

Policy on Training and Fostering Ethnic Minority Cadres in Mountainous Areas of Vietnam: Current Situation and Innovation Orientation

Nguyen Khanh Ly¹, Nguyen Chi Hai²

¹Studying PhD at Vinh University; Head of Faculty of Basic Sciences, Nghe An University, Vietnam

²PhD, Faculty of Law and Political Science, An Giang University, Vietnam National University Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam

ABSTRACT: The article analyzes the policy of training and fostering ethnic minority cadres in Vietnam in the context of national integration and digital transformation. The paper approaches the theory of public administration and capacity development, using the method of policy analysis combined with in-depth interviews in several localities in Vietnam. The results show that the current policy system has contributed to improving the quality of ethnic minority cadres, but there are many limitations in program design, resources, monitoring mechanisms, and the connection between training and use. The study proposes four innovation directions for the period 2026–2035, including (1) developing digital capacity and skills; (2) enhancing regional specificity; (3) linking training with planning and output assessment; (4) promoting lifelong learning. Comprehensive policy reform will help promote the role of ethnic minority cadres as a core force in local governance, contributing to narrowing the regional development gap and promoting sustainable development.

KEYWORDS: Training and fostering; ethnic minority cadres; public policy; digital capacity; mountainous areas of Vietnam

1. INTRODUCTION

Vietnam currently has 34 provinces and cities in the midland and mountainous regions, accounting for over two-thirds of the country's natural area, and is home to more than 14 million people from 53 ethnic minorities. Localities with large ethnic minority populations are mainly located in the Northern Midlands and Mountains, North Central Coast and Central Highlands, which have a particularly important strategic position in terms of economy, politics, national defense and security; at the same time, these are areas facing many difficulties in infrastructure development, education, health care, digital transformation and state management (Thanh et al., 2024). In this context, the contingent of ethnic minority cadres in mountainous areas plays a key role in conveying the Party and State's policies and guidelines to the people, ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of local governance, contributing to strengthening the great national unity bloc (Nguyen et al., 2024).

Practice shows that the capacity of a number of ethnic minority cadres has not met the requirements of innovation and integration, in the context of digital transformation and knowledge-based economic development. Some prominent challenges include gaps in educational attainment, management skills and foreign languages, limitations in the application of information technology and digital skills, and a lack of specific training and development programs suitable for the language, culture and socio-economic conditions of mountainous areas (Hai et al., 2023). The planning, use and evaluation of training and development results are formalistic, lacking a connection between the actual needs of the locality and the content of the training program. These limitations affect the effectiveness of ethnic policy implementation, slowing down the process of sustainable and equitable development in mountainous areas.

Over the past years, the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State of Vietnam have issued many policies and guidelines on training and fostering ethnic minority cadres, typically Resolution No. 24-NQ/TW (2003) on ethnic work, Decree No. 05/2011/ND-CP on ethnic work, Decision No. 402/QĐ-TTg (2016) approving the Project "Developing the contingent of ethnic minority cadres, civil servants and public employees in the new period", and recently the Ethnic Work Strategy for the period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2045. This policy clearly affirms the consistent viewpoint of the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State in building a contingent of ethnic minority cadres with qualities, capacity, prestige, and equal to the task. However, after many years of implementation, the actual effectiveness of the policy has not been uniform among regions and levels; the institutionalization of specific policies has not been timely; and the assessment of training and development quality still lacks a quantitative basis and a monitoring system based on output results (Nghia, 2020).

Many domestic and international studies have focused on socio-economic development in ethnic minority areas, poverty reduction, or social security policies. Studies approaching from the perspective of public administration and public policy on

Policy on Training and Fostering Ethnic Minority Cadres in Mountainous Areas of Vietnam: Current Situation and Innovation Orientation

training and development of ethnic minority cadres are still few (Nguyen et al., 2023). This is a research gap that should be filled, especially in the context of Vietnam innovating its public administration model towards digital government, digital citizens and digital society, requiring grassroots cadres to have modern management capacity, digital skills and the ability to lead the community in a multicultural environment.

The article aims to comprehensively analyze the policy on training and fostering ethnic minority cadres in mountainous areas of Vietnam, based on the approach to modern public administration theory and public human resource development. The research focuses on three objectives including (i) Analyzing the policy framework and the current implementation of training and fostering ethnic minority cadres in mountainous areas; (ii) Evaluating the effectiveness, limitations and factors affecting the policy; (iii) Proposing orientations and solutions for policy innovation in the period 2026–2035, in line with the trend of sustainable development and national digital transformation.

