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Clean production will help Vietnamese fruit compete with imports



Shifting to clean production is the right way for Vietnamese fruits to compete with the rising inflow of imports, both consumers and local fruit growers said.

Statistics of the Vietnam Customs show the country imported nearly 340 million USD worth of fruit in the first three months of this year, with products of the US, Australia, Thailand and China gradually expanding their share in the domestic market.

Le Minh Hoan, Secretary of the Party Committee of the Mekong Delta province of Dong Thap, said the recent success in fruit export has resulted in the negligence of the domestic market with nearly 100 million people.

He noted that although the local market does not generate revenues in foreign currency, but it is the main base for the fruit cultivation sector to develop in a sustainable way.

A survey of consumers showed when choosing fruit, most people first considered the safety factor, this is where the imports have an advantage over locally grown fruits.

"Domestic consumers will be willing to buy locally grown fruit if growers give them the same respect as for foreign buyers," Hoan said.

Some fruit growers have begun to notice the call of the market.

Ly Van Son, Deputy Director General of Ecofarm, said shifting to clean production is a must to re-gain consumers' trust, thus gaining the edge in competing against imported fruits.

According to Son, Ecofarm initially planned to focus on export, but after carefully analyzing the market, the company decided to sell half of its products on the domestic market.

Farmer Tran Thi Ly in Tan Hiep commune, Hon Quang district of Binh Phuoc province, invested 500 million VND (20,000 USD) in a hi-tech melon farm. Rising demand has encouraged her to open nine more farms now.

The key to sustainable development of the fruit sector is to keep a firm hold of the domestic market while continuing to boost exports.

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Vietnamese actress stuns Cannes red carpet



French football manager to help Vietnamese football enter World Cup



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Discovering Europe in the heart of Hanoi



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Vietnam earned 3.4 billion USD from exporting fruit and vegetables in 2017. The figure was 960 million USD in the first three months of this year.

Vietnam HR Awards will recognise HR excellence

The Vietnam HR Awards 2018 kicked off last week, offering a valuable resource for the local human resources community as the best HR strategies and practices are comprehensively evaluated and awarded.

Tieu Yen Trinh, CEO of Talentnet Corporation and deputy head of the awards' organising committee, believes that nowadays, one of the key priorities for both international and Vietnamese corporations is to develop an effective HR strategy, balancing business needs with employee benefits. The Vietnam HR Awards recognise the learning zeal of growing Vietnamese enterprises and remain one of the leading information channels with profound reference materials and learning opportunities to obtain HR innovation and strategy data from large corporations and companies.

"The Vietnam HR Awards this year have updated their competition requirements for small- and medium-sized enterprises with appropriate criteria. Also, the post-award events promise to bring unity and value to the local HR community," said Trinh.

The Vietnam HR Awards are co-held by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs' (MoLISA) newspaper publication in co-operation with Talentnet Corporation. The awards' judging panel is comprised of leading international and local HR experts who focus on assessing and judging enterprises' HR policies. Many award participants are large corporations such as Abbott, AIA CSC, DHL Express, HSBC, Intel Products, Intercontinental Hanoi Westlake, Unilever, Samsung, Mobile World, FPT, and TCM.

Aiming at aligning the local HR community with regional standards and contemporary trends, the organisers of the Vietnam HR Awards 2018 decided to expand the award categories and divide the original awards into two separate tables to maintain distinctions of different enterprises.

Under this new approach, Group A is for enterprises with outstanding HR strategies. Enterprises in the group must have worked in Vietnam for at least 15 years, have at least 100 employees, and own total property worth more than VND11 trillion (\$482.9 million).

Group B is for enterprises with effective HR policies. Enterprises in the group must have worked in Vietnam for at least five years and have at least 50 employees.

The deadline for the contestants is June 29. The awards ceremony will be held in November. Documents to apply for the awards should be in Vietnamese and English and sent to the Talentnet Corporation on Floor 6, No. 33 Mac Dinh Chi street, Da Kao ward, District 1, Ho Chi Minh City. A soft copy should be sent through the website www.vietnamhrawards.com.

Over the three previous seasons with practical post-award events since 2014, the Vietnam HR Awards was well received by Vietnamese enterprises, becoming an annual playground for the Vietnamese business community in general and the HR community in particular.

