

TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL FILE

SUPPORT FOR RESPONSIVE ACCOUNTABLE LOCAL GOVERNANCE IN NGHE AN PROVINCE, VIETNAM

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THE BELGIAN
DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION **.be**

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ABBREVIATIONS

CDF	Commune Development Fund
CDPR	(support to) Capacity Development for the Planning Reform
C-SEDP	Commune Socio-Economic Development Plan
CISB	Community Investment Supervision Board
DoF	Department of Finance
DoHA	Department of Home Affairs
DoIC	Department of Information and Communications
DoJ	Department of Justice
DP	Development Partner
DPI	Department of Planning & Investment
GoV	Government of Vietnam
HCMAP	Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics
ICP	Indicative Cooperation Programme
ICT	Information & communication technologies
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MPI	Ministry of Planning & Investment
M-Score	Mobile phone –based citizen score cards
NE	National Expert
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OSS	One Stop Shop
PAPI	Provincial Public Administration and Governance Index
PAR	Public Administration Reform
PC	People’s Committee
PCc	People’s Council
PCI	Provincial Competitiveness Index
PIB	People’s Inspection Board
POM	Project Operational Manual
PORIS	Poverty Reduction through Institutional Strengthening (project)
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Plan
SEDS	Socio-Economic Development Strategy
TFF	Technical and Financial File
ToC	Theory of Change
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNICEF	United Nations International Children’s Fund
VFF	Vietnamese Fatherland Front
VWU	Vietnam Women’s Union

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In response to the findings of the “Report on socio-economic development in 2014 and major tasks for 2015”, the Government of Vietnam (GoV) re-emphasized highest-level political demand for improved transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the public sector and a significant reduction in corruption and wastefulness.

In that perspective, to deliver effective public administration reform as a means of improving social, economic and administrative service delivery and increasing citizen satisfaction with government performance is a priority for political leadership at all levels. More transparent, accountable and responsive local governance is seen as a necessary condition for the successful implementation of the National SEDS (2011-2020). This requires on-going, two-way, government-citizen dialogue so that areas of performance shortfall can be identified and addressed and the adequacy of policies can be critically assessed and refined as necessary.

Belgium confirmed its commitment to support Vietnam’s efforts in that direction by allocating an amount of € 3,000,000 (Belgium contribution) to three provinces (Nghe An, Kon Tum and Ha Tinh) with a same objective of strengthening citizen-government engagement as a means of promoting more transparent, accountable and responsive local governance, improved service delivery and increased levels of citizen satisfaction. Belgium’s government contribution to the project is € 1,000,000 . The Vietnamese contribution for Nghe An is equivalent to € 150,000.

The project design is based on a thorough analysis of the national and specific provincial context with regard to government-citizen interactions at policy and operational level. It builds also on previous experiences of Belgium bilateral cooperation in the province through the Poverty Reduction through Institutional Strengthening (PORIS) project, and its contribution to the improvement of socio-economic planning & development practice in a decentralized framework. Notwithstanding the demonstrated commitment of provincial authorities, and continuous efforts made to improve local government performance and service delivery, a number of challenges remain to be overcome for a more responsive and accountable local governance in Nghe An province.

The theory of change for this project is that to contribute to the improvement of local social, economic and administrative service delivery and increasing citizen satisfaction with local government performance one should focus on two main strategic areas : (i) increasing citizen feedback and engagement on policies and local government performance at all levels; and (ii) increasing local government capacities, at all levels, to access, analyse and utilize citizen feedback.

The project specific objective is “Improved citizen-government interaction leading to improved service delivery and increased citizen satisfaction. It has five expected results as follows:

- Improved capacity of local government at all levels to disseminate information in a citizen-friendly manner.
- Improved capacity of People’s Councils and Mass Organizations, and specifically PIBs and CISBs to facilitate and promote improved two-way communication between citizens and government at all levels.
- Improved capacity of local government at all levels to collect, analyse and utilize citizen feedback in a transparent and deliberative fashion for more responsive and accountable local governance and improved service delivery.
- Improved capacity for local government at all levels to identify, plan, coordinate and oversee public administrative reforms in response to engagement with citizens and socio-political organizations
- The exchange and effective utilization of innovations, lessons learned and good practices with regard to citizen-government interactions; is promoted at provincial and national level

Building on PORIS experience, the project will support provincial efforts to render Commune –Socio-economic development planning (C-SEDP) implementation and management processes more inclusive and participatory so that the C-SEDP can serve as a main, province-wide platform for the promotion of increased citizen participation in the development process as well as more transparent, responsive and accountable local governance.

The Provincial People's Committee (PPC) of Nghe An is the administrative entity responsible for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the project, and for the Vietnamese contribution to the project. The Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) , by means of a Project Management Unit (PMU), will provide technical leadership for the coordination of project implementation. A DPI senior manager will be appointed to serve as Project Director. BTC will recruit an international technical advisor (ITA) (shared by the 3 provinces) and a full time national expert (NE) to support key stakeholders in the achievement of project's results.

Immediate beneficiaries of the project include : (i) People Committees and People Councils at the provincial, district and commune levels, participating line agencies (including Home Affairs, Planning and Investment, Justice , Finance etc..) who will benefit from the technical assistance and capacity building support provided under the project, (ii) The Vietnamese Fatherland Front (VFF) members and members of mass organizations at the provincial, district and commune levels who will benefit from organizational development and capacity building support which will enable them to better perform their core functions and (iii) the citizens of selected communes in 3 districts (Quy Chau (12 communes), Quy Hop (10 communes), and Cua Lo (8 communes)) where main project activities will be implemented.

The objective is also that all citizens of Vietnam could be indirect beneficiaries of the project through benefiting from the knowledge products, lessons learned, good practices generated in the province and beyond its boundaries, as well as through the dialogue strengthened at policy level with regard to the issue of citizen-government interactions.

While each project is situated within a unique socio-economic and politico-administrative context, mutual learning and cross-fertilization between the three provincial interventions is a common feature of each of the three projects. Shared technical assistance and common quality assurance mechanisms are foreseen to encourage synergies. Resources will be provided for sharing pilot experiences and lessons learned emanating from this project with other national institutions interested in the promotion of greater citizen-government interaction. In particular, collaboration will be developed with universities and other national institutions, such as the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics (HCMAP), on specific small research action projects which focus on innovations for improved local government performance. These exchanges will feed into the dialogue at policy level between the Belgian and Vietnamese Authorities to facilitate scaling up and knowledge sharing at national level as well as linkages with other DP's and NGO's involved in the issues of citizen engagement and social accountability in Vietnam. Complementarities with NGO's which have already developed citizen assessment and feedback mechanisms will be ensured.

The project will be pro-active in efforts to make innovative and appropriate use of information & communication technologies (ICT) in strategies for achieving planned objectives. Emerging mobile phone technologies such as M-score, websites, online helpdesks and hotlines, and relevant e-governance applications will be considered as key elements for project support.

ANALYTICAL RECORD OF THE INTERVENTION

DGD Intervention Number	NN 30117553
BTC Navision Code	VIE 1505011
Partner institution	People's Committee Department of Planning (implementing agency)
Duration Specific Agreement	Will end on 30/06/2019
Project Duration (Execution)	3 years (Closure at the latest 30/06/2019)
Start date	2016
Partner contribution	€ 150,000
Belgium contribution	€ 1,000,000
Sector (DAC codes)	15110: Public sector policy and administrative management
Global objective	Accelerated social and economic development in Nghe An Province through more responsive, transparent and accountable local governance.
Specific objective	Improved citizen-government interaction leading to improved service delivery and increased citizen satisfaction.
Results	<p>R1 Improved capacity of local government at all levels to disseminate information in a citizen-friendly manner.</p> <p>R2 Improved capacity of People's Councils and Mass Organizations, and specifically People's Inspection Boards (PIBs) and Community Inspection and Supervision Boards (CISBs) to facilitate and promote improved two-way communication between citizens and government at all levels.</p> <p>R3 Improved capacity of local government at all levels to collect, analyze and utilize citizen feedback in a transparent and deliberative fashion for more responsive and accountable local governance and improved service delivery.</p> <p>R 4 Improved capacity for local government at all levels to identify, plan, coordinate and oversee public administrative reforms in response to engagement with citizens and socio-political organizations.</p> <p>R5 The exchange and effective utilization of innovations, lessons learned and good practices with regard to citizen-government interactions; is promoted at provincial and national level.</p>

1 SITUATION ANALYSIS

1.1 Introduction

The Belgium-Vietnam Indicative Cooperation Programme (ICP) 2011-2015 has confirmed governance as a priority sector. In this context, the Extended Joint Working Team of November 2014 decided to allocate an amount of € 3,000,000 (Belgium contribution) to be divided equally between governance projects in three provinces: Nghe An, Kon Tum and Ha Tinh. The three projects, referred to as “Support for Responsive, Accountable Local Governance” (RALG) have the same overall objective of strengthening citizen-government engagement as a means of promoting more transparent, accountable and responsive local governance, improved service delivery and increased levels of citizen satisfaction. Each project is situated within a unique socio-economic and politico-administrative context which will inform the design and implementation strategy of each project. Mutual learning and cross-fertilization between the three provincial interventions is a common feature of each of the three projects.

1.2 National context

Vietnam is widely recognized for the political and economic transformation it has achieved starting from 1986 with the launch of the *Doi Moi* program of renewal. The reforms undertaken have transformed Vietnam from one of the poorest nations in the world to a middle-income country within thirty years. This dramatic growth, with per capita income rising from below US\$100 to an estimated at US\$1,596 in 2012, has coincided with a dramatic reduction in poverty from 58 to 14 per cent between 1993 and 2008 and an estimated 11.8 per cent in 2011.¹

While development indicators have improved and a number of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were achieved ahead of schedule, new challenges are emerging as Vietnam enters a new phase of development. Continued success in the creation of a more equitable and prosperous society will depend on the regulation of economic growth in environmentally sustainable ways, improved governance, and the more equitable distribution of wealth and social services across society.

1.2.1 Vietnam’s Sustainable Development Strategy (SEDS) 2011-2020

Vietnam’s Sustainable Development Strategy (SEDS) 2011-2020 is the comprehensive policy framework for sustainable social and economic growth and development. The SEDS highlights the need for a new economic model to ensure greater balance between economic growth and social, human and sustainable development goals so that all citizens benefit from the development process and the most vulnerable and disadvantaged are not left behind.

With respect to the governance arrangements required for its implementation, the Strategy makes reference to the imperative to: “...*enhance the effectiveness of State management towards accelerating administrative reform, improving transparency of national administration and fighting corruption; coordination among relevant stakeholders in implementing the Strategy and the consolidation of apparatus at all levels to undertake management work of sustainable development.*”²

Particular reference is also made to the need to mobilize citizens and socio-political institutions to: “...*speed up dissemination and education to raise the whole society’s awareness of sustainable*

¹ UNDP Website: <http://www.vn.undp.org/content/vietnam/en/home/countryinfo.html>

² Report on socio-economic development in 2014 and major tasks for 2015 at the 8th working session of the 13th National Assembly on October 2014.

*development; Design and realize communication programs appropriate to each type of subjects; Promote the role and responsibility of mass media like television, radio and press agencies for improving people's awareness of guidelines, policies and Strategy on sustainable development; Mobilize the participation of mass organizations like the Fatherland Front, Women's Union, Youth Union, Veterans' Association, Farmers' Association, Student Association, etc... in communication work concerning sustainable development".*³

SEDS implementation performance is assessed regularly. The "Report on socio-economic development in 2014 and major tasks for 2015" was critical of performance in the areas of anti-corruption and anti-wastefulness. The report concluded that the review, amendment and supplementation of the stipulation on corruption and wastefulness prevention and control remained slow, measures to counter corruption in many agencies were not effectively carried out, the efficiency of inspection was not high, the rate of reclaiming corrupted assets was low, and that the waste of time and resources remained important. It found that some ministries, agencies and localities did not pay due attention to citizen reception, settlement of complaints and denunciations and that there are lot of land-related complaints.

In response to these findings, for 2015 the Government of Vietnam (GoV) re-emphasized highest-level political demand for improved transparency, accountability and responsiveness in the public sector and a significant reduction in corruption and wastefulness. It is expected that at all levels of government efforts will be redoubled to make improvements on a wide variety of fronts including: the review, amendment and creation of legal regulations and measures to counter corruption and wastefulness, heightening the accountability of agencies, leaders, cadres, civil servants and public employees, strengthening the efficiency of State management, particularly over fields that give rise to corruption and wastefulness, and upholding the role of the Vietnam Fatherland Front (VFF), socio-political organizations, information and communication agencies and people in the fight against corruption and wastefulness.⁴

1.2.2 Enabling Environment for SEDS Implementation

As a policy instrument to support the achievement of larger SEDS objectives the GoV developed a Public Administration Reform Master Program (PAR) 2011-2020. Key objectives of this second generation reform program⁵ include:

- i. To build a system of open, clean, strong, modern, effective and efficient state administrative agencies from central to grassroots levels, and promote democracy and the rule of law in executive activities of the Government and state administrative agencies; and
- ii. To guarantee the exercise of democratic rights of the people in reality and protect human rights in association with the interests of the nation.

Among the key tasks falling under the PAR Master Program (2011-2020) are:

- i. To build and perfect laws on the relationships between the State and the people, focusing on guaranteeing and promoting the people's mastery, collecting the people's opinions before deciding on important guidelines and policies, and on the people's right to oversee activities of state administrative agencies; and
- ii. To reduce, and improve the quality of, administrative procedures in all fields of state administration, especially those related to citizens and enterprises.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The first generation PAR Master Program was implemented over the period 2001-2010

Over the recent past other legislation have been enacted to create an enabling environment for the realization of ambitions to establish more transparent, accountable and responsive local government and the achievement of high levels of citizen satisfaction with the delivery of social and administrative services.

The Law on Organization of Local Government (2015), the Ordinance on Grass Roots Democracy No. 34/2007/PL-UBTVQH11, the State Budget Law (2015), the Law on Public Investment (2015) and the Inspection Law (2010) all provide legal determinations of roles and responsibilities of State and non-State actors at the central, provincial, district and commune levels to engage together to ensure high standards of disclosure, accountability and transparency are maintained and that citizen perspectives are obtained and utilized to inform government decision-making at all levels.

The political demand for local government strengthening is reflected in the mechanism created to monitor the implementation of PAR Master Program (2011-2020). The PAR Index, established by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) in 2012, addresses all the themes of the plan including: i) PAR planning and implementation; ii) institutional development and implementation; iii) administrative procedure reform; iv) administrative organization structure reform; v) human resource development; and vi) administrative modernization. The Index contains two elements: a self-assessment of ministries/provinces, verified by the Department of Home Affairs (DoHA), of the extent to which the national PAR policies have been implemented at the provincial level (worth 60% of the total score); and a qualitative survey of citizens' satisfaction at the provincial level (worth 40% of the total score).

Another high profile tool for assessing governance performance is the Provincial Governance and Public Administration Reform Index (PAPI). PAPI assesses three mutually reinforcing processes: policymaking, policy implementation and the monitoring of public service delivery. The philosophy behind PAPI's innovative policy monitoring approach is that citizens are seen as "end-users of public administrative services" capable of assessing governance and public administration in their localities. The end result is Vietnam's first publically available dataset providing an objective evaluation of governance from the perspective of citizens. Based on this citizen input, PAPI provides a set of objective indicators that help assess the performance in governance and public administration, while at the same time providing an incentive for provinces to improve their performance over the long term.

1.2.3 National-level Governance Sector Programming in Vietnam

The context for governance sector programming in Vietnam needs to be seen from the perspective of Vietnam's new status as a lower middle-income country. While international Development Partners (DPs) appreciate the progress Vietnam has made, many (e.g. UK, Sweden, the Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, etc.) are making plans to withdraw from Vietnam and focus attention on less well-off countries. Belgium, having announced its intention to complete its bilateral cooperation with Vietnam by June 2019, is no exception.

DPs remaining in Vietnam seem to have shifted their focus from service delivery to governance and justice, and from central government to sub-national agencies and civil society. There is growing interest in evidence-based, networked, and coalition-based approaches⁶.

For DPs who are continuing to program in Vietnam, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the European Union (EU), governance and justice are key areas of focus and the GoV has welcomed support in these areas. The initial PAR Master Program (2001-2010) been completed with good progress with respect to one-stop shops (OSSs). The second PAR Master Program (2011-2020) is being supported by UNDP. There is growing interest in evidence-based approaches,

⁶ Study to review and assess impacts of Belgian interventions in Governance sector, 2015.

monitoring through measuring, and accountability through competition. There is a related interest in the stimulation of demand, including citizens' feedback, and advocacy for greater information disclosure and accountability. The focus is on nurturing the change makers rather than the DPs being change makers themselves, and the use of coalition-based approaches to cooperation (e.g. UK, Sweden, NL, Denmark, Switzerland, etc.). There is also significant DP interest in supporting the fight against corruption in Vietnam.

