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# USAID STRENGTHENING PROVINCIAL CAPACITY

## FINAL COMPLETION REPORT

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**Cover Photo:** USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity Learning Summit with the counterparts in Ba Ria Vung Tau, Vietnam, July 24, 2020

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## ACRONYMS

COVID-19	Coronavirus 2019
ELP	Executive Leadership Program
GESI	Gender Equality and Social Inclusion
GIMASYS	Global Integrated Management System Company
HICD	Human and Institutional Capacity Development
HRM	Human Resources Management
HSOG-PSU	Hatfield School of Government- Portland State University
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
MEL	Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning
MNA	Market Needs Assessment
MOHA	Ministry of Home Affairs
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NAPA	National Academy of Public Administration
PIRS	Performance Indicator Reference Sheets
PPD	Public-Private Dialogue
P&R	Pause and Reflection
PWS	Performance Work Statement
RFP	Request for Proposals
QASP	Quality Assurance Surveillance Plan
SOG/UEH	School of Government/University of Economics at Ho Chi Minh City
SVF	Startup Vietnam Foundation
TOT	Training of Trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity project was implemented by Chemonics International in partnership with its two main subcontractors J.E. Austin Associates and Hatfield School of Government- Portland State University (HSOG-PSU) from May 2019 – October 2022. The project contributed to USAID/Vietnam’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy Development Objective I – “Governance enhanced to facilitate broader-based, sustainable growth.” The overall project objective was to improve the efficacy and sustainability of economic reform-oriented provincial capacity building services. To achieve this, the project developed capacity for three local institutions – School of Government at the University of Economics Ho Chi Minh City (SOG/UEH)<sup>1</sup>, Startup Vietnam Foundation (SVF), and the National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA) – whose mandate is capacity development for provincial governments. The project was organized around three intermediate results (IR) contributing to the achievement of that objective: 1) Local institutions’ understanding of and responsiveness to local economic governance capacity needs improved, 2) Local institutions’ ability to design and deliver high-quality capacity development opportunities improved, and 3) Local institutions’ ability to generate demand and establish revenue streams for capacity development opportunities improved.

By the Numbers	
<b>21</b>	Percent improvement in SOG/UEH’s HICD assessment scores
<b>18</b>	Percent improvement in SVF’s HICD assessment scores
<b>45</b>	Project-trained staff of SOG/UEH and SVF utilizing modern teaching methods with provincial officials
<b>6</b>	New economic governance capacity development courses offered by SVF
<b>1,260</b>	Additional provincial officials pursuing capacity building services that address provincial needs from SVF and SOG/UEH

The project applied USAID’s Human and Institutional Capacity Development (HICD) framework to gauge the relative strengths and weaknesses of each institution by facilitating annual HICD assessments with each institution in 2019, 2020, and 2021. Annual HICD assessment helped each institution identify its capacity gaps for achieving its strategic objectives, understand the root causes of those gaps, and develop measures to address the capacity gaps. Closely integrated with this approach, the project assessed and supported capacity development to improve gender equality and social inclusion (GESI); monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL); and business model and financial sustainability capabilities. SOG/UEH and SVF committed to continue to apply this approach for their capacity development after the project closeout. SVF also plans to apply HICD in capacity development for its partner provinces.

**“Human and Institutional Capacity Development is helping SVF to adapt to changes and challenges”**

*Duong Van Anh, SVF Program Director*

As originally designed, the project's approach for institutional capacity strengthening for NAPA mirrored that of SVF and SOG/UEH described above. However, about four months into the project, NAPA expressed that HICD and other related elements described above (i.e. GESI, MEL, and business model support) were not top institutional priorities. Rather, they identified

<sup>1</sup> Over the course of the project UEH underwent a restructuring that saw SOG moved under the new College of Economics, Law, and Government. To avoid confusion, we refer to that organization as SOG/UEH throughout.

technical capacity development as their top priority, particularly in competencies including local governance, local economic governance, empirical research and critical strategic thinking; development and delivery of skill-based training and working in an international environment. The project restructured its approach with NAPA accordingly and developed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with NAPA documenting a mutually agreed upon program of technical capacity building support. However, bureaucratic hurdles and delays related to COVID-19 and leadership changes at the Ministry of Home Affairs (MOHA) ultimately prevented the signing of this MOU. Due to the prolonged delays and uncertain pathway forward, in August 2021 USAID and Chemonics restructured the project scope of work to remove NAPA and remain focused on SVF and SOG/UEH. Despite the challenges encountered engaging NAPA, the project did complete meaningful work with them early on. This is documented below.

Key achievements for each intermediate result are summarized below.

Intermediate Result 1 - Local institutions' understanding of and responsiveness to local economic governance capacity needs improved:

- *Develop a tailored MEL system.* To enhance SOG/UEH and SVF's impact measurement capabilities, the project developed tailored ICT-based MEL systems for each institution that help measure the immediate outcomes of institutional capacity strengthening activities and their downstream effects on provincial officials' performance. Both institutions are capable of operating the MEL systems now.
- *Develop skills and application of market needs assessment (MNA).* USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity trained SOG/UEH and SVF and supported them to practice MNA concepts, methods, and tools to ensure they can better understand capacity development needs of provincial government in particular and their customers in general. Both institutions have demonstrated their capacity to conduct MNA independently moving forward.
- *Enhance on-the-job mentoring service offering for provincial officials.* The project worked with SVF to refine its service offering through which provincial officials can engage SVF staff to provide ongoing on-the-job mentoring, using its experience and expertise in private sector engagement to solve ad-hoc problems related to economic governance.

**MEL has become the key tool that helps us to constantly gain the trust of many partners and donors. MEL helped us share our impactful stories powerfully like never before.**

*Ms. Dao Thi Hoai Phuong, MEL Manager of SVF*

Intermediate Result 2 - Local institutions' ability to design and deliver high-quality capacity development opportunities improved:

- *Design and conduct trainers' certificate programs.* USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity trained and certified SOG/UEH's core and adjunct training instructors as proficient in the knowledge, skills, and practices of modern adult learning methods and techniques.
- *Design and pilot of new training courses.* Provincial governments have a high demand for executive leadership courses. To support SOG/UEH to meet this demand and enhance course offerings, the project and SOG/UEH co-conducted an assessment of SOG/UEH's

Executive Leadership Program (ELP). The project and SOG/UEH then co-developed and piloted three new training courses for provincial officials to address the priorities of the provincial governance reforms in Vietnam, namely: 1) Facilitative Provincial Government to Strengthen Economic Competitiveness; 2) Innovation and Digital transformation; and 3) Innovation Leadership for Public Organization.

- *Enhance SVF’s curriculum and trainer program.* The project trained SVF to develop its curriculum and training materials in line with international standards and expand its trainer program in modern teaching methods. SVF applied these enhanced skills in the implementation of its Collaboration for Growth (Co4Growth) program.
- *Strengthen capacity for SVF in promoting public-private dialogue.* The project delivered a training workshop to strengthen SVF’s Public-Private Dialogue (PPD). SVF applied learned knowledge to conduct PPD for Quang Ngai province and for its current Co4Growth program to facilitate public-private dialogues with local government, businesses, and partners.

**GESI has been well integrated into SOG/UEH’s training syllabus and curricula for provincial officials**  
*Dr. Le Vinh Trien, Lecturer of SOG/UEH*

- *Conduct gender and social inclusion (GESI) assessments within SOG/UEH and SVF.* The project successfully conducted GESI assessments with SOG/UEH and SVF from Years 1 to 3, and with NAPA in Year 1. GESI recommendations from the assessments were incorporated into institutional capacity strengthening action plans. The project supported SOG/UEH and SVF to mainstream GESI in their trainings and other capacity development services through training, coaching, and guidelines.

**“Business model first comes to mind. Before the project, still in the middle of choosing which way to go and what would be potential sustainable revenue stream. Top achievement is being financially sustainable for SVF.”**  
*Mandy Nguyen, SVF Operation Director*

Intermediate Result 3 - Local institutions’ ability to generate demand and establish revenue streams for capacity development opportunities improved

**“The course on modern adult learning methods and techniques should be replicated for other UEH instructors.”**  
*Dr. Dinh Cong Khai, Dean of SOG/UEH*

- *Development of enhanced business models.* To develop and implement sustainable business models, the project conducted a mentoring process in developing, reviewing, and enhancing business models for SVF and SOG/UEH. Instead of focusing on static large business plans, the project helped the partner organizations to develop easy-to-read and flexible graphical business models that they can use as communication tools with customers, employees, clients, and partners.
- *Review and refinement of business models.* The project facilitated SOG/UEH and SVF to conduct annual review and update of their business models in 2019, 2020 and 2021. After these

**“If SOG/UEH can deliver a course on Innovation and Digital Transformation, it will lead the market for capacity development for provincial governments.”**  
*Dr. Dinh Cong Khai, Dean of SOG/UEH*

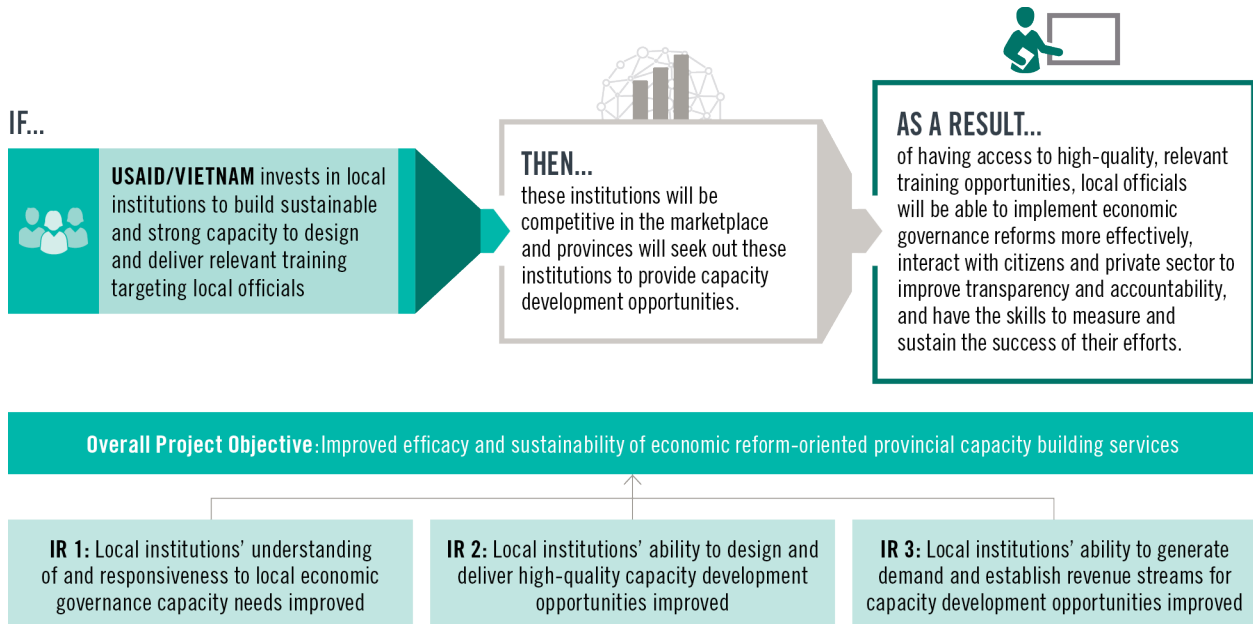
three iterations, both organizations understand the value of a business model and have greater recognition that without an appropriate business model, financial sustainability is impossible to maintain. Importantly, they also have the ability to review and update their models going forward, and both are committed to do this annually.

## IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH AND BEST PRACTICES

### Implementation Approach

USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity was designed with the following theory of change shown in Exhibit 1:

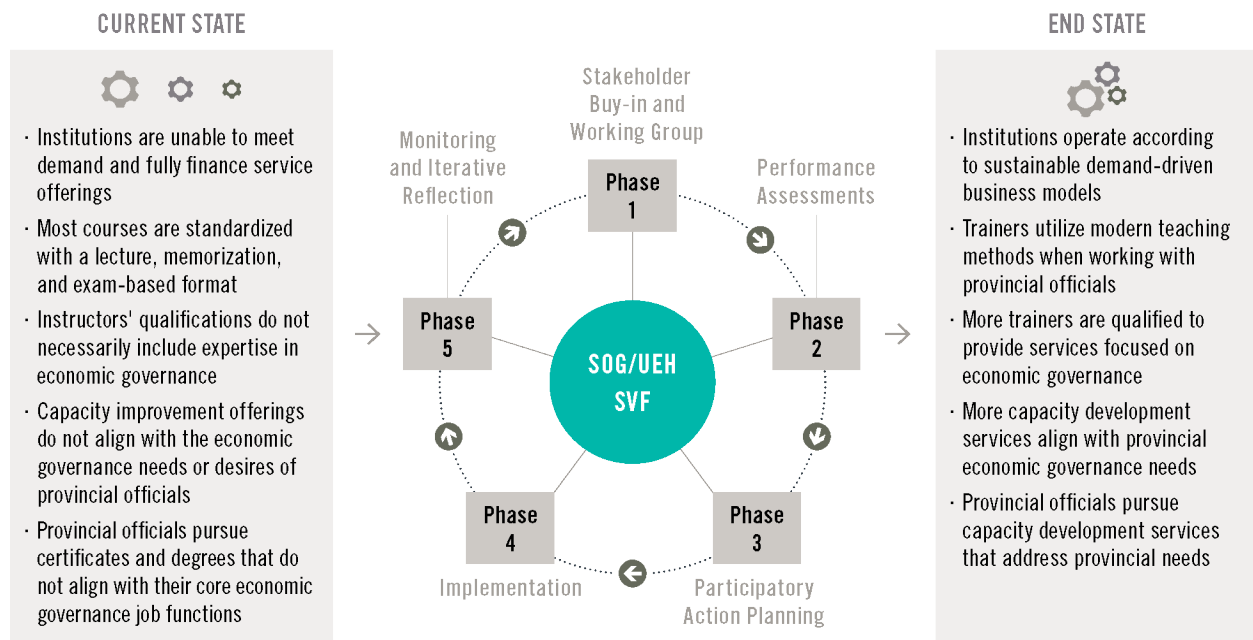
**Exhibit 1. Theory of Change and Results Framework**



To materialize this theory of change the project applied Institutional Capacity Strengthening Approach, based on USAID's local systems framework, for the implementation as shown in Exhibit 2:



## Exhibit 2. Institutional Capacity Strengthening Approach



To implement this approach, on an annual basis, USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity conducted 5Rs (results, roles, relationships, rules, and resources) analysis and mapping, based on USAID’s local systems framework and HICD assessments with SVF and SOG/UEH. The 5Rs analyses identified how the institutions fit within the broader economic governance system of government, university, and private sector. They also identified how they fit within the following relative to the project’s objective and results: the human, institutional, and financial resources available; the roles and responsibilities of various actors; the relationships (or lack thereof) between actors; the formal and informal governing rules; and the overall results — strengths and weaknesses — of the provincial economic governance system as a whole. The project utilized USAID’s HICD framework to gauge the relative strengths and weaknesses of each institution by undertaking HICD assessments with each institution. HICD assessments will identify capacity and current performance within the institutions, as well as how they relate to the other government, university, and private sector actors operating in the economic governance space. HICD will allow the institutions to define what success will look like in the Vietnamese context, set performance measures, and develop tailored capacity strengthening plans which underpinned work planning and technical assistance provided by the project.

One of the strengths of the HICD approach outlined above is that it is rigorous, regular, and requires deep engagement with partners. However, these features can also present challenges for some organizations, which was the case with NAPA. While discussions with NAPA counterparts during project design phase indicated their support for the HICD approach, institutional requirements and bureaucratic complexities, common to large government organizations like NAPA, prevented full socialization of the concept and approach across multiple levels of leadership. Once implementation began, the project quickly learned that elements of NAPA leadership were not fully committed to using the HICD approach. A key impediment was the time commitment required for full engagement. NAPA indicated that

implementing the process was too demanding on limited staff time. Rather, they strongly prioritized allocating those resources to technical capacity development. As a result, the project and NAPA redesigned the scope for NAPA to focus on technical capacity, including the following elements:

1. Delivery of an annual capacity strengthening program to a cohort of NAPA faculty focused on topics such as local governance and local economic governance; empirical research and critical strategic thinking; development and delivery of competency-based training; and working in an international environment,
2. Development of caselets drawing on international or Vietnam-specific examples for integration into NAPA trainings,
3. Development of training modules responsive to provincial officials' needs, and
4. Facilitation of an exchange visit to learn about practical experience in the management of public service training institutions.

As noted elsewhere, delays related to COVID-19 and bureaucratic hurdles ultimately prevented the project from implementing these elements of the project.

## **Best Practices**

*Flexibility and adaptability.* The project duration was three years, two of which occurred under COVID-19-related restrictions, which significantly limited the project's ability to conduct in-person gatherings and travel, both internationally and within Vietnam. Further, the urgent priority of COVID-19 response and recovery among the country's provincial officials limited their ability to engage as fully with the project as initially planned. However, the project rapidly pivoted at the start of the project to adopt online platforms to engage with partners and deliver assistance. By adopting online or hybrid (online and in-person) methods, Strengthening Provincial Capacity was able to adjust quickly to successfully conduct project activities and meet deliverable deadlines.

*Demand driven and value creation.* USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity considered each deliverable as a response to each partner institution's needs and expectations built on real-time, realistic assessments of available resources in consideration of the project timeline, organizational culture, and capacity to receive technical assistance that would aid in their respective missions and goals. The project sought to remain responsive and adaptive to each partner's needs while building on the success of various project activities as part of a comprehensive approach to capacity building for the partners and effective collaboration. Likewise, the project team and its partners maintained an agile mindset to not only develop the content of each deliverable but also to listen, understand, and adapt to the successive requirements and demands from each partner to align with a changing social and political context within partner institutions as well as in Vietnam.

*Co-creation.* The project embraced co-creation as a key tenet of its approach. The agendas for all project activities for SOG/UEH and SVF were co-developed. Annual HICD assessment reports and annual business model updated reports for institutional partners were co-produced

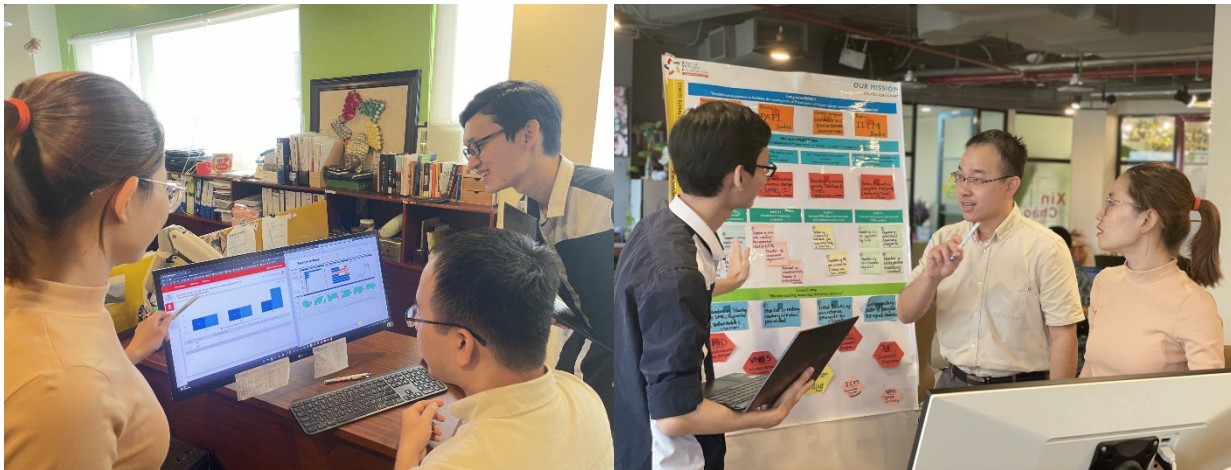
with SOG/UEH or SVF. Short training courses for SOG/UEH were co-developed with SOG/UEH. This commitment to co-creation required more time and effort for coordination from both sides, local partners and the project, but helped make the activities and products better suited to the needs of the local partners and strengthened ownership, contributing to sustainability of the project impacts.

*Regular engagement with partners.* The project ensured fluid and consistent communication between Chemonics, subcontractors, and partners, which is necessary for clarity around project activities and objectives. Regular communication was useful for providing updates on all organizational activities and initiatives, extending beyond project-related activities. Understanding the broader organizational context improves project implementation.

*Strategic partnership.* Selecting the right project partners contributed to project success. In SVF and SOG/UEH, the project identified two institutions with demonstrated motivations to public service, aspirations to develop and improve, strong commitments to the project, and clear senses of ownership. During project implementation, they demonstrated technical capabilities, commitment, trust, willingness to share, respect each other, and flexibility towards value creation. Strategic partnership is critical to project success.

*Focus on monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) system development.* Tailored MEL systems developed under the project are helping SOG/UEH and SVF to measure outcomes of the economic reform-oriented capacity development services they deliver to provincial officials. Throughout the MEL system development process, the project followed principles to ensure the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability: 1) MEL systems should measure and reflect the performance of the strategic objectives of the institutions in a systematic, logical way, 2) the MEL indicators should meet the basic requirements of a good set of indicators, 3) human centered design approach and Agile methodology are applied for information and communication technology (ICT) platform, 4) system development must be paired with a sound process of technology transfer and capacity building for the institutions to operate the systems effectively and sustainably.

*Business model development.* The business models provided useful frameworks for each organization. They identified a wide range of areas which are relevant to the long-term success of an organization and focus the institution's attention on prioritizing growth and improvement in those areas. Regular milestone reviews helped assess progress and identify opportunities for targeted support from the project. A coaching process around milestones for individuals and groups helped disseminate and cement business model thinking. This coaching process involved regular check-ins between the project and the partner institutions with a focus on immediate needs and empowering the partners to identify goals and take actions to achieve them.



SVF team discussing the MEL Results Framework and practicing the tools of the ICT-based MEL system supported by USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity, May 2022 (Credit: USAID SPC)

## INTERMEDIATE RESULT I: LOCAL INSTITUTIONS' UNDERSTANDING OF AND RESPONSIVENESS TO LOCAL ECONOMIC GOVERNANCE CAPACITY NEEDS IMPROVED

At the start, SOG/UEH demonstrated a good understanding of provincial capacity improvement needs in economic governance, such as in private sector engagement. However, these needs did not necessarily align with the skills that provincial officials demanded (e.g., hard skills like analytics). SOG/UEH aimed to improve their understanding of where economic governance needs converge with market demands for skills development within government, universities, and private sector/industry. Related, SOG/UEH lacked a systematic way of measuring the impact of its training, limiting their ability to make evidence-based adjustments to their training curricula and delivery methods.

SVF aimed to apply an analytical approach to better understanding the needs of provincial officials, with a focus on improving private sector engagement, business enabling environment, and improving provincial understanding of the startup ecosystem. However, similar to SOG/UEH, they did not have a systematic way of measuring the impact of its capacity development services or their responsiveness to officials' capacity needs and wants. Through a series of complementary activities described below, USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity shored up SVF's and SOG/UEH's understanding and responsiveness to local economic governance capacity needs.

### By the Numbers

- 100** Percent of clients (provincial officials) who indicate that capacity building services provided by SOG/UEH were responsive to their needs
- 94** Percent of clients (provincial officials) who indicate that capacity building services provided by SVF were responsive to their needs
- 6** New SVF mentors providing services to provincial officials
- 6** Provinces added by SVF to provide mentoring services to provincial officials
- 71** Percent of SOG/UEH provincial training staff trained to incorporate results of impact measurement into course design and delivery

Upon close consultation with NAPA in 2020, USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity removed MEL systems and the HICD assessments from the NAPA scope of support, and

instead, planned to deliver an annual capacity strengthening program. The capacity strengthening program targeted a cohort of NAPA staff and was planned to cover topics to develop competencies such as local governance and local economic governance, empirical research and critical strategic thinking, development and delivery of competency/skill-based training, and working in an international environment. In November 2020, Chemonics released an request for proposals (RFP) to subcontract with a US based organization to deliver capacity strengthening services for NAPA. Chemonics oversaw the full procurement process up to the technical evaluation, which was to be held in coordination with NAPA. However, with the project descoping in 2021, the RFP was cancelled along with the removal of the capacity strengthening program for NAPA.

## **KEY ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS**

*Facilitated market needs assessments of provincial capacity development services.* To enhance tailored capacity development services for provincial officials USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity trained SOG/UEH and SVF on a methodology for MNA to identify critical capacity needs for better supporting economic reform. Over the course of several workshops in June 2020, the project trained partner institutions on the MNA process, concepts, models, and case studies. Following this, SOG/UEH and SVF conducted a joint pilot MNA in Dong Thap province. The project coached the partner institutions to develop a framework and a detailed questionnaire for the pilot. The project also provided guidance to on areas of secondary research for effective interviews and MNA implementation. The findings of the MNA were shared with Dong Thap provincial government. SVF applied these findings directly for preparation of a collaboration plan with Dong Thap province.

