



USAID | VIETNAM

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PROGRAM UPDATES

Economic Growth and Governance:

- **USAID Launches Assistance to Strengthen Vietnam's E-Government Development:** E-government is the use of technological communications devices, such as computers and the internet, to provide public services. On October 13, USAID and Vietnam's Office of the Government (OOG) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to help OOG accelerate administrative reforms, enhance national inter-agency coordination and transparency, and further develop its e-government platform - the National Public Service Portal - which will improve access to information, benefitting both citizens and businesses. USAID assistance will focus on four main components: (i) Updating regulations related to online public service delivery and processing; (ii) Organizational change management to improve service delivery and communications plans to strengthen the National Public Service Portal; (iii) Improvements to business processes, interface design, and user experience on the National Public Service Portal; and (iv) Business process re-engineering support for one-stop shops, focusing on the digitalization of administrative procedure and access to digitized results via the National Public Service Portal. **So What?** Through this capacity building effort, USAID will assist the Government of Vietnam's digital transformation and administrative reform efforts in the public sector, making for more transparent, inclusive, and resilient service delivery.
- **USAID Supports Vietnam's Efforts to Improve the Business Environment through Technological Innovation:** Despite the numerous benefits of technological innovation and the Vietnam government's preferential policies for tech-companies to digitize their operations, many enterprises have yet to become aware, understand the nuances, and access government incentives linked to digital transformation. To address this gap, the USAID Linkages for Small and Medium Enterprises (USAID LinkSME) activity is collaborating with the Prime Minister's Advisory Council for Administrative Procedure Reform (ACAPR) to enhance the dialogue between small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and the government through a series of conferences to address administrative procedural challenges in the business environment. On October 7, USAID LinkSME,

ACAPR, the Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), and the Vietnam Association for Small and Medium Enterprises (VINASME) organized a conference in Hanoi to discuss how technological innovation could help SMEs increase productivity thereby promoting competitiveness, and the changes needed in administrative procedure reform to support technological innovation for business development in Vietnam. The conference was attended by more than 180 government and business representatives in-person and also reached more than 75,500 people by being live streamed on the Facebook page of VnExpress, one of the most influential media outlets in Vietnam. **So What?** Enhancing dialogue between MOST and VINASME supports the government's efforts to overcome challenges in the business enabling environment, while increasing the capacity of Vietnamese SMEs to participate in supply chains and supporting Vietnam's post-COVID-19 economic recovery efforts.

Health:

- **USAID Expands Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) Services in Quang Ninh Province:** PrEP is a powerful medication for HIV prevention and can reduce the risk of HIV infection by more than 92 percent if taken daily, as part of a combination HIV prevention strategy. Until early 2020, Quang Ninh's local community-based organizations (CBOs) and key population (KP) groups, such as men who have sex with men (MSM), did not know about the benefits of PrEP or how to access PrEP. To address this, in February 2020, the USAID Enhanced Community HIV Link - Northern activity started a community-based advocacy campaign for PrEP. USAID engaged CBOs and KP groups to increase their understanding of the benefits of taking PrEP and where to get it. The activity also provided technical support to CBOs to enhance their ability to share PrEP messages with their group members and expanded MSM networks to reach clients in both urban areas like Ha Long city and remote districts such as Dong Trieu, Mong Cai, and Cam Pha. **So What?** Quang Ninh CBOs now have PrEP information on the benefits of PrEP, where services are available, and how to link clients to all three PrEP facilities in the province. After six months of support, CBOs in Quang Ninh have helped 104 clients enroll for PrEP, more than a 10-fold increase in the number of people on PrEP in this province, thereby reducing the risk of HIV infection.

Environment:

- **USAID Supports the Quang Nam Provincial Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation-plus (REDD+¹) Action Plan and Efforts to Secure Private Sector**

¹ REDD+ refers to reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, and the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries.

Financing for Forest Conservation: On October 6, the USAID Green Annamites activity supported the Quang Nam Provincial People's Committee (PPC) and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to conduct a consultation meeting to review the province's carbon credit trading proposal for the Prime Minister's approval as well as potential investors' proposals to purchase REDD+ carbon credits from Quang Nam, offsetting these companies' carbon footprints and supporting forest protection. Vietnam was one of the first countries in Asia to develop a National REDD+ Action Program and so far, 22 provinces have developed provincial REDD+ action plans (PRAPs). With technical support from the USAID Green Annamites activity, Quang Nam prepared and approved its PRAP in June 2020. In order to provide reassurance to proposed buyers and offer a verifiable roadmap for REDD+ implementation in Quang Nam, USAID Green Annamites is also commissioning a peer-reviewed Project Description Document. The document will verify available carbon credits and facilitate Quang Nam's successful finalization of a carbon transaction, which will result in a reduction of over 15 million tons of carbon dioxide emissions over the next 10 years, protecting 175,470 hectares of forest area and supporting Quang Nam's continued efforts to reduce its deforestation risk and independently finance conservation projects. **So What?** USAID's technical assistance to the Quang Nam PPC on REDD+ is facilitating the province's capacity for private, sustainable investment for forest conservation, supporting Vietnam's self-reliance and safeguarding of its natural resources, goals of the Indo-Pacific Vision.

Social Development:

- **USAID Helps Renovate Bus Stops in Vietnam's Quang Tri Province in Accordance with Universal Accessibility Standards:** Universal design is the design of buildings, products, or environments to make them accessible to all people, regardless of age, disability, or other factors. Last year, USAID's Raising Voices Creating Opportunities activity supported the development of universal transportation design criteria to assist authorities in identifying priority issues to improve accessibility of transportation systems. In May 2020, USAID's Raising Voices Creating Opportunities activity and the Ministry of Transportation's Transport Development Strategy Institute used this set of criteria to conduct a comprehensive survey in Quang Tri province. Survey results showed that bus stations do not have ramps or other access points to accommodate persons with disabilities. In response, USAID's Raising Voices Creating Opportunities activity coordinated with Quang Tri Department of Transportation to renovate three bus stops in accordance with universal accessibility standards. **So What?** USAID is helping improve physical access to public transportation, thus facilitating the freedom of movement as well as improving the quality of life of persons with disabilities and the aging population in Vietnam.

Project Spotlight:

Each week we will highlight one of the more than 40 activities used to provide assistance in Vietnam.

People, especially children under 16, living with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDDs) require a range of services from different healthcare professionals. In Vietnam, these services are often not available due to a shortage of specialists in occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and to a lesser extent, physiotherapy. In addition, collaboration between therapists and professionals from different disciplines, for example pediatricians and psychologists, can be weak and there is a lack of guidance to support their work. USAID's [I-Thrive](#) activity, implemented in Thua Thien Hue and Quang Nam provinces, will address these challenges by enhancing the skills of therapists, developing interdisciplinary teamwork, fostering parent-mediated interventions, and producing national guidelines, thus helping children with IDDs to reach their full potential.

Outreach Opportunities on the Horizon:

- **October 28-29:** Indo-Pacific Business Forum, highlighting USAID Deputy Administrator Bonnie Glick and USAID/Vietnam Mission Director Yastishock's participation (TBD)

Other Key Upcoming Events:

- **October TBC (Hanoi):** Dialogue with the Council of the Central Party Committees on Counter Wildlife Trafficking (USAID Saving Species)

More Information about USAID/Vietnam Programs:

- USAID/Vietnam Website: <http://www.usaid.gov/vietnam>
- USAID/Vietnam Fact Sheets: <https://www.usaid.gov/vietnam/fact-sheets>