

State Management of Administrative Procedure Reform in the Context of Digital Transformation: A Study at The Health Department in Vinh Long Province, Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

Administrative procedure reform is a critical driver of public sector efficiency and service quality, particularly in the context of digital transformation. This study aims to critically assess the effectiveness of state management of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province, Vietnam, and to develop evidence-based policy solutions. The research adopts a mixed-method design integrating qualitative policy analysis and quantitative survey data collected from 10 experts and 100 citizens and businesses. Secondary data were obtained from official reports and legal documents for the period 2020–2024. The findings reveal substantial improvements in administrative efficiency, with a high on-time dossier processing rate (99.7%), enhanced transparency, and increased application of information technology. However, persistent structural challenges remain, including inadequate digital infrastructure, limited data integration, and uneven digital competencies among civil servants. Based on these findings, the study proposes targeted and actionable policy measures to enhance institutional frameworks, strengthen implementation mechanisms, improve human resource capacity, and promote digital transformation. The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from a provincial health governance context and offering policy-relevant, theoretically informed insights into administrative procedure reform in the era of digital transformation.

keywords: Administrative procedure reform; Public sector management; Digital transformation; Public service delivery

INTRODUCTION

In the process of public administration reform in Vietnam, administrative procedure reform has been identified as a key component for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of state management and enhancing the quality of public service delivery. State management of administrative procedure reform refers to the activities carried out by competent administrative agencies to design, organize, implement, monitor, and evaluate policies and programs related to administrative procedures. Beyond simplifying processes and reducing processing time, administrative procedure reform plays a crucial role in building a transparent, accountable, and service-oriented public administration.

In recent years, the Vietnamese Government has issued several important policies to promote administrative reform and digital transformation. Notable examples include Resolution No. 76/NQ-CP (2021) on the Master Program for Public Administration Reform for the period 2021–2030 and Decision No. 749/QD-TTg (2020) approving the National Digital Transformation Program. These policies emphasize improving administrative procedure control, promoting information technology application, and expanding online public services,

thereby contributing to the development of a modern, transparent, and citizen-centered public administration system.

Previous studies have examined administrative procedure reform and state management across various sectors and administrative levels. Studies by Vu Hong Khiem (2017), Nguyen Le Tuan (2020), Tran Thanh Tai (2021), and Vo Ngoc Tiep (2023) have clarified theoretical and practical foundations and proposed solutions to improve administrative reform at the local level. Other studies, such as Bui Ngoc Hien and Chu Quoc Anh (2024), have highlighted the role of digital transformation in enhancing administrative efficiency. In the health sector, research by Le Thanh Nhan (2019), Nguyen Ngoc Hien (2020), and Vu Dinh Toan (2020) has focused on the application of information technology to improve administrative procedure control and public service delivery.

However, existing studies primarily focus on general administrative systems or macro-level analysis, with limited empirical evidence at the provincial health department level. Moreover, the interaction between administrative procedure reform and digital transformation remains underexplored, particularly in local governance contexts where implementation capacity varies significantly. This gap is especially critical in the health sector, where administrative procedures are closely linked to service delivery and require both professional expertise and digital integration. As a result, there is a need for context-specific and evidence-based research to support more effective and practical policy solutions.

From a theoretical perspective, this study is grounded in the framework of digital governance and public sector innovation. Digital governance emphasizes the role of information and communication technologies (ICT) in enhancing transparency, efficiency, and citizen engagement, with key dimensions including system interoperability, data integration, service accessibility, and user-centered design. Meanwhile, public sector innovation highlights the need for institutional adaptation, organizational learning, and the transformation of administrative processes toward more flexible and performance-oriented models. These frameworks provide an analytical lens to examine key dimensions of administrative procedure reform, including institutional arrangements, organizational structures, digital infrastructure, and human resource capacity. By applying this integrated perspective, the study is able to assess not only the outcomes of reform but also the underlying governance mechanisms that shape its effectiveness.

In practice, the Department of Health is a specialized agency under the Provincial People's Committee, responsible for advising and organizing the implementation of state management in the health sector within the province. It directly handles a large number of administrative procedures related to citizens, businesses, and organizations, making it a critical unit for evaluating the effectiveness of administrative procedure reform in practice.

This study contributes to the literature in two main aspects. First, it provides empirical evidence on administrative procedure reform at the provincial health department level, a context that has received limited attention in previous research. Second, it integrates a digital governance perspective into the analysis of state management, thereby offering a more comprehensive understanding of how administrative reform and digital transformation interact in practice. These contributions help bridge the gap between theory and implementation in public sector reform.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the current status of state management of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province, Vietnam, and to propose context-specific solutions to improve its effectiveness in the context of digital transformation. The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the current status of state management of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province?
2. What are the limitations and causes of these limitations in state management of administrative procedure reform at the Department?

3. What solutions should be implemented to improve state management of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province in the coming period?

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a mixed-method approach combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to analyze the current status of state management of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province.

Data Sources

The study uses two main data sources: secondary data and primary data.

Secondary data were collected from legal documents issued by central and local authorities related to administrative procedures and administrative procedure reform; scientific research publications and related documents; and reports from the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province, including administrative reform reports, administrative procedure control reports, and reports on digital transformation implementation in the health sector.

Primary data were collected through surveys targeting two groups:

- (i) Individuals knowledgeable about administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health; and
- (ii) Citizens and businesses carrying out administrative procedures at the Department.

Data Collection Methods

Primary data were collected using a questionnaire survey with a convenience sampling method. The survey was conducted with 10 officials and civil servants knowledgeable about administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health to assess their awareness and level of attention toward administrative procedure reform, the effectiveness of implemented reform solutions, and difficulties and limitations encountered during implementation. The survey also collected opinions regarding reform solutions suitable for the health sector and evaluated the level of information technology application and digital transformation in administrative procedure processing.

