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Laws and Practice on Land Management in the Context of Digital Transformation in Vietnam

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ABSTRACT

The Vietnamese real estate market has been complicated in the past 5 years; real estate prices have increased and fluctuated; land management activities are still limited and have not resolved many arising issues, creating obstacles in the process of buying, selling, using and transferring land by people and businesses. Social management practices in general, and land management in Vietnam in particular, are posing new requirements for state agencies, people and businesses when many new technologies are applied. These are requirements for digital knowledge and skills to implement the goal of national digital transformation to improve the efficiency of social management activities. In this study, the author mentions the content of land management, land management efficiency and factors affecting land management efficiency in the trend of digital transformation in Vietnam. Based on the built scales including "Land Management Efficiency", "Digital Data", "Digital Civil Servants" and "Digital Citizens", the author conducted a survey of 360 leaders of commune-level government agencies of 3 provinces representing 3 regions of Vietnam, including: Thai Binh Province (North), Ha Tinh Province (Central), Binh Duong Province (South). The survey aims to assess the practical effectiveness of land management and identify practical factors affecting the effectiveness of land management in Vietnam. From the survey results and analysis above, the author draws research conclusions and policy adjustment implications to improve the effectiveness of land management in Vietnam.

Keywords: Land management; Land management efficiency; Digital transformation; Vietnam.

INTRODUCTION

Land management in Vietnam is regulated by law in terms of authority for central and local government levels, under the unified management of the central government - the Government. The 2024 Land Law stipulates that the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment assists the Government in unified state management of land nationwide; local governments at all levels are responsible for state management of land within their localities (VNA, 2024).

At the local level, the government apparatus performs land management within the administrative unit, including 63 provincial-level governments, 705 district-level governments, 10599 commune-level governments, of which the commune-level government is the lowest level in the 3-level local government system (GSO, 2024). In that system, the commune-level government is not organized into a specialized agency apparatus, but is organized with 6 civil servant positions: Commander of the Commune Military Command; Office - Statistics; Land - Construction - Urban and Environment (for wards and towns)/or Land - Agriculture - Construction - Urban and Environment (for communes); Finance - Accounting; Justice - Civil Status; Culture - Society (VNA, 2025; VG, 2023). In land management activities at the commune level, cadastral - construction - urban and environmental officials (for wards and towns)/or cadastral - agricultural - construction - urban and environmental officials (for communes) are assigned the task of local land management (VNA, 2024).

According to the law, land management includes many contents such as: Surveying, measuring, evaluating, classifying land; creating cadastral maps, maps of current land use status and land use planning maps; managing land use planning and plans; managing land allocation, land lease, land recovery, land use purpose conversion; registering land use rights, creating and managing cadastral records, issuing land use right certificates... (VNA, 2024). In this study, the author focuses on the content of "land registration" - people declare and register with local authorities to be granted land use right certificates.

In the content of land registration, although commune-level civil servants are assigned the task of land management within a certain limited scope, mainly supporting the process of registration and granting land use certificates, this is a necessary process and has a direct impact on the process and results of land registration of the people. Especially in the context of digital transformation in Vietnam being implemented drastically and widely, research on land

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management associated with the requirements and content of digital transformation is necessary. With that meaning, this research was conducted to find solutions to improve the efficiency of land management in the trend of digital transformation in Vietnam.

2. RESEARCH OVERVIEW

Land is a valuable asset - a natural resource that cannot be self-produced and is an extremely special commodity. Discussing the role of land in the development of the country, Duyen, V.T. (2024) emphasized that land is a special means of production, an internal resource, a huge source of capital for the country, a leading important component of the living environment, a place to distribute population, build economic, cultural, social, security and defense facilities; has profound economic and social significance in the cause of building and defending the Fatherland. Therefore, land management and effective land management always play an important role and meaning for the development of the country and localities. According to the popular understanding, land management is the process of using and developing land effectively and sustainably, meeting the needs of socio-economic development of the country. According to the expression of Dat, B.T. (2022), land management is the activities related to establishing and implementing rules for the management, use and development of land along with the profits obtained from land and resolving disputes related to land ownership and use rights. In land management, management measures aim to form appropriate human awareness and behavior so that people can act with an attitude of mastery, knowing how to exploit and improve the land, then the land always brings crystallization efficiency in the products of human labor; on the contrary, this results in many negative effects for people (Khue, M., 2024). Therefore, preserving and protecting land resources reminds people to know how to exploit but also regularly improve the land for immediate goals and long-term benefits. This is a basic requirement and task for land management.

