

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Switzerland helps boosting Vietnamese Banking Universities Training Capacity

Hanoi, 20 March 2008 - Creating a more efficient, sophisticated and profitable commercial banking sector is a key challenge for Vietnam in the context of increasing competition following its accession to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) in early 2007. To improve the skills of the banking sector's employees, the government of Switzerland, through the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO), is supporting the development of the institutional and training capacity of the teaching instructors at two major bank training universities in Vietnam.

This project will provide targeted training to the two universities owned and operated by the State Bank of Vietnam: the Banking Academy in Hanoi and the Banking University in Ho Chi Minh City. Both institutions currently lack a comprehensive programme to substantially upgrade the knowledge of their teaching staff in major banking subjects. The project, which values around US\$1 million, responds to the requirements for training designed at instructors, based on practical concepts and tools currently used by global banks.

Dr. To Ngoc Hung, Director of the Banking Academy and Dr. Ho Dieu, Vice Rector of the Banking University express their delight that the project has now commenced. They are very keen to cooperate with the project team, provided by a consortium consisting of European Savings Banks Group (ESBG, Belgium), Banking Skills Training and Consultancy Company (BTC, Vietnam) and Savings Banks Foundation for International Cooperation (SBFIC, Germany). The consortium's expertise will help the instructors gain the technical skills and teaching effectiveness required to gradually build Vietnamese banking practice up to international standards.

To best meet the Universities' needs and interests, European training experts conducted individual and group interviews with the instructors. Initial outcomes and a detailed programme for the remainder of the assignment is also presented to a group of stakeholders in the project launching event held today.

Some 50 instructors from each university will receive training in important areas like commercial bank management, business strategy development, and credit management. These training courses will be delivered at both universities from 2008. The project is expected to be completed in 2010.

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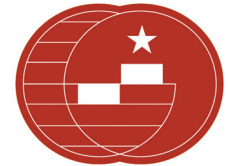
Project Partners of State Bank of Vietnam (SBV)

SECO: The Swiss State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) <<http://www.seco.admin.ch/index.html?lang=en>> is the federal government's centre of expertise for all core issues relating to economic policy. SECO promotes measures that enable partner countries to attain sustainable economic growth and benefit from increased international economic exchange. Priorities of the Economic Development Program in Vietnam are: strengthening competitiveness and trade diversification, mobilizing domestic and foreign investment, and promoting sound macro-economic conditions including monetary policies, a strong and healthy banking system and well functioning financial markets as basic conditions for private sector development.

ESBG – European Savings Banks Group <<http://www.savings-banks.com>> is an international banking association which represents one of the largest European retail banking networks, comprising about one third of the retail banking market in Europe. It represents the interests of its members vis-à-vis the EU Institutions and generates, facilitates and manages high quality cross-border banking projects. ESBG members are typically savings and **retail** banks or associations thereof, often organised in decentralised networks and offering their services throughout their **region**. ESBG members have furthermore been reinvesting

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responsibly in their region for many decades and they are a distinct benchmark for corporate social responsibility activities throughout Europe and the world.

Since 1992 and at the request of its membership, ESBG has been active in successfully performing TA & Training projects in various parts of the world (including Vietnam). These projects have mostly been funded by the multilateral and bilateral programmes, and ESBG has built up a solid reputation in leading consortia with multicultural teams of experts.

SBFIC – The Sparkassenstiftung für Internationale Kooperation (Savings Banks Foundation for International Cooperation – SBFIC, <www.sparkassenstiftung.de> established by German savings banks, has been implementing TA and Training projects for more than 15 years by offering banking services that are tailored to the needs of the target groups. As a well qualified work force at all levels is the basis of successful banking operations, human-resources development and training are an integral part of every SBFIC project; indeed, in many projects SBFIC focuses exclusively on this aspect.

BTC – Banking Training Skills and Consultancy Company Limited (BTC) <<http://www.btc.com.vn>> was established in 2001 under an initiative of the Mekong Private Sector Development Facility (MPDF) managed by International Finance Corp (IFC). The company currently has ten shareholders, which are leading joint stock commercial banks in Vietnam. BTC's mission is to enhance the competitiveness of Vietnamese financial institutions and banks by improving the knowledge and skills of bank officials and staff, and by transferring modern technologies from international banks operating in Vietnam.

Over its six years in operation, BTC has provided over 400 training courses to 10,000 trainees from 45 financial and credit institutions operating in Vietnam.

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