In addition, the study surveyed 100 citizens and business representatives who carried out administrative procedures at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province to assess their level of satisfaction with administrative procedure handling. The survey focused on factors such as transparency of procedures, efficiency of dossier processing, attitudes of civil servants, simplicity and convenience of procedures, processing time, guidance provided, related costs, and satisfaction with the online public service system.

Although the sample size is relatively small, it is appropriate for exploratory case study research and is supported by triangulation with secondary data sources, which enhances the reliability and validity of the findings.

Data Analysis Methods

After collection, survey data were coded and processed using statistical software such as Excel and SPSS. The analysis methods included:

Descriptive statistics: summarizing survey data using percentages, mean values, and statistical tables.

Analysis and synthesis: evaluating the current status of state management of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province.

Comparative analysis: comparing the number of administrative procedures received and resolved across the period 2020–2024.

Sociological data analysis: analyzing survey results to determine trends, levels of citizen satisfaction, and factors influencing state management of administrative procedure reform.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Current Status of Planning and Policy Issuance for Administrative Procedure Reform

Administrative procedure reform (APR) is considered a core and breakthrough task in Vietnam’s public administration reform agenda, aiming to build a modern and service-oriented administration. At the national level, the Government has issued several key policies providing the legal foundation for administrative procedure reform and digital transformation. Notable examples include Decree No. 63/2010/ND-CP on administrative procedure control, Resolution No. 76/NQ-CP (2021) on the Master Program for Public Administration Reform for the period 2021–2030, Decision No. 468/QD-TTg (2021) approving the project to innovate the one-stop-shop and inter-agency one-stop-shop mechanism in administrative procedure settlement, and Decision No. 1085/QD-TTg (2022) on reviewing and simplifying internal administrative procedures.

Based on these national policy frameworks and the strong direction of the Provincial Party Committee and the Provincial People’s Committee, the local government has issued guiding documents to implement administrative reform programs. For example, Decision No. 1227/QD-UBND (2021) approved the plan to implement the reform of the one-stop-shop mechanism for the period 2021–2025, while Decision No. 1850/QD-UBND (2021) promulgated the provincial Master Program for Public Administration Reform for 2021–2030.

Following these guidelines, the Department of Health has regularly developed annual administrative reform plans and issued guiding documents related to administrative procedure reform. Notably, Plan No. 30/KH-SYT (2020) summarized the results of administrative reform during 2011–2020 and developed the health sector’s administrative reform program for 2021–2030. In addition, Plan No. 75/KH-SYT (2023) outlined the digital transformation roadmap for the health sector through 2025 with a vision toward 2030.

The Department has defined clear objectives and implementation roadmaps to accelerate administrative procedure reform through digital technology application and process standardization. By 2025, the Department aims for 100% of administrative dossiers to be processed through the Public Service Portal and electronic one-stop-shop system; 100% of administrative procedures to be provided online at Level 4; at least 70% of services to receive online dossiers; and at least 90% citizen satisfaction with online public services. Despite these achievements, some limitations remain. Certain plans are still general in orientation and lack clearly quantified performance indicators. Monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment mechanisms are also not always timely, which may affect the effectiveness of state management of administrative procedure reform in the health sector.

Figure 1. Assessment of Officials on the Quality of Guiding Documents for Administrative Procedure Reform

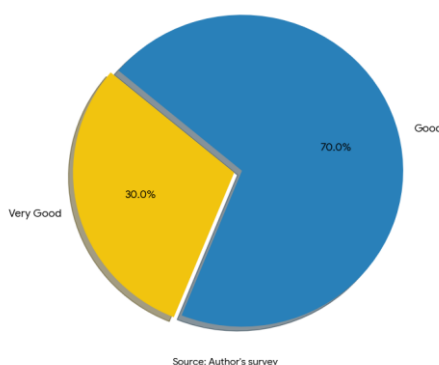


Figure 1. Assessment of Officials on the Quality of Guiding Documents for Administrative Procedure Reform

Source: Author’s survey

Survey results among officials directly involved in administrative procedure reform indicate that 30% rated the issuance of guiding documents as very good while 70% rated it as good, reflecting that policy issuance generally meets practical requirements and provides an important foundation for comprehensive reform implementation.

Organizational Structure for Managing Administrative Reform Activities

The Department of Health of Vinh Long Province has established a focal unit responsible for advising and coordinating administrative reform activities, particularly administrative procedure reform. This responsibility is mainly assigned to the Office of the Department, which monitors implementation progress and synthesizes results.

The unit collaborates with specialized divisions and subordinate agencies to review and simplify administrative procedures, develop annual reform plans, implement the one-stop-shop mechanism, control administrative procedures, and provide online public services. Officials responsible for administrative procedure control are assigned to various departments and units to ensure consistent reception, processing, and disclosure of procedures across the health sector. Tasks and responsibilities are allocated through formal decisions, plans, and official directives, providing a legal basis for coordination among departments. Administrative reform activities are implemented in a centralized and unified manner and closely associated with leadership responsibility. The Director of the Department assumes overall responsibility, while Deputy Directors supervise specific sectors and direct professional divisions in implementing reform tasks. The Department also coordinates with the Provincial People’s Committee Office, the Department of Home Affairs, and the Department of Information and Communications to standardize procedures and promote information technology application.

Overall, the organizational structure for administrative procedure reform has been consolidated and operates relatively effectively, with clear division of responsibilities and coordination mechanisms. However, human resources remain limited, many officials hold multiple responsibilities, and the capacity for digital governance and policy advisory still needs improvement.

Implementation of Administrative Procedure Reform

Review, Assessment, and Simplification of Administrative Procedures

The Department of Health has proactively conducted periodic reviews of the entire system of administrative procedures under its jurisdiction in accordance with the Government’s regulations on administrative procedure control, particularly Decree No. 63/2010/ND-CP and Decree No. 48/2013/ND-CP.

