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## 1. BACKGROUND

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From 2006 – 2010, the VDIC has been managing an Australian trust fund of AU\$674,000 to implement the Vietnam Virtual Learning Program (VVLP). Under the operation of this trust fund, four rounds of small grants have been given to nine local beneficiary institutions from various sectors to implement capacity building projects in different fields ranging from environment governance to leadership skills for CEOs of small and medium enterprises, (Annex 1: List of projects funded 2005 – 2010).

There are two key objectives of the grant:

- To build capacity within Vietnamese institutions, civil society organizations, targeting training agencies/divisions, through the provision of small grants funding to introduce and integrate blended learning methods and innovative technologies in training provision.
- To provide local institutions with access to world class expertise in order to foster knowledge sharing across countries, establishing a community of network and create a database of available contents resources.

Recognizing the value of the program support, VVLP beneficiaries have shared information about the program to their partners, including Ministries' technical agencies, universities, non-governmental organizations, research institutes, enterprises and self-help groups. There have been an increasing number of organizations submitting expressions of interest following the call for proposals of the VVLP every new round.

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## 2. KEY OUTCOMES

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After four years of implementation, the program has achieved its objectives, supplying necessary resources and appropriate approaches and technology to ***encourage and assist local organisations to implement innovative learning initiatives in capacity building areas*** which have multiple impacts locally and nationally.

**Outreach:** From 2006-2010, the VVLP has attracted active participation from many local institutions with an increasing number of civil society groups. Within four rounds, ***eighty three*** organizations sent expressions of interest, ***twenty three*** proposals were submitted and ***nine*** local institutions have received small grants ranging from US\$30,000- 50,000 to carry out various training activities. Since the grant is open for all local organizations, **training topics and themes are very much diversified** ranging from Plant Protection, Drug Information Analyzing, E-commerce, Environment Economics and Governance to management skills for CEOs of small and medium enterprises.

**Cost effective:** Blended learning methodologies with extensive use of ICT have helped many local organizations to materialize their training ambition *through very cost effective delivery instruments* such as high tech lectures using video conferencing equipment combined with web based forum and on-line learning platforms such as Moodle which allow participants to learn at their best suited pace and time.

Compared with a conventional training course where excessive amount of funding was spent on travel costs for experts and participants to meet at once place at one time, the VVLP has created a much more flexible, cost and time effective platform for organizations to reach out to much larger audience groups with diversified sources of expertise and contents within the countries, as well as across the region and globally.

*For example, it usually costs approximately US\$50,000 to have a one week workshop with fifty participants and two international experts or at least US\$ 10,000 for one person to attend a short course on management skills. With US\$ 24,000, a three month course on management skills was delivered twice to over 120 CEOs from local SMEs.*

**Demand driven:** Almost all training courses were designed based on sound empirical data of **demand** through a comprehensive **need assessment process**. Outcomes of the need assessment processes have often required organizations to rethinking their pre-set goals, objectives and thus re-engineering their course structure and in some cases the contents to become more practical while addressing actual demands and capacity from the learners.

**Just –in-time:** In addition to the small grant scheme, the Grant also helped the VDIC to mobilise and deliver *just-in-time knowledge sharing events* on topics such as inflation, financial risk management, climate change and social protection which were requested by and co-organized with local institutions including the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce, Institute of Financial Training (Ministry of Finance), ASEAN Secretariat.

**Community of practice:** Through connection with the Global Development Learning Network, the VVLP enables many institutions to increase their access to and mobilise local and international resources and content experts to address specific needs of capacity building within each organisation. Following a proactive process of identifying networks of expertise and intensive collaboration with them to design training course and develop training materials, all local institutions have managed to establish very strong and sustainable partnership with content experts (research institutes, universities...) within and outside the region.

*For example, community of practices on topics such as trade competition, environmental governance, clinical pharmacist, household surveys have been established allowing Vietnam to learn from the world and at the same time disseminating the country's best practices.*

**Collection of training materials, content databases:** With the support from content experts, each of the projects has developed very comprehensive training materials which were fully used during the delivery of their proposed training courses. Many materials have now been incorporated in mainstream textbooks, formal lecture and continue to be used in on-going training courses.

### 3. IMPACTS

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#### a/Impacts of the program to VDIC

**Opportunities:** Through the implementation of VVLP the VDIC has got many opportunities to reach out and become involved in capacity projects of Vietnam organizations from different sectors and various backgrounds. The team also has more chances to gain access to and understand other development projects beyond those that are supported by the World Bank.

