857	1.4315	2.1038	1.9954
Ca Mau	6.9016	1.7533	1.2394	2.0531	1.8559

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the first left column), and a scale of 0.25-2.5 points for the sub-dimensional levels (the other four columns). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes, not their scores. The longer the bar, the higher the score. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Figure 3.6a: Quality of Public Primary Schools by Province, 2023

(Branch size = percentage of respondents agreeing to provided positive statements; Perfect = 100% agreement)

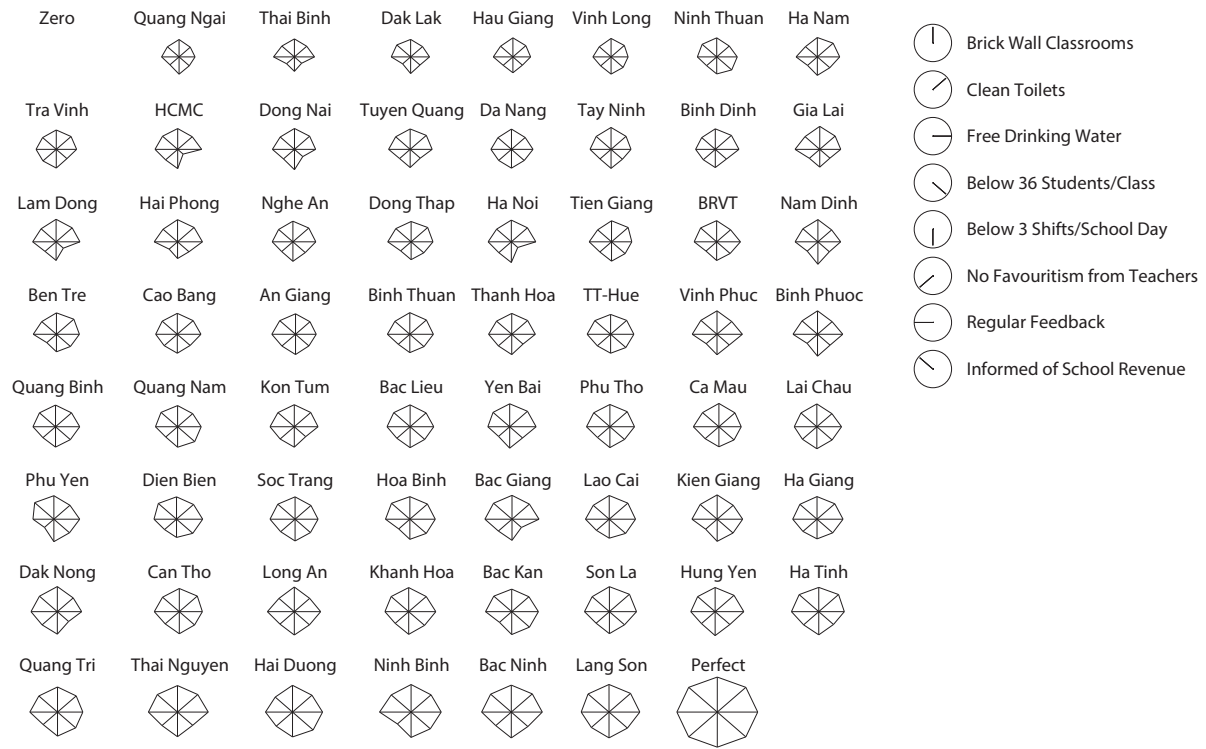


Figure 3.6b: Quality of Public District Hospitals by Province, 2023

(Branch size = percentage of respondents agreeing to provided positive statements; Perfect = 100% agreement)

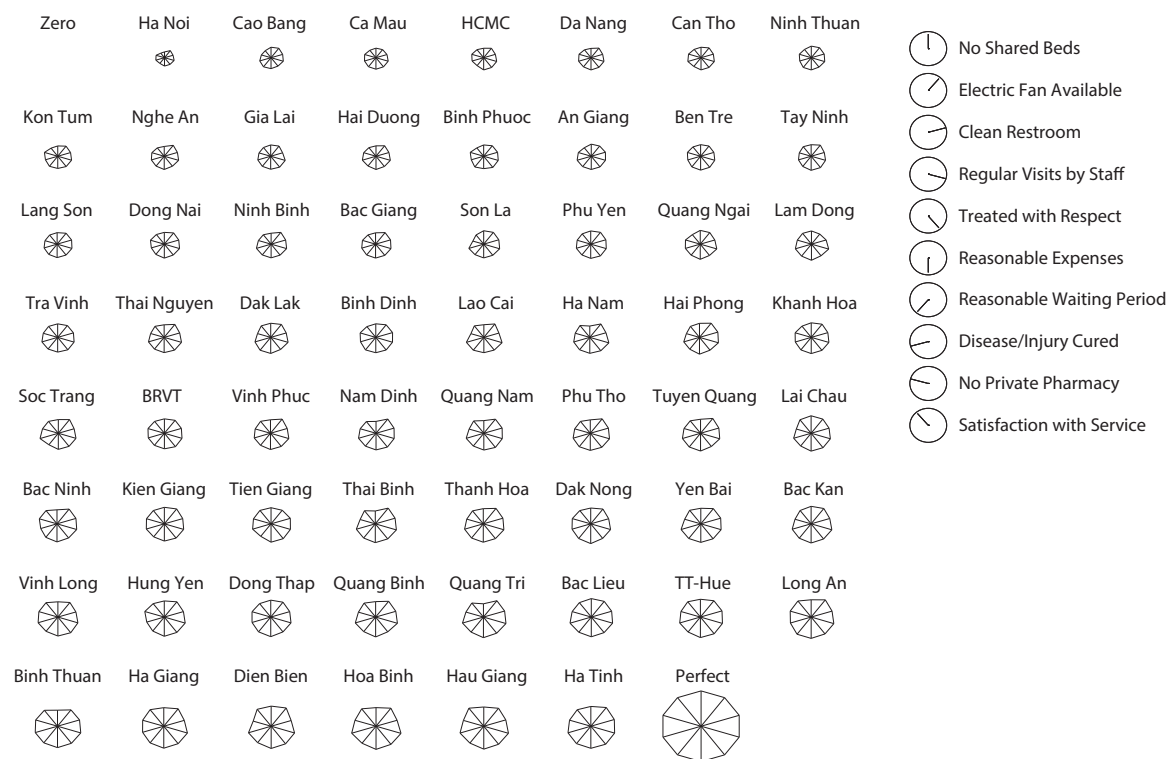


Figure 3.6c: Quality of Roads Near Home, 2021-2023

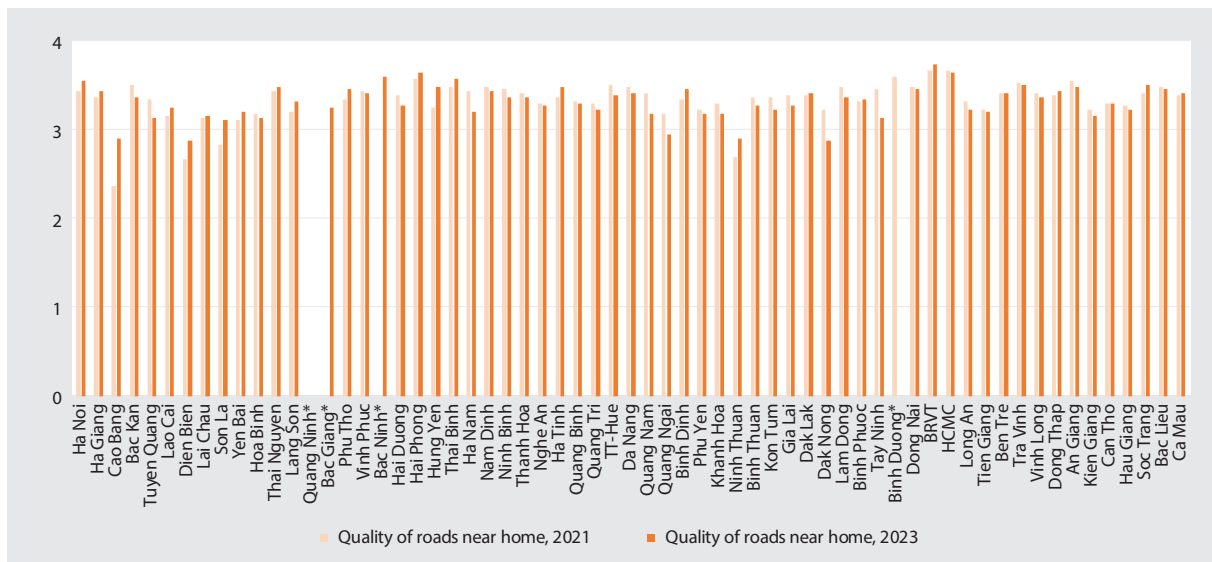


Figure 3.6d: Frequency of Garbage Pick-up, 2021-2023

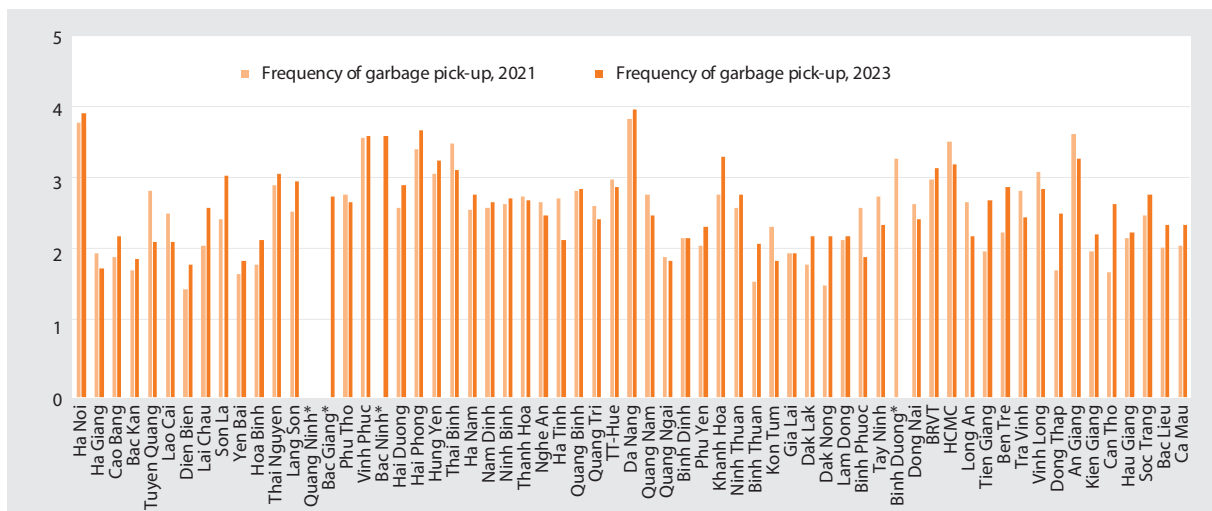
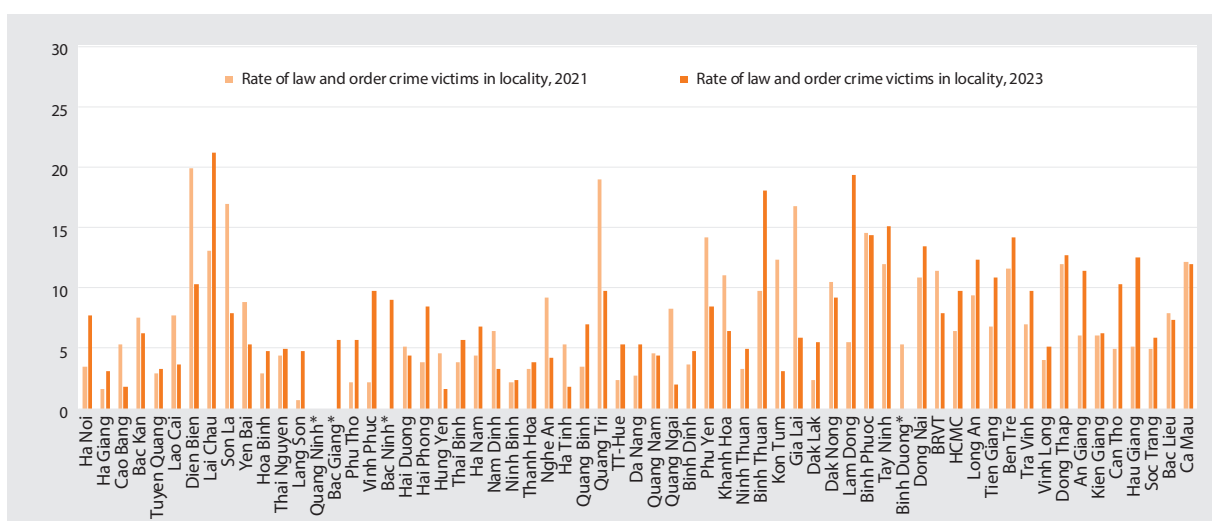


Figure 3.6e: Victims of Local Law and Order Crimes by Province, 2021-2023



(*) Data from some provinces were not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Dimension 7: Environmental Governance

The Environmental Governance dimension reflects citizens' assessment of two environmental aspects critical to their health: air and water quality. To inform this dimension, citizens are asked about the quality of the air they breathe daily and the quality of water from waterways nearest to their homes. In addition, citizens are asked if they saw firms operating in their localities paying bribes to avoid complying with environmental standards. The dimension sets some baselines to assist local governments in understanding citizens' environmental concerns over time. It also informs local governments of hotspots of environmental challenges that need to be addressed.

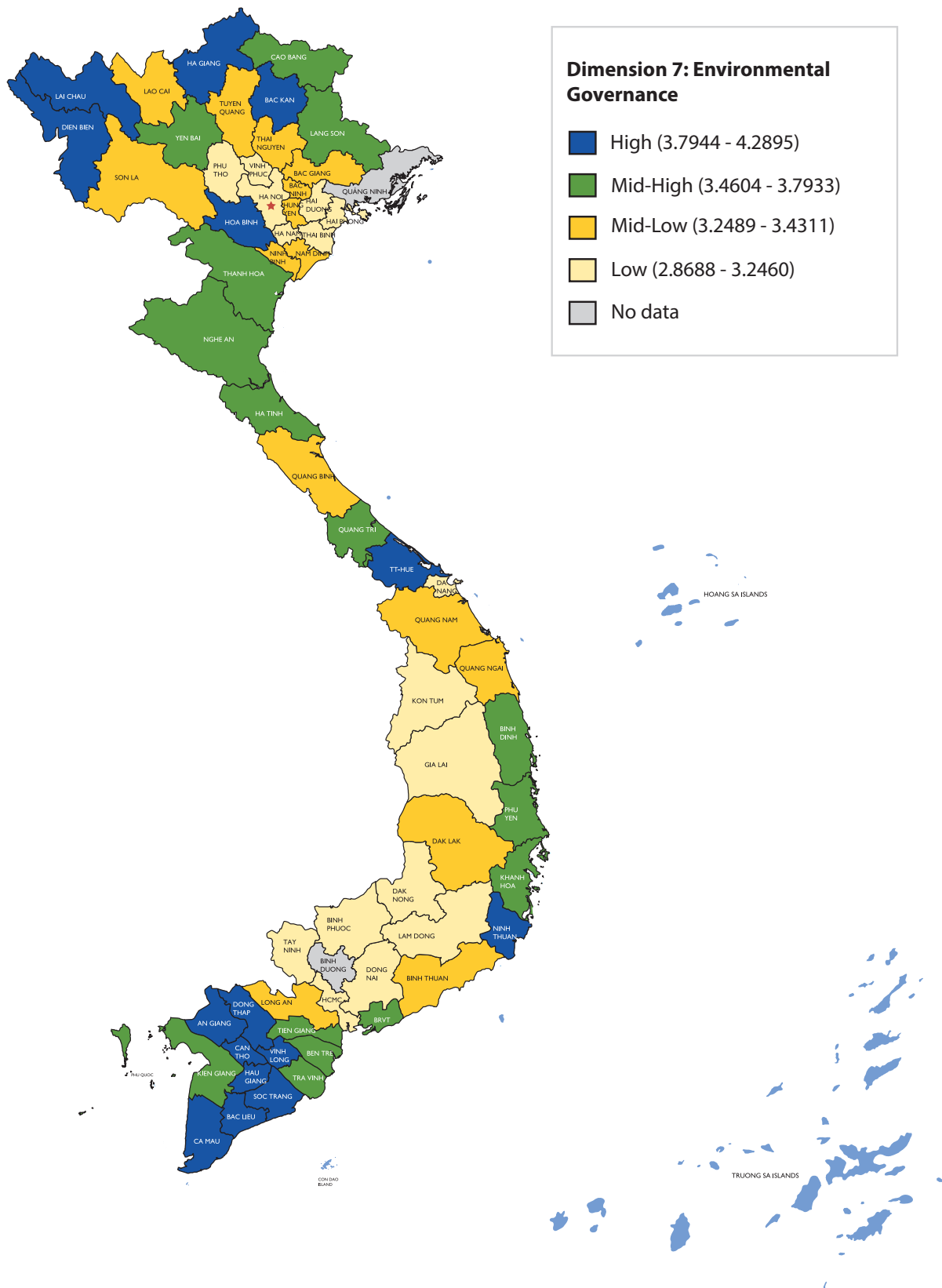
The following section presents a summary of key findings in relation to citizens' concerns about environmental conditions in their localities in 2023. First, Box 3.7 presents key findings from this

dimension. Then, Map 3.7 shows the aggregate dimensional scores for the 61 provinces by four quartiles: (i) from 3.794 to 4.29 points (High), (ii) from 3.46 to 3.793 points (Mid-High), (iii) from 3.25 to 3.43 points (Mid-Low), and (iv) from 2.86 to 3.24 points (Low). Next, Figure 3.7 provides a 2021-2023 comparison so provinces can understand whether they performed better or worse in 2023 compared to 2021. Table 3.7 presents a dashboard of 2023 provincial performance at dimensional and sub-dimensional levels. Finally, Figures 3.7a-b deliver a comparative perspective of how local governments addressed environmental concerns from 2021 to 2023. In particular, Figure 3.7a shows how citizens assessed their local governments' commitment to environmental protection by not colluding with firms operating in their localities to avoid environmental protection standards, and Figure 3.7b reveals if citizens who reported local environmental problems were responded to by local authorities.

