

Land Information Management at the Local Government Level in Vietnam

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SUMMARY

From 2010 to 2015, the Association of Cities of Vietnam (ACVN), with Federation of Canadian Municipalities' support, undertook a project in four Vietnamese cities to lay the foundations for a geographic information system. This system, which would be managed locally and be based on a land use registry model, was seen as an essential step in the growth of "smart cities".

The strategy was to develop an integrated information system to create links between data received from municipal departments involved in local-level land management (e.g. the urban management, environment, and taxation departments). This type of system would make it possible to establish and update information for every parcel of land within a municipality. As a result, it would improve land management (such as properties, permits, and taxation) by providing the relevant department with adequate information. This new system would also have economic benefits, including efficiencies of staff time and increased tax revenues.

The first phase of the project was implemented in the City of Nam Dinh and, as a result of its success, has since been replicated in three other Vietnamese cities (Thai Binh, Pleiku and Tra Vinh). In the four cities taking part, land use registers were developed by drawing up specific inventories or obtaining information from the cadastre, land use rights (red books) or tax records. Establishing these registers was a revelation for the cities involved, and clearly demonstrated the value of having an information system of this type for municipal management.

In 2015, ACVN commissioned an economic impact study of the project. The company hired to carry out the study (Development and Policies Research Center - DEPOCEN) concluded that the project had had a significant impact in each of the four participating

cities:

“[The] improvement of capacity and operational efficiency of the city governance in the land-related areas, such as issuing Land-Use Right Certificate, granting construction permits and collecting local tax... has generated reliable information for decision-making processes in urban governance.” DEPOCEN, 2015.

The project enabled us to see that the development of “smart cities” in Vietnam is essential and feasible. Despite a number of setbacks, the project results from all four cities are conclusive. It should be noted that, in addition to certain technical problems, the greatest difficulty encountered was ensuring municipal departments worked together to implement a local system within a centralized governance structure. It is clear that local-level collaboration is the strategic key to developing “smart cities”.