In Vietnam, land management is the process of using and developing land to serve many different purposes, but towards the most common goal of protecting national sovereignty, national security and socio-economic development. For many years, the Party and State of Vietnam, on the basis of building a regime of public ownership of land, have always paid attention to unified land management from the central to local levels. The issue of management is not simply about building and perfecting the system of land management agencies, but more importantly, it is about stating the management contents and strictly regulating the legal aspects of its contents. Therefore, talking about land management in the most general way means stating two sides of an issue: the system of land management agencies and the contents of the state management regime on land. As mentioned above, land management in Vietnam includes many contents according to the law, but in this study, the author focuses on the content of "land registration".

According to current law (VNA, 2024), land registration is the process by which people declare and register with local authorities to be granted land use right certificates. The effectiveness of land management is determined based on many criteria, both in terms of transparent and timely information, clear and quick administrative procedures, service attitude and people's satisfaction... In the context of national digital transformation in Vietnam, the application of many digital technologies in management activities has fundamentally changed the way state agencies operate. In essence, digital transformation is the next step in the development of information technology application: Normally, the application of information technology does not change existing processes or models; when the application of information technology at a high level leads to changes in processes or operating models, it is called digital transformation (MIC, 2021). The effectiveness of state management in general and the effectiveness of land management based on the above-mentioned statutory criteria are also reflected in the aspect of meeting the need for quick and accurate information and enhancing people's supervision on the basis of digital technology application. From there, the scale “Land Management Efficiency” (LME) was built for this study, including a number of contents: People have access to land information quickly, accurately and conveniently on a digital technology application platform (LME1); People carry out land registration procedures quickly, accurately and conveniently on a digital technology application platform (LME2); People are able to participate in building and monitoring the implementation of local land policies quickly, accurately and conveniently on a digital technology application platform (LME3).

In the context of digital transformation, state management activities in general and land management in particular are effective when ensuring the basic requirements for implementing digital transformation goals. According to MIC (2021), these are the conditions for digital infrastructure, digital human resources and digital society with people's understanding of digital knowledge and skills. Trung, N.S. (2022) based on the approach and content development of MIC (2021), emphasized three main factors, namely Digital Data, Digital Civil Servants, Digital Citizens. Specifically: (1) Digital data is formed through the digitization of documents using information technology applications, allowing people to quickly and accurately exploit data and information to carry out transactions and make legal requests with state agencies; (2) Digital civil servants - human resources performing public duties, they are equipped with basic, necessary digital knowledge and skills and are proactive, regularly updating this knowledge

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and skills to successfully complete assigned tasks in the digital environment: Consulting, organizing the implementation of assigned tasks in the digital environment; directing, operating, inspecting, supervising, reporting the results of performing assigned tasks in the digital environment; (3) Digital citizens - people with basic, necessary digital knowledge and skills to transact in the digital environment when participating in social activities and participating in the state's policy process. Based on those explanations, the author builds 3 scales - 3 factors affecting the effectiveness of land management in the context of digital transformation, which are: Digital data, Digital civil servants, Digital citizens.

- Firstly, the scale "Digital Data" (DD). Government agencies apply information technology to digitize documents such as policy documents, directives, and instructions on land management that have been issued and are still in effect, thereby forming digital data on land management. The content of the scale designed for this study includes: Local authorities have fully digitized documents such as policy documents, directives and instructions on land management to serve management, administration and information provision to people (DD1); People are guided by local authorities to exploit digital data to carry out transactions and make legal requests with government agencies in the land sector (DD2); People can exploit/proactively exploit digital data to carry out transactions and make legal requests with government agencies in the land sector (DD3).