Furthermore, the Vietnam HR Awards is widely recognised by enterprise leaders and HR experts as a prestigious, reliable, legitimate, and transparent award, contributing to the foundation for human capital and HR executives' development.

Nguyen Trung Chinh, acting editor-in-chief of the Labour and Social Affairs Newspaper and head of the organising committee, shared the importance of HR development and the important role of the Vietnam HR Awards, saying, "To achieve growth targets and market expansion, enterprises have to prioritise HR activities and build a strategic HR plan updated with current trends and fitting current business conditions. Confronting the pressure of globalisation, human capital is becoming a more and more important resource, leveraging enterprises to new heights and improving competitive advantages in a competitive market.

"Thus, enterprises need reliable reference sources like the Vietnam HR Awards to obtain insights from labour markets and to stay updated on new regional and international HR management approaches," Chinh added.

JUDGING TIMELINE

- April 18 – June 29, 2018: Shortlisting candidates and profile evaluation
- June 29 – August 3, 2018: Presentation, employee survey, site visits
- August 3 – September 28, 2018: Judging panel assessment, evaluation, and scoring
- October 1 – November 30, 2018: Vietnam HR Awards 2018 Ceremony

Vietnam Young Lions 2018 winners announced

The six most outstanding talents who will represent Vietnam at Cannes Lion 2018 have been revealed at the Vietnam Young Lions 2018 Awards Ceremony.

After more than one month of competition, Vietnam Young Lions 2018 - the biggest arena of Vietnam's marketing and communication industry has attracted nearly 500 contestants (241 teams) in three categories including Films, Digital, and Marketers. The talents of the Vietnamese creative industry have convinced the judging panel with their bold and distinctive ideas.

WHATEVER team beat out 115 rivals in the Digital category to win the golden medal. Meanwhile, the gold medal in the Marketer category went to NS Team. JUST ANOTHER TEAM was the winner of the Films category.

Speaking at the Awards Ceremony, Pham Thi Dieu Anh, managing director of AIM Academy and head of the organisation board, said: "One of our biggest achievements in this year's competition is the expansion in both the number of contestants and the level of competition. This year we received 241, a significant increase against the 100 teams in 2016."

"The competition attracted not only marketing and communication specialists but also independent artists and Vietnamese enterprises. Vietnam Young Lions 2018 has become a common playground for the

knowledge system' project established



Vietnamese creative community who share the passion to bring Vietnam to the world,” she said.

Under the theme of “Live With the Heart of a Lion,” the competition has gathered the best minds from leading multinational corporations in Vietnam. This shows businesses’ strong interest in creative work and action to support the development of the country’s creative industry.

After the challenge in Vietnam, the winners will begin their journey to conquer the creative arena of Cannes Young Lions 2018 in France this summer. AIM Academy—the organiser of the competition—will sponsor the whole trip worth nearly VND1 billion (\$43,950) for the six young talents to compete in Cannes Young Lions 2018 as well as experience the Cannes Lions Creative Festival.

Taiwan to become Dong Nai’s largest investor

Taiwan Core Pacific Group is seeking investment opportunities in fields like petrochemical manufacturing and industrial park and residential real estate construction in Dong Nai.

On April 19, Lin Ko Ming, vice chairman of Taiwan’s Core Pacific Group, visited Dong Nai and expressed interest in some potential investment sectors. The group asked for a land parcel of 100 hectares for petrochemical manufacture, and other areas to develop apartment buildings.

Core Pacific Group is one of the leading groups in Taiwan with a total value of \$5 billion. Core Pacific Group operates in the petrochemical industry, infrastructure, urban development and operation, and financial services.

Vice Chairman of the Dong Nai People’s Committee Tran Van Vinh said that Taiwan ranks second among the 45 countries and territories investing in Dong Nai, with the total registered capital of over \$5.2 billion.

Taiwanese businesses have invested much in the province, but there is no industrial park infrastructure. Investment in urban areas is very promising in Dong Nai, because if the investment plan complies with the provincial master plan, the project will receive support in dealing with administrative procedures.

According to the Dong Nai Industrial Zones’ Management Board, the province attracted 1,733 FDI projects by the end of 2017 with the total investment capital of \$31.3 billion.