To further cement skills developed during the pilot and support complementary course development, the project supported SOG/UEH to implement a second market MNA in Ba Ria Vung Tau province. In preparation, SOG/UEH led the process of designing the MNA and engaging with the stakeholders in Ba Ria Vung Tau. Experts from the project provided guidance to SOG/UEH during this process to refine their approach and provide feedback on materials such as the questionnaire and plan document. The MNA, conducted in March 2022, focused on capacity development needs of local governments for the implementation of digital transformation in the province. The MNA indicated that there are significant capacity gaps in this area and the following needs were identified:

- An introductory training on digital transformation to help provincial officials understand the nature of digital transformation
- Strategic management to help provincial officials to convert a policy into a strategic plan with clear priorities
- Project management to help provincial officials to implement digital transformation
- Collaborative governance to help provincial officials create enabling environment for digital transformation

The finding of the MNA were shared with the Ba Ria Vung Tau provincial government. They were also central to informing the project's and SOG/UEH's course development on

“innovation and digital transformation,” which was later piloted by SOG/UEH in Ba Ria Vung Tau (see Intermediate Result 2 section for more information on course development).

*Enhanced on-the-job mentoring service offering for provincial officials through SVF.* SVF’s developmental programs experienced high demand from the provinces. To supplement this, there was an opportunity for SVF to provide more ongoing advisory services to provincial officials. Through a series of workshops, technical assistance, and application of MNA, the project helped SVF to refine its service offering in which provincial officials can engage SVF staff to provide ongoing on-the-job mentoring, using its experience and expertise in private sector engagement to solve ad-hoc problems related to economic governance. To better meet client needs and its own objectives, SVF now has the foundational knowledge to incorporate MNA, when needed, into product development considerations and improve three of its products, namely its Incubator Program Development Package and Management Service; Mentoring Program Development Package and Management Service; and Ecosystem Builders, Core Trainers Development Program (Training of Trainers). This will help allow SVF to grow more sustainable in the future.

*Developed tailored MEL systems.* To enhance SOG/UEH and SVF’ impact measurement capabilities, the project developed tailored MEL systems for each institution that will measure the immediate outcomes of institutional capacity strengthening activities and their downstream effects on provincial officials’ performance.

The project started the assistance with the development of detailed MEL system reports for each institution. The MEL system report consists of approaches, plans, tools, processes, and action plans to enable the institutional partners to measure outcomes of the economic reform-oriented capacity development services they deliver to provincial officials. As a result, each institution will have a stronger feedback loop to allow it to maintain current understanding of provincial officials’ needs and use this information to feed into service design and delivery.

The MEL systems reports underpinned the design and development of an ICT-based MEL platform for each partner institution. The platforms incorporated updated MEL frameworks and indicators to reflect the institutions’ latest business plan and strategy with a full set of performance indicator reference sheets (PIRS) for all selected indicators for the two institutions. The ICT platforms were developed to support SOG/UEH and SVF to monitor and evaluate their activities in the most effective, efficient, and sustainable manner through data collection, management, and analysis of MEL indicators. The platform was designed as a responsive system of collecting and analyzing real-time, centralized, and consistent data.

#### **User feedback on MEL systems**

**“The system provides SOG/UEH with the training data such as the number of classes available, the number of students, etc., making it easier for lecturers to manage their classes”**

*-Nguyen Thi Hong Nhung, SOG/UEH lecturer*

**“MEL ICT helps SVF compile impact reports based on surveys and actual feedback from beneficiaries (enterprises). As a result, the level of SVF’s activities has been increased, and it is highly valued by sponsors and partners”**

*-Duong Van Anh, SVF Advisor*

**“The data has been centralized, which allows managers to capture the big picture of SVF’s activities. For myself, I was able to extract information and data from the system efficiently for my work.”**

*-Dao Thi Hoai Phuong, SVF Legal Manager*

The project led intensive trainings for SOG/UEH and SVF aimed to equip the participants with fundamental knowledge on MEL and skills in establishing and implementing results-based monitoring and evaluation systems, including data management, quantitative and qualitative data analysis, and reporting. Following this, SOG/UEH and SVF conducted pilot data collection and reporting, including client satisfaction and feedback, knowledge, attitude, and practice, staff performance and other surveys and indicators per the MEL plans of SOG/UEH and SVF. A piloting process was conducted to check the accuracy and suitability of the newly developed system and tools to improve and finalize the system before official deployment and transfer. During the piloting, users tested the ICT platform, the data collection process using data collection tools and indicator calculation/analysis results on MEL ICT system. After successful piloting, the systems were transferred to SOG/UEH and SVF in March 2022 with high appreciation from both institutions.



*SOG/UEH lecturers receiving completion certificates of the Trainers' Certificate Program supported by USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity, January 2021 (credit: USAID SPC)*

## **INTERMEDIATE RESULT 2: LOCAL INSTITUTIONS' ABILITY TO DESIGN AND DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IMPROVED**

SOG/UEH prioritizes the quality of its offerings highly. Their public administration programs are influenced by international standards, having been adapted from the graduate curriculum of the John. F. Kennedy School of Government and Lee Kuan Yew School of Public Policy and benefitting from many years as an official Fulbright teaching program for economics. Although SOG/UEH has an excellent reputation for high-quality training, the capacity assessment conducted during institutional selection noted that provincial trainers’ understanding of provincial needs and their utilization of modern adult learning methodologies were low.

SVF’s offerings in the startup ecosystem, policy building support, and the leadership accelerator were highly regarded. However, SVF did not have any programs to help provincial officials understand how the regulatory framework specifically impacts female entrepreneurs and the different types of support they need. While SVF staff did deliver capacity development opportunities to provincial officials, they were not trained as professors or instructors, so they are not necessarily familiar with modern adult learning methodologies.

When the new scope of work was developed for NAPA, the annual GESI assessment was removed. Instead, the project intended to develop annual caselets and training modules. The project planned to work closely with NAPA to facilitate the development of annual caselets by NAPA faculty, managers, and coordinators, as well as facilitate the development of annual training modules by NAPA staff participating in the capacity strengthening program. The modules were to improve the capacity of staff to design curricula that is responsive to provincial needs with regard to economic governance and based in modern pedagogical methods. The project also planned to organize local and international training study tours to expose NAPA trainers to a wider variety of teaching methodologies. An exchange visit to a relevant institution either in the US or another country for MOHA and NAPA executives to learn about practical experience in the management of public service training institutions was planned for Year 2 but was not executed due to the project descopeing.

Through a series of activities described below, USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity helped improve the quality and responsiveness of course and service delivery offerings of SVF and SOG/UEH. These are described below.

## KEY ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS

*Designed trainers’ certificate programs at SOG/UEH.* To improve SOG/UEH’s capacity in curriculum development, the project fostered a long-term partnership between SOG/UEH and HSOG-PSU to develop train-the-trainer modules for SOG/UEH staff involved in designing curricula. As part of this partnership, to build trainers’ capacity in modern pedagogical methods, HSOG-PSU designed a trainers’ certificate program with the goal of building the capacity of provincial trainers to deliver courses using

By the Numbers	
<b>71</b>	Percent of project-trained SOG/UEH staff who demonstrate improvements in job functions
<b>505</b>	Number of provincial officials who successfully completed SOG/UEH’s Executive Leadership Program
<b>270</b>	Number of persons trained by project to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations
<b>89</b>	Percent of project-trained SVF staff who now integrate gender and social inclusion considerations in their capacity development services



interactive and innovative teaching methodologies, such as experiential learning and live case study applications, that are tailored to the needs of adult learners. The purpose of the course is to certify SOG/UEH's core and adjunct training instructors as proficient in the knowledge, skills, and practices of modern adult learning methods and techniques. The trainer certificate program report, which was co-developed with SOG/UEH, includes a detailed action and implementation plan for certifying SOG/UEH faculty/instructors in adult learning methodologies. This program is designed to be responsive to the needs of Vietnam to make trainings more effective and efficient for adults whose demands for training and retraining increase rapidly to meet the demands of a fast-changing economy, especially under the conditions of Industrial Revolution 4.0.

The trainer certificate program was conducted in early 2021. As a result, trainers are able to incorporate adult learning teaching methodologies into course delivery, thereby improving provincial officials' uptake of course material. SOG/UEH has an expanded network of highly capable provincial trainers to deliver its programs at the provincial level and can call upon its partner HSOG-PSU for support as needed. As a follow-up to this course, a workshop on "Aligning Active Training Strategies to the Training Outcomes in Digital Transformation Training Environment" was organized for SOG/UEH instructors in June 2022. The workshop enhanced the UEH faculty's competency in using active teaching and learning strategies which align to the training objective/outcomes, especially towards the digital transformation context in Vietnam.

*Reviewed and Strengthen SOG/UEH's Executive Leadership Program (ELP).* SOG/UEH's ELP for provincial officials, which includes modules on economic governance topics, such as enhancing provincial competitiveness, economic integration, and cooperative management toward the market economy, is currently only three to five days long. While it is a highly sought after offering, the short duration of the training makes it difficult to consolidate learning, and provincial officials have requested more in-depth training. Additionally, the curriculum for public officials was adapted from an American program and would benefit from more contextualized case studies and applications for provincial officials. As part of the partnership, HSOG-PSU provided technical assistance to SOG/UEH to facilitate a co-review of the current ELP vis-a-vis the project's survey of provincial needs and a comparative review of domestic and international ELP programs to develop a more robust and responsive program. As a result, SOG/UEH's ELP will be further strengthened and become a model for other institutions.

*Designed New Training Courses for SOG/UEH.* To improve SOG/UEH's capacity for designing and delivering high quality capacity development that is responsive to the needs of provinces in economic governance, the project and SOG/UEH co-developed three new training courses – one in each year of the project. To ensure that SOG/UEH is able to deliver the new training courses effectively, the project supported course pilots for the Year 2 and Year 3 courses that included the following two elements:

- Training of trainers (TOT): The project trained SOG/UEH instructors to ensure they fully understand the concepts and contents of the course and how to deliver the course effectively.

- Practice to delivery of the course: The courses were delivered to provincial officials by SOG/UEH instructors and in combination with HSOG instructors.

The Year 1 (2020) training course was titled “Facilitative Provincial Government to Strengthen Economic Competitiveness.” It was designed to enhance the competence of provincial officials in implementing the Facilitative Government Policy at the provincial level in a way that responds to new challenges in economic, social, environmental, technological aspects towards sustainable development, inclusive growth, and Industrial Revolution 4.0 in the Vietnamese context in general, and in the provincial context in particular.

The Year 2 (2021) training course was titled “Innovation and Digital Transformation.” The course focused on supporting provincial officials to learn and apply new knowledge, skills, and values for creating an enabling environment for accelerated provincial innovation and digital transformation aligned with Vietnam’s Industrial Revolution 4.0 Strategy in the context of economic competitiveness. The project led a full pilot of the course in Ba Ria Vung Tau in April 2022. The pilot was organized as a training course of SOG/UEH for provincial officials. The training was attended by 99 participants, both online and in-person, including the vice-chairperson of the provincial People Committee, and directors and vice-directors of provincial departments. The course consisted of four modules: 1) digital transformation and the role of digital transformation in enhancing provincial competitiveness; 2) development of a strategy for digital transformation in public sectors; 3) leadership and management for implementation of a strategy for digital transformation in the public sector; and 4) risk management for digital transformation. The pilot confirmed that: 1) the course offering is timely in supporting the province to implement the Prime Minister’s decision on “The National Program for Digital Transformation to 2025 and Orientations toward 2030”; and 2) the course proves the SOG/UEH capability to develop capacity for provincial officials on digital transformation which is a priority in their work.

The Year 3 (2022) training course, titled “Innovation Leadership for Public organizations,” was designed to provide leaders in public organizations a competency-based framework for innovation leadership based on extensive research on the competencies and skills of innovative leaders both in the private and public sectors. By creating a framework and applied activities for innovative leadership for provincial officials, this course contributes to their training, education, and experiential learning. The course introduces strategic planning, design thinking, and project management to improve individual and organizational adaptation through training curriculum, skill-building exercises and a cross-section of international best practices and Vietnam-based case examples. A successful 4-day pilot course, held in September 2022, trained leaders and managers in foundational knowledge of innovation theory and applied methods at the individual and organizational level.

*Conducted Executive Leadership workshops for SOG/UEH faculty and executive students.* The Year 2 workshop was originally planned for May 2021, however was delayed due to the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic and was carried over to Year 3. The workshop took place in December 2021. The topic of the workshop was Community-based Learning. The workshop facilitator introduced the concept of community-based learning, and a case-study on how it was

applied in a marine conservation project in Hoi An, Vietnam was presented to illustrate the value of community-based learning in strengthening provincial capacity. The Year 3 workshop took place in June 2022. The topic of the workshop was “Strategy and Change Management for Digital Transformation.” The workshop is to promote knowledge sharing and skill development for Executive Masters students and faculty of SOG/UEH on this subject. Vice-director of Ho Chi Minh City Department for Communication and Information presented the digital transformation strategy of Ho Chi Minh City as an example.

