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in Development Cooperation

Information Note

Improving Social Security Human Resources in Vietnam

Hanoi, 8th July.- SOCIEUX, the Social Protection EU Expertise in Development Cooperation, is currently assisting Vietnam Social Security (VSS) to improve its human resources development plan. During a first mission to Hanoi, which took place from 22nd June to 3rd July, the experts assessed the current state of human resources at VSS by holding bilateral meetings with all relevant departments and by evaluating the organisation's operations.

Vietnam Social Security (VSS) is the state management agency responsible for social security insurance schemes. In its 2011-2020 Human Resources Development Plan VSS aims to have an appropriately skilled organisation fully capable of meeting the challenge of strategically developing Vietnam's social security sector. One of the challenges it faces is the need to re-orientate its large workforce (over 20,000) from its current, overly bureaucratic working practices towards a client- or service-orientated approach. VSS has therefore requested the support of SOCIEUX in assessing the general state of the HR development plan and proposing improvements.

The exploratory mission focused on providing an overview both of operational practice in the institution's HR department, which deals with functions such as recruitment, salaries and benefits, employee appraisal and rewarding good performance, and of the place and the role of the HR department in the VSS's general development strategy. Given the fact that a considerable number of VSS staff requires training, specific attention was also given to the capacities and capabilities of the institution's human capital, including staff skills and competencies. Additionally, the experts conducted a two-day training seminar covering several HR tools which a client-centred administration should be implementing.

In their recommendations, the experts suggested adopting a systematic approach to the drafting of a detailed HR strategic plan to be led by the Organisational and Personal Department. The contents of the plan would range from formulating individual job descriptions to detailing the organisational changes required. Moreover, a SWOT analysis of the institution's position revealed strong commitment on the part of the VSS staff and an enthusiasm for undertaking the necessary changes. The findings were based on bilateral meetings with key departments of the VSS, including the Training Institute for Social Security Operations, which is in charge of internal training.



From left to right: Ms. Ingrid Bakker, Mr. Phan Dinh Thang and Mr. Jean-Charles Dehaye



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The experts also reported that although at times they encountered language barriers and understood certain concepts differently, the work done with the VSS had been very rewarding. "Our counterparts are highly motivated and already dedicated to working for good results, so we recommend continuing to build on what they have already achieved with HR development and staff training. Since VSS is really eager to learn about international models and good practices, we tried to use examples we know from the EU, EU Member States and our own organisations. When it comes to implementing policy and the involvement of management in such things as HR development, what we saw at VSS seems quite comparable with our own experiences back home."

Meanwhile, Mr. Phan Dinh Thang, Deputy Head of the International Division at Vietnam Social Security declared that the mission went very well and that it will help build toward a client-centered organization. "The experts were very enthusiastic about their work, said Thang, and their background knowledge on social security and human resources enabled them to ensure a smooth transfer of information, collecting the data provided by our units and putting it together to provide the big picture."

As a result of this first fact-finding mission, which is linked to a World Bank initiative to review the VSS's business practices, the experts will also develop a working plan for subsequent SOCIEUX missions focused on training.

Experts deployed

- **Ms. Ingrid Bakker**, Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, Human Resource Division, the Netherlands
- **Mr. Jean-Charles Dehaye**, National Fund for Pensions (CNAV), France

About SOCIEUX

The EuropeAid funded project "SOCIEUX - Social Protection EU Expertise in Development Cooperation", is a technical assistance facility to support the efforts of partner countries to better design and manage social protection systems by means of short-term peer-to-peer inputs to be delivered by experts drawn primarily from the European Union Member States' public administrations and mandated bodies. SOCIEUX contributes to implementing the Communication on Social Protection in EU Development Cooperation (August 2012) and its subsequent Council Conclusions.

For more information

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