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# DESIGNING CONTEXT-SENSITIVE KPIS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS IN ETHNIC MINORITY AFFAIRS: LESSONS FROM VIETNAM'S PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION REFORM

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## ABSTRACT

*Vietnam's public administration reform concentrates on result-oriented management, yet the performance of civil servants remains qualitative, not connected to organizational goals. This study closes a literature gap by constructing a context-dependent Key Performance Indicator (KPI) system for the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). Using a mixed-methods approach—202 civil servant surveys, leadership interviews, and a pilot study—the presumed KPI system aligns individual performance with CEMA's socio-political mandates, overcoming cultural, institutional, and regional challenges. Outputs include a CEMA-specific KPI system, an implementation roadmap for KPIs in the public sector, and insight into challenges to outcome-based evaluation. Scaling requires legal standardization, capacity building, and digital solutions, offering a model for multicultural public administration.*

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**KEYWORDS:** KPI, Performance Management, Public Sector, Ethnic Minority Policy, Administrative Reform, Vietnam.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam's latest administrative reform, i.e., under Resolution No. 76/NQ-CP (2021), places a large emphasis on performance management in the public sector. Irrespective of this focus, the existing civil servant evaluation is still largely qualitative with little quantifiable data, indefinite procedures, and no alignment with institutional goals.

Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) - used extensively in numerous nations are deemed an effective instrument for measuring performance and increasing transparency. However, in Vietnam, the application of KPIs to public personnel evaluation remains in its infancy, being held back by institutional, technological, and cultural obstacles.

In this research, we seek to design a KPI system to fit the particular context of the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), a government agency responsible for overseeing ethnic policy in Vietnam. Merging theoretical frameworks and empirical findings, we examine how KPIs can enhance performance management in public organizations with distinctive sociopolitical functions.

The research aims to address two fundamental questions:

- (1) Why do we need to set KPIs for civil servants in CEMA?
- (2) In what ways may KPI systems be tailored to the specific functions and administrative structure of CEMA?

While more recent studies on Vietnamese public sector performance management have studied the adoption of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in typical administrative situations (Trinh & Sun, 2022; Vu et al., 2022), there remains an essential knowledge gap on how KPIs can be tailored specifically to specialist agencies that have unique socio-political missions, such as the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). Previous studies mostly rely on general administrative reforms or off-the-shelf performance indicators, without considering the complexity of ethnic minority governance, which includes walking a tightrope between cultural diversity, regional inequality, and inter-agency collaboration in geographically distant locations. Besides, international studies on KPIs in public administration (e.g., Van Dooren et al., 2015) hardly discuss the use of performance measurement systems in multicultural or ethnically diverse environments, especially in developing nations. This study fills this gap by developing a rationale-sensitive model of KPI especially for CEMA, combining the stakeholders' voice and balancing the

institutional, cultural, and technological problems involved in ethnic minority policy implementation in Vietnam. Through this, it supports theory building in performance management as well as practical solutions to multicultural public administration.

## 2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

### 2.1 Performance and KPI in the Public Sector

Public administration performance is typically defined as the ability to perform based on result-oriented criteria such as policy effectiveness, service quality, and procedure transparency. KPIs offer a measurable and methodical approach to performance measurement, typically aligned with the SMART model: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (Markić, 2014).

Aside from individual evaluation, KPIs also play an essential role in human resource management, training needs appraisal, and reward systems (Brudan, 2010). They assist in bridging the gap that occurs between organizational strategy and operational performance.

### 2.2 Performance Measurement Models

A number of performance management frameworks place emphasis on the alignment of KPIs with organizational strategy. The Balanced Scorecard (Kaplan & Norton, 1996) aligns internal processes with long-term objectives, and the Performance Prism concentrates on stakeholder expectations and organizational capabilities.

These models suggest that public-sector KPIs will not be grafted from private-sector logic but will be set according to each government system's administrative, technological, and institutional condition—particularly in developing or transitional contexts like Vietnam.

