

# Vietnam Ireland Bilateral Education Exchange (VIBE) Programme

## 1. Background

Investment in human capacity development is a cornerstone of Vietnam's national development policy. Needs assessments of the country's socio-economic development priorities consistently point to education and training at all levels as key areas for investment and reform.

Ireland has been supporting successive Vietnam Socio-Economic Development Plans since 2005. Its first Vietnam Country Programme 2007-10 included a commitment to support bilateral experience exchange links between the two countries. This commitment reflected an expressed government request that, alongside financial support, Ireland share its development experience and expertise with Vietnam in such areas as third-level education, economic policy making and enterprise development.

To give effect to this objective Ireland established the Irish Development Experience Sharing Programme (IDEAS) with Vietnam in 2009, and this has operated successfully since then. It has included provision of over 100 dedicated post-graduate Fellowships to Vietnamese students to study at Irish universities and Institutes of Technology, exchange links between economic research and policy institutions and collaboration in regard to enterprise development. A core theme has been facilitation of Irish experience sharing with peer institutions in Vietnam.

Irish Aid has also supported education and research in other parts of its successive Vietnam country programme. For example, Irish Aid supported the establishment of the joint Ireland Vietnam Blood Borne Virus Initiative (IVVI) which involves ongoing collaboration between the Vietnam National Institute for Hygiene and Epidemiology and University College Dublin, and supported UNDP post Graduate Fellowships as part of a national programme on poverty reduction.

Wider economic links between the two countries have also been growing from a previously small base. Increasing numbers of Vietnamese students are undertaking self financed third level education courses in Ireland, trade between the countries is expanding and investment in each other's economies is commencing. These trends reflect increasing awareness of Ireland as an English speaking, high tech, dynamic partner for Vietnam.

To further progress embryonic education and research links Irish Aid, through the Irish Embassy in Hanoi, is initiating a pilot programme under the IDEAS programme framework to stimulate co-operation between universities and research institutions in Vietnam and Ireland. This will operate on a pilot basis in 2015/16 and, if successful, will be continued in the next Irish Aid Vietnam Programme period 2017-20.

## 2. VIBE Programme Objectives

The overall objective of the new Vietnam Ireland Bilateral Education Exchange (VIBE) programme is to contribute to Vietnam's socio-economic development priorities by encouraging mutually beneficial development links between the two countries, with particular reference to third-level education and research cooperation.

The specific objective is to act as a catalyst to encourage and deepen third-level education and research links by supporting commencement of a number of new linkages between Irish and Vietnamese education and research institutions. The target number of new relationships for the pilot year is 3-5 new links.

"Links" here refer to new cases of two-way co-operation across a broad range of academic and research activities and can include but is not limited to:

- Development of MoUs and implementation plans
- Staff and student exchanges
- Joint curriculum design and development
- Joint workshops
- Joint teaching programmes
- Development and sharing of quality assurance/certification systems
- Institutional and management development
- Joint research<sup>1</sup>.

## 3. Disciplines

During the pilot year the programme will be relatively open regarding disciplines. However, they should reflect the overall objectives of contributing to socio-economic development, Government of Vietnam sectoral priorities for overseas education and research collaboration, and priority disciplines for IDEAS Fellowships.

In this regard particularly appropriate candidate areas include

- Management and finance,
- Agri-business, food and nutrition,
- Enterprise development and innovation,
- English language teaching,
- ICT,
- Environment and sustainability,

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<sup>1</sup> In the pilot year the scale of resources is unlikely to support major research but rather its planning, sharing and joint funding identification. It should be noted also that as a Priority Partner country Vietnam is eligible for collaborative research funding under the Irish Aid Programme of Strategic co-operation (operated by the Irish Higher Education Authority).

- Science, engineering and mathematics.

In the allocation of IDEAS Fellowships in 2015/16 and 2016/17 individual applicants from institutions participating in the VIBE Programme co-operation will be given particular consideration if there is synergy between the two streams of activity.

## **4. Eligible Applicant Institutions**

Applications must be made by the Vietnamese partner. Eligible institutions include Vietnamese higher education academic and research institutions that have registered legal status in Vietnam.

Applicant institutions must also have the organisational, governance and financial structures necessary to receive, manage, expand, account for and report on external funding in a transparent and efficient manner.

## **5. VIBE Funding**

In the pilot period awards of up to €50,000 per award will be allocated from the IDEAS budget.

In general, eligible activities will be those listed in Section 2 above. UN-EU cost norms for development projects in Vietnam will be applied. Specific expenditure eligible will include additional project-specific travel, subsistence, and translation costs. Time of core staff will not be reimbursable unless very clearly dedicated to the collaborative project.

The allocation of funding between the partners is a matter for those partners.

## **6. Application Process**

Application must be submitted in English, by the Vietnam partner to the Irish Embassy Hanoi by 12:00 hrs local time on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September, 2015. Emailed applications are required.

Contact details of applicant:

Name:

Address:

Email:

Telephone number:

Applications must be accompanied by:

- A letter from an authorised person in the Irish institution informing availability and support e.g. Head of International Affairs, Head of relevant School/Faculty/Department.
- A short description of the proposed collaboration and its benefits
- The work programme and budget breakdown.

Applications should not exceed 6 A4 pages, excluding Annexes. If successful, applicants will be required to provide a more detailed work plan as part of the contracting process.

## **7. Time Line, Award, Contract**

The time line is as follows:

- Call for proposal : 24<sup>th</sup> July
- Submission concept note : 14<sup>th</sup> September 2015
- Concept note assessment and notification of full proposal: 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2015
- Submission of full proposal: 6 October
- Notification and Signature of agreement: 12<sup>th</sup> of October 2015
- Commencement of co-operation: from end of October 2015
- Mid-term review end May 2016.
- Completion of projects, end December 2016.

Selection criteria will be:

- Evidence of some existing bilateral interaction
- A clear and practical co-operation plan and activities
- Feasibility and organisational capacity
- Likely sustainability beyond the pilot period
- Clear milestones, planned outputs and eventual outcomes.

Appraisal and selection will be done by the Embassy of Ireland Hanoi. A small internal selection committee will be established for this purpose.

An agreement will be signed by the Embassy and the successful Vietnam partner on selection. A more detailed work plan, and a letter of re-confirmation from the Irish partner, will be required at this stage.

Agreed funding will be paid in two tranches of one half each at commencement, and completion stage subject to satisfactory performance as judged by the Embassy.

## **8. Submission of applications**

Concept note and full proposal should be emailed by no later than the deadlines specified in Section 6 to:

Ms. Nguyen Mai Chi  
Programme Administrator  
Embassy of Ireland  
Floor 2, Sentinel Place  
41 A Ly Thai To Street  
Hanoi, Vietnam  
Tel: +84-4-3974-3291 ext. 658  
Email: [chi.nguyen@dfanet.ie](mailto:chi.nguyen@dfanet.ie)

## **9. Forms:**

Concept note  
Full proposal