



IN BRIEF...

Vietnam – Legal Sector Cooperation

Swedish legal sector cooperation with Vietnam is now in its third phase since 1991. During recent years, the focus has moved from legal reform to pave the way for economic reform towards a comprehensive approach to include individual human rights in all activities.

An independent judicial system that functions smoothly – whereby all people are treated equally in the eyes of the law – is a cornerstone of democracy. The same can be said for the rule of law. Countries therefore need well-trained lawyers and judges with a spirit of integrity. Poverty is not merely a question of income and financial resources but also of vulnerability, lack of power and security. Poor people often refer to violence, insecurity and lack of justice as major problems. In line with Swedish policy, legal sector cooperation with Vietnam addresses poverty in terms of equal rights before the law and better access to a fair and just legal system.

Strengthening law making and law implementation

The aim is to strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Justice in law making and law implementation that are compatible with international legal standards and ratified international treaties.

To obtain better quality documents, the project seeks to:

- Provide improved legal knowledge and law making skills for lawmakers and legal staff,
- Strengthen regional and global collaboration between lawmakers.

To raise the ability of civil judgement executors and other legal personnel in implementing laws, the project will, for example:

- Enhance staff skills in law implementation.
- Increase knowledge of disseminating legal information to the public.

To strengthen the Ministry of Justice' administrative management capacity:

- New working methods and organisation will be developed.
- Instruction concerning functions, duties and organisation are to be developed.

Strengthening legal education

The objective is to develop curricula and modern teaching methods for bachelor, master and doctorate degrees by:

- Enhancing the skills of lecturers in legal knowledge from market economy countries, improving proficiency in English to provide access to international research and to develop modern teaching methods. At least 30 law lecturers are expected to graduate from the master's programme in Vietnam in addition to graduates from the international master's and PhD programmes in Sweden.
- Developing libraries by upgrading facilities and training librarians to better meet the needs of students and teachers by establishing two fully computerised international law libraries with links to library institutions abroad.

- Enhancing the educational and management capacity of staff at the Hanoi Law University and the Ho Chi Minh City Law University.

Strengthening legal information

The legal information system will be strengthened to provide equal access for public officials and the public at large to the legal system. The objective is to establish an effective legal information system for collecting, indexing, searching, and using and distributing/disseminating legal information. There are three specific objectives to reach the overall goal:

- Better access to the National Legal Database by officials of the judiciary sectors, state agencies, lawyers, enterprises and others.
- Developing the library of the Ministry of Justice.
- Developing a law dictionary.

Strengthening legal aid

The objective is to provide access for disadvantaged people, especially in rural and remote areas, in order to ensure that their legal rights are upheld. The number of legal aid cases has increased considerably with increased access to justice for the poor.

The project includes:

- Supporting the National Legal Aid Agency and 15 Provincial Aid Centers to provide legal aid services.
- Support to enable the National Legal Aid Agency to exchange ideas with international experts and other countries on issues such as the division of power.
- Assisting the Provincial Legal Aid Centres in recruiting lawyers with specialist knowledge to address

legal matters raised by women, children and minorities. The project also involves training other legal experts in this field.

- Examining the existing mediation system to determine whether additional support is needed.

Implementation of the Strategy for legal system development to 2010

During 2000–2001 Vietnam carried out a comprehensive analysis of the problems and the needs in the legal system. Sweden was part of and contributed financially to this assessment. The analysis resulted in a strategy for Legal systems development to 2010. With UNDP and Denmark, Sweden co-finances assistance to Vietnam in implementing the strategy.

Halving poverty by 2015 is one of the greatest challenges of our time, requiring cooperation and sustainability. The partner countries are responsible for their own development. Sida provides resources and develops knowledge and expertise, making the world a richer place.



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