

## **EDUCATION AND TRAINING POSITION PAPER**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Vietnamese economy continues to grow and in order to sustain this growth at desired levels the need for quality education and training is imperative. The Vietnamese government has recognised the importance of education and training and progress is being made in many areas. Improving the productivity of the Vietnamese workforce is of paramount importance and this involves all levels of education. A coordinated effort by all major stakeholders lead by the Vietnamese Government is required.

The paper focuses on mainly two main areas firstly, Decree 73 and secondly, issues relating to Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

Decree 73 applies sets out the framework for the future of foreign investment in education in Vietnam. The quality of education in Vietnam has been an issue and this can be improved, in part, by attracting foreign institutions that have a record of delivering quality education.

A number of issues and recommendations have been raised to help make decree 73 more effective in establishment of quality education institutions in Vietnam. The Education and Training Working Group is working closely with the relevant government agencies to help improve the impact of Decree 73.

Having effective TVET institutions lays the foundation for economic growth by supplying work ready graduates with the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude to make a positive contribution in the workplace. As all TVET institutions are under the control of MoLISA we need to work with MoLISA to help improve the quality across TVET institutions. In addition, TVET institutions need to be able to attract capable students and the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and a single articulation system for Vietnamese education.

In conclusion, the Vietnamese economy continues to grow and this is of benefit to the citizens of Vietnam. There are opportunities for Vietnam, however, it needs a highly competent workforce to drive growth in the economy. The Education and Training Working Group, through the VBF, will continue with its commitment to assist Vietnam in achieving its economic potential.

## **Introduction**

The Vietnamese economy has a great opportunity to grow and in order to achieve this education at all levels needs to be at the highest standard possible. Great achievements have been made over the past decade and it is important to now to maintain and even speed up this momentum to bring the Vietnamese economy to even higher levels. There is an amazing potential in the Vietnamese workforce that needs to be nurtured and developed.

The theme of this forum is “Strengthening the Private Sector” and to achieve this Vietnam needs an educated and skilled workforce. Therefore, the graduates from Vietnamese institutions need to have the necessary knowledge, skills, and professional attitude to ensure that they are ready to contribute when they enter the workforce. This means that the curriculum developed by institutions needs to have a good academic standard and also provide the students with the skills needed to be “work ready” after the graduate.

As was mentioned in the Education and Training Position Paper in 2015, labour productivity in Vietnam needs to greatly increase. The right education and training will help close these “skills gaps” and the recruitment of the right foreign expertise will help also help close the “skills gaps” in the short term and also provide the necessary manpower where there are “skills shortages”. However, foreign expertise should be primarily focused on helping build the skills of Vietnamese workers and helping Vietnamese experts with the development of the Vietnamese workforce. Therefore “fostering partnership between domestic and foreign enterprises for a harmonious development of the Vietnamese economy” is a theme that the Education and Training Working Group fully supports.

At the highest level this needs the involvement of all major stakeholders working together under the leadership of the Vietnamese Government and in particular MoET and MoLISA. A strategic focus is required to make sure that everyone involved understands what needs to be achieved and that all stakeholders involved are in alignment. The effective use and coordination of Official Development Assistance (ODA) is important so that various initiatives are not overlapping and that the investment from these programs is both effective and efficient.

To achieve international standards education in Vietnam needs to improve the standard of education of Vietnamese institution and, in addition, needs an infusion of foreign capital, ideas and expertise. It also needs flexibility and adaptability, especially in the vocational training sector. The bottom line is that for the Vietnamese economy to grow and avoid the “middle income trap” serious structural changes are needed with the involvement of all major stakeholders and strong leadership by the Vietnamese government.

On-line learning is another area that can help Vietnamese students develop. The Vietnamese regulatory environment makes it difficult for students to gain recognition for overseas qualifications delivered in Vietnam part online (i.e. blended learning modes) even though these qualifications are issued by the overseas university as meeting all the same quality assurance requirements as the same courses delivered by 100% face-to-face mode.

