



Annual Report 2008

CUTS Hanoi Resource Centre



Hanoi Resource Centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2008

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Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS)

Hanoi Resource Centre (HRC)

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Established in 1983, Consumer Unity & Trust Society (CUTS) is now at the cutting edge of consumer movement in India as well as across the globe. Today, the organisation operates out of five programme centres and an advocacy centre in India, two resource centres in Africa, and one resource centre in the UK, with a staff strength of over 100. Three programme centres are located in Jaipur and one each in Chittorgarh and Calcutta, India. The advocacy centre is located at New Delhi, India; and resource centres are at Lusaka, Zambia; Nairobi, Kenya; and London, UK.

The organisation elects its Board/Executive Committee every fourth year, while the Secretariat is headed by the Secretary General. Over 1200 individuals and 300 organisations are its members. The organisation is accredited to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and the United Nations Commissions for Sustainable Development (UNCSD).

CUTS also works with several regional, national and international organisations, such as Consumer International (CI), the International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development (ICTSD), South Asia Watch on Trade, Economics & Environment (SAWTEE), and the Consumer Coordination Council of India etc. It also serves on several policy-making bodies of the Government of India.

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From the Secretary General CUTS International

CUTS has been working over the last couple of years in the Mekong region, especially in Cambodia, Lao PDR and Vietnam. After implementing regional projects on competition policy and law and international trade issues, it was realised that there is an urgent need in the region for further research and capacity building work on trade and regulatory policy issues.

Accordingly, CUTS launched its fourth overseas centre at Hanoi in January 2007 with the aim of promoting trilateral cooperation on a range of trade and economic policy issues.

Among its other overseas centre, the first one was established in Lusaka, Zambia in the year 2000, followed by Nairobi, Kenya in 2002 and London, UK in the year 2003. Another resource centre was launched in Geneva, Switzerland on July 16, 2008. Reportedly, CUTS is a rare Indian non-governmental organisation (NGO), which has overseas centres.

The purpose of these overseas offices is to promote trilateral development cooperation on a range of trade and economic policy issues, considering the fact that India has excellent diplomatic and commercial relations with these countries and the regions. In fact, these offices also network with many NGOs in the region other than government agencies.

In a short span of one year, CUTS Hanoi Resource Centre (CUTS HRC) has done a commendable job, though it is still far away from what CUTS expects or what I expect from it. In fact, the journey has just begun on a promising note.

HRC will be providing technical assistance to the VCAD, under the Ministry of Industry & Trade, over the period 2008-10 with support from the Government of Switzerland, in a capacity building project on competition policy and law. CUTS is also planning to provide support to the VCAD in

the drafting of a law on consumer protection for Vietnam, bringing in its 25 years of experience working on the issue from India and other countries in the world.

HRC will be campaigning to build consumer awareness in the Mekong Region countries of Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos. The DFID office in Vietnam is negotiating a project on Making Markets Work for the Poor in Vietnam and is likely to associate CUTS in this endeavour. HRC would also be providing technical assistance to the Vietnamese Competition Authority during 2007-09, with support from the Government of Switzerland.

The first assignment that the Centre undertook was to prepare an assessment of Vietnam's Investment Climate Policies Against the Organisation for Economic Co-operation & Development (OECD's) Policy Framework for Investment. This study was supported by the OECD and provided a "first hand" assessment of the most distinctive regulatory features and recent policy developments in Vietnam in the investment policy area using the questions of the 'Policy Framework for Investment' as indicative benchmark. Besides, the study identified the main areas of progress, the major shortcomings of Vietnam investment policies and possible areas of improvement.

The Centre acknowledges the support of the various donor agencies in fulfilling its objectives. Though a good initiative has been made, much work remains to be done.

I am confident that HRC can add to this impressive and varied array of activities in 2009, with new projects already in the pipeline. I congratulate it on its progress in 2008 and wish it continued success in the coming year.

Jaipur
August 2009

Pradeep S Mehta
Secretary General

Introducing CUTS HRC, Hanoi

CUTS Hanoi Resource Centre (CUTS HRC) was officially launched on February 29, 2008. It is the fourth out of the five overseas Centres of CUTS International, opened in Hanoi, Vietnam. Its aim is to promote trilateral development co-operation on a range of trade, development and economic policy issues.

