**ADMINISTRATION IN THE DIGITAL ERA: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR BUILDING A “GOOD GOVERNMENT”**

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# Summary

With respect to legal science in Vietnam, in the past few years, apart from the general studies on "Good Governance" with broad connotation, it is also possible to study "Good Governance" under narrow angles. That means: Governing the performance of the State's obligations towards building a good Government (meeting the requirements of transparency and anti-corruption) in the digital age. A good Government needs bidirectional interactions: The Government must successfully carry out their governmental commitments with the society, and vice versa, every individual must perceive and perform their obligations accordingly for the Government to administrate the country effectively.

Based on the fundamental theory of good governance, this article ***Administration in the digital era: Opportunities and challenges for building a “good government”*** is going to analyze the advantages and challenges posed in administrating the obligations of states and citizens in the digital era. Thereby, the article will also propose a number of solutions to govern the obligations of entities properly for building a transparent government.

**Keywords**: *Good governance, good government, obligation administration, digital age, executive, civic obligation**, single-rank government, smart city.*

# 1. Identify obligation administration in a digital age

## 1.1. Concepts and requirements of obligation administration in a digital age context

### 1.1.1. Concept

Good Governance, in the view of Worldbank, is understood as a *predictable, open, and transparent policy-making process; the professional* governance apparatus; the executive branch *responsible* for its activities; wholesome social organizations *participating in the public sectors*; behavior of all entities *complying with the standards* of the Rule of law State.[[1]](#footnote-1)

The modern governance concept is understood as *the establishment of rules for collective decision-making*, including agents or organizations, and there are no enforceable formal control systems which be able to arrange mandatorily the relationship between agents and organizations (if there is a mandatory arrangement which is the government, opposed to *governance* - *no one has a monopoly on decision-making*).[[2]](#footnote-2)

However, administration in general and State governance in particular, in the context of globalization, face many problems and global challenges that have direct, multifaceted and interconnected impacts on many aspects of national and social life. Globalization increases the instability of human security although society is more modern and developed[[3]](#footnote-3). The State must change to adapt to social changes in which one of the most important is interstate organizations, global organizations, and local governments can participate in global governance processes, also known as multilayered and trans-scalar *(Multi-layered and Trans - scalar)* governance.

From the characteristics of governance mentioned above, it can say that: For building a good government that requires bidirectional interactions: The Government must successfully carry out their governmental commitments with the society, and vice versa, besides the enjoyment of rights, individuals and organizations must perceive and perform their obligations to help the Government administrate the country effectively.

Based on the essence of governance, the concept of "obligation administration" used in the article is defined *as establishing policy, enacting the law, and controlling over the implementation of obligations (responsibilities) of State entities, citizens, and organizations*. Obligation administration is an important part of State governance.

The State obligations towards society are reflected in the responsibilities of State agencies and the obligations of civil servants and state employees in the course of performing their duties. Responsibilities of State agencies cover legislative, executive, and judicial fields. Under the executive perspective, governance of State obligations is the enactment of laws, organization of the implementation of the law, and supervision of the implementation of legal documents in administrative management.

### 1.1.2. Requirements

Along with governance, the term "good governance" is also being studied extensively, becoming the target of most countries. It can be understood that "good governance is a set of principles and criteria on social management to promote and ensure the harmonious and sustainable development of a country[[4]](#footnote-4)."

Nowadays, the industrial revolution 4.0 and the explosion of digital technology affect all the political - economic - social aspects extensively, and bring the world into the digital age. In this context, the characteristics of digital such as: unlimited, anytime-anywhere connectivity; instantaneous transmission speed; huge storage capacity (big data); surpassing computation and automation capacity, especially Artificial Intelligence (Artificial Intelligence - AI) with outstanding computing power, being able to learn, reason (analyze data to make accurate predictions) and self-correct ability… are drastically changing the way people interact with each other, the way of enjoying their rights, and performing their obligations. For good governance on obligation implementation of public power entities, it is necessary to determine the following basic principles of reasoning:

1. *Requirements of State obligation* *administration*

The principles that are often mentioned in good governance include: participation, equality, timely response, transparency, accountability, rule of law, consensus, effectiveness - efficiency. In the digital age, along with the remarkable advancement of technology, the inevitable requirement is that these principles must be raised to the optimal level. It means:

