

## Improving Public Administration Reform Index to Improve Efficiency of Public Administration Reform in Kien Giang Province

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**Abstract:** Determining the public administration reform index (PAR INDEX) is an important job to assess in a substantive, objective, and fair way the performance of administrative reform tasks, and at the same time, clearly indicate strengths and weaknesses. In performing administrative reform tasks in the locality, on that basis, necessary adjustments are made to the objectives, contents, and solutions to overcome each year, contributing to improving the effectiveness of administrative reform, and building the organizational system that is clean, strong, effective, and efficient. This study focuses on clarifying the issues of the public administration reform index; the status of the public administration reform index of Kien Giang province; from there, it proposes solutions to improve the efficiency of the public administration reform in Kien Giang province in the coming time.

**Keywords:** Administrative reform, PAR INDEX, work efficiency, Kien Giang province.

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## INTRODUCTION

The public administration reform index (PAR INDEX), the index of satisfaction of organizations and individuals about the service of state administrative agencies (SIPAS), and the provincial-level public administration and governance performance index (PAPI) are very important indicators in assessing the effectiveness, professionalism, publicity, and transparency in the management and administration of the provincial-level State administrative apparatus serving the people, the community, and the public business community. At the same time, it shows the openness in the business environment and the creative dynamism of the local leadership team, which is the basis for attracting domestic and foreign investors.

PAR INDEX is the annual evaluation of the State administrative agencies themselves in performing the tasks of administrative reform and the people's assessment of the State administrative

agencies in providing administrative services, and public service delivery, which is people's satisfaction with administrative services (SIPAS); PAPI is an index based on people's experiences and evaluations when interacting with local governments at all levels in terms of their capacity to administer, manage the State, implement policies, and provide public services. It can be seen that the PAR INDEX, SIPAS, and PAPI indexes are the "mirrors" that most clearly reflect the consulting, operation management, coordination, and direction of PAR (administrative reform) reflects the exact "perspective" of the people towards the administrative reform of a locality.

In this article we focus on the following topics:

First, an overview of the public administration reform index (PAR INDEX).

Second, assess the status of the index: PAR INDEX of Kien Giang province.

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Third, propose solutions to improve the above indicators to improve the efficiency of administrative reform in the coming time.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### The Concept of Administrative Reform

From an administrative point of view, the study of the term administrative reform must first start with the concept of "reform". Reform means "modifying the old parts that are not reasonable for the new city, meeting the requirements of the objective situation"; or "the radical modification of each part and each aspect of social life in the direction of progress without touching the foundation of the current social system" (Bao, 2008). On the basis of the reform concept, many concepts of administrative reform have been proposed as follows:

Reform is also considered "a solution to the requirements of practice with clear objectives, specific programs, and requirements to be completed within a certain time" (Bao, 2008). Administrative reform can be understood as a fundamental, long-term, and continuous process of change, including the structure of executive power and all conscious activities of the state apparatus in order to achieve cooperation between departments and individuals for the common purpose of the community and to coordinate resources to create effective and efficient management and quality of products (services or goods) serving the people through ways of organizing and exercising power. Understood in this sense, administrative reforms are changes intentionally designed to fundamentally improve the stages in the management of the state apparatus from planning; institutional setting; organization; staff work; finance; command; combination; check; information; and evaluation.

Some other authors emphasized improving efficiency, improving old administrative systems and methods, and building new ones. They believe that: Administrative reform is a long-term and continuous process in order to improve administrative efficiency, improve old administrative regimes and methods, and build new administrative regimes and methods within the scope of management. of the system of agencies that exercise executive power as well as all conscious activities of the state apparatus (Ha, 2002).

When delving into the content of administrative reform, some authors believe that: Administrative reform refers to changes in the entire public administration system, it includes the entire

reorganization of public administrations. ministries, defining tasks and functions of administrative units, improving methods and procedures, training staff, etc.; improving coordination at higher levels of government. Any improvement of the structure, procedures, capacity, and motivation of officials with the aim of improving the organizational and managerial capacity of public organizations is also considered administrative reform in this sense.

In the Dictionary of Administrative Terms: "Administrative reform is a system of guidelines and measures to make fundamental and systematic changes and improvements to the state administration (also known as the foundation of the state administrative system). public administration, national administration) in terms of Institution, organizational structure, operating mechanism, civil service regime, civil servant regulation, capacity, qualifications and service quality of the team civil servants working in that apparatus" (Khe & Nhon, 2002).