Human rights and justice is a growing area in the context of Vietnam's entry into the United Nations' Human Rights Council in 2014, a growing awareness of rights-based approaches to development programming, and the advocacy of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and DPs.

UNDP supports Vietnam's efforts to improve the quality of public administrative services through the introduction of e-services at local OSSs and human resource reforms to improve the leadership style, quality and the ethical behaviour of public servants. UNDP supports the PAR implementation in Bac Giang, Danang, and Ha Tinh.

With a focus on children, UNICEF also increasingly gets involved in governance and public management capacity development in Vietnam. UNICEF works on improving local participation in local planning and budgeting, the capacity building of elected bodies in interacting and consulting with children, especially vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. UNICEF is also increasingly involved in voicing citizen's perspective through citizen score-cards and transparent budgeting.

The World Bank has a large portfolio of projects related to governance and improved public management. The World Bank supports a 97,000,000 SDR (Special Drawing Rights) project designed to enhance living standards by improving livelihood opportunities in selected communes of upland districts of the central highlands of Vietnam. The project is active in Kon Tum province under the leadership of Department of Planning and Investment (DPI). The World Bank recently published a synthesis paper of user feedback pilot schemes in four Vietnamese provinces. The report acknowledges the need for local government to make use of citizen's feedback to improve service delivery.

USAID is one of the important donors in Vietnam. USAID programs in Vietnam support the country's continued development by focusing resources where they're needed most for economic growth, higher education, health security, social services for vulnerable populations, and the environment. USAID supports the Vietnam Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) measuring economic governance for business development. USAID will provide some support (technical assistance) to Kon Tum province to improve their PCI score.

Many NGOs, including OXFAM and PLAN, support governance improvement in Vietnam. Oxfam Vietnam focuses on empowering communities and civil society to take part in public policy, the social and economic development of the country, and strengthened governance (rule of law) and government accountability.

OXFAM Vietnam is currently implementing a mobile phone-based citizen score-card on public services in Quang Tri province (M-score). This initiative, piloted for the first time in Vietnam, establishes a mechanism for people to give and receive real time feedback on public service delivery. As such, the M-score can be seen as a tool for government authorities and elected bodies to monitor public service delivery as well as government transparency and accountability.

M-Score complements tools like PAPI in providing government with citizen feedback. M-score can be customized for specific services and geographical areas, providing localized and precise data on government services. In Quang Tri province, the M-score focuses on administrative services provided through OSSs. Preliminary evaluation of the pilot reveals M-score has contributed directly to reforms leading to improvements in the quality of the services provided.

1.2.4 Stakeholders in the Local Government System

Vietnam is divided into provinces and cities under direct central rule. Vietnam's 63 provinces are divided into districts and districts are divided into communes. Those three tiers (province, district and commune) together are known as the sub-national administrative level in Vietnam. While communes are further divided into wards in urban areas and villages in rural areas, wards and villages are considered residential community rather than an official administrative level. With about 55% of the overall state expenditure and 75% of capital expenditures made at the sub-national level (World Bank, 2014), Vietnam is a highly decentralized country comparatively. A recent World Bank study on fiscal decentralization (WB, 2015) concluded that while there has been significant decentralized spending, arrangements for transparency, accountability and oversight require further strengthening for the system to be effective.

The local government system is organized and operates in accordance with the principles of being modern, transparent, intended for the people, and subject to the people's supervision. Local governments at the provincial, district and commune levels have a popularly elected People's Councils (PCc) which are defined as the local organ of state power. It represents the will, aspirations and mastery of the people. It is elected by the local people and is accountable to them and to the superior state organs.

The executive organ of PCc at all levels is the People's Committee (PC). The PC, as the local organ of state administration, is responsible for implementing the normative documents issued by higher-level state organs as well as the resolutions of the People's Cc. The PC is elected by the PCc at the same level.

The VFF is the umbrella group for socio-political mass organizations in Vietnam. As defined in the Law of VFF 1999, the Front is "the political base of people's power." It is intended to have a significant role in society, promoting "national solidarity" and "unity of mind in political and spiritual matters." Many of the government's social programs are conducted through the VFF.

Recent legislation has clarified the working relationships between the VFF and local government. Article 15 of the Law on Organization of Local Government (2015) stipulates that local governments shall assist the VFF Committee and socio-political organizations in encouraging the people to get involved in building and strengthening the people's government, organizing the implementation of State policies and laws, and carrying out the social supervision and judgment of local government's activities. This law also requires the PCc and PC to provide the VFF Committee and same-level socio-political organizations with updated information about their activities, and holds local governments responsible for listening to, dealing with, and responding to recommendations of local VFF and socio-political organizations on government organization and socio-economic development at all levels.

The Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) is the socio-political organization representing the legal and legitimate rights and interests of Vietnamese women across all levels of society. The VWU strives for women's development and gender equality and is a member of the VFF. Currently, the VWU has 15 million members. Its main tasks include: i) providing communication, education and mobilization of women to implement laws and policies, uphold fine virtues and enhance their capacity and awareness; ii) mobilizing and assisting women in nurturing happy and sustainable families; iii) mobilizing and assisting women in economic development, sustainable poverty reduction, and environmental protection; iv) advising, proposing, participating in the development of laws and policies on gender equality and social counter arguments to such laws, and monitoring enforcement.

The Vietnam Farmers' Association is the organization which mobilizes, encourages, and educates farmers and defends the legitimate rights and interests of members. It is obliged to mobilize farmers to engage in agricultural development policies, to criticize government policies, implement the Party's directives, and to coordinate with other organizations in implementing social, economic and cultural development projects, programs and schemes in rural areas.

The Youth Union is the largest social-political organization of Vietnamese youth that gather and motivate

youth to participate in social and economic development activities and governance. It is obliged to promote and protect legitimate rights of youth.

The Inspection Law (2010), the Law on Public Investment (2015), the State Budget Law (2015) all formalize the VFFs key oversight role with respect to budget planning and management, the supervision of public investments, and compliance with national policy directives and regulations at all levels.

The Inspection Law (2010) defines the functions and responsibilities of the inspectorate system in Vietnam, and in particular the arrangements for the establishment and operation of People's Inspection Boards (PIB). PIBs are established in communes and wards under the leadership of VFF. Commune PC leaders are responsible for facilitating their operation. PIBs are responsible for supervising the implementation of legislation and policies, including the ordinance on grassroots democracy, and facilitating solutions for citizens' complaints and denunciations in communes. PIBs are also in charge of advising Commune PC concerning solutions to correct errors and misconduct and the protection of the rights and entitlements of citizens. PIB members are elected through meetings of citizens' representatives in the commune organized through the VFF. PIB membership can range between 5 to 11 members. Public servants in Commune PC cannot be PIB's members. PIB's term is 2 years.

Regulations⁷ are also in place for the community supervision of public investment. This role can be managed by the PIB if it has enough capacities, or through the establishment of Community Investment Supervision Boards (CISB) by the VFF. CISBs are comprised of a Chair, a Vice Chair and 3-7 members who are selected by citizens from the short list of candidates set by the VFF Committee. CISBs supervise projects funded by public contributions and state budget in its locality. CISB supervision responsibilities include: (i) a review of the relevance of investment decisions in plans including socio-economic development master plan, sector development master plan, land use master plan, and the infrastructure development and settlement master plan, (ii) the monitoring and supervision of investors and contractors conformity with land use and environmental protection plans, (iii) the supervision of contractors' work and overall monitoring of project implementation, and (iv) the acceptance of completed work and finalization of investment spending. Operation of CISB is funded from commune budget as a part of VFF operation budget.

1.2.5 Other Stakeholders of relevance to the project

The Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics (HCMAP) is a national centre for the training of mid- and high-ranking government leaders and managers and political science researchers. The Academy falls under the auspices of the Party Central Committee and is under the direct leadership and instruction of the Political Bureau and the Secretariat of the Party Central Committee.

The HCMAP has played a pioneering role in helping the provinces of Vietnam to analyse their PAPI scores as a means of having a more informed basis for preparing Action Plans to improve the service delivery and local governance and increase levels of citizen satisfaction. The HCMAP has supported Ha Giang, An Giang and Phu Yen provinces, and more recently Nghe An province, in undertaking assessments of the effectiveness of PAR based on PAPI scores. Those assessments have informed the PAPI-response Action Plans subsequently developed by the provinces.

The HCMAP might be supported by the Study Fund of the Belgium Embassy to undertake a study of the implementation of PAPI-response Action Plans and key success factors. The objectives of this study are three fold: i) to provide analysis and recommendations which can be incorporated into PAPI-response and PAR Action Plans; ii) to enable the development of a training curriculum on the devolution of authorities closer to the people; and iii) to provide for the professional development of HCMAP lecturers and

⁷ In particular PM Decision 80/2005/ and circular No. 04/2006/TTLT QD-Ttg for its implementation

researchers. Opportunities will be explored concerning a possible involvement of the role HCMAP in this project. To this end, special attention will be devoted to ensuring there are synergies and complementarity between Study Fund and project-supported HCMAP activities and that the duplication of efforts does not occur.

1.3 The Provincial Context: Nghe An Province

Nghe An is the largest province in Vietnam having a natural area of 16,500 km². It also has the fourth largest population which is estimated at 3.2 million. Nghe An has a diversified topography including coastal, river delta, midland and mountainous regions. There are 21 district-level administrative units in Nghe An and 480 commune-level administrative units. Nghe An is famous for its learning passion and excellence, creativity and successful endeavours in various sectors. Nghe An has 6 universities, 11 colleges, 15 vocational school and 70 technical training centers which annually provide training for 35,000 students and 50,000 technical workers.

From an economic perspective Nghe An can be seen to be comprised of two regions which are quite different in terms of level of development and cultural diversity. The eleven western districts are located in difficult to reach, remote mountainous areas characterized by their largely ethnic minority and low income populations. These districts receive significant subsidies from the provincial government. The remaining ten districts in eastern part of province are considerably more productive and economically developed than their western counterparts. The majority of the population in the eastern region of Nghe An is of the dominant Kinh ethnic group.

Belgium has been active in Nghe An province through the recently completed Poverty Reduction through Institutional Strengthening at the Provincial and District-levels project (PORIS) implemented over the period 2009-2014. The PORIS project was implemented by the Province of Nghe An with the objective of strengthening local institutional capacities for decentralised planning and the management of pro-poor growth, poverty reduction, and socio-economic development. In Quy Chau district a Commune Development Fund (CDF) was piloted which provided resources for the funding of locally identified socio-economic development projects. Over the course of four planning cycles communes learned how to implement a new participatory planning and budgeting approach and were able to finance local development priorities (e.g. small-scale infrastructure, local economic development projects) using the CDF. PORIS demonstrated that commune-driven development is effective because it increases local contributions and facilitates community owned, sustainable local development initiatives. It also paves the way for increased transparency and accountability.

Building on the successes of PORIS, in March 2014 provincial authorities approved a new regulatory framework and Commune Socio-Economic Development Plan (C-SEDP) guidelines for province-wide application. To further institutionalize innovations generated by PORIS the province is considering a number of follow-up actions including the establishment of linkages between the planning function and public administration reform, and the establishment of an M&E framework for C-SEDP management and implementation.

Through this project, Belgium cooperation became aware of the notable efforts being made within Nghe An to implement public administrative reforms including the simplification of a full 60% of administrative procedures. Nghe An is currently implementing an Action Plan to Improve the Effectiveness of Public Administration and Governance (2015) to meet objectives and targets in the following areas: (i) improved local citizen participation ; (ii) strengthened transparency and public disclosure; (iii) improved vertical accountability ; (iv) improved corruption control arrangements in the local public sector; (iv) simplified administrative procedures; and (v) improved quality of public services including health, educational and administrative services and improved infrastructure networks.

A detailed presentation of this plan is provided in Annex 7.3.

1.3.1 Key Observations on the Programming Context in Nghe An Province

Notwithstanding the demonstrated commitment of provincial authorities, and continuous efforts made to improve local government performance and service delivery, during the formulation mission local partners highlighted a number of challenges which remain to be overcome if the planned objectives RALG – Nghe An are to be achieved. The most significant of these are presented below:

1.3.1.1 Concerning Citizen-Government Interactions

- Legal framework for citizen participation exists but implementation is still posing important challenges. The main channels for citizen consultations are through the PCs and mass organizations. Yet broad-based citizen participation is often constrained by bureaucratic rigidities, capacity limitations, entrenched attitudes, and the absence of practical strategies and tools to permit the two-way dialogue with citizens system envisioned in the laws.

Citizen consultation currently often tends to be formalistic and one directional.

- Citizens are seen by public servants to be indifferent and non-responsive to information disseminated through the local government system. There are large numbers of policies, laws, decrees, and programs being disseminated through the local government system. These are generally articulated in a technical, legalistic fashion not well suited to most commune-level audiences.
- The one-way flow of technical information tends to result in citizen fatigue and a narrowing of the range of issues on which citizens are prepared to engage on i.e. issues of direct benefit.
- Citizens tend to provide feedback on government policies rather than government performance. This is in part due to the highly administrative approach departments employ to solicit citizen feedback, and also to the increased emphasis government now places on citizen satisfaction and the use of citizen feedback to improve local governance and service delivery.
- With respect to channels for citizen participation and oversight of public action there is a need to improve transparency and accountability through the strengthening of PIBs and CISBs. Particular reference here is on the development of operations manuals to document skills requirements, methodologies, strategies and tools for CISBs and PIBs to be able to more effectively play their oversight role in policy and project implementation and to liaise constructively with local authorities.
- For many government officials citizen dissatisfaction is seen as being the result of a lack of understanding of relevant policies and programs rather than due to deficient public service delivery. Citizens are considered apathetic and lacking capacity to understand government propaganda.
- The typical response to a citizen complaint is to issue an administrative clarification or explanation, as soon as possible, on a case-by-case basis. This approach to resolving citizen's queries and complaints makes it difficult for provincial leadership to be aware of issues and administrative arrangements which require more substantive deliberative attention.
- The prevailing attitude of public servants is one of government *managers* rather than public *servants*. Public service is more often seen as an administrative exercise where compliance with policy seems takes priority over the effective and efficient provision of services to citizens and citizen satisfaction.
- Local government personnel tend to equate public administrative reform with a limited range of proxy indicators set out in the PAPI, PCI, and PAR indexes

- Political leadership understands the need for independent mechanisms for citizen feedback, and that the feedback generated through government-managed systems may not accurately reflect citizens' perspectives. There is clear political demand for more sources of credible data on citizens' perceptions. Political leadership recognizes that such information is essential for the identification of specific areas and levels of the local government system where reforms are most required.
- There exists widespread interest among all stakeholders groups, especially the Provincial PCc to employ M-score technology, as a means of securing real time citizen feedback on, at a minimum, the administrative services delivered at OSSs and inter-agency OSSs. There has also been expressed strong interest in considering other applications for M-Score technology including for obtaining citizen feedback on the C-SEDP implementation.

1.3.1.2 Concerning Programme Design and Management:

- There exists strong political demand and leadership for the project and its objectives from the PC and DPI. This is demonstrated by the creation of a detailed provincial PAR Action Plan which includes PAPI score targets, engagement with the HCMAP to assist with the analysis of PAPI scores and the preparation of the post-PAPI action plan, and the emerging partnership with Oxfam to implement M-Score technology to capture citizen feedback on public administrative reform (OSSs) and C-SEDP implementation.
- The greatest interaction between government and citizens takes place at the commune level. There is consensus among all stakeholders that strategic focus of the project should be on strengthening capacities of commune-level stakeholders and on improved district-commune-level working relationships. The strategic role of provincial level stakeholders lies in the areas of coordination and oversight of project implementation at the district and commune levels, and the coordination of provincial in and utilization of knowledge and innovation exchanges with colleagues from Ha Tinh and Kon Tum provinces.
- Main entry points for RALG – Nghe An will be on strengthening citizen feedback on OSSs and on the citizen friendly implementation of the C-SEDP. Public administrative reform in terms of the establishment of OSSs is well advanced in Nghe An province. The strengthening of citizen feedback mechanisms on these administrative units is both timely and highly appropriate. With respect the C-SEDP process, emphasis will be placed not only on citizen participation in the planning process, but also on the implementation of plans in terms of the final determination of public investments, procurement, tendering, and project supervision. Focus will be on strengthening inter-governmental, especially district-commune-level, working relationships, communication and oversight.
- There exist strong capacities for project management. In Nghe An province. The Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) has considerable experience in managing ODA projects, including Belgian-funded projects, using the national execution modality. Local personnel who have experience working with BTC will be mobilized into the provincial Project Management Unit (PMU) for the RALG – Nghe An project which is under DPI. There are also senior officials working at the level of District PCs who have experience working with BTC and are highly motivated to oversee project implementation and success in their jurisdictions.