- Second, the scale "Digital Civil Servants" (CS). Digital transformation has put state agencies in a position to build a team of digital civil servants, changing the working habits of civil servants from the real environment to the digital environment to effectively manage the state in general and land management in particular. The content of the scale designed for this study includes: Civil servants are equipped (trained) with basic digital knowledge and skills necessary to perform state management/land management tasks in the digital environment (CS1); Civil servants proactively and regularly update digital knowledge and skills to perform state management/land management tasks in the digital environment (CS2); Civil servants successfully complete assigned tasks in the digital environment: Advise and organize the implementation of state management/land management tasks in the digital environment; direct, operate, inspect, supervise, and report on the results of performing state management/land management tasks in the digital environment (CS3).

- Third, the scale "Digital Citizens" (DC). Digital transformation has also required each citizen to equip themselves with basic digital knowledge and skills necessary to interact socially and participate in state management in the digital environment, forming a digital society. The content of the scale designed for this study includes: People are supported by local authorities to equip (foster) basic digital knowledge and skills necessary to conduct transactions and participate in state management/land management in the digital environment (DC1); The majority of people have digital knowledge, skills and ethical standards when conducting transactions and participating in state management/land management in the digital environment (DC2); The majority of people have proficient access to digital information sources to conduct transactions and participate in state management/land management in the digital environment (DC3).

From the above overview, the author has built a theoretical framework on Land Management Efficiency and factors affecting Land Management Efficiency in the context of digital transformation. The research model is determined to include 3 independent scales/variables: "Digital Data" (DD), "Digital Civil Servants" (CS), "Digital Citizens" (DC) and 01 scale/dependent variable "Land Management Efficiency" (LME). The above scales include 12 observed variables, designed by the author into 12 questions in the survey and measured by a 5-level Likert scale: 1 - Strongly disagree; 2 - Disagree; 3 - No opinion; 4 - Agree; 5 - Strongly agree (Table 1, Figure 1).

Table 1. Theoretical framework

No	Scales	Encode	Rating levels				
			1	2	3	4	5
I	**Digital Data**	**DD**					
1	Local authorities have fully digitized documents such as policy documents, directives and instructions on land management to serve management, administration and information provision to people	DD1					
2	People are guided by local authorities to exploit digital data to carry out transactions and make legal requests with government agencies in the land sector	DD2					
3	People can exploit/proactively exploit digital data to carry out transactions and make legal requests with government agencies in the land sector	DD3					
II	**Digital Civil Servants**	**CS**					

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No	Scales	Encode	Rating levels				
			1	2	3	4	5
1	Civil servants are equipped (trained) with basic digital knowledge and skills necessary to perform state management/land management tasks in the digital environment	CS1					
2	Civil servants proactively and regularly update digital knowledge and skills to perform state management/land management tasks in the digital environment	CS2					
3	Civil servants successfully complete assigned tasks in the digital environment: Advise and organize the implementation of state management/land management tasks in the digital environment; direct, operate, inspect, supervise, and report on the results of performing state management/land management tasks in the digital environment	CS3					
III	**Digital Citizens**	**DC**					
1	People are supported by local authorities to equip (foster) basic digital knowledge and skills necessary to conduct transactions and participate in state management/land management in the digital environment	DC1					
2	The majority of people have digital knowledge, skills and ethical standards when conducting transactions and participating in state management/land management in the digital environment	DC2					
3	The majority of people have proficient access to digital information sources to conduct transactions and participate in state management/land management in the digital environment	DC3					
IV	**Land Management Efficiency**	**LME**					
1	People have access to land information quickly, accurately and conveniently on a digital technology application platform	LME1					
2	People carry out land registration procedures quickly, accurately and conveniently on a digital technology application platform	LME2					
3	People are able to participate in building and monitoring the implementation of local land policies quickly, accurately and conveniently on a digital technology application platform	LME3					