Administrative reform is a planned change, according to a certain goal, as determined by the competent state agency (Thuy, 2013). Administrative reform does not change the nature of the administrative system, but only makes it more efficient, serving the people better; State management institutions are more synchronous, feasible, and come to life; the operation mechanism, functions, and tasks of the apparatus, the quality of administrative staff and civil servants more effectively and efficiently, meeting the requirements of socio-economic management of a country (Trung, 2019).

From the concepts and views from many different angles, it can be summed up as follows: Administrative reform is a process of change with a specific plan to achieve the goal of perfecting one or several contents of the administrative system. state administration (institution, organizational structure, operating mechanism, standardization of cadres and civil servants, etc.) in order to build a public administration that meets the requirements of an effective administration, efficient and modern.

### Public Administration Reform Index (PAR Index)

PAR INDEX: This is an administrative reform index, an important tool to monitor and evaluate administrative reform activities (administrative reform) issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs in Decision No. 1294/QĐ-BNV dated December 3, 2012, on approving the Project "Determining the PAR index of ministries, ministerial-level agencies, People's Committees of provinces and centrally-run cities" with the objective: Determining the Index administrative

reform to monitor and evaluate in a substantive, objective and fair manner the annual administrative reform results of ministries, ministerial-level agencies, People's Committees of provinces and centrally run cities. during the implementation of the Master Program on State Administrative Reform for the period 2011-2020.

The PAR INDEX consists of the agency's internal assessment (with an appraisal by the Central Appraisal Council) and the external assessment of the people.

The contents of the Index are identified in 8 areas, including Administrative reform direction and administration; Formulate and organizing the implementation of legal documents; Administrative reform; Organizational reform of the state administrative apparatus; Building and improving the quality of civil servants and public servants; Renovating the financial mechanism for administrative agencies and public non-business units; Modernize the administrative background; Implement one-stop mechanism, one-stop mechanism. The total score of the PAR Index is 100 points with the following assessment method: through local self-scoring results (internal assessment) with a maximum score of 62/100 points and sociological survey results. (external assessment) with a maximum score of 38/100 points.

On December 30, 2019, the Minister of Home Affairs issued Decision No. 1150/QD-BNV approving the Project "Determining the PAR index of ministries, ministerial-level agencies, People's Committees conscious; Accordingly, the set of criteria for determining the Provincial PAR Index is structured into 08 assessment areas, 43 criteria, 95 component criteria. (applicable to 2020). On December 30, 2020, it was replaced by Decision No. 1149/QD-BNV, 08 evaluation areas, 43 criteria, 102 component criteria) applied for 2021 - With an evaluation scale of 100 points, of which: 33.50/100 points is the score through the sociological survey; 66.50 self-assessment points. The Ministry of Home Affairs re- evaluated.

## **RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Assessment of the Current Situation of the PAR INDEX Index of Kien Giang Province**

#### ***Some Results Achieved***

Right at the end of 2020, the People's Committee of Kien Giang province focused on directing the concretization and timely issuance of documents, directing the implementation of administrative reform tasks in 2021 of the Government and the Ministry of Home Affairs. , and at the same time organize thorough implementation

to branches and localities in order to raise the sense of responsibility of heads of departments, branches, and localities in organizing the implementation of administrative reform tasks. Kien Giang Province has established a Steering Committee to improve and enhance the Indicators: PCI, PAR INDEX, PAPI, SIPAS; promulgating Plan No. 174/KH-People's Committee on September 20, 2021, on improving and enhancing Indicators: PCI, PAR INDEX, PAPI, SIPAS; promulgating the Plan on improving the quality and efficiency of administrative reform for the period 2021-2025 according to Resolution No. 76/NQ-CP dated July 15, 2021, of the Government and Directive No. 23/CT-TTg dated September 2, 2021, of the Prime Minister on the implementation of the State Administration Reform Master Program for the period of 2021-2030; promulgate a set of criteria for evaluating and grading administrative reform of the province close to the set of criteria of the Ministry of Home Affairs and suitable to the actual situation of the province; promulgating and guiding the grading of administrative reform for departments and branches; People's Committees of districts and communes.

The inspection of administrative reform for departments, branches, and localities is interesting in implementing according to the plan. In 2021, due to the impact of the Covid-19 epidemic, in line with the actual situation of the situation, in addition to the departments, branches, and localities that are conducting direct inspection as planned, the province will do this for the first time. The inspection through self-inspection reports of some units (Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Tourism, Department of Health).