To achieve the objectives, the study raises three research questions

- (1) How is the current policy on training and fostering ethnic minority cadres designed and implemented?
- (2) What are the difficulties, barriers and practical results of the policy implementation process?
- (3) What orientations will help improve the effectiveness, specificity and sustainability of the policy of training and fostering ethnic minority cadres in mountainous areas of Vietnam in the coming period?

Answering these questions will contribute to supplementing the theoretical basis for public policy research in the ethnic sector, which has profound practical significance in proposing solutions. It aims to develop a team of high-quality ethnic minority cadres, meeting the requirements of comprehensive, sustainable and inclusive development of mountainous areas in the current period of integration and digital transformation.

2. THEORETICAL REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Theoretical Basis for Training and Fostering Cadres in Public Management

In the field of public management, training and fostering cadres and civil servants is considered one of the key tools to improve institutional capacity, ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of the state apparatus. Developing public human resources is the process of equipping knowledge and skills, building administrative capacity, public ethics, and the ability to adapt to change. In Vietnam, the concept of "training" is understood as the process of equipping basic knowledge and skills to form the capacity to perform public duties; and "fostering" is the activity of updating and supplementing specialized knowledge and new skills to meet the requirements of specific tasks in each stage of development (Hai, 2025).

Cadres are people who hold leadership and management positions in the political system, responsible for planning, organizing, and supervising policy implementation. Ethnic minority cadres are those who perform administrative management functions, acting as a bridge between the State and ethnic communities, contributing to strengthening trust and encouraging people's participation in local governance. Capacity building for this team has a dual meaning of both enhancing the effectiveness of ethnic policy implementation and creating conditions for the development of specific human resources in mountainous areas.

From a theoretical perspective, the study applies the Competency-Based Approach and the Public Human Resource Development (PHRD) theory as the basis for analysis. According to the competency model, public service effectiveness is determined by a combination of competencies, including (1) professional competence (knowledge), (2) implementation skills (skills), and (3) attitudes and public service values (attitudes). When applied to ethnic minority cadres, these factors should be developed based on the specific cultural and social context of each region. The PHRD theory emphasizes investment in human resources as a source of public capital, considering training and development as a long-term strategy to ensure the sustainability of the state governance system.

2.2. Public Policy Approach to Training and Fostering Ethnic Minority Cadres

From the perspective of the public policy cycle, training and fostering ethnic minority cadres is seen as a specialized policy, including problem identification, policy formulation, implementation, monitoring, evaluation, and adjustment (Cong, 2024). In Vietnam, this policy is directly influenced by institutional factors (constitution, law), organization (administrative apparatus, training facilities), and society (needs of ethnic minority communities).

The three basic principles in the ethnic policy approach emphasized in the Ethnic Work Strategy 2021-2030 include (1) Equality and social justice - ensuring that all people have the opportunity to develop their capacity and participate in social management; (2) Respect and preservation of ethnic cultural identity - training must be appropriate to the language, customs, and lifestyle of each region; (3) Sustainable and inclusive development – linking cadre training with the goal of socio-economic development and digital transformation in mountainous areas. It can be affirmed that training and fostering ethnic minority cadres is a human resource activity, an important public policy tool to narrow the regional development gap, improve institutional capacity, and strengthen people's trust in the State.

2.3. Overview of Domestic and Foreign Research

In the world, multi-ethnic countries, including China, Laos, Thailand, and Indonesia, have implemented many policies to develop indigenous ethnic cadres in line with modern governance requirements. In China, the policy of training ethnic minority cadres is implemented in parallel with the strategy of "ethnic regional self-management", in which the state supports scholarships, language training, and transfers of ethnic minority cadres to the central government to improve management experience. In Laos, the "on-site training" model has been effectively applied, combining administrative theory and community leadership skills, helping to reduce costs and increase practicality. Thailand focuses on bilingual training and multicultural local governance, aiming at the integration of ethnic minority cadres in the administrative apparatus.

In Vietnam, many studies have mentioned the work of developing ethnic minority cadres, mostly focusing on the aspects of planning, use, and remuneration policies. The above studies are mostly descriptive and have not formed a comprehensive analytical framework on the policy of training and fostering ethnic minority cadres from the perspective of modern public administration. Moreover, there is a lack of regional comparison works, as well as an evaluation of policy effectiveness based on capacity and output-outcome. This gap shows the urgent need for an integrated approach, combining policy analysis, staff capacity, and sustainable development of mountainous areas in the same research model.

