

Vietnam UPDATE

August 2009-December 2009

UPCOMING HIGHLIGHTS

- **First quarter 2010: USVTC and STAR Vietnam complete GE Foundation grant on the Rule of Law and Transparency in Vietnam.**
- **Early 2010: USVTC and STAR Vietnam will release WTO casebook.**

RECENT HIGHLIGHTS

- **November 15: US, Vietnam agree to TPP in Singapore.**
- **October: The International Center Sports Corps starts its website.**
- **August 24-28: USVTC completes a four-component entrepreneurship program with workshops and corporate site visits in Vietnam**

USVTC-EF and STAR Vietnam Work to Improve Transparency, Rule of Law in Vietnam

USVTC-EF and STAR Vietnam continue to work on a grant awarded in October 2008 by the GE Foundation focusing on improving transparency and the rule of law in Vietnam so the country would better meet its WTO requirements.



The program has held over 40 workshops and 2 conferences, hosting representatives from every province in Vietnam. Michael McNamer was a key speaker for the program. Mr. McNamer has many years of experience working as a Senior Attorney and a Director of Training and working with the State of California Office of Administrative Law.

McNamer discussed the importance of drafting legal normative documents (LND) and how they must be strictly obeyed in order to:

- Meet Vietnam's specific WTO commitments in the WTO Working Party Report.
- Improve the quality of Vietnam's draft LNDs and gain additional benefits in respect to law-making for a market economy ruled by law.
- Better ensure the legal validity of the LND when finally issued.

The program also hosted workshops with David M. Spooner, Andy W. Shoyer, Dr. David Gantz, Brenda Jacobs, Jay Eizenstat, and John Magnus to talk about international commitments that affect Vietnam and issues related to the rule of law and transparency.

The program also created online e-gazettes for posting legal regulations for comment in five provinces and a casebook for study related to WTO law. So far, over 38,000 local regulations have been posted and the websites have gotten over three million hits. The case law book is expected to be released in early 2010.

US, Vietnam Agree to Trans-Pacific Partnership

On November 15, 2009, it was announced that the United States and Vietnam agreed to work toward a Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) goal. The announcement was made at the APEC CEO Summit.

The TPP is a free trade agreement between, before the announcement, Singapore, Brunei, New Zealand and Chile.

Ron Kirk, the United States Trade Representative, said, "Our engagement in the Trans-Pacific Partnership gives us the opportunity to address gaps in our current agreements, and to set the standard for 21st-century trade agreements going forward.

"To fulfill the full promise of APEC, we must look not only at what we can do for ourselves in the region but also at how we can work together to demonstrate leadership on trade for the entire world."

Two other countries, Australia and Peru, also expressed interest in signing the TPP.

Entrepreneurship Grant Holds Workshops in Vietnam

The final components of USVTC's 18-month long grant on entrepreneurship were held August 24-28. The grant initially began October 1, 2007 and was funded by a U.S. Department of State grant.

The components consisted of three workshops that took place in Ho Chi Minh City, Danang, and Hanoi, and three corporate site visits held in the country. The site visits illustrated how far Vietnam had come on the issues being discussed.

Partners for the workshops included the Young Businesspeople Association in HCMC, the Investment Promotion Agency in Danang, the Young Businesspeople Association in Hanoi and the Hanoi Network Entrepreneur for Women.

Roughly 60-70 participants were present at each of the workshops, reaching about 200 people across Vietnam.

The agenda for each workshop included welcoming remarks on behalf of the USVTC and local partners, followed by presentations on the U.S.-based program, delivered by participants from each host city. This presentation offered a summary of the program and insights about the impact of its various aspects on the professional and personal lives of the participants.

These presentations were followed by specialized presentations by USVTC's partners Jeffrey Horvath, Barry Clark, and Dessie Apostolova.

Following the three workshops, the emerging consensus was for the establishment of a Vietnam Entrepreneurship Network with three areas of responsibility:

1. Consolidating and expanding existing resources for entrepreneurs and small businesses;
2. Organizing and carrying out action to ensure that the needs of small business are acknowledged and properly communicated to government and other stakeholders; and
3. Building awareness of the benefits that entrepreneurship and free enterprise bring to individuals, communities, and the entire country.

Upcoming Labor Delegation to Visit DC in January

USVTC and Star Vietnam, thanks to financial support from USAID, will bring a Study Mission on Labor planned for Washington D.C. January 10 - 15, 2010 and San Francisco January 16 - 20, 2010.

Meeting targets will include the Department of Labor, the Department of State, USTR, the Senate Finance Committee, the House Ways and Means Committee, the House and Senate Labor Committee, the Environmental Defense Fund, AFL-CIO, the Chamber of Commerce, Vietnamese Embassy, and USAID. In San Francisco the group will meet with the Labor Council, and the US Dept. of Labor.

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We are pleased to continue our work with the Environmental Defense Fund on "Assisting Vietnam's Transition to a Low-Carbon Economy."

The project is in the second phase of a joint EDF-IC climate change program in Vietnam to include USVTC activities in partnership with EDF.

Resources provided by EDF will assist Vietnam in developing the necessary skills and capacity to: participate in international negotiations and begin to adopt the emerging best practices on climate change, encourage understanding through media, involve business leadership groups, evaluate trade and investment trends, and work with potential donors to fund increased activities.

For more information, please see our website.