CUTS HRC is registered under the Regulations on the Operation of Foreign NGOs in Vietnam, promulgated in conjunction with Decision 340/TTg of the Prime Minister, dated May 24, 1996, and is currently located at No. 14/16 Nguyen Phuc Lai, Hanoi, Vietnam. It bears the Registration No. AT 445/UB-HD issued by the People's Aid Co-ordination Committee (PACCOM) of Vietnam.

Initially, CUTS HRC actively engaged itself in capacity building for competition authorities and also strengthening the consumer movement in Vietnam. It also contributed significantly to the overall policy-making process in Vietnam, especially with regard to enhancing the role of the civil society therein.

CUTS HRC will be providing technical assistance to the Vietnam Competition administration Department (VCAD) under the Ministry of Industry & Trade, over the period 2008-10 with support from the Government of Switzerland, in a capacity building project on competition policy and law. It is also planning to provide support to VCAD in the drafting of a law on consumer protection for Vietnam, bringing in CUTS' 25 years of experience working on the issue India and other countries in the world.

MISSION and OBJECTIVES

Mission

Its mission is to be a catalyst in transferring objective knowledge and advocacy skills from India and elsewhere to the Greater Mekong Sub-

region (GMS) for mainstreaming the civil society movement therein into the development process.

Objectives

Its objectives are:

- To be an initiator of dialogue between the local policy community in the GMS and the civil society movement therein during the policy-making process towards effective public policy reforms in the larger framework of poverty alleviation and sustainable development;
- To cross-fertilise exchange of knowledge and research-cum-advocacy skills through making regional and international good policies and practices available in the GMS; and
- To promote effective regional and international integration of economies and civil societies, with a special emphasis on South-South co-operation.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Current office personnel in Hanoi include:

- Alice Pham (Pham Thi Que Anh), Director, CUTS HRC joined CUTS International in 2003 and worked at the Jaipur-based CUTS Centre for Competition, Investment & Economic Regulation (CUTS C-CIER) as a researcher for four years. In 2007, she came back to Hanoi, Vietnam (of which she is a citizen) and started the process of establishing a new resource centre of CUTS in Hanoi. In February 2008, CUTS HRC was officially launched. As the Director, she manages the overall day-to-day operations of the office and is also responsible for undertaking research, supervising the implementation of active projects at CUTS HRC and fund-raising activities.
- Tran Thi To Tam (Programme Officer) joined CUTS HRC on a full-time basis on August 01, 2008, after a two-month probation period, in 2007. As a programme officer, she is responsible for assisting the director in undertaking research, implementing projects, as well as general networking and advocacy activities.
- Ngo Thi Bich Thuy (Accountant) joined CUTS HRC in April 2008. She manages all areas of finance and accounting and some related administrative matters of the office.
- Nguyen Thi Thu Phuong (Office Administrator) joined CUTS HRC in February 2008. She manages all administrative work in the office, and also assists the director and the programme officer in organising events.

FUNDS

The activities of the Centre for the year have been carried out with the help and support of its headquarters in India as well as other external funding agencies, which include:

- The State Secretariat for Economic Affairs of Switzerland (SECO) and the Swiss Competition Commission (COMCO);
- The Ford Foundation (Office for Vietnam and Thailand); and
- The International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

Consumer protection and competition law and policy are the two fields which CUTS HRC currently has expertise in and competitive advantages over other civil society organisations (CSOs) working in Vietnam. The programmatic areas of HRC will extend more to trade and development issues. A Senior Researcher is expected to join Hanoi to work on these issues on a full-time basis. The Centre also intends to engage in more long-term projects involving research, capacity building, advocacy and networking, as well as information dissemination. It expects to build networks in the country and expand, to cover the whole region in the area of international and regional trade, development, and poverty.

Work Programme on Economic Policy and Others

ONGOING PROJECTS

The ongoing projects are:

- Strengthening the Competition Authorities in Vietnam (SCAV);
- Strengthening the Consumer Movement in Vietnam (SCMV);
- Consumer Protection Regimes in the World; and
- Using Competition Law/Policy Tools in Dealing with Anti-competitive Practices in the Pharmaceutical Distribution System in Vietnam.