2.4. Analytical Framework

Based on the theoretical foundation and overview mentioned above, the article builds a policy analysis framework for training and fostering ethnic minority cadres based on four pillars, including (i) Policy Context, including institutions, financial resources, training facilities, and coordination mechanisms between government levels; (ii) Policy Design & Implementation reflected in program content, training forms (concentrated, in-service, online), and results evaluation mechanism; (iii) Competency and Motivation of ethnic minority cadres (Competency & Motivation). Associated with professional qualifications, digital skills, community management skills, and public service responsibility; (iv) Outcomes & Impacts are measured through the quality of public service performance, people's satisfaction, and the contribution level of ethnic minority cadres to sustainable development in mountainous areas.

The relationship between the four factors is envisioned as having a two-way impact: good policies will improve the capacity and effectiveness of ethnic minority cadres' public service; conversely, the cadre team's capacity and feedback are the basis for adjusting and perfecting policies. The analytical framework helps to clearly identify influencing factors, creating a foundation for proposing directions for policy innovation in the period 2026-2035.

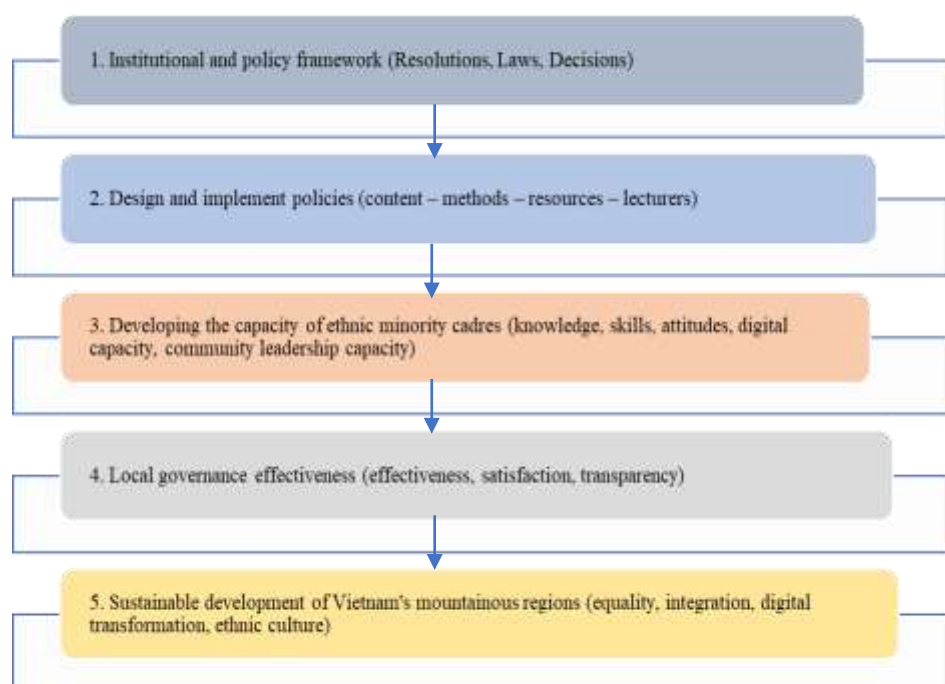


Figure 1. Impact of training and fostering policies for ethnic minority cadres

Figure 1 describes the value chain of impacts of training and fostering policies for ethnic minority cadres. When policies are designed and implemented effectively, the civil service and digital capabilities of officials are enhanced, local governance is improved, social trust is strengthened, and sustainable development in mountainous areas is promoted. A policy framework that reflects the two-way relationship is feedback from practice that will help perfect policies in the public administration cycle.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted based on the public policy approach combined with qualitative analysis to clarify the content, mechanism, and effectiveness of implementing policies on training and fostering ethnic minority cadres in mountainous areas of Vietnam. Based on the presented analytical framework, the study selected appropriate methods to ensure systematicity, scientificity, and the ability to generalize to practice. Documentary analysis was used to synthesize and analyze legal documents, resolutions, projects, and reports of the Government and the Ministry of Home Affairs. Key documents include the Law on Cadres and Civil Servants (2019); Decree 101/2017/ND-CP on training and fostering cadres, civil servants, and public employees; Decision 402/QĐ-TTg (2016) on developing ethnic minority cadres, along with the Summary Reports of the National Target Program for Socio-Economic Development in Ethnic Minority Areas for the 2021–2025 period.

