



# Field Study Report – Improving Usability of Digital Product Passports in Vietnam

During a three-month field study in Vietnam, we collaborated with a local logistic tech company to design, develop, and test digital product passport prototypes with real users.

## Before arrival

We applied for a KTH Field Studies travel grant to carry out the international component of our bachelor thesis, which focused on the usability of Digital Product Passports (DPPs). These are part of the EU's upcoming sustainability legislation and aim to increase transparency and circularity in product lifecycles. We chose Vietnam because we had an established collaboration with the logistics tech company **Wareflex** in Ho Chi Minh City. Their team supported both the technical development and fieldwork. Our preparations included coordinating with Wareflex, reviewing cultural norms, and organizing practicalities such as travel insurance and vaccinations. Since our stay would be longer than 45 days, we also **secured e-visas in advance**.

## Upon arrival

We arrived in **Ho Chi Minh City on February 15** and stayed until **May 15**. For the first few weeks, we worked closely with Wareflex at their office to define design goals, align on project scope, and begin development of our prototypes.

Once the tools were ready, we conducted fieldwork, meeting with local users to test the different formats of DPPs through usability tasks and interviews. In the final stage, we returned to Wareflex to analyze the collected data and prepare our findings. The field study spanned approximately **12 weeks**, with ongoing support from our local partners.

## Financials

Overall, the cost of living in Vietnam was significantly lower than in Sweden. Daily expenses such as food, transportation, and mobile data were affordable.

### Tips for saving money:

- Eat at local restaurants, which offer quality meals at low prices
- Use **Grab** (ride-hailing app) instead of taxis
- Purchase a local SIM card for affordable internet access
- Choose shared Airbnb apartments/ Service apartment for better value and flexibility

### Accommodation

We arranged a service apartment as accommodation through with input from our local contact, who helped us choose a safe and central neighborhood. We stayed in **Thaodien, Distric 2**, which provided convenient access to both the office and field test locations.

The apartment offered stable internet, air conditioning, and basic kitchen facilities. The cost was approximately **250 EUR per person per month**, which was significantly more affordable than housing in Stockholm.

### Project

Our project explored how **Digital Product Passports**, soon to be mandated in the EU, can be designed for better usability and impact. We wanted to understand how different presentation formats influence users' ability to engage with and trust sustainability data. We developed three fully functioning prototypes using **Flutter**, and connected them to a **mock database built with Supabase**. The prototypes displayed identical product information in three different formats:

1. Text-based
2. Infographic-based
3. Interactive and modular

The project workflow followed three stages:

- First: Collaboration with Wareflex to develop prototypes
- Second: Field testing with 30 participants through usability tasks and interviews
- Third: Back at the office, we conducted data analysis and synthesized insights

This hands-on process allowed us to evaluate the practical effectiveness of our design choices and gather valuable user feedback.

### Country

Vietnam and Hochiminh City was welcoming, vibrant, and full of energy. While we experienced some initial adjustment to the pace of life and communication style, we quickly

adapted and felt comfortable navigating the city. People were friendly, and we appreciated the openness and curiosity we encountered during the interviews and day-to-day life.

### **Leisure and social activities**

Outside of work, we took the opportunity to explore Vietnamese culture and history. We visited museums, local markets, and historical landmarks. We also enjoyed the local food scene and café culture, which offered a great way to unwind and observe daily life. We met both locals and other international visitors through coworking spaces and meetups. It was easy to build connections and find social activities, especially in a city as dynamic as Ho Chi Minh.

### **Sustainability**

We made efforts to reduce our environmental footprint during the trip:

- We mostly walked or used electric cars for local travel
- We avoided single-use plastics and used refillable water bottles
- We worked digitally, avoiding paper-based surveys and materials

Our project was directly linked to **UN Sustainable Development Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production**. By improving the usability of DPPs, we hope to support consumers in making more informed and sustainable choices in the future.

### **Other recommendations and observations**

- Local knowledge is extremely helpful, stay in close contact with your host organization
- Flexibility is important, sometimes plans or locations need to change
- Take the opportunity to learn from your surroundings, the experience goes beyond the project