Strengthening the Competition Authorities in Vietnam

The project entitled, 'Strengthening the Competition Authorities in Vietnam' has been implemented with the support of State Secretariat for Economic Affairs, Switzerland (SECO) and the Swiss Competition Commission (COMCO). It would contribute to the establishment of a business environment that is conducive to the development of the private sector; and would deepen the application and the implementation of Vietnamese competition policies. The duration of the project is of three years.

Research

As per the Project schedule, a market study on the telecoms sector in Vietnam has been conducted by the VCAD officials in the 1st year. CUTS HRC has provided technical support to them in this regard, such as commenting on study outline, providing list of references and available (soft) copies on the identified topic, i.e. Telecom Sector and comments on a Survey Questionnaire prepared by VCAD.

Another activity in the 1st year of project implementation was the production of leaflets and reference documents on consumer protection issues. Due to the change of the context and after discussions between COMCO, CUTS and VCAD, this has been replaced by activities to produce a research report on Mergers & Acquisitions (M&As) in Vietnam. The English summary of the report was prepared and sent to CUTS

HO/COMCO/VCAD in December 2008. Commenting on and compiling comments from other parties on the M&As research report was finished.

Five articles for the first year were written by CUTS HRC for the magazine of the Vietnam Standards and Consumers Association (VINASTAS) on issues related to competition and consumer protection in Vietnam.

Training and Capacity Building

CUTS HRC produced a feasibility report on the potentiality of organising semester course/classes in select universities in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City for the purpose of introducing competition and consumer protection issues into training in these institutions.

The report was delivered to COMCO in November 2008 and COMCO has approved the next project activity for the year 2009 of designing the curriculum and preparing training material. The work is to be undertaken by CUTS HRC, in collaboration with CUTS Institute for Regulation & Competition (CIRC), VCAD and COMCO.

Strengthening the Consumer Movement in Vietnam

The Centre has implemented a project entitled “Strengthening the consumer movement in Vietnam” in association with the Vietnam Standards and Consumers Association (VINASTAS) with the support of The Ford Foundation - Office for Vietnam and Thailand.

The overall goal of this project is to promote a healthy and vibrant consumer culture in Vietnam, which ensures the meeting, in the long term, of the seven legitimate needs of consumers as set out in the United Nations’ Guidelines for Consumer Protection. The duration of the project is two years, expected to be completed by 2010.

The specific objectives of the Project include:

- Structured development of the consumer movement in Vietnam, with the core being VINASTAS, its provincial branches and subordinate institutions, based on clear strategies and innovative activities;
- Positive developments/changes in consumer protection laws and regulations; and
- Effective mechanisms for engagement of all relevant stakeholders, most of all consumers, and ensure active participation channels for better representation of consumer voices.

Research

CUTS HRC, jointly with the VCAD, prepared a research report on most common provisions in consumer protection laws in the world to serve as a baseline for the Consumer Protection Law drafting process in Vietnam. Another research study on the various models of building a consumer protection regime in the world was also completed.

Training and Capacity Building

The following are the Training and Capacity Building activities:

- CUTS HRC organised a study tour for VCAD officials on consumer protection to Taiwan.
- CUTS, jointly with VINASTAS, started drafting a five-year development strategy for VINASTAS.
- A seminar, as part of the law drafting process, was held to disseminate the research findings of the two joint studies with VCAD.
- Two capacity building seminars on issues related to handling consumer complaints and dispute settlement with VINASTAS members were organised in November 2008.
- CUTS HRC is also supporting VINASTAS to study the feasibility of setting up a hotline for receiving consumer complaints in Vietnam and improve the quality of its magazine, THE CONSUMER.

Consumer Protection Regimes in the World

The United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection, 1985, stresses and urges the role of governments to develop and maintain a strong consumer protection policy. Each government should set its own priorities for consumer protection in accordance with the country's socio-economic and environmental circumstances and its people's needs, considering the costs and benefits of proposed measures.