The review process focuses on evaluating the necessity, rationality, and compliance costs of administrative procedures. Through this process, the Department is able to promptly identify procedures that are outdated, overlapping, or create difficulties for citizens and organizations during implementation.

Table 3.1 Summary of Results of Reviewing, Reducing, and Simplifying Administrative Procedures (2020–2024)

| Year | Total Administrative Procedures Before Review | Procedures with Shortened Processing Time | Reduction Rate (%) | Procedures Abolished | Newly Announced Procedures | Total Procedures After Review |
|------|---|---|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2020 | 174 | 168 | 96.6 | – | – | 174 |
| 2021 | 174 | 168 | 96.6 | – | – | 174 |

| | | | | | | |
|------|-----|-----|------|----|----|-----|
| 2022 | 162 | 156 | 96.2 | 5 | – | 162 |
| 2023 | 162 | 156 | 96.2 | – | – | 162 |
| 2024 | 162 | 156 | 96.2 | 15 | 78 | 120 |

Source: Compiled from annual reports of the Department of Health of Vinh Long (2020–2024)

As shown in Table 3.1, the review and evaluation of administrative procedures at the Department of Health during the period 2020–2024 was conducted regularly and produced relatively stable results. During 2020–2021, the Department managed 174 administrative procedures, of which 96.6% had their processing time shortened. In the period 2022–2023, the number of procedures decreased to 162, while the proportion of procedures with shortened processing time remained high at 96.2%. In 2024, the Department carried out a comprehensive review of the entire administrative procedure system. As a result, 15 outdated procedures were abolished, while 78 new procedures were announced, reducing the total number of procedures to 120. This process contributed to streamlining the administrative procedure system and creating more favorable conditions for citizens and organizations. These results reflect the Department’s strong commitment to administrative reform while also highlighting the need for continuous monitoring and evaluation to ensure the effectiveness and stability of the administrative procedure system in the health sector.

Table 3.2. Summary of Administrative Procedure Dossiers Processed by the Department of Health (2020–2024)

| Year | Total Dossiers Processed | Processed Ahead of Schedule | Processed On Time | Processed Late | On-time and Ahead-of-schedule Rate (%) |
|------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------|--|
| 2020 | 1,740 | 1,729 | 2 | 9 | 99.5 |
| 2021 | 1,490 | 1,490 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| 2022 | 2,429 | 2,409 | 8 | 12 | 99.5 |
| 2023 | 2,399 | 2,394 | 0 | 5 | 99.8 |
| 2024 | 2,370 | 2,359 | 8 | 3 | 99.9 |

Source: Compiled from annual reports of the Department of Health of Vinh Long (2020–2024)

During the 2020–2024 period, the provincial Department of Health received and processed 10,428 administrative procedure dossiers, with an average on-time processing rate of 99.7%. Among these years, 2021 recorded the most outstanding performance, when 100% of dossiers were processed on time or ahead of schedule. At the same time, the number of overdue dossiers gradually declined over the years, decreasing from nine cases in 2020 to only three cases in 2024. These results demonstrate a positive and stable trend in administrative management and monitoring, as well as the strong sense of responsibility among civil servants and public employees in fulfilling their duties. The quality of administrative procedure processing has improved significantly over time, reflected in shorter processing times, standardized procedures, and the expansion of fully online public services. The achievements obtained during this period have contributed positively to improving the Provincial Public Administration Reform Index (PAR Index) and affirm the effectiveness of the Department of Health’s management and supervision of administrative procedures within the health sector.

Table 3.3. Number of Administrative Procedure Dossiers Received by Sector (2020–2024)

| No. | Sector / Administrative Field | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 | 2023 | 2024 | Total |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|
| 1 | Food Safety and Nutrition | 120 | 68 | 129 | 131 | 81 | 529 |
| 2 | Social Protection | 1 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| 3 | Medical Assessment | 119 | 116 | 101 | 99 | 252 | 687 |
| 4 | Medical Examination and Treatment | 535 | 327 | 515 | 1,056 | 836 | 3,269 |
| 5 | Pharmaceuticals | 876 | 975 | 1,682 | 1,162 | 1,232 | 5,927 |
| 6 | Cosmetics | 37 | 5 | 35 | 10 | 19 | 106 |
| 7 | Medical Equipment | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 8 | Social Evils Prevention | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 9 | Children Affairs | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 10 | Health Finance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 11 | Preventive Medicine | 85 | 16 | 29 | 39 | 38 | 207 |
| 12 | Traditional Medicine | 0 | 0 | 2 | 3 | 5 | 10 |
| 13 | Training | 0 | 0 | 0 | 3 | 1 | 4 |
| Total | | 1,772 | 1,507 | 2,493 | 2,500 | 2,464 | 10,736 |

Source: Compiled from the reporting software system of the Department of Health (2020–2024).

During the 2020–2024 period, The Department of Health of Vinh Long Province received a total of 10,736 administrative procedure dossiers. The number of dossiers increased significantly from 2022 onward and remained at a relatively high level in subsequent years, reflecting the growing demand for administrative services in the health sector. The majority of dossiers were concentrated in the pharmaceutical sector (55.2%) and medical examination and treatment (30.4%), indicating that administrative workloads are primarily associated with professional management activities and the provision of healthcare services.

However, the distribution of administrative procedures across sectors remains uneven, leading to substantial workload pressure on officials responsible for these areas. Therefore, it is necessary to restructure administrative processes, enhance the application of information technology, and allocate human resources more efficiently in order to improve administrative performance and service delivery in the health sector.