Source: Compiled by the author through the review

Research model

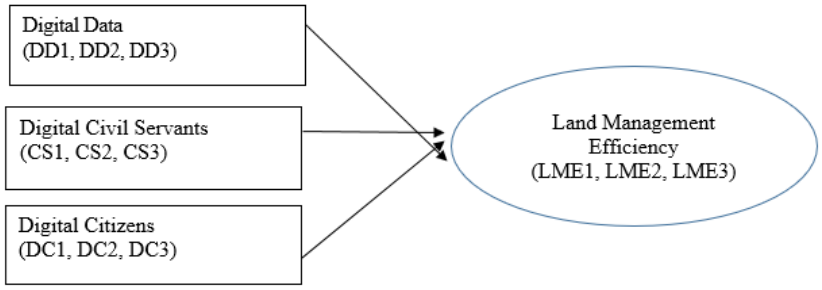

Figure 1. Research model

The theoretical research model was built to demonstrate the impact of the factors "Digital Data" (DL), "Digital Civil Servants" (CC), "Digital Citizens" (CD) on "Land Management Efficiency" (HQ). The author conducted empirical research in 3 localities of Vietnam with the hypothesis that: *Digital Data (H1), Digital Civil Servants (H2) and Digital Citizens (H3) have a positive impact, affirming the land management* effectiveness.

3. RESEARCH METHODS

In this study, qualitative research methods are used through collecting and analyzing secondary data to build a theoretical framework on factors affecting the effectiveness of land management. In addition, the author uses quantitative research methods through direct surveys of opinions of 360 leaders of commune-level government agencies of 3 provinces representing 3 regions of Vietnam, including: Thai Binh province (North), Ha Tinh province (Central), Binh Duong province (South). The survey is conducted in two steps: Preliminary survey and official survey.

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a) Preliminary survey

With 12 observed variables of the 4-scale research model, the minimum sample size required in quantitative research is N = 12*5 = 60 (Hair, J.F. et al., 2009). First, the author conducted a preliminary survey in Thai Binh province with a sample size of N = 120 leaders of commune-level government agencies (N > 60). The results of the preliminary survey in Thai Binh province showed that the scales and observed variables are reliable enough to be used in official surveys on a larger scale.

b) Official survey

The author conducted an official survey with 360 leaders of commune-level government agencies of 3 localities representing 3 regions of Vietnam as mentioned above: N > 60, ensuring reliability when conducting survey research. The survey was conducted selectively: Survey respondents were leaders of commune-level government agencies for 3 years or more; the author conducted preliminary interviews to capture information about the standards of the surveyed people and distributed survey forms based on their consent to answer. The survey results collected 360/360 valid forms, achieving a response rate of 100%.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The author conducts statistics and tests Cronbach' Alpha to identify the reliability of the scales and observed variables in the research model. According to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), the scale ensures reliability when it reaches Cronbach'alpha value > 0.6; observed variables are reliable when it reaches Corrected Item-Total Correlation value > 0.3. The statistical and testing results are shown in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Statistical results and testing results of the scale

Scales	Observed variables	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation	Cronbach' Alpha	Corrected Item-Total Correlation
1. Digital Data (DD)	DD1	360	3	5	4.30	.557	.761	DD1 = .621
	DD2	360	2	5	4.26	.559		DD2 = .617
	DD3	360	2	5	4.21	.603		DD3 = .599
2. Digital Civil Servants (CS)	CS1	360	2	5	4.24	.585	.722	CS1 = .609
	CS2	360	2	5	4.25	.589		CS2 = .601
	CS3	360	3	5	4.14	.606		CS3 = .589
3. Digital Citizens (DC)	DC1	360	1	5	4.02	.612	.661	DC1 = .396
	DC2	360	1	5	3.96	.628		DC2 = .407
	DC3	360	1	5	3.98	.622		DC3 = .398
4. Land Management Efficiency (LME)	LME1	360	2	5	4.22	.584	.713	LME1 = .613
	LME2	360	2	5	4.17	.601		LME2 = .541
	LME3	360	2	5	4.08	.589		LME3 = .497
Valid N (listwise)		360						

Source: Author's survey results

Data in Table 2 shows that observations on the scales of "Digital Data" (DD), "Digital Civil Servants" (CS), "Digital Citizens" (DC) and "Land Management Efficiency" (LME) are all rated at an average level of Mean > 3.96, statistically significant according to the determined Likert scale (1-5). Commune-level government leaders all affirmed the effectiveness of local land management, reflected in the aspect of people accessing land information; performing land registration procedures and participating in policy making, monitoring the implementation of local land policies quickly, accurately and conveniently on the basis of applying digital technology to a certain extent, in accordance with the practical situation of the level of knowledge and the development of the local digital society.