Governments all over the world have been trying to build a strong legal and regulatory framework to ensure consumer protection. While some countries already have a well-developed consumer protection regime in place, there are many countries that are in the process of evolving such regime.

CUTS C-CIER started the initiative to develop a report which would compile and conduct an analysis of the state of consumers around the world, by collecting country chapters, 10-12 page essays on the Consumer Protection Regime of all the countries.

CUTS HRC contributed three country papers on Vietnam, Lao PDR and Cambodia.

Using Competition Law/Policy Tools in Dealing with Anti-competitive Practices in the Pharmaceutical Distribution System in Vietnam

The Project, supported under the Competition Research for Economic Development (CRED) Grant of IDRC, implemented from August 2008-March 2009, is meant to contribute to the promotion of public (consumer) welfare in Vietnam, by way of ensuring and enhancing access to medicines and enhancing the efficiency of health delivery systems in the country. This is a joint research project between CUTS HRC and VCAD, with VCAD taking the lead as the institutional partner for IDRC.

CUTS HRC was responsible for looking at the international experiences, the market structure, some issues related to consumer protection with regards to the pharmaceuticals industry, as well as some issues related to the regulatory framework. The first draft of the research report has been completed. The research has been finalised in February 2009 and then translated into English.

Two seminars were organised in Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City on March 18 & 20, 2009 respectively, for the purpose of information dissemination.

FUTURE PLANS

Fostering Equity and Accountability in the Trading System for Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

The project has three layers of objectives. The directional objective is 'to foster equity and accountability in the trading system – at national as well as regional and international level'. The development objective is 'to ensure and enhance positive linkages between trade and human development in the Indo-China region'. And, the programme objective is 'to generate a more coherent Southern voice in the formulation and implementation of trade and development policy – nationally, regionally as well as on the international platform, most notably as related to the WTO'.

The proposed duration of the project would be of three years (2009-2012). A concept note, together with a further refined proposal, has been submitted to SECO for review.

Building Civil Society Capacity on Electricity Reforms for Better Growth with Poverty Reduction in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam

The project is aimed at enhancing the capacity of CSOs in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam to stimulate regulatory improvements that can facilitate improved access to electricity services. The project is expected to last for two years (2009-2011). A project concept note has been developed and submitted to the Swiss Agency for Development Co-operation (SDC-Bern, Switzerland) for its review.

The 7Up6 Project

Initially, a project in line of the CUTS' 7Up model (<http://www.cuts-ccier.org/7Up-model-en.htm>) was planned to be launched in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) region, including all the regional states. Failing to generate immediate interests from donors, the project is still at the initial stage of proposal development. However, two possible spin-off projects have been identified: one on assessing the state of competition for promoting a functional competition policy in Indonesia (with support from SECO) and one on building the capacity of CSOs in the CLV countries on certain competition, regulatory and consumer protection issues (with support from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. Further project design and planning is in progress.

Advocacy and Networking

It has always been CUTS HRC's priority to network and reach out to various organisations. The Networking has enabled the Centre to share its strengths and involve others in its activities, with a view of building capacity.

EVENTS

How to Handle Consumer Complaints – Legislation Problems and Practices

CUTS HRC, in partnership with the Vietnam Standards and Consumer Protection Association (VINASTAS), and with support from The Ford Foundation, Office for Vietnam and Thailand, organised two training workshops under the project entitled, 'Strengthening the Consumer Movement in Vietnam', in Hai Phong, on November 18, 2008; and in Vung Tau, Vietnam, on November 20, 2008 respectively.

While delivering the inaugural address, Dr Doan Phuong, President, VINASTAS pointed out myriad difficulties that the consumer movement



in Vietnam is facing. George Cheriyan, Director, CUTS Centre for Consumer Action, Research & Training (CUTS CART) participated as a resource person.

The workshops deliberated on legal issues (litigation) as well as the practices of consumer redressal mechanism. There were presentations on legal framework analysis, case studies and hypothetical case handling techniques, with an introduction of Indian system of consumer dispute settlement mechanisms to Vietnam.

