**The Development of E-government and Its Role in Anti-corruption Strategy in the Republic of Korea: Lessons for Vietnam**

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**Abstract:**

E-government is not a new concept. In fact, it is increasingly being utilised to improve transparency in the public sector and to combat corruption. Faced with the pressure of increasing government performance while being responsive to citizen demands, E-government is considered to go beyond the simple exercise of putting information and services online. It can be used as a powerful tool to transform the structures, process and work culture of government. This article aims to study the position of E-government as an anti-corruption strategy in the context of Vietnam via literature and data analysis. Furthermore, it will examine the case of E-government development in South Korea - one of the successful models of E-government in order to construct the lessons for Vietnam. Eventually, this article proposes strategic suggestions for the development of E-government amid the anti-corruption strategy of Vietnam.

**Key word:** e-government, anti-corruption, South Korea, ICT infrastructure, leadership

**Introduction**

E-government has become an important instrument for every country that attempts to enhance governance in order to get rid of corruption. Since the end of the twentieth century, the Vietnamese government has been committed to building an effective E-government. After two decades, Vietnam has demonstrated many statements which affirm the political will in digitising the public sector. The government gained several achievements in the field. At the moment, Vietnamese E-government is assessed relatively well based on the international ranks. So far, the rank of the digitalised government of Vietnam is improved every year.[[3]](#footnote-3) Besides the preparation of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) infrastructure, the Vietnamese government also published a supportive set of laws for the foundation of E-government. Amid the “war on corruption”, it is necessary to study the experience of successful countries in developing E-government. This article presents a case study of the “OPEN” system of the Seoul Metropolitan Government (SMG) which is eventually applied nationally. The SMG has been a leader and innovator in e-governance and has successfully applied information technologies in public administration to create a more effective, efficient and transparent government for citizens. Apart from expanding the accessibility to citizens and improving the efficiency of the public sector, the OPEN system pushed the transparency in the administrative procedure of the delivery of the public services. Thanks to the system, the applicants can track the process of approving applications and the officials who are responsible for. The clear process forces the public servants to work much accountability. The elimination of direct personal contacts with the officials has a significant impact on restricting the opportunities for corrupt officials. The citizens also enjoy a greater space to interact with the government. This article argues that the experience from the development as well as the use of the OPEN system is precious lessons to apply in Vietnam. To prove this argument, this paper is constructed in three sections. Via literature review, section 1 demonstrates the development of E-government and its role in anti-corruption. This section answers the question: Why is it vital for the Vietnamese government to digitalise the public services in anti-corruption strategy? The second section examines the lesson learned from the case of the Republic of Korea. By analysing two aspects in Seoul and Vietnam: ICT infrastructure and political will, the article attempts to provide a comparative analysis to explain the reason why Vietnam can inherit the knowledge of the South Korean system. This section will point out the problems of the OPEN system and how Seoul overcame them. The final section discusses how Vietnam should adopt these lessons appropriately.

1. **E-government and its role in anti-corruption**

According to the United Nations Development Program, E-government should be understood as the applicability of ICT by the government to “work more effectively, share information and deliver better services to the public”[[4]](#footnote-4). Gupta et al, argue that the term E-government should be limited in the concerns among “the development of online government services to citizens and businesses”[[5]](#footnote-5). Silcock interpreted the target beneficiaries of E-government as “citizens, business partners, and employees”.[[6]](#footnote-6) West provides the definition which expands the opportunity to participate in the political system of citizens.[[7]](#footnote-7) Kim et al. argue that this new platform of public service can deliver “modernized, integrated, and seamless services for citizens.”[[8]](#footnote-8) The term E-government is perceived that it is the use of ICT technology by the government to deliver public services more effectively.