The analysis of documents helps to identify the legal framework, objectives, and current policy orientations, and at the same time clarifies the inheritance and innovation in thinking about public human resource management in mountainous areas. The study uses the semi-structured interview method. In-depth interviews with 15 managers in the provinces of Cao Bang, Ha Giang, Son La (in the Northern Midlands and Mountains), and Gia Lai, Dak Lak (in the Central Highlands). The interview content focuses on three groups of topics: (1) Assessment of the current status of implementing policies on training and fostering ethnic minority cadres; (2) Difficulties, barriers, and lessons learned; (3) Proposing innovation orientations suitable for the context of digital transformation and the requirements of sustainable development in mountainous areas.

The collected data were coded and processed using content analysis methods to identify recurring themes, the relationship between policy, implementation, and results, thereby drawing conclusions and policy recommendations. To ensure reliability, the study conducted triangulation between secondary data sources and interview results. This approach helps the article have theoretical depth, reflect rich practices, and create a basis for proposing policy innovation orientations for the period 2026–2035.

4. RESEARCH RESULTS

4.1. Current Legal Framework and Policy Orientation

The training and fostering of ethnic minority cadres and civil servants is identified by the Communist Party of Vietnam and the State of Vietnam as a strategic task in developing human resources in mountainous areas and ethnic minorities. The system of legal documents in this field is relatively complete, demonstrating the consistent attention of the State.

Resolution No. 24-NQ/TW (2003) on ethnic affairs affirms that “training, fostering and using ethnic minority cadres is a key task to promote the internal strength of the ethnic community”. Conclusion No. 65-KL/TW (2019) of the Politburo emphasizes the requirement to “innovate the training, planning, and arrangement of ethnic minority cadres in association with the requirements of transforming local governance models”. Decree No. 05/2011/ND-CP on ethnic affairs and Decision No. 402/QĐ-TTg (2016) approving the Project on developing the contingent of ethnic minority cadres, civil servants, and public employees in the new period are two fundamental documents, establishing a comprehensive policy framework from objectives, objectives, to implementation mechanisms.

The strategy for ethnic affairs for the period 2021–2030, vision 2045 (issued with Decision 1719/QĐ-TTg, 2021) continues to affirm the importance of improving the quality of human resources in ethnic minority areas, in which priority is given to training grassroots cadres of ethnic minorities with qualities, capacity, prestige and understanding of the customs and languages of the people. The Law on Cadres and Civil Servants (2019), Decree 101/2017/ND-CP on training and fostering cadres, civil servants, and public employees, and guiding circulars of the Ministry of Home Affairs have created a unified legal corridor, clearly stipulating the process, content and methods of training, contributing to the institutionalization of the Party's policies on ethnic affairs.

Current policy documents have demonstrated inheritance, unity, and mutual complementarity, aiming at the goal of building a contingent of ethnic minority cadres to meet the requirements of sustainable development in mountainous areas. However, the implementation and organization of policy implementation in many localities still have many limitations, leading to results that are not commensurate with the set goals (Ta et al., 2023).

4.2. Achievements in Policy Implementation

Currently, the country has over 25,000 ethnic minority cadres, civil servants, and public employees, accounting for about 22% of the total number of civil servants at the commune level in mountainous provinces. This rate is not high compared to the population structure, but has had a positive change compared to the period 2010–2015, reflecting the initial effectiveness of training and development programs over the past decade.

Some notable results include the expansion and diversification of the system of training and development facilities. Provincial political schools, regional administrative academies, and political training centers have organized hundreds of short-term training courses for ethnic minority cadres each year. Many localities, such as Lao Cai, Son La, Dak Lak, Gia Lai, and An Giang (of which

Policy on Training and Fostering Ethnic Minority Cadres in Mountainous Areas of Vietnam: Current Situation and Innovation Orientation

the first four provinces are in the mountainous and midland regions, and An Giang has a mountainous area in the West of the Mekong Delta), have developed periodic training plans linked to job positions and job title standards.