Despite laying down stricter conditions for investment projects, FDI capital pouring into the province continued to increase this year. In particular, disbursement reached \$1.1 billion, equivalent to 88 per cent of the total registered capital.

Nam Long Group announces \$341-million Akari township

Last week Nam Long Group, one of the leading housing developers in Vietnam, announced Akari City, its fifth project to be built in cooperation with Japanese Hankyu Hanshin Properties Corp. and Nishi Nippon Railroad.

The Akari City township project is located in Binh Tan district of Ho Chi Minh City.

The two Japanese investors and Nam Long group will have 50/50 joint contribution of the total investment of about VND7.676 trillion (\$341 million). This will be one of Nam Long’s key projects in the next 3-5 years.

According to Steven Chu Chee Kwang, CEO of Nam Long Investment Corporation, the company and the two Japanese partners are increasingly tightening relations to create not only homes but also a real estate system where properties for various purposes—commercial properties, schools, hospital, services, and entertainment, etc.—are developed synchronously, offering residential communities high-quality and unique lifestyle.

Meanwhile, Kazumasa Ohchi, a representative from Hankyu Hanshin Properties, said that his company saw that Nam Long has a matching business strategy of providing high-quality houses at “affordable prices,” which makes a great contribution to the development of the local area and the community and is a great fit to their firm.

“Until now, we have developed four projects together. Fortunately, all the projects were carried out successfully and received positive feedback from customers. This fifth project is a combination of our understanding and Nam Long’s great experience. We hope to create added value for the housing sector in Vietnam. Akari City will be officially introduced in the third quarter of 2018,” he said.

With direct entrance to Vo Van Kiet Boulevard —the arterial road connecting east and west Ho Chi Minh City—Akari City is strategically located for both residential and commercial purposes.

The project has a total floor area of 539,000 square metres, consisting of 4,600 apartments designed following the standards of Nam Long’s Flora product line, with separate facilities, such as community club, swimming pool, children’s playground, gymnasium, and many other facilities.

Vietnam, Egypt show determination to effectively realize trade deals

Vietnam and Egypt have pledged to escalate the implementation of agreements reached by the two countries’ leaders to increase bilateral trade turnover on a par with potential and strength of each nation.

Vietnam Deputy Minister of Industry and Trade Cao Quoc Hung and his Egyptian counterpart Said Abdullah made the announcement at the first meeting of the Vietnam-Egypt trade and industry cooperation Subcommittee in Cairo on April 22.

At the meeting, the leaders highlighted the fine traditional ties between the two countries and their advantages in geographical positions and market scales, which were shown by the signing of numerous agreements on economics, trade, and investment cooperation.

Vietnam, Egypt show determination to effectively realize trade deals hinh 1 However, the total turnover in bilateral trade hit just US\$342 million last year, which fell far below each country’s full potential. As a result, the first meeting between the two sides was marked by both parties showing their strong determination and efforts to actively implement the agreements signed during Egyptian President Abden Fattah El Sisi’s visit to Vietnam in 2017 and a review of cooperation mechanisms to remove technical barriers so as to facilitate bilateral investment and trade exchanges.

The two deputy ministers expressed their confidence that with such strong prospects, the two sides should

make greater efforts to elevate bilateral trade to US\$1 billion in near future.

Vietnam, Egypt show determination to effectively realize trade deals. To reach the target, a score of measures to boost trade and industry cooperation have been taken with a focus on making regular reviews and building periodical information exchange mechanisms on the implementation of the findings of the meeting and diversifying export products in line with their demands and strength. For instance, oil and gas is Egypt's particular strength while consumer goods production, electronic products, seafood and mechanical engineering are Vietnam's strong areas.

Egypt also agreed to provide trade support for Halal food to help Vietnamese products achieve greater penetration into the Egyptian market and other Islamic countries.

Both sides also pledged to remove technical barriers for trade facilitation and step up closer cooperation in renewal energy and share experience in their policy making process.

Medicinal material is an important factor in pharmaceutical production. The government has incentive policies to support the pharmaceutical sector's use of domestic medicinal materials.

A report by the National Institute of Medicinal Materials says Vietnam has nearly 4,000 varieties of plants, 400 species of animal, and 75 minerals useful for medicine.