Regarding corruption, the definition of the United Nation Development Program states that corruption is “the misuse of public power, office, or authority for private benefit.”[[9]](#footnote-9) It is widely accepted that corruption has a bad influence on economic development. [[10]](#footnote-10) Hence, many scholars and organisations have proposed various solutions and approaches to curb corruptions. Kim suggests a technological approach that is the solutions rely on the utilization of ICT in service provision and delivery. This approach emphasizes two effects which can restrict the risk of corrupt acts. First is to enhance the transparency of the administrative procedure.[[11]](#footnote-11)

Certainly, the E-government can play a significant role to boost transparency. From theoretical perspectives[[12]](#footnote-12) to empirical research[[13]](#footnote-13), it is undeniable that the governmental manipulation of the flow of the information is convenient for public officials to conduct corrupt acts. Therefore, the E-government could play a significant role in anti-corruption strategy because the advantages of the technology enable the citizens to access the necessary information and track the administrative procedure. As the Global Corruption Report stated, ‘‘E-government offers a partial solution to the multifaceted problem of corruption”[[14]](#footnote-14) because the technology helps cut down discretion, that prevents potential opportunities for public officials from overusing their power. Furthermore, the transparent data of administrative procedure on the internet helps citizens track the wrongful acts and unreasonable procedures. From this perspective, transparency has become the core driver of E-government.

The second effect is to open more opportunities for citizens to participate in public administration decision-making. Kim and Lee provide a definition of the electronic participation that “refers to citizens' voluntary participation and involvement in public administration affairs and public decision making through the use of Web-based applications provided by the government”.[[15]](#footnote-15) From the observation of scholars such as Tran, Nguyen and Nguyen, the implementation of E-government in authoritarian regimes does not always go with democratization.[[16]](#footnote-16) This indicates there might be no changes in the political system during the implementation of E-government. In particular, Rubasundram and Rasiah point out the main motivation of the governments in Southeast Asia in the E-government project is to improve the governance in terms of the quality of public service and fight corruption.[[17]](#footnote-17) Kim and Lee argue that e-participation improves trust in government. [[18]](#footnote-18) The authoritarian or closed regimes may utilise e-participation to profound the legitimacy of the government as well as to enhance the efficiency of the administrative system. Thus, In this article, the term e-participation should be understood as the interaction of citizens with public administration affairs and public decision making through the use of online platforms by the government.

Andersen concludes that E-government is an effective instrument in curbing corruption at the micro-level.[[19]](#footnote-19) Even though this term has become popular, not every country has gained success in applying E-government. In Southeast Asia, the regional countries were aware of the term E-government since the 1970s. Many policies in these countries have been published and implemented to promote the applicability of E-government. However, apart from Singapore and Malaysia, the rest of Southeast Asian countries do not enjoy a high ranking of E-government, which indicates that after forty years, there are still many difficulties for these countries to overcome.[[20]](#footnote-20) Among Asian countries, there is a successful model of South Korea that can inspire other countries. The OPEN (Online Procedures Enhancement for civil applications) system of the SMG has been recommended by many credible international organisations such as the UN, World Bank. [[21]](#footnote-21) As one of the most important municipal governments in Asia, Seoul has played a key role in leading the E-government campaign in the region. It shows outstanding performance compared to its competitors in international surveys such as The Global E-government Survey[[22]](#footnote-22) and United Nations E-government Survey[[23]](#footnote-23). This system will be examined in the next chapter to clarify the elements that generated success and how Seoul dealt with the obstacles.

1. **The lessons from the case of South Korea**

**2.1. The case of OPEN system**

The OPEN system is a web-based internet service which was developed and operated by SMG. Via the website [www.metro.seoul.kr](about:blank), as of 2007, SMG could deal with 64 tasks and 40 committee procedures.[[24]](#footnote-24) These services could be classified into 10 groups that cover main civil administration matters:

- Housing and construction

- Transportation

- Culture & Tourism

- Urban planning

- Administration

- Construction work

- Environment

- Industry & economy

- Sanitation & welfare

- Fire fighting [[25]](#footnote-25)

Notably, the OPEN system was implemented by the SMG first. The city is the capital and largest metropolis of South Korea which has been granted power for local autonomy since 1988. After a decade, Goh Kuh, the mayor of Seoul began to implement the OPEN project on January 25, 1999, after getting elected. Cho and Choi put the emergence of the OPEN system in the context of the war on corruption that was declared by Goh. [[26]](#footnote-26)