### 2.3 Public Sector KPI Design Principles

Successful KPI systems in the public sector must adhere to five principles of design:

1. Specificity: Capture the precise functions and responsibilities of each job or role.
2. Measurability: The indicators must be founded on objective, measurable data.
3. Process-output-outcome alignment: Separate inputs, processes, and ultimate outcomes.
4. Transparency: Offer fair, regular, and transparent assessment procedures.
5. Consensus: Obtain agreement from implementing staff as well as leadership.

### 2.4 International and Domestic Experience

Countries that have been effective in using KPIs in the public sector offer valuable lessons for

Vietnam. In the US, the Government Performance and Results Act (GPRA, 1993) encourages accountability by aligning individual and organizational objectives with performance-based metrics. Malaysia employs KPIs in a transparent reward and sanction system to foster a culture of accountability (Government of Malaysia, 2005). Singapore employs digitized KPI systems, reducing administrative process handling time by 30% and enhancing service quality (Government of Singapore, 2020). Indonesian local governments have also utilized KPIs for reducing administrative process fragmentation, enabling inter-agency coordination through robust technological infrastructure and stakeholder agreements (Siti-Nabiha et al., 2023). In the European Union, KPIs are being applied to public procurement for greater transparency and efficiency, and network analysis determines geographic priorities and optimizes the allocation of resources (Fountoukidis et al., 2024). China, in the midst of institutional rigidity, includes performance-based measurements in its public sector, yet challenges persist in reconciling measures with heterogeneous regional needs. In Vietnam, pilot schemes in Hanoi and Ministry of Information and Communications demonstrate potential but are faced with challenges such as compartmentalized systems and partial integration with the Satisfaction Index on Administrative Services (SIPAS) (Hanoi People's Committee, 2021). Current research emphasizes the importance of stakeholder engagement in Vietnam's performance management success (Trinh & Sun, 2022). These figures recognize four determinants of KPI success: strategic alignment, technological support, regulatory frameworks, and professional development, which are necessary in order to tailor KPIs to the unique socio-political and ethnic minority governance environment of CEMA.

Building on earlier studies (Vu et al., 2022; Trinh & Sun, 2022; Van Dooren et al., 2015), this study formulates KPI implementation effectiveness in public administration in ethnic governance environments as influenced by organizational, cultural, institutional, and technological determinants. The model also recognizes the moderating influence of ethnic regional variations (Figure 1).

**Leadership Commitment:** Refers to the extent to which decision-makers and top managers support, prioritize, and promote the institutionalization of KPI systems.

**Employee Engagement:** Consists of the inclination, motivation, and commitment of civil

servants to the design and use of KPIs and their perception of the fairness and usefulness of the system.

**Variables Description**

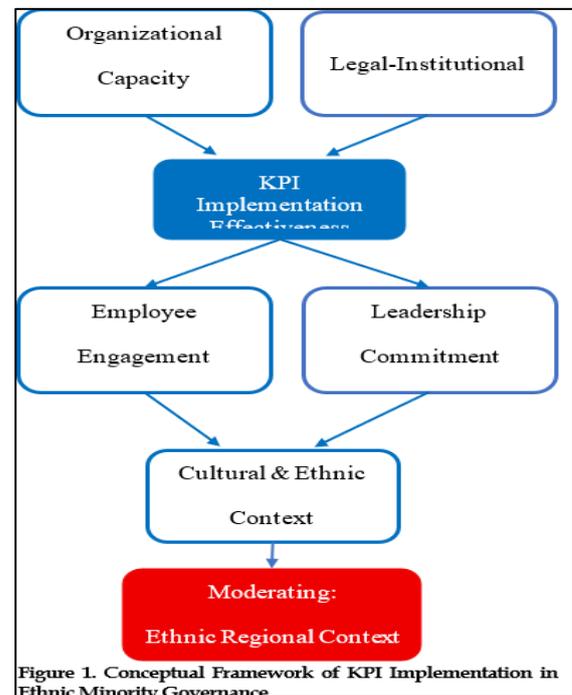


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of KPI Implementation in Ethnic Minority Governance

### **Dependent Variable**

**KPI Implementation Effectiveness:** This variable is the extent to which Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are actually adopted and applied in ethnic minority governance environments in public sector agencies. It can be quantified by measures such as:

- Actual use of KPI in performance evaluations;
- Greater transparency and accountability;
- Alignment of personal and institutional goals;
- Perceived improvement in quality of services for ethnic minority groups.