2 STRATEGIC ORIENTATIONS

Presented below are guiding principles for project design as well as discussion of how technical assistance will be strategically deployed to support project implementation and the achievement of planned results. The discussion which follows is informed by two fixed features of the programming context including:

- The project time frame and budget are absolutely fixed. The planned date for project implementation to commence is June 2016 and the date by which all aspects of project implementation must be completed is June 2019. The Belgian contribution to the project in Nghe An project is limited to euro 1.0 million
- There will be three similar projects being implemented in Nghe An, Ha Tinh and Kon Tum provinces. There will be horizontal linkages established between project operations to achieve management efficiencies and enable the sharing of studies, assessments, lessons learned and good practices across provinces for replication or application where ever possible and appropriate.

2.1 Alignment to provincial priorities and plans

It is essential that the project be responsive to local priorities and political demand. The project intervention framework (see Chapter 3, below) will be overlaid onto provincial Action Plans (such as PAPI and PAR action plans) under implementation at the time of project approval. Additional analysis of the current situation on public administration reform in the three districts participating in the project (see section 3.6 below) will be provided at project start. This will provide structured flexibility for the project to contribute to the achievement of priority local results.

The project will be responsive to local dynamics and stakeholder relationships by placing special emphasis on strengthening vertical (between government levels) and horizontal (between actors across government departments) interaction between stakeholders central to the achievement of project objectives.

Furthermore, the strategic orientation of the project will be on strengthening capacities of stakeholders at the commune-level and on improved district-commune-level working relationships. This is because the greatest interaction between government and citizens takes place at the commune level and this is the level where capacities and effective tools and procedures are particularly limited.

The strategic role of provincial-level stakeholders will be to provide political and technical leadership for the coordination and oversight of project implementation at the district and commune levels. A second key role of provincial-level implementing partners is to play a leadership role in the implementation of knowledge and skills exchanges with other provinces.

Overall, the project will be inclusive in terms of strengthening working relationships collaboration between the main socio-political stakeholder groups in Vietnamese society. Key stakeholders include the VFF and other mass organizations, government departments, and the PCc and PC at the provincial, district and commune levels.

2.2 Balancing short-term results with long-term vision

The project design and ambitions must be kept realistic and practically implementable. To expedite project mobilization and results achievement the project will support elements of provincial strategies and

plans which are of fundamental and direct relevance to the achievement of planned RALG – Nghe An project objectives.

Though provincial action plans will necessarily have a province-wide scope and comprehensive character, the project design and scope-of-work must be informed by the fixed time and financial parameters of the project and actual capacities of implementing partners. Strategic emphasis will be placed on ensuring that project resources and technical assistance generate short to medium-term results that can be replicated, transferred or mainstreamed as appropriate under a longer-term vision.

2.3 'Structured flexibility' for iterative project management

The project design will be sufficiently flexible to accommodate iterative project management. This will allow the project to adapt to implementation experience and new opportunities and innovations which arise over the course of the project. Management decision-making will be informed by sound and continuous analysis and understanding the drivers and constraints to change. Bilateral and technical dialogue will be supported with dedicated resources and tools.

Measures to be taken to promote and facilitate iterative project management include: the conduct of a baseline comprehensive exercise at the beginning of the project to permit evidence-based planning and decision-making, short cycles of planning and monitoring, the conduct of annual reviews involving the three provinces, and the conduct of regular backstopping missions to feed into ongoing reflection processes.

The systematic update of PAPI and PAR improvement plans on the basis of regular citizens feedback (such as M-Score, PAR Index or the annual PAPI indexes) will also feed into this iterative management.

2.4 Multiple, complementary technical assistance modalities

The project will promote mutual learning where stakeholders learn together and collectively how to improve communication, coordination and collaboration amongst themselves. Multiple mechanisms will be employed to support, facilitate, and to a certain extent frame learning opportunities and innovation.

In this regard, technical assistance will take different forms and assume different roles to facilitate changes in institutional, organisational and individual capacities.

An international technical advisor (ITA), to be shared between the three RALG provincial projects, will be responsible for the coordination of change processes supported by the project in each province and across provinces. The ITA will also provide technical support for project implementation in each of the three RALG provinces on a part-time basis. Such senior technical assistance is required not only to analyse and navigate the complex context of local governance and identify learning opportunities. It is also required to identify key challenges and opportunities relating to the longer-term evolution of citizen-government partnerships. The long-term ITA will be responsible for assuring coherence between activities included in project action plans as well as ensuring the different activities planned are realistically implementable and likely to contribute to the achievement of the Specific Objective. The ITA also has an important role to play in networking with national-level stakeholders and coordinating the identification and mobilization of Vietnamese and external service providers.

One full-time national technical advisor (NTA) will support province-level project planning, coordination, oversight and reporting. The NTA will contribute to the identification of specialized technical support required to support reform/change processes at the organisational and individual levels. The NTA will also serve as coach and knowledge broker to help develop skills and potentials of local government personnel and other stakeholder organizations for change management and deliberative dialogue.

Short and/or medium-term specialized expertise will be required where implementing partners require a level of technical support which is beyond the mandate or ability of the ITA or NTA. This type of technical assistance will support the strengthening of organizational capacities of stakeholder groups as well as the professional capacities of individuals through skills enhancement, on-the-job training, coaching, etc.

Where more than one province requires technical support of a similar nature, consideration will be accorded to the recruitment of national-level service providers (including, possibly, national research or academic institutions) who could be mobilized to provide support to multiple provinces using a variety of methodologies. This approach can result in cost efficiencies, facilitate improved information, knowledge transfer and learning across provinces.

Periodic technical backstopping missions by BTC will be organised. The focus of these missions will be the technical content of the work being carried out by the projects. These missions will be undertaken twice during the first year of project implementation and once per year for the balance of the project period. The issues raised during these missions can contribute to timely management decision-making and beneficial adjustments to implementation plans and strategies.

2.5 Internal coherency and complementarities with other donor's support

The project will build on existing capacities and relations BTC has developed in Nghe An. Reference here is made to capitalizing on project management capacities created through previous BTC interventions which can be utilized to achieve timely and effective project mobilization and implementation.

The project will be informed by the experiences of other donors or NGOs working in Nghe An. This will permit the creation of synergies, complementarity, and the creation of longer-term sustainability strategies.

The project will seek to promote and ensure coherence and complementarities between Belgium-supported interventions in the area of government–citizen communication and engagement. For example, Oxfam has developed the M-score technology as a tool to allow citizens to provide feedback to local government on the delivery of selected administrative services at OSSs. The M-score tool has direct relevance and application to the RALG – Nghe An project in that it can be used to provide local authorities with complementary, credible and independent citizen feedback on local government performance and service delivery. Nghe An province has already approached OXFAM to roll out M-score in the province. The Nghe An People's Committee is not only interested in using M-score technology to provide enable citizen feedback on OSS performance. It would also like to see M-score adapted to provide citizen feedback on C-SEDP implementation. Financial support for M-score implementation in Nghe An and other RALG provinces could possibly be mobilized through a call for proposals for Belgian NGOs in Vietnam to be launched in March 2016.

The HCMAP could be a partner of the project by undertaking further analysis of citizen satisfaction survey reports to which could be used to improve the relevance and efficacy of local PAR reforms and efforts to improve service delivery.

3 INTERVENTION FRAMEWORK

3.1 Overall Theory of Change

From the key observations on the programming context in Nghe An presented in Chapter 1 a conceptual framework for programming or “Theory of Change” (ToC) can be generated.

A priority for political leadership at all levels is to deliver effective public administration reform as a means of improving social, economic and administrative service delivery and increasing citizen satisfaction with local government performance. More transparent, accountable and responsive local governance is seen as a necessary condition for the successful implementation of the National SEDS (2011-2020). This requires on-going, two-way, government-citizen dialogue so that areas of performance shortfall can be identified and addressed and the adequacy of policies can be critically assessed and refined as necessary.

In the case of Nghe An province, relatively low levels of citizen satisfaction with local government performance have been confirmed through citizen surveys including the PAPI Index (see Nghe An PAPI profile in Annex 7.4). This contrasts with the higher levels of citizen satisfaction suggested through the citizen feedback mechanisms administered by the bureaucracy.

There are comprehensive arrangements in place for the dissemination of information to citizens and citizen engagement. These arrangements, and the manner in which public servants tend to implement them, often results in the dissemination of information which is difficult for citizens to understand and is perceived to be of questionable relevance. Further, citizens often consider arrangements for engagement with government to be rather rigid and formalistic and not oriented towards the promotion of sustained two-way dialogue.

Mass Organizations including the VFF, VWU, the Youth Union and others have an important and expanding role to play in facilitating dialogue between government and citizens. Their capacity to implement their role is varied and limited in the context of their national to sub-commune level mandate and the technical skills and competencies required. As a result, the effectiveness of Mass Organizations in fulfilling their envisioned role as key brokers and facilitators of citizen-government dialogue and collaboration is limited.

From this perspective the ToC for this project is that to contribute to the improvement of local social, economic and administrative service delivery and increasing citizen satisfaction with local government performance RALG – Nghe An should focus on two main strategic areas:

- increasing citizen feedback and engagement on policies and local government performance at all levels; and
- increasing local government capacities, at all levels, to access, analyse and utilize citizen feedback.

Through enhancing citizen’s voice at all levels as well as the capacities of local government to use it effectively more effective public administrative reform, improved service delivery and more transparent and accountable local governance can be expected.

This ToC is reflected in the project results framework as described below.

3.1.1 General Objective

The General Objective (GO) of the Support for Responsive and Accountable Local Governance in Nghe An Province (RALG – Nghe An) is: “Accelerated social and economic development in Nghe An Province through more responsive, transparent and accountable local governance.”

3.1.2 Specific Objective

The Specific Objective (SO) of the RALG – Nghe An is: “Improved citizen-government interaction leading to improved service delivery and increased citizen satisfaction.”

Each of the 2 strategic areas of the ToC depicted above is broken down into expected results which highlight stakeholder-focussed project management and monitoring and facilitate the tracking of results in terms of change processes.

3.1.3 Project Results Areas

The project has five expected results as follows:

- Result 1 Improved capacity of local government at all levels to disseminate information in a citizen-friendly manner.
- Result 2 Improved capacity of People’s Councils and Mass Organizations, and specifically PIBs and CISBs to facilitate and promote improved two-way communication between citizens and government at all levels.
- Result 3 Improved capacity of local government at all levels to collect, analyse and utilize citizen feedback in a transparent and deliberative fashion for more responsive and accountable local governance and improved service delivery.
- Result 4 Improved capacity for local government at all levels to identify, plan, coordinate and oversee public administrative reforms in response to engagement with citizens and socio-political organizations
- Result 5 The exchange and effective utilization of innovations, lessons learned and good practices with regard to citizen-government interactions; is promoted at provincial and national level

3.1.4 Main assumptions underlying the project Theory of Change

A number of critical assumptions underlying the project ToC are presented below. They will be monitored regularly over the course of the project as a means of risk mitigation and strategic management.

- provincial political leadership remains committed to effective public administrative reform and the achievement of planned project results;
- improved mechanisms for citizen-government communication will lead to increased levels of citizen participation in local governance;
- mass organizations are committed to embracing their two-way communication interface role with citizens and local government at all levels; citizen feedback can trigger meaningful public administrative reforms;
- local administration structures at all levels will be prepared to engage in reforms in response to areas of performance shortfall identified through citizen feedback; and
- essential attitudinal change on the part of both citizens and public servants will be triggered by new forms of dialogue, collaboration and mutual learning.

3.1.5 Expected Results and main lines for activities

3.1.5.1 Result 1 Improved capacity of local government at all levels to disseminate information in a citizen-friendly manner.

This will involve strengthening the capacities of relevant departments including the Department of Justice (DoJ), Department of Information and Communications (DoIC), Department of Home Affairs (DoHA), the Department of Finance (DoF) and others in the dissemination of information on government policies, procedures and programs in more citizen-friendly and innovative ways with the objective of promoting broad-based understanding and dialogue between citizens and government at all levels.

The following activities have been identified :

- Collecting citizen feedback concerning the relative effectiveness of various methods of communication and co-relations between subject matter and mode of communication and engagement.
- Prioritization of issues to be communicated of the most relevance to citizens and government e.g. budget disclosure, land use plans, anti-corruption legislation and strategies, social program entitlements, PAPI & PAR ambitions and emphasis on citizen participation in local governance.
- Translation of selected priority policies into ethnic languages.
- Enhancement of mechanisms to allow ethnic minorities to advise local authorities on how to more effectively communicate with ethnic minority communities.
- Piloting of innovative models of inter-departmental collaboration for the preparation of communication material and vetting of materials with PCc and mass organizations to obtain citizen's perspective.
- Piloting of new forms of collaboration between the different tiers of local administration with the VFF and other mass organizations for the dissemination of official communications and facilitating two-way dialogue.

3.1.5.2 Result 2 Improved capacity of People's Councils and Mass Organizations, PIBs and CISBs to facilitate and promote improved two-way communication between citizens and government at all levels.

The objective is to strengthen overall technical capacities for the institutionalization and facilitation of on-going citizen-government dialogue.

This will involve two main workstreams :

- the transfer of relevant skills, knowledge, methodologies and tools to People's Councils and Mass Organizations to increase their individual and organizational capacities for citizen engagement, community facilitation, consensus building, advocacy, training and skills transfer, strategic communications, dispute resolution.
- the strengthening of capacities of PIBs and CISBs to perform their core compliance monitoring, inspection and oversight roles as envisioned in the Inspection Law (2010) and other legislation.

With regard to Peoples's Council and Mass Organizations the following activities have been identified :

- Assessment of strengths and weaknesses of current forms of engagement between

PCCs and mass organizations with citizens.

- Identify priorities for citizen engagement on the basis of two-way government-citizen at the district and commune levels.
- Develop communications strategies for the provincial, district and commune-levels which link organizations with issues and objectives.
- Assess capacities of PCCs and mass organizations and mobilize technical assistance for the strengthening of capacities in such areas as conflict resolution, consensus building, community facilitation and mobilization, advocacy, etc.

Capacity strengthening at the level of PIBs and CISBs will entail the following (indicative) activities:

- Assess strengths and weaknesses of PIBs and CISBs in the project catchment area.
- Identify and document best practices and key success factors for PIBs and CISBs.
- Promote and facilitate enhanced institutional arrangements for receiving and deliberating upon the findings of PIBs and CISBs and the implementation of responsive, enabling administrative responses.
- Develop guidelines, manuals and other tools to enable PIBs and CISBs to better perform their supervisory and oversight functions.
- Design and implement innovative approaches for coaching, mentoring and skills transfer across PIBs and CISBs.
- Explore the potential for small action research projects to generate new information on key success factors, the transferability of project innovations, and other issues of consequence to RALG implementing partners and broader national audiences and networks including central government institutions, academic and research institutions, NGOs, and development partners.

3.1.5.3 Result 3 Improved capacity of local government at all levels to collect, analyse and utilize citizen feedback in a transparent and deliberative fashion for more responsive and accountable local governance and improved service delivery.

This will involve the strengthening of organizational and technical capacities of relevant departments at all levels to solicit, collect, analyse and utilize citizen perspectives as a means of identifying priority areas for public administrative reform.

This will also require capacity building for PCCs and PCs to lead, coordinate and oversee processes for data analysis and for government-citizen engagement concerning local government performance and public administrative reform.

Programming in this area will involve but not be limited to knowledge and skills transfer from specialist advisors, the use of information and communication technologies where relevant and appropriate, and the development, testing and refinement of innovative tools and methodologies for deliberative engagement, consensus building, situation analysis and public administrative reform planning and oversight. This includes analysis of annual PAPI scores to identify the underlying public management areas for improvement.

The project will be pro-active in efforts to make innovative and appropriate use of information & communication technologies (ICT) in strategies for achieving planned objectives. Emerging mobile phone

technologies such as M-score, websites, online helpdesks and hotlines, and relevant e-governance applications will be considered as part of the project's on-going strategic and iterative planning process.

Indicative activities under this result areas will comprise :

- Develop an inventory of mechanisms for the collection of citizen feedback and mobilize citizen-government forums at all levels to assess the relative strengths and weaknesses of each.
- Solicit citizens' views concerning innovative approaches to enabling two-way government-citizen engagement and in the context of issues of particular importance e.g. budget disclosure, land use policies, etc.
- Consider how ICT applications can be used to facilitate improved data collection, manipulation and analysis.
- Assess current procedures for the collection and interpretation of citizen feedback within and between the three administrative levels of the local government system and arrangements for transparent deliberation and responsive decision-making.