* All people must be equally involved in governance. The Government has policies to help citizens have the opportunity to access technology.
* Achieve complete transparency. In which, all information related to the implementation of Government obligations must be public to all people, and expressed in a complete, clear, and understandable manner. The Government is accountable for all its actions if it is requested.
* All processes and procedures are simple, flexible, and convenient to serve the citizen's requests. The Government must respond promptly to the very rapid changes in the digital age.
* Regardless of the era, the principles of the rule of law must be guaranteed. Policies and laws on performing obligations in the digital space must be fully and closely established. In which, the ownership and personal information of citizens are protected. Entities in digital space are managed within the legal framework.
* With the participation of multiform entities, to reach a consensus requires the Government to have the ability to devise a long-term and proper strategy for sustainable development in the future. This is extremely essential for governance in the digital age, with the rapid developments in science and technology.
* In the new governance model, in order to ensure the State's effectiveness, using hard power (military, police, courts, prisons, etc.), the State also has soft power which is shown in the prestige, capacity, efficiency, democracy, and justice of the public apparatus.
* In the digital age, it requires the State to take advantage of technology to optimize the efficiency of its governance. At the same time, efficiency also includes the use of human resources in a sustainable way.

1. *Requirements of civic obligation administration*

The goal of good governance is towards a developed, harmonious, and sustainable society. It is impossible to have a good society if people only enjoy rights without performing their obligations. Rights and obligations are two inseparable sides of the same coin. For every human being, their worth depends on their dedication. For a country, when the dedication of each human being is more than their enjoyment, the country prospers. Therefore, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of good governance, civic obligations need to be exalted over rights.

A good government is a government that can skillfully coordinate between the rights and obligations of citizens. In which, citizens are facilitated to perform their obligations maximum. Based on that, the article proposes the following requirements:

(i) Rights and obligations must be fully regulated by the state and popularized to citizens in a timely manner. Rights and obligations must be commensurate. It means, whoever has rights, has obligations. Where rights appear, obligations appear. Rights over any field come with obligations in that field. The Government must ensure and create conditions for citizens to fulfill their obligations in all fields.

(ii) The Government encourages people to fulfill their obligations of dedication by helping the community for the common good. For example: visiting the lonely and elderly, donating to aid the needy, etc.

(iii) The obligations of citizens must be highly moral and self-aware. Although morality is an invisible factor, it is the foundation for sustainable social development as the highest goal that good governance is aiming for.

## 1.2. Opportunities for obligation administration in the digital age

In the present era, it is impossible to achieve the goal of "good governance" without using digital. Along with the forcefully ongoing digitization process in all fields, the application of digital technology in State governance is not only an indispensable need but also opening up unprecedented opportunities. Digital is a pivotal instrument for the Government to improve capacity, management efficiency, and increase transparency and responsibility in its operations. At the same time, it is also an instrument to support citizens to fulfill their obligations effectively. In the field of governance, these technologies can be applied to things such as:

- Reducing stratification, minimizing the cumbersome management apparatus, and being able to move to the single-rank government model. Thereby, it helps increase transparency, reduce corruption, and optimize operational efficiency.

- Narrowing the gap between the Government and citizens. Citizens can interact directly to the Government through online portals. Thereby, it helps increase democracy, and promotes residents’ participation in governance.

- IoT in combination with instant transmission capability and automation technology can be applied in the management, monitoring and control of real-time systems. Some systems such as urban infrastructure management systems (railway tracks, wastewater treatment systems, lighting systems, security camera systems, etc.), transportation systems (including signal lights, automatic parking, electronic toll booths, vehicle journey monitoring, traffic congestion control, etc.), environmental management, response in emergency situations, etc. This is the foundation for building smart cities in the future.

## 1.3. Challenges for obligation administration in the context of IT boom

- Infrastructure and resources: they are common challenges for state governance in most countries. Infrastructure for governance in the digital era requires a huge financial investment. In addition, the appropriate technology and process must be selected. The government must also have sufficient technical and management capacities to master advanced technologies. Ensuring the confidentiality and safety of data in digital space is of paramount importance to the country.

- From the perspective of residents: it is about the perception and attitude of using technology in obligation administration. For example, residents may be concerned about ensuring freedom, and confidentiality of information, etc. A majority of inhabitants in developing countries do not yet have access to and lack the skills to use digital technology. The people’s awareness of self-discipline, compliance and active participation is not yet high.