Box 3.7: Key Findings from Dimension 7: Environmental Governance in 2023

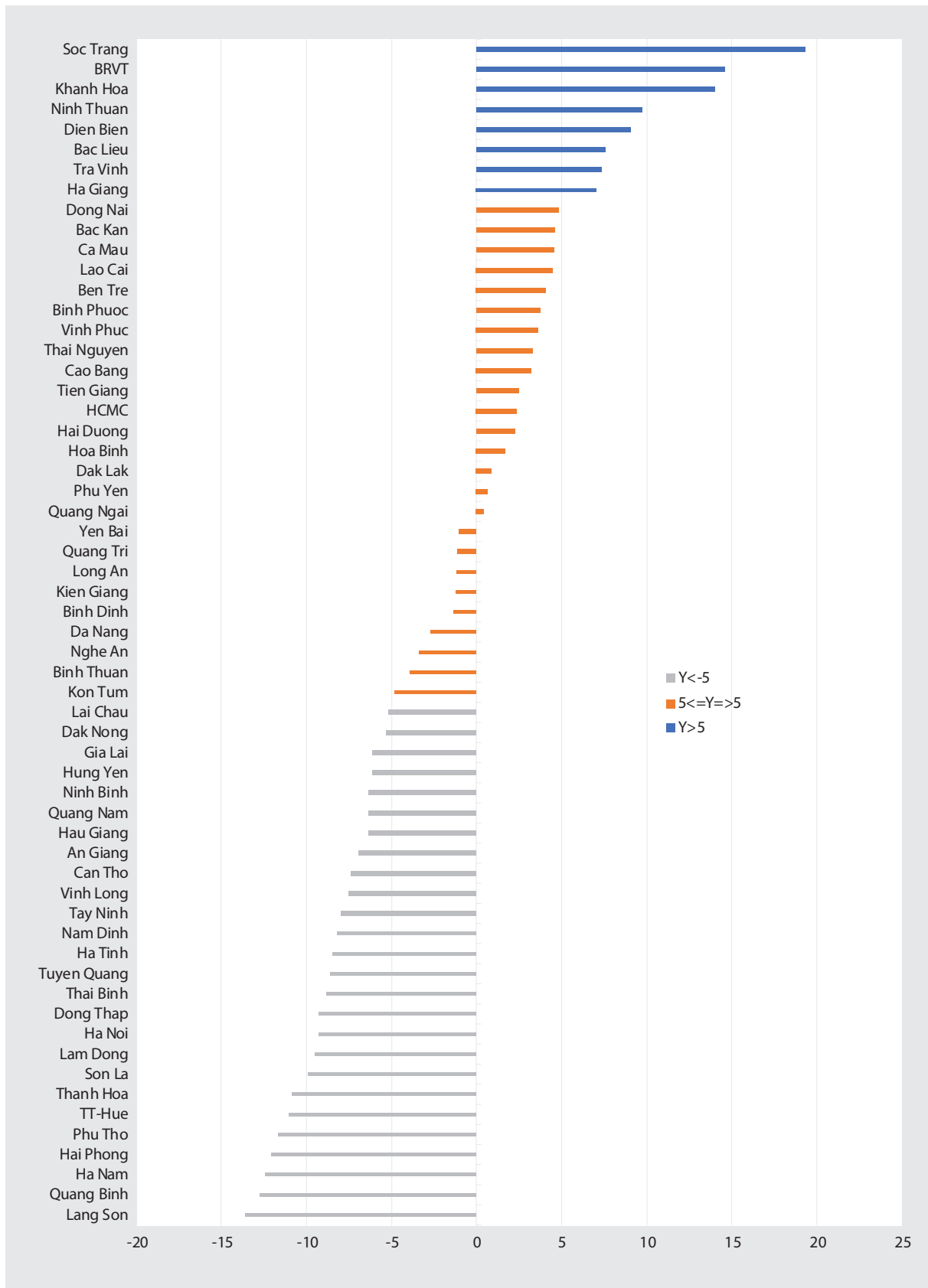
- As found in previous years, hubs of environmental concern remain in the Red River Delta and Southeast regions, where more industrial provinces are located, and the Central Highlands. Among 16 provinces in the Low quartile, six are from the Red River Delta and four each from the Southeast and Central Highlands regions (Map 3.7). The Mekong River Delta was more highly rated than other regions, with eight out of 13 provinces in the High quartile.
- As shown in Table 3.7, all provinces scored below 4.3 points on the 1-10 point scale in 2023, below the national highest score of 4.73 points in 2021. Eight provinces (Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Bac Lieu, Dien Bien, Ha Giang, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Soc Trang and Tra Vinh) made significant improvements over the past three years, while 26 provinces scored lower in 2023 than 2021 (Figure 3.7).
- The perceived lack of local governments' commitment to environmental protection and the poor quality of domestic water sources are reasons for low provincial scores. Fewer than 80 percent of respondents in all provinces agreed that firms in their localities did not give bribes to local governments to bypass environmental regulations (see Figure 3.7a). The good news is the proportions in agreement increased in 24 provinces, higher than in 2022, but still declined in 35 provinces compared to 2021. The largest year-on-year drops in the percentage of respondents who believed their local governments did not accept bribes to avoid green regulations (by more than 18 percent) were seen in Hai Phong, Phu Tho, Quang Binh, Thai Binh, and Thanh Hoa.
- On governments' responses to citizens reporting local environmental problems, more respondents in 25 provinces said their local governments responded immediately to such reports in 2023 compared to 2021 (Figure 3.7b). Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Binh Phuoc and Tien Giang provinces had the highest increases (of more than 20 percent) in reporters with positive feedback in 2023. An Giang, Dak Lak, Lang Son, Nam Dinh, Quang Nam and Yen Bai saw the largest drops (by more than 20 percent) in this regard.

Map 3.7: Provincial Performance in Environmental Governance by Quartiles, 2023



Note: Blue is for provinces with their scores within the High quartile (75th ≤ x ≤ 100th percentiles), green is for 16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile (50th ≤ x < 75th percentiles), orange is for provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile (25th ≤ x < 50th percentiles) and light yellow is for provinces with scores within the Low quartile (0th ≤ x < 25th percentiles). Gray (No data) is for provinces from which collected data is not qualified (with an estimated value for an indicator larger than 2 standard errors and with field evidence) for use. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between quartiles are.

Figure 3.7: Changes in Performance in Environmental Governance (2021-2023)



Note: Y = percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of ±5% defined as statistically significant. 2021 data from Bac Giang and Bac Ninh, and 2023 data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Table 3.7: Dashboard of Provincial Performance in Environmental Governance, 2023

Province	7: Environmental Governance	7.1: Seriousness in Environment Protection	7.2: Quality of Air	7.3: Quality of Water
Ha Noi	2.8688	0.8996	1.6225	0.3467
Ha Giang	3.9613	1.0964	2.0998	0.7651
Cao Bang	3.6803	0.9813	2.0460	0.6530
Bac Kan	3.8142	0.9506	1.9886	0.8749
Tuyen Quang	3.4101	1.0129	1.9715	0.4257
Lao Cai	3.3743	0.8919	1.9436	0.5388
Dien Bien	3.9471	1.0273	2.2149	0.7050
Lai Chau	3.8066	0.9292	2.2546	0.6227
Son La	3.4311	0.8915	1.9849	0.5547
Yen Bai	3.6239	1.0488	2.0326	0.5425
Hoa Binh	3.8857	1.0278	2.1166	0.7413
Thai Nguyen	3.3439	1.0443	1.8731	0.4265
Lang Son	3.5704	1.0691	1.9617	0.5396
Quang Ninh*				
Bac Giang	3.3046	0.9508	1.8636	0.4902
Phu Tho	3.2217	0.8957	1.8696	0.4564
Vinh Phuc	3.1321	0.8891	1.8438	0.3992
Bac Ninh	3.3818	1.0068	1.9547	0.4204
Hai Duong	3.2102	0.9854	1.7226	0.5022
Hai Phong	3.2356	0.9082	1.8416	0.4858
Hung Yen	3.4276	1.0172	1.9464	0.4640
Thai Binh	3.2460	0.8053	1.7520	0.6886
Ha Nam	3.0684	0.8373	1.8210	0.4100
Nam Dinh	3.3198	0.9572	1.9523	0.4102
Ninh Binh	3.2934	0.8846	1.8590	0.5497
Thanh Hoa	3.6915	1.0014	2.0874	0.6027
Nghe An	3.6344	1.0411	1.9910	0.6023
Ha Tinh	3.6608	1.0336	2.1201	0.5070
Quang Binh	3.2894	0.9149	1.8779	0.4966
Quang Tri	3.5462	1.1046	1.8609	0.5808
Thua Thien-Hue	3.9691	1.1492	2.0972	0.7228
Da Nang	3.1460	0.9866	1.8107	0.3487
Quang Nam	3.3093	0.8567	1.8010	0.6516
Quang Ngai	3.3853	1.0382	1.7661	0.5811
Binh Dinh	3.5785	1.2225	1.8811	0.4750
Phu Yen	3.5146	1.0655	2.0184	0.4307
Khanh Hoa	3.7424	1.1911	2.0788	0.4725
Ninh Thuan	3.9032	1.1129	2.2209	0.5695
Binh Thuan	3.3820	0.9966	1.9507	0.4347
Kon Tum	3.1526	0.8288	1.8400	0.4837
Gia Lai	3.0374	0.8093	1.8492	0.3789
Dak Lak	3.2489	0.9238	1.9478	0.3773
Dak Nong	3.1457	0.8171	1.8370	0.4915
Lam Dong	2.9912	0.8765	1.7516	0.3631
Binh Phuoc	2.9948	0.8007	1.7919	0.4022
Tay Ninh	3.1994	0.9423	1.8377	0.4193
Binh Duong*				
Dong Nai	2.9915	0.8813	1.7156	0.3947
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	3.5328	1.0705	2.0643	0.3980
Ho Chi Minh City	2.9642	0.9006	1.6962	0.3673
Long An	3.4039	0.9123	1.7259	0.7657
Tien Giang	3.7933	1.1159	1.9441	0.7332
Ben Tre	3.5043	0.9943	1.8595	0.6505
Tra Vinh	3.4604	1.0796	1.9322	0.4486
Vinh Long	3.8010	0.9541	1.9635	0.8834
Dong Thap	4.2895	1.0550	1.8234	1.4111
An Giang	3.9688	1.1659	1.9736	0.8294
Kien Giang	3.7898	1.0172	1.8910	0.8815
Can Tho	3.9595	1.1042	1.8631	0.9923
Hau Giang	4.1708	1.0682	1.8122	1.2904
Soc Trang	4.0347	1.2984	2.1054	0.6309
Bac Lieu	3.9442	1.2555	1.9647	0.7240
Ca Mau	3.7944	1.1742	1.9674	0.6528

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the first left column), and a scale of 0.33-3.33 points for sub-dimensional levels (the other three columns). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes, not their scores. The longer the bar, the higher the score. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Figure 3.7a: Percentage of Respondents Agreeing to the Statement “Firms in Locality Do Not Pay Bribes to Avoid Environmental Responsibility;” 2021-2023

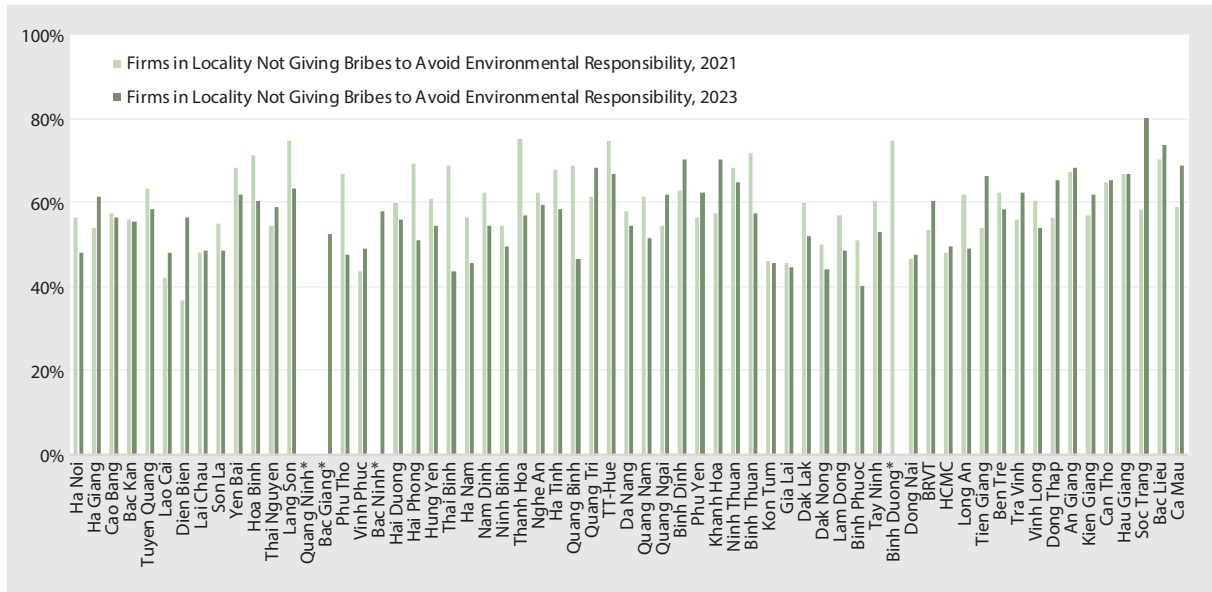
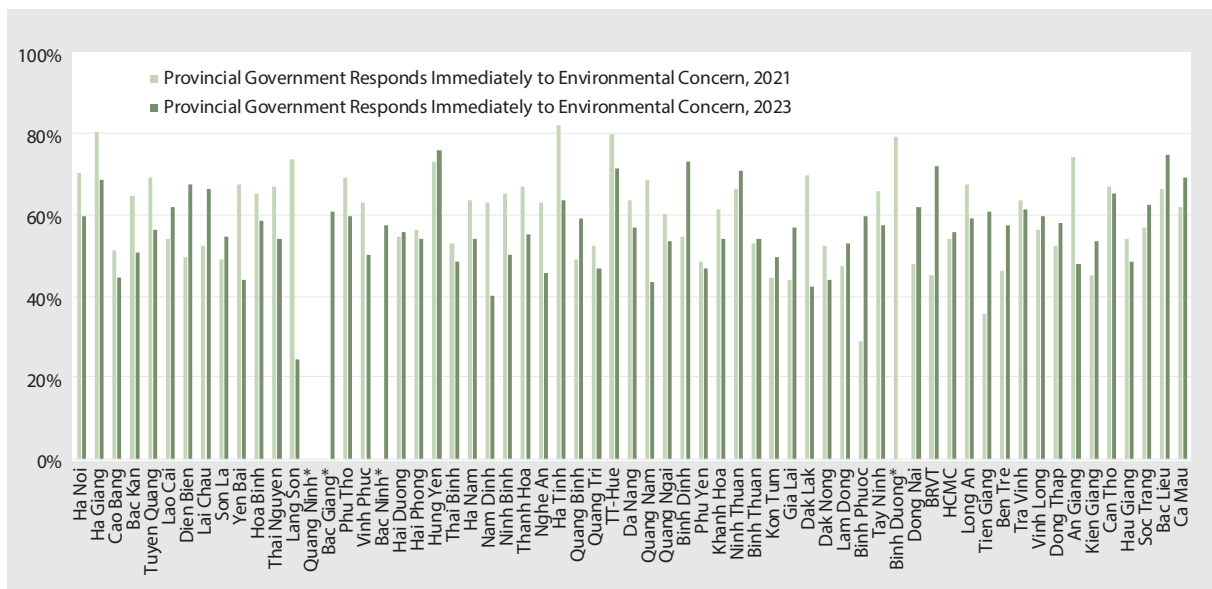


Figure 3.7b: Percentage of Reporters of Environmental Problems Having Been Responded by Local Governments, 2021-2023



(*) Data from some provinces were not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Dimension 8: E-Governance

The E-Governance dimension presents citizens' assessment of key e-government aspects: the availability, accessibility, user-friendliness and responsiveness of online public services. The dimension provides information about the availability of local government online portals for citizens to access public services and whether citizens have internet access—the enabling environment to participate in e-government. The dimension helps to create baselines, so provincial governments can better understand conditions for e-government in their localities. It also assists local governments to more effectively interact with citizens via online platforms at every stage of the policy cycle—from policy-making and policy implementation to policy monitoring and evaluation. In 2023, two new indicators were introduced to Sub-dimension 8.1 - Access to E-Government and E-Service Portals: the 'Percentage of Citizens Who Used Online Government Service Portal' and the 'Percentage of Citizens Who were Able to Pay for Service Online', to start assessing the performance of provincial and national e-service portals in providing a full suite of public administrative services.