### **Independent Variables**

**Organizational Capacity:** Refers to the internal capabilities of public institutions, e.g., human resources, budget availability, IT infrastructure, and strategic management abilities in KPI implementation. **Legal and Institutional Framework:** States the presence of legal obligations, norms, and institutionalized procedures to support the implementation and implementation of KPI-based evaluation systems.

**Digital and Data Infrastructure:** Comprises technical infrastructure and reporting mechanisms for data enabling real-time tracking, computation of KPI, and reporting.

**Cultural and Ethnic Context:** Contains the socio-cultural context, ethnic heterogeneity, local customs, as well as communication barriers potentially affecting the uptake of standardized measures of KPI.

**Inter-agency and Local Coordination:** Refers to the level of coordination among central and local government institutions, especially in policy implementation and information sharing on ethnic issues.

### *Moderating Variable*

**Ethnic Regional Context:** It influences intervening process relationship among independent variables and how effective KPI implementation is. It includes geographical dispersion, socioeconomic development levels, and logistical difficulties in minority ethnic regions. These dimensions of context may enhance or reduce the effects of institutional, cultural, and technical drivers.

## **3. METHODOLOGY**

The study used a mixed-methods approach, using both quantitative and qualitative methods to provide vivid rich descriptions of the measurement of performance in Vietnam's Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). The use of survey data, in-depth interviews, focus groups, and pilot study ensured empirical rigor and contextual richness and was aligned with the research aims of establishing a context-specific KPI framework.

### *3.1 Quantitative Approach*

A structured survey was conducted among 202 central office civil servants in Hanoi and regional offices in Đắk Lắk and Cần Thơ, selected to represent Vietnam's diverse ethnic and geographical environments (West Highlands and Mekong Delta). Stratified random sampling ensured proportional distribution into three functional position groups: management (30%, n=60), professional/technical (50%, n=101), and administrative/support (20%, n=41). This kind of distribution ensures greater sample representativeness by representing CEMA's staff composition. Additionally, the sample included 52% of respondents from Đắk Lắk (n=105) and 48% from Cần Thơ (n=97) in an attempt to quantify regional variation.

The questionnaire applied 5-point Likert scale to measure perceptions regarding prevailing performance assessment practice, attitudes toward KPI implementation, and perceived readiness for implementation. Constructs included awareness, perceived usefulness, support for KPI

implementation, concerns regarding data/tool availability, and views on common evaluation formality. Pre-test was administered to the questionnaire using 20 respondents to ensure relevance and clarity, achieving Cronbach's Alpha values between 0.84 and 0.90 for constructs, indicating high internal consistency.

Data were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to determine descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, frequency, percentages) and SPSS 26 for inferential tests. Descriptive statistics provided an insight into trends, which included high levels of KPI awareness (M = 4.20, SD = 0.60) and moderate data infrastructure issues (M = 3.30, SD = 0.90). To explore between-group differences in perceptions, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was applied to compare differences in means for significant constructs (awareness, support for adopting KPI, and concerns for availability of data) between the three job groups (management, professional, administrative) and between the two regions (Đắk Lắk, Cần Thơ). The ANOVA was to test the null hypothesis that there would be no significant differences between groups or regions ( $p > 0.05$ ). Post-hoc Tukey tests were used to isolate individual group differences where ANOVA findings were significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). These tests were used to determine whether functional role or regional setting may play a factor in attitudes towards the implementation of KPIs, which can guide the KPI framework design.

### *3.2 Pilot Study and Qualitative Approach*

Qualitative data were collected by means of 10 in-depth interviews and three focus groups to collect institutional and contextual perspectives. The interview participants were five department heads and five senior policy officers at CEMA's central and regional offices, selected based on their experience (minimum five years) and their involvement in the implementation of ethnic policy. All interviews were 45–60 minutes long and asked questions on institutional barriers, KPI design preferences, and cultural aspects of performance measurement. Three focus groups comprised 6–8 civil servants per group (total n=20) in Hanoi, Đắk Lắk, and Cần Thơ to provide diverse regional perspectives. Participants were selected to reflect diverse roles and ethnicities. Focus groups briefly addressed stakeholder expectations, feasibility of implementing KPIs, and regional issues. Qualitative data were examined using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), with coding themes induced (e.g., "data infrastructure

deficits," "cultural resistance"). Inter-coder reliability was ensured through cross-checking of themes within the research team.