These authors analysed that Goh applied four principal approaches in the war on corruption:

“(1) to remove the factors causing corruption;

(2) to punish the corrupt officials with certainty;

(3) to enhance transparency in the administrative process;

(4) to secure the citizen-government cooperation to drive out corruption”[[27]](#footnote-27)

Based on these approaches, E-government proves that it is a suitable instrument. This online system is designed to improve the speed of civil affairs as well as to enhance the accessibility of civil services to every citizen. By cutting down the occasion to work directly with the public officials, it contributes to removing a reason behind corruption. With the advantage of the technology, the administrative procedure is disclosed on the website, hence, the citizens can access the information fairly. Furthermore, the status of each civil application can be tracked on the internet in real-time. The citizens can observe the progress of the handling process from the first to the final stage. The OPEN system provides a function which enables citizens to leave feedback after using the system. Because the responsibility of officials in charge is now clear, the civil servants now have to be more accountable, if they don’t want to get complaints about unnecessary delays from the citizens. Besides, the citizens can utilise this platform to cooperate with the government at different levels to reveal corruption in administrative affairs.

Kim et al. also share this point of view by examining the OPEN system under four strategies against corruption from the UNDP: prevention, enforcement, access to information and empowerment, and capacity building. These authors conclude that to materialise the model of OPEN successfully, those four strategies must be integrated into the framework of the system.

The OPEN system was praised not only by the international community but also by the domestic stakeholders. The positive impact of this system has been recognised widely, hence, the OPEN system was voted by citizens, specialists and government employees to become the Most Valuable Policy of Seoul in 1999 and 2000. At the time when this system was introduced, SMG scored 64 in the anti-corruption index. In 8 years, this index of SMG rose to 84.9, which implies the transparency of the administrative system was improved clearly. [[28]](#footnote-28) The success of the OPEN system encouraged the central government to embed a similar system into the “Saeol” system - an E-government with national scale.

**2.2. The condition to implement the OPEN system**

1. **Infrastructure**

Under the administration of Goh, SMG envisioned that Seoul would become a digital city. In fact, the ICT infrastructure of Korea was improved tremendously during that phase. By 2000, 74.6 % of people who were in their 20s and 74,1 % of people between 7-19 years old used the internet. The majority of people who are under 30 years of age could utilise the internet. After 30, the internet utilization rate decreased dramatically from 43.6 % for those in their 30s to 5.7% for those in their 50s and older. [[29]](#footnote-29) Until 2007, more than 90% of households in South Korea could connect to broadband internet at home. Regarding mobile phones, in 2007, 90% of the Korean population were able to use cell phones.[[30]](#footnote-30) In 1995, the size of the population aged between 10 and 39 in the Seoul Metropolitan Area was greater than any group.[[31]](#footnote-31) Thus, the majority of the population could use the internet effectively to access digitised public services. Remarkably, Seoul decided to implement the OPEN project in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Because the ICT infrastructure of the city was mature enough to provide a firm foundation for the OPEN system to function properly. With an adequate level of internet literacy, SMG was confident to introduce such a system to its citizens.

1. **Political will**

Kim emphasises that strong leadership is one of the elements that made up the success of the OPEN system. This is a reasonable argument because the application of the OPEN system requires the comprehensive cooperation of the administrative systems. In particular, Kim points out that Mayor Goh proposed the OPEN system to fight corruption within the SMG and to promote the digitization process of Seoul.[[32]](#footnote-32) Goh began to reform the ICT sector of the city after being elected. Before the announcement of the OPEN initiative, the Information System Planning Bureau was organized professionally under the arrangement of Goh. He allocated a professional from the private sector to work as Chief Information Officer, a new position in the government to deal with the relevant matters. [[33]](#footnote-33) The birth of the OPEN system occurred in the ending of the reform of the 7th Republic of Korea (1993-1998). The major goals were “to establish a democratic and efficient administration; to create people-oriented government (to provide better services); and to build a lean, clean, and strong government”.[[34]](#footnote-34) Thus, the initiative of the OPEN system was supported not only by the city authority but also by the central government.