Updating, Disclosure, and Transparency of Administrative Procedures

The Department of Health of Vinh Long Province places significant emphasis on the updating, disclosure, and transparency of administrative procedures in accordance with Government regulations and the directives of the Provincial People’s Committee. Administrative procedures under the Department’s authority are regularly reviewed, updated, and publicly announced through official decisions issued by the Chairperson of the Provincial People’s Committee. The published information includes the procedure name, required documents,

implementation steps, processing time, fees and charges, and responsible agencies. These procedures are publicly displayed at the Department’s headquarters, at the one-stop administrative service unit, and on both the provincial Public Service Portal and the National Public Service Portal. Such transparency enables citizens and businesses to access administrative information more easily, reducing procedural overlaps and minimizing the need for repeated dossier submissions. As a result, these efforts contribute to improving the efficiency of administrative procedure processing, increasing the number of online submissions, and enhancing overall citizen satisfaction with public services.

Table 3.4. Assessment of Transparency and Public Disclosure of Administrative Procedures

| Level of Agreement | Experts/Officials Familiar with Administrative Procedure Reform (%) | Citizens and Businesses (%) |
|--------------------|---|-----------------------------|
| Strongly disagree | – | 0 |
| Disagree | – | 4 |
| Neutral | – | 28 |
| Agree | 60 | 55 |
| Strongly agree | 40 | 13 |

Source: Author’s survey.

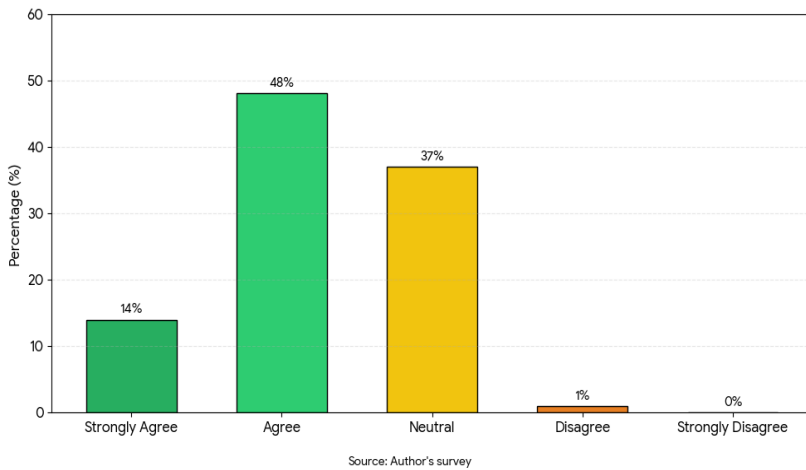
Survey results among officials with expertise in administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health indicate that 40% strongly agreed that the updating and public disclosure of administrative procedures has been implemented very effectively, while 60% agreed with this assessment. Similarly, 68% of surveyed citizens and businesses selected the “agree” or “strongly agree” options, indicating a generally positive perception of the transparency of administrative procedures. Meanwhile, 28% rated the situation as neutral, and only 4% expressed disagreement. These findings suggest that the disclosure of administrative procedures has been implemented in a relatively systematic and effective manner, with procedures fully posted and regularly updated on the provincial and national public service portals. This has improved transparency and facilitated easier access to administrative information for citizens and businesses.

Reception and Handling of Feedback and Recommendations

The reception and handling of feedback and recommendations (F&R) related to administrative procedures at the Department of Health has been implemented relatively seriously and in accordance with existing regulations. In general, only a small number of feedback cases related to administrative procedure regulations have been recorded. The Department consistently maintains a formal citizen reception mechanism in accordance with Decision No. 128/QĐ-SYT dated March 7, 2017, and Decision No. 130/QĐ-SYT dated March 8, 2017. Under these regulations, the Director meets citizens periodically on the 1st and 16th of each month. Information regarding reception schedules, internal regulations, and procedures for handling complaints and denunciations is publicly disclosed at the Department’s headquarters and on its official website. In 2020, the Department received four petitions, including three complaints and one denunciation. Among the complaints, three were partially valid, while the denunciation was determined to be unfounded. From 2021 to 2023, no feedback or complaints related to administrative procedures were recorded. In 2024, one case of feedback was received regarding the submission of a dossier using an incorrect payment account. The Department handled the case in accordance with regulations, ensuring the legitimate rights and interests of citizens and businesses. During the 2020–2024 period, the Department handled feedback and recommendations related to administrative procedures in a timely and compliant manner. The relatively low number of complaints indicates that the administrative procedure system in the health sector has been operating in a stable and transparent manner. The Department has maintained an effective citizen reception mechanism and has processed petitions through multiple channels. However, the feedback case recorded in

2024, which was related to operations in the digital environment, highlights the need to further improve guidance and technical support for citizens and businesses when using online administrative services, particularly regarding electronic payment of administrative fees and charges. Strengthening these support mechanisms would help minimize difficulties encountered during the implementation of administrative procedures in the health sector.

Figure 2. Assessment of Citizens and Businesses Regarding the Handling of Feedback and Recommendations Related to Administrative Procedures



Source: Author's survey

Source: Author's survey

Figure 2. Assessment of Citizens and Businesses Regarding the Handling of Feedback and Recommendations Related to Administrative Procedures

The survey conducted at the Department of Health regarding the handling of feedback and recommendations indicates that 62% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed, reflecting a generally positive assessment of the efforts made by the authorities in addressing citizens' concerns. However, 37% of respondents rated the performance as neutral, and 1% expressed disagreement, suggesting that the effectiveness of feedback handling remains uneven and that some cases may not fully meet the expectations of citizens and businesses. These findings indicate the need to further improve the quality, timeliness, and adequacy of responses to feedback and recommendations in order to enhance citizen satisfaction and strengthen the effectiveness of administrative procedure reform in the health sector.