A three-month pilot study was conducted within CEMA's Personnel Department from January to March 2024 to test the feasibility of the suggested KPI framework. It engaged 10 officials, such as the Head of Organizational Affairs, two policy officers on ethnic and gender matters, and seven administrative officers. Five KPI indicators were tested, which included task completion rate, precision of policy proposals, and quality of coordination between departments (refer to Table 2). Data were captured through CEMA's own internal workplace work management system and stakeholder questionnaires (n=15). The evaluation indicated that 80% of the subjects found the KPI system easy to use with a 90% rate of task completion. Qualitative feedback highlighted the need for stronger data tools and training. Findings were triangulated with survey and interview data to enhance the KPI framework.

### 3.3 Data Analysis and Integration

Quantitative data provided empirical evidence for performance gaps and stakeholder attitudes, while qualitative data unfolded organizational patterns, institutional constraints, and normative expectations. Triangulation was ensured through cross-referencing the survey outcome (e.g., technical infrastructure issues of data) with interview themes (e.g., requirements of digital platforms) and pilot study outcomes (e.g., feasibility of KPI measures). The mixed-methods design ensured maximum credibility and field validity of the proposed KPI framework, ensuring responsiveness to CEMA's socio-political imperatives.

## 4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Current Status of Performance Measurement at CEMA

In spite of its highly qualified workforce (more than 90% undergraduate or postgraduate degree holders), CEMA's civil servant assessment is still constrained by:

- Vague, qualitative criteria unrelated to job-specific results
- Lack of alignment between individual performance and organizational goals
- Subjective conclusions based on top-down analysis with minimal data validation
- Infrequent assessment cycles, usually once a year,

without giving prompt feedback.

Survey findings show that: 70.3% support the introduction of KPIs, 59.9% consider existing evaluations non-influential and formalistic, 74.2% are willing to use KPIs when properly guided, 61.4% are worried about the absence of tools and data infrastructure. Further analysis using one-way ANOVA revealed the existence of differences among perceptions about KPI adoption across position groups and regions. Further analysis of the survey responses (Table 1) revealed that although awareness and perceived usefulness of KPIs were high ( $M > 4.0$ ), technical readiness issues (e.g., data availability) remained an impediment.

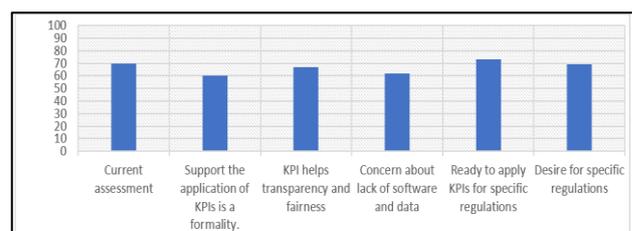


Figure 2: Survey results of civil servants' perceptions of KPIs in the Ethnic Committee.

Figure 2 shows that readiness to deploy KPIs leads with the greatest percentage of agreement (74.2%), followed by the assessment of formality of the current assessment, which is 59.9%.

Failures in performance management

On the basis of the survey of 202 departmental civil servants, affiliated units and two localities (Can Tho and Dak Lak), the research team discovered several urgent issues:

Lack of specific, quantitative appraisal criteria system: The standards are not specific, not clearly indicating the degree of work completion in terms of the specific objectives of each job title.

Inadequate connection between individual assessment and organizational objectives: The civil servants do not see the connection between individual work performance and the performance of the unit suitably.

The evaluation process isn't scientific: Largely dependent on the personal views of the evaluator, without openness and support databases.