Among the above scales, the observed variables of the "Digital Citizens" (DC) scale were assessed at the lowest level with Mean (DC1) = 4.02, Mean (DC2) = 3.96, Mean (DC3) = 3.98, showing that local leaders assessed that people have certain limitations in digital knowledge and skills when conducting transactions and participating in state management/land management in the digital environment. That poses a task for local authorities, that local authorities need to pay attention to implementing support policies to equip (foster) basic digital knowledge and skills necessary to conduct transactions and participate in state management/land management in the digital environment. Along with that is the proactive learning and research of people so that people have the ability to proficiently access digital information sources when conducting transactions and participating in state management/land management in the digital environment.

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That is of great significance, creating initiative for local authorities to successfully implement the goal of digital transformation and improve the efficiency of land management in the digital environment.

All 4 scales and 12 observed variables in the model have standard test values: Cronbach's alpha > 0.6; Corrected Item-Total Correlation > 0.3. These scales continue to be used to conduct exploratory factor analysis to test the theoretical model of the study. Exploratory factor analysis with Varimax rotation is performed to preliminarily assess the unidimensionality, convergent value, and discriminant value of the scales to have more basis for drawing research conclusions about the suitability of the initial theoretical model. The results of exploratory factor analysis are shown in Table 3 and Table 4 below.

Table 3. Total Variance Explained

KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.802
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	2945.852
	df	133
	Sig.	.000

Total Variance Explained

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	7.475	41.526	41.526	7.475	41.526	41.526	4.715	26.197	26.197
2	4.750	26.391	67.916	4.750	26.391	67.916	4.303	23.907	50.104
3	1.789	9.941	77.857	1.789	9.941	77.857	4.022	22.342	72.447
4	1.136	6.312	84.170	1.136	6.312	84.170	2.110	11.723	84.170
5	.648	3.601	87.771						
6	.436	2.423	90.194						
7	.399	2.215	92.409						
8	.341	1.897	94.306						
9	.245	1.361	97.356						
10	.177	.983	98.339						
11	.099	.549	98.888						
12	.021	.113	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Source: Author's survey results

Table 4. Rotated Component Matrix

Rotated Component Matrix[a]

Scales	Observed variables	Component			
		1	2	3	4
Digital Data (DD)	DD1	.814			
	DD2	.812			
	DD3	.793			
Digital Civil Servants (CS)	CS1		.821		
	CS2		.788		
	CS3		.816		
Digital Citizens (DC)	DC1			.778	
	DC2			.783	
	DC3			.764	
Land Management Efficiency (LME)	LME1				.805
	LME2				.789
	LME3				.775

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Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis. Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization. a. Rotation converged in 6 iterations.

Source: Author's survey results

In quantitative research, according to Hair, J.F. et al. (2009), exploratory factor analysis was performed in accordance with the data set through the values: 0.5 ≤ KMO ≤ 1; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level Sig. < 0.05; Eigenvalue ≥ 1; Total Variance Explained ≥ 50%; Factor Loading ≥ 0.5. The data in Table 3 and Table 4 show that:

+ KMO coefficient = 0.802 > 0.5, confirming that exploratory factor analysis is appropriate for the data set; Bartlett's test has an observed significance level of Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05, showing that the observed variables have a linear correlation with the representative factor. Total Variance Explained with Cumulative % = 84.170% > 50% (Table 3), showing that 84.170% of the variation of the representative factors is explained by the observed variables; all observed variables have Factor Loading > 0.5 (Table 4), showing that the observed variables have good statistical significance. The theoretical research model initially proposed is consistent with the survey research practice.

+ The observed variables were extracted into 04 factors corresponding to the 04 initial factors with Eigenvalues > 1 (Table 3), continuing to confirm the suitability of the initial research model. And the initial research model was kept intact, including: 03 independent variables "Digital Data" (DD), "Digital Civil Servants" (CS), "Digital Citizens" (DC) and 01 dependent variable "Land Management Efficiency" (LME) with 12 observed variables with good statistical significance, which can perform multivariate linear regression analysis to examine the relationship of the scales in the model. The results of the regression analysis are shown in Table 5, which is the basis for the author to draw research conclusions.