Besides the reform of the administrative system, Goh had to face the severe crisis which was caused by corruption. Kim illustrated the damage from the corruption in South Korea at that time by pointing out the decrease in trust in government between 1981 and 2001. [[35]](#footnote-35) Kalinowski linked the corruption and the foreign currency crisis in South Korea in 1997 due to the closed relationship between corporations and government officials.[[36]](#footnote-36) It is worth noting that the Goh administration approved Anti-Corruption Index (ACI) to measure the performance of the selected areas of the city services. This Index is adapted from the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) developed by Transparency International (TI), a famous international non-governmental organization in the anti-corruption and transparency field. Thanks to this policy, the citizens now can compare the scores within the authorities of different districts and observe the changes in the same districts after years. [[37]](#footnote-37) Kalinowski explained that the context of the crisis allowed the political system to conduct a series of radical reforms which brought systematic changes.[[38]](#footnote-38)

1. **Problem and solution**

As other radical reforms, the OPEN system faced reluctance from the officials. The research of Kim et al. showed that there might be two main reasons behind this attitude. First is the increase of work in a short time. With the advantage of the technology, the productivity of the officials was expected to be enhanced. However, in reality, the officials had to deal with a more heavy workload due to the real-time operation. In particular, the public officials were required to handle one application on the system within a required amount of time. This real-time tracking system was described as putting great pressure on the officials. Second is the reduction of opportunity to benefit from corruption. The officials could not have many possibilities to overuse their position as before. [[39]](#footnote-39)

The first solution from SMG was to make the use of the OPEN system compulsory by publishing a new regulation. This was regarded not sufficient, hence, the Audit and Inspection Bureau was mobilised to supervise the implementation of the system. SMG also required the Information System Bureau to assist regarding technical issues. The cooperation of two bureaus was effective to force the officials to apply the new system. [[40]](#footnote-40)

The second problem was the lack of equity among service users. The majority of the internet users population of Seoul was younger than 30 when the OPEN system was introduced. At that time, the people, who were from 30 and above, had more needs in using civil services on the OPEN system due to their position in household and society. They belonged to the groups that were low in the internet utilisation rate. SMG overcomes this difficulty by allocating the internet rooms in district offices. This room is open for public use with the assistance of the staff to the citizens who were not familiar with using the E-government system. Gradually, this issue was solved because of the popularity of ICT technology. [[41]](#footnote-41)

1. **The E-government in Vietnam**

**3.1. The background of Vietnam**

Vietnam committed to building an E-government at the Fourth ASEAN Informal Summit 2000 in light of the inevitable role and trend of information technology application in state agencies.[[42]](#footnote-42) On a basis of being a backward agricultural country with its economy following the central planning model as well as the underdeveloped level of science and technology, E-government creation in Vietnam is considered as an extremely difficult and complicated task. This challenge stemmed from the shortage of a legal framework for the general direction of E-government development that created many difficulties for localities in investing and applying ICT.

In 2006, the implementation of the E-government model was discussed in the session of The Fourth Annual Conference on E-government. Accordingly, Vietnam has determined that it is necessary to clearly define a strategic vision, come up with a design and create a deployment model following regular updates. David Blumains who is an advisor of Asia- Pacific Data Research Center argued that Vietnam’s E-government had been in its early stage and the implementation of an E-government model should last at least five years, thus finding answers to the first questions about its vision and strategy should be started now.[[43]](#footnote-43) Three years later, according to the project named “Acceleration” and the Overall national strategy on Information Technology development issued by the Vietnamese Government, E-government was identified as one of the most important goals to achieve. Thus, after 9 years since the commitment to build E-government was given, Vietnam has pointed out the target that to be achieved in national development strategy, which is to expand an E-government model, promote the application of information technology for administrative reform, and government agency modernization. This model is expected to create an effective, efficient and people-centred government as well as a favourable environment for socio-economic development.