- The large participation of all sectors of residents in governance will help to collect opinions, but will also create many conflicting views, requiring more time to reach a consensus. Moreover, in many countries, a majority of residents still do not have enough political knowledge and skills, and it is prone to overreaction and sentiment towards issues, etc. Thus it requires the Government to have a very skillful manner of management and leadership.

- Issue of cybersecurity: connecting and communicating in the digital age is too easy and fast. This poses the challenge of having control over information sources. Do not allow disturbed, false or decadent information to be transmitted. In particular, do not let bad forces have the opportunity for destructive propaganda.

However, this solution faces the biggest challenge of legal institutions: it has not been regulated specifically in the current laws of Vietnam.[[5]](#footnote-5) In order for the strategies of building digital government to be put into practice, reforming the current legal system to be compatible with the digital government is a huge challenge. According to Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc at the *National Scientific Workshop on the Fourth Industrial Revolution and legal issues*, ministries and agencies should focus on reviewing and proposing a pilot legal framework for state administration to ensure political security, financial security, and macroeconomic stability.[[6]](#footnote-6)

# 2. The reality of the State obligation administration and civic obligation administration in Vietnam

## 2.1. The reality of State obligation administration to meet the requirements of a good government

Resolution No. 18-NQ/TW of the Communist Party determined that: The organizational structures of the political system are still cumbersome; and, the operational effectiveness and efficiency have not met the requirements and duties. The functions and missions of some state agencies are still unclear, overlapping, and duplicate, etc. Facing these actual situations, the Vietnamese government has actively absorbed new governance modalities in both private and state sectors in accordance with domestic conditions; thereby reforms current governance practices according to international governance standards[[7]](#footnote-7).

### 2.1.1. Institution of state obligation establishment to meet the requirements of building government

In recent years, administrative reforms, improving the effectiveness and efficiency of state management, have been implemented in Vietnam, which brings significant changes in state institutions and aspects of state governance[[8]](#footnote-8). Transparency-oriented institutions associated with accountability are gradually being finalized in order to establish state obligations to meet the requirements of government construction, specifically:

1. *Public and transparent institutions*

In fact, a series of legal documents have recognized and demonstrated the requirements of transparency in government operations, including the 2013 Constitution, the 2013 Land Law; the 2014 Housing Law; the 2014 Public Investment Law, etc. In particular, efforts towards transparency are most concentrated in the two laws, the Law on Access to Information and the Law on Anti-Corruption[[9]](#footnote-9). As the Law on Access to Information stipulates that state agencies have the responsibility to: "*provide the information they create*" (Article 9); The Law on Anti-Corruption states that agencies, organizations, and units must: "*Be public and transparent for information about the organizations and operation of their agencies, organizations, and units*" (Article 9).

1. *Institutions of accountability*

Being recognized in legal documents, sub-law documents, and other documents, specifically: the Law on Handling of Administrative Violations stipulates that the accountability is that the violating individuals or organizations are allowed to "*give opinions and evidence to defend their rights and legitimate interests*” (Article 61); The Law on Inspection also states that: The subject of inspection has the following rights: "*to explain matters related to the inspection contents*" (Article 53), etc. The activity of "accountability" is done separately, considered as an act of any party in the relationship (State or individual), and to give opinions to demonstrate the correctness and legality in their actions.

Separate regulations on accountability are specified in Decree No. 90/2013/NĐ-CP dated August 8, 2013, of the Government stipulating the accountability of state agencies in performing duties, powers assigned (concretized by Circular No. 02/2014/TT-TTCP dated April 29, 2014, of the Government Inspectorate detailing and guiding the implementation of a number of articles of Decree No. 90/2013/NĐ-CP)[[10]](#footnote-10).

### 2.1.2. The reality of performing state obligations in current conditions

1. *Transparency and the prevention of corruption*

In Vietnam, in recent years transparency started to be approached as a criterion for state governance. The State has specifically accelerated the announcement to citizens via documents, implementing the transparency of a democratic system, restructuring the inspection and examination conduct, and increasing advisory services.

However, chances to get access to the information, which is the key for citizens to raise their voice, are limited. Information and data about activities of the public sector are hard to reach, even in circumstances that require openness[[11]](#footnote-11). Resolution No. 18-NQ/TW of the central executive committee stated that the openness, transparency, and accountability of the administration system are still limited.