**Champion in knowledge brokering:** By assisting local institutions in identifying relevant content experts to meet various demands of capacity building, VDIC has successfully played an important role to facilitate and connect Vietnam organizations with external knowledge networks locally and globally. The VDIC has established strong partnerships with technical networks and communities of practice in Vietnam and also in many countries in the world. A database of qualified trainers and training institutions categorized by areas of expertise and learning methodology provision has been created to further support the team in accommodating diversified learning demands across themes and sectors.

*For example, when Vietnam and other countries in the region were facing the high inflation crisis, the VDIC quickly managed to mobilize World Bank, Turkey and Chilean experts to organize a seminar called: Today's inflation: Global context and local solutions. The seminar was actively attended and greatly appreciated by policy makers, bankers, and researchers from eight countries in the region.*

#### b/Impacts of the program to beneficiary organizations:

**Critical and strategic planning:** Having to prepare grant proposals to compete for the VVLP small grants, local institutions had to engage in a rigorous process from identifying training needs to prioritizing demand to match with available resources and think strategically about why, what, how a training course is developed. More importantly, since the grant can only finance a slice of the training ambition, organizations had to develop and fine-tune their comprehensive master plan training program in order to ensure the consistency and compliance of the program towards the overall achievement of the organization. This process required strong endorsement of the institutions' leadership based on a cohesive and strategic plan supported by sound but realistic financial resources.

*For example, a ministerial training institution has always conducted training courses with contents identified and designed top down from central office without any consultation with participants from provincial levels. With this grant, for the first time, a training course was developed following basic steps of conducting participatory needs' survey 2 months prior to developing a curriculum of the course. Results from the needs' assessment has helped the design team to reengineer their content and the program to be based on actual demand and suitable to the staff's level of competency at both central and provincial levels.*

**Awareness of available resources and tools for training:** By observing many knowledge sharing events hosted by the VDIC, many organizations have been introduced to and become familiarized with available learning tools, features of each of the methodologies, and with being able to make an appropriate blend of learning tools to best suit their overall learning objectives. Grantees are strongly encouraged to use participatory and learner-oriented methodologies where learners are enabled to participate in online forums, face to face forums, group work, case study, and field

research to build and sustain their motivation and engagement throughout the course's cycle. Many ICT tools for communication and disseminating knowledge (such as Videoconference, web forum, Moodle...) have been adopted.

*For example, all grantees have used Videoconference for lecturing with experts from foreign countries and connecting to other cities within Vietnam such as Can Tho, Hue, Danang and HochiMinh city. At least three to four tools (Moodle, web forum, online tutor) have been incorporated in the learning design.*

**Networking:** Most organizations have been very proactive in identifying and mobilizing resources (technical and financial) to response to their needs. They also conducted thorough research to find out what is the best source of content at an affordable cost. The use of Videoconference has helped many organizations to stay in touch with their identified partners and continue their exchange after the course has been completed. Participants also formed a network amongst themselves to support each other during and after the course were completed.

*For example, out of 120 CEOs that graduated from the "leadership skills" courses, 40 participants have formed a social networking group and regularly organize a working lunch to continue to reflect and share changes that have happened to them as the outcomes of their application of the knowledge learnt during the course. Through partnership with the Swedish UPSALA, the Hanoi College of Pharmacy started to implement another program on "Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR)" skills for ADR pharmacists and national health care practitioners in Vietnam.*

**Monitoring and evaluation:** All projects were required to use a comprehensive Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) system to measure motivation and satisfaction of learners before, during and after the course while also taking into consideration feedback from learners to adjust the learning pace as well as supplement more learning materials/references. Online tutoring was also applied to collect feedback and to monitor learning progress as well as adjusting the design whenever needed. A building capacity for learners approach was adopted and applied replacing the conservative approach of "providing" learner with a training course.

*For example, the Center for Resources and Environment Studies (CRES) has developed a pre-post survey system to capture changes in the way that lecturers (who received TOT training in this program) deliver their training courses i.e. using various sources of references, research for more materials and incorporate diversified tools to engage students in an active learning environment. Post survey conducted six months after the training was completed showed that 20 out of 28 lecturers have shown strong indication of changes in their delivery modes.*

**Sustainability:** The VVLP only provides small grants for programs which are already a part of an on-going comprehensive master plan training program of Vietnamese institutions. As such using the knowledge and skill required through developing the proposal for this grant, many organizations have successfully obtained other sources of funding for other components of their programs. The awareness and experiences gained during the implementation of the grant also helped them in re-thinking and re-engineering the design of other programs and in exploring ways to integrate ICT in delivering courses in a cost-effective manner. All training materials developed during the program have been not only fully used but expanded and further developed to meet growing/changing demands from learners.