For more information, please see <http://www.cuts-international.org/HRC/media-archive-nov08.htm>

Lectures on “Restrictive Business Practices and the EC and US Response”

CUTS HRC in association with the Business Administration Department, Foreign Trade University of Vietnam and the Law Department, Hanoi National University organised two lectures on “Restrictive Business Practices (RBPs) and the EC and US response” in Hanoi, on December 13 & 15, 2008 respectively.

Professor Mark Furse, a visiting scholar on competition from Glasgow University, Scotland, was invited to deliver the lectures to a wide audience of teachers and students in these universities. The lectures were organised as part of CUTS HRC’s advocacy and networking programmes.

Asian Civil Society Lauds UNCTAD’s XII Quadrennial Conference

On the eve of the forthcoming quadrennial meeting of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD XII) to be held in Accra, Ghana on April 20-25, 2008, CUTS organised a two-day international conference in Hanoi, on March 06-07, 2008

The conference sought to formulate a set of key messages to be fed into the Civil Society Forum, to be held during the UNCTAD XII. This event was held under a project entitled, “Linkages between Trade, Development and Poverty Reduction” by CUTS International.

A total of 37 participants from 16 countries attended the conference, including six CUTS staff members from HRC and CUTS Centre for International Trade, Economics & Environment (CUTS CITEE), Jaipur.

Several media representatives were present in the conference, who facilitated a wide coverage of the event in Vietnam and abroad.

Towards such objective, the conference will discuss four sub-themes of the UNCTAD XII, which are:

- Enhancing coherence at all levels for sustainable economic development and poverty reduction in global policy making, including the contribution of regional approaches;
- Key trade and development issues and the new realities in the geography of the world economy;
- Enhancing the enabling environment at all levels to strengthen productive capacity, trade and investment: mobilising resources and harnessing knowledge for development; and
- Strengthening UNCTAD – enhancing its development role, impact, and institutional effectiveness.

For more details, please see: http://www.cuts-citee.org/pdf/Report-Pre-UNCTAD_XII-Hanoi.pdf

Opening of CUTS Hanoi Resource Centre

CUTS HRC was formally launched in Hanoi, on February 29, 2008. This is the fourth overseas centre of CUTS International, opened with the aim of promoting trilateral development cooperation on a range of trade and economic policy issues.

CUTS HRC will be providing technical assistance to VCAD, under the Ministry of Industry & Trade, over the period 2008-10 with support from



L to R: Alice Pham, Pradeep S Mehta, Lal T. Muana, Bach Van Mung, and Patrick Krauskopf

PARTICIPATION/REPRESENTATION

Date/Place	Event	Issue	Participant(s)
January 13-14, 2008, Khon Kaen, Thailand	Mekong Institute Research Advisory Roundtable Meeting organised by the Mekong Institute, with the support of New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID)		Alice Pham
February 29, 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam	Launch meeting of the project entitled 'Strengthening the Vietnamese Competition Authorities'	Mehta made a presentation on 'Engaging Civil Society to Promote Competition Reforms in Developing Countries'	Pradeep S Mehta, Alice Pham and Thanh Mai
March 18-20, 2008, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Consumers International's (CI) Asia Pacific Regional Members Meeting organised by CI Kuala Lumpur Office	Presentation on 'Competition & Consumer Protection'	Alice Pham
April 07-08, 2008, Khon Kaen, Thailand	Regional Policy Dialogue on Trade Facilitation Policy Gap Analysis on Cross-Transport Agreement (CBTA) in the Greater Mekong Sub-region organised by the Mekong Institute, with the support of New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency (NZAID)		Alice Pham

Contd...

Date/Place	Event	Issue	Participant(s)
June 07-11, 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam	Regional Training and Forum on 'Making Markets Work for Small Farmers: Understanding Marketing and Market Intermediation', organised by the Asia Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (DHRRA), in collaboration with Viet DHRRA, Vietnam Farmers Union, Foro Rural Mundial and ASEAN Foundation	To enhance knowledge and skills of participants in marketing and market intermediation which would link small farmers to markets	Alice Pham
June 11, 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam	Reviewing the Law Enforcement Practices on Consumer Protection and Building a Bill on Consumer Protection in Vietnam', organised by the Vietnam Competition Administration Department (VCAD)		Alice Pham and Thanh Mai
October 23, 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam	Sharing Experience and Identifying orientation on Advocacy of NGOs, jointly organised by Centre for Support of Social Development Programmes (CSDP) and Centre for Development Assistance (CDA)	To share experiences in advocacy regarding poverty reduction and development cooperation between NGOs in and outside of Cooperation Development Group (CDG) and identifying	To Tam

Contd...