The observation of Tong describes that Vietnam prepared a relatively comprehensive set of laws for E-government at that time.[[44]](#footnote-44) The laws on online transactions in 2005, on ICT in 2006, on telecommunications in 2009 and on radio frequency in 2009 contributed to creating a supportive legal foundation for digitizing government services. Especially in 2007, the government published Resolution 64/2007/ND-CP on ICT application in governmental agencies. To specify the public services in Vietnam, the Ministry of Information and Communication ratified Circular 26/2009/TTBTTTT. This Circular categorises the services into four levels:

* Level 1 includes those providing information about processing, documenting, and fees of public services;
* Level 2 services cover level 1 and allow users to download and notify completion of document forms;
* Level 3 services permit users to fill in and submit documents online;
* Level 4 services incorporate all the previous three functions with the addition of an online payment service.

In 2010, the Prime Minister approved the 2011-2015 National Program on applying ICT to government activities. Five years later, Resolution No.36a/NQ-CP on E-government was passed. Accordingly, ICT application was regarded as one of the key drivers for the growth of the knowledge economy, society, national competitiveness, industrialization, modernization, and sustainable development in Vietnam.

E-government is officially defined in the Vietnam E-government Architecture Framework Version 1.0 as following: “E-government is the Government that applies information technology to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of state agencies, enhance transparent information as well as provide better public services to the individuals and enterprises”. Accordingly, E-government typically provides groups of services as follows: Government-to-citizen (G2C), Government-to-business (G2B), Government-to-employees (G2E) and Government-to-government (G2G).[[45]](#footnote-45)

* G2C in which the government provides information and services to their citizens includes information dissemination to the public; basic citizens services such as license renewals, ordering of birth or death or marriage certificates and filing of income taxes; citizen assistance in educational and medical care systems and other types of services.[[46]](#footnote-46)
* When the government provides information and services to businesses, they are known as G2B that covers a variety of services to be carried out between the government and business communities, namely obtaining business information, downloading application forms, renewing licenses, registering businesses, applying for permits and payment of taxes. Moreover, policies, rules as well as regulations are propagated and disseminated. These services aim at supporting business development, especially the development of small and medium enterprises through simplification of licensing procedures or facilitation of the approval process.[[47]](#footnote-47)
* G2E focuses on the relationship between government and employees, those are officials, public servants and public employees, to coordinate internal operations and improve internal efficiency. Human resource training and development services are created to be likely to boost and strengthen daily administrative functions as well as ways of handling affairs with citizens.
* G2G services are implemented at both domestic and international levels. They are transactions between central and local governments as well as between units of government such as public authorities, departments and organizations.

E-government development is a long-term, continuous process with different stages, and the construction of the Vietnamese E-government Architecture Framework, as well as the E-government Architecture at all levels, play an important role in the development of E-government. Those models are likely to help local government leaders make timely and accurate investment decisions, improve the quality and efficiency of E-government services. The E-government architectures show the overall design of all components in the E-government and its functions as well as the relationship between them. Therefore, the E-government Architecture Framework will enhance interconnection, integration, sharing, and reuse of information and information infrastructure; boost the ability to monitor and evaluate the investment, ensure the synchronous deployment of information technology application, reduce duplication, save costs and implementation time of state agencies. According to statistics, there are 19 out of 22 ministries, ministerial agencies, and 61 among 63 provinces, cities which are currently implementing those architectures to connect and share data among state agencies.[[48]](#footnote-48) Those will facilitate the construction and carry out of the E-government in Vietnam.

In the context of the fast-growing industrial revolution 4.0, the trend of E-government development towards digital government as well as technology development trends such as big data, artificial intelligence, blockchain is going to blow up. Along with those trends, the Government and the Prime Minister issued many regulations related to information technology application and the construction of E-government, for instance, Decree No. 61/2018/ND-CP dated 23/04/2018 on implementing the one-stop-shop mechanism, one-stop-shop in settling administrative formalities and Decision No. 28/2018/QD-TTg dated 12/07/2018 on the sending and receipt of e-documents between agencies in the state administrative system. Therefore, the Vietnamese E-government Architecture Framework version 2.0 needs to be built to meet the requirements of the development trend of E-government towards the digital government.

