

# CUTS HRC Activity Report

No. 3-4/2011

## ONGOING PROJECTS

### Study on Unfair Trade Practices in Select ASEAN Countries

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

The Launch Meeting of the project was organised by the Centre in collaboration with the Vietnam Competition Authority (VCA) Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam in Hanoi, Vietnam on March 11, 2011. The meeting brought together experts and academicians within and beyond the ASEAN region, as well as partners, advisors and select local government officials working in the field and the press to discuss and exchange views on the nature and prevalence of UTPs in the region, their impacts on business growth and consumer welfare, and the legal and regulatory framework as well as institutions to deal with them, etc.

The project implementation is designed two main pillars – research and advocacy. Capacity building and networking elements are built in the whole implementation process of the project.

- Activity 1: Project Launch/Inception Meeting*
- Activity 2: Country-level studies – Legal and Institutional Mapping*
- Activity 3: Country-level Studies – Empirical Research*
- Activity 4: Country-level Studies – Perceptions Survey*
- Activity 5: Project Website and E-Discussion Forum*

The project is managed by HRC, involving the project leader, Pham Thi Que Anh, Director, HRC and the Project Coordinator, Tran Thi To Tam, with support from other colleagues in HRC regarding event management or banking and accounting. The project management team is in constant communications with all the project advisers, especially the Regional Economist, Dr. Deunden Nikomborirak, who provided her comments and suggestions to ensure the methodological soundness of all project activities so far. By December 2011, all research activities (literature review, empirical research and the perception survey) have been done and the final country reports are being finalised by all country partners.

The project website has also been set up and accessible at <http://utp.cuts-hrc.org> with an e-discussion group built in.

### Holding Broadband Service Providers to Account

A project entitled “Holding Broadband Service Providers to Account” is being undertaken by Consumers International (CI) with the objective of empowering 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. The project is being implemented by the Centre in cooperation with VINASTAS within two years (2011-2012) in Vietnam.

Under the agreed division of responsibility, HRC is in charge of carrying out the “Interviews or Focus Group Discussion” with the minimum target of 30 respondents and VINASTAS is responsible for carrying out a consumer survey with regard to broadband services. Besides, VINASTAS and HRC jointly do research on legal and regulatory environment including a questionnaire about the laws, regulations, codes and policies bearing on relevant issues, using an online form provided by CI. HRC has completed the interviews and a short report has been furnished to CI by December 2011.

## PUBLICATIONS

The first two issues of the Competition and Consumer Protection Dossier (CCD) in Vietnam has been finished and uploaded onto HRC website. The third issue is in the making.

## REPRESENTATIONS

- Pham Thi Que Anh attended the Mekong Forum, a bi-annual event organised by the Mekong Institute on the theme of “From the Greater Mekong Sub-region (GMS) to the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC): Prospects for Human Resource Development and Capacity Building in Regional Cooperation and Integration” in Khon Kaen, Thailand on July 12-13, 2011.
- Pham Thi Que Anh attended the Intergovernmental Group of Experts (IGE) meeting of UNCTAD on Competition Law and Policy in Geneva, Switzerland during July 18-21, 2011. This was an annual event where participants meet to discuss ways of improving worldwide cooperation on competition policy implementation and enhancing convergence through dialogue.
- Rijit Sengupta and Pham Thi Que Anh participated in the second BRICS International Competition Conference in Beijing, China on September 21-22, 2011. The theme for the conference was “Competition Enforcement under Economic Globalisation”.
- Pham Thi Que Anh attended the 2011 Annual Conference in Asia of the Economic Freedom Network entitled “Competition – Engine for Prosperity” jointly organised by the Freidrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom, the Centre for Public Policy Studies and the Institute for Democracy and Economic Affairs in Kuala Lumpur on October 11-12, 2011.
- Tran Thi To Tam participated in a conference entitled “Competition Law and Trade” organised by Hanoi University of Foreign Trade within the framework of a SECO-funded project on building “Regional Competence Centres for Trade Law and Policy in South Africa, Peru and Vietnam” in Hanoi, Vietnam, on October 28, 2011.
- Pham Thi Que Anh attended the 1<sup>st</sup> ASEAN Competition Conference organised by the ASEAN Secretariat and the Indonesian Competition Authority with support from GIZ (former InWent project), the ASEAN Australian Development Cooperation Programme and Japan International Cooperation Agency in Bali, Indonesia on November 15-16, 2011.