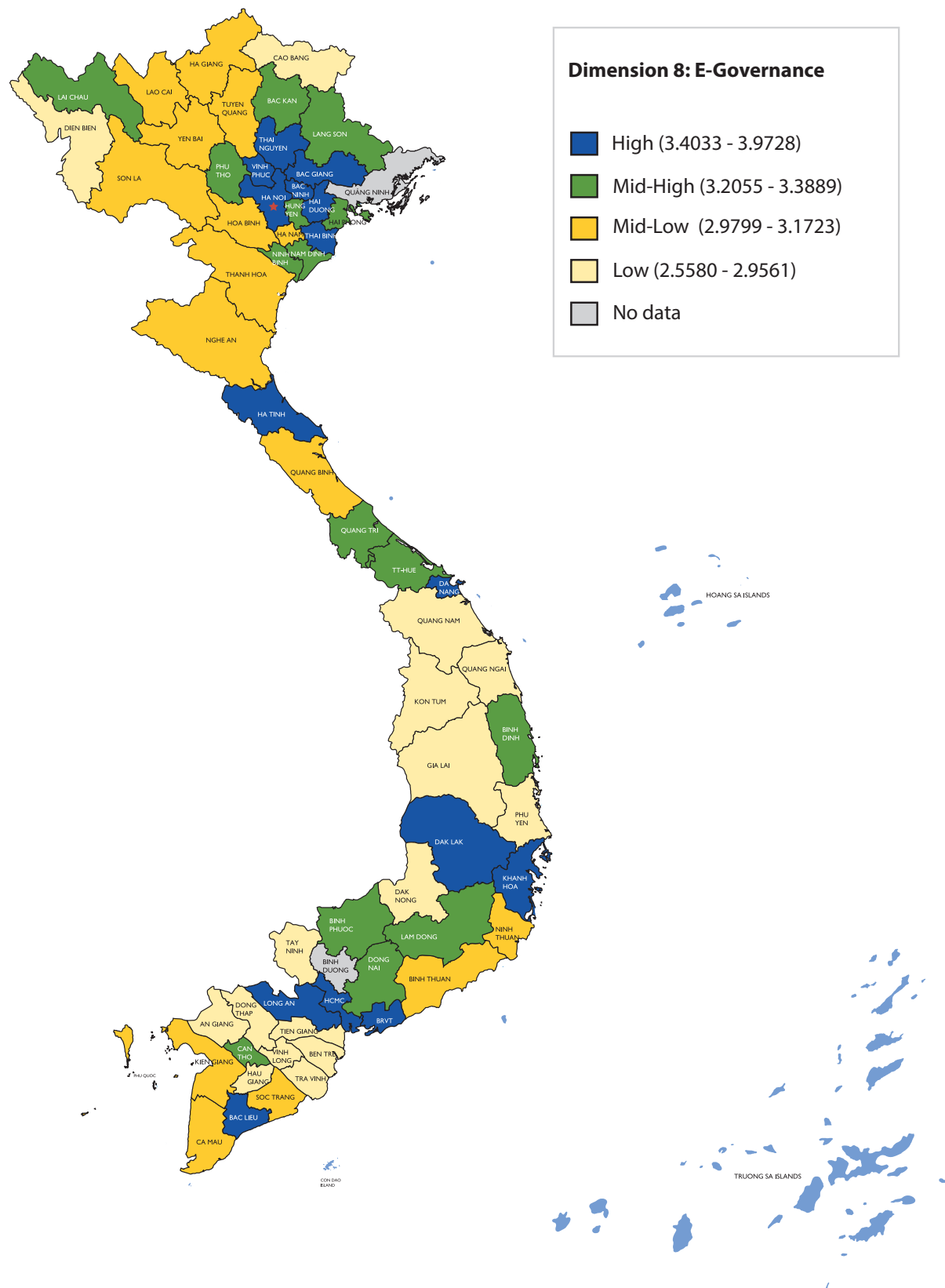
Below is an overview of provincial performance in the E-Governance dimension in 2023. First, Box 3.8 highlights key findings at the provincial level. Then, Map 3.8 presents the aggregate dimensional scores for the 61 provinces by four quartiles: (i) from 3.39 to 3.97 points (High), (ii) from 3.20 to 3.38 points (Mid-High), (iii) from 2.97 to 3.17 points (Mid-Low), and (iv) from 2.55 to 2.95 points (Low). In addition, Figure 3.7 helps provinces to understand whether they performed better or worse in 2023 compared to 2021, while it should be noted that the two new indicators may contribute to score changes. Table 3.8 displays a dashboard summarizing 2023 provincial performance at dimensional and sub-dimensional levels.

In addition, Figure 3.8a provides a comparative perspective of local government e-portal usage for administrative procedures when weighed against citizens' internet access by province in 2023 compared to 2021. Figure 3.8b depicts how citizens perceived the user-friendliness of provincial government portals in 2023 compared to 2021. Finally, Figure 3.8c presents 2023 findings on whether online government service portals (e-services) were used and if so, whether citizens could pay for the service online.

Box 3.8: Key Findings from Dimension 8: E-Governance in 2023

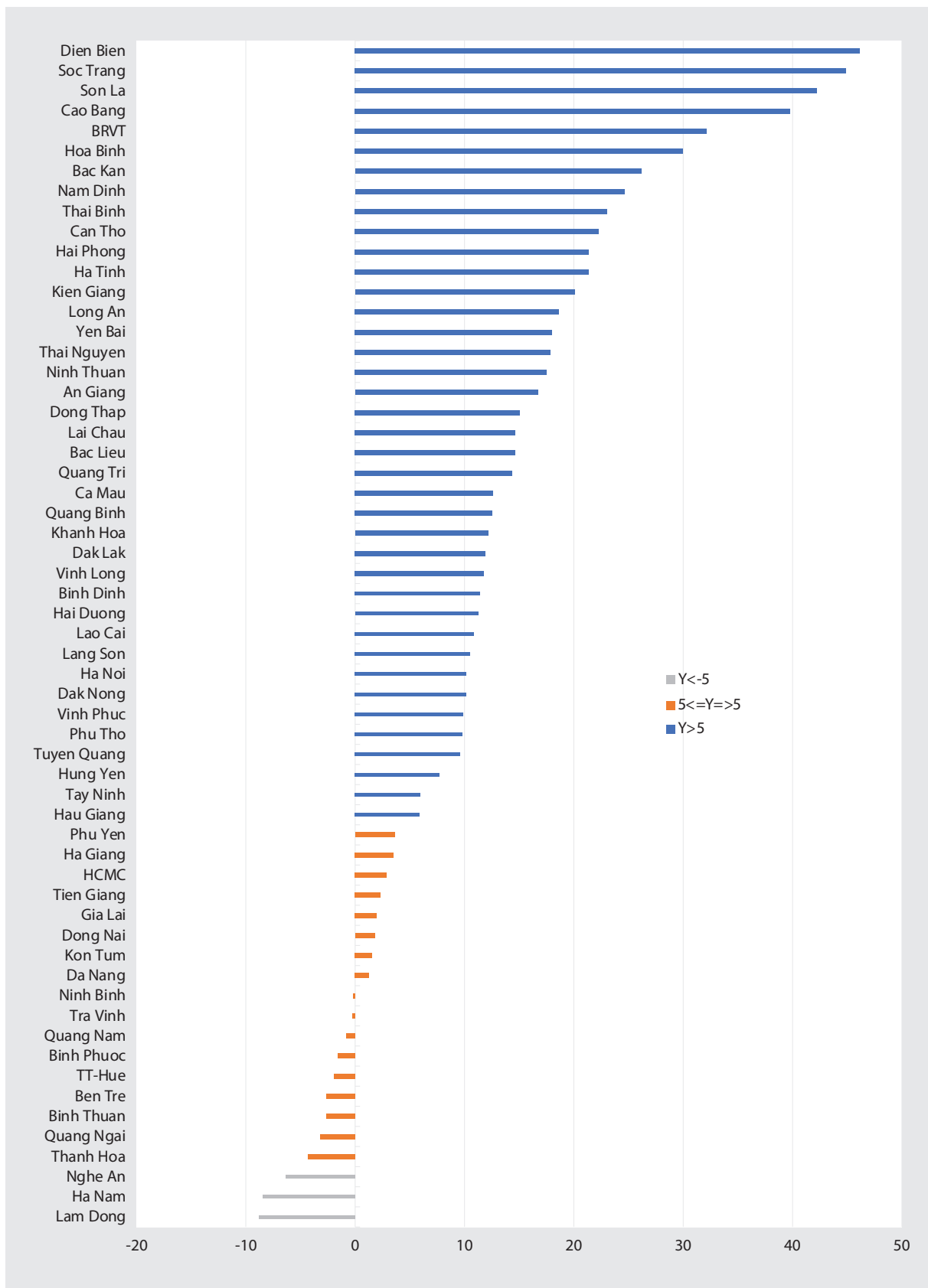
- As Map 3.8 reveals, the regional pattern in this dimension is more diverse in 2023. Among 15 provinces in the High quartile, five are from the Red River Delta and three from Northcentral and Central Coastal regions. Among High quartile provinces are three centrally-governed municipalities of Da Nang, Ha Noi and HCMC, similar to 2021's and 2022's results. Meanwhile, poorer performing provinces were concentrated in the Mekong River Delta (seven out of 11) and Central Highlands (three out of five).
- All provinces scored below four points on the 1-10 point scale, similar to results from 2020 to 2022 (Table 3.8). Also, 39 provinces made encouraging year-on-year improvements, while three provinces (Ha Nam, Lam Dong and Nghe An) saw dramatic declines from 2021's scores (Figure 3.8). Similar to the previous two years' findings, poor results in Access to E-government Portals and Government Responsiveness through E-government Portals were attributed to the overall poor performance in e-government services (see Table 3.8).
- Citizens' experiences in 2023 indicated a constant large divide between access to the internet and e-government portals for e-services seen over the past three years. As shown in Figure 3.8a, differences of greater than two points between the Access to the Internet and the Access to E-government Portals sub-dimensions are seen in 11 provinces, with Da Nang, Ha Noi, Hai Duong and HCMC seeing the widest gaps (2.22 to 2.37 points of difference). Meanwhile, Figure 3.8a also shows the potential for increased access to e-services in 38 provinces, where the Access to the Internet sub-dimension inched up 0.15 to 0.92 points over the three years.
- Regarding user-friendliness of provincial government portals, as shown in Figure 3.8b, fewer than 40 percent of respondents familiar with their provincial websites in 61 provinces said the portals were user-friendly in 2023. Users in 42 provinces rated their provincial government portals poorer in 2023 than 2021. The number was higher in 2023 compared to 2021 in 14 provinces, with the largest increases in Lai Chau and Soc Trang.
- Findings from the two new indicators ('Percentage of Respondents Having Used Online Government Service Portals' and 'Percentage of Users Being Able to Pay for Services Online') presented in Figure 3.8c show that, in all provinces, fewer than 17 percent of respondents who did administrative procedures in 2023 used their provinces' online government service portals. In 17 provinces, fewer than 5 percent used e-services (with the lowest found in An Giang, Ben Tre, and Tien Giang), while in 29 provinces the proportions ranged from 5 to less than 10 percent. In 15 other provinces, the proportions of e-service users were 10.5 to 16.5 percent (the highest in Ha Giang, Thai Nguyen and Vinh Phuc). Among the few users in Hai Duong and Tuyen Quang, almost all said they could pay online for the e-services. While in Gia Lai, Hau Giang and Tra Vinh, none of the users could pay online.

Map 3.8: Provincial Performance in E-Governance by Quartiles, 2023



Note: Blue is for provinces with their scores within the High quartile (75th ≤ x ≤ 100th percentiles), green is for 16 provinces with scores within the Mid-High quartile (50th ≤ x < 75th percentiles), orange is for provinces with scores within the Mid-Low quartile (25th ≤ x < 50th percentiles) and light yellow is for provinces with scores within the Low quartile (0th ≤ x < 25th percentiles). Gray (No data) is for provinces from which collected data is not qualified (with an estimated value for an indicator larger than 2 standard errors and with field evidence) for use. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between quartiles are.