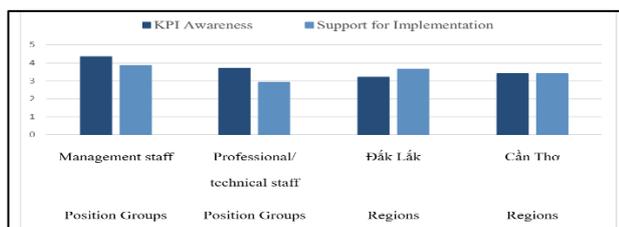
Appraisal periodicity is not sufficient to meet the needs of monitoring work progression: Regular annual assessment once every year is not sufficient to adjust and amend public service behavior in a timely manner. Specifically, survey findings indicate that over 60% of the civil servants surveyed hold that existing appraisal norms are ritualistic, with little incentive to fight or improve actual performance.

**Table 1: Descriptive Statistics and Reliability Analysis.**

Variable	Group/Region	Mean	SD	Cronbach's Alpha
Awareness of KPI	Management	4.35	0.55	0.84
	Professional/Technical	4.20	0.60	0.84
	Administrative/Support	4.05	0.65	0.84
	Đắk Lắk	4.25	0.58	0.84
	Cần Thơ	4.15	0.62	0.84
Support for KPI implementation	Đắk Lắk	4.00	0.75	0.84
	Cần Thơ	3.80	0.85	0.84

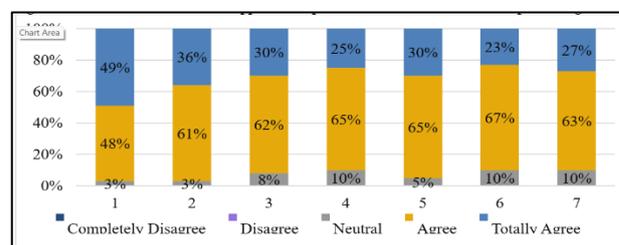
Survey findings reveal that: 70.3% of the participants support the adoption of KPIs, 59.9% deem existing evaluations formalistic and non-productive, 74.2% would be ready to implement KPIs if they are provided with guidelines, and 61.4% worry about the shortage of tools and infrastructure for data. Another analysis with one-way ANOVA also revealed considerable disparities in perceptions of adopting KPIs across position groups and regions. For KPI awareness, ANOVA results showed there was a significant position group effect,  $F(2, 199) = 4.82, p = 0.009$ . Post-hoc Tukey tests showed that management personnel ( $M = 4.35, SD = 0.55$ ) reported significantly higher awareness compared to administrative/support personnel ( $M = 4.05, SD = 0.65, p = 0.007$ ), and professional/technical personnel ( $M = 4.20, SD = 0.60$ ) did not differ from these two groups. There were no major regional differences in awareness,  $F(1, 200) = 1.23, p = 0.27$ . ANOVA identified a significant regional effect for support for the implementation of KPI,  $F(1, 200) = 5.67, p = 0.018$ , with the members from Đắk Lắk ( $M = 4.00, SD = 0.75$ ) expressing greater support than the members in Cần Thơ ( $M = 3.80, SD = 0.85$ ). These findings suggest that managerial roles and local environments, particularly where ethnic communities coexist in regions like Đắk Lắk, influence KPI adoption readiness, implying the need for customized training and communications within CEMA's KPI framework.

These results, in Figure 3, indicate the need for tailored interventions to address varying levels of CEMA's staff KPI readiness. Examination of survey feedback (Table 1) also showed that while awareness and perceived usefulness of KPIs were considerable ( $M > 4.0$ ), technical readiness issues (e.g., availability of data) were still a constraint, as observed in qualitative interview comments about infrastructural shortages.



**Figure 3: Mean KPI Awareness and Support for Implementation Across Position Groups and Regions.**

1. Task planning tools when assigning relevance to the Party and State's policies, values, and guidelines.
2. Task planning was consistent with the functions and tasks of the organisation.
3. Task planning includes focal points and key roles in each stage.
4. Task planning creates consistency across processes, work, and services.
5. Task planning ensures the correct authority at the agency, unit, and departments.
6. Task planning provides training for staff in completing and improving their work.
7. Task planning creates systematicity between programs and plans.



**Figure 4: Civil Servants' Perceptions of Task Planning Readiness at CEMA.**

**Note:** Data from 2023 survey of 202 CEMA civil servants, showing agreement levels (Fully Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Fully Disagree) on seven criteria: (1) Task planning is prepared in good time, (2) Task planning includes participation of stakeholders, (3) Task planning aligns with organisational goals, (4) Task planning includes clear timelines, (5) Task planning provides resource allocation, (6) Task planning meets ethnic minority requirements, (7) Task planning is revised frequently. Source: Authors' survey data, 2023.