Compared to the Vietnamese E-government Architecture Framework version 1.0, its version 2.0 has three new points: updating the core components including purpose and scope of application, architectural framework contents, reference models, E-government map and implementation; updating E-government architecture and attaching lists of information systems and databases for the Vietnam E-government foundation; and taking out five reference models on business, data, application, technology and information security.[[49]](#footnote-49)

* The Business Reference Model represents the functional framework of the Government including all management functions of sectors and fields assigned to ministries, sectors, and localities. This framework is built on business activities and it will be independent of functions and tasks that are pointed out to ministries and branches.
* The Data Reference Model provides a framework for sharing and reusing information between ministries, sectors, and localities. Information is based on corresponding data groups and is not influenced by any agencies creating those data.
* The Application Reference Model provides a business-oriented functional framework for classifying applications based on the applications used to support operational goals. This model could be utilized to know the possibilities of consolidation of applications providing similar services.
* The Technical Reference Model provides a technical framework that classifies standards and technologies to support the provision of technological services and technology capabilities. This model guides how this model of each ministry, sector, or locality can be integrated with the national technical reference model. This could be done by providing a platform to promote the ability to reuse and standardize technologies and technology service components nationwide.
* The Security Reference Model specifies the purpose of security and fully identifies the risks and risk control mechanisms at each level of organizations to categorize monitor mechanisms to ensure a safe environment.

These models will be compulsory references for ministries as well as localities in the process of building E-government at ministerial as well as local levels.

In order to improve the quality of E-government foundation, the Vietnamese Government issued Resolution No.17/NQ-CP dated 07/03/2019 on a number of key tasks and solutions for E-government development in the period of 2019-2020, towards 2025. According to this Resolution, the results of E-government Development are still of limited level such as Vietnam’s E-government Development Index is still low, below the ASEAN average, the telecommunication infrastructure index fell by 10 places. Moreover, there is a lack of a synchronous legal framework for E-government development; the construction of national databases and fundamental information technology infrastructure for E-government development is slow; information security and safety is low; there has not yet been data connection and sharing between information systems; the mechanism for investment and information technology service rent still meets with many difficulties; the application of information technology has not been effective, the settlement of administrative procedures and the processing of work dossiers depends heavily on paperwork, in a manual manner; the rate of using online public services is still very low.[[50]](#footnote-50) The Resolution also affirms that there are some causes of the above-mentioned facts, including the lack of leadership role in directing the implementation and disconnection and self-management of information and data still common leading to duplication and inconsistency of information. These reasons are two issues that South Korea has been successfully resolved in the process of E-government implementation.

**3.2. What should Vietnam utilise from South Korea’s experiences**

The success of the OPEN system is based on the basic assurance of the ICT infrastructure and the unity of the leadership team.

In terms of ICT infrastructure, in Vietnam, the national telecommunications network system has developed rapidly with advanced technology covering the entire country and connecting with a large amount of information to countries around the world. By 2010, the number of internet subscribers per 100 people reached 30 and the number of telephones per 100 people reached 180, which would be high in the world.[[51]](#footnote-51) The successful launch of two telecommunication satellites named Vinasat 1 and Vinasat 2 has brought to Vietnam more opportunities in creating and expanding synchronous telecommunication networks from optical cable systems and radio systems to satellite information systems. The application of information technology has been implemented regularly in stage management agencies, linked to the reform of administrative procedures that contribute to the enhancement of social labour productivity. However, ICT infrastructure is not stable when the coverage of information networks has not distributed evenly and the quality and service networks do not meet the user demands well. In addition, the linking and sharing of information and data have not been fully implemented so that online public services are not effective. In 2017, the rate of services having online records at the ministerial level accounted for around 55% and figures for the provincial level were approximately 12%.[[52]](#footnote-52) It is also a problem that South Korea had encountered before in E-government development that is based on closed source[[53]](#footnote-53). Later, in order to implement E-government synchronously, South Korea built an E-government development strategy in the direction of standardization and established a standard development software framework to build E-government as well as utilize the unified technical infrastructure. Vietnam so far has designed an E-government architecture framework, not yet unified to use a common technical infrastructure. Moreover, in the OPEN system, service users only need to access the system and select the available desired service. The system will process it and the user just wait until the results are sent. However, in Vietnam, the online public service system has been used, but has not been unified. This system is distributed into many levels according to administrative units. Each level will handle a number of specific services. Thus, in order to simplify administrative procedures, save time and improve work efficiency, Vietnam should adopt a synchronous E-government portal system to handle all requests.