Figure 3.8: Changes in Performance in E-Governance (2021-2023)



Note: Y = percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of $\pm 5\%$ defined as statistically significant. (*) 2021 data from Bac Giang and Bac Ninh, and 2023 data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Table 3.8: Dashboard of Provincial Performance in E-Governance at the Local Level, 2023

Province	8: E-Governance	8.1: Access to E-government and E-Service Portals	8.2: Access to the Internet	8.3: Government Responsiveness through E-government Portals
Ha Noi	3.9728	0.5521	2.9178	0.5029
Ha Giang	3.0663	0.6843	1.8883	0.4936
Cao Bang	2.8394	0.4062	2.0547	0.3786
Bac Kan	3.2587	0.5219	2.3036	0.4332
Tuyen Quang	3.0051	0.4644	2.0587	0.4820
Lao Cai	3.1334	0.5310	2.1820	0.4205
Dien Bien	2.9411	0.4962	1.9478	0.4972
Lai Chau	3.2732	0.5565	2.3462	0.3705
Son La	3.1295	0.4244	2.3334	0.3717
Yen Bai	3.0940	0.5792	2.1112	0.4036
Hoa Binh	3.1520	0.4752	2.2185	0.4582
Thai Nguyen	3.6873	0.5905	2.6684	0.4283
Lang Son	3.2237	0.5017	2.3150	0.4069
Quang Ninh*				
Bac Giang	3.4825	0.5451	2.5373	0.4001
Phu Tho	3.3779	0.4544	2.5470	0.3765
Vinh Phuc	3.6729	0.6040	2.6131	0.4557
Bac Ninh	3.7290	0.5240	2.7799	0.4251
Hai Duong	3.4033	0.4054	2.6259	0.3721
Hai Phong	3.3889	0.4623	2.4306	0.4960
Hung Yen	3.2196	0.4364	2.4073	0.3758
Thai Binh	3.4844	0.5481	2.4996	0.4367
Ha Nam	3.0309	0.4179	2.2411	0.3720
Nam Dinh	3.3304	0.4711	2.4613	0.3979
Ninh Binh	3.3145	0.4400	2.4989	0.3756
Thanh Hoa	3.0299	0.4328	2.2420	0.3551
Nghe An	2.9799	0.4234	2.1651	0.3913
Ha Tinh	3.4543	0.5222	2.4602	0.4720
Quang Binh	3.1723	0.4763	2.2890	0.4071
Quang Tri	3.2700	0.4463	2.3336	0.4900
Thua Thien-Hue	3.3045	0.5166	2.3551	0.4329
Da Nang	3.6072	0.4783	2.7209	0.4080
Quang Nam	2.9199	0.4514	2.0433	0.4252
Quang Ngai	2.8784	0.4585	1.9604	0.4595
Binh Dinh	3.2881	0.4573	2.3950	0.4358
Phu Yen	2.6945	0.3914	1.9332	0.3699
Khanh Hoa	3.4780	0.4771	2.5265	0.4744
Ninh Thuan	3.1100	0.5113	2.1904	0.4084
Binh Thuan	3.0044	0.4404	2.1625	0.4014
Kon Tum	2.6910	0.3994	1.9299	0.3618
Gia Lai	2.7366	0.4026	1.9649	0.3690
Dak Lak	3.4170	0.4584	2.5663	0.3924
Dak Nong	2.9099	0.4310	2.0737	0.4051
Lam Dong	3.2274	0.4935	2.3330	0.4009
Binh Phuoc	3.2154	0.5527	2.2107	0.4520
Tay Ninh	2.9268	0.4030	2.1644	0.3595
Binh Duong*				
Dong Nai	3.3458	0.4719	2.4587	0.4152
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	3.6563	0.5927	2.5705	0.4931
Ho Chi Minh City	3.5300	0.4670	2.6849	0.3781
Long An	3.4940	0.5225	2.5422	0.4293
Tien Giang	2.6972	0.3920	1.9507	0.3545
Ben Tre	2.5628	0.3883	1.8164	0.3581
Tra Vinh	2.5580	0.3928	1.7635	0.4017
Vinh Long	2.9267	0.4362	2.1370	0.3535
Dong Thap	2.9171	0.4746	2.0191	0.4235
An Giang	2.9561	0.3956	2.2052	0.3553
Kien Giang	2.9970	0.4066	2.1823	0.4081
Can Tho	3.2055	0.4389	2.2741	0.4925
Hau Giang	2.9224	0.4315	2.1200	0.3709
Soc Trang	3.1672	0.5159	2.2640	0.3873
Bac Lieu	3.5391	0.5619	2.5528	0.4243
Ca Mau	3.1356	0.4543	2.2268	0.4545

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the first left column), and a scale of 0.33-3.33 points for sub-dimensional levels (the other three columns). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes, not their scores. The longer the bar, the higher the score. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Figure 3.8a: Divide between Access to the Internet and Access to Local E-Government Portals, 2021-2023

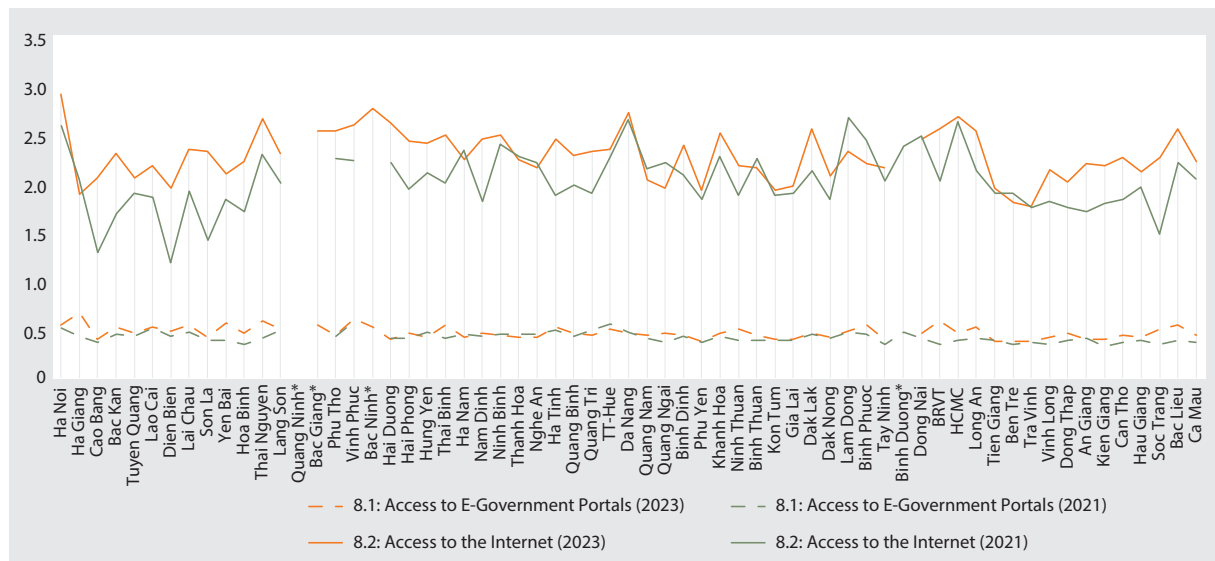


Figure 3.8b: Proportion of Respondents that Knows Provincial Website and Thinks It is User-Friendly, 2021-2023

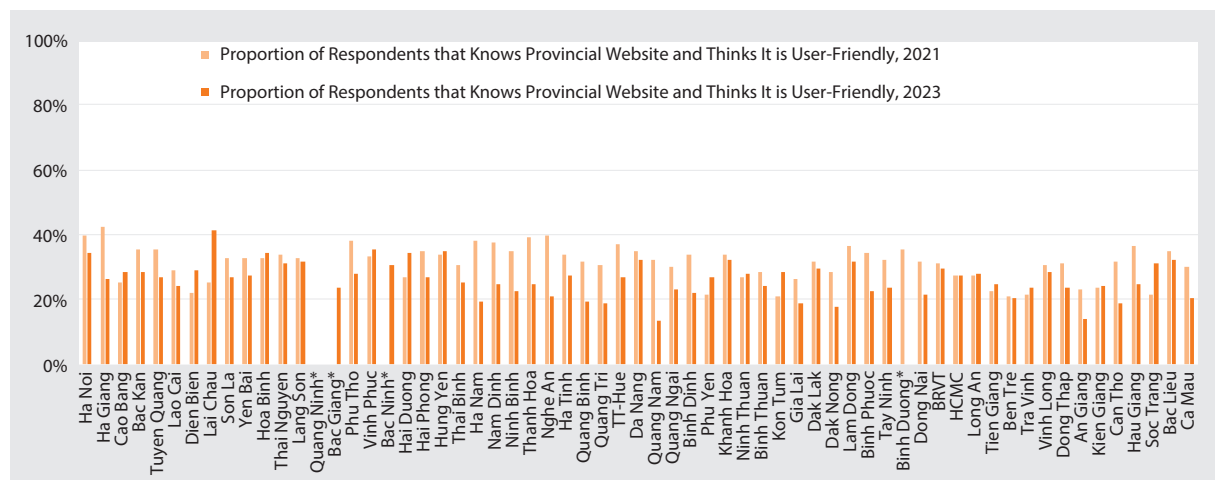
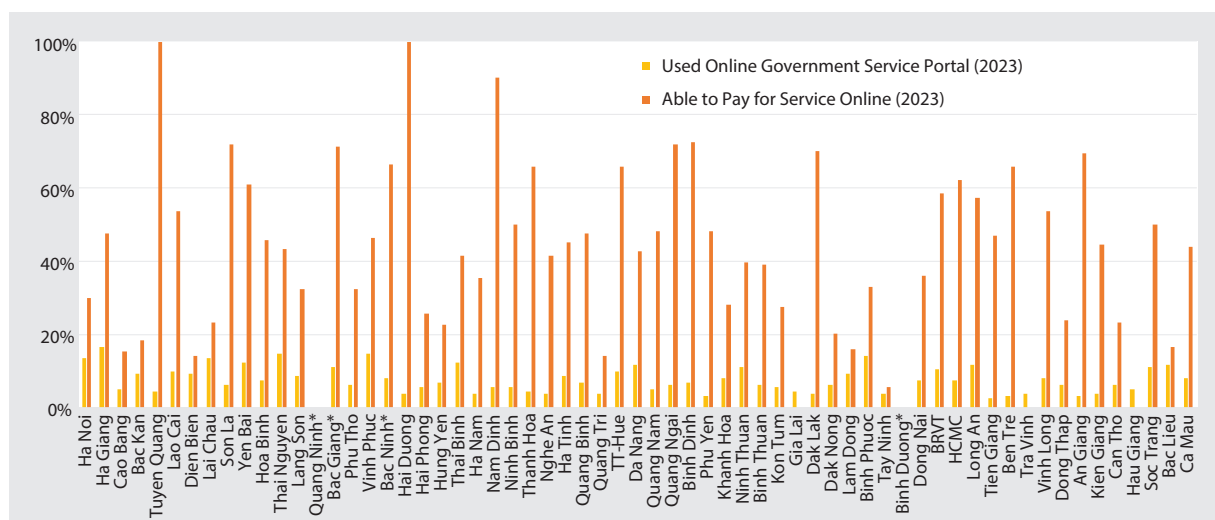


Figure 3.8c: Percentage of Respondents Having Used Online Government Service Portals and Been Able to Pay for Services Online (2023)



(*) Data from some provinces were not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values.

Aggregate 2023 PAPI at the Provincial Level: Mind the Gaps

This final section presents 2023 provincial aggregate performances by quartiles, calculated by adding up each province's scores in the eight PAPI dimensions. With the aggregate scores, provinces can assess how they performed relative to other provinces with similar socio-economic and geographic endowments in the same year. In PAPI reports, aggregate provincial PAPI scores are presented by quartiles, not ranks, to assist provinces in identifying their own strengths and weaknesses. Deeper dives into indicator-level findings, available on the PAPI website at www.papi.org.vn, are the keys to success for provinces that wish to optimize their responses to citizens' expectations.

Below is an overview of key aggregate findings concerning provincial performance in governance and public administration in 2023. First, Box 3.9 highlights key findings at the provincial level in 2023. Map 3.9 shows the aggregated provincial PAPI scores

by four quartiles. On a scale of 10-80 points, the first quartile (High) includes provinces with 2023 PAPI scores ranging from 43.96 to 46.04 points, the second quartile (Mid-High) features provinces with scores ranging from 42.39 to 43.95 points, the third quartile (Mid-Low) from 40.90 to 42.33 points and the fourth quartile (Low) from 38.97 to 40.83 points. It should be noted that data presented in these tables and on Maps 3.1-3.9 are rounded to four decimals to show that the differences between provincial scores by quartiles or province are marginal most of the time. Then, Table 3.9 summarizes 2023 dimensional and aggregate PAPI scores by province. Figure 3.9 illustrates changes made in provincial performance in eight dimensions in comparison to provincial scores in 2021. Figures 3.9a-b show the gaps between provincial performance in 2023 using the highest, median and lowest scores. Finally, Figure 3.9c reveals the differences in governance and public administration performance as experienced by non-permanent versus permanent residents in 11 provinces with significant numbers of migrants interviewed in 2023.

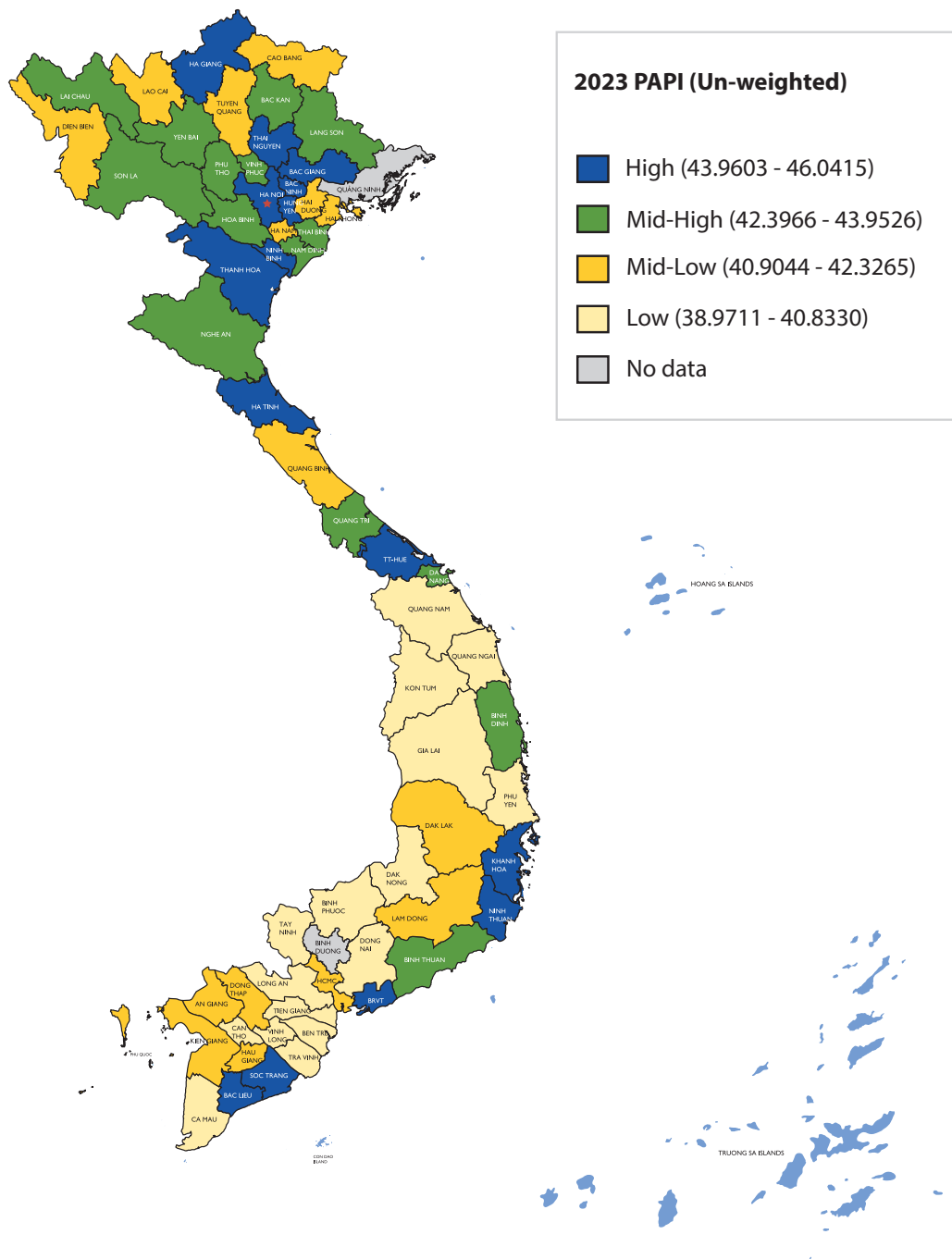
Box 3.9: Key Findings from the Aggregate 2023 PAPI

- Northern and central provinces tend to perform better than their southern peers. As Map 3.9 shows, among 15 provinces in the High quartile, five are from the Northcentral and Central Coastal region and four from the Red River Delta region. Among 16 provinces in the Low quartile, seven are from the Mekong River Delta region and three from the Central Highlands.
- Provincial performance did not differ greatly across provinces when considering the 2023 aggregated PAPI scores for 61 provinces. The 2023 gap between the lowest and highest possible provincial scores (38.97 points and 46.04 points, respectively) is 7.07 points (Table 3.9), smaller than the divides in 2021 and 2022 (10.84 and 9.07 points, respectively). This means that provincial scores became more convergent, which is also reflected in Figure 3.9b. This means that provincial governments should not pay too much attention to the aggregated scores.
- The number of improvers in provincial performance by dimension matters because they indicate which provinces have acted upon previous years' PAPI findings in which areas. Compared to 2021's findings, as shown in Figure 3.9, 24 provinces did significantly better in Participation at Local Levels (Dimension 1), 12 provinces in Transparency in Local Decision-making (Dimension 2), five provinces in Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens (Dimension 3), 12 provinces in Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (Dimension 4), and 39 provinces in E-Governance (Dimension 8). Meanwhile, only six provinces posted a higher score of significance (with a 5 percent increase or greater) in Public Administrative Procedures (Dimension 5), one province in Public Service Delivery (Dimension 6), and eight provinces in Environmental Governance (Dimension 7), respectively. In contrast, 19 provinces poorly performed in Dimension 4, 17 provinces in Dimension 6, and 26 provinces in Dimension 7, respectively.
- Rising provincial scores in the E-Governance dimension indicates some improvements in provincial performance, aligning with that observed in Chapter 2. As Figures 3.9a-b show, the highest, median, and lowest scores in the E-Governance dimension increased. About half of provinces posted higher scores, although remaining in a lower range between 2.56 and 3.17 points, while the second half saw a wider range from 3.17 to 3.97 points, higher than the range in 2021. Other positive moves are seen in overall provincial performance in the two

dimensions of Control of Corruption in the Public Sector and Public Service Delivery, with both dimensions seeing higher lowest provincial scores in 2023 than 2021 (Figure 3.9b). However, the dimensional scores for Participation at the Local Level, Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens, Public Administrative Procedures, and Environmental Governance either stood still or reduced after three years.