Application of Information Technology in Administrative Procedure Reform Associated with Digital Transformation

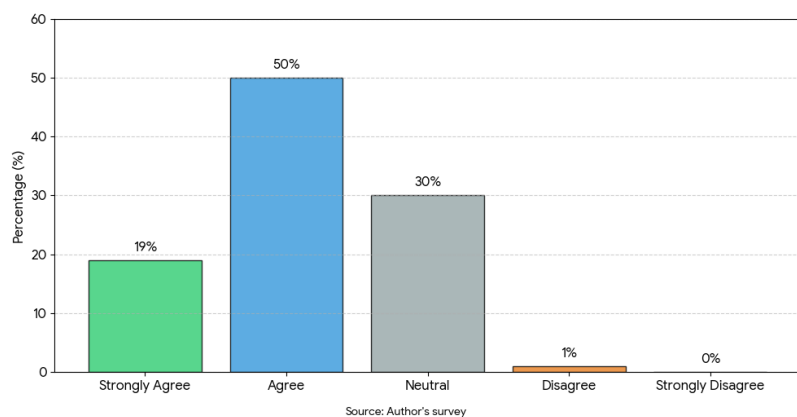
The Department of Health of Vinh Long Province has strengthened the application of information technology in administrative procedure reform through digital platforms such as the iOffice document management system, official email, and digital signatures. Since 2022, the rate of electronic document exchange has increased, contributing to reduced processing time, minimized paperwork, and improved transparency and management efficiency. The Department issued Plan No. 112/KH-SYT (2022) on the digitization of administrative procedure records and results for the 2024–2025 period, implemented through the Administrative Procedure Information System and the National Public Service Portal. By 2024, the digitization rate reached 73.4%, while the One-Stop Service Unit has promoted online submission of applications to save time and costs. Information on administrative fees and charges has also been updated on the National Public Service Portal in accordance with relevant regulations. In addition, digital platforms have been implemented in line with provincial and national digital transformation programs. By 2024, the electronic health record system was expected to cover over 80% of the population, integrated with the Ministry of Health's system and the National Population Database, thereby reducing repeated information submission when performing administrative procedures. Overall, the application of information technology has improved the efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of administrative services in the health sector. However, the proportion of online applications remains relatively low due to user habits and the specific nature of healthcare services that

often require direct consultation. Information security measures also remain limited and require further improvement to minimize risks related to personal and medical data protection.

Citizens’ Satisfaction with Administrative Procedure Reform

Resolution No. 76/NQ-CP (2021) emphasizes a citizen-centered approach to administrative reform, aiming to build a democratic, professional, modern, and efficient public administration. Through the receipt of feedback and recommendations as well as satisfaction surveys, the Department of Health has gradually monitored and evaluated the quality of administrative services, thereby improving procedures and enhancing the effectiveness of administrative procedure implementation in the health sector.

Figure 3. Effectiveness of Administrative Procedure Reform and Service Satisfaction



Source: Author’s survey

Figure 3. Effectiveness of Administrative Procedure Reform and Service Satisfaction

Survey results indicate that 69% of citizens and businesses expressed agreement with the effectiveness of administrative procedure reform, including 50% agreeing and 19% strongly agreeing that these reforms have improved service satisfaction. Meanwhile, 30% provided neutral responses and 1% disagreed, suggesting that further improvements in administrative procedures and service quality are still necessary.

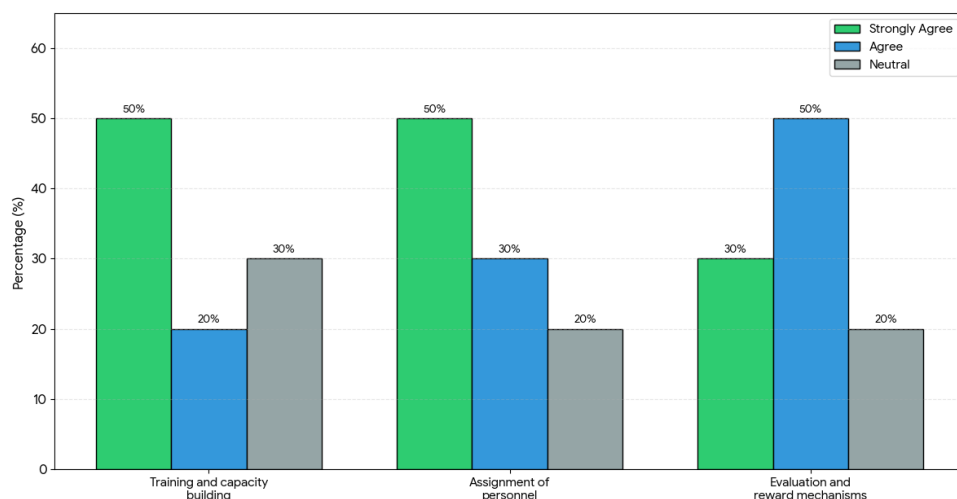
Despite these achievements, the assessment of citizen satisfaction at the Department of Health still has several limitations that need to be addressed. Survey activities are mainly integrated into general programs and plans, rather than being conducted regularly as independent and in-depth assessments targeting specific groups of public service users. In addition, the evaluation methods remain relatively simple and have not effectively utilized digital technologies for collecting, processing, and analyzing feedback data. As a result, satisfaction assessment results have not yet fully reflected the overall quality of administrative procedure reform or provided a solid basis for proposing solutions to improve public service quality in the future.

