

International Sustainability Investment Strategy for Vietnam

Introduction

A decade ago, no one would have imagined Portland State University as an institution of higher education that could garner such a remarkable reputation for its transformational work in Vietnam.

To date, PSU has several well established partnerships with institutions of higher education, public agencies and private corporations in the country, with Intel Vietnam Scholars (IVS) Program being the highest profile accomplishment of PSU's partnership with Vietnam. This is the largest private company funded education project between the US and Vietnam and is having major effects in reforming the way that Vietnam educates engineering and other specialists.

PSU is also admired for its work in the country including collaborations with the Ho Chi Minh Political Academy, the University of Sciences in Ho Chi Minh City, UNHABITAT-Vietnam, the Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Investment and Planning, and with one of the emerging private universities in Vietnam – Eastern International University.

International Sustainability Investment Strategy for Vietnam

Portland State University has been actively engaged in sustainability initiatives in Vietnam since 2003 as part of the University's Internationalization Imperative that was created to "explore the intersection of internationalization and academic excellence with a focus on sustainable urban development." Since 2009, the Institute of Sustainable Solutions (ISS) has played a major role in furthering various Vietnam sustainability initiatives.

In the fall of 2011, the ISS team (in collaboration with the PSU Internationalization Council) started seeking ways to better align PSU's internationalization efforts identified in the newly released Comprehensive Internationalization Strategy with sustainability strategies, using Vietnam, one of PSU's strategic countries, as a pilot case.

With the guidance of Prof. M. Ingle in the Center of Public Service, representatives of the PSU/Portland & Vietnam Forum (pdx.edu/Vietnam-forum) began working with ISS team members in late 2011 to craft a "PSU international sustainability investment strategy (ISIS)". The vision of the ISIS for Vietnam is: "By 2015, PSU's regional, national and international profile as an 'urban sustainability university of choice' related to faculty, community and student engagement with Vietnam is significantly raised." The strategic intent of the ISIS is to significantly raise PSU's international sustainability profile by communicating the high visibility benefits of the Vietnam portfolio for faculty research, community engagement and student education.

Updates

1. ISS has agreed to make an initial investment to support the core programmatic areas of ISIS strategy for Vietnam including:

Program Opportunity #1: Faculty & Student Research in Climate Adaptation Governance & Leadership (Khanh Pham-Program Lead)

Program Opportunity # 2: PSU/Portland – Hoi An Eco-City Community Engagement Partnership. (Julia Babcock - Program Lead).

Program Opportunity #3: PSU and Vietnamese Student Sustainability Education. (Dr. Shpresa Halimi – Program Lead)

Program Opportunity # 4: Cross-Cutting Portfolio Integration and Communications Program (Prof. M. Ingle, Program Lead).

2. Dr. Shpresa Halimi joined the Center for Public Service to lead PSU and Vietnamese student sustainability education initiatives.
3. Climate Adaptation Internship (July-September, 2012). Khanh Pham (PhD, Urban Studies) will spend 2 month in Vietnam to solidify relationships on climate adaptation research with PSU partners in Hanoi (including UN Habitat, Ho Chi Minh Academy and Vietnam National University Urban Studies program).
4. UN- Habitat Vietnam Internship (July –September, 2012). Julia Babcock in collaboration with UN-Habitat and Hoi An city officials will develop monitoring and evaluation strategies for Eco-City development including community level engagement tools for feedback mechanisms and reporting.
5. The Center for Public Service will host a delegation of 16 highly ranked Vietnamese government practitioners for a Sustainability Leadership Training sponsored by Scheme 165 Vietnam.
6. PSU's next event-based opportunity for Intel Vietnam-related PR is the upcoming welcome of IVS Cohort 3 in August 2012. Intel Vietnam Scholars Cohort 3 has a focus on women in engineering.
7. In October 2012, a Vietnam delegation will participate in POSI's EcoDistrict Summit to share their experience adapting the EcoDistrict framework to Hoi An in central Vietnam (<http://ecodistrictsummit.com/>)

The way forward

The initial ISS investment is intended to leverage additional external funding to support the emerging Vietnam sustainability initiative. Dr. Halimi will work with the Vietnam program team to identify potential funding sources (domestic and indigenous Vietnamese) and develop grant proposals to bring in additional resources that would allow for the achievement of sustainability vision and transformational change at PSU.