On January 23, 2020, Transparency International (TI) announced the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of 2019. Vietnam is still among the countries (which accounts for two-thirds of the total countries and territories) receiving below 50/100 points. This implies that corruption in the public sector in Vietnam is still a significant issue[[12]](#footnote-12).

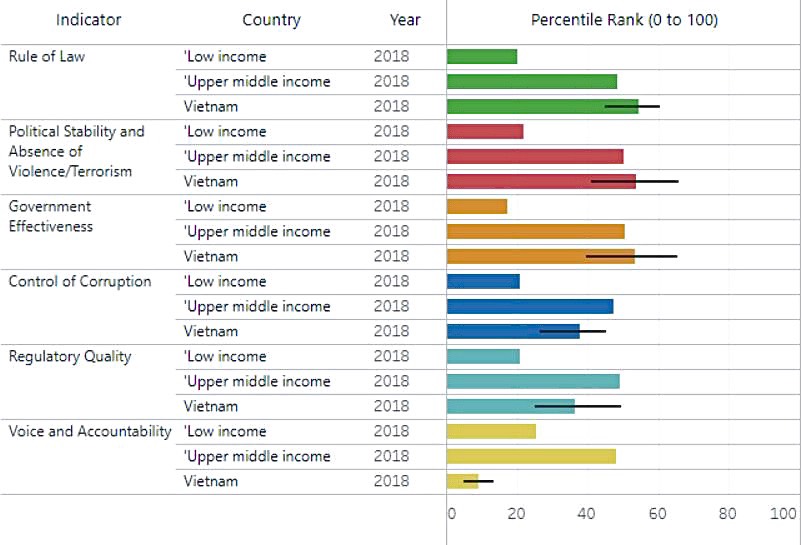
On April 20, 2019, the Government Inspectorate reported the appraisal of provincial prevention and elimination of corruption in 2018. The report showed that provincial prevention and elimination of corruption only reached approximately 60% of the requirement. Especially, the index of openness and transparency in the officers’ activities proved to be the worst, reaching only 1.046/ 1.5 (69.73%) compared to the requirement[[13]](#footnote-13).

Without strong measures to prevent and punish corrupt conduct, this issue will cause many serious consequences on all the aspects of the economy and society, undermining the citizens’ confidence in the Party and the State.

1. *Citizens’ participation*

The Government enacted Decree No. 29/1998/NĐ-CP, stating that the local authorities need to survey the locals’ opinions openly, and defining specific tasks that citizens have the right to decide in their region. Citizens can participate in building policies and laws through authorized representatives (The Congress, People’s Councils), other political-social organizations that they participate in, or media channels. Besides, citizens can directly participate in the national decision when there is a national referendum, and directly get involved in resolving local issues in accordance with the laws[[14]](#footnote-14).

In practice, however, the people’s participation in governance is very limited. We can refer to the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI).



*Worldwide Governance Indicators (2018) (Source:* [*www.govindicators.org*](about:blank)*)*

According to the WGI 2018, the Voice and Accountability of Vietnam saw the lowest index, significantly lower than this index of other low-income countries. These comparisons indicate the aspects of governance quality that Vietnam needs to focus on if they wish to accelerate the country’s development.

1. *Accountability*

In 2013, the Government also issued Decree No. 90/2013/NĐ-CP regulating the accountability of State agencies in implementing assigned tasks and powers.

However, in the “*Vietnam 2035 Report*” produced by the World Bank and the Ministry of Planning and Investment of Vietnam, it is believed that accountability is the weakest point of the Vietnam government. Voice and Accountability Index of Vietnam is still among the ten lowest countries and compared to other countries, this ranking has seen a decreasing trend since 1996[[15]](#footnote-15).

## Currently, the government is testing several solutions to improve the credibility of the state apparatus with the citizens. It is expected to create a new operating mechanism in which the state apparatus’ accountability at all levels is improved.

## 2.2. The reality of civic obligation administration

### 2.2.1. Legal institutions on civic obligations

Civic obligations are contained in the Constitution, laws, other by-law documents, collectively referred to as the legal institution of Civic obligations.

Specifically, according to the 2013 Vietnam Constitution, citizens have the following basic obligations: protecting the Fatherland, military obligation (Article 45), complying with the constitution and law (Article 46), paying taxes (Article 47), studying (Article 39), and obligations to environmental protection (Article 43), etc.