The program content has been gradually innovated towards practicality and multi-disciplinary. Training courses have focused on updating knowledge on public administration, law, leadership skills, project management, digital skills, application of information technology, and policy communication skills in ethnic minority areas. Some pilot models, such as bilingual training in Vietnamese - Khmer or Vietnamese - H'Mong, have helped improve access to information for officials and people (Chaudhry, 2016).

Financial support and learning incentives have been implemented. Many provinces have issued regulations to support training and development costs, prioritize enrollment, arrange jobs after training, or send ethnic minority cadres to study master's and doctoral programs domestically and internationally (Dau Tuan, 2023). The initial connection between training institutions and local authorities has been established, contributing to improving training efficiency. Awareness of Party committees and authorities at all levels has been raised. The training and development of ethnic minority cadres has become an important indicator in the local human resource development plan, integrated into socio-economic development programs in ethnic minority areas. The results show that the policy of training and developing ethnic minority cadres has contributed positively to improving the quality of cadres in mountainous areas, gradually forming a generation of young cadres with university and postgraduate degrees, understanding the locality, and having the ability to apply management knowledge into practice.

4.3. Limitations, Difficulties, and Causes

The practical implementation of the policy of training and fostering ethnic minority cadres in mountainous areas still has many systematic limitations. The content and training methods are not suitable for the characteristics of ethnic minority regions. Most of the programs are still heavy on theory, little practice, and not linked to the characteristics of language, culture, and local development needs. Topics on community management, intercultural communication skills, and digital skills have not been widely taught (DeJaeghere et al., 2015).

Lack of a mechanism to monitor and evaluate policy effectiveness. Many localities do not have a set of indicators to monitor and evaluate the results of training and fostering based on output (output-outcome). The evaluation often stops at the number of participants, not reflecting the quality and impact on the capacity to perform public duties. Investment resources are still limited. Funding for training and fostering ethnic minority cadres is largely based on local budgets, while many mountainous provinces still face difficulties. Some programs have to be reduced in scale, time, or cannot be maintained continuously. There is a lack of lecturers who understand ethnic culture and language (De Nguyen et al., 2025). Inviting experts and lecturers with practical experience in ethnic minority areas is still limited. Training materials and materials have not been compiled in bilingual form, causing difficulties for learners.

The planning, use, and rotation of cadres after training are not effective. Many cases after training are still not assigned to suitable jobs, or do not have a mechanism to promote capacity. This reduces learning motivation and wastes resources. The impact of digital transformation poses new requirements for skills and training methods. While the majority of ethnic minority cadres in remote areas still face difficulties in technology infrastructure, equipment, and Internet, online training programs - the current mainstream trend - have not been widely applied. This increases the gap in digital capacity between cadres in mountainous and lowland areas.

The causes of the above limitations stem from many factors including (1) lack of synchronization in policy design between the central and local levels; (2) weak institutional capacity and inter-sectoral coordination; (3) inconsistent awareness of the role of training and fostering in sustainable development of ethnic minority areas; and (4) financial - monitoring - evaluation mechanisms that are not results-oriented.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. The Level of Conformity Between Policy Objectives and Implementation Practices

Analysis of the current situation shows that policies on training and fostering ethnic minority cadres in mountainous areas of Vietnam have been planned with quite comprehensive goals, aiming to improve the quality of grassroots cadres aiming to reduce inequality in capacity and development opportunities between regions. When put into practice, the gap between goals and results is still quite large. Policy objectives are built at the central level with a wide coverage, while implementation conditions in each locality are very different, leading to a situation of "one-size-fits-all" policies. The lack of regional-specific policies has reduced implementation effectiveness, causing many training programs to only achieve quantitative targets without really creating changes in administrative capacity and community leadership skills (Trung, 2021).

Inter-sectoral coordination between the Ministry of Home Affairs, the National Academy of Public Administration, and mountainous provinces is still loose. The unclear decentralization mechanism leads to overlapping responsibilities and difficulties

Policy on Training and Fostering Ethnic Minority Cadres in Mountainous Areas of Vietnam: Current Situation and Innovation Orientation

in monitoring and evaluating results. This reality shows that the policy process should be redesigned flexibly, taking into account the geographical, cultural, and economic characteristics of each region.

5.2. Factors Affecting Policy Effectiveness

From the research results, it is possible to identify four main groups of factors that directly affect the effectiveness of training and fostering policies for ethnic minority cadres

Institutional and legal factors. Although the system of legal documents is quite complete, it lacks a specific mechanism for implementing policies at the local level. Regulations on program content, output standards, and quality assessment are not unified, leading to large differences between provinces. In addition, the lack of mechanisms to encourage cadres to self-study and self-develop, and the lack of policies linking training with planning, promotion, and rotation of cadres have reduced the motivation for capacity development (Friederichsen, 2012).