Mobilize technical assistance as required for the strengthening of capacities for the collection, interpretation and utilization of citizen feedback and the institutionalization of beneficial administrative reforms and participatory processes.

3.1.5.4 Result 4 Improved capacity for local government at all levels to identify, plan, coordinate and oversee public administrative reforms in response to engagement with citizens and socio-political organizations.

This will involve the provision of technical assistance to support relevant government departments at all levels to plan, implement, monitor and oversee technically robust public administrative reforms which effectively respond to citizen feedback on local government performance and the quality of service delivery.

In this regard the project will respond to the strong demand expressed by provincial leadership to consolidate and deepen accomplishments made with support provided by the PORIS project in terms of making the C-SEDP and implementation process more transparent and participatory. Specifically, the project will support provincial efforts to render C-SEDP implementation and management processes more inclusive and participatory so that the C-SEDP can serve as a main, province-wide platform for the promotion of increased citizen participation in the development process as well as more transparent, responsive and accountable local governance. Capital funding for the Commune Development Fund will come from the provincial budget.

Activities under this result will entail :

- Strengthen capacities for the diagnosis of causes of local government performance shortfalls and identification of appropriate remedial measures.
- Strengthen horizontal and vertical interfaces between government departments at the different administrative levels through the clarification and simplification of roles and responsibilities and administrative procedures and through improved communications and oversight.
- Develop, validate/refine tools and processes for citizen-sensitive, participatory C-SEDP implementation including budgeting, tendering and procurement processes and, monitoring and oversight processes arrangement.
- Enhance arrangements for communication and inclusive monitoring of plans and strategies for implementing responsive public administrative reforms.
- Implement exchanges between RALG provinces to enable the transfer of good practices and lessons learned.

3.1.5.5 Result 5 The exchange and effective utilization of innovations, lessons learned and good practices with regard to citizen-government interactions; is promoted at provincial and national level

This will involve the active participation of political and technical stakeholders from Nghe An province in exchanges with counterparts from Ha Tinh and Kon Tum provinces to share lessons learned and good practices. Provincial participants, who may be drawn from any level of government, will be pro-active in both the documentation and dissemination of lessons learned, and also on the utilization and application of good practices as appropriate to permit optimum levels of results achievement.

Resources will be provided for the sharing of pilot experiences and lessons learned emanating from this project with other national institutions interested in the promotion of greater citizen-government interaction. In particular, collaboration could be developed with universities and other national institutions, such as the HCMAP, on specific small research action projects which focus on innovations for improved local government performance. Similarly, resources will be dedicated to developing and/or entering into existing national and international networks and practitioner platforms which could contribute to improved citizen-government engagement practices in Vietnam.

These exchanges will feed into the dialogue at policy level between the Belgian and Vietnamese Authorities to promote a further scaling up the initiatives and knowledge sharing of the at national level as well as linkages with the other development partners and NGO's involved in the issues of citizen engagement and social accountability in Vietnam.

Also at management level (project planning and monitoring) these exchanges and synergies between the RALG's in the three provinces will be encouraged (for instance through a shared international assistance, through the organization of joint reviews and evaluations and through joint technical support missions).

Following activities will be implemented :

- The documentation of good practices and critical success factors leading the effective achievement of planned results.
- The creation of informal interprovincial working groups, supported with technical assistance, to deliberate on and pilot innovative approaches to addressing strategically significant issues e.g. the promotion enhanced, sustained constructive two-way dialogue with ethnic minorities living in remote areas; appropriate uses for ICT for the achievement of planned objectives, how to create political space for innovation and creativity in the promotion of citizen-government engagement; the development of tools, manuals and guidelines for PIBs and CISBs.
- The establishment of networks with local and national institutions which can be used to create a more enabling environment for the achievement of planned objectives, technically support project implementation, and facilitate the dissemination of lessons learned, good practices and critical success factors more broadly across Vietnam.

3.2 Programming Framework

Two central elements of the design of the RALG – Nghe An project are that it be well aligned with provincial plans and priorities for public administrative reform and improved local governance and that it remains flexible to allow adaptations based on implementation experience and new opportunities.

To this end a programming framework has been developed which captures all key programming activities identified in the Nghe An Governance and PAR Action Plan to 2015. This framework was validated by provincial stakeholders during the final plenary meeting of the formulation team's mission to Nghe An

province. It has informed the proposal of indicative activities as shown in section 3.1.6 above.

The final selection and scoping of activities and mechanisms for their coordination, implementation and oversight will be confirmed during the Inception Phase.

It is envisaged that the Inception Phase, which will last 3 months at a maximum, will be comprised of four sub-phases:

- Review of the current provincial PAR and PAPI action plans in an analytical way in order to: (i) understand better actual constraints and opportunities relating to citizen participation and government responses to citizen feedback in the Nghe An context; and (ii) to prioritize activities to be included in the project work plan based on demand, feasibility and coherency with project objectives;
- On the basis of this review, the review of critical assumptions and the project ToC, refine the project results framework, M&E framework and set performance targets for the first year;
- Identify and classify technical assistance requirements in terms of short and long term requirements and whether the TA would best be sourced from within the province or at the national level;
- Elaborate project planning and budgeting frameworks, implementation coordination, monitoring, reporting arrangements and oversight arrangements as well as a detailed action plan for the first year.

3.3 Results Framework

Intervention Logic	Indicators	Baseline Value	Target	Sources
<p>General Objective:</p> <p>Accelerated social and economic development in Nghe An Province through more responsive, transparent and accountable local governance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased economic output Expanded economic and social infrastructure. 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial statistics on economic productivity. Provincial statistics on access to basic social services. PCI Scores
<p>Specific Objective:</p> <p>Improved citizen-government interaction leading to improved service delivery and increased citizen satisfaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased levels of citizen engagement with government at all levels. Greater mutual understanding between citizens and government of priority areas for PAR. Improved citizen participation in public programs and policies. Increased citizen contributions to the oversight of public policy and program implementation. 	<p>current PAPI scores⁸: (/10)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participation at local levels : 5.29 transparency : 5.9 vertical accountability : 6.05 public administrative procedures : 6.91 control of corruption : 5.51 public services delivery : 6.69 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase of scores with at least 10% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PAPI report
<p>Result 1</p> <p>Improved capacity of local government at all levels to disseminate information in a citizen-friendly manner.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of official publications which are effectively translated into a form which can be understood by citizens and provide a basis for citizen-government engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No translated publications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Minimum translated publications per annum 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports Baseline survey <p>To be confirmed with local partners.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of measures taken to customize information to be disseminated to ethnic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No measures taken to disseminate to 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least innovative 	

⁸ A detailed explanation of PAPI indexes is provided in annex 7.4 and on www.papi.vn

Intervention Logic	Indicators	Baseline Value	Target	Sources
	minorities.	ethnic minorities	measure taken per year	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of innovations tested concerning different media for communicating government policies and programs to citizens. The extent to which different levels of government actively contribute to and participate in innovative approaches to generating and disseminating citizen-friendly information. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No innovations tested Little participation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 1 innovation tested per year Regular participation (in 30% of more of the cases) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none">
<p>Result 2</p> <p>Improved capacity of People's Councils and Mass Organizations, and specifically People's Inspection Boards (PIBs) and Community Inspection and Supervision Boards (CISBs) to facilitate and promote improved two-way communication between citizens and government at all levels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of innovations for improved citizen-government engagement tested. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No innovations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two innovations tested per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project report To be confirmed with local partners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of levels of local government system at which innovations are tested and refined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No levels are tested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one level tested per year 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase the number of issues on which there is citizen-government engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little citizen-government engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular citizen-government engagement (in 30% of more of the cases) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The generation of tools, manuals, guidelines to enable PIBs and CISBs to better perform their core mandate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No tools, manuals and guidelines generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two tools, manuals and guidelines are generated annually 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The scope of utilization of new tools by PIBs and CISBs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No utilization of new tools by PIBs and CISBs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilization of new tools by PIBs and CISBs in 30% of more of the cases. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved scope and quality of PIB and CISB contributions to the overall supervision and oversight of public investments and public policy implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited scope and quality of PIB and CISB contributions to the overall supervision and oversight of public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PIB and CISB contributed in 50 % of all cases of overall supervision 	

Intervention Logic	Indicators	Baseline Value	Target	Sources
		investments and public policy implementation.		
Result 3 Improved capacity of local government at all levels to collect, analyse and utilize citizen feedback in a transparent and deliberative fashion for more responsive and accountable local governance and improved service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increase in the volume of citizen feedback collected at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Little citizen feedback collected at all levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A system is put in place to collect citizen feedback at all levels within one year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project report To be confirmed with local partners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development and utilization of effective tools and methodologies for analysing citizen feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No effective tools and methodologies for analysing citizen feedback. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective tools and methodologies for analysing citizen feedback are developed within one year. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The adoption of improved mechanisms for government-citizen dialogue on issues of public concern. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out dated mechanisms for government-citizen dialogue on issues of public concern. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within one year mechanisms for government-citizen dialogue on issues of public concern are reviewed and updated 	
Result 4 Improved capacity for local government at all levels to identify, plan, coordinate and oversee public administrative reforms in response to engagement with citizens and socio-political organizations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New reforms identified & planned. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No new reforms identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least one new reform identified per annum 	To be confirmed with local partners.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of innovations identified and utilized for improving vertical and horizontal coordination and oversight of PAR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No innovations identified and utilized for improving vertical and horizontal coordination and oversight of PAR. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least two innovations identified and utilized for improving vertical and horizontal coordination and oversight of PAR per annum. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of innovations for PAR identification, planning, coordination and oversight institutionalized as good practice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No innovations for PAR identification, planning, coordination and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> AT least two innovations for PAR identification, planning, 	

Intervention Logic	Indicators	Baseline Value	Target	Sources
		oversight identified.	coordination and oversight are institutionalized as good practice.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of stakeholders collaborating effectively for PAR implementation and oversight (horizontal coordination) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or few stakeholders participating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stakeholders participate minimum 50% of the time 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of levels of local government effectively contributing to the identification, planning coordination and oversight of PAR reforms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No or few levels of local government effectively contributing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Different levels of local government contribute minimum 50% of the time 	
<p>Result 5</p> <p>The exchange and effective utilization of innovations, lessons learned and good practices with regard to citizen-government interactions; is promoted at provincial and national level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> lessons learned and good practices documented and shared with other provinces. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No lessons learned and good practices documented and shared. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 4 lessons learned and good practices documented and shared per annum. 	Semi-annual and annual provincial project progress reports.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> number of good practices from other provinces applied in Nghe An province. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No good practices from other provinces applied in Nghe An province. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At least 2 good practices from other provinces applied in Nghe An province per annum. 	

3.4 Indicators and progress markers

Performance indicators and the methodology for data collection will be fine tuned during the starting phase and will be monitored and continuously adapted during project implementation according to the following principles:

- performance indicators for the achievement of project objectives will rely to the extent possible on Vietnamese monitoring systems (e.g. the SEDP M&E framework, PAPI and PAR indexes..
- performance indicators which refer to changes in terms of capacities (e.g. knowledge, skills, procedures) including attitudinal and behavioural change, will have to be confirmed and refined in close collaboration with actual implementing partners.

This TFF therefore provides indicative and non-comprehensive articulations of categories of performance indicators. These indicators have been defined at the level of the outputs (products and services to be delivered by the project) as well as categories of expected changes (mainly through the use of these outputs) which are expected to contribute to the achievement of planned objectives.

The ToC underlying each result area and the synergies between results areas will be further developed during the first year, and specific performance indicators will be identified and validated by implementation partners and reviewed and refined regularly. For each of the planned results intermediate capacity outcomes will be defined using appropriate indicators. These are process indicators which focus on the early signs of change (showing the steps in the direction for change) at the institutional/organizational and individual levels. Project progress in terms of the achievement of intermediate capacity outcomes and overall performance targets will be regularly monitored and periodically evaluated.

In this regard, the monitoring of change process is part of the capacity development process itself. The definition and exploration of indicators throughout project implementation will contribute to the progressive development of a shared language which relates to national policy and enables provincial-level discourse concerning citizen-government interaction. Indeed a “common language” for more collaborative, service-oriented and inter-level and inter-agency public administration requires attitudes and behaviours which may not come naturally to many now in the local government service. The project will feed into this longer term process while paying attention to create purposeful collaborative settings where desired practices can be repeated, assessed, validated and incentivized.

Capacity development support provided under the project must also promote opportunities to identify mutual learning moments and emerging changes in capacities which had not been expected or foreseen in the project annual action plan and results framework.

3.5 Risk analysis

Below is a summary of main risks to the achievement of planned objectives and results. Mitigation measures have been foreseen in the framework of the project and/or through policy dialogue mechanisms.

3.5.1 Sustainability and Effectiveness Risks

Risk	Comments	Level	Mitigation Measures
More responsive, transparent local governance does not lead to accelerated social and economic development	It is well established that more transparent, accountable and responsive local governance leads to improved allocative efficiency, higher levels of resource mobilization, higher levels of value for money in public investment and a more predictable and stable environment for private sector investment.	Low	<p>More responsive and transparent governance requires political commitment and a willingness to be creative and innovative. All indications suggest there are high levels of political commitment at the provincial and district levels to planned results and a willingness to exercise political authority to that end. Strong leadership of the Provincial PC and Project Steering Committee chairs is needed.</p> <p>There is awareness among stakeholders of the limitations of purely administrative reforms in the achievement of planned results. Project holders are aware that innovation and creativity will be required for the achievement of planned results and see the project as a means of accessing technical support to this end.</p> <p>Inter-provincial exchanges of lessons learned and good practices can create opportunities for the sharing and mainstreaming of innovations in a manner which expands stakeholders' sense of what is possible.</p>
Local government stakeholders at different levels may demonstrate resistance to change or place self-imposed limits to the scope for innovation and creativity for PAR and accountable, transparent local governance.		Medium	<p>The systematic review of baseline data and targets, short planning and monitoring cycles, provincial annual reviews, bi-annual Steering Committee meetings, periodic backstopping missions, and performance indicators from other initiatives (PAPI, PAR Index, PCI) will provide ample opportunity for project holders to implement performance from a comparative and evidenced-based perspective. This will enable project holders to take management decisions conducive to a more enabling environment for the achievement of planned results.</p>
Citizens may be sceptical or non-responsive to efforts made by local government stakeholders to improve two-way communication.		Medium	<p>Multiple stakeholders (VFF, Mass Organizations, PCc) will be supported to engage with citizens at all levels. The technical assistance provided is likely to result in overall increase in citizen-government dialogue.</p> <p>Emphasis will be placed on creating synergies and complementarity between the support provided to state and non-state stakeholders. This complementarity can be expected to create an enabling environment for the achievement of planned results.</p> <p>Good practices and lessons learned can be transferred, where possible and applicable across provinces. This is intended to expedite the adoption of good practices and maximize levels of results achievement.</p>

Risk	Comments	Level	Mitigation Measures
Stakeholders focus on performance indicators such as PAPI, PAR and PCI rather on the adoption of new innovative business practices and new forms of social partnership.	There is a widespread tendency of bureaucrats to view performance indicators as ends in themselves without an understanding of the significance of more responsible, accountable and transparent local governance and how to achieve it.	High	The political leadership within the province have a sophisticated and enlightened appreciation of the objectives of the project and the challenges to be addressed during project implementation. It is anticipated that clear, consistent and appropriate vision and leadership will be provided by the Steering Committee to ensure implementing partners confront the fundamental challenges. This may involve the creation of incentives for results achievement in the context of constructive inter-provincial cooperation.

3.5.2 Implementation risks

Risk	Comments	Level	Mitigation Measures
The planned scope and reach of the project in terms of number of districts, communes and volume of planned activities and results exceeds capacities to deliver.	The larger the geographic footprint of the project and scope of planned results the greater delivery challenges will be and the greater the likelihood planned results will not be achieved and sustained.	High	During the inception phase the scope of work for the first year will be critically assessed from the perspective of implementation capacity. Project implementation will be monitored closely. If and when implementation performance falls short of reasonable expectations consideration will be given to the viability of the scope of programming and possible measures to be taken to ensure project plans remain implementable and likely to generate satisfactory results.
Public servants and other implementing partners demonstrate resistance to the adoption of attitudinal changes which may be required for the achievement of planned results.	In the context of history and convention it is understandable some may resist changes in the perceptions about the nature of the relationship between citizens and government the project is intended to achieve.	Medium	Project holders (the PCs) are well aware of the attitudinal change this project is designed to bring about and are in favour of changes which will enable project objectives to be achieved. Project holders can be expected to create incentives for stakeholders to embrace innovation and attitudinal and behavioural adaptation within the public service. Activities can be implemented and performance be assessed from a perspective which is sensitive to the adjustment some stakeholders may be expected to make. The documentation and dissemination of good practices and critical success factors, realism and sensitivity with the pace and sequencing of reforms, participatory monitoring processes, and steadfast and consistent leadership from authorities are elements of a strategy which can be developed to promote constructive attitudinal adaptations over the course of the project.