*For example, the DVDs and audio tapes developed by the National Institute of Plant Protection which provide detailed guidance for famers to identify sources and types of fruit and plant's diseases, is now being broadcasted on Channel VTV2 of the Vietnam Television and also on local radio stations. In the case of CRES, local text books and lecture notes on environmental economic*

*and governance drafted by participants have been used for 44 classes and trained 1540 students.*

#### 4. LESSONS LEARNT

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##### Values to share

- VBLP Grants are **open** for all local organizations of different areas of business specialization. The grant has created an open channel for many local institutions, especially small and medium Institutes to access technical, financial and learning methodology resources to implement their capacity improvement initiatives. This grant also offers Vietnamese institutions a **unique opportunity** to build their own capacity through adopting a new concept of designing and planning training activities that might have been of their interest for sometime but had not been realized due to limited financial and expertise resources.
- Blended Learning has proven as a **good measure for capacity building** work because (i) blended learning enables an effective mobilization of international and local expertise by allowing the flexible yet demand-driven selection of content providers to best address specific needs of different groups of audience (ii) a blend of different learning tools will create the best possible engaging learning environment allowing learners to process and comprehend knowledge at an individual level as well as stay connected with other people in small groups within and across countries via multimedia/ICT learning tools.
- The comprehensive process required by the grant application has forced institutions to think strategically and effectively in designing and managing their proposed program. Conventionally, Vietnamese organizations used to plan their training based on the availability and scope of the pre-allocated funds from Government (top-down/ supply -driven planning), with the requirement of this grant procedures, selected institutions have started practicing designing and managing activities and expenses using output - based and demand - driven approach. Monitoring and reporting mechanism processes also helped to increase the accountability and transparency in financial and activities management.

##### Lessons to learn

- Many local institutions applied for the grant simply because of the available resources without having a clear understanding of “blended learning”. However their proposals **are full of innovative ideas and ambition** for a better training plan and better delivery methodology. As such various trainings on blended learning concept, proposal writing, project management, financial monitoring should be provided to participating institutions to help them fully understand blended learning, action and participatory learning approaches and to be able to actually apply them in their programs.
- The past implementation of the grant has also shown that participating organizations learned a great deal though carrying out all steps required by the grant, from conducting a systematic needs’ assessment to project management and event planning and coordination. Frequent coaching and technical support during implementation would be a key factor in making sure that the awarded project can achieve the expected outcomes.

### Annex 1: List of projects funded 2006 – 2010

No.	Year	Project Title	Grantee	Grant
1	2006	Training for Trainers on Environmental and Natural Resources Management in Vietnam with Advanced and Innovative Modes	Centre for Natural Resources and Environmental Studies (CRES) – Vietnam National University Hanoi	US\$44,964
2	2006	Supporting IPM Capacity Development Networks in Vietnam	National Institute of Plant Protection, Institute of Agricultural Sciences	US\$48,476
3	2007	Integration of ICT to Enhance the Ability in Drug Information usage for Drug Information and Clinical Pharmacists in Hanoi College of Pharmacy and Northern Health-care Centres	Drug Information Centre – Hanoi College of Pharmacy	US\$22,170
4	2007	Capacity Building on E-Commerce for the Group of Master Trainers of the Vietnam Trade Information Center	Vietnam Trade Information Centre – Ministry of Commerce and Industry	US\$21,977
5	2008	Visionary Leader Training Program	Institute of Information Technology for Business – Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry	US\$23,280
6	2008	Training on Impact Evaluation of Poverty Reduction Programs in Vietnam using Panel Data of Vietnam Household Living Standard Surveys 2004 – 2006	Institute of Labor Science and Social Affairs – Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs	US\$20,593
7	2008	Competition, Trade and Business Environment	The Centre for Development and Integration	US\$20,494
8	2009	Improving Professional Skills for Vietnamese Nurses in accordance with the United States' Nurse-training Standards	Hanoi Medical School	US\$30,000

## ROUND I

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### 1. Training of trainers in Environment Economics and Governance

*Grantee: Center for Research and Environment Studies (CRES), Hanoi National University*

Objectives: the project aims at (1) increasing Vietnamese trainers and trainees' access to international state-of-the-art **knowledge on natural resources and environmental management**; (2) enhancing effectiveness of existing environmental training programs through integrating blended learning methods; building up capacity for Vietnamese participants in developing and sustaining blended learning programs; and, (4) establishing partnerships between Vietnamese and Australian specialists in exchanging knowledge in environmental management and development.