In addition, the obligations of citizenship are stipulated in many legal documents such as: the obligation to register the place of residence of the citizens (Clause 4, Article 4 of the Law on Residence 2006), environmental protection obligations (Clause 1, Article 4 of the Law on Environmental Protection 2014), obligations of employees (Clause 2, Article 5 of the Labor Code 2019), obligations of employers (Clause 2, Article 6 of the Labor Code 2019), obligations of enterprises (Article 8 of the Law on Enterprises 2020), obligations of citizens in accessing information (Clause 2, Article 8 of the Law on accessing information), etc.

### 2.2.2. The Reality of performing civic obligations in the current information technology development conditions

In the rapid current development of information technology, the fulfillment of citizens' obligations becomes very convenient, quick and inexpensive such as electronic tax registration, declaration, payment, settlement, and refund, electronic tax invoice[[16]](#footnote-16); military obligation registration; declaring residential address; notifying the authorities when detecting criminal signs[[17]](#footnote-17); protecting the environment[[18]](#footnote-18), etc.

In addition, modern information technology also strengthens civic participation in order to enhance their sense of responsibility to the community such as: expressing their opinions and aspirations on the country's affairs; creating a positive link, a sense of community among people and between people and the state; making public policy highly practical, limiting group interests[[19]](#footnote-19); taking the initiative to share legal regulations and spreading ethical views to each other; supporting the difficult and disadvantaged people in society; and, actively updating a lot of useful information for the community and public policymakers.

However, in reality, the fulfillment of citizens' obligations and the State’s civic obligation administration still have some problems that need to be adjusted.

1. *Obligations to declare residency of citizens*

Citizens tend to avoid their duty to report their residency, making it difficult for authorities to know the actual number of residents in their area. There are several reasons for this:

Cumbersome and expensive procedures of residence management through household registration books and temporary residence books; people are constantly moving because of the demand for jobs; students moving to city for school; sightseeing tourism thanks to convenient transportation, houses and real estate in many different places; Vietnamese citizens taking business trips abroad very often; and, homeless people with no permanent residence[[20]](#footnote-20), etc.

The speed of such rapid and complicated residence changes requires state management agencies to apply the advancement of science and technology to give citizens a more flexible and accurate residence registration.

When technology is used to declare residency[[21]](#footnote-21), the citizens’ obligation to declare residency is easy, quick, and accurate. The citizen is then only obligated not to use private technology to conceal his residence address. This will place requirements on the protection of an individual’s privacy.

1. *Obligations to protect the environment*

Currently,citizens' performance of environmental protection obligations is not really good, especially their awareness of not littering indiscriminately, thus causing serious damages to the environment, socio-economic damages; and seriously affecting human health[[22]](#footnote-22).

In addition, noise pollution is still a significant social issue. Making loud noises that affect the surrounding people is still a big concern; and, many cases have happened related to this issue[[23]](#footnote-23).

1. *Military service*

According to Clause 2, Article 37 of the 2013 Constitution, young people must "take the initiative in creative labor and the country’s protection." However, while many young men volunteer to enlist in the military, some still find ways to avoid joining [[24]](#footnote-24).

1. *Tax obligations*

The State's promotion of technology application in tax administration has contributed to saving time and costs in fulfilling individuals' and businesses' financial obligations. However, taxpayers are still wary of online tax payments for many reasons. In addition, tax evasion and fraud are still very complicated and sophisticated[[25]](#footnote-25); and, incorrect tax refunds are still happening[[26]](#footnote-26).

1. *The obligations of enterprises*

Enterprises are always offered the most favorable legal corridor to do business - to make products, create jobs, and contribute to national finance. Therefore, in addition to enjoying the incentives, companies also have to fulfill their obligations under the law: environmental protection, tax payment, provision of high-quality products, ethics, and business ethics to meet the legitimate rights and interests of employees, etc.[[27]](#footnote-27)

However, some obligations are still violated, especially environmental protection obligations. Many businesses or projects have polluted or posed a risk of severe environmental pollution.[[28]](#footnote-28)

1. *Other obligations*

There are many civic obligations that we can infer from the rights of people and citizens, although they are not specified in the Constitution, such as:

Because "*everyone has the right to freedom of religion*" (Article 24 of the 2013 Constitution), therefore they must build their religions into a source of morality (not a threat) for society.