There are more than 320 drug producers using medicinal material and 20 factories have met the Good Manufacturing Practice standard of the World Health Organization. The Institute has worked with medicinal herb growing areas to plant appropriate varieties.

It has studied and transferred technology to localities to grow endemic medicinal plants such as Ngoc Lam ginseng in Kon Tum province, artichoke in Lai Chau and Lao Cai province, bastard cardamon in Thai Nguyen province, moringa in An Giang, and multiflorous knotweed in Sa Pa and Ha Giang province.

In recent years, medicinal herb plantation has been shrinking. Some varieties are near extinction.

Production facilities are poorly equipped. Medicinal material use hasn't been well managed.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade has proposed solutions to increase the domestic supply of medicinal materials to boost pharmaceutical production.

Last year the Prime Minister said at a national conference that developing medicinal materials involving three major orientations: clearly identifying the role of medicinal materials at the national, local, and sectoral levels; developing medicinal materials in line with market demand; and re-organizing the medicinal material sector in terms of processing, manufacturing, and using traditional herbal remedies in combination with modern medicine.

Vietnam-ASEAN Entrepreneur Club makes debut in Hanoi

The Vietnam-ASEAN Entrepreneur Club has made its debut in Hanoi with an aim of promoting trade connectivity in the region.

Vice President of the Vietnam-Laos-Cambodia Economic Development and Cooperation Association (VILACAED) Bui Tuong Lan said at the launching ceremony on April 19 that the club will help businesses further understand legal provisions regulating economic and investment in regional countries.

Club members will have a chance to compare notes and be assisted in training and connectivity to form a sustainable business community for development, said Mr Lan.

Nguyen Thi Nga, an owner of a business in Hanoi and a new member of the club, suggested said Vietnamese small- and medium-sized enterprises should change their thinking in production, business and management and partner with each other for mutual growth.

She believed that the Vietnam-ASEAN Entrepreneur Club is a useful playground, helping local businesses study development models of their regional partners and enhancing connectivity between themselves and with those from the region.

ASEAN is a potential market for business expansion and domestic businesses should fully exploit it to be successful, said Ms Nga.

Dong Nai draws over 456 million USD in FDI

The southern province of Dong Nai has granted investment licences to 56 foreign direct investment (FDI) projects worth 456.6 million USD, fulfilling 45.6 percent of the yearly target.

Half of the projects are newly invested with total capital of 151.5 million USD while the remaining are allowed to increase capital by 304.9 million USD, according to the provincial Department of Planning and Investment, saying most of them apply advanced technologies friendly to the environment.

Notable projects include the manufacturing of electronic spare parts with total registered investment of 25 million USD from Japan, the Singapore-invested project specialising in pharmaceutical production worth 47.7 million USD, the Netherlands' Bosch Gasoline Systems - HCP project worth over 71 million USD manufacturing mechanical equipment, and the 47 million USD processing and manufacturing project invested by Japan.

Most of FDI projects in Dong Nai are from the Republic of Korea, China's Taiwan, Japan, China, Singapore and Germany.

So far, Dong Nai has counted 1,778 FDI projects with combined investment capital of 32.3 billion USD, including 1,309 valid projects worth 27.2 billion USD. The province attracted investors from 45 countries and territories with the Republic of Korea, China's Taiwan and Japan topping the list.

Petrol prices remain stable, oil prices slightly rise

The price of bio-fuel E5 was kept unchanged while those of diesel 0.05S and kerosene increased slightly by 380 VND and 500 VND per litre respectively in the latest regular adjustment of petrol and oil prices on April 23.

The Ministries of Industry-Trade and Finance announced that the prices of E5 are not higher than 18,932

VND per litre, and those of RON95 petrol not higher than 20,500 VND per litre.

Prices of diesel 0.055 and kerosene should not be higher than 16,734 VND per litre and 15,581 VND per litre respectively.

The changes took effect at 15:00 on April 23.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Finance conduct a review of fuel prices every 15 days to adjust the prices in accordance with fluctuations on the world market.

During the past 15 days, the world price of RON 92 petrol, which is used to produce E5 fuel, averaged 77.980 USD per barrel, up 1 USD over the level in the previous review period. The average price of diesel was at 83.661 USD, up 2.5 USD per barrel.