*Year 2 and 3 workshops for Vietnamese and American executives on topics of provincial governance reforms.* The Year 2 workshop was planned for May 2021 but could not be implemented due to the outbreak of the third wave of the COVID-19 and was carried over to Year 3. The workshop took place on December 11, 2021. The Year 3 workshop took place on May 17, 2022. The topic of both workshops was Collaborative Governance a new concept and method for the government to work with outside government stakeholders and partners in dealing with development challenges. The collaborative governance framework and a case study of its application in dealing with flooding issues in Portland, Oregon, U.S., was presented and discussed.

*Fostered sustainable partnership between SOG/UEH and HSOG-PSU.* An important constant throughout the project was deepening the relationship between SOG/UEH and HSOG-PSU. As noted elsewhere, HSOG-PSU played a lead role in providing course development and capacity building and mentoring to SOG/UEH. In addition to these, in Year 3, HSOG-PSU hosted a study exchange at Portland State University with six delegates from SOG/UEH focused on the role of institutions in the community and effective financing, governance and partnership strategies by facilitating experiential learning, modern teaching methodologies and technology in training, education and research. The visit culminated in the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two institutions to advance programs and further strategic alignment and partnership. The MOU covers the period of 2022-2027.



*PSU and UEH signed the MOU on July 28th, 2022. (Credit: PSU Communications Team)*

*Enhanced SVF's curriculum and trainer program.* To support SVF to develop curriculum and materials in line with international standards and expand its trainer program in modern teaching methods, the project delivered two training courses for SVF staff and leaders in June 2021. The objective of the first training was to support SVF to develop curricula and design the process for onboarding experts, consultants, and coaches into programming. This was applied to SVF's Collaboration for Growth (Co4Growth) program. During this workshop, the project presented international best practices for curriculum/program development for entrepreneurship support

organizations, approaches to developing a code of conduct for participants, and feedback on the design of the Co4Growth program. In the second workshop, SVF applied the lessons from the first workshop and provided coaching to onboard experts, consultants, and coaches involved with the Co4Growth program. This workshop was led by SVF with support from USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity and was an opportunity for SVF to demonstrate the application of technical assistance provided by the project. Approximately 60 participants from about 50 of SVF's partners attended the training and continued to join the SVF's Co4Growth program and receive coaching and mentoring from SVF's mentors and SVF's partners over the next five months. Workshop participants provided strongly positive feedback to SVF and USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity. SVF was effective in adapting and applying many of the recommendations provided by the project.

*Strengthened capacity for SVF in promoting public-private dialogue.* The project successfully delivered a training workshop on strengthening SVF's PPD for SVF leaders and staff in October 2021. The training workshop prepared SVF for PPD events that it will organize and facilitate on the development of an inclusive financial ecosystem to ensure appropriate financial products and services for small and medium enterprise growth under its current Collaboration for Growth (Co4Growth) program. SVF conducted PPD sessions on this topic for Quang Ngai province at the end of October 2021 where it applied learned knowledge into its current Co4Growth program to facilitate public-private dialogues with local government, businesses, and partners.

*Conducted gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) assessments within SOG/UEH and SVF.* The project conducted GESI assessment within SOG/UEH and SVF on an annual basis, and with NAPA during the first year of the project before the consultations with NAPA led to removing GESI assessments from their scope. The purpose of the GESI assessment is to ensure that GESI issues are considered at an institutional level, including assessing the differing needs of male, female, and vulnerable populations, provincial authorities and entrepreneurs, as well as the institutions' internal approaches to GESI mainstreaming to mainstreaming of women and vulnerable populations. This will create more inclusive opportunities for economic growth, and stronger, more inclusive partner institutions.

In each GESI assessment, USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity GESI specialists met with staff at various levels and functions throughout the institutions through individual and small group key informant interviews. Key informant interviews and focus groups discussions were conducted with SOG/UEH's leaders, faculty, alumni and students, SVF's leaders, staff, and experts, provincial government officials, entrepreneurs, and start-ups in Ho Chi Minh City and other provinces. Respondents also completed an institutional GESI assessment survey questionnaire to identify their self-assessment of strengths and gaps. The specialists also held additional meetings, as well as a focus group discussion, with other organizations such as donors, projects, and NGOs working on GESI issues and with beneficiary populations, for further insights. Based on this information, the assessment outlined potential issues and opportunities for GESI integration in the capacity development program with each partner institution and proposed recommendations within each intermediate result area by institution. The project then worked with SOG/UEH and SVF to prioritize the recommendations and incorporate them into the institutional capacity strengthening plans. Based on their priorities

and recommendations, the project provided technical assistance to SOG/UEH and SVF to enable them to improve GESI issues in each institution's capacity strengthening program as well as gender mainstreaming in capacity development services for provincial staff.

Over the course of the project, GESI awareness and capacity improved within the partner institutions. In the first year, the project encountered a challenge in terms of uptake of the recommendations because the partner organizations at various levels did not yet consider GESI as a priority for their work. GESI generally is not a priority in strategy, work plan, and budget of the majority of organizations in Vietnam, including the partner institutions in the initial stage. However, through project support, the interest and commitment of both SOG/UEH and SVF in GESI issues and GESI mainstreaming in their programs and services have increased year by year. Both SOG/UEH and SVF leaders were committed to capacity building for their staff and integration of GESI into their provincial capacity building programs as well as development of business models. Based on GESI assessments' recommendations, both institutions, for the first time, assigned GESI focal points, who were actively participating in the GESI planning process and development of GESI capacity building training programs, including training program development, development of GESI training materials and presentations. The key project outcome through the support for the partner institutions to improve GESI capacity are presented below.

*Built capacity of GESI focal points and staff at SOG/UEH.* In 2020, the project delivered a series of GESI trainings and workshops to build capacity of GESI focal points and staff at SOG/UEH and SVF. The GESI training series provided long-term GESI focal points and relevant personnel in SOG/UEH and SVF with knowledge and skills to plan and develop gender-responsive programs and to mainstream gender in their trainings and other capacity development services. The training series consisted of three sessions:

- A one-day joint TOT on GESI concepts and integration for long-term GESI focal points and relevant personnel in SOG/UEH and SVF;
- A one-day workshop with each of the two partner institutions on integrating GESI into their work and in the activities supported under USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity in their capacity development action plans; and
- A one-and-a half-day joint training module on GESI for SOG/UEH and SVF to deliver provincial government officials, including on how to tailor provincial offerings when they design, deliver, and monitor the impact of capacity development services for provincial officials.

The trainings fit the needs of SOG/UEH and SVF in terms of capacity building for their GESI staff and integration of GESI into their capacity building services. The training series was particularly notable as the first GESI-focused training both institutions had received. Findings from the second GESI assessment show that there was an improvement in terms of knowledge and understanding from the partner institutions' staff on GESI issues as a result of the training. The trainings provided them with background information on why GESI considerations are important in the design and implementation of capacity development services. They provided the institutions' staff with fundamental concepts and knowledge as well as how to integrate GESI into their work. This laid the background for the institutions to tailor provincial offerings

when they design, deliver, and monitor the impact of capacity development services for provincial officials.

*Designed the Guidelines for Mainstreaming GESI.* The project developed guidelines for mainstreaming GESI in training for SOG/UEH and guidelines for mainstreaming GESI in the service delivery cycle for SVF, as well as basic knowledge document on GESI for SOG/UEH. These serve as supplementary materials to the GESI training series and as part of coaching activities provided by the project to build the capacity of the partner institutions in GESI mainstreaming in their services for provincial officials.

*Supported SOG/UEH's lecturers to integrate GESI into training curricula:* To respond to the identified needs of SOG/UEH, in January and February 2021, the project provided coaching for lecturers on integrating GESI in the Human Resources Management (HRM) curriculum as a pilot course. After the pilot GESI-mainstreamed course on HRM was completed, the project delivered a training workshop on mainstreaming GESI in SOG/UEH's training programs in March 2021. This was aimed at presenting and sharing the experience of GESI mainstreaming in HRM course and providing guidelines, key issues, and methods for GESI mainstreaming in the training curriculum development and delivery. This training was designed and implemented to address the gaps and improve the capacity of SOG/UEH's lecturers in mainstreaming GESI in their training curricula. As a result of the training, SOG/UEH's faculty members have improved their knowledge and understanding on GESI and identified critical solutions to mainstream GESI into existing training curricula for provincial officials.

Based on the experience of GESI mainstreaming in HRM, the project continued the coaching for SOG/UEH lecturers to integrate GESI in four other topics, namely Public Management, Urban Management, Public Investment Project Appraisal, and Law and Public Policy during April-June 2021. The lecturers then successfully delivered these GESI-mainstreamed courses to their Master students who are provincial government officials in Ho Chi Minh City, Vinh Long, and Ba Ria Vung Tau during July-September 2021 and continued to deliver these courses in Ho Chi Minh City and other provinces in 2022.

The above activities supported the institutions to improve GESI integration in their capacity strengthening program as well as mainstreaming in capacity development services for provincial officials. Findings from the third GESI assessment show that there has been an improvement in terms of knowledge and understanding from the partner institutions' staff on GESI issues and integration in the capacity development services as a result of the training and coaching from the project.

*Integrated GESI sensitive indicators and data collection methods in the MEL systems.* For both SOG/UEH and SVF, the project integrated GESI sensitive indicators and data collection methods in the institutions' MEL systems to inform the design and implementation of their training, consulting, coaching, mentoring and other capacity strengthening services for provincial officials. The MEL indicator systems and data collection tools of SOG/UEH and SVF were thoroughly reviewed and mainstreamed with GESI elements in the design of indicators, data disaggregation, data analysis and reporting. All the MEL indicators of SOG/UEH and SVF were reviewed and disaggregated by gender, age, geography, language, ethnicity, when and where

possible. As a result, the MEL systems can better inform program design and implementation for SOG/UEH and SVF and improve the quality of their reporting with GESI data.

*Held a seminar on Contemporary GESI Issues in Vietnam:* In June 2022, the project convened a GESI Seminar on Contemporary Issues in Vinh Long province with the participation of SOG/UEH’s lecturers, alumni, students, provincial officials, and researchers on GESI. This seminar provided the participants an opportunity to learn and share international and local models for improving GESI awareness, assessment, and application in academic and professional work relevant to the Mekong delta region. The project and SOG/UEH Faculty codeveloped the agenda including a study tour of local aqua and agricultural practices as well as a diverse mix of speakers to share their expertise on GESI topics from the local governments of Can Tho, Ben Tre and other provinces in Central Vietnam. Participants of the workshop conducted teambuilding and discussion exercises to discuss GESI issues in their communities and how to align resources to address these challenges in the future. SOG/UEH Faculty participated as facilitators with the project team so that the seminar multidisciplinary format can be replicated in the future.



Photo: USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity delivered a fund-raising planning workshop to SVF team in September 2019 (Credit: USAID SPC)

### INTERMEDIATE RESULT 3: LOCAL INSTITUTIONS' ABILITY TO GENERATE DEMAND AND ESTABLISH REVENUE STREAMS FOR CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES IMPROVED

SOG/UEH has a reputation for delivering high-quality programs, which has led to high demand for services from provincial officials. In fact, SOG/UEH can generate its own revenue through programs, consultancies, and research for business, which can allow it to be more autonomous from the government and more sustainable. In response, USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity assisted SOG/UEH to develop a business model to allow the institution to more effectively make use of its extensive alumni network to disseminate information and identify opportunities for collaboration with provincial officials and the private sector.

SOG/UEH is a relatively young academic institution with a reputation for delivering high-quality client services. Its strategic intent was to grow the quantity and value of its academic services while further nurturing its high-quality reputation with domestic and global stakeholders. These stakeholders include the faculty and staff of SOG/UEH, executives and colleagues in UEH, a robust alumni network, international collaborators, and a growing number of emergent public sector officials in Vietnam's municipalities and provinces who represent the future market demand. At the start of the project, SOG/UEH executives were keenly aware that the school's service delivery expansion vision would rely on an enhanced level of academic and financial autonomy. SOG/UEH, in its own strategy documents and in its HICD assessment with USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity, identified many performance and capacity improvements needed for high-value service delivery expansion along with enhanced institutional autonomy. However, a restructuring that occurred in Years 2 and 3 saw SOG/UEH moved under the College of Economics, Law, and Government. The structural changes also led to a decreased emphasis and ability to achieve on financial autonomy. The project was responsive to the evolving situation and through support for an initial business model and subsequent annual updates, focused on addressing the need for a more systematic and action-oriented understanding of how to go about implementing service delivery improvements.