Current Status of Building and Improving the Quality of Civil Servants and Public Employees in Implementing Administrative Procedure Reform

The Department of Health has implemented various measures to improve the quality of civil servants and public employees involved in administrative procedure reform, considering human resources a decisive factor in the effectiveness of reform efforts. Based on central and provincial policies, the Department has completed the job position scheme and arranged personnel in accordance with assigned functions and responsibilities. By 2024, the job positions and the structure of civil servant and public employee ranks had been officially approved, providing a basis for recruitment, training, and performance evaluation. However, staff shortages remain, particularly at the grassroots health level. The current staffing rate is slightly above 90% for civil servants and below 90% for public employees, creating significant workload pressure and affecting the quality of administrative procedure resolution. Recruitment during the 2020–2024 period has not fully met staffing needs due to difficulties in attracting high-quality human resources, leading to task overlap and reduced work

efficiency. During the 2020–2024 period, the Department of Health focused on training and professional development for civil servants and public employees in areas such as professional expertise, public administration, political theory, communication skills, public service ethics, and information technology application. Since 2022, training programs have increasingly been associated with digital transformation and the provision of online public services. As a result, the professional capacity and sense of responsibility among staff have improved, contributing to better service quality. However, training in administrative skills, administrative procedure reform, and digital competencies remains limited due to budget constraints, with many staff members having to cover training costs themselves. Efforts to strengthen administrative discipline and accountability have also been emphasized through regular inspections, and staff generally comply well with regulations, with no reported cases of harassment.

Figure 4. Survey Results on Administrative Procedure Reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province



Source: Author’s survey

Figure 4. Survey Results on Administrative Procedure Reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province

Survey results among civil servants and public employees directly involved in administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health highlight three main issues. First, regarding training and capacity building in administrative procedure reform, 50% strongly agreed, 20% agreed, and 30% provided neutral responses, indicating that training activities have been relatively effective but still require improvements in methods and formats to better meet practical reform requirements. Second, regarding the assignment of personnel responsible for administrative procedure reform in accordance with their qualifications and competencies, 50% strongly agreed, 30% agreed, and 20% were neutral, suggesting that while attention has been paid to staff allocation, further review and adjustment are needed to maximize individual capacity. Third, regarding evaluation and reward mechanisms linked to administrative procedure reform outcomes, 30% strongly agreed, 50% agreed, and 20% were neutral, indicating that although such mechanisms exist, they have not yet created strong motivation and should be improved in a more transparent and accountable manner.

Current Status of Communication Activities on Administrative Procedure Reform

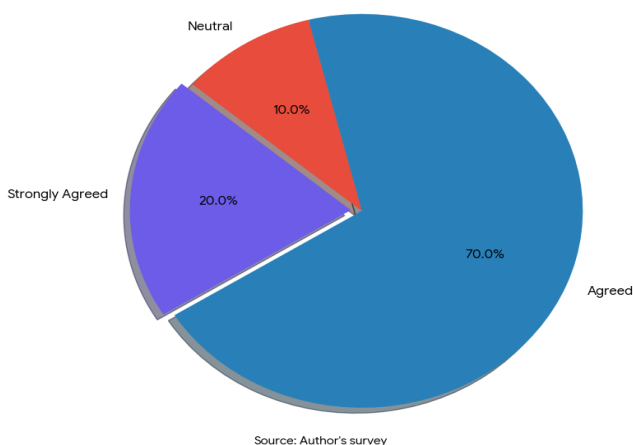
The Department of Health has continued to promote communication on administrative procedure reform in connection with broader administrative reform efforts and the development of e-government and digital government. These activities aim to enhance the awareness and responsibility of civil servants and public employees while supporting citizens and businesses in accessing transparent and convenient health administrative procedures. Communication activities are mainly conducted through the Department’s official website and the provincial and national Public Service Portals, where detailed information on application requirements, procedures, processing time, and fees is publicly available. Communication has also been integrated with guidance on the use of online public services and the electronic identification account

(VNeID). As a result, the proportion of online applications in 2024 increased significantly, reflecting the initial effectiveness of these efforts. However, communication methods remain somewhat limited, largely focusing on public postings and integration into meetings, while lacking visual communication materials and targeted approaches for specific groups, particularly people in remote areas and private healthcare facilities. In addition, digital communication channels and interactive tools have not yet been fully utilized, which limits the accessibility and use of online public services.

Current Status of Inspection and Supervision in the Implementation of Administrative Procedure Reform

Inspection and supervision of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health are implemented to ensure that procedures are carried out in accordance with regulations and in a transparent and public manner. These activities are integrated with administrative reform plans, administrative procedure control, and civil service inspections in order to identify and address existing shortcomings. Inspection activities are conducted periodically and on an ad hoc basis, focusing on key aspects such as the receipt and processing of applications, public disclosure of procedures, processing time, service attitude, the one-stop service mechanism, and the application of information technology. Through these inspections, the Department provides timely guidance and recommendations to correct errors and improve performance. Through inspection and supervision activities, the Department regularly reviews and adjusts administrative procedures, improves service quality, strengthens staff accountability, and enhances public trust in the transparency of state management.

Figure 5. Distribution of Responses on Inspection and Supervision



Source: Author's survey

Figure 5. Distribution of Responses on Inspection and Supervision

Survey results among civil servants and public employees at the Department of Health indicate that 20% strongly agreed, 70% agreed that inspection and supervision activities are conducted regularly and according to specific plans, contributing to compliance with administrative procedure reform requirements. However, 10% provided neutral responses, suggesting that the frequency and coverage of inspections may not yet be fully consistent across units. This finding implies that, while formal inspection mechanisms are in place, their implementation may vary in practice, potentially leading to gaps in monitoring effectiveness. Overall, inspection and supervision activities have contributed to strengthening administrative discipline and improving the effectiveness of administrative procedure reform in the health sector. Nevertheless, to meet the increasing demands of administrative reform and digital transformation, inspection systems should be further enhanced through risk-based monitoring approaches, the application of digital tracking tools, and the integration of citizen satisfaction as a core performance indicator.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research emphasizing the role of institutional quality, transparency, and digital transformation in improving public service delivery. Similar to the studies of Nguyen Le Tuan (2020) and Bui Ngoc Hien and Chu Quoc Anh (2024), the results confirm that the application of

information technology significantly enhances administrative efficiency and reduces processing time. However, this study further reveals that digital transformation in the health sector remains uneven, particularly in terms of infrastructure readiness and human resource capacity. Compared to international practices, where integrated data systems and fully digitalized administrative processes are more widely adopted, the level of interoperability among information systems in Vinh Long remains limited. This suggests that the effectiveness of digital transformation is not solely dependent on technology adoption but also on institutional coordination and governance capacity. Therefore, a more comprehensive approach is required, combining institutional reform with digital capacity development to ensure sustainable improvements in administrative performance.