Date/Place	Event	Issue	Participant(s)
		orientation on advocacy for NGOs in general, and CDG in particular	
November 11, 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam	“Impacts on Economics, Employment and Poverty Reduction of Vietnam Two Years after WTO’s Admission” jointly organised by the Centre of Development and Integration (CDI) and the Vietnam Asia-Pacific Economic Centre (VAPEC)		Tam To
December 16, 2008, Hanoi, Vietnam	Vietnam Innovation Day (VID) 2009, co-organised by the Government Inspectorate and the World Bank Vietnam	Topic was “More Accountability and Transparency, Less Corruption”	To Tam

the Government of Switzerland, in a capacity building project on competition policy and law. CUTS is also planning to provide support to VCAD in the drafting of a law on consumer protection for Vietnam, bringing in its 25 years of experience working on the issue from India and other countries in the world.

Attending and speaking at the reception were Alice Pham, Director CUTS HRC; Pradeep S Mehta, Secretary General, CUTS; Lal T. Muana, the Indian Ambassador to Vietnam; Bach Van Mung, the Director General of VCAD; and Patrick Krauskopf, representative of the Government of Switzerland. Also present were representatives from foreign embassies in Vietnam, CUTS’ long-time partner organisations, local and international, government and non-government organisation (NGOs) as well as press agencies.

Outreach

E-NEWSLETTER and WEBSITE

The homepage of CUTS HRC has become alive and kicking and CUTS HRC news is uploaded often. It is also suggested that HRC should have a website in Vietnamese, with links to CUTS main website. Testing of the whole page is being undertaken. CUTS HRC is also taking necessary actions to develop an e-newsletter, targeted at regional readers, covering issues related to trade and economics, competition and regulation, consumer protection and human development, etc., to promote our visibility and pro-activity in the relevant circles and ensure outreach.

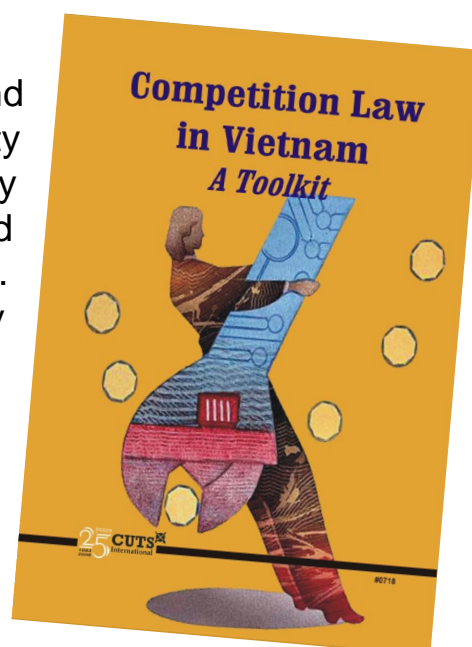
PUBLICATIONS

During the period, followings publications were brought out.

Toolkit

Competition Law in Vietnam: A Toolkit

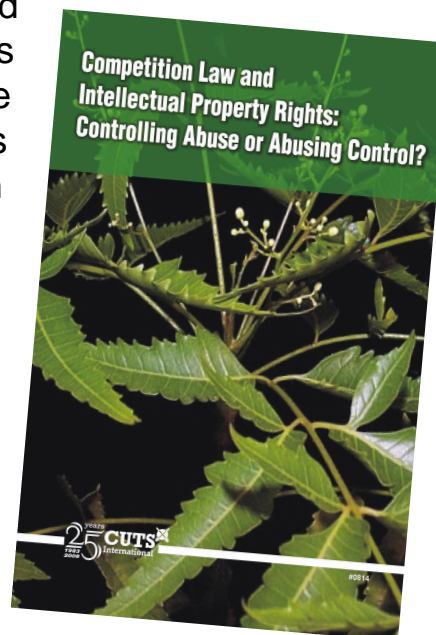
The Toolkit analysis the constraints and challenges that the competition authority of Vietnam may face in building a healthy competition culture in the country and suggest essential elements for success. It is meant for competition authority officials and administrators. However, it can also be useful for activists, journalists, academics, etc., as an advocacy tool, and by the business community for compliance education and self-regulation. The Toolkit examines the competition scenario in Vietnam market *vis-à-vis* enforcement of competition law against RBPs.