Survey findings reveal that 61.4% to 66.8% of the respondents concur or entirely concur on task planning effectiveness (Figure 3), and there is positive sentiment towards KPI implementation. However, moderate concern with data infrastructure ( $M = 3.30, Table 1$ ) reveals that technical challenges are still there.

#### 4.2 Recommended KPI Framework for CEMA

The KPI model is occupation-focused, coupled with public service values, and underpinned by theory models like SMART and Balanced Scorecard.

The model differentiates between:

- Input indicators (i.e., written policy proposals),
- Process measures (e.g., adherence to procedural timelines),
- Outcome measures (e.g., levels of ethnic minority satisfaction served).

KPIs were grouped into three role categories:

- Management/Executive: e.g., task completion rate,

staff satisfaction,

- Professional/Technical: e.g., document processing accuracy, policy approval rates
- Administrative/Support: e.g., response times, inter-departmental coordination.

Each indicator possesses exact definitions, measurement methods, thresholds, and weights allocated to them. For example:

**Table 2: KPI indicators of ethnic policy support.**

KPI Indicator	Measurement	Threshold (Excellent/Acceptable)	Frequency	Weight
Policy recommendation approval rate	Approved proposals / Total	>85% / 70-85%	Annual	25%
Minority household economic access rate	Supported households / Targeted	>90% / 80-90%	Quarterly	30%
Public service satisfaction	Likert survey (1-5 scale)	>4.0 / 3.0-4.0	Quarterly	20%

(Source: Pilot data, CEMA, 2024)

A pilot study was carried out in the Personnel Department, namely with the Head of Organizational Affairs and an officer who works on gender and ethnic policy. Feedback was positive and feasibility was established.

### 4.3 Academic Contributions and Comparative International Dimension

This research adds the following value academically:

1. Contextualized Performance Theory: Illustrates the ways in which KPI models can be applied in specialist mandate public sectors (e.g., ethnic policy).
2. Methodological Innovation: Employs a mixed-methods approach to public sector KPI design, weighting stakeholder feedback and statistical data equally.
3. Comparative Insight: Compares Vietnam's formalistic, centralized examination systems with outcome-oriented cultures in Malaysia, Singapore, and America.

Whereas other examples focus on digital infrastructure and legal adherence, CEMA's approach incorporates locally applicable KPIs for socio-political obligations, including ethnic diversity, regional inequalities, and inter-sectoral collaboration.

### 4.4 Implementation Challenges

Quantitative KPI system, categorized by position, suitable to the nature of the Committee for Ethnic Minorities (ethnic policies, far-flung areas), going beyond the formality of current appraisals (Decree 90/2020/ND-CP). However, constraints include: lack of data, automation software, fear of change, inter-departmental coordination.

Compared to existing Vietnam's civil servant evaluation models, which are dominantly self-evaluation, evaluation of supervisors and some overall

criteria like political qualities, sense of responsibility or sense of discipline and order, the KPI index system suggested in this research is quantitative, measurable, and directly linked to certain public service outputs. Though older decrees like Decree No. 90/2020/ND-CP or the Ministry of Home Affairs' instructions are still subject to not being specific and detailed enough in job position classification, this KPI model follows the path of job function classification with different indexes for each type of position: management - operation, professional - technical, and administrative - support. In particular, the outstanding new point of the KPI system is the applicability to the nature of the Ethnic Committee - the agency executing the state management function of ethnic affairs, in the context of interdisciplinary and high regional nature. The establishment of indexes for work on ethnic policy posts, management of ethnic minority cadres, coordination of mountainous region development projects, etc., allows for the measurement of work efficiency more realistically than the conventional administrative assessment frameworks.