At the start of the project, SVF largely supported itself financially through funding from its private sector founders. Additionally, SVF generated revenue from provincial governments and via services to businesses and corporations. SVF collected about 10 percent from the provinces for the programs it delivers either directly to them or to support their priorities, although provinces have often provided in-kind support in the past to cover an additional 10 percent, such as space for events. However, SVF forecasted that its programs for the provinces will provide enough funding to partially cover its management and administrative expenses. Additionally, SVF planned on funding coming from donors, provincial governments, and programming beneficiaries. Therefore, through its business model support USAID Strengthening Provincial

By the Numbers	
4	New provinces utilizing capacity development services from SOG/UEH
3	Provinces added by SVF for training courses
5	Provinces added by SVF for consulting services
1,696	Hours of consulting services provided to provincial officials by SVF



Capacity helped SVF to focus on market needs and how to tailor its operations to those needs that will drive financial sustainability.

Within the discussions with NAPA in 2020 to revise their scope, NAPA was not seeking assistance with its business model, thus it was removed from USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity's engagement of technical assistance with NAPA.

## **KEY ACTIVITIES AND HIGHLIGHTS**

*Developed sustainable business models with SOG/UEH and SVF.* To develop and implement sustainable business models, the project led a collaborative mentoring process to develop, review, and enhance business models for each partner institution. Instead of focusing on developing a static large business plan for the partners, the activity helped the partner organizations to develop easy-to-read and flexible graphical business models that they can use as communication tools with customers, employees, clients, and partners. Following agreement on new business models, the project supported the institutional partners with monthly mentor check-ins to work on any bottlenecks. Business model contents included the following (decisions regarding the content were subject to the partners' priorities):

- Training, service, and product review
- A client discovery process of needed support
- Co-development with client of new or enhanced trainings and service offerings
- Development of new revenue models
- Development of potential new partner agreements
- Understanding and development of plans for institutional changes to systems, culture and process changes for new service offerings (to be linked with the HICD assessments and performance improvement plans)
- Development of financial forecasts for new service offerings
- Fundraising plan to address any funds needed

The development of business models for SOG/UEH and SVF was organized in three iterations in Year 1, 2, and 3.

*Developed and updated SOG/UEH's business model.* For the first iteration in Year 1, the activity introduced the concept and a process for development of a business model. The project co-worked with SOG/UEH in elaborating a first business model for SOG/UEH. In this iteration, SOG/UEH decided to focus its business model on developing and implementing a dynamic and adaptive business model that supports the activities of UEH and SOG/UEH, allowing for the expansion of services while maintaining academic integrity and quality. Concretely, the business model report provided recommendations on three areas: transition to autonomy, expansion and growth, and internal processes.

In the second iteration, updated in Year 2, SOG/UEH decided to further concretize and operationalize its business model. For this purpose, the priorities of the second iteration were a responsive market-driven organization and improved sustainability through streamlined

operations, and increased autonomy. The business model report provided recommendations on four areas: leadership and strategy, context, value creation, and autonomy and operation.

Finally, in Year 3, SOG/UEH decided that the priorities of this iteration were to provide an update on SOG/UEH's progress since the initial articulation of its business model during 2019, with emphasis on progress during 2020 and 2021, and the necessary updates required with the contextual changes for an updated Strategy for 2022-2025. The recommendations accompanying this revised strategy and business model focus on continuing to develop a new culture within SOG/UEH, driven by multidisciplinary agile leadership and execution teams. Finally, this review paid special attention to the sustainability of the SOG/UEH Strategy and Business Model, following completion of USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity in 2022.

*Developed and updated SVF's business model.* SVF was familiar with the concept and process of business model. Therefore, SVF asked the activity to support improvement of its existing business model, specifically, SVF wanted its provincial programming to be the priority for business model support. In response, the business model report developed with SVF provided one-year and long-term recommendations. The one-year recommendations included: 1) conduct in-depth, recurring market and entrepreneur assessments, 2) focus on closer client critical needs and international support for provincial product development, 3) improve marketing, sales and outreach, and 4) focus on financial sustainability in 2020. The long-term recommendations were: 1) enhance product portfolio with further refinement and international certifications; 2) ensure staff are aware of best practices in ecosystem and entrepreneurship development; 3) Recognize and maintain focus on institutional core competencies when deciding on activities, whether new or existing; and 4) Develop relationships with partners who can serve as institutional mentors, especially regarding provincial procurement and donor funding processes.

In the second iteration, developed in Year 2, SVF decided to focus more on operational and management to implement the business model. SVF has transformed itself from a foundation with a reputation for offering free programs centered on startups, entrepreneurship, and innovation in Vietnam to an organization looking to earn revenue for the value it provides in building the inclusive economic growth of Vietnam's provinces. For this purpose, the business model report provided SVF recommendations on: 1) revenue model, 2) product line with focus on provincial governments, 3) marketing, sale and outreach, 4) SVF operation in 2021, and 5) 2021 financial projection.

In the final iteration, SVF decided that its business model should focus on SVF moving from implementing shorter and smaller budget projects to more extended and larger revenue projects. This means it needs to continue to strengthen its financial systems and project management while developing a high-quality MEL system. In addition, SVF needs to increase its content production, including items such as project case studies and data for international development organizations and national governments. Finally, this review pays special attention to the sustainability of the SVF Business Model, following completion of USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity in 2022.



Photo: USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity facilitated the annual Pause and Reflect Session with SOG/UEH, March 2021

## INTEGRATION OF CROSSCUTTING ISSUES

**Annual Work Plan.** The project facilitated annual work planning sessions to present against the project objectives and approach and elaborate the annual work plan, with participation of USAID and the HICD working groups from the two project partner institutions (SOG/UEH and SVF), as well as subcontractors HSOG-PSU and J.E. Austin Associates.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan.** The project developed the MEL Plan with inputs from partner institutions (SOG/UEH and SVF), as well as subcontractors HSOG-PSU and J.E. Austin Associates, including the verification of the indicators and targets with the partner institutions. To respond to the comments and recommendations in data quality assessment report in November 2020, the project updated the MEL plan by changing the indicator targets from cumulative to annual and updating the Performance Indicator Reference Sheets (PIRS) of some indicators. The MEL Plan was also updated to incorporate the revisions of the indicator and targets in the Performance Work Statement (PWS) in the contract modifications in 2020 and 2021.

**Quality Assurance and Surveillance Plan (QASP).** The project developed the QASP to provide a systematic method for USAID to monitor progress on the PWS. The QASP corresponds to overall performance objectives and standards, including the timeliness, accuracy, quantity, and quality of each objective, and ensures quality control mechanisms are in place to deliver results. It provided measurable criteria that determine whether required deliverables/outputs have

been achieved. Along with the revision of the MEL Plan and contract modifications, the project revised all QASP indicators from cumulative to annual, incorporated the revisions in the PWS in contract modifications, and provided the PIRS for the indicators that had not been defined in the MEL Plan.

*Human and Institutional Capacity Development.* The project utilized USAID's HICD framework to gauge the relative strengths and weaknesses of each institution by undertaking HICD assessments with each institution. HICD assessments will identify capacity and current performance within the institutions, as well as how they relate to the other government, university, and private sector actors operating in the economic governance space. HICD will allow the institutions to define what success will look like in the Vietnamese context, set performance measures, and develop tailored capacity strengthening plans.

HICD assessments were conducted annually by SOG/UEH and SVF with the project facilitation. The process starts with a contextual - 5R analysis, following by HICD scoring three areas: i) executive leadership, ii) operation and training, and iii) personnel and administration to identify capacity gaps of the institution for fulfilling its strategic objectives. The root cause analyses of the identified capacity gaps were conducted in order to develop a solution package which will be prioritized according to the three objectives of the project to elaborate the project annual capacity strengthening plan.

Both SOG/UEH and SVF's scores in both Year 2 and Year 3 increased over the baseline in all categories. By the end of Year 2, SOG/UEH's scores increased over the baseline in the categories as follows: Executive Leadership: 22.1%; Operations and Training: 19.8%; and Personnel and Administration: 21.8%; with an average increase of 21.2%. SVF's scores increased over the baseline in all categories as follows: Executive Leadership: 22.51%; Operations and Training: 17.01%; and Personnel and Administration: 15.28%, with an average increase of 18.27%. Thus, the project successfully met the target of percent of organizations with improved performance and exceeded the acceptable quality level of 14% increase over the baseline at the end of Year 2.

*Develop institutional capacity strengthening plans.* Based on the annual updated HICD assessments, the project used the assessment findings to assist SOG/UEH's and SVF's HICD working groups to set priorities, define next steps, and develop tailored institutional capacity strengthening plans that respond to each institution's strengths and opportunities for improvement and specify clear roles and responsibilities for each activity, as well as timelines for implementation. The project held annual workshops with SOG/UEH and SVF to develop these plans, which form the basis for guiding the project's targeted technical assistance to support SOG/UEH and SVF as they implement their capacity strengthening plans.

*Pause and Reflect Sessions.* The project conducted annual pause-and-reflect (P&R) learning sessions with SOG/UEH and SVF to reflect on entrenched issues, monitor progress against desired outcomes, address obstacles to strengthen outcomes, and identify lessons learned from implementation. The sessions took stock of how activities are progressing and whether changes need to be made to the implementation approach. During the sessions, the participants analyzed the project progress, reflected on the best practices, addressed the remaining gaps and

challenges, identified lessons learned, and proposed solutions and recommendations for improving the project. SOG/UEH and SVF team members participated actively in the discussions and provided valuable feedback, opinions, and recommendations for adapting the project activities moving forward.

Based on the findings and recommendations from the P&R sessions, the project adopted the partners' recommendations to improve the quality of deliverables and the coordination and collaboration with the partner institutions. The recommendations from the P&R sessions have been put into action, contributing to the improvements in project management, implementation, and coordination, as well as the delivery of technical assistance and services. A mechanism of co-production and co-development of project deliverables was fostered, resulting in stronger engagement by the partners and strengthened local ownership. Coordination and communication improved thanks to more structured procedures for the activities and monthly meetings between the project team and partners. All project partners showed technical capabilities, commitment, trust, sharing, and flexibility towards value creation.

The third and final P&R session in March 2022 reviewed and analyzed the overall project progress, reflected on best practices, challenges, and opportunities, identified lessons learned, and proposed solutions and recommendations for sustaining project results after project termination. Additionally, participants discussed changes/improvements for future projects in terms of project design, approach, and implementation. Both SOG/UEH and SVF highly appreciated the great benefits and impact the project has brought about for supporting their capacity strengthening services for provincial officials, and ultimately, provincial economic governance capacity.

*Learning Summit.* USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity convened a learning summit on July 24, 2020 in Vung Tau city with the collaboration of the USAID Learns project. The Learning Summit brought together NAPA, SOG/UEH, and SVF along with the project team to reflect on Year I activities. The learning summit aimed to increase the institutions' understanding of provincial economic governance issues. Each institution shared broad lessons learned in the past year of implementation and discussed common challenges and opportunities among them. Participants reflected upon how each institution is contributing to provincial capacity development and discussed how these successes can be adapted and replicated in other institutions, as well as ways to collaborate or improve existing collaboration to ensure outcomes are sustainable. The focus of the learning summit was to develop a greater sense of ownership toward the project and foster collaboration and coordination among the partner institutions.

As a result of the learning summit, the project team and the partner institutions identified learned lessons, best practices, opportunities, challenges, and recommendations and incorporated them into partner institutions' capacity strengthening plans as well as coordination plans among the three institutions.

## CHALLENGES AND LESSONS LEARNED

### COVID-19 pandemic

The challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak and resulting social distancing requirements led to delays in implementing of the activities scheduled for the period of 2020 and 2021. Thanks to flexibility, adaptability, and collaboration of all project stakeholders all the project deliverables stipulated in the contract with USAID were implemented. Lessons learned: flexibility, adaptability and collaboration are conditions for implementation in disruptive environment.

### Contract mechanism

The rigid nature of a fixed-price contract presents challenges in implementing a responsive, dynamic technical assistance project over several years. The project team, partners, and USAID adapted and improved at working within this structure to effectively deliver assistance, however a more flexible mechanism could have allowed for this with greater efficiency. Lesson: take into careful consideration a contract mechanism which fits the project characteristics and local context.

### Engagement challenges with NAPA

Chemonics encountered two main challenges engaging with NAPA that ultimately led to their removal from the project. First, Chemonics engaged with each of the local institutions during the design phase to discuss and co-design approaches that ultimately led to the adoption of an HICD approach and related elements (i.e. GESI, MEL, and business models support). Working with NAPA at this stage proved challenging. The institutional and bureaucratic requirements within NAPA limited the opportunity for deep engagement with organizational leadership. Within large organizations like NAPA, fully co-designing and socializing a program requires a significant amount of time and formalities not afforded at this phase of the project design. Nonetheless, Chemonics engaged with key representatives such as NAPA's General Director of International Cooperation Department, incorporated their inputs and perspectives, and secured buy-in. Upon award and initial implementation phase, the project was able to engage NAPA leadership more directly, however these interactions revealed a misalignment between leadership priorities and the project design. USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity's contract mechanism and design exacerbated this by requiring adherence to a specific set of deliverables and associated deadlines. This limited the project's ability to give the time and flexibility needed for a longer engagement and co-design period that would be more responsive to NAPA's priorities and concerns. Notably, Chemonics had greater access and involvement from SVF and SOG/UEH staff and leadership at the design phase, which led to a smoother start-up and successful implementation of the HICD approach throughout the life of project. Lesson learned: it is important to have a strong understanding of the complexities and political economy of working with large bureaucratic organizations like NAPA and incorporate extra time and flexibility needed to fully engage with key stakeholders within the organization and secure buy-in.