Table 5. Multivariate regression results

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	VIF
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1(Constant)	1.214	.522		17.086	.000	
Digital Data (DD)	.407	.304	.422	11.124	.000	1.776
Digital Civil Servants (CS)	.342	.287	.378	8.596	.000	1.802
Digital Citizens (DC)	.281	.189	.194	5.585	.000	1.811
a. Dependent Variable: Land Management Efficiency (LME) R Square: 0.745; Durbin-Watson: 2.015						

Source: Author's survey results

The data in Table 5 shows that:

+ R Square = 0.745, confirming that the scales "Digital Data" (DD), "Digital Civil Servants" (CS), "Digital Citizens" (CD) explain 74.5% of the variation in the scale "Land Management Efficiency" (LME); 1 < VIF < 2, showing that the regression model does not have multicollinearity; Durbin-Watson = 2.015 (1 < d <3), showing that the regression model does not have autocorrelation, confirming that the scales "Digital Data" (DD), "Digital Civil Servants" (CS), "Digital Citizens" (DC) are independent and have an impact on the scale "Land Management Efficiency" (LME), confirming the suitability of the theoretical research model with the survey data set.

+ The regression coefficients of the three independent variables "Digital Data" (DD), "Digital Civil Servants" (CS), "Digital Citizens" (DC) are all statistically significant with Sig. = 0.000 (Sig. < 0.05) and have positive values: B(DD) = 0.407, B(CS) = 0.342 and B(DC) = 0.281, confirming the positive relationship between the three independent variables "Digital Data" (DD), "Digital Civil Servants" (CS), "Digital Citizens" (DC) and 01 dependent variable "Land Management Efficiency" (LME); hypotheses H1, H2, H3 are accepted; the initial research model continues to be confirmed to be appropriate.

Based on the generalized regression model of Hair, J.F. et al. (2009): Y = Bo + B1*X1 + B2*X2 + ... + Bi*Xi, the author determined the multivariate regression model of this study as follows:

$$LME = 1.2\ 46 + 0.407*DD + 0.342*CS + 0.281*DC$$

Based on the regression coefficient (B), it can be seen that the correlation level of the independent variables and the dependent variables in decreasing order is: "Digital Data" (DD), "Digital Civil Servants" (CS), "Digital Citizens" (DC). That contributes to further affirming the results of empirical research in Vietnam, that: (1) Vietnam is implementing digital transformation and positively impacting the effectiveness of state management/land management;

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accordingly, people have access to land information; carry out land registration procedures and participate in policy making, monitor the implementation of land policies at the local level quickly, accurately, and conveniently on the basis of applying digital technology to a certain extent, in accordance with the practical situation of the level of knowledge and the development of the local digital society; (2) Local civil servants have digital knowledge and skills to complete assigned tasks in the digital environment: Consulting and organizing the implementation of state management/land management tasks in the digital environment; directing, operating, inspecting, supervising, and reporting on the results of implementing state management/land management tasks in the digital environment; (3) The majority of people have certain limitations in digital knowledge and skills when conducting transactions and participating in state management/land management in the digital environment.

The above reality poses a task for local authorities, that local authorities need to pay attention to implementing support policies to equip (foster) basic digital knowledge and skills, necessary to conduct transactions and participate in state management/land management in the digital environment. Along with that is the proactive learning and understanding of the people so that they can fluently access digital information sources when conducting transactions and participating in state management/land management in the digital environment. That is of great significance, creating initiative for local authorities to successfully implement the goal of digital transformation and improve the efficiency of state management/land management in the digital environment.

Explaining this issue, the author emphasized that digital transformation with the meaning of developing digital government and digital society has set a requirement for each citizen to equip themselves with basic and necessary digital knowledge and skills and constantly update and supplement them to avoid being left behind. Digital transformation is not just the work of state agencies, but also the work of each citizen, requiring the synchronous participation of the entire social system. After all, digital transformation is to serve the people, so when each citizen becomes a digital citizen, digital transformation will be successful: The participation of the entire population is the factor that ensures the success of digital transformation, changing the national ranking. Therefore, digital transformation also has the meaning of a national revolution; when the entire population participates in digital transformation, they will become the factor that discovers suitable technology, finds or improves suitable solutions in the direction of positive interaction between state agencies and the people.

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