Financial resources and facilities. Training programs in mountainous areas are limited by tight budgets, degraded training facilities, and a lack of modern teaching equipment. In the context of digital transformation, investment in online training platforms, electronic libraries, and learning management systems has not been implemented synchronously. This makes the learning process of ethnic minority cadres heavily dependent on traditional centralized forms, which are both costly and inflexible.

Capacity and cultural and social characteristics of trainees. A part of ethnic minority cadres have limited education, foreign languages, and information technology (Trung, 2022). Differences in language, customs, habits, and lifestyle directly affect the process of acquiring knowledge. In some localities, the fear of studying away from home or the lack of conditions to take care of the family make it impossible for many trainees to fully participate in the courses. Therefore, the design of the program needs to ensure cultural sensitivity and flexibility in space and time of study.

Quality of lecturers and program content. Provincial political and administrative training institutions rely mainly on part-time lecturers, few of whom have practical experience in ethnic minority areas. The training program is still heavily theoretical, lacking practical skills and modern management tools. The lack of integration of content on digital government, digital transformation, policy communication skills, and multicultural community governance makes the program unable to keep up with the requirements of the new era.

5.3. International Comparison and Lessons Learned

The experience of several multi-ethnic countries in Asia shows that training ethnic minority cadres is only truly effective when combined with institutional reform and local decentralization. In China, the policy of regional autonomy helps ethnic localities to proactively develop training programs suitable to local culture, while also motivating ethnic minority cadres to strive to improve. In Thailand, the bilingual training model combined with on-site training has proven effective in improving the ability of indigenous cadres to participate in the administrative apparatus. Laos focuses on on-site training, combined with community development, thereby reducing costs and maintaining the bond between cadres and people.

Compared to international models, Vietnam has a highly centralized political-administrative system, so policies should be designed in the direction of stronger decentralization for localities, encouraging creativity in building specific programs. At the same time, it is possible to learn from the experiences of these countries in building a database of ethnic minority human resources, applying flexible learning programs, and competency tracking systems (Tran & Walter, 2010).

5.4. Digital Transformation and Requirements for Innovation in Training Content

One of the major challenges today is that digital transformation has become a driving force for innovation in training ethnic minority cadres. While Vietnam is promoting the development of digital government and grassroots digital government, ethnic minority cadres are the direct "bridge" between citizens and the state. Civil servants should be equipped with new capacities, including skills in using digital platforms, data mining, multimedia communication, and decision-making based on digital information.

The application of a blended learning model between online and in-person training is a suitable trend for mountainous areas, helping to save costs and expand learning opportunities for officials in remote areas. However, to implement effectively, it is necessary to invest synchronously in technology infrastructure, bilingual electronic learning materials, and a team of lecturers with knowledge of digital skills. At the same time, it is necessary to develop a set of digital competency standards specifically for ethnic minority officials, similar to the competency framework for civil servants of e-Government that is being issued.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Entering a new stage of development, Vietnam is promoting the transformation of the national governance model towards digital government, digital society, and digital citizens, in which the human factor - especially the grassroots cadres and civil servants - plays a decisive role. With the characteristics of mountainous areas and ethnic minority areas, the requirement for training and

Policy on Training and Fostering Ethnic Minority Cadres in Mountainous Areas of Vietnam: Current Situation and Innovation Orientation

fostering cadres is to improve professional qualifications and aim to develop comprehensive capacity, digital skills, and community leadership qualities.

Content (SWOT)	Analysis of current policies	Solution orientation
Strengths	Full legal system; High awareness of Party committees; Wide training network	Promoting the role of political-administrative bases; Standardizing programs according to job positions
Weaknesses	Heavy theoretical content; Lack of ethnic lecturers; No output assessment	Building a digital competency framework; Applying blended learning
Opportunities	Digital transformation; Local decentralization; International cooperation of ethnic minority human resources	Taking advantage of digital technology; Socializing training, public-private partnership
Threats	Regional gap; Language barrier; Lack of stable financial resources	Improving the results-based budget mechanism; Linking training with public service assessment

Figure 2. Orientations for innovation in training and fostering policies for ethnic minority cadres