Second, bureaucratic complexities and challenges extended beyond NAPA and were largely beyond the manageable control of the project. After NAPA expressed their lack of support for HICD, they and the project redesigned the capacity building support program. Per NAPA's requirements, the project formalized this program in a draft MOU as a key step in gaining authorization to initiate the program. However, despite full buy-in from NAPA for the MOU, executing this became tied up with getting project approval from the Ministry of Home Affairs. The project worked for more than a year with NAPA to secure the Ministry's attention and approval to allow implementation to commence. Delay was tied to two main factors. First, the Ministry was in a prolonged process of a leadership transition and there was a reluctance of the outgoing minister to sign off on the program before his successor took office. Second, the COVID-19 pandemic shifted attention of relevant officials and made it extremely difficult to get their attention on signing off on the MOU and issuing project approval. Lesson learned: to the extent possible, project approval should be secured prior to the start of the project. This serves as approval for implementation and engagement and also removes political hurdles within agencies under the responsible Ministry.

### **Participation of local partners in the project design**

While Chemonics engaged with NAPA, SOG/UEH and SVF during the proposal design phase, this was limited by time constraints and institutional limitations. A more concerted period of engagement at the design phase and/or a longer stakeholder buy-in and co-design period at the start of the project could support alignment with partner goals. Lesson learned: substantive participation of the project partners in the project design creates their ownership of the project and ensures the project better meet their needs.

### **Project might be an additional burden for the partners**

The SOG/UEH and SVF teams are typically very busy with their organizational workplans, and expectations for intensive participation in project work often translates into an additional workload. Indeed, many staff from these two organizations expressed the heavy workload. To address this issue the project adapted its workplan to the availability of the partners and co-designed with the partners the project activities to ensure they better meet the real needs of the partners. Lesson learned: to negotiate with the partner to integrate the project implementation into their workplan.

### **Establish clear mutual expectations and agreement**

It is critical to identify concrete activities at the outset to secure buy-in, build ownership of the process, and ensure agreement on outcomes so all partners understand the staff and time resource required to meet shared objectives. We must ensure that we are speaking the same language. Cultural understanding from the start is critical to understanding motivations and incentives from organizational and strategic perspectives as well as how to scale up successful programs aligned with provincial priorities and authorities. Lesson learned: establish clear mutual expectations and agreement in the first step will secure buy-in and strengthen local ownership.

### **Follow up support to enhance application**

SOG/UEH and SVF sometimes faced the challenge of putting the new knowledge and skills into practice and needed further support from the project. Therefore, the project continued to

provide coaching and follow-up support after delivering a training or report. For instance, after GESI training in the first year to provide basic knowledge on GESI, the project continued to coach SOG/UEH's lecturers in the second year to develop GESI-mainstreamed curricula, through specific, hands-on guidance throughout the process. As a result, the lecturers completed the GESI mainstreaming in the courses and delivered them to the provincial officials. Lesson learned: Training alone was not sufficient. The project should spend time on practice, follow up, and application, using “theory-framework-application” modality, when providing technical assistance to the partner institutions.

### **Include more of the local expertise**

International consultants provide world-class expertise and extensive experience but may lack understanding of local context. To address this, the project mobilized local consultants to work with international consultants in delivering project results, such as MEL, GESI, Adult Learning Certificate Program, business model development. This could mitigate challenges from international team distance and travel restrictions. Lesson learned: Tap into local expertise with understanding of context and culture.

### **Use collaborative tools**

The project had to work with different counterparts with tight schedules for activities and deliverables. Better use of collaborative tools can help partners work more efficiently and effectively so there is no confusion around materials, timelines or opportunities to shape input and outcomes. Lesson: Utilizing a shared online platform/program which is user-friendly for partner activities will facilitate all partners seeing the same information in a timely manner in preparation of events or activities.

### **Enhance collaboration among partners**

There was sometimes a lack of collaboration among SOG/UEH, SVF, and other stakeholders. There were difficulties in finding common ground between partners to leverage strengths and gain efficiencies. There were differences among partner institutions in organizational goals and approaches, people, technology, methodology, measurement, and policy. This led to delays in some joint activities, e.g. the second market needs assessment. Lesson: A scheme to foster collaboration among the partners should be prioritized and developed with project facilitation in the early step.

## **MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING**

USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity implemented MEL to rigorously measure progress, guide planning and implementation decisions, and support learning and reflection among the project partners. A total of 30 indicators and targets were defined in the project MEL plan and QASP and tracked throughout the project. The project met or exceeded all but one of the targets. Notable results include the following (A full list of indicators, targets and results can be found in Annex 2):

- Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance (CBLD-9): The project achieved the life of project (LOP) target, with both SOG/UEH and SVF improving performance. HICD scores for SOG/UEH increased 22.1%, 19.8% and



- 21.8% and those for SVF increased 22.51%, 17.01% and 15.28% in the areas of Executive Leadership, Operations and Training, and Personnel and Administration respectively (against the target of 14% by end of Year 2 over the baseline).
- Number of project-trained staff delivering capacity development services for economic governance: A total of 37 project-trained staff (18 lecturers of SOG/UEH and 19 SVF staff) delivered capacity development services, 9% higher than the LOP target of 34 (15 for SOG/UEH and 19 for SVF). SOG/UEH surpassed the target by 3 persons due to its efficient collaboration with the lecturers of other schools who attended the project trainings and delivered the courses to the students on economic governance.
  - Number of clients using capacity development services offered by staff from project-assisted institutions: The project reached a total of 4,132 clients, 41% above the LOP target of 2,916. SOG/UEH had a total of 1,349 clients, including provincial officials and students attending Master and Bachelor courses, over the target of 1,353 new clients. SVF had 1,998 clients, including provincial officials, representatives from socio-political organizations, lecturers and students from universities, and entrepreneurs, over the target of 748. This result from SVF is much higher than the target, due to higher demand from provinces for its training courses and its efficient combination of online and in-person trainings.
  - Percentage of clients who indicate that the capacity building services they received were responsive to their needs: both SOG/UEH and SVF got a high rate of satisfaction and responsiveness to clients' needs: 95% and 96% respectively versus the LOP target of 70% and 60% through the surveys of their clients.
  - Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations (for SOG/UEH): A total of 270 master students from SOG/UEH attended GESI-mainstreamed courses, 35% higher than the cumulative target of 200. This result is due to the lecturers' effective mainstreaming of GESI issues into the curricula for delivery to the students with the training and coaching of the project.
  - Number of provincial officials annually pursuing capacity development services that address provincial needs from SVF and SOG/UEH: A total of 1,616 provincial officials pursued capacity development services, 11% higher than the LOP target of 1,456, due to higher demand from provinces for SOG/UEH and SVF' training courses.
  - Percentage of SPC-trained SOG staff who demonstrate improvements in job functions: 71% of SOG staff improved in job functions, as demonstrated by their application of modern teaching methods, incorporation of impact measurement or application of new knowledge in their teaching or research, against the target of 70%.
  - Number of hours of consulting provided to provincial officials (SVF): Total 2,527 hours of consulting, mentoring and training services were provided to provincial officials against the target of 2,300 hours.

The one indicator that the project was unable to achieve during the implementation period was "Number of provincial officials successfully completing Executive Leadership Program." The life

of project target was 700 and 505 officials completed the program. For the past two years, provincial governments have been squarely focused on responding to and recovering from the COVID-19 pandemic. In this atmosphere, SOG/UEH found it extremely difficult to secure the commitment of officials to participate in the program. SOG/UEH has two executive courses planned for late 2022 for 80 senior officials and has indicated that the project would achieve the target of 700 by the second quarter of 2023.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Better involve local partners in the designing phase of a project to ensure their ownership and commitments. Chemonics engaged heavily with local partners during the proposal development phase, however there were significant time constraints. Moreover, institutional formalities and internal approval requirements, particularly with the planned government institution (NAPA), limited the depth of co-design and commitment at this pre-project phase.
- Integrate project workplan and related deliverables into partner workplans to avoid project becoming additional burden for the partners. Despite considerable efforts to integrate, the rigid project contract mechanism made adjusting activity timing and assistance very difficult. Keeping the project on track meant asking project partners to prioritize project activities consistently, which was difficult given the rigorous project schedule and the considerable workload faced by partner institution staff outside of the project.
- Communicate early and clearly the financial and regulatory parameters of project operations. It is important for partners to have a clear understanding of what kind of support can be provided under the program and what responsibilities are expected of them. Early on in the project, this was not understood well by all, which led to misunderstandings about the rationale for project policies and decisions.
- Contract mechanisms such as fixed price contract should be carefully studied in terms of strengths, weaknesses, relevance, and lessons learned before adopting it for future projects. The fixed price mechanism can limit the responsiveness and dynamism required for technical assistance programs conducted over several years.
- Implementing HICD approach (and related elements) in large bureaucratic institutions like NAPA requires much more flexibility – both in terms of design and timelines. HICD, as implemented by USAID Strengthening Provincial Capacity, is rigorous and requires significant resource allocation from partners to participate in regular assessments, co-design of plans and activities, and capacity building activities. Marshaling these resources and adhering to strict timelines can prove prohibitively challenging for large, complex organizations.

## **ANNEX I. LIST OF SELECTED USAID STRENGTHENING PROVINCIAL CAPACITY REPORTS AND AND KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTS**

A comprehensive set of knowledge products produced under the project will be submitted separately along with this report.

<b>Title of the Report/Knowledge Product</b>
SOG/UEH's Institutional Capacity Strengthening Plans for Years 1, 2 and 3
SVF's Institutional Capacity Strengthening Plans for Years 1, 2 and 3
MEL System Report of SOG/UEH
MEL System Report of SVF
ICT-based MEL System of SOG/UEH
ICT-based MEL System of SVF
Institutional and Business Model Reports of SOG/UEH for Years 1, 2 and 3
Institutional and Business Model Reports of SVF for Years 1, 2 and 3
Human and Institutional Capacity Development Reports of SOG/UEH for Years 0, 1 and 2
Human and Institutional Capacity Development Reports of SOG/UEH for Years 0, 1 and 2
New Training Course Reports and Materials of SOG/UEH for Years 1, 2 and 3
Trainer Certificate Program Report and Materials for SOG/UEH for Year 1
Annual Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Assessment Report of SOG/UEH for Years 1, 2 and 3
Annual Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Assessment Report of SVF for Years 1, 2 and 3
Learning Summit Report for Year 1
Guidelines for Mainstreaming GESI in Training Programs for SOG/UEH
Guidelines for Mainstreaming GESI in the Service Delivery Cycle for SVF
Basic Knowledge Document on GESI for SOG/UEH

## ANNEX 2: MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING DATA SUMMARY

### MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND LEARNING PLAN INDICATORS

ID #	Indicator Name	Baseline value		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Life of Project (LOP)	Comments
<b>CDCS Development Objective I:</b> Governance enhanced to facilitate broader-based, sustainable growth								
<b>Activity Goal:</b> Improved efficacy and sustainability of economic reform-oriented provincial capacity building services								
<b>Activity Objective:</b> Strengthen the capacity and sustainability of local institutions' capacity building services								
1	Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance (CBLD-9)	0%	Target	67%	100%		100%	The project achieved the life of project (LOP) target, with both SOG/UEH and SVF improving performance. HICD scores for SOG/UEH increased 22.1%, 19.8% and 21.8% and SVF increased 22.51%, 17.01% and 15.28% for Executive Leadership, Operations and Training, and Personnel and Administration respectively (against the target of 14% by end of Year 2 over the baseline).
			Actual	67%	100%		100%	
			Deviation	0%	0%		0%	
2	Number of project-assisted institutions operating in accordance with a sustainable business model	0	Target	0	0	2	2	The project achieved the LOP target with both SOG/UEH and SVF operating in accordance with a sustainable business model, based on results of quick Sustainability Assessments conducted in April 2022.
			Actual	0	0	2	2	
			Deviation	NA	NA	0%	0%	
3	Number of project-trained staff delivering capacity development services for economic governance	0	Target	0	24 SOG/UEH: 10, SVF: 14	10 SOG/UEH: 5, SVF: 5	34 SOG/UEH: 15, SVF: 19	A total of 37 project-trained staff (18 lecturers of SOG/UEH and 19 SVF staff) delivered capacity development services, 9% higher than the LOP target of 34 (15 for SOG/UEH and 19 for SVF).
			Actual	0	31 SOG/UEH: 12, SVF: 19	6 SOG/UEH: 6 SVF: 0	37 SOG/UEH: 18 SVF: 19	