This remained of this report will focus on the following areas:

- Decree 73,
- Technical and Vocational Education and Training

## 1. Decree 73

Decree 73 replaces applies to foreign investment and cooperation projects in education in Vietnam including foreign-invested tertiary institutions, schools and kindergartens, twinning programs, and representative offices of foreign education institutions. We firmly believe that the most important goal is to have quality graduates entering the workforce and that Decree 73 is integral in this respect.

There has been much consultation between MoET officials and the E&T working group members to improve Decree 73 and the E&T Working Group appreciates the time and effort that MoET has put in to this work with us. This is a work in progress and we look forward to continuing this great work so that the end result is the best possible for all parties concerned.

Some of the main areas that still need work include the following:

- Conditions for the issuance of licenses should be classified separately and be transparent when applying to establish either short term or long term educational institution, and
- The short-term educational institutions and branches of the long-term educational institutions should be allowed to rent buildings for their operations (conditions requiring that they must own their own building should be removed and replaced).
- English language teachers with the required qualification i.e. An undergraduate degree, being a native English speaker, and holding an accredited international English language speaking qualification should need prior experience regardless of the institution in which they are teaching.
- University lecturers, particularly in business related subjects and industries such as tourism and hospitality should only need a degree at the level they are teaching if they have over ten years “real world” experience in their field. This will maintain the academic standard whilst providing the students with an opportunity to learn about the practical aspects of working in business. This will be lost if the lecturers have only academic and research experience with limited or no experience in applying what they are teaching in the business world.

The following are the main issues raised by the E&T working group in their 2015 position paper. Please refer to the 2015 Position Paper for further details including recommendations.

- **Licensing-related issues**
  - There kinds of licenses are required
  - The list of application documents is not clearly understood
  - Inspection the facilities of foreign invested educational Institution
- **There were also a number of recommendations to amend certain articles including.**
  - The lack of a legal framework for extension of operation term of educational institution
  - The teaching staff (Article 31)
    - Minimum qualification of instructors
    - Years of teaching experience of foreign lecturers
    - Requirements for recruitment of English language teachers
    - The lack of a legal framework on operation area of foreign-invested educational institutions after obtaining the operating license and starting operations
    - The limitation on the percentage of Vietnamese students. (Article 24).
    - Hospitality education.

## **2. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET)**

Vietnamese Government has put vocational skills training and boosting employment at the heart of its development goals. Its plan is that by 2020, trained skilled workers will make up 55% of the labour force. The Government also wants to tailor its vocational training more to the needs of the business community, so it is promoting the expansion of vocational education and training provision and improvements in the quality and needs-based focus of training. The Government also wants to tailor its vocational training more to the needs of the business community, so it is promoting the expansion of vocational education and training provision and improvements in the quality and needs-based focus of training.

Now that it is final (as of July) that all TVET will report to MOLISA, there are a number of questions that need to be addresses including the following:

- What will this mean to the colleges that previously reported to MOET?
- How can we reposition the TVET system to deal with high-level skills training across all sectors (health, business, manufacturing technology) as well as ‘trades’ training?
- How can we raise entrance level standards for high level TVET and offer more appealing credentials for TVET? Is there any will to change TVET to TPET (Technical and Professional Education and Training), or at least differentiate them in some way?
- What happens to articulation with Universities for the colleges that previously reported to MOLISA?
- Is there going to be a sharing of resources among the MOLISA institutions with the colleges previously under MOET?

It the E&T Working Group Position Paper in 2015 the following as areas that need to be addressed:

- Meeting industry needs,
- Attracting students into TVET institutions, and
- Building the capacity of TVET Institutions.

It is important that we continue to work on these areas and find solutions to help improve the TVET system.

## **3. Conclusion**

To achieve this Vietnam needs a highly competent workforce with the knowledge and skills to drive growth in the economy. Quality education at all levels is required to provide the skilled workforce to maintain this growth. This will require the strong leadership of the Vietnamese Government and especially MoET and MoLISA working closely with other relevant stakeholders to find effective solutions.

The Education and Training Working Group, through the VBF, will continue with its commitment to assist Vietnam in achieving it economic potential. We look forward to seeing progress in the above areas and again would like to thank the VBF for inviting us to contribute to this important forum.