3.5.3 Management and fiduciary risks

Risk	Comments	Level	Mitigation Measures
Implementing partners struggle to effectively manage the considerable planning, coordination and oversight requirements of the projects at all levels of the local	The role of the Provincial Project Working Group (PPWG) in the planning coordination and oversight of project implementation horizontally across implementing partners	Medium	The PPWG will receive technical support from a full-time National Expert based in the PMU. The part-time ITA will provide on-going technical support and guidance on a part-time basis. The crucial role of the PPWG is understood and emphasis will be placed on the creation of robust monitoring arrangements for project planning, coordination and oversight.

Risk	Comments	Level	Mitigation Measures
government system.	and vertically at the district and commune levels is a significant challenge and is of critical importance.		Performance in the area of planning, coordination and oversight will be constantly reviewed and measures to support and strengthen these functions will be considered as a key element of the strategic management of the project. It is expected that relevant authorities will create an enabling environment for constructive iterations in these essential management functions to be made.
Service providers cannot be mobilized to provide the required specialized technical assistance to implementing partners in a timely fashion.	Though stakeholders agree national and international technical assistance will be required, the specific areas where TA will be required, modalities for TA and levels of effort required have yet to be discussed.	Medium	<p>During the project inception phase the ITA and NE will liaise closely with implementing partners for the detailed planning of activities to be implemented during the first year of the project. During these discussions areas where TA is of significant strategic and substantial importance will be identified. For TA needs shared by multiple provinces the ITA will identify suitable national-level service providers capable of meeting the needs of multiple provinces in a cost-efficient and technically robust manner.</p> <p>For TA needs which can be met from within the province, the PMU will support procurement processes and communicate with other provinces where service providers are providing exemplary services.</p> <p>The performance of service providers will be carefully monitored and managed with a view to ensuring quality deliverables are achieved.</p>
PMU is unable to mobilize the required management and technical staff on time	PMU staff assignment and recruitment may take some time jeopardizing project implementation in a very tight timeframe	Medium	Continuous dialogue will be established between the parties in order to start with staff recruitment as soon as both parties have approved the project document
The PMU is unable to generate action plans and progress report which meet minimum technical standards.	The PMU does not have clear authority over the multitude of departments involved in project implementation. It is possible that implementing departments may not provide information required for planning and reporting in a timely fashion.	Low	<p>At the level of the Steering Committee implementing partner's obligations and responsibilities for project planning and reporting will be confirmed and monitored.</p> <p>The PMU will develop planning and reporting tools to facilitate and coordinate implementing partners' timely input into plans and reports. The NE will provide operational support for this function and the ITA will provide additional punctual support if and as required.</p>
The PMU is unable to manage project finances in accordance with minimum standards for national execution.	Following the project mid-term review Nghe An province has successfully managed the PORIS project and has demonstrated capacity to meet all relevant financial management requirements.	Low	Personnel who worked in the PORIS PMU will be assigned to work in the PMU for this project. If difficulties emerge it is possible for short term backstopping to be provided by the BTC Representation in Hanoi.

3.6 Project Beneficiaries

The ultimate beneficiaries of this project will be the citizens of Nghe An province who will enjoy improved service delivery and more responsive, accountable local governance.

Indirect beneficiaries of the project may include local and national service providers whose professional experience and capacity may be enhanced through their participation in the project. Other public or non-state institutions will benefit from the knowledge products, lessons learned, good practices generated in the province and beyond its boundaries, as well as through the dialogue strengthened at policy level,. All citizens of Vietnam could thus be indirect beneficiaries of the project.

Immediate beneficiaries include the following stakeholder groups:

- PCs and PCcs at the provincial, district and commune levels, participating government departments at all levels including DoHA, DPI, DoJ DoF, DoIC who will benefit from the technical assistance and capacity building support provided under the project.
- The VFF members and members of mass organizations including but not limited to the VMU and the Vietnam Youth Union at the provincial, district and commune levels who will benefit from organizational development and capacity building support which will enable them to better perform their core functions.
- The citizens of selected communes in Quy Chau (12 communes), Quy Hop (10 communes), and Cua Lo (8 communes) districts where the project will be implemented , will enjoy influence on government decision-making resulting in improved local government performance and service delivery.

The three districts selected to participate in the project were chosen on the basis of the following rationale:

- They present three geographical regions: Quy Chau as representative for mountainous regions, Quy Hop for hilly regions, and Cua Lo Town as an urban area.
- They were among the best performers in implementing C-SEDP as regulated by Decision 811/QD-UBND issued by Nghe An Provincial PC. Their conditions are suitable to implement all intervention areas of the project.
- There is a strong commitment from district leadership in improving effectiveness of the local governance in an effort to better respond to demand of citizens and businesses in their localities. All districts have selected PAR as a priority of the Action Program to implement the Resolutions of District Party Bureau of 2015-2020.
- The selected districts are experienced in implementing technical assistance in building capacity for local governments and citizens. Therefore, district, commune and village officers have certain experiences in working with donor projects.
- All districts have qualified IT infrastructure, which can facilitate application of IT in developing citizen-sensitive monitoring tools.

4 RESOURCES

4.1 Financial resources

The contribution of the Government of Vietnam is equivalent to €150,000 . It will cover the provision of office space and office equipment within the DPI building , as well as the contribution of government staff to the project at the provincial, district and commune levels. It will also include allowances for a part-time project director and a full-time financial officer.

Given the focus of the project on the C-SEDP and the hypothesis that the funding of the soft (participatory preparation process) and hard (capital) C-SEDP will be covered by the province, those will also account as Vietnamese contribution to the project. They constitute important assumptions for the success of the project.

Belgian contribution amounts to €1,000,000.

The draft budget outline is as follows:

Result 1 : € 80,000

Result 2 : € 150,000

Result 3 : € 120,000

Result 4 : € 200,000

Result 5 : € 60,000

General Means: € 390,000

4.2 Human resources

The human resource inputs for the project can be summarised as followed:

The Provincial People's Committee will assign a Project Director within the provincial Department for Planning and Investment (DPI).

DPI will assign other relevant technical staff to support project activities.

BTC will recruit the following staff.:

- a full time national expert (NE). S/he will be recruited by BTC 's office in Vietnam, according to BTC Human Resources policy. The selected person will be presented to PPC for its advice. EU/UN cost norm will be applied.
- an international technical advisor (ITA). S/he will be recruited by BTC HQ according to Belgian regulations. This ITA will provide technical assistance to the three provinces (the 3 RALG projects). Despite sharing his/her time between the three projects, the ITA will be under the administrative responsibility of Ha Tinh province. Ha Tinh PMU will be responsible for obtaining visa for the ITA and his/her family.

Other local staff members will be recruited by the PMU:

- a full-time Financial Officer
- a part-time Translator/Interpreter
- a driver

The local staff recruited by the PMU will be recruited in accordance with Vietnamese Government rules and regulations, except for their fees: EU/UN cost norm will be applied. For staff whose salaries are funded by the Belgian contribution, before recruitment or promotion, PMU must request for BTC Non Objection.

Below is a summary of the positions and related contract management procedures

Positions HR processes	Project Director	International Advisor (part-time , 1/3)	National Expert	Financial Officer	Translator/ interpreter	Driver
ToR (job description & profile)	N/A designated among the senior managers within DPI	Joint (in the TFF)	Joint (in the TFF)	Joint	PMU	PMU
Short listing/ Assessment	DPI	BTC	BTC and DPI	PMU	PMU	PMU
Contracted by	DPI	BTC	BTC	PMU	PMU	PMU
Funded by	VIE	BE	BE	VIE	BE	BE

4.3 Services

In addition, funds are available to contract Vietnamese and international consulting services.

4.4 Material Resources

Whatever taxes or duties claimed under the Vietnamese laws and regulations, will be paid under the Vietnamese contribution. The Belgian contribution, whatever the management modalities, shall not be used to pay taxes, customs or duties for procurement of equipment, labour and services.

Below is a synthesis of budget breakdown.

BUDGET TOTAL					unit	quantit	amount	Mode of Executon	BUDGET TOTAL	%	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
A	Specific Objective (SO) :								610,000	61%	140,000	260,000	210,000
R 01	Improved capacity of LG to disseminate information								80,000		10,000	30,000	40,000
R 02	Improved capacity of PPC & mass organisations to facilitate 2 way communication								150,000		30,000	70,000	50,000
R 03	Improved capacity of LG to collect , analyse and utilize citizen feed back								120,000		30,000	50,000	40,000
R 04	Improved capacity for LG to plan & coordinated PAR reforms								200,000		50,000	80,000	70,000
R 05	exchange & utilization of lessons learned with other provinces								60,000		20,000	30,000	10,000
R 05 01	workshops, capitalization exercises								40,000		10,000	20,000	10,000
R 05 02	studies and consultancies through framework contracts								20,000		10,000	10,000	
X	CONTINGENCIES								0	0%	0	0	0
X 01	Contingencies								0		0	0	0
X 01 1	Contingencies (NEX)												
X 01 02	Contingencies (BTC-managed)												
Z	GENERAL MEANS								390,000	39%	151,500	111,500	127,000
Z 01	Human Resources								282,600		94,000	94,000	94,600
Z 01 01	International Technical Assistance - Technical advisor								person/month 36 5,000 BTC-Managed	180,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Z 01 02	National Expert								person/month 36 2,000 BTC-Managed	72,000	24,000	24,000	24,000
Z 01 03	translator								person/month 18 700 BTC-Managed	12,600	4,000	4,000	4,600
Z 01 04	driver								person/month 36 500 BTC-Managed	18,000	6,000	6,000	6,000
Z 02	Investments								30,000		30,000	0	0
Z 02 01	IT equipement									10,000	10,000	0	0
Z 02 02	vehicle									20,000	20000		
Z 03	Operational Expenditures								44,400		16,500	11,500	16,400
Z 03 01	operational costs technical assistance modalities									15,600	5,200	5,200	5,200
Z 03 02	Other Operating Expenditures									28,800	11,300	6,300	11,200
Z 04	Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing								33,000		11,000	6,000	16,000
Z 04 01	backstopping									9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
Z 04 02	Evaluation									15,000	5,000	0	10,000
Z 04 03	Auditing									9,000	3,000	3,000	3,000
TOTAL									1,000,000		291,500	371,500	337,000

BTC- Managed	331,200	33%	110,200	105,200	115,800
NEX	668,800	67%	181,300	266,300	221,200

5 IMPLEMENTATION MODALITIES

5.1 Legal framework

The General Agreement between the Belgian Government and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was signed 11th October 1977.

The Indicative Cooperation Programme (2011-2015) between the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam was signed 24th June 2011.

The present Technical and Financial File is part of the Specific Agreement signed between the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Government of the Kingdom of Belgium, determining the legal framework of the intervention.

5.2 Institutional framework

The Vietnamese Government has designated the Provincial People's Committee (PPC) of Nghe An as the project holder. The PPC is the administrative entity responsible for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the project, and for the Vietnamese contribution to the project.

The DPI, by means of a Project Management Unit (PMU), will provide technical leadership for the coordination of project implementation. A DPI senior manager will be appointed to serve as Project Director. The Project Director will manage the PMU.

The Belgian Government designates the Directorate-General for Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid (DGD), represented by the Belgian Embassy in Hanoi as the Belgian entity responsible for the Belgian contribution to the project. The Belgian Development Agency (BTC), represented by its Resident Representative in Hanoi, is the Belgian entity responsible for the coordination, implementation and monitoring of the project and the management of the Belgian contribution.

5.3 Implementation and follow-up structures

The implementation of the project will require stakeholders to be mobilized at several levels.

As a summary of the strategic steering and management modalities of the project, and in accordance with the strategic orientation shown in section 2 above, the following levels can be distinguished:

- The policy layer. On a regular basis representatives of Vietnam and Belgium Authorities (MPI, Embassy) will have a policy dialogue to exchange views on the policy environment of the project and overall progress. This dialogue will address the transversal support to the three provinces, the question of scaling up of provincial experiences and of the coordination with other donor's initiatives. DPI and BTC can prepare the contents for this dialogue. This dialogue will be conducted through half-yearly meetings of the Vietnam-Belgium Joint Working Team, but also on an ad hoc basis. Policy Dialogue can also take place with other relevant stakeholders to promote and facilitate citizens' engagement and participation.
- The strategic layer. A Project Steering Committee will be established at provincial level. It will be responsible for providing the necessary strategic guidance and direction to project management and to approve project plans, budgets and reports.

- The operational layer. This will be the PMU, in charge of the coordination, management implementation and oversight of all the activities of the project in coordination with the relevant stakeholders.

Besides these official structures, the following organizational arrangements are envisaged to ensure optimal participation of main project stakeholders:

- An informal Provincial Project Working Group (PPWG) will be established. Chaired by the Project Director it will be comprised of representatives of line agencies involved in project planning, implementation and oversight, the PP Council Office and the VFF. The main role of this working group is to ensure the technical planning, coordination and oversight of main activities at the provincial, district and commune levels. Membership of this group would also be involved in exchanges with other provinces. With regard to the wide variety of themes to be discussed, representatives of PIB's and CBI's, mass organisations, universities, external expertise etc. can be invited to participate in the work of the PWG. The composition and tasks of the PWG will be reviewed during the inception phase and approved by the Steering Committee.
- Informal District Task Forces (DTFs) will be established in Districts selected to be involved in the project. Responsible for coordinating, implementing and overseeing the implementation of project activities at the district and commune levels, the task forces will be comprised of the district-level representatives of the departments and other stakeholders represented in the PPWG. The composition and tasks of these task forces will be further defined during the inception phase and approved by the Steering Committee.

Below is a detailed description of the roles and responsibilities, as well as the composition of main project implementation and follow-up structures.

5.3.1 Project Steering Committee

The Project Steering Committee (PSC) represents the strategic management level of the intervention. It is responsible for providing the necessary strategic guidance to the Project Management Unit and assures that an enabling environment is maintained for the achievement of optimum levels of planned results.

The PSC is created at project start-up. A session of the Steering Committee will be organized within the 3 months of project's start-up in order to approve the project annual work plan and budget, the Project Operational Manual (POM), as well as the M&E work plan (all being an output of the project's inception phase).

Within the limitations imposed by the Specific Agreement, the PSC shall confirm its own internal operating procedures and take its decisions by consensus of the members.

The PSC will consist of the following members:

- The Vice Chair or Chair of People's Committee, Chairman
- The Resident Representative of BTC, co-Chairman
- a Representative from the Office of the People's Council
- a Representative of the Director of the Department of Planning and Investment
- a Representative of the Director of the Department of Home Affairs

- a Representative from Department of Foreign Economic Relations/ Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)
- a Representative from the Ministry of Finance (MoF)

The chairman and co-chairman may invite different stakeholders, as non-voting members, to attend meeting as and when required.

The PMU operates as the PSC secretariat.

Responsibilities of the PSC

The PSC will assume the following responsibilities and is mandated to:

- Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of the different agencies and entities involved in the project are clearly defined;
- Approve the annual work plans and budgets
- Provide timely implementation and policy guidance to all project stakeholders;
- Appraise the state of progress of the project, the achievement of planned results and the specific objective;
- Approve the Project Operation Manual at the start of the intervention.
- Approve modifications of results, modalities and budget realignments provided that such modifications do not alter the project's general and specific objectives nor its overall budget; approve proposals related to modifications of project indicators;
- Seek approval of both Governments for modifications to the validity of the project's Specific Agreement, changes to the Specific Objective, duration of the Specific Agreement and the project's overall budget;
- Ensure that an accredited accounting firm carries out annual external audits, deliberates on audit findings and recommendations, and monitors the implementation of audit recommendations. Based on the conclusions of the audit reports, the PSC may decide to make the audit bi-annual;
- Appraise recommendations of the external reviews and follow-up their implementation;
- Approve an action plan related to the closing process (planning, last operational and financial commitments), the final report and the final closure of the project, following the procedure mentioned in the guideline "Closing Procedure" provided by BTC

Operating Mode of the PSC

The PSC must meet at the end of the inception phase to approve, among others, the project operational manual (POM), the project work plan & budget, and the M&E work plan.

Thereafter, the PSC will meet on a six monthly basis. The final PSC meeting will be organised about 3 months prior to project completion. During this meeting the draft final report will be presented for approval.

Additional PSC meetings may be held upon request of the Chair or co-Chair.

The PSC will establish its own internal rules and take decisions generally by consensus of the members.

This includes the choice of the location of the meetings.

The Project Director, the ITA and NTA , will participate in the PSC as observers and serve as the secretariat to PSC meetings.

