

CUTS HRC Activity Report

No. 2/2011

PAST PROJECT

Strengthening the Competition Authorities in Vietnam

CUTS Hanoi Resource Centre (CUTS HRC), in cooperation with the Vietnam Competition Authority (VCA), implemented a project entitled, “Strengthening the Competition Authorities in Vietnam”, which was launched in February 2008. Through the strengthening of the Vietnam Competition Administration Department (Ministry of Trade – www.vcad.gov.vn) and better understanding of the benefits of competition among public officials, the private sector, and civil society, the Project aims to contribute to the establishment of a business environment that is conducive to the development of the private sector. The project was supported by the Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the Swiss Competition Commission (COMCO) and duration was of three years.

The final meeting of the project was organised in Hanoi, Vietnam on April 04-05, 2011. The participants were representatives of VCA, COMCO, SECO and CUTS. In the meeting, participants discussed the final project progress and financial report, and planned finalisation and setting deadlines of outstanding activities.

ONGOING PROJECTS

Study on Unfair Trade Practices in Select ASEAN Countries

The project, a two-year programme lasting from 2011 till 2013, supported by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, aims at generating and promoting substantive discussions/dialogues in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) on issues related to unfair trade practices (UTPs). The project is implemented in five countries of the ASEAN region, namely Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam by HRC in cooperation with research partners in respective project countries.

Project partners have embarked on the first phase of research activities including literature review, empirical research and institutional and legal mapping. The institutional and legal mapping exercise is meant to take stock of the current designs of the relevant legal and institutional frameworks in select countries in the ASEAN region on UTPs. This exercise should be finished in late August 2011 and the field market research phase should be started from July onwards.

Holding Broadband Service Providers to Account

HRC, in partnership with the Vietnamese Standards and Consumer Protection Association (VINASTAS), has implemented a project entitled “Holding Broadband Service Providers to Account”, – a new project of Consumers International (CI) funded by Ford Foundation. Lasting from 2011 till 2012, the project aims to empower consumer organisations around the world to demand more equitable and accessible broadband service offerings, respecting consumers’ rights and broader human rights, as a necessary condition of achieving a socially-inclusive information society. HRC and VINASTAS are partners to jointly implement this project in Vietnam.

According to the division of responsibility, HRC is in charge of writing a secondary research report and VINASTAS is responsible for carrying out a consumer survey with regard to broadband services. Besides, VINASTAS and HRC will jointly do research on the legal and regulatory environment. The deadline for these activities is December 31, 2011. Currently, the research process at HRC has been started.

REPRESENTATIONS

- Nguyen Thanh Ha attended a seminar “M&A Control in Vietnam – Swiss Experience Seminar” organised by the VCA in cooperation with the COMCO in Hanoi, on April 04, 2011.
- Pham Thi Queh Anh and Nguyen Thanh Ha attended a seminar entitled “The Role of Sectoral Regulatory Bodies on Promoting Competition Conference” organised by the VCA in cooperation with the COMCO) in Hanoi, on April 05, 2011. Pham gave a presentation during the conference and also a TV interview on the sidelines regarding the competitive environment in Vietnam.
- Tran Thi To Tam participated in the 2nd National Reference Group (NRG) Meeting organised by STAMEQ in the capacity building project entitled “Strengthening capacity on Sustainability Criteria for Bio Energy (ISO 13065) in South and Southeast Asia regions” implemented by South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics and Environment (SAWTEE) in partnership with the Swedish Standards Institute (SIS) on May 15, 2011. The project was supported by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). This NRG meeting was organised as a preparatory task for the Pre-Seminar and the subsequent ISO PC248/WG Meeting in Frankfurt, Germany, May.