- On whether local governance and public administration is inclusive for short- and long-term non-permanent residents, Figure 3.9c reveals profound differences between the two provinces of Dak Nong and Thai Nguyen and nine other provinces and centrally-governed municipalities (Bac Giang, Bac Ninh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Can Tho, Da Nang, Dong Nai, Ha Noi, HCMC and Long An). In Dak Nong and Thai Nguyen, non-permanent respondents had a more positive assessment overall than permanent respondents. In contrast, non-permanent residents had much poorer experiences in interacting with local governments in receiving provinces in Dong Nai and Long An than in Bac Giang, Bac Ninh, Ba Ria-Vung Tau, Can Tho, Da Nang, Ha Noi and HCMC.

Map 3.9: Provincial Performance in Governance and Public Administration Index by Quartiles, 2023



Note: See Note for Map 3.8.

Table 3.9: Dashboard of Aggregate Dimensional Performance by Province, 2023

Province	Unweighted 2023 PAPI Score	1: Participation at Local Levels	2: Transparency in Local Decision-making	3: Vertical Accountability	4: Control of Corruption in the Public Sector	5: Public Administrative Procedures	6: Public Service Delivery	7: Environmental Governance	8: E-Governance
Ha Noi	43.9603	5.4275	5.6707	4.2760	6.7348	7.1611	7.8486	2.8688	3.9728
Ha Giang	44.2479	5.2831	5.8120	4.3854	7.1751	7.3943	7.1704	3.9613	3.0663
Cao Bang	41.6551	4.7730	4.9857	4.3219	6.7454	6.8293	7.4801	3.6803	2.8394
Bac Kan	43.3483	5.4484	5.3958	4.1974	6.8537	7.2522	7.1279	3.8142	3.2587
Tuyen Quang	41.4939	4.9680	5.0237	4.2456	6.8629	7.0660	6.9125	3.4101	3.0051
Lao Cai	42.1075	5.0013	5.3572	4.2258	6.3806	7.4679	7.1670	3.3743	3.1334
Dien Bien	42.0204	4.6964	5.2514	4.4288	6.6271	7.1951	6.9334	3.9471	2.9411
Lai Chau	43.6223	4.9664	5.4656	4.5131	6.4826	7.3947	7.7201	3.8066	3.2732
Son La	42.3966	4.8918	5.1034	4.3282	6.6088	7.3132	7.5906	3.4311	3.1295
Yen Bai	42.4908	4.7348	5.1596	4.3356	6.7614	7.1989	7.5827	3.6239	3.0940
Hoa Binh	43.5493	5.1577	5.1274	4.4621	7.2309	7.3462	7.1872	3.8857	3.1520
Thai Nguyen	45.7875	5.9081	5.8433	4.3562	7.2045	7.4420	8.0022	3.3439	3.6873
Lang Son	43.4778	5.3092	5.2937	4.3401	7.0990	7.2880	7.3537	3.5704	3.2237
Quang Ninh*									
Bac Giang	44.3204	5.5787	5.6870	4.3875	7.1515	7.3001	7.4286	3.3046	3.4825
Phu Tho	42.9957	5.3255	5.3108	4.3579	6.8925	7.2723	7.2370	3.2217	3.3779
Vinh Phuc	43.9526	5.3734	5.2837	4.4806	6.6689	7.3103	8.0307	3.1321	3.6729
Bac Ninh	45.7047	5.5334	5.8234	4.5467	7.1588	7.2747	8.2568	3.3818	3.7290
Hai Duong	41.7535	4.9445	5.0398	3.8955	6.9967	6.7793	7.4842	3.2102	3.4033
Hai Phong	42.1143	4.9757	5.1073	4.1539	6.3267	6.9351	7.9911	3.2356	3.3889
Hung Yen	44.2282	5.4553	5.4960	4.4015	7.0570	7.5595	7.6117	3.4276	3.2196
Thai Binh	43.7585	5.3641	5.6726	4.5241	6.2523	7.0967	8.1182	3.2460	3.4844
Ha Nam	41.5581	5.0680	5.0235	4.2112	6.6085	7.4572	7.0903	3.0684	3.0309
Nam Dinh	43.1782	5.4363	5.2143	4.2632	6.5661	7.1895	7.8585	3.3198	3.3304
Ninh Binh	44.0721	5.4982	5.3995	4.3643	6.3939	7.5158	8.2925	3.2934	3.3145
Thanh Hoa	44.2042	5.7695	5.4915	4.2973	6.9686	7.1907	7.7652	3.6915	3.0299
Nghe An	42.8473	5.0856	5.2890	4.3177	6.6789	7.0761	7.7858	3.6344	2.9799
Ha Tinh	45.4291	5.7635	5.7491	4.5042	7.0536	7.5358	7.7079	3.6608	3.4543
Quang Binh	41.5998	5.3277	5.2466	4.4084	6.2326	6.8270	7.0959	3.2894	3.1723
Quang Tri	42.7705	5.0971	5.0076	4.2810	7.1662	7.1043	7.2982	3.5462	3.2700
TT-Hue	46.0415	5.3435	5.8356	4.3688	7.5740	7.3418	8.3041	3.9691	3.3045

Province	Unweighted 2023 PAPI Score	1: Participation at Local Levels	2: Transparency in Local Decision-making	3: Vertical Accountability	4: Control of Corruption in the Public Sector	5: Public Administrative Procedures	6: Public Service Delivery	7: Environmental Governance	8: E-Governance
Da Nang	42.6668	4.9304	4.9587	4.3450	6.6289	7.2374	7.8132	3.1460	3.6072
Quang Nam	40.5960	4.8030	4.5627	3.8587	6.5458	6.9010	7.6957	3.3093	2.9199
Quang Ngai	40.4891	4.7072	4.9118	4.0592	5.8563	7.2627	7.4281	3.3853	2.8784
Binh Dinh	43.5718	4.5581	5.4563	4.2454	7.4530	7.2301	7.7623	3.5785	3.2881
Phu Yen	40.4202	4.3751	4.6415	4.0020	6.8087	6.6793	7.7044	3.5146	2.6945
Khanh Hoa	44.9419	4.8979	5.8761	4.3181	7.3734	7.1770	8.0790	3.7424	3.4780
Ninh Thuan	45.5054	5.3349	5.5838	4.4239	7.3609	7.5599	8.2286	3.9032	3.1100
Binh Thuan	42.4740	5.1865	4.9966	4.2166	6.7600	7.2866	7.6413	3.3820	3.0044
Kon Tum	39.9613	4.9030	4.7103	4.0865	6.2617	6.8741	7.2821	3.1526	2.6910
Gia Lai	40.3179	4.7472	4.8494	4.1498	6.4906	6.9227	7.3842	3.0374	2.7366
Dak Lak	42.3265	4.7562	5.3089	4.2091	6.6173	7.2269	7.5422	3.2489	3.4170
Dak Nong	38.9711	4.6512	4.3093	4.0599	5.9589	7.0977	6.8387	3.1457	2.9099
Lam Dong	40.9044	4.9879	4.7018	4.3124	6.1929	7.0737	7.4171	2.9912	3.2274
Binh Phuoc	39.9526	4.5280	4.5631	4.1880	6.1097	7.0298	7.3238	2.9948	3.2154
Tay Ninh	39.2364	3.9292	4.3770	4.0106	6.8288	7.1959	6.7686	3.1994	2.9268
Binh Duong*									
Dong Nai	39.9114	4.3364	4.5910	4.1376	6.4840	7.0263	6.9986	2.9915	3.3458
BR-VT	44.5746	4.6407	5.6430	4.2696	7.2181	7.4515	8.1626	3.5328	3.6563
HCMC	41.7754	4.6059	5.1528	4.3042	6.6335	7.0510	7.5338	2.9642	3.5300
Long An	40.8330	4.5727	4.8038	3.8661	6.7088	7.2252	6.7585	3.4039	3.4940
Tien Giang	39.6906	3.6879	4.5152	3.9365	6.6372	7.2813	7.1419	3.7933	2.6972
Ben Tre	40.2128	4.6710	4.5919	3.8073	6.7834	7.1337	7.1583	3.5043	2.5628
Tra Vinh	40.1433	3.9348	4.4062	4.0087	6.6237	7.3404	7.8111	3.4604	2.5580
Vinh Long	40.8231	4.1784	4.7011	3.9901	6.3796	6.9903	7.8559	3.8010	2.9267
Dong Thap	41.3226	3.9250	4.6667	4.0032	6.9578	7.3098	7.2535	4.2895	2.9171
An Giang	41.8455	4.3381	4.5846	4.0608	6.8861	7.0038	8.0471	3.9688	2.9561
Kien Giang	40.9892	3.9487	4.8033	4.2508	6.8893	7.1431	7.1671	3.7898	2.9970
Can Tho	40.1744	3.8642	4.7525	4.0891	6.4232	7.0732	6.8072	3.9595	3.2055
Hau Giang	41.0692	4.3388	4.4485	3.9288	7.0010	7.1214	7.1376	4.1708	2.9224
Soc Trang	45.6196	4.9588	5.4844	4.4934	8.1470	7.4360	7.8981	4.0347	3.1672
Bac Lieu	45.5784	5.0213	5.5018	4.6572	7.6585	7.6398	7.6164	3.9442	3.5391
Ca Mau	40.1054	3.8049	4.4119	4.0719	6.8578	7.1274	6.9016	3.7944	3.1356
100th Percentile (Highest)	46.0415	5.9081	5.8761	4.6572	8.1470	7.6398	8.3041	4.2895	3.9728
75th Percentile (Mid-high)	43.9526	5.3255	5.4656	4.3643	7.0536	7.3132	7.8132	3.7933	3.3889
Median	42.3265	4.9445	5.1274	4.2696	6.7600	7.1989	7.5338	3.4311	3.1723
25th Percentile (Mid-low)	40.8330	4.6059	4.7103	4.0865	6.5458	7.0737	7.1671	3.2460	2.9561
0th Percentile (Lowest)	38.9711	3.6879	4.3093	3.8073	5.8563	6.6793	6.7585	2.8688	2.5580
Highest - Lowest Gap	7.0704	2.2202	1.5668	0.8500	2.2906	0.9604	1.5457	1.4207	1.4148

Note: Figures are mean scores based on a scale of 1-10 points for the dimensional level (the last eight columns with numbers), and a scale of 10-80 points for the aggregate PAPI score (the second column from the left). The provinces are ordered by provincial codes. (*) Data from Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included due to their manipulated extreme outlier values. The score ranges in the legend are not rounded to .00 to show how marginal the differences between provincial scores are.

Figure 3.9: Changes in Comparable PAPI Dimensions, 2021-2023

Province	Dimension 1: Participation at Local Levels	Dimension 2: Transparency in Local Decision- making	Dimension 3: Vertical Accountability	Dimension 4: Control of Corruption in Public Sector	Dimension 5: Public Administrative Procedures	Dimension 6: Public Service Delivery	Dimension 7: Environmental Governance	Dimension 8: E-Governance
Ha Noi	8.33	-4.43	-1.23	-4.82	-4.99	0.69	-9.24	10.18
Ha Giang	9.41	8.71	2.20	6.15	1.71	-6.22	7.08	3.54
Cao Bang	4.87	3.47	12.60	6.81	-0.32	3.60	3.23	39.78
Bac Kan	12.15	3.61	-1.22	-0.09	4.30	-8.57	4.63	26.12
Tuyen Quang	0.63	-10.53	-3.24	-3.10	-0.86	-11.17	-8.54	9.61
Lao Cai	14.62	2.77	3.95	7.14	5.36	-3.30	4.51	10.86
Dien Bien	12.45	12.19	15.10	22.33	1.14	9.09	9.07	46.20
Lai Chau	1.88	8.45	5.36	2.82	0.49	1.50	-5.12	14.61
Son La	1.95	8.63	6.10	4.57	5.89	3.49	-9.84	42.23
Yen Bai	-2.94	0.03	-4.73	-2.36	1.18	1.87	-1.02	17.99
Hoa Binh	-1.64	-3.33	0.27	-4.18	4.39	-6.11	1.72	29.99
Thai Nguyen	18.47	7.37	-0.33	4.66	2.13	-0.30	3.31	17.85
Lang Son	-3.76	-12.40	-3.78	-5.84	-2.18	-4.87	-13.57	10.48
Quang Ninh*								
Bac Giang*								
Phu Tho	-3.90	-9.09	-2.58	-7.88	-1.55	-8.35	-11.62	9.78
Vinh Phuc	13.74	1.73	1.44	6.79	-5.86	-1.02	3.64	9.84
Bac Ninh*								
Hai Duong	2.33	-7.56	-5.72	0.90	-7.65	-4.07	2.28	11.25
Hai Phong	1.46	-5.76	-5.87	-14.78	-7.07	1.01	-12.03	21.38
Hung Yen	0.96	-6.20	-0.39	-6.41	0.73	-4.84	-6.12	7.66
Thai Binh	8.43	-1.82	-0.72	-13.78	-2.54	-1.45	-8.75	23.04
Ha Nam	6.67	-5.59	-4.38	-5.80	-0.48	-5.30	-12.37	-8.50
Nam Dinh	3.75	-8.10	-0.36	-6.17	-3.09	-0.71	-8.17	24.58
Ninh Binh	4.71	-5.49	-4.12	-4.66	-1.51	3.77	-6.30	-0.26
Thanh Hoa	-1.46	-11.48	-5.76	-10.77	-1.48	-3.78	-10.81	-4.32
Nghe An	5.36	-2.87	-3.39	-6.55	-2.45	0.69	-3.39	-6.42
Ha Tinh	13.70	1.33	-4.10	-2.27	1.68	-6.26	-8.41	21.32
Quang Binh	9.65	-3.31	-3.14	-12.51	-2.84	-11.17	-12.73	12.50
Quang Tri	2.58	-0.90	-3.01	8.37	-2.31	-4.33	-1.06	14.37
Thua Thien-Hue	-2.40	-5.92	-4.51	-2.55	-5.16	-1.89	-11.00	-1.92
Da Nang	21.30	-2.02	1.64	-2.25	-1.20	-5.34	-2.66	1.23
Quang Nam	7.31	-9.67	-8.54	-4.19	-0.43	-5.23	-6.30	-0.85
Quang Ngai	13.47	1.42	1.99	-11.39	0.82	-5.38	0.47	-3.26
Binh Dinh	-1.36	11.06	2.03	9.69	3.82	-1.92	-1.31	11.47
Phu Yen	-4.85	-5.51	2.21	-1.46	-1.03	2.11	0.70	3.57
Khanh Hoa	16.27	14.36	0.35	12.64	0.98	1.00	14.06	12.14
Ninh Thuan	-1.19	2.28	0.93	2.46	6.32	1.70	9.77	17.52
Binh Thuan	-3.67	-9.52	-4.38	-8.64	4.55	-2.81	-3.85	-2.67
Kon Tum	9.14	-0.87	-0.21	1.27	0.30	-3.66	-4.76	1.54
Gia Lai	2.27	0.08	-0.67	9.34	0.30	-1.92	-6.07	1.95
Dak Lak	-8.45	6.10	1.11	0.58	6.26	0.45	0.94	11.86
Dak Nong	-10.11	-4.94	0.46	-4.93	2.55	-4.26	-5.28	10.17
Lam Dong	-7.28	-10.56	-2.93	-6.65	-3.46	-3.08	-9.47	-8.88
Binh Phuoc	2.65	-5.57	0.31	-5.05	-1.36	0.86	3.75	-1.54
Tay Ninh	-6.91	-20.98	-4.52	-5.37	2.65	-12.99	-7.91	5.95
Binh Duong*								
Dong Nai	-1.41	-5.72	-7.13	2.23	-1.85	-7.77	4.87	1.76
Ba Ria-Vung Tau	8.60	12.07	0.59	11.68	10.44	2.00	14.63	32.13
Ho Chi Minh City	13.55	3.30	-0.44	4.84	2.14	-2.80	2.39	2.84
Long An	6.80	-5.09	-7.25	-7.22	-0.26	-12.58	-1.14	18.65
Tien Giang	-5.27	5.32	-3.35	4.56	9.62	-4.89	2.51	2.29
Ben Tre	8.51	2.92	-7.19	3.73	2.10	-0.50	4.11	-2.67
Tra Vinh	3.59	-5.35	0.62	2.49	2.50	-1.87	7.34	-0.34
Vinh Long	-1.41	-0.73	-1.77	-6.47	-1.10	-3.98	-7.47	11.75
Dong Thap	-14.10	-3.80	-7.37	2.84	2.79	-3.96	-9.23	15.11
An Giang	7.58	-9.30	2.83	-5.08	-3.39	2.32	-6.91	16.71
Kien Giang	0.93	14.43	3.83	3.99	1.70	-2.37	-1.17	20.10
Can Tho	-8.27	3.42	-0.33	-5.13	-0.44	-9.83	-7.34	22.27
Hau Giang	3.74	-6.46	-11.90	0.97	-0.17	-4.65	-6.33	5.85
Soc Trang	16.00	22.12	12.95	20.76	0.11	4.60	19.33	44.91
Bac Lieu	10.05	-0.69	1.50	2.64	3.30	-5.08	7.61	14.57
Ca Mau	-12.21	-14.19	-11.27	8.04	-4.38	-7.86	4.59	12.57
Highest	21.2997	22.1196	15.1030	22.3253	10.4412	9.0869	19.3250	46.2038
75th Percentile	8.8699	3.3608	1.2760	4.5668	2.3193	0.6904	3.4743	17.9218
Median	2.6458	-2.0246	-0.6671	-1.4650	0.1069	-3.0813	-2.6558	10.8643
25th Percentile	-1.5463	-5.8409	-4.2514	-5.5846	-1.6998	-5.2665	-8.0442	1.8562
Lowest	-14.1037	-20.9831	-11.8993	-14.7834	-7.6536	-12.9870	-13.5653	-8.8822
Interquartile Range	10.4162	9.2017	5.5274	10.1514	4.0191	5.9569	11.5185	16.0657