Everyone has the right to freedom of speech (Article 25 of the 2013 Constitution). At the same time, everyone is also obliged to be ethical in terms of their speech. This means we must say things that have constructive and educational quality.

“*Everyone has the right to enjoy and access cultural values*” (Article 41 of the 2013 Constitution), and at the same time, they must also have the obligation to use together technology to create and introduce cultural and artistic works which have truth - goodness - natural beauty and are suitable to aspects of the national culture.

# 3. Recommendations to increase the efficiency of obligation administration in the digital environment to meet the requirements of building good government and anti-corruption

## 3.1. Pilot a model of establishing digital government toward the single-rank government

Faced with the development of Industry 4.0 and digital technology, on June 3, 2020, the Prime Minister approved the "National Digital Transformation Program to 2025, with an orientation to 2030" with Decision No. 749[[29]](#footnote-29). This created a premise for the process of building a model of digital government moving to a single-rank government.

### 3.1.1. Solution Description

With the direct connection between citizens and digital government which is in the process of moving to a single-rank government, there will be a lot of reduction of unnecessary intermediaries, creating transparency of the State and convenience for people.

1. *Building a single-rank administrative office model*

With the advent of digital government towards the single-rank government, we will have a complete digital government law replacing the 2015 Law on Organizing the Government and the 2015 Law on Organizing the Local Government, creating a legal corridor for a digital government to operate. This is a law regulating the structure, principles of organization and operation of digital government; duties and powers of digital government and members of the government.

The digital government operates a system to digitize the national databases to manage and change the mode of direction and administration, basing on transferring information and data from paper documents to digital data.

The state management apparatus becomes a single-rankgovernment, in which the Central Office functions as an executive switchboard to manage all activities of representative offices in all provinces of the country. Administrative agencies at all levels are transformed into representative offices in each locality. From this feature, the Government can set up a network to operate throughout the national territory.

Each citizen is provided with an ID card that has a GPS locator and contains a lifetime identification number. Based on the Draft Law on Residence (amended), Law on Citizen Identity 2014, Circular 07/2016/TT-BCA, February 1, 2016, the information in that identification number is stored in the database of the National Data on Population which includes 22 contents, including all information about an individual from birth to death.

This ID card also integrates many other functions such as payment of bills, medical examination, shopping, many other utilities. At the same time, it is seen as a tool to connect citizens with the Central Government and as a tool for the state to manage citizens.

When detecting cases that are unregistered residency, the residential management system will send notices to citizens and inform local management staff. At the same time, citizens will have limited privileges when moving to a new residence.

In order to save time and money for the people, the Digital Government establishes a National Public Service Portal, integrating essential public services in administrative procedures, health and residence declarations, complaints and denunciations, and financial obligations. This form of online transactions helps create a transparent and open digital government, avoiding public harassment, embezzlement, and corruption. In cases a citizen does not make online transactions with the Government, he can go directly to the representative office in the nearest place.

In the field of state administration, AI application is an optimal solution for things such as:

- Automating and optimizing administrative processes and procedures in all public services. Providing online public services in which AI can be used to check the reasonableness, detect errors and violations in all public services. The application of Virtual assistants is to help answer questions and provide information for citizens. Using Big Data aims to collect and manage all detailed information related to individual citizens. Thus, it creates convenience and satisfaction for residents, and the same time, completely eliminating bureaucracy and authoritarianism.

- Supporting the Government to make decisions. With the ability to synthesize and analyze huge data sources, AI helps to identify problems in many aspects, show advantages and disadvantages, predict trends, suggest solutions, etc. AI has truly become an effective right-hand for the Government in making important decisive policies. Thereby, it contributes to creating a very high efficiency in state governance.

1. *Management and security of citizens' personal information*

All information such as education, health, residence, employment, marriage, etc. of the citizens from birth to death is updated, stored and gradually improved on a server system, contributing effectively to residential management.

The national database system on population is managed, used and exploited in accordance with security and guarantee of citizens' personal privacy rights.

Each case of data collection requires prior approval and license from the Central Office. Each history of access to personal data is saved with date, time, location, visitor information for individuals to know, and for the Government to manage.