For example, the index regarding the level of policy advice suitable for ethnic minority areas, or the index regarding the quality of updated ethnic minority cadre profiles, are all data that have never been included in the current evaluation system. Additionally, building KPIs on a multidimensional framework - quantitative and qualitative combined - not just facilitates measurement and tracking on a periodical basis, but also assists in addressing formality, the intrinsic weakness in assessing Vietnam's public sector civil servants. This has particular application in the situation of the Committee for Ethnic Minorities promoting administrative reform and digitalization for enhancing service quality to certain groups - ethnic

minorities, distant and disadvantaged areas.

From there, it can be confirmed that the suggested KPI system is not only innovative in terms of approach and construction methodology, but also manifests specificity and flexibility in line with the functions and tasks of the governing body - an imperative orientation to reform the Vietnamese civil service at present.

#### 4.5. KPI Implementation Process

Successful KPI system implementation within the public sector needs to be a systematic, transparent and participatory process with stakeholders. This encompasses key steps from data collection, analysis to results utilisation, in a bid to promote accuracy, objectivity and effectiveness of the evaluation system (Figure 5).

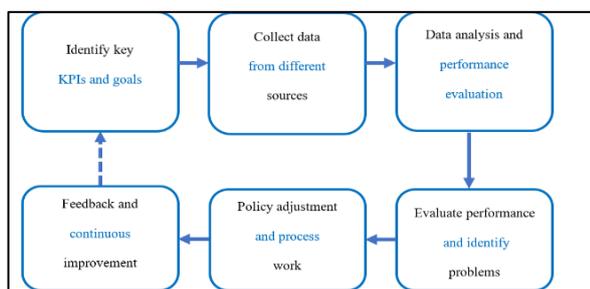


Figure 5: Flowchart of collection, analysis and use of KPI data.

However, to be able to use the KPI model systematically and durably on a national scale, there are supporting conditions of organizations and institutions. First of all, there needs to be a promulgated uniform framework regulation by the Ministry of Home Affairs to establish a legal foundation and uniformity across ministries, branches, and localities. This framework must clearly establish the indicator design process, key KPI sets per job position type, and technical standards for measurement and evaluation. Second, there is a need to emphasize training and capacity development of staff and civil servants, particularly in results-based assessment thinking and KPI system design and operation skills.

Developing the knowledge and capacity of human resources is a precondition to make the model effective in practice. Last but not least, the use of information technology in performance management must be encouraged, by developing integrated software systems, connecting public service data and allowing monitoring and analysis of KPI indicators automatically, openly, and instantly.

The reproduction of the KPI model is not only a novelty of the means of civil servant management,

but also a key step towards achieving the objective of "modern public administration for results" on which the Government is embarking in the ongoing period of administrative reform.

#### 4.6 Discussion, Comparison, and Policy Recommendations

##### 4.6.1 Feasibility and Importance of KPI Implementation

The pilot program at CEMA demonstrates the effectiveness of a KPI system in alignment with Vietnam's administrative reform under Resolution No. 76/NQ-CP (2021). The shift to results-based evaluation is a global phenomenon (Van Dooren et al., 2015). KPIs such as ethnic minority family aid rates or public service satisfaction willably make direct contributions toward CEMA's policy goals for inclusive development. However, the transition toward results-based rather than process management is hampered by cultural and political challenges. Vu et al. (2022) mention that traditional personal relationships and command-and-control style decision-making are hindrances to the innovations in performance management in Vietnam's public sector. Civil servant resistance to change and interagency coordination, aggravated by the Vietnam system's top-down orientation of governance, must be addressed in CEMA. Positive leadership, emphasized by Vu et al. (2022), and targeted capacity-building training are imperative to shattering these hindrances and facilitating KPI adoption.

##### 4.6.2 International Comparative Models

International experience from Singapore, Malaysia, China, and the U.S. underscores the necessity to synchronize KPI with organizational and public service goals. Singapore's digitized KPI systems enable real-time monitoring and transparency (Government of Singapore, 2020), which can be imitated by CEMA through investment in digital infrastructure. Vietnamese centralized government, as opposed to Singapore's decentralized setup, limits flexibility in KPI implementation (Vu et al., 2022). Malaysia's reward-driven KPIs are opposed to Vietnam's formalistic evaluations, where compliance is prioritized over outcomes. The organization of CEMA must adapt to specific challenges like regional disparities and ethnic diversities by incorporating community-based indicators, as the engagement of citizens stimulates performance (Trinh & Sun, 2022). Such findings necessitate Vietnam adopting a resilient, context-specific KPI model, supported by legislative and technological underpinnings, to ensure sustained adoption.

