

The end result is poor service.

Nevertheless, the system has made rapid gains during the early 1990s, which have improved service immensely. Linkages have been made with satellite communications in Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh City, and Danang; however, improvement of internal communications is still required.

The DGPT has outlined the following priorities for the current 1991-1995 Five-Year Development Plan:

- Development should focus on providing basic telephone service.
- Provide automatic integrated digital networks for all cities.
- Install automated/switched mobile cellular radio for main cities.
- Establish national subscriber trunk dialling (STD).
- Improve international direct dialling (IDD).
- Correct and expand facsimile transmission.
- Link the national data network to international data networks.
- Develop a network of broadcast radio, television, transmitter and transmission lines.

The telecommunications network must be further developed for the country to progress through its industrialization. The government has completed its National Telecommunications Network Development Plan, which provides the framework for the ongoing development of the system. The financial requirements for the system to develop are tremendous and will only be met with external assistance.

ENERGY, MINING, AND CONSTRUCTION

Vietnam is one of the smallest producers and consumers of energy in the world. The country's per capita consumption at 88 kilograms is extremely low compared with the average of 297 kilograms for all low income countries. Vietnam's energy resources include large coal (anthracite) deposits, hydropower, and oil and gas, providing the country with various means to meet its energy needs for the future. Ministerial responsibility for long-term planning in electricity and coal rests with the Ministry of Energy (MOE). The MOE is accountable for production, exploration, and consumption; planning for power stations and transmission lines; and the coal industry. The oil and gas industry is under PetroVietnam.

Oil and Gas

Vietnam is viewed as one of the last frontiers in the world for oil exploration. The outlook for offshore petroleum exploration and development in one of the largest unexplored basins in the world is encouraging. Offshore, there is over 500,000 km² of continental shelf worth exploring, while onshore the Red River delta in the north and the Mekong delta in the south have potential basins.

The discovery of natural gas has been limited to a small gas field in the Red River delta used primarily for power generation. Long-term potential for natural gas is seen in the north, while short-term potential lies with the production of gas in association with oil in the south.

In 1974, oil discoveries were made offshore by Shell and Mobil; however, the Vietnamese were unable to take advantage of the discovery until 1986 when the Russians entered into a joint venture with the Vietnamese government and began to produce oil from the Bach Ho (White Tiger) field where the Mobil discovery was first made. Production began in June 1986 and reached 100,000 barrels a day in 1991.