Meanwhile, the cost of ethanol E100 which is used to produce E5 petrol stood at 14,488 VND per litre before tax.

Networking event connects Vietnamese firms with CACCI members

The Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) hosted a networking event in Hanoi on April 23 to connect Vietnamese businesses with members of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI).

CACCI President Jemal Inaishvili and more than 30 leaders of major businesses, who are on a working visit to Vietnam, took part in the event.

The enterprises are from such economies as Australia, India, Nepal and Taiwan (China) and operate in various fields, including textiles-garment, cosmetics, consumer goods, distribution, food processing, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, construction, information technology, and tourism.

In his opening remarks, VCCI Vice Chairman Doan Duy Khuong highlighted the importance of cooperative relations between VCCI and CACCI, stressing the connectivity between businesses of Vietnam and regional countries, especially amid the growing international economic integration.

Khuong noted that Asia-Pacific can be considered the world's largest region which is home to many big countries like Japan, China, the Republic of Korea, Russia and India. Total GDP of the member economies has reflected the potential of this region, he said.

Since the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) was signed, the potential for cooperation with major economies and markets has become almost unlimited, helping Vietnamese firms to promote exports and imports, access advanced technologies, and improve their management and governance capacity.

CACCI President Inaishvili applauded the outcomes of Vietnamese enterprises, including major strides in economic development over the past years. The growth of the Vietnamese business community demonstrated the Government's efforts to create a favourable business environment, he said.

Inaishvili said the event to connect Vietnamese firms and CACCI members would open the door for intensive and extensive cooperation across the region.

He also took this occasion to invite VCCI leaders and Vietnamese companies to attend the CACCI conference in Istanbul, Turkey, in late 2018.

Asian-Pacific, Vietnamese businesses explore potential

An official from the Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce & Industry (CACCI) has said Vietnamese businesses have big trade potentials.

"Potentials of Vietnamese businesses are very big, there was huge development in the last ten years," CACCI President Jemal Inaishvili told Vietnam News Agency.

"And there are bigger potentials to Vietnam in the time to come, especially when several trade accords are coming into effect."

Inaishvili attended a business forum with CACCI members in Hanoi on April 23 with more than 30 executives and representatives from various sectors, including garment and textile, food processing, industrial products, construction, and information technology.

"The whole economy progress of Vietnam is very important because Vietnam plays more and more important role in the region in particular and in the region at large," Inaishvili said.

"The economic growth of Vietnam in the last decade was very significant with growth of more than six percent every year, this means the government is doing very well."

For his part, Vice President of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) Doan Duy Khuong said Asia-Pacific is an economic region with many big members, including China, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Russia, Australia, and New Zealand.

"The participation of Vietnam in this dynamic economic region is very significant," Khuong said.

"Besides, member nations of the CACCI have diversified development rates which are suitable with Vietnamese businesses in the progress of integration," he added.

Vietnam is an open economy with nearly 100 million people and the country's export turnover reached up to 400 billion USD a year. Bilateral, multilateral and integration policies with countries in Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region will create big driving forces to boost the Vietnamese economy.

Over the past three decades of Doi Moi (Renewal), Vietnam's economic growth averaged nearly 7 percent a year, a higher growth compared to the world's average.

To date, Vietnam has attracted more than 310 billion USD from foreign direct investment, of which nearly 80 percent has come from Asia-Pacific nations.

Vietnam has signed a total of 17 trade deals, of which 10 have become effective, 2 have been signed but are yet to take effect, while negotiations have concluded on 2 deals and are on the way for three others.

In March, 2018, Vietnam signed the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), which looks to remove tariff barriers in the region towards progressive, open and equal trade. The pact will create one of the world's largest free trade blocs with a combined market of 499 million people and GDP of about 10.1 trillion USD, accounting for 13.5 percent of global GDP.

The forum was jointly organized by the CACCI and VCCI.

"The CACCI looks forward to staging the bilateral business meetings each year to boost exchanges among Vietnamese businesses and CACCI members," the CACCI President said.

PetroVietnam to continue with large-scale divestment

The State-owned Vietnam Oil and Gas Group (PetroVietnam or PVN) has drafted a plan for a comprehensive restructuring until 2025, under which it will continue with large-scale divestment from all of its member corporations and companies.