Notes: Percentage of change in 2023 data from 2021 data, with a change of $\pm 5\%$ defined as statistically significant. The provinces are ordered by provincial codes. The traffic light colours represent the trend. The green arrow implies an improvement, the yellow arrow indicates a static status, and the red arrow shows a decline. (*) Data from Bac Ninh, Bac Giang, Binh Duong and Quang Ninh are not included in some dimensions due to their manipulated extreme outlier values in 2021, 2022 and 2023.

Figure 3.9a: Comparing Median Values of Provincial Dimensional Scores, 2021 vs. 2023

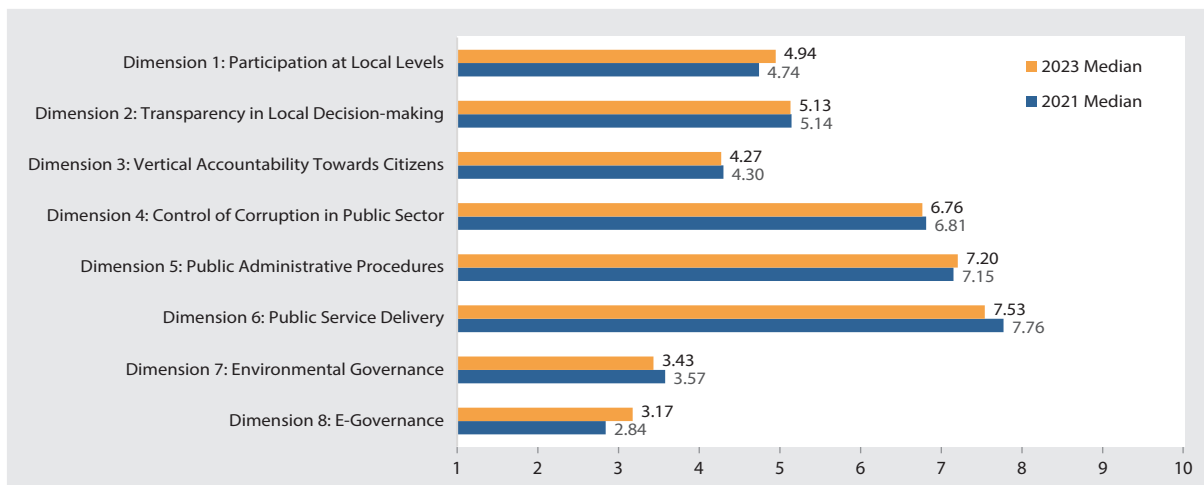


Figure 3.9b: Comparing Highest and Lowest Provincial Dimensional Scores, 2021 vs. 2023

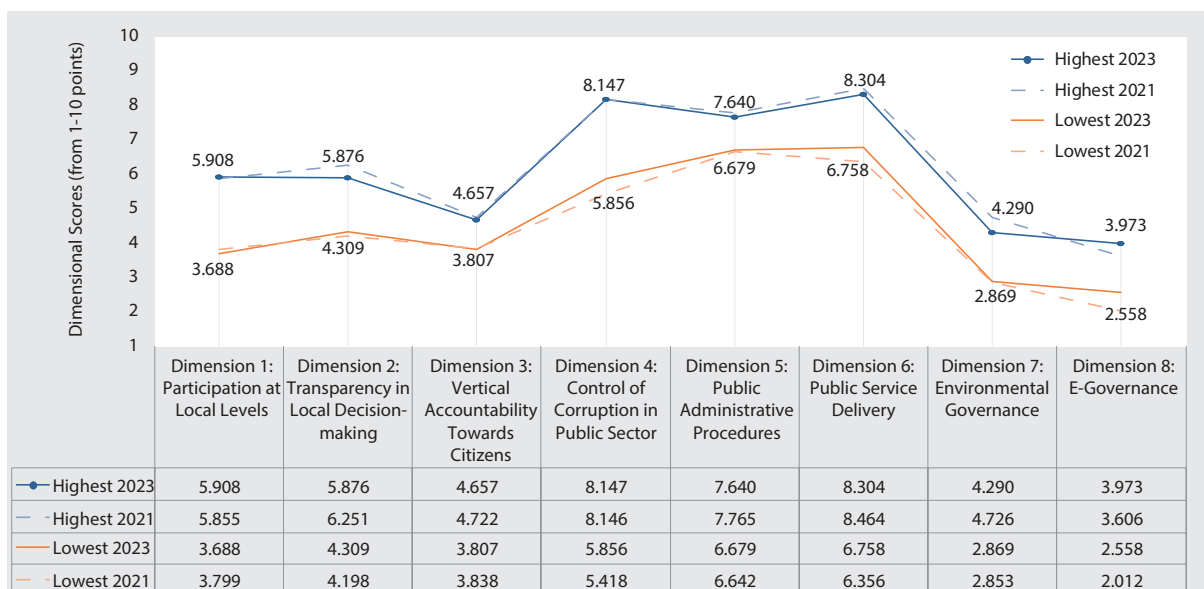
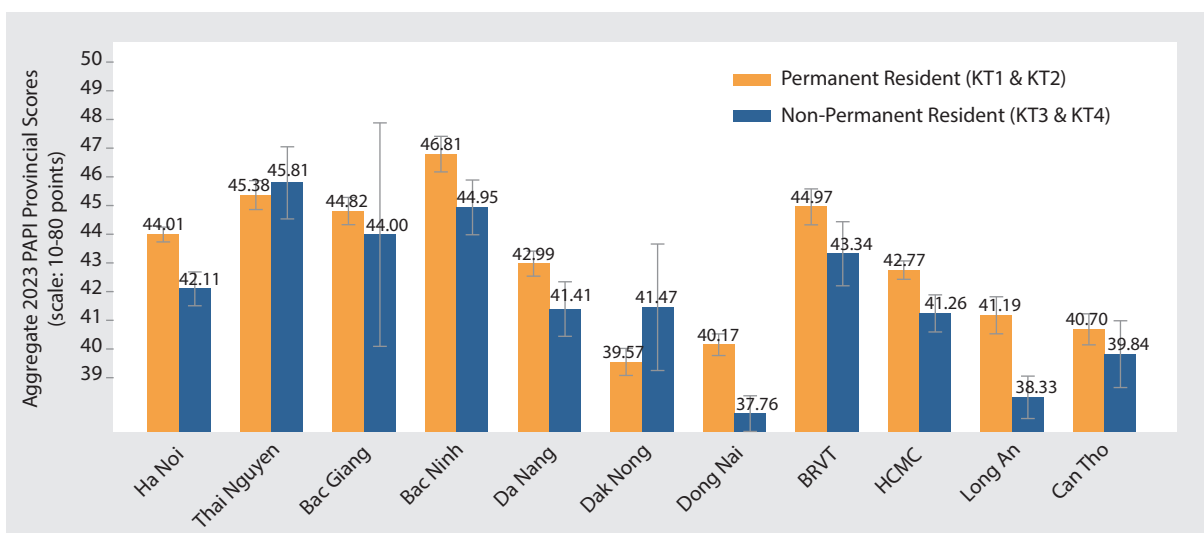


Figure 3.9c: Differences in Governance and Public Administration as Experienced by Non-Permanent Residents in 11 Migrant-Receiving Provinces by Province, 2023



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APPENDICES

Appendix A: PAPI Score Ranges and Results at Dimensional, Sub-dimensional and Indicator Levels (2020-2023)⁵⁷

Table A1: List of Indicators for Participation at Local Levels (Dimension 1), 2020-2023

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
Total Dimension	Dimension 1: Participation at Local Levels	1	10	4.78	4.71	4.97	4.88
Sub-Dimension 1	Civic Knowledge	0.25	2.5	0.77	0.72	1.00	1.01
Sub-Dimension 2	Opportunities for Participation in Elections	0.25	2.5	1.39	1.50	1.43	1.43
Sub-Dimension 3	Quality of Village Head Elections	0.25	2.5	1.48	1.47	1.48	1.44
Sub-Dimension 4	Voluntary Contributions	0.25	2.5	1.14	1.03	1.06	1.00
S1. Civic Knowledge	Knowledge of Policy (%)	0%	100%	61.39%	63.17%	51.48%	57.86%
	Knowledge of Leaders (%)	0%	100%	15.40%	9.84%	41.18%	38.34%
S2. Opportunities for Participation in Elections	Participated in Formal Associations (%)	0%	100%	44.70%	45.01%	44.94%	45.30%
	Participated in Informal Associations (%)	0%	100%	13.87%	13.23%	14.15%	15.33%
	Voted in Last Commune People's Council Election (%)	0%	100%	52.39%	65.30%	65.30%	65.30%
	Voted in Last National Assembly Election (%)	0%	100%	44.41%	62.04%	62.04%	62.04%
	Village Head Elected (%)	0%	100%	83.60%	81.94%	84.59%	82.98%
	Participated in Village Head Election (%)	0%	100%	62.79%	65.07%	66.48%	68.24%
S3. Quality of Village Head Elections	More than One Candidate (%)	0%	100%	49.00%	45.43%	48.62%	43.68%
	Invited to Participate (%)	0%	100%	55.45%	52.18%	57.77%	50.93%
	Paper Ballot Was Used (%)	0%	100%	83.47%	77.20%	82.20%	81.58%
	Votes Were Counted Publicly (%)	0%	100%	76.35%	73.51%	70.53%	70.48%
	Candidate Was not Suggested (%)	0%	100%	29.20%	32.93%	42.42%	42.77%
	Voted for the Winner (%)	0%	100%	92.04%	92.03%	91.44%	90.25%
S4. Voluntary Contributions	Voluntary Contribution to Project (%)	0%	100%	47.28%	44.21%	40.91%	41.49%
	Community Monitoring Board Monitors Contribution (%)	0%	100%	38.22%	29.71%	35.70%	31.42%
	Voluntary Contribution Recorded (%)	0%	100%	79.58%	67.97%	62.89%	62.28%
	Participated in Decision-making to Start Project (%)	0%	100%	60.62%	49.87%	47.15%	43.12%
	Provided Inputs to Project Design (%)	0%	100%	36.56%	30.85%	31.92%	27.49%

⁵⁷ Findings for PAPI from 2009 to 2020 can be found in annual PAPI reports available at <https://papi.org.vn/eng/bao-cao/>. 2020 PAPI findings are included herein for comparison between the end of the previous government term (2016-2020) and the current term (2021-2025).

Table A2: List of Indicators for Transparency in Local Decision-Making (Dimension 2), 2020-2023

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Means Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
Total Dimension	Dimension 2: Transparency in Local Decision-Making	1	10	5.28	5.19	5.25	5.12
<i>Sub-Dimension 1</i>	<i>Access to Information</i>			0.80	0.81	0.81	0.86
<i>Sub-Dimension 2</i>	<i>Poverty Lists Transparency</i>	0.25	2.5	1.73	1.71	1.69	1.63
<i>Sub-Dimension 3</i>	<i>Commune Budgets Transparency</i>	0.25	2.5	1.39	1.37	1.44	1.31
<i>Sub-Dimension 4</i>	<i>Transparent Land Use Plans/ Price Frames</i>	0.25	2.5	1.36	1.29	1.32	1.32
S1. Access to Information	Searched for Information about State Policy and Legislation (%)	0%	100%	13.60%	14.40%	13.80%	17.30%
	Received Information Needed about State Policy and Legislation (%)	0%	100%	11.82%	12.37%	11.62%	15.05%
	Information Received Useful (%)	0%	100%	12.55%	12.72%	12.62%	15.80%
	Information Received Reliable (%)	0%	100%	12.32%	12.69%	12.38%	15.58%
	Did Not Pay a Bribe for the Information (%)	0%	100%	97.10%	97.61%	97.76%	97.74%
	Reasonable Waiting Time for Information (%)	0%	100%	99.67%	99.87%	99.72%	99.70%
S2. Poverty Lists Transparency	Poverty List Published in last 12 Months (%)	0%	100%	60.19%	59.29%	61.12%	57.40%
	Type 1 Errors on Poverty List (% Disagree)	0%	100%	33.31%	34.99%	37.08%	39.45%
	Type 2 Errors on Poverty List (% Disagree)	0%	100%	30.91%	30.33%	33.93%	34.93%
S3. Commune Budgets Transparency	Commune Budget is Made Available (%)	0%	100%	42.11%	42.31%	45.38%	38.61%
	Respondent Read Commune Budget (%)	0%	100%	28.78%	25.22%	25.35%	20.64%
	Believe in Accuracy of Budget (%)	0%	100%	81.70%	80.25%	86.38%	79.64%
S4. Transparent Land Use Plans/ Price Frames	Aware of Local Land Plans (%)	0%	100%	16.32%	13.89%	15.66%	16.20%
	Comment on Local Land Plans (%)	0%	100%	4.49%	3.88%	4.67%	4.52%
	Land Plan Acknowledges Your Concerns (%)	0%	100%	89.39%	84.92%	90.59%	89.77%
	Impact of Land Plan on Your Family (1=no impact; 2=hurt my family/villagers; 3=Beneficial)	1	3	2.23	2.20	2.29	2.25
	Did not Lose Land as a Result of Land Plan	0%	100%	86.92%	84.08%	80.10%	80.75%
	Compensation Close to Market Value (%)	0%	100%	36.96%	32.52%	31.94%	33.47%
	Informed of Land Usage (%)	0%	100%	78.08%	79.05%	81.28%	80.55%
	Land Used for Original Purpose (%)	0%	100%	85.73%	91.89%	86.80%	88.90%
	Know Where to Go to Get Land Price Information (%)	0%	100%	52.81%	42.39%	46.08%	45.53%

Table A3: List of Indicators for Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens (Dimension 3), 2020-2023