Figure 2. The SWOT matrix helps to comprehensively identify factors affecting training and fostering policies for ethnic minority cadres. From there, four main orientations are formed, including (1) developing digital capacity and skills; (2) enhancing regional specificity; (3) linking training with planning, use, and evaluation; (4) promoting lifelong learning. The diagram shows the mindset of transforming policies from “administrative – centralized” to “capacity – results – digital adaptation”. Based on the analysis of the current situation and discussion, four key innovation orientations for the period 2026–2035 can be identified

First, shifting from training according to programs to training according to capacity and job position. Training content should be designed based on the standard competency framework for each position group (commune leaders, professional departments, specialized cadres on ethnic affairs, women, youth). Applying the Competency-Based Training model will help personalize the learning path, linking training with outputs and actual needs of the locality (Vân, 2025).

Second, increase specificity and flexibility in program design. It is necessary to develop separate programs for each cultural-linguistic region, such as the Northwest, Central Highlands, South Central, or the Khmer region in the South. Courses should combine bilingualism (Vietnamese - ethnic minorities), focusing on intercultural communication skills, community management, and applying legal knowledge in handling administrative situations (Vũ, 2022).

Third, integrate digital transformation content and modern soft skills. The new policy should consider digital competency as a mandatory criterion in the competency framework for ethnic minority cadres (Michaud, 2022). The training program should include topics on e-government, open data, online public service exploitation skills, information security, and soft skills such as presentation, community leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving.

Fourth, training should be linked to planning, use, and treatment of cadres after training. Planning work needs to ensure the principles of "learning goes hand in hand with practice" and "training goes hand in hand with use". After completing the course, cadres must be re-evaluated on their ability to perform public duties and considered for appropriate job placement or promotion according to a transparent and fair competition mechanism (Ha et al., 2024). At the same time, there should be policies to encourage young ethnic minority cadres to strive to study, improve their professional qualifications, and create a sustainable source of successors.

7. CONCLUSION

The policy of training and fostering ethnic minority cadres in the midland and mountainous regions of Vietnam is one of the important pillars in the strategy of sustainable development, ensuring equity and social cohesion. The current policy system has created a relatively complete legal framework, contributing to improving the qualifications, awareness, and public service capacity of ethnic minority cadres. However, the implementation process still has many limitations in the stages of program design, inter-sectoral coordination mechanisms, financial resources, and training effectiveness assessment. The gap between policy objectives and practical results shows the urgent need to innovate the approach towards capacity - output - regional specificity.

Policy on Training and Fostering Ethnic Minority Cadres in Mountainous Areas of Vietnam: Current Situation and Innovation Orientation

In the period 2026-2035, the policy of training and fostering ethnic minority cadres should be oriented according to four principles: (1) comprehensive capacity development, especially digital capacity; (2) linking training with the use and planning of cadres; (3) strengthening decentralization and regional specificity; (4) encouraging lifelong learning and innovating teaching methods. Thereby, the ethnic minority cadres truly become the core force in local governance, a bridge between the State and the people, contributing to narrowing the development gap between the mountainous and lowland regions. Policy innovation has profound humanistic and political significance, and is a prerequisite for realizing the goal of “leaving no one behind”, towards a sustainable, inclusive, and adaptive Vietnam in the digital transformation era.