Furthermore, the relatively moderate level of citizen satisfaction indicates that administrative reform efforts should move beyond procedural efficiency toward improving user experience and service quality. This shift is particularly important in the health sector, where administrative processes are closely linked to service accessibility and public trust. The identified limitations, such as inadequate digital infrastructure and uneven digital competencies, stem from several underlying structural factors. These include limited financial resources, fragmented investment mechanisms, lack of interoperability between information systems, and insufficient coordination among relevant agencies. In addition, training programs have not been sufficiently aligned with practical digital transformation needs, resulting in a gap between policy objectives and implementation capacity. These findings highlight that administrative procedure reform in the context of digital transformation is not merely a technical issue but also an institutional and governance challenge. Addressing these root causes requires coordinated efforts in policy design, resource allocation, and capacity building to ensure the long-term effectiveness and sustainability of reform initiatives.

Solutions For Improving State Management Of Administrative Procedure Reform

Improving Institutional Frameworks and Enhancing the Quality of Policy Formulation and Implementation for Administrative Procedure Reform at the Department of Health

To enhance the effectiveness of administrative procedure reform, the Department should prioritize the improvement of institutional frameworks in alignment with digital transformation goals for the period 2026–2030.

First, the Department should conduct a comprehensive review to propose the simplification of administrative procedures. The target is to reduce average processing time by at least 20% for key areas such as pharmaceuticals and medical licensing by 2030.

Second, policy formulation should be strengthened by ensuring consistency, feasibility, and alignment with digital infrastructure capacity. A standardized policy development process should be introduced, requiring impact assessments before issuance. By 2028, 100% of new administrative procedures should undergo ex-ante evaluation.

Third, transparency should be enhanced through the full public disclosure of administrative procedures on digital platforms. By 2027, 100% of procedures should be updated and publicly available on the provincial and national public service portals.

Finally, organizational improvement must focus on inter-departmental digital coordination. By 2027, 100% of internal work processes should be integrated into a unified digital platform to eliminate 'data silos' and ensure seamless document flow.

Improving the Organizational Structure for Administrative Procedure Reform

Improving the organizational structure is a key factor in enhancing the effectiveness of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health, as current limitations stem from fragmented responsibilities and weak coordination.

First, the organizational structure should be streamlined and unified through the establishment of an Administrative Reform Steering Committee by 2026, chaired by the Department's leadership. This committee will be responsible for coordinating reform activities, monitoring implementation progress, and ensuring accountability across units.

Second, responsibilities should be clearly assigned to each unit through formal regulations and job descriptions. By 2027, 100% of units involved in administrative procedures should have clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and performance indicators. These indicators should include processing time, service quality, and citizen satisfaction.

Third, job positions should be standardized based on competency frameworks aligned with administrative reform and digital transformation requirements. A targeted human resource development plan should be implemented for the period 2026–2030, aiming for at least 90% of staff working in administrative procedure units to meet required competency standards by 2030.

Fourth, leadership responsibility and internal monitoring mechanisms should be strengthened by linking reform outcomes to performance evaluation systems. Annual performance assessments should be conducted, and by 2028, at least 85% of units should achieve their assigned administrative reform targets. Regular inspections should also be carried out to identify and address operational bottlenecks in a timely manner.

Finally, organizational improvement should be closely aligned with digital transformation by promoting digital workflows, enhancing the use of information systems and public service portals, and strengthening inter-departmental coordination. By 2030, at least 90% of internal administrative processes should be handled through digital systems, contributing to improved transparency, efficiency, and service quality.

Improving the Management and Implementation of Administrative Procedure Reform

The Department should enhance the implementation of administrative procedure reform through a results-oriented approach.

First, administrative procedures should be regularly reviewed and simplified based on feedback from citizens and businesses. A target should be set to reduce average processing time by 10–15% by 2028.

Second, transparency should be strengthened by ensuring that all procedures, timelines, and fees are clearly displayed at One-Stop Service Units and on digital platforms.

Third, feedback mechanisms should be diversified, including hotlines, online portals, and mobile applications. By 2027, at least 80% of feedback and recommendations should be processed through digital channels, with a response time of no more than 3 working days.

Fourth, the transition to 'paperless' administration should be accelerated. By 2030, the Department aims for over 90% of administrative dossiers to be submitted and processed entirely online, with 100% of results being digitally signed and returned via the public service portal.

Finally, citizen satisfaction should be assessed regularly through digital surveys, with a target satisfaction rate of at least 90% by 2030.

Improving the Quality of Civil Servants in Administrative Procedure Reform

The Department of Health should enhance the quality of civil servants and public employees involved in administrative procedure reform through a structured and performance-oriented approach for the period 2026–2030.

First, staff allocation should be improved by clearly defining roles and responsibilities for each unit and individual through formal job descriptions. Priority should be given to assigning qualified personnel with legal

knowledge, communication skills, and digital competencies to One-Stop Service Units. By 2027, 100% of staff involved in administrative procedures should have clearly defined responsibilities and performance indicators.

Second, training and capacity building should be strengthened through the implementation of an annual training program focusing on professional expertise, administrative skills, public service ethics, and information technology. Training programs should shift focus from general administration to digital governance and data security. By 2030, 90% of staff must demonstrate proficiency in using specialized health databases and AI-assisted tools for dossier evaluation.