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
Total Dimension	Dimension 3: Vertical Accountability Towards Citizens	1	10	4.91	4.29	4.28	4.24
Sub-Dimension 1	Interactions with Local Authorities	0.33	3.3	2.02	1.99	1.97	1.95
Sub-Dimension 2	Government Responsiveness to Citizens' Appeals*	0.33	3.3	0.95	0.49	0.48	0.47
Sub-Dimension 3	Access to Justice Services*	0.34	3.4	1.94	1.81	1.83	1.82
S1. Interactions with Local Authorities	Contacted Village Head (%)	0%	100%	29.14%	29.10%	26.69%	23.52%
	Contact with Village Head Successful (%)	0%	100%	91.78%	91.08%	92.32%	91.12%
	Contacted Commune People's Committee (%)	0%	100%	20.11%	17.67%	16.99%	15.88%
	Contact with Commune People's Committee Successful (%)	0%	100%	90.27%	90.45%	90.36%	90.23%
	Contacted Mass Organization (%)	0%	100%	12.27%	11.23%	10.02%	9.21%
	Contact with Mass Organization Successful (%)	0%	100%	96.33%	93.68%	95.48%	95.16%
	Contacted People's Council (%)	0%	100%	5.44%	4.65%	4.76%	3.83%
	Contact with People's Council Successful (%)	0%	100%	93.68%	89.56%	90.65%	90.88%
S2. Government Responsiveness to Citizens' Appeals	Actions Taken by Citizens (%)	0%	100%	22.40%	23.23%	21.50%	20.27%
	Successful Actions of Citizens (%)	0%	100%	19.31%	20.23%	18.72%	17.82%
S3. Access to Justice Services	Trust in Courts and Judicial Agencies (%)	0%	100%	88.38%	86.91%	86.79%	86.75%
	Use of Local Courts when in Civil Disputes (%)	0%	100%	84.92%	73.90%	75.63%	74.39%
	Use of Non-courts when in Civil Disputes (%)	0%	100%	4.46%	10.46%	11.02%	11.11%

Table A4: List of Indicators for Control of Corruption in the Public Sector (Dimension 4), 2020-2023

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
Total Dimension	Dimension 4: Control of Corruption in the Public Sector	1	10	6.96	6.84	6.69	6.79
Sub-Dimension 1	Limits on Corruption in Local Governments	0.25	2.5	1.73	1.67	1.64	1.68
Sub-Dimension 2	Limits on Corruption in Public Service Delivery	0.25	2.5	2.06	2.01	2.00	2.03
Sub-Dimension 3	Equity in State Employment	0.25	2.5	1.22	1.21	1.15	1.20
Sub-Dimension 4	Willingness to Fight Corruption	0.25	2.5	1.95	1.94	1.90	1.88
S1. Limits on Corruption in Local Governments	No Diverting of Public Funds (% in agreement)	0%	100%	68.92%	67.84%	66.20%	67.88%
	No Bribes for Land Use Rights Certificates (% in agreement)	0%	100%	63.95%	59.99%	57.86%	60.31%

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
	Frequency of Bribes for Land Use Rights Certificates (% of users)	100%	0%	46.46%	47.57%	44.86%	43.22%
	No Kickbacks for Construction Permit (% in agreement)	0%	100%	64.59%	62.16%	60.85%	62.48%
S2. Limits on Corruption in Public Service Delivery	No Bribes in Public District Hospital (% in agreement)	0%	100%	69.74%	66.27%	66.17%	67.71%
	Frequency of Bribes at Public District Hospital (% of users)	100%	0%	44.24%	51.45%	48.15%	49.70%
	No Bribes for Teachers' Favouritism (% in agreement)	0%	100%	73.91%	71.65%	70.89%	72.86%
S3. Equity in State Employment	No Bribes for State Employment (% in agreement)	0%	100%	54.76%	53.27%	49.92%	52.25%
	No Relationship for State Employment (a 0-5 point scale)	0	5	1.59	1.61	1.51	1.60
S4. Willingness to Fight Corruption	Corruption Had No Effect on Respondent (%)	0%	100%	97.47%	96.71%	96.81%	96.71%
	Provincial Authorities Serious about Combating Corruption (%)	0%	100%	50.32%	48.13%	45.91%	45.51%
	Denunciation Price '000s VND (Imputed)	0	150,000	26,012	26,425	31,001	32,190
	Victims Denounced Bribe Request (%)	100%	0%	3.68%	5.03%	4.66%	7.49%

Table A5: List of Indicators for Public Administrative Procedures (Dimension 5), 2020-2023

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
Total Dimension	Dimension 5: Public Administrative Procedures	1	10		7.19	7.22	7.20
Sub-Dimension 1	Certification Procedures	0.33	3.4		2.40	2.44	2.41
Sub-Dimension 2	Land Title Procedures	0.33	3.4		2.31	2.32	2.34
Sub-Dimension 3	Personal Procedures	0.33	3.4		2.47	2.46	2.45
S1. Certification Procedures	Applied for government certification service (%)	0%	100%	29.39%	27.92%	31.07%	27.97%
	Total Quality of Certification Procedures (4 criteria)	0	4	3.85	3.76	3.81	3.80
	Satisfaction with Service on Certification Procedures (5-point scale)	1	5	4.28	4.18	4.18	4.19
S2. Land Title Procedures	Took Part in Procedures for Land Use Rights Certificates (LURC) (%)	0%	100%	11.35%	14.00%	12.72%	13.61%
	Did not Use Many Windows for LURCs (%)	0%	100%	83.27%	78.05%	81.70%	82.99%
	Received LURCs (%)	0%	100%	84.62%	82.41%	84.02%	83.81%
	Total Quality of Land Use Rights Certificate Procedures (4 criteria)	0	4	3.50	3.42	3.37	3.44
	Satisfaction with Land Use Rights Certificate Procedures (5-point scale)	1	5	3.91	3.83	3.78	3.85

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
S3. Personal Procedures	Took part in personal administrative procedures at the commune level (%)	0%	100%	26.95%	27.06%	25.11%	22.42%
	Did not Use Many Windows for Personal Procedures (%)	0%	100%	95.25%	94.49%	94.62%	95.55%
	Total Quality of Personal Procedures (4 criteria)	0	4	3.58	3.43	3.46	3.48
	Satisfaction with Services on Personal Procedures (5-point scale)	1	5	4.21	4.21	4.16	4.15

Table A6: List of Indicators for Public Service Delivery (Dimension 6), 2020-2023

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
Total Dimension	Dimension 6: Public Service Delivery	1	10	7.06	7.74	7.52	7.52
Sub-Dimension 1	Public Health Care	0.25	2.5	1.99	1.97	1.94	1.91
Sub-Dimension 2	Public Primary Education	0.25	2.5	1.53	1.82	1.66	1.69
Sub-Dimension 3	Basic Infrastructure	0.25	2.5	2.06	2.01	1.97	1.99
Sub-Dimension 4	Law and Order	0.25	2.5	1.48	1.94	1.94	1.92
S1. Public Health Care	Population with Health Insurance (%)	0%	100%	88.79%	89.58%	90.70%	91.24%
	Quality of Health Insurance (4-point scale)	1	4	3.60	3.61	3.60	3.56
	Quality of Free Medical Care for Children (5-point scale)	1	5	4.21	4.29	4.20	4.19
	Poor Households Are Subsidized with Health Insurance (%)	0%	100%	78.45%	75.69%	74.75%	73.24%
	Checks for Children Are Free (%)	0%	100%	75.70%	73.45%	72.93%	71.38%
	Total Hospital Quality (10 criteria)	0	10	5.86	5.28	4.87	
S2. Public Primary Education	Kilometre Walk to School	Min	Max	1	1	1	1
	Number of Minutes Travelling to School	Min	Max	8	8	8	7
	Overall Rating of Primary School (5-point scale)	1	5	4.16	4.21	4.19	4.15
	Total School Quality (8 criteria)	0	8	4.73	4.71	4.81	4.77
S3. Basic Infrastructure	Households with Electricity (%)	0%	100%	99.21%	98.04%	98.66%	99.03%
	No Power Cut Over the Past 12 Months (%)	0%	100%	17.36%	22.60%	34.51%	29.74%
	Quality of Road (1=All Dirt; 4=All Asphalt)	1	4	3.31	3.32	3.29	3.31
	Frequency of Garbage Pick-up (0=Never; 4=Every Day)	0	4	2.63	2.54	2.57	2.63
	Share Drinking Tap Water (%)	0%	100%	62.61%	58.14%	58.67%	56.97%
	Share Drinking Unclean Water (%)	100%	0%	3.90%	4.34%	4.50%	4.47%

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
S4. Law and Order	How Safe Is Locality (3=Very Safe)	1	3	2.30	2.32	2.32	2.28
	Change in Safety Over Time (%)	0%	100%	12.28%	11.66%	13.16%	11.63%
	Crime Rate in Locality (% Victims of Crime)	0%	100%	9.05%	7.29%	6.67	7.69%
	Feeling Safe Walking in the Day Time (3 = Very Safe)	1	3	2.34	2.35	2.36	2.32
	Feeling Safe Walking in the Night Time (3 = Very Safe)	1	3	2.05	2.07	2.08	2.04

Table A7: List of Indicators for Environmental Governance (Dimension 7), 2020-2023

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
Total Dimension	Dimension 7: Environmental Governance	1	10	3.56	3.59	3.46	3.50
Sub-Dimension 1	Environmental Protection	0.33	3.33	1.03	1.04	0.97	1.00
Sub-Dimension 2	Quality of Air	0.33	3.33	1.83	1.80	1.89	1.92
Sub-Dimension 3	Quality of Water	0.34	3.34	0.70	0.74	0.59	0.58
S1: Environmental Protection	Firms in Locality Not Giving Bribes to Avoid Environmental Responsibility (% in agreement)	0%	100%	59.12%	59.45%	53.97%	56.76%
	Citizens Report Environmental Problem if One Exists (%)	0%	100%	85.88%	83.93%	83.85%	81.80%
	Provincial Government Responds Immediately to Environmental Concern (% in agreement)	0%	100%	56.68%	59.52%	69.13%	68.30%
	Environmental Protection Being Given Priority over Economic Development (% in agreement)	0%	100%	72.60%	64.87%	56.85%	56.41%
S2: Quality of Air	Not Wearing Masks to Avoid Polluted Air (%)	0%	100%	17.83%	19.05%	21.64%	23.77%
	Rating of Air Quality as Good (%)	0%	100%	89.81%	88.80%	89.36%	89.17%
	Better Air Quality than 3 Years Ago (%)	0%	100%	41.62%	39.31%	44.85%	45.95%
S3: Quality of Water	Water from Nearby Waterways Good Enough to Drink (%)	0%	100%	4.54%	5.45%	3.03%	2.62%
	Water from Nearby Waterways Good Enough to Wash Clothes (%)	0%	100%	15.00%	15.95%	10.22%	9.66%
	Water from Nearby Waterways Good Enough to Swim (%)	0%	100%	17.43%	19.51%	12.87%	12.51%

Table A8: List of Indicators for E-Governance (Dimension 8), 2020-2023

Dimension and Sub-Dimensions	Name of Indicator	Scale		National Mean Over Time (2020-2023)			
		Min	Max	PAPI 2020	PAPI 2021	PAPI 2022	PAPI 2023
Total Dimension	Dimension 8: E-Governance	1	10	2.77	2.87	3.01	3.18
Sub-Dimension 1	Access to E-Government Portals*	0.33	3.33	0.39	0.42	0.42	0.48
Sub-Dimension 2	Access to the Internet	0.33	3.33	1.97	2.03	2.18	2.29
Sub-Dimension 3	E-Responsiveness of Provincial Authorities	0.34	3.34	0.40	0.42	0.41	0.41
S1: Access to E-Government Portals	Access to Adequate Information about Certification Procedures from Local E-Government Portal (% in agreement)	0%	100%	3.69%	4.32%	4.27%	5.32%
	Access to Adequate Information about Land Use Rights Certification Procedures from Local E-Government Portal (% in agreement)	0%	100%	1.54%	2.00%	1.64%	2.08%
	Used Online Government Service Portal (% in agreement)*						7.49%
	Able to Pay for Service Online (% in agreement)*						43.05%
S2: Access to the Internet	Access to Government Information from the Internet (% in agreement)	0%	100%	47.90%	46.75%	53.61%	56.28%
	Access to the Internet at Home (% in agreement)	0%	100%	62.81%	67.77%	71.04%	75.80%
S3: E-Responsiveness of Provincial Authorities	Proportion of Respondents Who Used Local Government E-Service Portal for Personal Papers (%)	0%	100%	2.24%	2.78%	2.60%	2.69%
	Proportion of Respondents that Knows Provincial Website and Thinks It Is User-Friendly (%)	0%	100%	25.56%	31.20%	24.45%	26.18%
	Proportion of Respondents Aware that Province Posted Draft Regulation for Comment (%)	0%	100%	46.86%	61.63%	56.59%	52.44%

(*) Sub-dimension with new indicators, which are also marked with *.

(*) Note: Min = Minimum; Max = Maximum

Appendix B: PAPI Sampling Strategy and Key Demographic Information about Respondents (2009-2023)

Every two years since 2021, the PAPI research project resamples new districts using the same multi-stage, clustered, probability proportion to size (PPS) approach. The re-sampling is necessary for both fairness and data integrity. While PPS sampling ensures representativeness under budget constraints, it is always possible that a particular province may be disadvantaged due to the selection of particularly problematic districts. By re-sampling regularly, we ensure that the disadvantages of district selection are ephemeral and that the selection of new districts will ensure that the new districts will improve their performance as well. In practice, we have not seen these swings empirically as the selection of new districts has had little impact on overall provincial scores; however, the possibility remains. Data integrity is reinforced by ensuring that provincial leaders cannot target resources to only sampled districts, leading to unequal services and governance within a province. In addition, re-sampling ensures that efforts to game the PAPI survey by training targeted populations on how to answer before survey implementation are unsuccessful.

In 2023, we re-sampled field sites and populations with two qualifications. First, all capital districts, communes, and villages are maintained. As populations, economic activity, and government services are concentrated capitals, leaving them out omits critical information for evaluation of underlying governance. Second, we only re-sampled half of the districts selected in 2021 while maintaining the others as a control group. This randomized experiment will also allow for an impact evaluation of whether PAPI data and diagnostics improve governance over time. Malesky, Phan, and Le (2022)⁵⁸ studied this question in a previous paper, relying upon the initial randomized roll-out of PAPI in 2009. However, their analysis was limited by the fact that PAPI data was aggregated at the provincial level and did not permit a great deal of local variance. Moreover, at the time of the original rollout, PAPI did not have the same level of national prominence that it now enjoys. Arguably, as PAPI is now far more important for provincial decision-making for districts and localities under each provincial government’s authorities, we should see greater improvements across each province, not just a few selected districts under PAPI surveys.

Table B1 presents the 2023 PAPI Sampling Strategy and Figure B1 shows 2023 Fieldwork Sites by Villages. In addition, Figures B2-B7 show key demographic features of the 2023 populations in comparison with previous years from 2011-2022.

Table B1: 2023 PAPI Sampling Frame

Indicative Sampling by Cluster	Small provinces [57 with p<2 million]	Medium provinces [4 with 2 million <p<7million]	Large (Ha Noi and HCMC)
Survey Locations in 63 Provinces			
No. of districts	3	6	6
No. of communes	6	12	12
No. of villages	12	24	24
Permanent Residents-Citizens in All 63 Provinces			
No. of targeted permanent-resident respondents per village (minimum)	20	20	40
No. of targeted permanent-resident respondents per village (maximum)	24	24	48
No. of listed standby permanent-resident respondents per village (pax)	20	30	40
Sub-total Sample Frame for Permanent Resident Population (min)	240	480	960

⁵⁸ See Malesky, Phan and Le (2022).

