

CUTS HRC Activity Report

July-September 2014

ONGOING PROJECTS

Competition Policy and Law in ASEAN

The German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ) is undertaking a 3-year regional project (2011-2014) entitled “Competition Policy and Law in ASEAN” with a total budget of €2mn.

Within the framework of this project, CUTS and GIZ have recently signed a contract with a budget with budget of 411mn VND (equivalent to approx. US\$19,500), valid till the end of September 2024, to undertake the following activities: (i) To complete the pending Competition Assessment in Lao PDR; (ii) To provide national expertise for an External Review of the Vietnam competition regime; and (iii) Other project activities based on mutual agreement.



External Review of the Vietnam Competition Regime

The desk research part for the Vietnam External Review is being undertaken by CUTS Hanoi Resource Centre (CUTS HRC). For the field research component, GIZ and the Vietnam Competition Authority (VCA) has engaged VietSurvey, a consulting company, to conduct an enterprise awareness survey. When the survey is completed, the results would be integrated into the main Review Report written by CUTS, which would be further reviewed by an international expert engaged independently by GIZ.

Strategic Competition Action Plan post-2015 for the AEGC

CUTS HRC is also helping GIZ with the preparation of a Strategic Competition Action Plan Post-2015 for the ASEAN Experts Group on Competition (AEGC). The Plan is expected to be finalised in December 2014 for submission to an ASEAN high-level meeting in January 2015.

Preparatory Competition Assessment for Law Drafting in Lao PDR

CUTS HRC has prepared a legal inventory, an economic mapping and a questionnaire for stakeholder survey, under a former contract with GIZ. To further aid the competition law drafting process in Lao PDR, CUTS HRC expects to provide suggestions and recommendations in the form of a short report on the basis of the updated legal inventory and economic mapping. An awareness survey is presently being carried out by Lao national experts at NERI (National Economic Research Institute).

SESA Programme: Trade Promotion through Standardisation

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is supporting a 2-year programme (Jan 2013-Dec 2014) implemented by the Swedish Standards Institute (SIS) to build institutional capacity within the South-east and South Asia (SESA) regions on standard setting and standard implementation. Eight countries which are selected to participate in the programme include Cambodia, Laos, Indonesia, Vietnam, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. CUTS HRC is the programme's partner organisation for the South East Asia region.

The total budget for CUTS-led activities in the project in 2014 is about. US\$45,000.

During the reporting period, the 6th issue of the Newsletter on Standards and Quality was prepared and disseminated to relevant



stakeholders. Besides, a Guidebook on “Carbon Foot-printing of Products for Vietnam” is currently being prepared in the form of a monograph for dissemination. Finally, a briefing paper titled “Trade Facilitation through Standards Harmonisation in ASEAN” was also published and posted on the website of CUTS HRC.

The following publications are also being prepared: (i) the 7th issue of the Newsletter on Standards and Quality; (ii) a comparative gap analysis of the standardisation system with a focus on stakeholder engagement in four countries, namely, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar.

Promoting Food Safety in Vietnam – A Project supported by the Anne Fransen Fund (AFF) 2014

CUTS HRC and the Vietnam Standards and Consumers Association (VINASTAS) are implementing a project entitled “Promoting Food Safety in Vietnam: A Case Study on the Presence of Pesticides, Chemicals and Harmful Bacteria in Vegetables and Fruits”, supported by Consumers International (CI) through the Anne Fransen Fund (AFF) in 2014 with the budget of €9,000. The project duration is March-December 2014.

The main activities are: (i) Preparation of a study on the presence of pesticides, chemicals and harmful bacteria in vegetables and fruits; (ii) Undertaking a survey on the consumption habit of fruits and vegetables of Vietnamese consumers; (iii) Preparation of a final report of the state of food safety in Vietnam and; (iii) A national conference to disseminate the findings.



About 180 samples of fruits and vegetables randomly collected on the market in three big cities in Vietnam, namely Hanoi, Ho Chi Minh and Da Nang, were sent to the Technical Centre of Standards, Metrology and

Quality, under the Directorate for Standards, Metrology and Quality (STAMEQ) for inspection. Besides, a survey of 150 Vietnamese consumers living in the three aforementioned three cities on the consumption habit of fruits and vegetables was carried out following the preparation of a survey questionnaire.

The final analytical report, based on the results of the study and survey, is in progress. It is expected that the report will be finalised in early November 2014 while the national conference is to take place in November.

Competition Distortions in Vietnam

The Friedrich-Naumann-Foundation for Freedom (Vietnam office) is supporting this project with a total budget of US\$4,000 lasting till November 2014. The main outputs of the project will be three quarterly dossiers of Competition Distortions produced in English and Vietnamese and an analytical research report on “Competition Distortions in Vietnam” at the end of the project. These e-publications will be disseminated amongst CUTS’s networks within and across Vietnam.



The third dossier covering the period June-August 2014 was completed and submitted to the donor. The same was then disseminated to relevant stakeholders. The final analytical report is also being prepared.

REPRESENTATIONS

- Alice Pham took part in the 4th ASEAN Competition Conference, which was organised during July 17-18, 2014 in Philippines.
- To Tam and Hoang Duyen took part in the 2nd meeting on “The Law on Right to Information in Vietnam” organised by the People’s Participation Working Group on August 17, 2014.
- The Foundation for Consumers of Thailand, in collaboration with Biothai Foundation, Thai Health Promotion, Thailand and the Consumer Protection on Health Programme, Chulalongkorn University organised a meeting on “Food for Change” addressing consumer protection on Food Safety and Security in ASEAN Community in Bangkok, Thailand during July 24-25, 2014. AP took part in the meeting and delivered two presentations on “Food Security in Vietnam” and “Food Safety in Vietnam” respectively for experiences-sharing.
- Alice Pham, To Tam and Hoang Duyen took part in a training session on e-tools for International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) for the five South East Asian countries part of SESA programme (Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Indonesia) organised in Hanoi, Vietnam during August 11-12, 2014.
- Alice Pham took part in the meeting of the ASEAN Experts Group on Competition (AEGC) on the post-2015 Competition Action Plan for ASEAN as consultant to GIZ, organised in Jakarta, Indonesia during September 9-10, 2014.
- Hoang Duyen took part in an awareness-raising workshop focusing on the market for milk and milk products in Vietnam organised by VINASTAS in Hanoi, Vietnam on September 19, 2014.
- During September 24-25, 2014, Alice Pham took part in a regional conference of the National Health Service Office of Thailand organised in Bangkok, Thailand and gave presentations on competition and consumer protection issues in ASEAN.
- Alice Pham took part in the Annual Meeting for 2014 of the SESA Steering Committee organised in Bangkok, Thailand during September 29-30, 2014.