Expected results: the project aims to gain significant enhancement on capacity of CRES and also educational institutions in Vietnam in environmental economics and governance. Trained participants are lecturers of Environmental Economics and Natural Resource Management from various universities and other training institutions and organizations. Their roles are to introduce, teach and transfer knowledge on environmental economics and resource management to students and colleagues of their institutions, universities and development projects. At the organization level, this project is conducted as a pilot project for a long-term blended joint training program between CRES/VNU and APSEG/ANU.

### 2. Project: Building Capacity in Plant Protection for the network of Integrated Pesticide Management (IPM)

*Grantee: National Institute of Plant Protection (NIPP), Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development*

Objectives: Pests diseases constrain the production and export potential of high value crops (fruits and vegetables). There are significant concerns regarding pesticide use in local markets for these crops. Ministry and international experts have agreed to work together to address the knowledge needs in **food safety and trade**. The project aims to (1) collect and compile data and learning approaches from Vietnam's and CABI's resources, so as to develop new distance learning resources on the major pest risks for key horticultural crops; (2) evaluate these materials through pilot training workshops led by NIPP in the north and south of Vietnam, by which researchers, agriculturists and retailer/civil society groups will be trained in IPM principles and the implications of good agricultural practice.

Expected results: In addition to improving the capacity of Vietnamese scientists to diagnose and treat plants' diseases, the project is expected to enable NIPP and relevant organizations to build their own staff training programs in plant protection. The training exercises have brought the scientists closer to farmers and given them a better understanding of the environment in which they are working to solve plant disease problems. In addition, the Ministry has a longer term plan to restructure agricultural science institutions in northern Vietnam with the specific assistance of CABI, who is also the international partner of NIPP for this project. Therefore, result of the project will encourage networking and interaction among young scientists within Vietnam network.

Through CABI's resources and through linkage with other institutions established via the CABI-MARD MOU, we would be able to access to resources, specialists and institutions in Australia and Europe.

## ROUND II

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### 3. Building skills in drug information using and analyzing for researchers and pharmacists in Northern Hospital of Vietnam

*Grantee: Hanoi College of Pharmacy*

**Objectives:** the project aims to (1) improve quality of healthcare services in Vietnam; (2) Reduce the inappropriate healthcare expenses caused by the **irrational uses of drug**; (3) Regional and multilateral networking in sharing experiences/knowledge between Swedish, Australians and Vietnam in **Drug Information management** and development promoted.

**Expected results:** Participating in the project, teachers in universities and drug information practitioners at hospitals are expected to apply the learned knowledge and skills of drug information analysis to their work. Teachers will integrate the knowledge and skills into their lectures to teach their students who are pharmacists and DI practitioners in the future. This will benefit their work in support people in using drugs in a safer way. For staff from provincial clinics with the roles to provide advice on drug uses to doctors and nurses at hospitals, they help to ensure the accurate uses of drugs and medicines by patients. This would result in the shortened treatment duration and reduced illness and mortality of patients. Apart from the technical knowledge and skills learned, project members and participants will be learning other skills such as project management, budget and activity planning, blended learning methods. These skills will become practices applied by the DI Center in delivering capacity building activities in the future.

### 4. Improving capacity in teaching E-commerce of VTIC's trainer group.

*Grantee: Vietnam Trade Information Center, the Ministry of Trade*

**Objectives:** (1) increasing the capacity in practicing E-commerce of the provincial and local trade promotion centres through the facilitation and coaching of qualified VTIC's trainers group; (2) developing e-commerce learning resources for different types of commodities for different size of companies; (3) creating networks of organizations and institutions whose are leading in research, teaching and practice e-commerce with wide range of applications.

**Expected results:** the project aims to build capacity for a group of trainers by providing them with technical knowledge and efficient teaching methods, so that they can deliver better training for organizations in provinces and in the ministry. All outputs achieved during the project implementation, including training materials, facilitation guidelines and lessons learned will become resources and be re-used by VTIC's master trainers in the following training and workshops for other organizations, known mostly at provinces. Participating in all phases of the project's implementation is a valuable learning experience for project staff of VTIC. As a result, their capacity in project management, especially those are funded by foreign sponsors, will be improved and this will give more opportunities to approach and win grants of capacity building.