Information and communication on administrative reform continue to receive attention and direction, especially propaganda on indicators: PCI, PAR INDEX, PAPI, SIPAS (by the Center for Investment and Trade Promotion. and Provincial Tourism shall assume the prime responsibility for, and coordinate with the Department of Home Affairs and the provincial Vietnam Fatherland Front Committee in, conducting propaganda in a number of districts and cities in the province); implementation of e-government, digital government, implementation of digital transformation; arrange and consolidate the organizational apparatus, functions, and tasks of specialized agencies under the People's Committee of the province, the People's Committee of the district; decentralize recruitment, use and manage cadres, civil servants and public employees according to regulations.

Coordinating with the Ministry of Home Affairs to organize the first sociological survey of the survey subjects who are delegates of the Provincial People's Council; leaders, departmental-level managers, departmental-level management leaders; Leaders of the district-level People's Committees to serve the determination of the administrative reform expenditures for 2021 are carried out on software, through the receipt of online electronic surveys via official mail, and sent to each subject. Surveyed subjects, surveyed subjects have more awareness and responsibility in filling out the sociological questionnaire, showing more objectivity and accuracy than before.

In general, the administrative reform score of the state has increased by 2.06 points compared to 2020, and some component criteria are interested in directing and there is an improvement in scores and rankings such as there are 02 areas of increase in score and rank increase: (1) Building and organizing the implementation of legal documents (increasing 0.42 points, ranking 14/63 and increasing 28 ranks compared to the year); (2) Reform of organizational apparatus (increased 0.69 points, ranked 04/63 provinces and cities and increased 29 ranks); (3) Building and improving the quality of cadres, civil servants and public employees (increasing 0.95 points, ranking 43/63 provinces and cities, increasing 14 ranks).

### **Limited Existences**

Although the Provincial People's Committee has made great efforts and focused on leading and directing sectors and localities to have solutions to improve and raise the province's PAR INDEX in 2021, however, the PAR INDEX of the province in 2021. The province has not improved in ranking and has been downgraded for 2 consecutive years and is in the ranking position and group with a low index compared to the whole country, according to which:

Some areas of the PAR INDEX Index have not improved in points and rankings compared to 2020: (i) Leadership and management (ranked 63/63 provinces and cities, equal to 2020); (ii) Administrative procedure reform (ranked 54/63, down 43 ranks compared to 2020); (iii) Public finance reform (ranked 61/63, down 14 places).

There are 02 areas that have increased but decreased in rank: (1) Modernizing the administrative system (ranked 57/63 provinces and cities, down 02 ranks); (2) Impact of administrative reform on the implementation of socio-economic development indicators of the province (ranked 55/63, down 11 ranks compared to 2020).

The Satisfaction Index (SIPAS) shows the level of satisfaction of people, organizations, and businesses with the province's service provision in 2021, although it increased by 1 level (from group 4 to group 3), but still at a low ranking position compared to the whole country (ranked 58/63, equal to 2020).

Due to the severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the results of many expenditures were affected, and the component criteria in this field failed to meet such as the level of enterprise development in the province; provincial budget revenues (Khuyen & Van, 2022); the rate of increase of gross domestic product (GRDP) of the province and the level of implementation of socio-economic development expenditures assigned by the provincial People's Council; gain points.

Determining the PAR Index directed by the Ministry of Home Affairs from 2012 to the present. Accordingly, Kien Giang province was ranked 48th (in 2012), 33rd (in 2013), 26th (in 2014), 50th (in 2015), 46th (in 2016), 47th (in 2017), 45th (in 2018), 54th (in 2019), 61st (in 2020) and 63rd in 2021, and ranked in group C (classified into 3 groups: Group A achieves 90% or more group B achieves 80 % - less than 90% and group c from 70% - less than 80%).

### **Reasons for the Restriction**

Besides the objective reasons (Covid-19 epidemic, limited transportation system, etc.), the subjective causes are:

The roles and responsibilities of the heads of a number of departments and localities have sometimes lacked the decisiveness in directing the implementation of administrative reform work in their respective branches and localities, especially in proposing solutions. Solutions to overcome, improve, and raise the criteria scores and rankings (content, fields), and component spending. Due to the fact that a number of criteria and criteria have not been improved, the remedy is effective and lasts for many years (Luong & Vu, 2022).

The lead agencies assigned by the Provincial People's Committee have not promoted well their role of advising the Provincial Steering Committee in leading, directing the implementation, and reconsolidating and overcoming the shortcomings. Limited to improve, raise to PAR INDEX, PAPI, and SDPAS Index.