Monographs

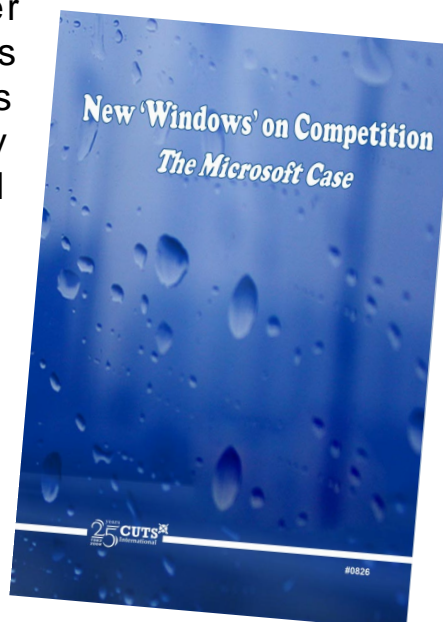
Competition Law and Intellectual Property Rights: *Controlling Abuse or Abusing Control?*

The relationship between competition law and intellectual property rights (IPRs) policy is sometimes mistakenly regarded as pure juxtaposition and contradiction. This Monograph examines the interface between competition law issues and the protection of IPRs – both complementarities and conflicts. It discusses the IPRs-related competition issues, highlighting abuse of a dominance position due to IPRs. In addition, the paper provides an overview of the competition law and IPRs in developing countries. Written in an easy-to-understand language, it aims to serve the purpose of reaching out to relevant stakeholders as well as general readers.



New 'Windows' on Competition: The Microsoft Case

The Microsoft cases are still under controversy, not only due to the giant's undeniable achievements and contributions to mankind's progress, but also the way competition laws are moulded differently and implemented differently in different jurisdictions. This monograph examines Microsoft's various alleged anti-competitive practices and its long-lasting battle with successive trials from nations worldwide. It also looks into some legal issues that should be discussed that are based on Microsoft's experiences. The ultimate objective is to raise awareness on the new application of competition law, especially for reference in developing countries to deal with cases of the same nature.



Networking with Stakeholders and NGOS

HRC worked closely with competition authorities in Vietnam, such as the Vietnamese Competition Administration Department, the Vietnamese Competition Council and the Vietnamese Standard and Consumer Associations. The Centre also strengthened the networks with local consumer associations in the North and the South of the countries, via training seminars. A number of journalists were keen to know about the Centre's activities. Besides, HRC has actively engaged itself in disseminating information on competition and consumer protection to select universities in Hanoi to receive their co-operation in future. CUTS HRC also received a couple of scholars, such as Professor Mark Furse from the University of Glasgow and Dr. Makoto Kurita from Chiba University Law School, to exchange and share ideas on the issues of competition law and policy in Vietnam. During the period, there are many other CSOs, regulatory and government agencies, inter-governmental bodies and business associations that CUTS HRC networked with.

Conclusion and the Road Ahead

During the first year since establishment, the Centre has significantly contributed to capacity building of competition authorities and also strengthening the consumer movement in Vietnam. It has also engaged in various activities related to policy-making process, trade development and economic policy, advocacy and networking. In the coming years, the Centre is committed to fulfilling tasks as per yearly operation plan and continuously strengthening collaborative work with various stakeholders at local and overseas levels. Its target is to make CUTS a renowned name among the civil society working in the Mekong region, not just Vietnam, as a resource centre for policy research, advocacy and training on international trade, consumer protection, economic and regulatory policies.

Audit Report



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