## ROUND III

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### **5. Capacity building in Competition, Trade and Business Environment**

*Grantee: Center for Development and Integration*

Objectives: the project aims to improve promulgation and effective implementation of a legal and regulatory framework that is conducive to the development of the private sector in Vietnam. In addition, it is to create a sharing and learning network between the Vietnam community of practice of private sector, governmental offices and media agencies via this learning opportunity and an international institute who has qualifications and experiences in this area.

Expected results: 60 participants will possess knowledge on competition, market structure, restrictive Business and Unfair Trade Practices, Relevant situation in the world and Vietnam. Participants also will be able to practice skills to analyze market structure, relate to and contextualize Vietnam market, assess the current practice, set up market scenarios for Vietnam enterprises; and, analyze opportunities and risks for business strategy for Vietnam enterprises. Apart from that, the project is expected to increase the institutional capacity of CDI in adopting a new learning methodology - blended learning, joining learning international community; and overall, providing high quality training products to better support Vietnam enterprises.

### **6. Building capacity in Impact Evaluation of Poverty Reduction Programs in Vietnam using Panel Data of Vietnam Household Living Standard Surveys 2004-2006**

*Grantee: Institute of Labor Science and Social Affairs, Ministry of Labor, Invalid and Social Affairs (MOLISA)*

Objectives: the overall aim of the project is to provide the ILSSA staffs with knowledge and analytical skills of impact evaluation of poverty reduction programs using Panel Data from Vietnam Households Living Standard Surveys (VHLSS) 2004 and 2006. Enhancing knowledge and analytical skills of impact evaluation will help the staffs have policy recommendations on poverty reduction programs for MOLISA. Thus, a practical training on quantitative impact evaluation will be very helpful for the daily works and researches of the ILSSA staffs.

Expected results: Beneficiaries of the projects are staff of ILSSA, MOLISA, Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI), Committee of Ethnic Minorities (CEM). After the project, the trainees will have a more profound understanding on impact evaluation and causal - effect concepts. Their better understanding can result in a better program assessment and contributing to a better decision on the program's effectiveness. Three papers on impact evaluation of socioeconomic programs/policies conducted by the trainees can provide helpful inputs for policy makers in poverty reduction. Finally, the project also contributes to strengthening the network relationship between ILSSA, Georgetown University, National Economics University, MPI, CEM, and other departments of MOLISA.

### **7. Improve the capacity of the VCCI in supporting and training Vietnamese enterprises through the application of ICT in Visionary Leader Training Program**

*Grantee: Institute of Information Technology for Business, Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)*

Objectives: The project's overall goal is to improve capacity of ITB – VCCI in carrying out blended learning programs for Vietnamese Small and Medium Enterprises. The project is aiming at creating an innovative environment where learning experiences are engaging, current, useful, relevant and highly applicable to participants' projects. It also encourages the Institute to use Information Communications Technologies (ICTs) to increase access to knowledge sharing with best practice content experts and practitioners located across borders during and after the project's implementation.

Expected impacts: The project provides VCCI with an opportunity to apply an innovative delivery of training courses using different ICT tools. Pilot courses on soft management skills will be provided to local CEOs of small and medium enterprise. Experiences from designing and organizing these pilot courses would help improving ITB to better organize future learning programs for more participants in different areas using diversified sources of expertise, nationally and internationally. Another expected result is to create a network of community between enterprises' managers across the country. A standard of procedures and criteria to design training courses is also expected to be produced to help with other future training programs.

## ROUND IV

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### **8. Building Capacity of Vietnamese Nursing Teachers through the usage of blended learning methodology**

*Grantee: Hanoi Medical University*

Objectives: The project aims to (1) develop supplement curriculum and materials for the training course based on those standards; (2) improving the capabilities of the nurse trainers in accordance with the international nurse-training standards and (3) Advocacy from MOH, MOET to set up a National Exam Frame or Standard of Nursing.

Expected results: The application of international standards in nursing teaching and assessment will result in an improved quality of training of Vietnam medical universities. Overall, this is a good preparation for Vietnam nursing education in obtaining international accreditation. As the result, it will increase the registration of students to Nurse training schools that will improve the capacity of health care work force of the country. The partnership with international partners who are experienced in nurse training will create more opportunities for career development for graduate students from nursing schools, through having more opportunities to work in Vietnam and also in other countries. As the result, the reputation of HMU will be recognized at international standards and this will attract students from other countries come to their nursing training program.