Accordingly, the group will only keep more than 50 percent of stakes at three members, and reduce its stakes in the remaining ones to less than 50 percent or even sell out.

The plan, which has been submitted to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, said the group will divest from service operations by around 2020 and electricity by 2025 after completing the construction of coal-fired thermal power plants as directed by Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc.

From now to 2020, PVN will focus on five key sectors, including exploration and exploitation; gas; oil and gas processing; electricity; and oil and gas services. By 2025, its focus will be narrowed to four, namely exploration and exploitation; gas; oil and gas processing; and electricity. After 2025, the group will no longer operate in electricity.

From 2017 – 2020, PVN will complete the equitisation of Binh Son Refining and Petrochemical Co Ltd (BSR), PetroVietnam Power Corporation (PV Power), and PetroVietnam Oil Corporation (PV Oil). It will prepare conditions to equitise PVEP after 2020 and merge PetroVietnam University (PVU) and Vietnam Petroleum Institute (VPI) into Vietnam Petroleum Academy in 2020.

Between 2021 and 2025, the group will push forward with equitisation and divestment. It will only maintain more than 50 percent of stake in the three following firms – PetroVietnam Exploration Production Corporation (PVEP), Vietsovpetro and PetroVietnam Gas JSC (PV Gas).

Meanwhile, it will reduce its stakes to less than 50 percent each in 12 subsidiaries, including BSR (43 percent), PetroVietnam Fertiliser and Chemicals Corporation (PVFCCo), PetroVietnam Ca Mau Fertiliser JSC (PVCFC), PetroVietnam Power Corporation (PV Power), PetroVietnam Transportation Corporation (PV Trans) (36 percent), PetroVietnam Technical Services Corporation (PTSC) and PetroVietnam Drilling and Well Services Corporation (PVD) (less than 30 percent), and PetroVietnam Oil Corporation (PV Oil) (35.1 percent).

PVN will offload all stakes from Dung Quat Shipbuilding Industry Co Ltd (DQS) and Petro Cam Ranh.

Workshop on Vietnam's economic matters held in Poland

Vietnam's economic development and opportunities generated by the EU-Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) were discussed at a recent workshop in Poland's Varsava capital city.

Delegates at the event took note of Vietnam's positive economic prospects in 2018, especially increasing foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows to the country.

Statistics reveal that in 2017 alone, Vietnam attracted 36 billion USD in FDI, the highest amount over the past decade.

Regarding the EVFTA, a new-generation FTA between Vietnam and 28 EU members, the delegates said the deal is expected to open up new opportunities for exporters with preferential taxes.

The EU is Vietnam's second biggest importer, with 18 percent of Vietnamese goods shipped to the region.

Vietnam runs a trade surplus of 31.8 billion USD with the EU in 2017, with exports to the market growing 12.7 percent.

Talking about the illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing under the European Commission (EC)'s yellow card warning, the participants highlighted Vietnam's efforts to complete institutions, improve State management capacity and fishermen's awareness of IUU fishing, in order to remove the warning.

They suggested Vietnam learn from Poland's experience in building a legal foundation and implementing IUU regulations, while seeking cooperation in training experts in this field.

They also underlined the need to encourage Poland to soon complete procedures to approve the EVFTA in order to promote Vietnamese seafood exports to the market.

VN firms team up with Asia-Pacific partners for stronger growth

Vietnamese enterprises must band together with their Asia-Pacific partners for stronger growth.

Said conclusion was reached at an April 24 conference on strengthening the connection and partnership between Vietnam's firms and members of the Confederation of Asia-Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry (CACCI).

Speaking at the conference, Doan Duy Khuong, Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)'s Vice Chairman, appreciated the important cooperation between the VCCI and the CACCI, and between Vietnam and regional countries.

Khuong emphasised the importance of such regional collaboration, especially in the context of increasing international economic integration.

Jemal Inaishvili, President of the CACCI, noted the Vietnamese business community's effort in recent years, with significant economic development progress.

He believed such growth has demonstrated the government's efforts to create a smooth and favourable

business environment for both local and international firms.

Seeing how the Asia-Pacific region can be considered the largest consumer market in the world with a multitude of rising powers such as Japan, China and South Korea, and a total GDP accounting for 60 percent of the world's, the area is full of potential, added Khuong.