The Project Director will propose the agenda of the PSC and present the PMU semi-annual (6 monthly) reports as defined hereafter and in the POM for approval. A copy in English and Vietnamese of that report will be transmitted to all members of the PSC at least 6 working days before the PSC.

Minutes of the meeting of the PSC as well as amended reports with comments and recommendations from the PSC members will then be transmitted at latest one week after the meeting to all the members of the PSC and to the Belgian Embassy through the BTC Representation in Hanoi.

5.3.2 Project Management Unit

The Project Management Unit (PMU) will be responsible for the project implementation.

Composition of the PMU

The PMU will comprise of the following members (See chapter 4 for details) :

- The PMU Director designated among the senior managers within DPI, will bear the overall responsibility for the daily management of the project.
- An International Technical Advisor (ITA) will provide technical assistance to the Project Director for the strategic management of the project as well as for the planning and implementation of the technical dimensions of the project in terms of citizen engagement, public administrative reform and responsive, accountable local governance.
- A National Expert (NE) with in-depth knowledge and experience of the local governance field in Vietnam will facilitate and support the day-to-day management of the project under the overall supervision of the Project Director
- support staff : Financial officer, Translator/Interpreter, Driver.

Responsibilities of the PMU

The PMU will be in charge of the daily coordination, management and oversight of all project activities as defined below;

- Ensure that all activity outputs are linked to the results and specific objective through a close monitoring based on pre-defined indicators;
- Assure the administrative support of the PSC (secretariat, agenda, documents, minutes, dissemination of minutes);
- Assure the effective operation of the inception phase;
- Set up a monitoring system to feed an evidence-based planning and reporting system;
- Prepare and submit the Project Operation Manual to the PSC
- Prepare the quarterly activity and financial reports and planning as well as the cash-call file to be submitted to BTC approval;
- Ensure the proper use of funds;
- Prepare the quarterly, annual reports and the final report;
- Prepare the audit action plans and its implementation ;

- Contribute to the preparation of the ToR for the End Term Review and other review missions as deemed required;
- Facilitate the work by providing all necessary information to the external audits and evaluation missions and to guarantee the good execution of their recommendations;
- Follow-up all the necessary administrative procedures for tax and VAT exemption/refund;
- Ensure the adequate closure of the project activities, including the preparation of the final report at the end of the project duration and other needed activities following the procedure mentioned in the guideline “Closing Procedure” provided by BTC
- Coordinate the execution of the project in accordance with the project work plans approved by the PSC;
- Secure alignment with provincial authorities and institutions, in particular DPI, DOHA, DoF and coordinate with other related donor funded projects.
- Promote and facilitate synergies with other projects supported by Belgium, other development partners, and in particular the RALG – Ha Tinh and RALG – Kon Tum projects.

Operating Mode of the PMU

The PMU will report directly to the PSC in terms of activities and results linked to the project. It will also provide all required information to the BTC representation in terms of technical content, administrative and finance reporting, as described below. The organisation and operation of the PMU will follow the Vietnamese Rules and Regulations on ODA projects.

5.4 Management modalities: guiding principles

As far as technical implementation of the project and the achievement of its results are concerned, responsibility is shared between DPI and BTC, with the exception of the external audit and evaluations that remain under the responsibility of BTC. The PMU is responsible for the daily management of project activities.

The PMU is responsible for the financial and procurement management of the budget lines defined as NEX (Vietnamese systems and rules). BTC is responsible for the financial and procurement management of the budget lines defined as BTC-management (BTC systems and rules). It is also responsible for the transfers of funds to the PMU upon positive evaluation and approval of the financial and activity planning reports and plans.

For the budget lines defined as NEX, BTC will retain a “no objection” right according to determined thresholds. The Resident Representative of BTC in Vietnam will be responsible for the “no objection” for BTC. In this regard, the Resident Representative may seek technical advice from the International Technical Advisor, or from independent international and national consultants contracted by BTC following Belgian public procurement rules. All the costs related to the technical supervision and control will be supported by the budget of the project, including all costs related to BTC “no objection”.

BTC will be responsible for the organization of the external audits and evaluations. This concerns among others Financial and Technical Auditors from the Belgian State, Final Review, external financial and operational audits and Final Evaluation. BTC will guarantee the correct information of MPI during the whole processes, as well as the institutional dialogue around the output of these audits and evaluations.

5.4.1 Financial Management

The financial management of the project will be assured by the PMU based upon action and financial plans previously approved by the steering committee.

Bank accounts

For the budget under NEX modality, the PMU shall open dedicated project accounts

- A bank account in EUR at a commercial bank where project funds will be channelled from the Belgian contribution;
- A bank account in VND at a commercial bank.

Any expenditure from those bank accounts will require the double signature of the Project Director and the Project Financial Officer.

Under no circumstances, these accounts can have a debit balance. They cannot receive funds from other sources and cannot serve to finance other activities. The possible interests generated by these accounts will be deducted from the expense of the project. There will be first and foremost used to cover the banking costs of the account. Whenever possible, payment through bank transfers will be privileged.

For local expenses under BTC-management, an account shall be opened in Hanoi and managed according to BTC procedures.

Funds transfer

From the notification of the execution agreement, a cash call can be introduced to the local Representation of BTC. The requested amount can correspond with the needs of first six (6) months, plus a buffer amount initially set at 10% of the needs. This will be done by the PMU and directly submitted to the Representation if no PSC is in place at that moment. This cash call will go together with a signed detailed expenses project of the first 12 months of the project, following the format prescribed in the POM.

The PMU will request BTC to transfer funds to the specific project account, based upon yearly work plans and budgets which will have been approved by the PSC, as well as satisfactory financial reports on the utilization of the previous disbursement. This cash call will represent the cash needs of the project for the upcoming 12 months. The request will be sent to BTC Representation.

From the second instalment on, transfers of funds will be conditional upon the PMU satisfactorily accounting for 70% of the previous cash call. If larger amount of cash would be needed without fulfilling this condition, a specific request can be introduced.

The transfer will be processed by BTC after approval by PSC and BTC of the following documents:

- The letter requesting the transfer;
- A detailed financial report of previous expenses;
- The last progress and financial report. In the financial report, all project expenditure and the related fund transfers should be fully documented and substantiated;
- The last analysis of implementation report;
- The last activity and financial planning and the related detailed disbursement plan, included a list of commitments;
- The last external audit reports approved by the Project Steering Committee;
- The follow-up of the audit recommendations approved and controlled by the PSC.

These cash calls will be certified by PMU and checked and validated by BTC. The expenses that cannot be justified shall be deducted from the next replenishment.

BTC commits itself to transfer the funds in the 30 days following the date of the request receipt. If BTC assesses that a cash call request cannot be honoured, it will address to the partner a letter specifying the necessary additional information that have to be sent. The time for payment will be postponed till the registration of a cash call introduced in due form.

The payment of the final balance will be subordinated to the fulfilment by the PMU of the obligations related to the agreement and on the basis of the following documents:

- The same documents as for all other cash calls;
- A closing action plan (see guideline Closing procedure) approved by PSC;
- The “financial balance” set up according to the rules describes in the BTC closing procedure manual, including, among others the last commitments, the advances, and any other liabilities towards external parties;
- A project follow up (objectives + results) and the follow up of the reviews and audit recommendations.

All the funds under BTC management should be managed under the BTC internal rules and regulations that will be made available at the start of the project. The management of these funds is under the responsibility of BTC Hanoi.

Financial planning

Every quarter, the PMU and the BTC Representation must elaborate a financial planning for the current quarter and for the following quarters and following years based upon the six-monthly action plans approved by the steering committee. This planning will be undertaken in accordance with BTC procedures.

Accounting and payment process

The management and further release of the funds will follow the Vietnamese Rules and Regulations for ODA projects. The PMU will use software approved by BTC and applied sound management procedures regarding the following steps of accounting: ordering, committing, paying and encoding.

The payment request will be submitted by the related management unit to the Provincial Treasury that will control it within maximum 5 working days based on the contractual documents. Treasury will inform the local branch of DoF about the expense approval as well as PMU that will authorize the Bank to release the money to the contractor.

Each expense has to be useful and opportune, and its consistency with the budget must be checked by the finance officer. BTC reserves the right to consider the expense as ineligible, not justified, or not respecting the obligations mentioned in the TFF. In that case, the expenses will be deducted from the next instalment that will go with an explicative note. In the event of the next instalments not being paid or not being sufficient to cover the deduction of unjustified expenses, those amounts will be reimbursed by PMU to BTC.

The eligible costs are the ones that meet the following criteria: (i) they are necessary to the project; (ii) they are foreseen in the budget and the action plan of the project; (iii) they meet the principles of sound financial management, economy, cost efficiency; (iv) they were effectively incurred, booked in the partner’s accounting and are supported by original supporting documents.

Budget management

The total budget may not be exceeded.

The PSC, on the basis of proposals worked out by the PMU, must approve changes of budget according to BTC rules and regulations.

The possible budgetary changes are: (i) change of the budget structure; (ii) transfer of resources between existing budget lines to reduce fiduciary risks; (iii) reallocation of funds between the different financial modes; (iv) utilisation of the contingencies. This is possible as long as the changes do not affect the Specific Objective of the programme and remain within the limits of the approved budget.

In order to facilitate the start-up of the intervention, commitments and expenses may be made (as part of the Belgian contribution of 1,000,000 EUR before the signature of the Implementation Agreement between Belgian Government and BTC. These shall concern logistics (ICT equipment) and human resources (for recruitment procedures) for a maximum amount of 15,000 EUR.

Logistics = 10,000 EUR

Personnel = 5,000 EUR

5.5 Public Procurement

NEX - Procedures to apply

The procurement under NEX budget lines will apply Vietnamese rules and regulations, with competitive quotation in the procurement of goods, services, construction and installation if the bid package price is less than VND 100 million. When conducting competitive quotation, a request to provide a quotation must be sent to tenderers. Each tender package must have a minimum of three quotations from three different tenderers. The procedures will be detailed in the POM.

In order to comply with Belgian requirements for control of public expenses, the use of Vietnamese systems has to be combined with an ad-hoc system of no objections. The thresholds for the no objection process will be in line with BTC rules and regulations related to delegation of responsibilities as indicated in table 5 below.

The No-objection is required at the following steps of the process: (i) tender documents (complete file) including ToR and selection criteria; (ii) attribution report including proposal of contract; (iii) acceptance of the works / supplies.

Given the activities related to the different results, long-term agreement including standards and conditions as basis for procurement according to each specific contract (framework agreement) shall be favoured. Each framework agreement will require BTC no objection.

Table 5: BTC No-objection threshold

Threshold amounts	Technical advice	Legal advice	No-objection from BTC*	Timing for the NO in working days ⁹
Framework agreement			BTC RR	Max 5
5,000 € - 25,000 €	Upon request of BTC RR		BTC RR	Max 5
25,000 € – 85,000 €	positive advice of BTC	According to the needs	BTC RR	Max 10
> 85,000 € ¹⁰	positive advice of BTC	1. Unconditionally positive advice from a local jurist or 2. BTC legal advisor if the advice of the local jurist is not unconditionally positive	BTC RR	Max 25

The detail modalities of the application of the No-objection will be described in the POM.

BTC-management

For the BTC -management budget lines, procurement will be done according to the Belgian law on public tendering.

Management of Grant Agreements

In accordance with Article 8 of the BTC Law, BTC can provide financing to one or more third-party partners for the achievement of part of the activities of the TFF or for an own action that contributes to the achievement of the objectives of the intervention. Grants will be awarded in accordance with the modalities described in the BTC guide for the elaboration and follow-up of Grant Agreements. Public or private entities that are awarded grants are called "beneficiary parties". The beneficiaries of the actions funded by the grant are called "final beneficiaries".

The criteria for identifying a beneficiary party will be established taking the following domains into consideration:

'Eligibility criteria':

- Exclusion criteria ;
- Minimum capacities required in technical, operational or financial terms

'Evaluation criteria':

- Sustainability (including after the end of the Specific Agreement) in financial or content terms;
- Added value of the proposal from a social, economic or environmental point of view;
- Realism of the proposal;
- Compliance of the proposal compared to the objectives of the Specific Agreement;

⁹ Upon reception of the complete set of documents

¹⁰ In case of a tender evaluated at 200.000 € or more, a BTC RR non objection with ad-hoc mandate is required

- Overall cost and eligibility of costs;
- Cost–benefit ratio;
- Level of innovation;
- Expected impact;
- Contribution to the transversal themes.

As the use of a Grant Agreement is not provided for in this TFF, if the necessity of working with a Grant agreement arises it is necessary to obtain approval of the PSC, approval which is laid down in a report, on the basis of a clearly reasoned justification why, for this case, the public procurement regulations do not apply.

For each Grant Agreement amounting to less than or equal to 500,000 EUR, BTC will inform the Belgian State. For the purpose, the BTC Resident Representative will regularly transfer to Belgian Embassy the list of the beneficiary parties of Grant Agreements including the object and amount of the Agreements.

Grant Agreements of a budget in excess of 500,000 EUR with a beneficiary party that is not listed in the TFF will be submitted for approval by the Belgian State.

5.6 Modification of the TFF

The present TFF may be amended by mutual consent of the parties. Careful consideration must be given not to change the present TFF in a way that would unnecessarily change the outcome of the intervention as originally agreed between the parties. A formal agreement by the Belgian government is needed for the following changes: (i) the duration of the Specific Agreement, (ii) the total Belgian financial contribution, (iii) the Specific Objective of the intervention and (iv) the execution modalities.

The request of the above modifications has to first be approved and motivated by the PSC. The exchange of letters requesting these modifications shall be initiated by the Vietnamese party and shall be addressed to the Belgian Embassy.

The following changes to the TFF will have to be approved by the PSC: (i) the project results and their respective budget, (ii) the specific objective indicators and result indicators; (iii) the composition and responsibilities of the PSC; and (iv) the mechanism to change the TFF.

The adapted version of the TFF shall be communicated to the BTC headquarters and to the Belgian Embassy.

5.7 Monitoring, review and backstopping modalities

5.7.1 Results framework

A result oriented monitoring framework has been set up for this intervention to be used for accountability, for systematic learning and for strategic steering purposes. This framework is based on the intervention strategy. The indicators reflect the delivery of main results (and their quality), intermediary changes (i.e. the change processes), specific and general objective. The framework is indicative and will be fine-tuned during project inception phase and finally approved by the Project Steering Committee. The results framework can be found in section 3 above.

5.7.2 Different components of monitoring

The PMU will have primary responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the project. The Project Director, supported in this role by the ITA and the NE , will be responsible for the delivery and quality of monitoring.

5.7.2.1 Baseline:

Baseline data have been provided on the basis of the identified results framework and indicators (see section 3 above). These elements will be completed and finetuned during a comprehensive baseline exercise to be conducted at the beginning of the project under primary responsibility of the Project Director with technical support of the ITA and the NE.

The Baseline is the first component of the Monitoring process. By providing the intervention with a finalized and realistic monitoring framework, the baseline is the link between formulation and implementation.

As such, the comprehensive baseline exercise is about finetuning the monitoring of the intervention in order to ensure: (i) that stakeholders are on a same level of understanding of the change process (the intervention) that is supposed to take place; (ii) that everybody knows how progress towards this change (compared to the starting situation) will be measured; (iii) that risks are identified and taken into account in the implementation strategy and (iv) that the accountability, steering and learning needs are addressed.

The Baseline Report is the final output which sets out the M&E framework of the project, indicators, sources of verification, a risk management table and an updated operational plan. The Baseline Report will be finalized at the beginning of the project through a comprehensive baseline exercise (within the 3 months of the inception phase) and will also be developed in an incremental way on the basis of new information generated through implementation experience. The Baseline Report is presented and validated by the PSC.

5.7.2.2 Operational monitoring

Operational monitoring refers to both planning and follow-up of the intervention's information (inputs, activities, outputs). It is an internal management process of the intervention team and is done every 3 months. The PSC does not have a role in Operational Monitoring (see also section on reporting below).

5.7.2.3 Results Monitoring

Results Monitoring refers to an annual participatory reflection process in which intervention team (PMU and other stakeholders involved in the project activities) reflects about the achievements, challenges, etc. of the past year, and looks for ways forward in the year(s) to come. The result monitoring report is to be approved by the PSC.

5.7.2.4 Final Monitoring

The purpose of final monitoring is to ensure that the key-elements on the project's performance and on the development process are transferred to the partner organisation, the donor and BTC and captured in their "institutional memory". This enables the closure of the intervention, the hand-over to the partner organisation and the capitalisation of lessons learned.

5.7.3 End-Term Review

Reviews offer an external perspective on the intervention's performance and analysis of the development process. Performed by an independent external actor, reviews play an important role in the accountability of the intervention's performance. They are normally organized twice during the lifetime of the intervention. Due to the short project duration, there will be no mid-term Review (except on specific request by the Project Steering Committee). Annual results monitoring, including exchange workshop with the other provinces, and regular backstopping missions will provide moments to reflect more thoroughly on project performance and on the possible reorientations needed to achieve expected results.