## 5. CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

### 5.1 Conclusion

This study sets out that building and applying KPI guidelines in the public sector of Vietnam, specifically the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA), is possible and necessary in terms of sustaining administrative reform. Through integrating international best practices and empirical fieldwork, the research provides a function-specific, context-sensitive set of performance measures for different positions in CEMA.

The proposed KPI framework assists Vietnam in shifting its paradigm of public management away from subjective, input-oriented evaluations to an open, measurable, and outcome-based system. Pilot implementation demonstrated both technical viability and strong support from civil servants, highlighting the importance of the framework in better accountability, motivation, and policy impact—particularly service delivery for ethnic minorities.

However, widespread adoption will have to be preceded by system readiness, including legal harmonization, enhanced institutional capacity, and electronic infrastructure. KPIS should not be seen as static tools, but as cobbles of a dynamic performing environment coupled with national reform goals and public service reform.

Three legs support scalability: (1) institutionalization of KPI in the legal form, (2) investment in building capacity to ease resistance to change, and (3) exploitation of digital infrastructure for monitoring real-time performance – a crucial

move towards administrative modernization in Vietnam.

Despite its contributions, the research is not flawless. Focusing on CEMA and two provinces (Đắk Lắk and Cần Thơ) could limit generalizability to other Vietnamese agencies or other parts of the country with varying ethnic compositions. Additionally, using self-reported survey answers could cause response bias and would have to be validated in future studies using objective measures of performance.

### 5.2 Policy Implications

From the evidence, several key policy recommendations are made:

1. Enact a national legislation for KPI use in civil service evaluation, with clear guidelines appropriate to role-specific tasks.
2. Develop sample KPI templates for different job categories, launched by the Ministry of Home Affairs or other concerned departments.
3. Conduct capacity building, including training public managers in performance-based appraisal, data analysis, and ICT tools.
4. Implement integrated digital platforms facilitating real-time monitoring of data, cross-agency coordination, and reporting automation.
5. Pilot and rollout the model to the provinces and ministries starting with those working on complex and multi-dimension policies (e.g., Ministry of Information and Communications, Ministry of Labor).

By institutionalizing KPIS as part of Vietnam's public service reform, the country can move closer to achieving a transparent, efficient, and citizen-focused public administration.

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### APPENDICES

#### *Appendix 1: Sample KPI Framework by Position Group*

Position Group	KPI Indicator	Measurement Unit	Evaluation Frequency
Management/Executive	Task completion rate	%	Quarterly
	Subordinate satisfaction	Likert scale (1–5)	Quarterly
Professional/Technical	Document processing accuracy	%	Monthly
	Policy proposal approval rate	%	Annual
	Economic support access (minority groups)	%	Quarterly
Administrative/Support	Response time to internal requests	Hours/Days	Weekly
	Interdepartmental coordination quality	Likert scale (1–5)	Quarterly

#### *Appendix 2: Example KPI Matrix – Head of Personnel Division*

KPI Indicator	Objective	Measurement	Threshold	Weight
Task completion rate	≥ 95% on time	Tasks on time / Total tasks	>95%: Excellent; <80%: Poor	30%
Quality of personnel records	≥ 90% error-free	Valid records / Total records	>90%: Good; <70%: Weak	25%
Database update frequency	≥ 1 update/month	Monthly update log	≥1: Met; <1: Not met	20%
Internal audit compliance	No major violations	Number of violations	≤1: Acceptable; >2: Improve	15%
Satisfaction of collaborating units	≥ 4.0/5.0	Internal survey	>4.0: Good; <3.0: Improve	10%

Note:

- Weight: Reflects the importance of each indicator in the overall assessment, total weight = 100%.
- Assessment frequency: Quarterly, with data collected from the work management system and internal surveys.
- Data sources: The electronic information system of the UBDT, work reports, and opinion surveys from related units.
- Survey scores are calculated as an average of at least 10 responses from coordinating units, using a 5-point Likert scale.