



Foreign Trade University
91 Chua Lang, Lang Thuong,
Dong Da, Ha Noi
Viet Nam



World Trade Institute, University of Bern
Hallerstrasses 6
CH – 3012 Berne
Switzerland

PRESS RELEASE

SWITZERLAND SUPPORTS REGIONAL COMPETENCE CENTER FOR TRADE LAW AND POLICY IN VIETNAM TO ASSIST ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Hanoi, 17 November 2010 – The Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and the World Trade Institute (WTI) of the University of Bern have joined forces in implementing a four year academic cooperation project in three advanced developing countries: Peru, South Africa and Vietnam. Funded by a five million CHF grant from SECO, in the framework of the Swiss Economic Development Cooperation, the project’s overall objective is to create regional hubs and competence centers in the field of trade law and policy.

In Vietnam, the **Foreign Trade University (FTU)**, with fifty years of research and education in the areas of trade related issues, was selected as the Vietnamese partner to implement the project. The project is expected to create **a sustainable and academically productive cooperation network** that will address one of the main obstacles to sound trade policy formulation by training future generations of experts - students, young and more established academic researchers and policy officials - called upon to assume leadership roles in trade policy formulation within governmental, civil society, business and academic circles. The institution partners will engage in a range **of academic training and research activities in trade policy**, adopting a multidisciplinary across the fields of law, economics and global political economy.

At the launch event of the project in Hanoi today, Prof. Dr. Hoang Van Chau, the FTU President said that *“Foreign Trade University is proud to be an implementing partner of the project funded by SECO and coordinated by WTI. We highly appreciate this partnership initiative which is not only contributing to the integration process of Vietnam into the world economy, but also improving the quality of higher education - teaching and research - in trade related issues in Vietnam”*. With the support and cooperation of the WTI, FTU will engage in the activities such as design and delivery of Master and PhD trainings on international trade regulation and policy, production of high quality trade policy-related research, promotion of academic staff and student exchanges, a four-year PHD scholarship, and hosting joint conferences. *“These activities are assessed to be strategic, relevant and responsive to the needs and constraints of Vietnam, and I believe that the project’s objectives will be achieved with a strong commitment of partners and their leadership”* commented Prof. Dr. Chau.

Prof. Pierre Sauvé, the Director of Studies from WTI, one of the world's leading institutions of advanced learning in the field of trade regulation, added that *“the project's focus on academic institutions, their human capital and research related infrastructure is critically important in cooperation. Teaching and training will be supported by academic scholarships to attend the WTI's flagship Master of International Law and Economics (MILE) program and its yearly Summer Academy on International Trade Regulation as well as to pursue a PhD on trade related matters at the WTI. In addition, research fellowships, joint research projects and conferences will aim to strengthen the research network among the institutions and in the region”*. He also emphasized that *“ trade regulation and policy have gained an importance for the economic development of countries, large or small, developed or developing. However, the lack of general and specialized technical knowledge is hindering the informed decision-making by key stakeholders in trade policy debates in Vietnam”*.

Ms. Brigitte Bruhin, the Deputy Country Director representing SECO in Vietnam, congratulated the FTU and WTI for this meaningful cooperation. She fully agreed with the comments made by the two partners and stated that *“Vietnam is one of seven priority countries for purposes of development cooperation by SECO and sustainable trade policy is one of the key objectives for the Vietnam Country Strategy 2009 – 2012”*. With regard to the increasingly integrated process of Vietnam into the regions and the world, she noted that *“well-formulated and enforced trade policy and regulation are needed for Vietnam to gain enhanced access to world markets on equal terms, to consolidate the confidence of investors, to protect intellectual property rights, to move up the value chain and leap-frog the middle-income trap, to protect the environment and the rights of workers, and to alleviate poverty.”*.

SECO reaffirmed the importance of Swiss-Vietnamese relations in the coming years and called for improved synergy, cooperation and coordination between and among different partners/stakeholders to deliver sustainable trade policy in Vietnam and help achieve balanced and inclusive growth for all.

For further information, please contact

Ms. Vu Thi Hien

Coordinator of Project in Foreign
Trade University
Head of Project Management
Department
Foreign Trade University
91 Chua Lang, Lang Thuong,
Dong Da, Ha Noi, Vietnam
Mobile: 0903284333
Email: glda@ftu.edu.vn

Mr. Pierre Sauvé

Director of Studies
World Trade Institute
University of Bern
Hallerstrasse 6
CH-3012 Berne
Switzerland
Email: Pierre.sauve@wti.org

Ms. Brigitte Bruhin

Deputy Country Director
Economic Development
Cooperation
Swiss Cooperation Office for
Vietnam
Embassy of Switzerland
Hanoi Central Office Building,
16th Floor,
44B Ly Thuong Kiet Street, Hanoi,
Vietnam
Phone: +84 4 3934 66 27
Fax: +84 4 3934 66 33
E-mail: brigitte.bruhin@sdc.net