Ministries and agencies shall manage each individual's information according to their management functions. If a citizen changes his place of residence, the involved ministries shall send him a notification, for example, to advise him not to go because of an epidemic in his destination, or to advise him what to bring. It is strict management but with friendly interaction between the people and the State. Citizens have obligation to report his place of residence to the State and are protected and taken care of by the State.

1. *Reality and challenges*

According to data up to February 2020 of the General Statistics Office - Ministry of Planning and Investment, our country has 63 administrative units at the provincial level, 707 at the district level, and 10,614 at the commune level. Thus, the number of representative government offices can be more than 10,000 units that are present all over the country.

In the discussion at the conference hall on the amended Law on Residence project on the afternoon of 16 June 2020, Minister of Public Security To Lam said that the Ministry of Public Security has completed granting citizenship identification and personal identification numbers for more than 16 million citizens. About 80 million citizens have not been granted, of which 50 million need citizenship identification; with rest being under 14 years old. The Ministry of Public Security shall be able to complete this task in one year, by 1 July 2021, when the law takes effect [[30]](#footnote-30). However, it is a difficult task to implement chip-based identity cards and personal identification numbers.

Digital government staff needs to be professionally trained on network administration and to master digital devices. They must be qualified and professional to operate a Digital Government's digital management system.

Digital technology helps the connection between the people and the Government Office to be quick, convenient, and transparent. However, it is for information exchange only. It cannot deal with tasks that need handling specifically. These tasks must be handled by traditional functional forces such as the Ministry of Public Security, the courts, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment, the Ministry of Transport. However, digital technology will help to increase productivity many times. For example, for driving tests, an automatic scoring system has ended proctors' intervention, removing the risk of their being bribed and their emotions. Machinery is cold but also pure*.*

Cyber information security is a matter of survival for a Digital Government. Therefore, the Digital Government invests in a network security system for the absolute security of the national database.

As for remote mountainous areas of sparse population, which are not yet connected to the national electricity grid and which have difficult terrains, we shall apply a Digital Government divided into stages and set out the finishing stages for motivation.

### 3.1.2. Legal issues to be dealt with: Constitutional provisions and the provisions on Law on Organizing the Local Government

Aiming at a Digital Government model and then a single-rank Government requires considerable changes in legal provisions. The legal issues to be handled are proposed as follows:

* Replacing the 2015 Law on Organizing the Government and the 2015 Law on Organizing The Local Government by the Law of the Digital Government, regulating the positions, authorities, and operating principles of the single-rank central Government and its Representative Offices of the Central Government. In addition, there need to be specific regulations on the professional qualifications of State employees to meet the requirements of a Digital Government.
* Supplement the principle of online voting through the National Election Portal in Article 7, Constitution 2013 and the Law on the Election of the Deputies to the National Assembly and People’s Councils 2015. Besides, the Law on Election should be supplemented with detailed provisions on the organization of electronic elections, on voting activities, on voter registration deadlines, on filing, and on election results announcement.
* Adding to *Chapter II, 2013 Constitution the regulations on Citizen’s obligations* in digital Government, citizens are under obligations on building, complying with laws, and giving moral opinions to cyberspace; and to notify criminal signs on the network to the appropriate authority when detected. Adding to *Article 18, Law on CyberSecurity 2018 on prevention of and combatting the use of cyberspace, information technology and electronic media in order to breach the law on national security, social order and safety*, regulates laws on not allowing for spreading evil things on the network, and not propagating wicked things.
* Supplement Article 23 of the 2013 Constitution and Article 10 of the Draft Law on Residence (amended) with the obligation of citizens to declare their places of residence to the authorities. They are prohibited from using techniques to conceal their places of residence. Penalties shall be included for offenses, and restrictions shall be applied on the rights of one who does not declare his place of residence or does it late.
* Supplement Clause 2, Article 33 of the Draft Law on Residence (amended) with the regulation on the Central Office's implementation of State management of residence and responsibility for confidentiality, management, and provision of citizens' personal information, and the regulation on the level and authority to access citizens' personal information of each ministry and agency.

## 3.2. Building smart cities

1. *Building smart cities is a global trend in the digital age*

In recent decades, based on the scientific and technological achievements of the industrial revolution 4.0, building smart cities has become an indispensable development trend for cities, especially with major cities in the world as well as in Vietnam. According to the latest statistics given in the report, Smart Cities Project Database - Q2, 2020 of the market research firm Navigant Research, by the second quarter of 2020, more than 1,400 cities in the world are planning to develop into a smart city.