Indicative Sampling by Cluster	Small provinces [57 with p<2 million]	Medium provinces [4 with 2 million <p<7million]	Large (Ha Noi and HCMC)
Sub-total Sample Frame for Permanent Resident Population (max)	288	576	1152
Non-Permanent Residents-Citizens in at least 12 Migrant Receiving Provinces			
No. of targeted non-permanent respondents per village (min)	10	10	12
No. of listed non-permanent respondents per village (max)	12	12	14
No. of listed standby non-permanent respondents per village (pax)	15	15	20
Sub-total Sample Frame for Non-Permanent Resident Population (min)	120	240	288
Sub-total Sample Frame for Non-Permanent Resident Population (max)	144	288	336
Total (Min)	360	720	1248
Total (Max)	432	864	1488

Figure B1: 2023 PAPI Fieldwork Sites (832 Re-sampled Villages)

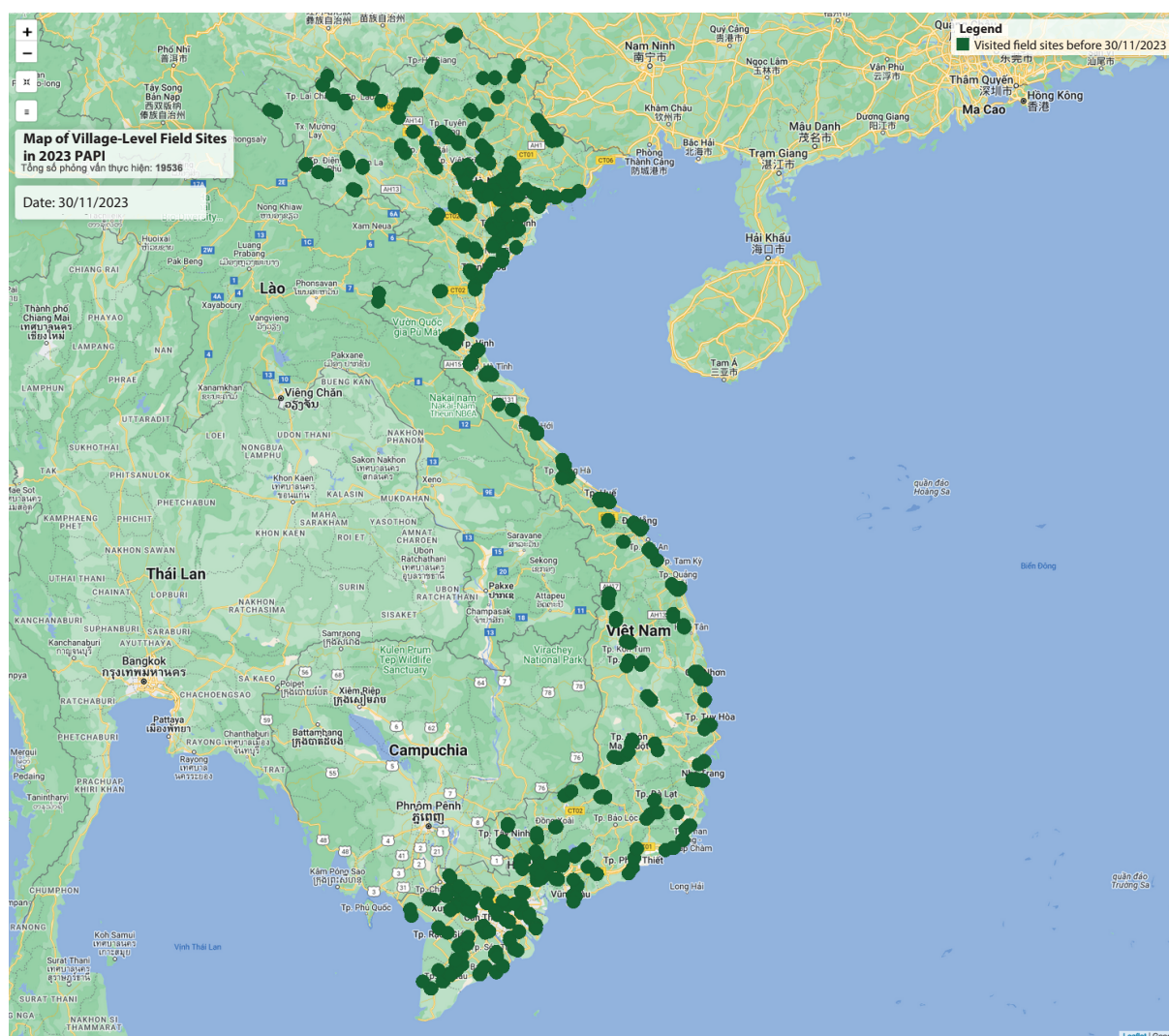


Figure B2: Total Number of Respondents per Year, 2009-2023⁵⁹

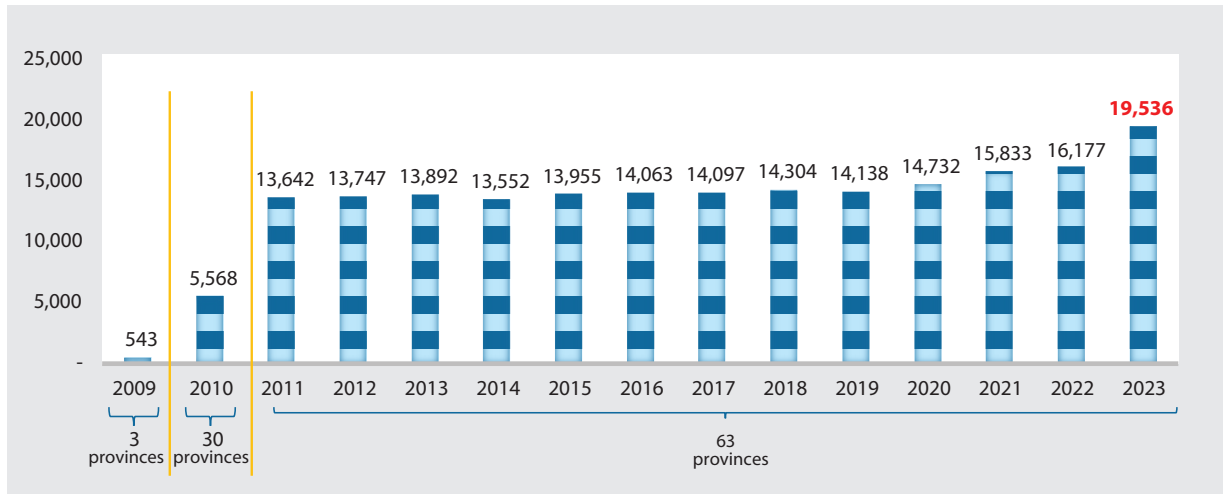


Figure B3: Key Demographic Trends, 2011-2023 (Percentage Share)

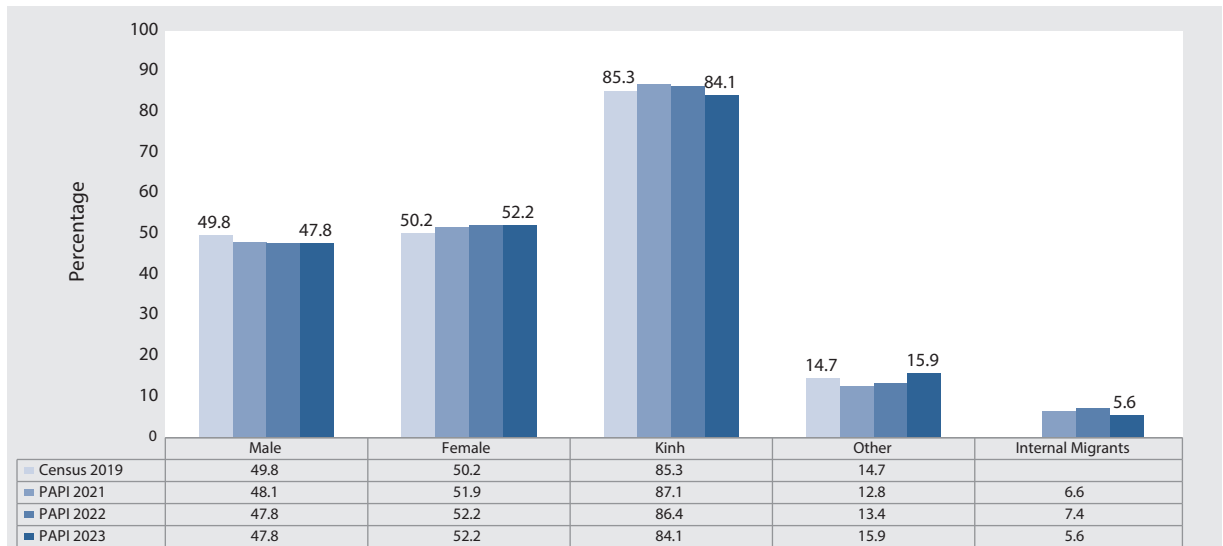
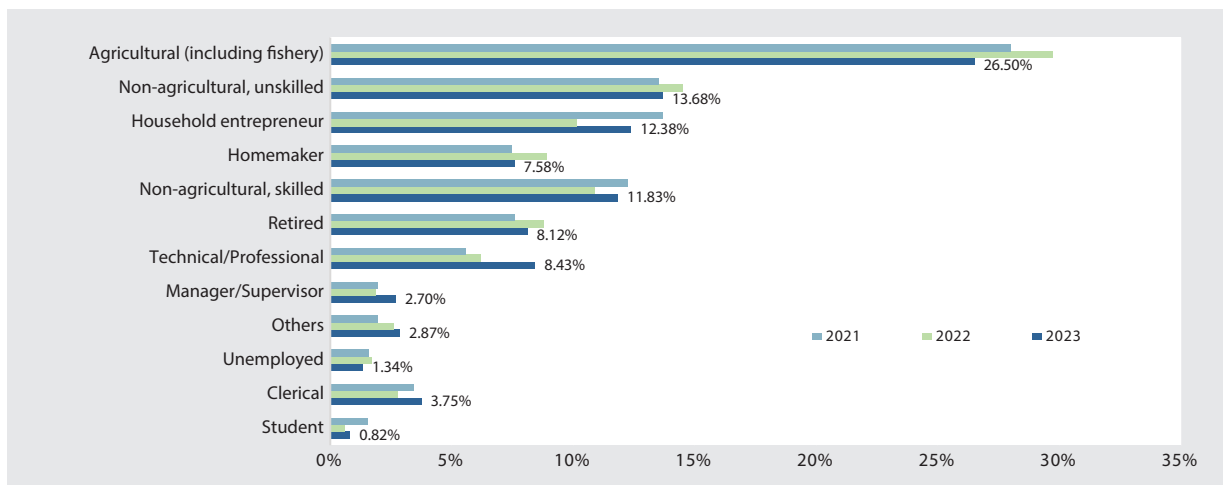


Figure B4: PAPI Respondents' Occupation, 2021-2023 (Percentage Share)



⁵⁹ The 2023 survey population includes 596 respondents from two provinces of Binh Duong and Quang Ninh, whose data could not be used due to pre-survey priming effects. For more information about PAPI population demographics, visit <https://papi.org.vn/eng/bao-cao/>.

Figure B5: PAPI Respondents' Educational Levels, 2021-2023 (Percentage Share)

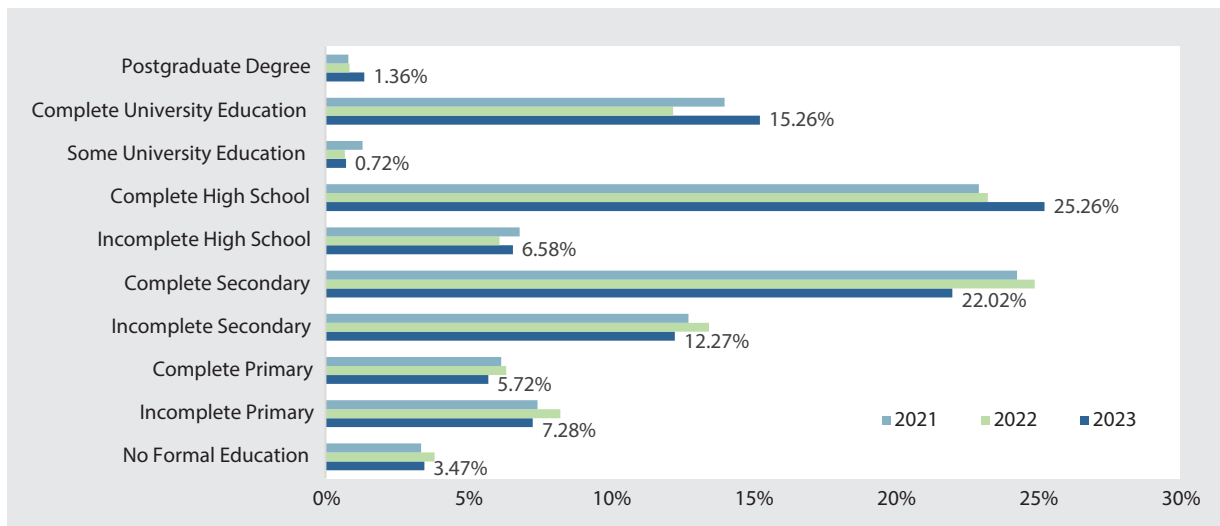


Figure B6: PAPI Respondents' Age by Age Groups, 2021-2023 (Percentage Share)

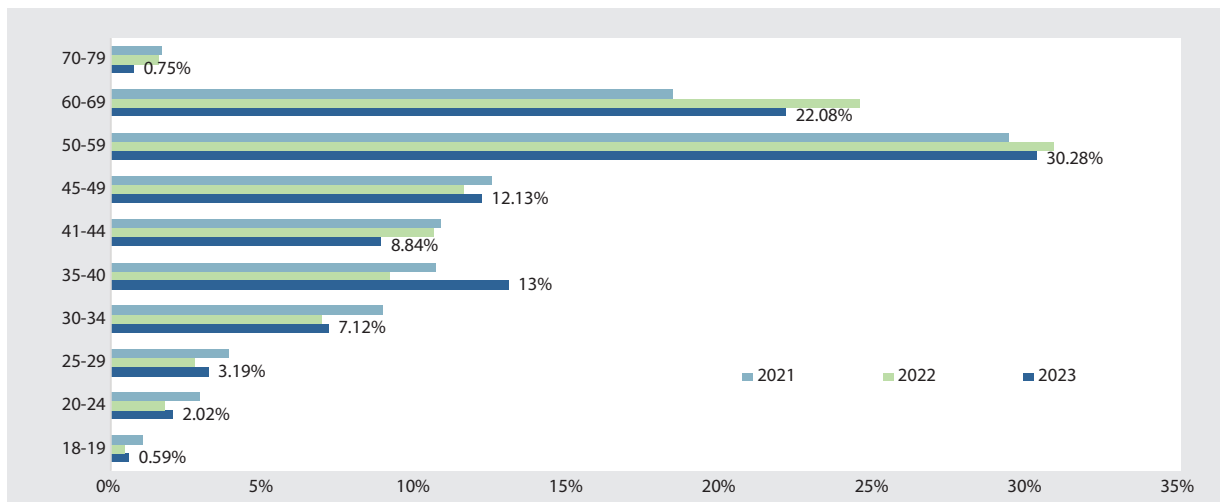
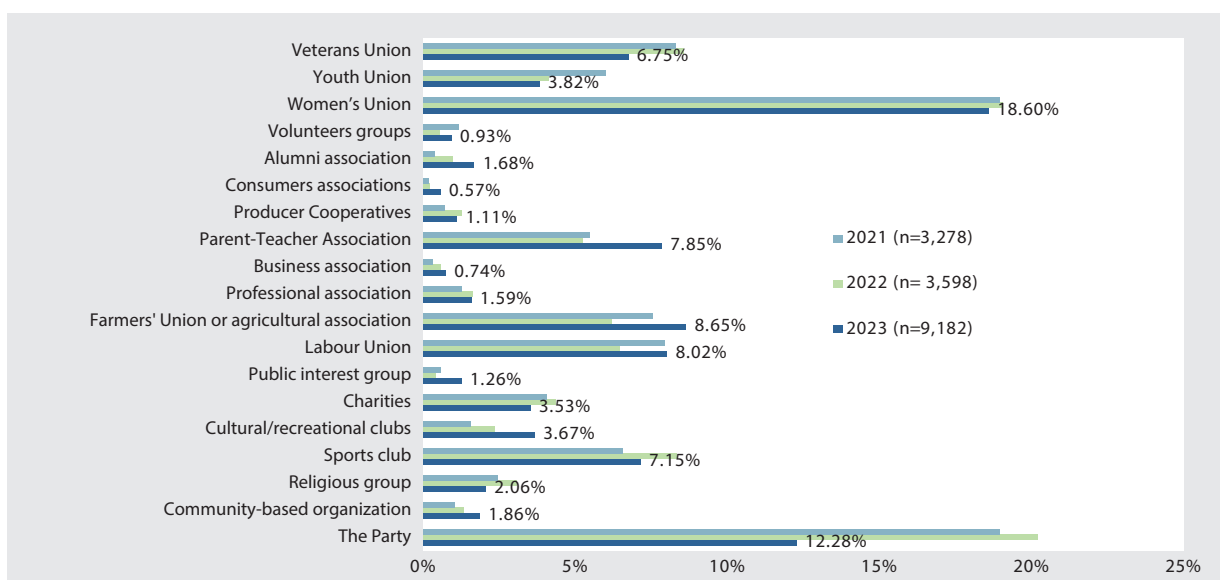


Figure B7: PAPI Respondents' Membership of Associations, 2021-2023 (Percentage Share)



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