The work of information and propaganda on the content, role, meaning, and importance of administrative reform in leaders at all levels and the contingent of cadres, civil servants, and the people are not really deep. Wide, has not yet created a

spillover effect in the majority of people and businesses; the form of public administration reform propaganda has not been innovated yet (Thi & Hong, 2022).

In the direction and organization of the implementation of administrative reform tasks, there is not a deep presence, lack of regular inspection, urging and rectification; the organization and implementation of overcoming shortcomings and limitations after inspection and examination is not good; the leadership, direction, review and organization of the implementation of the tasks assigned by the Government have not been paid attention regularly and have not been performed well (Vu, 2022), a number of tasks have not been completed or completed but are overdue; no new models or new initiatives on administrative reform; there are still cases of cadres and civil servants violating discipline and discipline; there is still the status of dossiers being processed late compared to regulations (at all 3 levels); the sense of responsibility and service attitude of some sections of cadres and civil servants directly handling administrative procedures in the performance of public duties is not good, causing difficulties and troubles for people and businesses.

### **Tasks and Solutions to Improve the Administrative Reform Index (PAR INDEX) in the Coming Time**

In order to improve the PAR index in the coming time, it is necessary to perform the following six tasks and solutions:

First, on the basis of the results of the PAR INDEX Index in 2021 at the provincial level and the results announced by the Chairman of the People's Committee on the classification of administrative reform implementation of the departments, agencies, sectors, and localities, conduct a fake assessment, clearly identify the shortcomings, limitations, and causes, propose solutions to overcome, improve and improve the efficiency of administrative reform in the coming time. Identifying administrative reform tasks as a regular focus task, and improving and enhancing the above-mentioned indicators is an urgent task in 2022 and the following years.

Secondly, continue to lead and direct the organization to well implement the proposed contents and solutions according to Plan No. 174/KH-UBND dated September 20, 2021, of the Provincial People's Committee, in the focus well solved 03 groups of issues: "Administrative reform", "Public transparency", and "Accountability".

Thirdly, pay attention to renewing propaganda forms, associated with promoting

administrative reform propaganda in many appropriate forms to raise awareness, of the roles, and responsibilities of cadres, civil servants, public employees, public servants, and employees people and organizations, especially the responsibilities of the heads of departments, agencies, sectors, and localities, and create the consensus of the society to actively participate in administrative reform (so that the people of the organization understand their rights and responsibility in participating in the supervision and feedback on service quality of state administrative agencies).

Fourth, uphold the responsibilities of heads of departments, branches, and localities in administrative reform. Persons, heads of departments, branches, and localities must regularly monitor, organize, inspect, and evaluate the direction, administration, and performance of administrative reform tasks for their subordinate units, local, through inspection, directing rectification, and proposing specific solutions to overcome and achieve results.

Fifth, organize thoroughly in leaders, cadres, civil servants, and employees of State administrative agencies at all levels, branches, and public non-business units about the purpose, meaning, and importance of the PAR INDEX index is associated with continuing to thoroughly grasp the guidelines of the Party, the Resolution of the Government and the guiding documents of the Party, the State, the Provincial Party Committee and the Provincial People's Committee on administrative reform work in order to improve public administration. Raise awareness, attitude, and sense of responsibility in building a public service system serving the people.

Sixth, based on the assigned functions and tasks of each department, branch, and district-level People's Committee, review and compare the content, criteria, and components of the above-mentioned indicators to propose practical solutions. Currently to improve the score, improve the ranking of each indicator. Striving for the PAR INDEX in 2022 to be in a good position compared to the general index of the whole country.

### **CONCLUSION**

The process of globalization and international integration Globalization is an objective process that has far-reaching effects on all countries. This process makes countries around the world become closer to each other, more closely related to each other, and more osmotic and dependent on each other. Countries are facing many opportunities but also facing many new challenges at the international level. International integration is a requirement for countries to take advantage of



opportunities and at the same time limit challenges in globalization to be able to develop. The administrative apparatus of countries must move more quickly to enhance the country's competitiveness in the process of global integration and division of labor. That requires administrative institutions and staff to adapt to international laws and practices, and at the same time maintain independence, and self-reliance, and protect national interests.

The effects of the technical and technological revolution have affected all aspects of social life, including management activities. These changes pose new challenges to the traditional administration. That requires reforming the administrative system, rearranging the apparatus, and renewing human resource management methods to keep up with the common progress of the world.

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