In Vietnam, the Party and State determine that smart cities will be an inevitable trend. Therefore, Vietnam has issued many guiding documents to direct closely.

On August 1, 2018, the Prime Minister continued to issue Decision No. 950/2018/QĐ-TTg “Decision approving the project of sustainable smart urban development in Vietnam for the period of 2018 - 2025 and orientations towards the year 2030 ”. This is an important legal document for provinces and cities to build smart urban development projects in their localities.

According to the Ministry of Construction's report, as of July 2020, 38/63 provinces and cities directly under the Central Government have been or are developing smart urban development projects[[31]](#footnote-31).

1. *Smart cities help increase efficiency in managing obligations in a digital environment*

In order that the construction of smart cities truly become an effective solution to improve the efficiency of obligation governance in a digital environment, urban governments need to focus on two important criteria: providing online public services efficiently and creating favorable conditions for people to participate in urban governance.

1. *Providing efficient online public services*

Nowadays, with strong support from IT, smart cities must focus on providing public services seamlessly and uninterruptedly in the online environment. Simultaneously, the monitoring of public administrative services must be done automatically by applying automatic data analysis technology. Machine learning technology will check immediately when civil servants and state-employees have interactive activities with people, enterprises for public administrative services, thereby promptly identifying and immediately warning about possible violations during the handling of public service records and implementation of remedial plans. From there, the management agencies evaluate according to the criteria of Key Performance Indicator (KPI) and score public administrative centers. In addition, the online public service also provides tools to track progress, log records, record all contents of communications and electronic transactions to help individuals and enterprises directly monitor and supervise their profiles, accordingly creating a tool to monitor the deployment of public services by state agencies. Additionally, the camera system connected to the public administration centers will supervise the center's activities through images. All of the above tools are deployed synchronously to avoid corruption and troubles; increasing the publicity, transparency and efficiency of administrative procedures to better the governance process.

1. *Creating favorable conditions for people to participate in urban governance*

In smart city governance, the people's participation and contribution play a very important role. When building a smart city, the government needs to create a diverse and conveniently-connected environment for people to feedback and make recommendations on all aspects of social life. The more people provide information, the more precisely the obtained information reflects the reality of the city. Thanks to the feedback and supervision of the people, in combination with the data collected from the observation system and the sensor, competent agencies and units can grasp and handle situations quickly and accurately. Senior leaders of the urban government can also monitor, command, receive multimedia information and emergency information as well as expand the scope of management to the ward and commune levels, enhance coordination between units, have more insights on the performance of the subordinates. The entire work of handling feedback must be made public so that people can monitor, interact and evaluate the level of satisfaction with the results of each agency's response. The reflected processing results also need to be summarized, evaluated and included in the emulation criteria of each individual and unit. When these things are done well, it is clear that transparency, timeliness, effectiveness and efficiency in urban governance are significantly enhanced, increasingly meeting the requirements of building a good government, and combating corruption and waste.

Moreover, through diversified and conveniently-connected channels, people have favorable conditions to fulfill the obligation to protect the country, protect national security, social order and safety, and environment, etc. by providing real and instant information about crime situation, security order, environment and so forth in specific parts of urban areas. Each citizen is comparable to a mobile camera which provides information useful for the urban government to promptly detect and handle violations of the law, ensuring security and order in the area and contributing to the maintenance of the national defense.

# Conclusion

This article has outlined the requirements on obligation administration of State and citizen in the digital age. In particular, the requirement of obligation administration of State is based on the fundamental knowledge of "good governance", which is further developed to suit the conditions of digital technology. The requirement for the governance of citizen obligations is a new step based on the correlation between State and civic obligations, between the rights of enjoyment and the obligation to contribute.

In addition, this article also gives an objective assessment of the governance situation of State and civic obligations in Vietnam. The article judges that the administration of obligations in Vietnam still has certain limitations. However, the Government has been actively adopting new governance modalities to suit the situation of Vietnam and increasingly meet international administration standards.

In the last part, this article proposes solutions to improve the efficiency of obligation administration, towards successfully building a good Government. In which, clearly starting the necessary conditions and challenges when applying the above models. These solutions are also suggestions for the Government to have a specific pathway to take the next steady steps, and ultimately achieve the goal of a developed, stable, harmonious, and sustainable society in the future.

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