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**DEVELOPMENT OF ICT
IN VIETNAM STATISTICS**

**Paper prepared
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Introduction

The National Statistical Service of Vietnam has undergone fundamental changes during the last some years. During this period, the GSO has taken significant steps towards becoming a modern and internationally recognized statistical institution. One of the key factors of the development of Vietnam Statistics is application of ICT.

GSO has like many other Central Bureaus of Statistics been through the development from punch card – mainframe – which were introduced at the GSO in early 1970's, to a network of PC's connected with servers. Today the GSO is well equipped with IT hard- and software and a staff that is fully prepared for the challenges that the future will bring.

This paper presents in brief development of ICT application in Vietnam Statistics.

1. Development Strategy

Recognizing importance of IT, in 2001 the Government of Vietnam has approved Strategy of development of IT in Vietnam. A key part of the Strategy is to enhance the ICT environment and support the development of E-government and wide application of ICT in ministries and Government agencies. Development of ICT in Statistics is a part of the Government strategy.

In 2002, the Prime Minister approved Strategy for development Vietnam Statistics to 2010. The strategic plan aimed at modernization and capacity building of the GSO for purposes of improving the quality, transparency, timeliness and dissemination of statistics. Development of ICT is one of the 7 key programs of the Strategy. The program consists of (1) modernization of GSO ICT infrastructure and processes; (2) improvement in the flow of data analyses and (3) development and expansion of GSO intranet, website and portal.

2. Activities

2.1 Reorganization: The first step for implementing strategic plan of ICT development was ICT Conference with participation of ICT leading IT experts and representative from Ministries, government agencies and provincial Statistics Office for discussion and recommendations for development of ICT in Statistics. Then, by the proposal of the GSO, the Government has a decision on reorganization of GSO. According to the decision of the Government the Department of Methodology and Standards assigned for monitoring ICT development in the GSO system. Also 3 regional IT Centers were established in Hanoi, Danang and Hochiminh cities. The Centers operate according to unique work plan of the GSO.

2.2 Modernization of ICT infrastructure of GSO

Infrastructure of the GSO has been significantly improved during the last years. The GSO WAN is consisting of GSO LAN, 64 PSO LANs and 3 Regional IT Centers. In the Head Quarters Office and large PSOs every staff was equipped with a modern PC connected to LAN and Internet.

The IT infrastructure was improved by Government funds and international assistance. The Government approved in 2005 a Project on Modernization of GSO with total fund of 15 Million \$US from the Government budget and loan from the WB. The project aimed at not only improvement of IT infrastructure by purchasing new PCs to equip for all 5000 GSO staff from central to district level but also aimed at application of E-forms for data entry by email/web into survey data base; Digital scanning form using ICR technology and use of Mobile PDA for surveys. The Project divided into 3 phases: (1) Infrastructure Upgrade; (2) Improve data collection and processing and (3) Portal and Internet Creation.

2.3 ICT supported Statistical methods and approaches:

Improvement of IT environment in the GSO was supported by:

- Standardization of classifications, nomenclatures and indicators.
- Improvement of data collection using modern technology: (E-form, Web-App; Scanning, ...)

- Improvement of procedures for data processing and setting up databases.
- Improvement data dissemination using ICT (GSO Website, CD-ROM, ...)
- Training in ICT. Different courses have been conducted for different staff groups.
(training for leaders, administration management, SPSS, STATA software....)

2. 4 Monitoring via LAN

The development of IT within the GSO could be seen through application of IT in many aspects of activities:

- New software for automatic data processing for many indicators (CPI, IIP, ...)
- Data collection by Website. A Website connected to largest enterprises to collect data from them.
- Monitoring and controlling activities via LAN .

3. Future plan

- Upgrading IT infrastructure at district statistical offices.
- Improvement of data flow ensuring transparency, timeliness and reliability of statistics.
- Improvement of data dissemination using ICT
- Enhancing qualification of the staff.

4. Challenges:

The biggest challenge for Vietnam Statistics in ICT development is qualification of the staff especially in district level. With rapid development of ICT, updating new knowledge and skills for the staff in 672 district statistical offices is a big problem.

5. The needs for ICT training

- Needs for training on statistical specialized software.
- Needs for training on database and management
- Needs for training on network security