ID #	Indicator Name	Baseline value		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Life of Project (LOP)	Comments
			<b>Deviation</b>	NA	29%	-40%	8.8%	SOG/UEH surpassed the target by 3 persons due to its efficient collaboration with the lecturers of other schools who attended the project trainings and delivered the courses to the students on economic governance.
4	Number of new/revised training courses developed with project assistance to meet local economic governance capacity needs	0	Target	1 SOG/UEH: 1	2 <sup>2</sup> SOG/UEH: 1 NAPA: 1	1 SOG/UEH: 1	4 SOG/UEH: 3 NAPA: 1	The project achieved the revised LOP target of 3 new/revised training courses, including “Facilitative Provincial Government to Strengthen Economic Competitiveness”, “Innovation and Digital Transformation”, and “Innovation Leadership for Public organizations” in Years 1, 2, and 3 respectively.
			Actual	1 SOG/UEH: 1	1 SOG/UEH: 1 NAPA: 0	1 SOG/UEH: 1	3 SOG/UEH: 3 NAPA: 0	
			<b>Deviation</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	
5	Number of clients using capacity development services offered by staff from project-assisted institutions	1,546 SOG/UEH: 253 SVF: 508 NAPA: 785	Target	550 SOG/UEH: 450 SVF: 100	580 SOG/UEH: 450 SVF: 100 NAPA: 30 <sup>3</sup>	240 SOG/UEH: 200 SVF: 40	2,916 SOG/UEH: 1353 SVF: 748 NAPA: 785	The project reached a total of 4,132 clients, 41% above the LOP target of 2,916. SOG/UEH had a total of 1,349 clients over the target of 1,353 new clients. SVF had 1,998 clients over the target of 748.
			Actual	978 SOG/UEH: 553 SVF: 425	940 SOG/UEH: 202 SVF: 738	668 SOG/UEH: 341 SVF: 327	4132 SOG/UEH: 1349 SVF: 1998 NAPA: 785	
			<b>Deviation</b>	78%	62%	178%	41%	
6	Percentage of clients who indicate that the capacity building	0%	Target	SOG/UEH: 0% SVF: 0%	SOG/UEH: 60% SVF: 50%	SOG/UEH: 70% SVF: 60%	SOG/UEH: 70% SVF: 60%	Both SOG/UEH and SVF got a high rate of satisfaction and responsiveness to clients’ needs:

<sup>2</sup> It is noted that NAPA was removed from the project in 2021 so Y2 target was revised accordingly in the contract modification, from 2 to 1, and LOP target from 4 to 3. However, the target cannot be changed in Development Information Solution (DIS) as this is a PPR indicator.

<sup>3</sup> It is noted that NAPA was removed from the project in 2021 so Y2 target was revised accordingly in the contract modification. However, the target cannot be changed in Development Information Solution (DIS) as this is a PPR indicator.

ID #	Indicator Name	Baseline value		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Life of Project (LOP)	Comments
	services they received were responsive to their needs		Actual	SOG/UEH: 0% SVF: 0%	SOG/UEH: 94% SVF: 70%	SOG/UEH: 95% SVF: 96%	SOG/UEH: 95% SVF: 96%	95% and 96% respectively versus the LOP target of 70% and 60% through the surveys of their clients.
			Deviation	NA	SOG/UEH: 56% SVF: 40%	SOG/UEH: 36% SVF: 60%	SOG/UEH: 36% SVF: 60%	
7	Percentage of training staff from SOG/UEH trained to incorporate results of impact measurement into course design and delivery	0%	Target	0%	50%	70%	70%	71% of SOG/UEH staff from SOG/UEH incorporated impact measurement into course design and delivery against the target of 70%.
			Actual	0%	61%	71%	71%	
			Deviation	NA	22%	1%	1%	
8	Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations (GNDR-8) (for SOG/UEH)	0	Target	0	100	100	200	A total of 270 Master students from SOG/UEH attended GESI-mainstreamed courses, 35% higher than the cumulative target of 200. This result is due to the lecturers' effective mainstreaming of GESI issues into the curricula for delivery to the students with the training and coaching of the project.
			Actual	10	97	163	270	
			Deviation	NA	-3%	63%	35%	
9	Number of staff from project-assisted institutions trained in capacity development services	0	Target	0	48 SOG/UEH: 20 SVF: 28	20 SOG/UEH: 10 SVF: 10	68 SOG/UEH: 30 SVF: 38	A total of 70 staff (32 from SOG/UEH and 38 from SVF) were trained in capacity development services with project assistance, against the LOP target of 68.
			Actual	0	53 SOG/UEH: 23 SVF:30	17 SOG/UEH: 9 SVF: 8	70 SOG/UEH: 32 SVF: 38	
			Deviation	NA	10%	-15%	2.9%	
10	Number of hours of capacity development services provided to clients by project-trained staff from SVF and SOG/UEH	0	Target	0	1,400 SOG/UEH: 1000 SVF: 400	850 SOG/UEH: 600 SVF: 250	2,250 SOG/UEH: 1600 SVF: 650	A total of 3,970 hours of capacity development services were provided to clients, including 2,677 and 1,293 hours by trained staff of SOG/UEH and SVF, against the target of 1,600 and 650 hours
			Actual	0	1,953 SOG/UEH: 1,170	2,017 SOG/UEH: 1,507	3,970 SOG/UEH: 2,677	

ID #	Indicator Name	Baseline value		Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Life of Project (LOP)	Comments
					SVF: 783	SVF: 510	SVF: 1,293	respectively, or 76% higher than the LOP total target of 2,250.
			<b>Deviation</b>	NA	40%	137%	76%	

## QUALITY ASSURANCE SURVEILLANCE PLAN INDICATORS

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
<b>Goal: Strengthen the capacity and sustainability of local institutions' capacity building services</b>								
Partner institutions demonstrate performance improvement	1. Percent of USG-assisted organizations with improved performance (CBLD-9): end state: 100% Overall HICD scores for SVF and SOG/UEH: 5% increase over baseline by end of year 1 and 14% increase over baseline by end of year 2	0	Target	67%	100%		100%	The project achieved the LOP target, with both SOG/UEH and SVF improving performance. HICD scores for SOG/UEH increased 22.1%, 19.8% and 21.8% and SVF increased 22.51%, 17.01% and 15.28% for Executive Leadership, Operations and Training, and Personnel and Administration respectively (against the target of 14% by end of Year 2 over the baseline).
			Actual	67%	100%		100%	
			<b>Deviation</b>	0%	0%		0%	
SVF and SOG/UEH develop and implement sustainable business models	2. Number of institutions operating in accordance with a sustainable business model increased (includes SVF and SOG/UEH): end state: 2  Years 1-3 will be for development and refining of the business models. SVF and	0	Target	0	0	2	2	The project achieved the LOP target with both SOG/UEH and SVF operating in accordance with a sustainable business model, based on results of quick Sustainability Assessments conducted in April 2022.
			Actual	0	0	2	2	
			<b>Deviation</b>	NA	NA	0%	0%	

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
	SOG/UEH will reach the target of operating in accordance with a sustainable business model in Year 3.							
More staff from SVF and SOG/UEH utilize modern teaching methods/ competency-based training approaches when working with provincial officials	3. Number of SPC-trained staff from SVF and SOG/UEH, utilizing modern teaching methods//competency-based training approaches when working with provincial officials Annual: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 0; Year 2: 27; Year 3: 11; End state: 38 Cumulative: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 0; Year 2: 27; Year 3: 38; End state: 38 Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	0	Target	0	27	11	38	A total of 45 trained staff from SVF and SOG/UEH utilized modern teaching/ service delivery methods when working with provincial officials, including 25 from SVF and 20 from SOG/UEH. SOG/UEH invited the lecturers from other schools to join project trainings on modern teaching methods who then integrated these new methods in their trainings. SVF's experts also actively utilized alternative and innovative methods when delivering services to the clients.
			Actual	0	31	14	45	
			Deviation	NA	15%	27%	18%	
More staff from SVF and SOG/UEH deliver capacity development services for economic governance	4. Number of project-trained SVF and SOG/UEH staff delivering capacity development services for economic governance Annual: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 0; Year 2: 24; Year 3: 10; End state: 34 Cumulative: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 0; Year 2: 24; Year 3: 34; End state: 34	0	Target	0	24 SOG/UEH: 10, SVF: 14	10 SOG/UEH: 5, SVF: 5	34 SOG/UEH : 15, SVF: 19	A total of 37 project-trained staff (18 lecturers of SOG/UEH and 19 SVF staff) delivered capacity development services, against the LOP target of 34 (15 for SOG/UEH and 19 for SVF). SOG/UEH surpassed the target by 3 persons due to its efficient collaboration with the lecturers of other schools who attended the project trainings and delivered the courses to the students on economic governance.
			Actual	0	31 SOG/UEH: 12, SVF: 19	6 SOG/UEH: 6 SVF: 0	37 SOG/UEH : 18 SVF: 19	
			Deviation	NA	29%	-40%	8.8%	



Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
	Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target							
SVF increase economic governance capacity development courses	5. Number of economic governance capacity development courses offered by SVF. Annual: Year 0: 7; Year 1: 3; Year 2: 2; Year 3: 0; End state: 12 Cumulative: Year 0: 7, Year 1: 10; Year 2: 12; Year 3: 12; End state: 12 Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	7	Target	3	2	0	12	One more new governance capacity development course in the topic of public private dialogue was offered by SVF in Year 3, leading to a total of 13 courses against the LOP target of 12.
			Actual	3	2	1	13	
			Deviation	0%	0%	NA	8.3%	
More provincial officials use capacity building services that address provincial needs from SVF, SOG/UEH	6. Number of provincial officials pursuing capacity building services that address provincial needs from SVF and SOG/UEH Annual: Year 0: 356; Year 1: 450; Year 2: 450; Year 3: 200; End state: 1,456 Cumulative: Year 0: 356; Year 1: 806; Year 2: 1,256; Year 3: 1,456; End state: 1,456 Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	356	Target	450	450	200	1,456	A total of 1,616 provincial officials pursued capacity development services, 11% higher than the LOP target of 1,456, due to higher demand from provinces for SOG/UEH and SVF' training courses.
			Actual	698	218	344	1,616	
			Deviation	155%	48%	72%	11%	
<b>IR 1: Local institutions' understanding of and responsiveness to local economic governance capacity needs improved</b>								

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
Provincial officials satisfied with capacity building services offered by SVF and SOG/UEH staff	7. Percentage of clients (provincial officials) who indicate that the capacity building services they received were responsive to their needs: end state $\geq 60\%$ (SVF), $\geq 70\%$ (SOG/UEH)  Acceptable tolerance level: $\pm 3\%$ from target	0%	Target	SOG/UEH: 0% SVF: 0%	SOG/UEH: 60% SVF: 50%	SOG/UEH: 70% SVF: 60%	SOG/UEH : 70% SVF: 60%	Both SOG/UEH and SVF got a high rate of satisfaction and responsiveness to clients (provincial officials)' needs: 100% and 94% respectively versus the annual target of 70% and 60% through the surveys of their clients.
			Actual	SOG/UEH: 0% SVF: 0%	SOG/UEH: 94% SVF: 70%	SOG/UEH: 100% SVF: 94%	SOG/UEH : 100% SVF: 94%	
			<b>Deviation</b>	NA	SOG/UEH: 56% SVF: 40%	SOG/UEH: 42% SVF: 57%	SOG/UEH : 42% SVF: 57%	
More provincial officials providing feedback on impact of services offered by SVF	8. Percentage of clients (provincial officials) providing feedback on impact of services: end state: 60% of clients surveyed Acceptable tolerance level: $\pm 3\%$ from target	0%	Target	0%	50%	60%	60%	72% of the provincial officials provided feedback on impact of services against the target of 60% through the surveys of SVF's clients.
			Actual	0%	100%	72%	72%	
			<b>Deviation</b>	NA	100%	20%	20%	
Higher number of mentors providing services to provincial officials to more provinces	9. Number of mentors providing services to provincial officials: Annual: Year 0: 2, Year 1: 2; Year 2: 1; Year 3: 1; End state: 6 Cumulative: Year 0: 2, Year 1: 4; Year 2: 5; Year 3: 6; End state: 6	2	Target	2	1	1	6	With a total result of 8 mentors, SVF exceeded the target of 6 mentors providing services to provincial officials. This result is due to a change in the profiles of SVF's mentoring clients in Year 2, comprising not only provincial directors (as originally planned) but also middle management and experts, resulting in a higher number of mentors who are qualified to provide this service to provincial officials.
			Actual	2	4	0	8	
			<b>Deviation</b>	0%	300%	-100%	33%	
	10. Number of provinces included in mentoring services for provincial	4	Target	2	2	1	9	SVF got two new provinces of Binh Phuoc and Tay Ninh for its mentoring services in Year 3,