As mentioned earlier, strong leadership is the key factor for successful E-government development. The Communist Party showed its robust commitment on anti-corruption via a series of disciplinary action against corrupt high-profile Party members. [[54]](#footnote-54) Based on this movement, Vietnam should focus on dealing with corruption in the lower level of the political system, which is remarkably popular in the administrative system.[[55]](#footnote-55) The E-government with its successes and empirical effectiveness in fighting corruption should be utilised more robustly. Although the Vietnamese government clearly defines E-government development towards a digital government as one of the most important strategies, there is still the lack of consistency in the operation of service groups provided by E-government in localities that has been making the implementation ineffective. Local authorities have not yet identified a roadmap of specific tasks to deploy as well as have not linked information technology application to administrative procedure reform and working method innovation, especially concerning working with citizens and businesses. As a medium and long-term strategy, Vietnam should consider enacting an E-government law along with decrees and guiding documents to ensure the operation of E-government based on open data and application of modern technologies. More specifically, participants using the services provided by E-government must be entitled to evaluate the effectiveness of E-government through the transparency index that measures the transparent performance of online public services.

**Conclusion**

An E-government initiative is recognized as a key strategic requirement for a knowledge-based society in the 21st century. E-government is one of the main solutions for reforms, public services provision, fighting corruption, and improving accountability because it will boost transparency and openness in government spending. Moreover, E-government will increase more opportunities for citizens and enterprises to participate in state management, especially in monitoring activities in the administrative field that improves the effectiveness and efficiency of the state administrative apparatus.

Due to the undeniable advantages of E-government, many countries are choosing this idea for fighting corruption and many governments including South Korea are allocating resources to establish an E-government. After going through continuous efforts in E-government and national information, South Korea has become one of the global E-government leaders. The South Korea E-government promotion led to enhanced efficiency of public administration by stabilizing electronic processing of government work, and improved economic feasibility, expertise and security of government resource management by constructing government-wide data centres and integrating government information systems. Besides, it led to reduction of document submission for civil service application by a large extent and increased convenience and participation of citizens in policy-making by providing portal services for civil application or enabling interaction with public offices without having to visit these offices in person. These practices so far have been introduced to the word as the best cases and received the worldwide acknowledgement.

In the beginning, Vietnam was quite hesitant in the implementation of E-government. It was not until Vietnam signed the e-ASEAN framework as well as committed to building an E-government. Over the past years, the Vietnamese government has always paid heed to promote the application of information technology as well as developing E-government in the activities of state agencies to better serve citizens and businesses. However, many contents of E-government development have not been achieved as expected, thus learning from South Korea's success could be considered. The success of the OPEN system in SMG is mainly made by synchronous ICT infrastructure and strong leadership. Accordingly, in order to implement E-government synchronously, a common technical infrastructure should be created and applied at the national level. Besides, leadership roles in directing the implementation and the mechanism to ensure the implementation should be strong enough to build up enabling Government integrity.

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3. According to the statistics of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, United Nations, with an overall score of 0.66 on the E-government Development Index, Vietnam moved up two places from last year and was currently ranked 86th out of 193 member states, compared to 99th in 2014.

   See more at: [https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data/Compare-Countries](about:blank) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
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