And End-of-Term Review (ETR) will be organized at the end of the intervention. The review will analyse

project performance as well as focus on learning, and the capitalization of lessons learned. Special attention will be given to expected and unexpected change at the level of beneficiaries.

5.7.4 BTC HQ backstopping missions

Several follow-up backstopping missions from BTC headquarters will be performed during the course of the project. These missions may be organized on a BTC or a project initiative. These missions may involve several competences as M&E, financial controlling, governance sector, operations or any other requested. ToR of these missions will be prepared in close collaboration with BTC Representation in Hanoi and the PMU.

5.7.5 Reporting

The different processes are briefly explained below. The quality (reliability, timeliness, completeness) of the reporting will determine the future disbursements for the project. Unsatisfactory documented explanations could lead to funds transfer suspension until further notice. The PSC will lead the additional enquiries to obtain the quality level required and assurance that the funds are correctly followed. All this process must be documented. All reports as specified in the table below will be issued in Vietnamese and English. In case of interpretation, the English version will always prevail.

Table 3: Summary of Reporting steps

Report	Responsible	Content	Destination
Monitoring reports			
Start-up report	PMU	The start-up report includes : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The first year operational and financial planning • The baseline workplan • The project Operation Manual 	Project Steering committee
Baseline report	PMU	The baseline reports includes the M&E framework of the intervention, including indicators, sources of verifications, a risk management table and an updated operational planning.	finalized by the project director, on the basis of baseline data form the TFF , with ITA and NTA support presented to the Project Steering Committee (PSC) for approval ,within the 3 months of project start
Quarterly Progress Report	PMU	It includes: Project Progress and planning Financial status and planning Other operational information	BTC Representation
Annual Results monitoring report	PMU	Results monitoring is the annual participatory “reflective action” of the team on achievements and challenges of the past year, in order to look for ways forward in the year(s) to come. Adjustment to the interventions are proposed to the steering committee.	BTC Representation, PWG, PSC ,MPI, Belgian Embassy
Final monitoring report	PMU	The purpose of final monitoring is to ensure that the key-elements on the intervention’s performance, and lessons learned out of the development process are transferred to the partner organisation, the donor and	

Report	Responsible	Content	Destination
		BTC and captured in their “institutional memory. It is a summary of what different stakeholders might want to know at closure or some years after closure of the intervention.	
Evaluation reports			
ETR report	BTC HQ/External consultant	External End Term Review	BTC Representation, Steering Committee, MPI,
Audits			
External project audit+GoV project audit	Auditing firm/GoV	Financial audit of the projects commissioned by BTC / GoV	BTC Representation/Steering Committee, MPI,

BTC may ask for additional information on the report content and/or additional documents. The PMU will send the requested information or documents within the next 15 days following the request.

The financial reports can be based on Vietnam Dong. In that case, and to draw up the reports, the effective expenses will be converted into Euro with a conversion method approved by BTC at the start of the project. In these financial reports, the expenses will be presented in their original currency and in Euros.

Probative supporting documents justifying the expenses (invoices, detailed account, payment attests), should respect international standards. Those files will be archived in chronological order and will be kept at the permanent disposal of BTC and the external auditors for a period of eight years from the date of the first payment/spending. The MPI/DNEI allows BTC to consult the supporting documents anytime.

5.7.6 Audits

5.7.6.1 Vietnamese audits

The PMU will share with BTC the reports that result from GoV’s regular auditing procedures and all other audit reports that would be made available by other donors.

5.7.6.2 Financial and procurement project audits.

BTC will deploy an independent qualified audit firm (International Accounting Standards) to audit the dedicated project accounts annually. BTC will write the terms of references of the audits. These audits will be financed out of the BTC-managed lines and carried out by the auditors according to the BTC framework contract in force.

The audit reports will be submitted to the PSC who will decide on the measures to be taken, if any. This annual external audit will:

- Check the compliance, ex-post, between payments from the specific bank account and the work realised on field and locally, with the supporting documents, kept by the partner;
- Check the respect of the management procedures of the project including management of all project assets and procedures mentioned in the POM;
- Check the respect of the public procurement Vietnamese rules and internal regulations.

The auditing reports shall be discussed in the PSC.

The PMU shall set-up an action plan based on the audit recommendations to allow it to remedy the noticed weaknesses. The action plan and its follow up must be presented at each PSC meeting, which will approve its implementation. The cash call will be conditioned by the settlement or follow up of possible reserves/issues revealed by the audit mission. Both parties should consult each other to settle those reserves/issues. If after consultation no solution is found, BTC reserves the right to postpone the next instalments.

Annual audit could take place at any time, initiated by one or the other party.

If the auditing report shows that the funds are not managed in a transparent and appropriate way, BTC Resident Representative can suspend the next instalment and request the reimbursement of the funds already transferred.

In accordance with the legal status of BTC, each year an Audit Committee reviews the accounts of BTC. Within this framework, the Audit Committee may also carry out audits of programmes in Vietnam. The Audit Committee of BTC may also request that BTC's internal auditor conduct additional audits.

6 CROSS-CUTTING THEMES

6.1 Gender

Gender is an explicit Vietnamese policy concern. In the South East Asia region Vietnam is recognized for its success in closing gender gaps over the last 20 years. These efforts have resulted in high adult literacy rates for men and women; school enrolment data that show little difference between boys and girls; and the highest proportion (over one quarter) of women in national parliament in the Asia-Pacific region. Vietnam also has one of the highest women's economic participation rates in the world: over 80% of women between the ages of 15 and 60 participate in the labour force.

Considerable attention has been given to gender in the Sustainable Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) and further improvements seem assured. Nevertheless, a comprehensive Country Gender Assessment¹¹ of few years ago highlighted four issues that require additional attention. The fourth one is particularly relevant for the RALG as it refers to "progress in increasing the number of women in decision making which has been slow and inconsistent".

The RALG project is in a position to can make an important contribution to increasing women's involvement and influence in public policy making. Supporting citizen engagement at the different levels of the local government system offers unique opportunity to promote the development of innovative mechanisms for women to voice their concerns on government policies, plans and programs as well as public service delivery and overall local government performance.

In supporting the dissemination of user-friendly policies and regulations and with a view to enable a 2-way communication, the project will amplify the voice of women and vulnerable groups in Vietnamese society. The project will integrate gender perspectives into the communication plans of local authorities and into specific communications initiatives targeted at women or involving women as key actors in government processes. For instance, the needs and interests of women will be factored into the capacity building support to be provided to PIB's and CIB's to enable them to be better equipped to perform their supervisory and inspection roles.

Furthermore, capacity development initiatives to enhance skills, knowledge and attitudes of the local public servants will be prepared in a gender sensitive manner and will address and respect women's perspectives as implementers and beneficiaries. In particular, project activities related to C-SEDP planning and implementation at the commune-level will enhance awareness and local capacities to engender development plans and budgets be used to increase womens' participation in C-SEDP formulation and implementation.

The project will ensure women are well represented on the technical task forces and working groups to be set up at commune, district and provincial levels. This will enable project planning, analysis and reflection and management decision-making to be informed by the unique perspectives of women and girls. To this aim a gender budget scan methodology will also be used for activity programming during the inception phase¹².

¹¹ Vietnam Country Gender Assessment, World Bank , 2011.

¹² BTC guidance on budget scan methodology is available.

6.2 Environment

*“Environment protection is a responsibility of the whole society and an obligation of every citizen; it must be conducted consistently on the basis of clear accountability of ministries and agencies as well as decentralization between central and local levels; the role of communities and mass organizations should be brought into play and the cooperation with other countries in the region and the world enhanced”.*¹³

The National Strategy on Environmental Protection to 2020 with Visions to 2030 affirms the high priority the GoV attaches to environmentally sustainable social and economic development. It sees sustainable development to be “...the common work of the whole Party, people, authorities at all levels, ministries, agencies, localities, enterprises, social organizations, communities and individuals.”¹⁴

To this end, the GoV seeks “...to accelerate the dissemination of laws so that all people and enterprises fully and soundly understand legal stipulations, requirements, standards and criteria of environment protection; have full awareness of their responsibility and obligation for environment protection; and engage in environment protection activities;...”¹⁵

It also seeks to “...further strengthen and consolidate State management agencies in charge of environment protection from central to local levels, placing focus on provincial, district and communal levels in order to improve their capability of enforcing environment protection laws...” and to “...boost inspection, supervision and investigation against law infringements and environment crimes...”¹⁶

There is significant scope for the RALG – Nghe An project to advance and promote government’s ambitions for environmental protection in a manner entirely complementary to the project’s core objectives of promoting more transparent, responsive and accountable local governance. The RALG – Nghe An, as most projects intended to strengthen capacities for inclusive, participatory, accountable governance, has supply and demand-side dimensions.

On the one hand the RALG – Nghe An seeks to achieve changes in the way local government operates in terms of PARs which lead to improved service delivery and government performance. On the other hand, the project seeks to strengthen citizens’ voice and create a more enabling environment for citizens and government to communicate and understand each other better, and for citizens to hold government organizations to account.

In practical terms, environmental perspectives will be integrated into the results framework of the RALG- Nghe An project as follows:

- (R1) Specific attention will be placed on the dissemination of citizen friendly information concerning legislation, policies, programs and the responsibilities and obligations of citizens and government in the area of environmental protection and management .
- (R1) Specific attention will be placed on ensuring the role of project stakeholders in the promotion, supervision and oversight of official policies , laws and strategies pertaining to environmental protection. These issues will be specifically taken into consideration in

¹³ The National Strategy on Environment Protection to 2020, with Visions to 2030 was approved by the Prime Minister in his Decision 1216/QĐ-TTg on September 05, 2012.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

capacity needs assessments and capacity building for improved local government performance.

- (R2) Technical assistance will be provided to PCcs and Mass Organizations to strengthen capacities at all levels for managing and monitoring compliance and enforcement of environmental protection safeguards associated with C-SEDP planning and implementation. The issues of climate change mitigation and adaptation, water management, energy and urban planning will be given due attention.
- (R3) The project will be proactive in strengthening systems and tools for collecting data relating to priority environmental issues (such as those mentioned for R2) as well as techniques for analysing and responding to citizen feedback in a transparent and inclusive manner. Environmental impact assessment, including citizens participation and information will be paid specific attention.
- (R4) The project will be proactive in provision of technical assistance as required for the identification, planning, coordination and oversight of reforms intended to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public servants in understanding and performing their assigned roles and functions in the execution of the National Strategy for Environment Protection and other national and local strategies related to environmental matters.
- (R4) Particular attention will be accorded to the strengthening of capacity at all levels for the implementation and oversight of environmental policies and regulations associated with C-SEDP preparation and implementation.
- (R5) Experiences, lessons learned and good practices relating to the implementation and oversight of environmental protection legislation and policy will feature in annual inter-provincial exchanges.

7 ANNEXES

7.1 ToR long-term personnel

7.1.1 Terms of reference of the Project Director

The Project Director will be responsible for project daily management. S/he will support the project Steering Committee to assure his/her role and duties in the overall supervision of the project. S/he will have thorough knowledge and experience in the local government system, as well as project management experience (planning and monitoring of activities, finance, administration). S/he will work and collaborate closely with the ITA and National Expert and will responsibility for the coordination of project management and implementation. S/he will be appointed by Nghe An PPC.

More specifically, the Project Director, supported by the ITA, will perform the following tasks:

- Coordinate project activities and their monitoring and oversight under the overall direction of the Project Director
- Ensure day-to-day management of the project;
- Oversee and quality assure project plans, budgets, results-based progress reports and financial reports;
- Maintain close relationships with People's Councils, relevant line agencies, civil society representatives, and service providers as necessary;
- Identify key national stakeholders and local partners for the project;
- Supervise the contracting of service providers;
- Coordinate and oversee the operations of the PMU including it's secretariat function of the PSC;
- Participate in exchanges and mutual learning initiatives between Ha Tinh and Kon Tum provinces and at the national level.

7.1.2 Terms of reference of the International Technical Advisor

The International Technical Advisor (ITA) will provide technical assistance to the Project Director for the strategic management of the project as well as for the planning and implementation of the technical dimensions of the project in terms of citizen engagement, public administrative reform and responsive, accountable local governance. To this end, s/he will work in collaboratively with the Project Director, the National Expert and PMU staff.

The ITA will be responsible for the coordination of change management processes supported by the project in the three RALG provinces. S/he should not only be technically proficient but also have extensive experience in local government capacity building and in change management facilitation roles.

S/he will be responsible for assuring coherence between different types of activities included in project action plans as well as for ensuring planned activities are realistically implementable and likely to contribute to the achievement of the Specific Objective.

The long-term ITA will also be responsible for assuring coherence and coordination between the various lines of short- and medium- term short term technical assistance foreseen in the project.

The ITA will report to the Resident Representative of BTC in Hanoi.

The responsibilities of the ITA will include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following:

- Provide analytical and technical advice to support citizen-government engagement issues and related reforms within the local government system;
- Identify key opportunities and challenges to be met for the achievement of priority organisational change and institutional development goals;
- Supervise drafting of ToR for studies, reviews and consultancy services;
- Coordinate the identification and mobilization of national-level service providers required for the achievement of planned results.
- Facilitate workshops and training activities as and where appropriate and serve as a resource person in capacity development and change management;
- Advise the Project Director on all issues regarding the coordination, monitoring, oversight and strategic management of the project.
- Provide technical assistance to support project M&E.
- Coordinate and backstopping missions using BTC or external expertise.
- Ensure that sufficient, timely and relevant attention is given to environmental and climate related issues
- Coordinate the planning and execution of inter-provincial exchanges and the oversight of service providers active in multiple provinces.
- Contribute to the capitalization and dissemination of the lessons learned of the project; liaise with and promote networks of experts and practitioners in Vietnam and abroad; and
- Ensure linkages with the Belgian supported projects with regard to institutionalization of planning practices and with the climate change program for the 'spatial development framework' piloting approach.
- Support the Embassy in the policy dialogue and provide them with the relevant information

S/he will also play a close supportive role to the Programme Coordinator with respect to:

- The organisation, coordination, M&E and oversight of project implementation in accordance with the approved project work plans and budgets;
- Participating in all PSC meetings and in Provincial Working Group (PWG) meetings on a periodic and ad-hoc basis as required;
- The quality assurance of the narrative and financial reports to be submitted to the PSC;
- The coordination of project implementation with any other relevant ODA or other programming being implemented in the province;
- Supervise the preparation of financial and procurement plans; and
- Coordinate and facilitate financial audits for the Belgian contribution.

The profile of the preferred candidate includes:

- Relevant and internationally recognised advanced degree in public administration, economic, social sciences or other relevant field;

- Minimum of 10 years relevant work experience with decentralisation and local governance reforms internationally;
- Experience of institutional development and capacity building in the local government sector with a proven expertise and experience with government-citizen engagement, social accountability etc.;
- Minimum of 10 years field experience in the area of governance, local governance and/or public sector reform in countries in the South, particularly with low-or middle-income countries. Experience of the Eastern Asian context is an asset;
- Proven experience in project management (including financial and human resources management)
- Proven experience working in change management facilitation roles;
- Proven, effective facilitation skills and the ability to develop effective interpersonal relationships; teamwork, negotiate and manage conflict;
- Excellent communication and report writing skills;
- Excellent planning, management and organisational skills;
- A high level of computer literacy, including Word, Excel, Internet, E-mail, Power Point;
- Excellent spoken and written English.

Duration of the assignment: 36 months

Duty station: Hanoi, Vietnam - work divided between 3 provinces (Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Kon Tum)

7.1.3 Terms of reference of the National Expert

A National Expert with in-depth knowledge and experience of the local governance field in Vietnam will be recruited to facilitate and support the day-to-day management of the project under the overall supervision of the Project Director.

S/he will be work and collaborate closely with the ITA. His/her tasks will include:

- Provide technical support for the analysis of existing provincial studies and PAR plans as a means of identifying activity streams and planned indicators and results for RALG annual plans and budgets.
- Explore new methodologies and approaches for citizen feedback mechanisms which can be set up in the Vietnamese context and specifically provincial context of Nghe An, etc..
- Contribute to the identification and follow-up of the specialized TA needed to support specific organisational development domains, and specific capacity development activities with regard to; i) citizen involvement and feedback; and ii) local government responsiveness to citizen feedback and appropriate PAR.
- Liaise with universities and other research institutes, and with other RALG provinces involved as may be required.
- Participate in the identification and documentation of lessons learned and good practices to feed into and stimulate capitalization exercises at provincial and inter-provincial level
- Contribute to the preparation of the project work plans and reports progress report

- Contribute to developing and filing in on a regular basis the M&E framework of the intervention
- Participate in the Steering Committee and provincial working groups and contribute to the preparatory work for the secretary of the PSC

Profile:

- University in Public administration, political science, social sciences or related field.
- Expertise in the decentralized planning and local governance policies in Vietnam, good knowledge of SEDP processes, citizen participation, PAPI index ...
- A minimum of 7 years experience in the management and implementation of governance sector projects or other relevant programming.
- Good leadership skills, problem solving skills.
- Willingness and ability to operate at all levels of the local government system.
- Experience with Project Cycle Management and proven planning and reporting skills
- Fluency in English and Vietnamese, good written and spoken communication skills
- Ability to work within a team

Duration of the assignment: 36 months. S/he will be based in Vinh City with regular travel to targeted districts and communes.