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
	officials: Annual: Year 0: 4; Year 1: 2; Year 2: 2; Year 3: 1; End state: 9 Cumulative: Year 0: 4; Year 1: 6; Year 2: 8; Year 3: 9; End state: 9		Actual	3	1	2	10	leading to the cumulative result of 10 over the LOP target of 9 provinces.
			Deviation	50%	-50%	100%	11%	
More SOG/UEH staff trained to incorporate results of impact measurement into course design and delivery	11. Percentage of SOG/UEH provincial training staff trained to incorporate results of impact measurement into course design and delivery: end state: 70%  Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	0%	Target	0%	50%	70%	70%	71% of SOG/UEH staff from SOG/UEH incorporated impact measurement into course design and delivery against the target of 70%.
			Actual	0%	61%	71%	71%	
			Deviation	NA	22%	1%	1%	
<b>IR 2: Local institutions' ability to design and deliver high quality capacity development opportunities improved</b>								
SVF training staff implementing gender and inclusiveness-sensitive capacity development services	12. Percentage of SPC-trained SVF staff who integrate gender and social inclusion considerations in their capacity development services as a result of SPC institutional capacity strengthening: End state: ≥ 40% Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	0%	Target	0%	30%	40%	40%	17/19 project-trained SVF staff responded that they integrated GESI in their capacity development services, or 89.5% of total, exceeding the LOP target of 40%. This result is due to strong commitment of SVF's leaders and staff in integrating GESI in their services.
			Actual	0%	43%	89.5%	89.5%	
			Deviation	NA	143%	124%	124%	
SOG/UEH staff demonstrate improvements in their job functions	13. Percentage of SPC-trained SOG/UEH staff who demonstrate improvements in job functions: End state: 70%  Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	0%	Target	0	50%	70%	70%	71% of SOG staff improved in job functions, as demonstrated by their application of modern teaching methods, incorporation of impact measurement or application of new knowledge in their teaching or research, against the target of 70%.
			Actual	0	54%	71%	71%	
			Deviation	NA	8%	1%	1%	

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
More provincial official completing Executive Leadership Program at SOG/UEH	14. Number of provincial officials successfully completing Executive Leadership Program Annual: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 250; Year 2: 250; Year 3: 200; End state: 700 Cumulative: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 250; Year 2: 500; Year 3: 700; End state: 700	0	Target	250	250	200	700	The project under- achieved the LOP target by 28%. Due to the priorities of provincial officials over the past two years, the officials were focused on COVID-19 action and pandemic economic relief to their communities. SOG/UEH has pledged to meet the target by early 2023.
			Actual	421	0	84	505	
			Deviation	68%	-100%	-58%	-28%	
More persons trained to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment	15. Number of persons trained with USG assistance to advance outcomes consistent with gender equality or female empowerment through their roles in public or private sector institutions or organizations (GNDR-8): Annual: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 0; Year 2: 100; Year 3: 100; End state: 200. Cumulative: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 0; Year 2: 100; Year 3: 200; End state: 200. Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	0	Target	0	100	100	200	A total of 270 Master students from SOG/UEH attended GESI-mainstreamed courses, 35% higher than the cumulative target of 200. This result is due to the lecturers' effective mainstreaming of GESI issues into the curricula for delivery to the students with the training and coaching of the project.
			Actual	10	97	163	270	
			Deviation	NA	-3%	63%	35%	
<b>IR 3: Local institutions' ability to generate demand and establish revenue streams for capacity development opportunities improved</b>								
Business models developed and implemented to generate sales at	16. Number of provinces included in training courses from SVF: Annual: Year 0: 9; Year 1: 0; Year 2: 1; Year 3: 1; End state: 11.	9	Target	0	1	1	11	SVF got one new province (Quang Nam) for its training service in Year 3. Cumulatively it got 12 provinces over the LOP target of 11.
			Actual	1	1	1	12	

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
SOG/UEH and SVF	Cumulative: Year 0: 9; Year 1: 9; Year 2: 10; Year 3: 11; End state: 11. Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target		<b>Deviation</b>	NA	0%	0%	9%	
	17. Number of provinces included in consulting services from SVF: Annual: Year 0: 7; Year 1: 0; Year 2: 1; Year 3: 1; End state: 9. Cumulative: Year 0: 7; Year 1: 7; Year 2: 8; Year 3: 9; End state: 9. Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	7	Target	0	1	1	9	SVF got no new province for consulting service in Year 3, but cumulatively reached 12 provinces over the LOP target of 9. This is due to SVF's new strategy to expand consulting market for its services in Year 2.
			Actual	1	4	0	12	
			<b>Deviation</b>	NA	300%	-100%	33%	
	18. Number of hours of consulting services provided to provincial officials by SVF: Annual: Year 0: 819; Year 1: 350; Year 2: 740; Year 3: 391; End state: 2,300 Cumulative: Year 0: 819; Year 1: 1,169; Year 2: 1,909; Year 3: 2,300; End state: 2,300 Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target	819	Target	350	740	391	2,300	Total 2,527 hours of consulting, mentoring and training services were provided to provincial officials against the target of 2,300 hours. This indicator has a broad meaning and measures number of hours of business development services (consulting, mentoring, coaching, and training), as defined in the PIRS.
			Actual	526	734	448	2,527	
			<b>Deviation</b>	50%	-0.8%	14.6%	9.8%	
	19. Number of provinces utilizing capacity development services from SOG/UEH: Annual: Year 0: 11, Year 1: 1; Year 2: 2; Year 3: 0; End state: 14. Cumulative: Year 0: 11; Year 1: 12; Year 2: 14; Year 3: 14; End state: 14.	11	Target	1	2	0	14	The project achieved the LOP target. Note: there was an error in the baseline value; it should be 10 provinces instead of 11. With 4 new provinces added from year 1-3, the project achieved total of 14 new provinces, meeting the LOP target.
			Actual	1	2	1	14	
			<b>Deviation</b>	0%	0%	NA	0%	

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
	Acceptable tolerance level: ±3% from target							
<b>HSOG-PSU and SOG/UEH Partnership</b>								
HSOG-PSU and SOG/UEH partnership strengthened	20. Number of sustainable partnerships developed: End state: 1	0	Target	0	0	1	1	The project achieved the target. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PSU and SOG was signed in August 2022.
			Actual	0	0	1	1	
			<b>Deviation</b>	NA	NA	0%	0%	
New or supplemental training courses or case studies developed jointly	21. Number of training courses/supplements or case studies developed to address provincial reform challenges: Annual: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 1; Year 2: 1; Year 3: 1; End state: 3 Cumulative: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 1; Year 2: 2; Year 3: 3; End state: 3	0	Target	1	1	1	3	The project achieved the LOP target of 3 new/revised training courses, including “Innovation and Digital Transformation”, “Facilitative Provincial Government to Strengthen Economic Competitiveness”, and “Innovation Leadership for Public organizations” in Years 1, 2, and 3 respectively.
			Actual	1	1	1	3	
			<b>Deviation</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Exchange visits conducted to facilitate partnership between HSOG-PSU and SOG/UEH	22. Number of HSOG-PSU faculty visits to SOG/UEH Annual: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 3; Year 2: 3; Year 3: 3; End state: ≥ 9. Cumulative: Year 0: 0; Year 1: 3; Year 2: 6; Year 3: 9; End state: ≥ 9.	0	Target	3	3	3	9	The project got one more visit of Dr. Ashley Hollenbeck from InPlace Ecocultural Learning Institute sharing materials and a presentation in Year 2 Course TOT (April 2022) and in the workshop with Vinh Long in community-based learning (Dec 2021), leading to total of 10 faculty visits against LOP target of 9.
			Actual	6	3	1	10	
			<b>Deviation</b>	100%	0%	-67%	11%	

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
Workshops focus on quality assurance of training, and applied research	23. Number of annual review and planning workshops conducted: ≥ 1 per year in Years 2-3 with an end-state goal of 2 by Year 3	0	Target	0	1	1	2	The project achieved the LOP target of 2 workshop (1 in Year 2 and 1 in Year 3).
			Actual	0	1	1	2	
			Deviation	NA	0%	0%	0%	
Workshops enable executives from SOG/UEH and PSU to convene and share knowledge of provincial government reforms	24. Number of joint executive leadership workshops for faculty and executive students conducted: ≥ 1 per year in Years 2-3 with an end-state goal of 2 by Year 3	0	Target	0	1	1	2	The project achieved the LOP target. The first workshop on Community-based Learning was planned for May 2021 but postponed to December 11, 2021 due to outbreak of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> wave of COVID-19. The second workshop on Strategy and Change Management for Digital Transformation was held on June 1 and 2, 2022.
			Actual	0	0	2	2	
			Deviation	NA	-100%	100%	0%	
Workshop increase executives' knowledge of provincial governance reforms.	25. Number of provincial governance reform workshops held for Vietnamese and U.S. executives: ≥ 1 per year with an end-state goal of 2 by Year 3	0	Target	0	1	1	2	The project achieved the LOP target. The first workshop on Collaborative Governance was planned for May 2021 but postponed to December 12, 2021 due to outbreak of the 3 <sup>rd</sup> wave of COVID-19. The second workshop on Collaborative Governance was held on May 17, 2022.
			Actual	0	0	2	2	
			Deviation	NA	-100%	100%	0%	
<b>B4 deliverables</b>								
Annual GESI assessment for SVF and	Number of GESI assessments conducted: ≥ 1 for each institution per year	2	Target	2	2	2	6	The project achieved the LOP target, with annual GESI assessments conducted with

Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
SOG/UEH conducted for better GESI mainstreaming into capacity building services of these institutions			Actual	2	2	2	6	SOG/UEH and SVF each year during 2019-2021
			Deviation	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Annual human and institutional capacity development (HICD) assessment conducted for SVF and SOG/UEH to measure performance improvement	Number of HICD assessments conducted: $\geq 1$ for each institution per year	2	Target	2	2	2	6	The project achieved the LOP target, with annual HICD assessments conducted with SOG/UEH and SVF each year during 2019-2021
			Actual	2	2	2	6	
			Deviation	0%	0%	0%	0%	
Tailored monitoring, evaluation and learning systems developed, piloted and institutionalized for SVF and SOG/UEH	Number of tailored MEL systems developed: $\geq 1$ for each institution  The MEL systems are piloted and operationalized from Year 2	0	Target	0	2		2	The project achieved the LOP target, with tailored MEL systems developed and transferred to SOG/UEH and SVF in Year 2
			Actual	0	2		2	
			Deviation	0%	0%		0%	
Sustainable business models of SVF and SOG/UEH are developed and enhanced	Number of business models developed, reviewed, and enhanced: $\geq 1$ for each institution	0	Target	2	2	2	6	The project achieved the LOP target, with annual business models developed for SOG/UEH and SVF each year during Year 1-3
			Actual	2	2	2	6	



Performance Standard	Acceptable Quality Level	Baseline value		Y1	Y2	Y3	LOP	Comments
for SVF and SOG/UEH to identify revenue stream to increase sustainability	The business models for each institution are updated annually		<b>Deviation</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	
SOH/UEH trainer certificate programs expose trainers to variety of adult learning teaching methodologies	Number of trainers' certificate program designed for SOG/UEH: ≥ 1 by end of year 1	0	Target	1	0	0	1	The project achieved the LOP target, with the trainers' certificate program designed and delivered to SOG/UEH in Year 1
			Actual	1	0	0	1	
			<b>Deviation</b>	0%	NA	NA	0%	
Learning events held to review progress, identify good practices understand and address challenges, and support knowledge transfer amongst partners	Number of learning events held: ≥ 1 per year [≥ 3 over life of project (LOP)]  Learning summit frequency: Year 1  Pause and reflect sessions frequency: Annually, Year 1 – Year 3	0	Target	3: 1 learning summit; 2 pause and reflect sessions (SOG/UEH, SVF)	2 pause and reflect sessions (SOG/UEH, SVF)	2 pause and reflect sessions (SOG/UEH, SVF)	7	The project achieved the LOP target, with 1 Learning Summit in Year 1, and P&R sessions with SOG/UEH and SVF annually from Year 1- Year 3
			Actual	3: 1 learning summit; 2 pause and reflect sessions (SOG/UEH, SVF)	2 pause and reflect sessions (SOG/UEH, SVF)	2 pause and reflect sessions (SOG/UEH, SVF)	7	
			<b>Deviation</b>	0%	0%	0%	0%	

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