REFERENCES

- 1) Cong, C. M. (2024). Improving the effectiveness of legal communication and education for ethnic minority and mountainous people. *Journal of State Management*, 31(12), 31-39. <https://doi.org/10.59394/JSM.20>
- 2) Chaudhry, P. (2016). *Government Munificence and the Struggle to be Poor Politics, Power and the Local State in Vietnam's Northwest Borderlands*. The Australian National University (Australia).
- 3) Dau Tuan, N. (2023, September). The Role of Ethnic Work of the Political System in Vietnam in the Economy and Society of Ethnic Minority Communities. In *International Conference on “Global Changes and Sustainable Development in Asian Emerging Market Economies* (pp. 583-611). Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland.
- 4) DeJaeghere, J., Wu, X., & Vu, L. (2015). Ethnicity and education in China and Vietnam: discursive formations of inequality. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45(1), 118-140. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057925.2013.841034>
- 5) De Nguyen, V., Tran, V. D., Duong, T. H., & Le, V. H. (2025). Managing the Quality Assurance of Education of Students on Ethnic Boarding Schools: A Case Study on the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. *Educational Process: International Journal*, 17, e2025383. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=EJ1483900>
- 6) Friederichsen, R. (2012). The mixed blessings of national integration: New perspectives on development in Vietnam's northern uplands. *East Asia*, 29(1), 43-61. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12140-011-9155-y>
- 7) Ha, N. T. N., Nhi, L. T. P., & Trung, N. Q. (2024). Professional development for ethnic minority public leaders in the Northern mountain regions of Vietnam: needs and barriers to their participation. *Professional Development in Education*, 1-13. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19415257.2024.2421495>
- 8) Hai, N. C., van Tuan, P., Le, V. T. P., & Tan, T. H. (2023). Factors affecting the policy of training and fostering civil servants of Khmer ethnic minorities in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam. *GeoJournal of Tourism & Geosites*, 46(1). <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.46118-1012>
- 9) Hai, N. C. (2025). Assessment of policies to preserve the cultural values of ethnic minorities in An Giang Province, Vietnam. *Geo Journal of Tourism and Geosites*, 61(3), 1738-1750. <https://doi.org/10.30892/gtg.61332-1542>
- 10) Michaud, J. (2022). Ethnography in the Northern Vietnamese Highlands. In *Routledge Handbook of Highland Asia* (pp. 430-450). Routledge.
- 11) Nguyen, T. C., Son, N. T., Ly, N. K., Van Giap, L., & Hanh, T. T. (2023). Quality of personnel ethnic minority in the mountain area of Vietnam in the time of promoting industrial, modernizing the country. *European Journal of Political Science Studies*, 6(2). <http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejps.v6i2.1523>
- 12) Nguyen, D. T., Dao, T. T., Van Mai, T., & Doan, Q. T. N. (2024). Improving Human Capital to Support Ethnic Minority Families: The Case of Thanh Hoa, Vietnam. *Razprave in Gradivo: Revija za Narodnostna Vprasanja*, (92), 183-207. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2478/tdjes-2024-0010>
- 13) Nghia, H. T. (2020). Management of training and retraining ethnic minority cadres, civil servants, public employees in the current period. *Journal of Ethnic Minorities Research*, 9(2), 23-29. <https://doi.org/10.25073/0866-773X/413>
- 14) Thanh, T. B., Cường, N. A., Nam, Đ. T., Du, N. C., & Văn, V. H. (2024). Negative Impacts of Free Migration in the Mountainous Provinces of Northern Vietnam. *Przestrzeń Społeczna (Social Space)*, 24(2), 27-62. <https://socialspacejournal.eu/menu-script/index.php/ssj/article/view/382/198>
- 15) Ta, H. T. T., Tran, T., & Nguyen, P. T. T. (2023). Impact of Industrial Revolution 4.0 on Vietnamese Ethnic Minority Human Resources. In *Inventive Computation and Information Technologies: Proceedings of ICICIT 2022* (pp. 823-840). Singapore: Springer Nature Singapore.
- 16) Trung, T. T. (2021). Improvement of the efficiency of state management on ethnic group culture associated with sustainable development in mountainous provinces in the North of Vietnam. *European Science Review*, (9-10), 41-48.
- 17) Trung, T. T. (2022). Enhanceing the role of the department of culture, sports and tourism in provinces and centrally-run cities in the state management of ethnic group culture in Vietnam. *European journal of law and political sciences*, (2-3), 15-21.

Policy on Training and Fostering Ethnic Minority Cadres in Mountainous Areas of Vietnam: Current Situation and Innovation Orientation

- 18) Tran, L. T., & Walter, P. G. (2010). National unity and ethnic identity in a Vietnamese university. *Comparative Education Review*, 54(4), 483-511.
- 19) Văn, N. V. (2025). Focusing resources to implement programs and policies to contribute to sustainable development of ethnic minority areas in Lao Cai Province. *Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Dân tộc*, 14(2), 14-20.
<http://dx.doi.org/10.46827/ejpss.v6i1.1432>
- 20) Vũ, T. T. M. (2022). Policy on human resource development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas in the field of education. *Tạp chí Nghiên cứu Khoa học và Phát triển*, 9-17. <https://doi.org/10.58902/tcnckhpt.v1i1.2>



There is an Open Access article, distributed under the term of the Creative Commons Attribution – Non Commercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/>), which permits remixing, adapting and building upon the work for non-commercial use, provided the original work is properly cited.