He also mentioned that since the signing of the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), cooperation with major economies and markets would soon be virtually unlimited for Vietnamese businesses, in order for them to accelerate operations, trade, while gaining access to advanced production technology and improved management and administration.

Coupled with collaboration from Asia-Pacific's enterprises, Khuong was certain that Vietnam's firms will gain competitiveness and the whole economy will be significantly improved.

Organised by the VCCI, the event aimed to create a bridge between and to help both sides' businesses find suitable cooperation and investment opportunities.

At the same time, the VCCI hoped to reach out to senior members of CACCI's, one of the largest organisations representing the Asia-Pacific region's business community.

The event was part of Inaishvili's visit to Việt Nam, along with over 30 representatives from the CACCI's member corporations, most notably from Australia, India and Nepal, specialising in textile, garment, cosmetics, consumer goods, food distribution and processing, pharmaceuticals, chemicals, industrial products distribution, construction, IT, and tourism.

Inaishvili expressed his wish to invite representatives from the VCCI and other Vietnamese business delegations to join the CACCI Summit later this year in Istanbul, Turkey.

Earlier in April, the VCCI had worked with the CACCI and the General Department of Customs of Vietnam on a project to update the 2010 Incoterms, or International Commercial Terms, and a 2020 draft, in order to update and discuss previous experiences and mistakes in the fields of import, export, insurance, banking and finance.

Four public utilities in Danang to be equitized

Four public utilities in the central coastal city of Danang will have to go public by July this year, said the city's vice chairman Tran Van Mien at a conference on the restructuring of public utilities on April 24.

After their equitization, Danang Drainage and Wastewater Treatment Company, Danang Bridge and Road Management Company, Danang Lighting Management Company, and Danang Green Tree and Park Company should hold their first general meetings in July also.

Mien said another public utility, Danang Center of Integrated Circuits under the Department of Information and Communications, will undergo equitization by 2020 if the city gets the nod from the Prime Minister.

The city will let seven more public utilities go public in the 2021-2025 period, he added.

In October 2016, the PM approved the transformation of the four above enterprises into joint stock companies in the 2016-2020 period. However, they have yet to complete their equitization due to numerous obstacles. For example, the city has not determined the proportion of State ownership at these entities after their equitization.

Vo Ngoc Dong, director at the municipal Department of Home Affairs, said the city would reduce the number of employees who receive salaries from the State budget by 2,000 until 2021.

He added the number of public utilities would be cut to 21 from the current 49. The majority of entities in the education, healthcare, culture, sports and agriculture sectors will be restructured as well.

Data of the department showed Danang had 409 public service units and over 22,000 employees in 2017. Those agencies in the education sector accounted for a staggering 61%, followed by the healthcare sector with 9%, and the culture and sports sector with 7.6%.

Vietnam re-affirms resolve to fight IUU fishing at Seafood Expo Global

Vietnam's resolve to fight illegal, unreported and unregulated (IUU) fishing has been reiterated by the country's representatives at a press conference on April 25 at the Seafood Expo Global in Brussels, Belgium.

The April 25 event aimed to update the press and European seafood importers on measures Vietnam is taking to combat IUU fishing, a problem on which the European Commission (EC) issued a yellow card warning to Vietnam last September.

Nguyen Thi Trang Nhung, Deputy Director of the Department of Science, Technology and International Cooperation under the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, said Vietnam has obtained positive outcomes in the issue.

The most important outcome is the Law on Fisheries, approved on November 21, 2017, which details IUU fishing activities and stipulates strict punishments compared to administrative penalties for violations in other fields.

Efforts of the whole political system of Vietnam have resulted in observable advances in the certification of seafood origin and control of fishing boats' activities, she added.

As the yellow card could affect the prestige and trade of Vietnamese seafood in the European and global markets, the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP) and businesses have also made every effort to cooperate with authorised agencies and with one another to fight IUU fishing over the last six months.

Le Hang, a representative of VASEP, said the association has regularly updated the list of fisheries businesses committing to IUU fishing prevention on its website in both English and Vietnamese, thus showing Vietnamese firms' consensus and determination to EU importers and managerial agencies.