Third, administrative discipline and accountability should be reinforced by establishing clear mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating staff performance. Regular inspections should be conducted, and by 2028, at least 95% of civil servants should fully comply with administrative procedures and service standards, with zero tolerance for misconduct such as delays or harassment.

Fourth, evaluation and incentive mechanisms should be improved by linking performance outcomes to measurable indicators, including on-time processing rates, service quality, and citizen satisfaction. Annual performance assessments should be conducted, and by 2030, at least 85% of staff should achieve a “good” or higher performance rating, with outstanding performers receiving appropriate rewards and recognition.

Finally, investment in facilities, equipment, and IT infrastructure should be increased to support staff in performing their duties effectively. At the same time, the Department should promote a professional, transparent, and innovation-oriented working environment. By 2030, all administrative units should be equipped with adequate digital tools and operate within a fully integrated electronic system, contributing to improved efficiency and service quality.

Enhancing Communication on Administrative Procedure Reform

Improving public awareness and consensus is essential for ensuring the effectiveness and sustainability of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health. To achieve this, communication activities should be implemented in a structured and measurable manner during the period 2026–2030.

First, digital communication should be strengthened through the Department’s official website, the provincial Public Service Portal, and verified social media channels. Communication content should be presented in user-friendly formats such as infographics, short videos, and step-by-step guides. By 2027, at least 80% of administrative procedures should be accompanied by digital guidance materials, and online communication activities should reach at least 70% of service users.

Second, on-site communication at One-Stop Service Units should be enhanced through clear visual displays, printed guidance materials, and digital information screens. In addition, AI-based tools such as chatbots and automated response systems should be piloted by 2028 to support citizens in accessing administrative information. By 2030, at least 60% of basic administrative inquiries should be handled through digital or automated support systems, reducing direct workload for staff.

Third, collaboration with educational institutions, youth unions, and mass organizations should be promoted to organize awareness campaigns, training sessions, and support programs for citizens using online public services. These activities should be conducted at least twice per year, with a target of reaching at least 75% of target groups, particularly in rural and disadvantaged areas.

Fourth, experience-sharing and capacity building for civil servants should be strengthened through study visits, workshops, and training programs on effective communication models. By 2029, at least 80% of staff involved in administrative procedures should participate in communication and digital service training programs.

Finally, incentive mechanisms should be introduced to encourage citizens and businesses to use online public services. These may include reduced processing time, fee incentives, or priority handling for online

submissions. By 2030, at least 90% of administrative dossiers should be submitted online, reflecting improved public awareness and behavioral change.

Strengthening Inspection and Supervision with Incentive and Sanction Mechanisms

Inspection and supervision should be strengthened to ensure compliance, transparency, and accountability in the implementation of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health during the period 2026–2030.

First, inspection activities should be conducted regularly through a combination of periodic and ad hoc inspections. By 2027, 100% of administrative units should be inspected at least once per year, with inspection plans publicly announced in advance to ensure transparency. In addition, at least 20% of inspections should be unannounced to improve objectivity and compliance.

Second, real-time digital monitoring will replace traditional periodic checks. The system will automatically flag any dossiers approaching their deadline, enabling leadership to intervene immediately. By 2027, 30% of staff performance scores will be derived directly from automated processing data and citizen feedback (SIPAS index).

Third, inspection results should be systematically linked to reward and sanction mechanisms. Units and individuals achieving high performance should be recognized annually, while cases of delay, non-compliance, or misconduct should be subject to clear disciplinary measures. By 2030, at least 95% of administrative units should fully comply with procedural regulations and timelines, as measured through inspection reports.

Finally, citizen feedback should be formally integrated into the evaluation process through digital feedback systems and satisfaction surveys. By 2027, at least 80% of feedback and recommendations should be collected and processed through online platforms, and citizen satisfaction indicators should account for at least 30% of overall performance evaluation criteria.

CONCLUSION

This study examines the state management of administrative procedure reform at the Department of Health of Vinh Long Province in the context of digital transformation. The findings reveal that significant progress has been made in improving administrative efficiency, transparency, and the application of information technology, as reflected in the consistently high on-time processing rate and increased accessibility of public services. However, several challenges persist, including limited digital infrastructure, insufficient data integration, and uneven human resource capacity. These limitations highlight that administrative reform is not solely a technical process but also an institutional and governance challenge. The study emphasizes that effective administrative procedure reform requires an integrated approach combining institutional improvement, organizational restructuring, human resource development, and digital transformation. By providing empirical evidence from a provincial health context, this study contributes to bridging the gap between theory and practice in public sector reform. Future research should expand comparative analysis across regions and apply advanced quantitative methods to further evaluate reform effectiveness.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study provides several important policy implications for improving administrative procedure reform in the health sector, particularly in the context of digital transformation at the provincial level. First, policymakers should prioritize the development of a comprehensive and coherent institutional framework that ensures consistency, transparency, and adaptability. This includes standardizing administrative procedures, strengthening legal enforcement mechanisms, and integrating digital transformation objectives into policy design and implementation. Second, sustained investment in digital infrastructure and data integration systems is essential to enhance the efficiency and interoperability of administrative processes. Priority should be given to developing shared data platforms, ensuring system interoperability, and strengthening data governance frameworks to support seamless information exchange across agencies. Third, capacity building for civil

servants should be treated as a strategic priority. In addition to improving professional and administrative skills, targeted training programs on digital competencies, data management, and service-oriented governance should be implemented to meet the demands of modern public administration. Fourth, a stronger citizen-centered approach should be adopted by improving accessibility, transparency, and responsiveness of public services. This includes expanding digital public services, diversifying feedback channels, and incorporating citizen satisfaction as a key performance indicator in administrative evaluation systems. Finally, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms should be enhanced through the application of data-driven tools and performance-based management systems. The integration of real-time monitoring, measurable performance indicators, and accountability frameworks will be critical to ensuring continuous improvement and policy effectiveness.

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