

The Minutes of the Second Meeting of VERN Selection Committee

The second meeting of VERN Selection Committee was held through a videoconference session connecting three sites Hanoi, Singapore, Laval (Canada) and Amsterdam (the Netherlands) on 16 June 2003, from 7:00-9:30 PM. The Selection Committee was established by Decision 01/QT-KTH dated 11 February 2003 by the Director of the Institute of Economics Prof. Dr. Do Hoai Nam. The Selection Committee comprises of the following:

1. Ha Huy Thanh, Vice-Director of the Institute of Economics, Chairman
2. Remco Oostendorp, The Free University of Amsterdam, VERN academic advisor, member
3. John Cockburn, The Laval University, VERN academic advisor, member
4. Martin Rama, the World Bank in Vietnam, member
5. Evan Due, IDRC Singapore, member
6. Vu Thieu, Hanoi National Economics University, member
7. Nguyen Danh Son, the Ministry of Science and Technology, member
8. Vu Quoc Huy, National Economics University, member
9. Nguyen Thang, Institute of Economics, secretary (with no voting power).

All members of the Selection Committee were present in the meeting. In addition, Prof. Bernard Decaluwe of the Laval University also joined the meeting as an observer at the Laval site. Three written comments, from international academic advisors and Prof. Vu Thieu on proposals were received by VERN office.

The meeting was started by the Chairman. Then Nguyen Thang, the VERN Network Leader briefly mentioned the focus areas of VERN (Trade, Employment and Firm-Level Competitiveness) and its objectives, which were used to guide the Committee in the discussion and selection process. He also conveyed some important messages from Dr. Do Hoai Nam, VERN's Director, who asked the Selection Committee to work effectively, efficiently and objectively to select up to 6 proposals that should be of adequate quality. In case less than 6 proposals meet the quality standard, any unspent amount of money may be used for a bid for add-ons among the selected teams at a later stage, or by alternative ways that the international academic advisors and VERN's office will suggest to VERN's Director.

Then the two academic advisors, John Cockburn and Remco Oostendorp presented their detailed evaluations on individual proposals, starting with the most promising ones downwards. These evaluations, together with their detailed comments on the first draft of the full proposals were sent to all members of the Selection Committee well before the meeting started for their careful study.

Other members of the Selection Committee were engaged in a lively discussion of each proposal. They focused mostly on areas where they disagree with comments by the advisors, or where further clarification was required. Decision was made on individual proposals on the basis of the consensus among all members of the Committee. The discussion came up with the following list of selected proposals, which is recommended to VERN's Director for endorsement:

	VERN No	Leader	Institutes/ Organizations	Proposed Titles of Research
1	6	Dang Nhu Van	Institute of Economics	From Productivity to Competitiveness: Three Essays on How the Competitive Edge of Vietnam's Textiles and Garments Firms Can Be Improved
2	9/34	Nguyen Thi Lan Huong (RCFL) and Doan Hong Quang	Institute of Labour Science and Social Affairs (MOLISA)/ Institute of World Economy	Wage and Employment Effects of Trade Reform: The Case of Vietnam
3	26	La Hai Anh	Hanoi National Economics University	Export Competitiveness of Vietnam, China, and members of ASEAN in US and Japan Markets
4	13	Tran Quoc Trung	Industry Department, MPI	Trade Liberalization and Non-farm Household Enterprises in Vietnam: Challenges or Opportunities ahead?
5	1	Bui Thi Tam	Hue university	Trade Liberalization and Employment in Agricultural Sector - The Case of Central Provinces, Vietnam

The Selection Committee may also request Team 1, in consultation with academic advisors, to slightly modify the title of the research to better match it with the proposed content.

Team 23, led by Nguyen Thi Canh with research topic "Determining the Factors Affecting on the Competitiveness of Enterprises in Vietnam Foodstuff Processing Industry in the Process of Integration. (The Case Study for Ho Chi Minh City)" is allowed to re-submit the proposal to the Selection Committee by the end of August 2003. The new version then should fully take into account comments by the advisors on the first draft of the full proposal. This research may be awarded IDRC funding subject to the satisfaction by the international academic advisors, who will, after consultation with other members of the Selection

Committee and VERN office, send their final recommendation to VERN's Director for endorsement.

Proposal "The Global Software Battlefield: How can *David* (Vietnam) Stand up to *Goliaths*?" proposed by Team 8 lead by Dinh Le Hai Ha and Proposal "Influence of Maize Free Trade to Vietnam's Maize Commodity Chain and Pig Breeding" suggested by Team 12 lead by Dao The Anh were not accepted. It was also noted that the advisors put Team 8 in contact with Richard Heeks, a UK-based international specialist in software competitiveness analysis, and Dr. Le Thuc Duc, a Vietnamese specialist. Similarly, Team 12 was put in contact with F. Golleti, Chairman of AgriFood consulting firm, and Nicholas Minot of IFPRI, who have extensive expertise on the issue and good knowledge of Vietnam. If the teams are active enough, they should be able to maintain these capacity-building links in the future.

These minutes was endorsed by all members of the Selection Committee.

Date: 16 June 2003

On behalf of the Selection Committee,

Ha Huy Thanh,
Chairman