She noted that after the EU issued the yellow card warning, seafood exports to this market have declined as importers have become more cautious and worried that tightened examination of imports could take them more cost and time.

Nguyen Xuan Nam, Chairman of the board of directors of the Hai Vuong Co. Ltd, told Vietnam News Agency that the EU is a very important market and some of his company's clients have expressed concern about the risk of a red card, which can lead to a trade ban on fishery products, after the yellow card. His company has actively informed its clients about Vietnam's solutions to soon lift the yellow card and avoid red card.

Brian Cullinane, purchasing director at Pan Euro Foods – an Irish company that has imported Vietnamese aquatic products for five years, said the EU's yellow card warning is a relatively new issue and almost hasn't affected the market much, but the situation could worsen in the next two or three years if Vietnam failed to lift the yellow card.

On April 20, Vietnam submitted a report on its efforts to address IUU fishing to the EC. The EU is set to send a delegation to Vietnam between May 15 and 25 to assess local IUU fishing prevention.

VSIP Hai Duong celebrates dual milestones

Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park in the northern province of Hai Duong (VSIP Hai Duong) on April 26 held the grand opening of its office and ISO 9001:2015 and OHSAS 18001:2007 certificate award ceremonies, marking two important milestones in the park's history.

Local authorities, customers, business partners, and the staff of VSIP Hai Duong joined the events.

The new office will bring a fresh look to VSIP Hai Duong and provide a better overall operating environment for its staff to ensure they continue to provide high-quality services to its clientele.

Additionally, the attainment of ISO & OHSAS certificates further demonstrates VSIP's commitment to becoming an entity that possesses quality management systems which conform to customers' regulatory expectations and requirements. These two certificates also demonstrate VSIP Hai Duong's commitment towards improving customer service.

VSIP Hai Duong is the sixth project of VSIP Group—one of the successful models of economic cooperation between Vietnam and Singapore. This industrial park was officially approved in April 2015 and has been quick in turning the 150ha agricultural land into a modern and clean industrial park.

VSIP Hai Duong is strategically located at Luong Dien-Cam Dien commune, Cam Giang district, with good and easy connectivity to amenities, the city centre, major seaports, and has direct access by major highways to China.

VSIP Hai Duong offers investors a comprehensive infrastructure system and on-site amenities ranging from a good road system to general utilities and a sewage treatment plant to meet the operating needs of companies in the industrial zone. Unique to VSIP Group, VSIP Hai Duong provides one-stop customer service which supports investors in license application as well as their day-to-day operations.

"Hai Duong province warmly welcomes investors and commits to supporting them through the Hai Duong Industrial Zone Authority as a focal point to connect with other government agencies," Pham Minh Phuong, Director of the Hai Duong Industrial Zone Authority.

"Hai Duong province and our management board have always recognised VSIP's performance in attracting investment and creating a green-clean-beautiful industrial park which revolves around high standards and professionalism, he said.

As commented by investors, they highly appreciate supporting services from VSIP. VSIP facilitates investors throughout the investment process and guides them through the pitfalls of Vietnamese regulations, he added.

Howard Shi, General Manager of Best Pacific Vietnam Co., Ltd., shared: "Best Pacific selected VSIP Hai Duong for three main reasons. First, this industrial park is near to Hanoi and Haiphong. Second, the infrastructure system is very comprehensive, and third, the park's staff support customers very diligently."

To date, seven enterprises have invested in VSIP Hai Duong with a total estimated investment of 150 million USD, accounting for 40 percent of the total area. This is an impressive figure as the IP just came into operation in 2017.

VSIP Hai Duong will continue to make breakthroughs and strike to make its industrial park a better operating location for both domestic and international enterprises.

The first VSIP was launched in 1996 in the southern province of Binh Duong by the two governments of Vietnam and Singapore. Two decades later, VSIP Group has eight projects spreading over six provinces: Binh Duong, Bac Ninh, Haiphong, Quang Ngai, Hai Duong, and Nghe An.

VSIP Hai Duong is the third project of VSIP JSC, a member of VSIP Group. The first project of VSIP JSC was VSIP Bac Ninh (launched in 2007) and the second one is VSIP Hai Phong (2010). In April 2015, VSIP was officially approved to construct VSIP Hai Duong on the total area of 150ha.



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