Chapter 13

E-Government in Vietnam: Situation, Prospects, Trends, and Challenges

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ABSTRACT

Electronic government (e-government) has established as an effective mechanism for increasing government productivity and efficiency and a key enabler of citizen-centric services. Despite the considerable investment of the Government of Vietnam in e-government, the outcomes of it are still far below the expectation. This paper aims also to assess the current situation of e-government in Vietnam and to investigate the reasons for the modest results of it. Different indicator groups for the measurement of e-government will be applied to access the status of each dimension of e-government as well as the overall performance of e-government in general. The challenges and issues of implementing e-Government systems will also be relevant to implementing ICTs to build systems to support e-governance.

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1. INTRODUCTION: E-GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENT IN VIETNAM

Successful diffusion of information communications technology (ICT) has technologies triggered the usage of Internet, e-commerce, and eventually in electronic government (e-government). Electronic government initiatives have often sounded very promising but have been difficult to implement. The challenge lies in the implementation of e-government successfully. One likely barrier is that e-government is approached as if in a universal context, which can be generalized across the globe. On the other hand, the individual countries’ contextual imperatives, culture and conditions vary. Therefore, a universal approach is less likely to be effective in all contextual settings. This article mainly focuses on e-government in Vietnam, explore important factors affecting the adoption and implementation of e-government in Vietnam via trends, prospects and challenges.

The development of electronic government (e-Government) has become a global trend of public sector reforms during the last two decades. Although the term ‘e-government’ appeared more than twenty years ago, there is no commonly accepted definition. The definition that is often cited is the one Layne and Lee mention in their research: “E-Government refers to government’s use of technology, particularly web-based Internet application to enhance the access to and delivery of government information and service to citizens, business partners, employees, other agencies, and government entities” (Layne & Lee, 2001, p. 123). Holiday (2006) also points out ‘the core idea’ of e-Government in his paper: “e-Government usually comprises public sector use of information and communication technology (ICT), including the Internet, to boost information dissemination, enhance service delivery, and facilitate citizen participation” (Holiday, 2006, p. 516).

Furthermore, the growth of e-Government is often divided into stages, such as the five-stage model suggested by UN and American Society for Public Administration:

1. **Emerging**: An official government online presence is established;
2. **Enhanced**: Government sites increase, information becomes more dynamic;
3. **Interactive**: Users can download forms, e-mail officials and interact through the web;
4. **Transactional**: Users can actually pay for services and other transactions online and

Heeks (2001, p. 4) argues that there are three main domains of e-Government: improving government process (e-administration), connecting citizens (e-citizens
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