7.2 Budget programming

BUDGET TOTAL				unit	quantit	amount	Mode of Executon	BUDGET TOTAL	%	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	
A	Specific Objective (SO) :								610,000	61%	140,000	260,000	210,000
R 01	Improved capacity of LG to disseminate information							NEX	80,000		10,000	30,000	40,000
R 02	Improved capacity of PPC & mass organisations to facilitate 2 way communication							NEX	150,000		30,000	70,000	50,000
R 03	Improved capacity of LG to collect , analyse and utilize citizen feed back							NEX	120,000		30,000	50,000	40,000
R 04	Improved capacity for LG to plan & coordinated PAR reforms							NEX	200,000		50,000	80,000	70,000
R 05	exchange & utilization of lessons learned with other provinces							NEX	60,000		20,000	30,000	10,000
R 05 01	workshops, capitalization exercises							NEX	40,000		10,000	20,000	10,000
R 05 02	studies and consultancies through framework contracts							NEX	20,000		10,000	10,000	
X	CONTINGENCIES								0	0%	0	0	0
X 01	Contingencies								0		0	0	0
X 01 1	Contingencies (NEX)							NEX					
X 01 02	Contingencies (BTC-managed)							BTC-Managed					
Z	GENERAL MEANS								390,000	39%	151,500	111,500	127,000
Z 01	Human Resources								282,600		94,000	94,000	94,600
Z 01 01	International Technical Assistance - Technical advisor						person/month	BTC-Managed	180,000		60,000	60,000	60,000
Z 01 02	National Expert						person/month	BTC-Managed	72,000		24,000	24,000	24,000
Z 01 03	translator						person/month	BTC-Managed	12,600		4,000	4,000	4,600
Z 01 04	driver						person/month	BTC-Managed	18,000		6,000	6,000	6,000
Z 02	Investments								30,000		30,000	0	0
Z 02 01	IT equipement							NEX	10,000		10,000	0	0
Z 02 02	vehicle							NEX	20,000		20000		
Z 03	Operational Expenditures								44,400		16,500	11,500	16,400
Z 03 01	operational costs technical assistance modalities							BTC-Managed	15,600		5,200	5,200	5,200
	natl transportation costs						Lumpsum	BTC-Managed	15,600		5,200	5,200	5,200
Z 03 02	Other Operating Expenditures							NEX	28,800		11,300	6,300	11,200
	intl missions, regional study tours ..						Lumpsum	NEX	10,000		5,000		5,000
	consumables & other operational costs						month	NEX	10,700		3,600	3,600	3,500
	bank costs						year	NEX	900		300	300	300
	telecommunications						month	NEX	7,200		2,400	2,400	2,400
Z 04	Monitoring, Evaluation and Auditing								33,000		11,000	6,000	16,000
Z 04 01	backstopping							BTC-Managed	9,000		3,000	3,000	3,000
	Technical Backstopping and Monitoring by BTC Hqs						missions	BTC-Managed	9,000		3,000	3,000	3,000
Z 04 02	Evaluation							BTC-Managed	15,000		5,000	0	10,000
	Baseline, Mid-Term & Final Evaluation						Lumpsum	BTC-Managed	15,000		5,000		10,000
Z 04 03	Auditing							BTC-Managed	9,000		3,000	3,000	3,000
	External Auditing						Lumpsum	BTC-Managed	9,000		3,000	3,000	3,000
TOTAL								1,000,000		291,500	371,500	337,000	

BTC- Managed	331,200	33%	110,200	105,200	115,800
NEX	668,800	67%	181,300	266,300	221,200

7.3 Summary overview of ongoing PAPI and related action plans in Nghe An province

Below is a short summary of main features and priorities of the current plans and priorities defined by Nghe An Provincial Authorities for responding to the challenges revealed by the PAR and PAPI studies in the province.

7.3.1 Overview of Nghe An province

Nghe An province is located in the center of the North Central of Vietnam, having natural area of 16,500 km² – the country's largest province. Having diversified topography condition with sea, delta, midland and mountain. The province has the longest border with Laos of 419 km and long coastal line of 82 km. Nghe An has 21 district-level administrative units (of which there are 11 mountainous district) and 480 commune-level administrative units with population of 3.2 million (the country's fourth largest population). The province is famous for learning passion and excellence, diligence, creative and successful in various sectors. Nghe An has 6 universities, 11 colleges, 15 vocational school and 70 technical training centers which annually provides training for 35 thousand students and 50 thousand technical workers.

In economic development, there are two main regions featuring major differences in terms of level of development and cultural diversification namely: (1) The 11 western districts with difficult accessibility, poor population with majority of ethnic minorities and mainly subsidized by provincial government and (2) Remain districts and towns in eastern part of province with higher economic stand point, concentrated industrial workshops, townships, businesses with majority of population are Kinh. Provincial income is mainly contributed by these eastern localities.

7.3.2 PAPI scores

Since its participation into the PAPI study, Nghe An has given due attention to the results with several efforts to improve the situation in the province. A most successful effort among policy initiatives made by the province is the strengthening of PAR working group led by PPC (established in 2008 following National Scheme No.30 of the Prime Minister with key members from DPI, DoJ, DoNRE, DoHA and DARD). Since 2011 until 2013 before merging into DoJ, this working group had contributed substantially to reviewing and simplifying of almost 60% of administrative procedures in the province. And most recently, this body has provided advisory to the PPC for promulgating a Decision on simplifying procedures administrative procedures that significantly benefit enterprises investing into the province.

With those actions, there are already some improvements observed, however, still much more efforts remain be made with respect to the following challenges:

- The province's PAPI score is low, capacity of management and execution of policies and public service delivery as well as people participation on state governance is limited, public administration performance is low. In 2013, the province's PAPI was ranked 37/63 provinces, lose 15 grades compared to 2012 report. In 2014, Nghe An gained 10 positions compared to 2013. In 2014, Nghe An has increased in transparency, vertical accountability and public service delivery. Nghe An scores best performers (7) on vertical accountability, and high average on participation (30), transparency (19), public administrative procedure (17) and public service delivery (45). The province scores low average on control of corruption.
- Two key indicators of this status is province's average position in PCI map (55.83) and low PAPI score (rank 37/63 provinces). The 2014 PAPI scores has improved compared to 2013.

As identified in the Diagnostic Assessment of Nghe An PAPI score, the report made by HCM Political Academy, three key weakest indicators that should be paid most attention are Transparency,

Accountability, and Administrative procedures. The HCM PA report also recommends six prioritized areas for improvement, including:

- diversification of information dissemination to citizens in an innovative and citizen friendly manner via various channels including direct meeting, mass media, websites and posted in public sites. Key information needed to be shared are those relating to land use plan, granting of land use right certificate, and Ordinance on Grassroots Democracy (OGD)
- disclosure of commune budget plan and implementation in more friendly language
- better training on skills in financial statement preparation and publicity of the statement provided to commune accountants.
- more transparent and responsive process for preparing the list of the poor.
- review of operational effectiveness of PIBs and CISBs.
- and the following activities which have been given priority in the 2016-2020 PAR Program at commune level: (i) providing more equipment and training on soft skills to PAR staff and OSS staff; (ii) publishing the “Manual on Administrative Services” to households; (iii) rearranging working schedule of commune OSSs to serve citizens all days; paying allowances for OSS staff in a timely manner; (iv) strengthening oversight and supervision over operation of commune authorities in implementing OGD and PAR program; and (v) introducing effective M&E system for PAPI score improvement.

7.3.3 Nghe An PAPI Action Plan

Responding to the PAPI score, Nghe An has developed its Action Plan to Improve Its Effectiveness of Public Administration and Governance by year 2015. The Plan had set the general objective of improving Nghe An’s ranking on PAPI score so that it can be ranked in the group of high PAPI performing provinces in 2015. The specific objectives of the Plan are:

Paying great attention on improvement of four dimensions having lower-than-average scores in 2013 relative to other provinces in the same region, while maintaining high rankings in the remaining two dimensions. More specifically,

- Improving citizens’ participation at grassroots level by 30% relative to 2013 score, reaching the absolute score of 6.77 points.
- More transparency in providing timely and reliably information to citizens (increased by 20% relative to 2013 score, reaching the absolute score of 6.92 points).
- Improving vertical accountability to citizenry, in which strong emphasis is made on improving operational quality of PIBs and CISBs (increased by 20% relative to 2013 score, reaching the absolute score of 7.04 points).
- Stronger control over corruption in the public sector (increased by 30% relative to 2013 score, reaching the absolute score of 7.50 points).
- Keeping improving trend of public administration procedure simplification so that the province is in the top 15. Score on public service delivery should help the province to be ranked at 30th ranking nationwide.

The Plan defines major measures to meet these objectives and targets:

1. Improving local citizens’ participation: (i) Strengthening communication and awareness

raising for leaders and civil servants in all tiers and sectors on importance of PAPI improvement; (ii) regularly disseminating laws and requirement of OGD about the issues which are subject to inform to citizens, get involved citizens' participation in discussing, deciding, providing comments and supervising. (iii) clarify responsibilities of local governments and public servants in administrative agencies in facilitating OGD implementation.

2. Strengthening transparency and publicity: (i) rescreening all administrative procedures, removing unnecessary paper works, merging possible administrative requirements so simplify public administrative procedures as much as possible; (ii) Publicizing policies and supports applied to the poor as an effort to facilitate citizens' supervision; (iii) Strengthening the oversight of PCc and mass organizations over commune budget; (iv) Publicizing land use plans and land price schedules at CPC offices, other land-related information including boundaries of land eligible for compensation, compensation levels, number of households and land areas to be compensated, typologies of land subject to be acquired, compensation levels for other properties, crops situated in acquired land.
3. Improving vertical accountability: (i) Strengthening operation of PIBs and CISBs; (ii) Implementing Mechanism for Dialogue and Communication with Citizens, which was issued by the Provincial Party Bureau on 30/8/2012; (iii) Taking stocks on implementing PM's Decision 80/2005/QĐ-TTg and the Inter-ministerial Circular 04/2006/TTLT on the Community's Supervision Mechanism;
4. Promoting efforts to control corruption in the public sector: (i) promoting OSS and IAOSS. All procedures, paper work requirements, timing, fee levels, and templates and forms should be publicized in OSS and IAOSS. Citizens are instructed carefully by OSS staff ; (ii) Setting up the hotline so that citizens, businesses and investors can denunciate cases of miss-behavioral public servants ; (iii) Strengthening coordination in investigating and inspecting miss-behavioral cases, and in reviewing administrative procedures relating to investment projects; (iv) Disseminating anti-corruption legislations in various ways so that citizens can understand and participate in supervising and identifying corrupted cases ; (v) Emphasizing on training and strengthening responsibility and professional ethics of public servants together with setting up a fair enumeration system. Improving quality of public affairs and clearly defining responsibilities and tasks in each steps of public service delivery process; (vi) Strictly implementing job turnover requirements, promoting the role of mass media in investigating corrupted cases and protecting denunciators.
5. Simplifying administrative procedures: (i) removing obstacles to effectiveness of public administration and governance, and business environment, especially those stemming from management of public agencies; (ii) clearly specifying responsibilities of citizens, businesses and public agencies in dealing with administrative procedures, especially those of the heads of public agencies; (iii) Strengthening professional inspection in receiving and handling with citizens' complaints related to administrative procedures in investment management. Decisively replacing public servants who are intentionally creating additional red tapes for citizens and businesses; (iv) Publicizing in internet and agencies' offices required administrative procedures. Positioning qualified staff in the jobs relating to receiving and handling with citizens' requests, strengthening coordination in inspecting and supervising investment-related procedures at different local tiers, promptly identifying miss-behavioral public servants ; (v) Facilitating IT application in public agencies, especially in adopting proper software in OSS and e-government.

6. Improving quality of public services: (i) Improving quality of health care services and educational services, especially in kindergarten, primary and secondary public education; (ii) Improving quality of infrastructure network: Placing priority in using state budget to invest in pro-business infrastructure, especially in the South East Economic Zone and concentrated Industrial Parks, mobilizing all non-state budget funding sources for infrastructure development via different modalities including PPP and private investment in intra-industrial park infrastructure, speeding up implementation of investment projects in seaport, airport and road development, improving service quality of railway transportation, post and telecommunication, public utilities and banking and finance.

7.4 Nghe An PAPI Profile for 2015

PAPI

The Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index

Measuring
Citizens'
Experiences

BY PROVINCE

Index By Province Library News & Media FAQ

Home About PAPI Contact Us

Nghe An 2015

facebook Tweet +1

2015 Data

2014 Data

2013 Data

2012 Data

2011 Data

5.29

Participation at Local Levels

5.9

Transparency

6.05

Vertical Accountability

5.51

Control of Corruption

6.91

Public Administrative Procedures

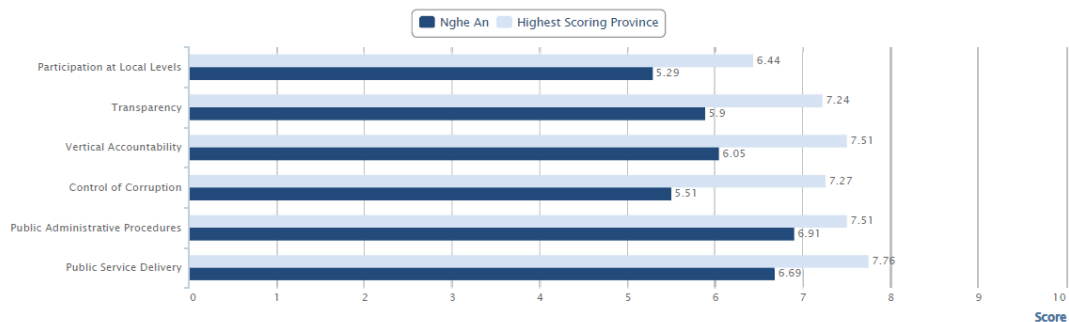
6.69

Public Service Delivery

PAPI measures the standards of governance and public administration drawn from citizens' experiences when interacting with governmental authorities. As a tool to monitor performance PAPI contributes to accelerate continued progress in governance and public administration performance. In an environment reliant on "self-assessments" by government stakeholders to measure government performance, PAPI helps provide a bottom-up perspective, by studying people-centred experiences.

This provincial profile presents an initial overview of the main results and key findings at both the dimension and subdimension level. It also explains graphically the actual scores for the respective province and places it in comparative perspective with the best performing provinces and with itself over time. This will be useful for provinces hoping to identify good practices and to excel in performance.

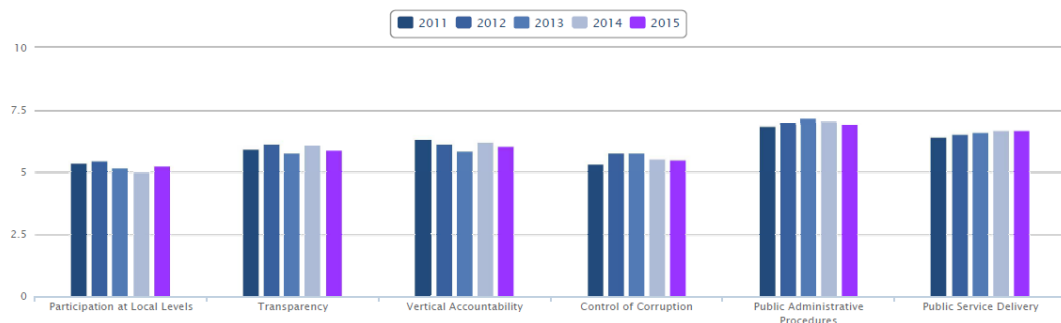
2015 Overall Governance and Public Administration Performance



TIP: Lighter bar on top of each dimension represents highest scoring province in 2015

Since 2010 PAPI has collected responses from nearly 75,000 citizens across all 63 provinces making it the largest governance and public administration performance survey in the country. In 2015 PAPI was replicated with a total sample of 13,995 citizens directly interviewed.

Provincial changes over time 2011–2015



TIP: Click the legend to toggle year's data or zoom in the chart