



THE WORLD BANK



## Vietnam Women's Innovation Day 2013 “Women's Economic Empowerment”

### Contents and guidelines

#### **BACKGROUND: Gender Equality and Women's economic opportunities in Vietnam**

Vietnam Women's Innovation Day 2013 is co-organized by Vietnam Women's Union, The World Bank and UN Women with an aim to encourage and promote innovations that foster Women's Economic Empowerment.

Viet Nam has experienced tremendous changes in the country's economy and society. The national poverty rate declined from 58.1% in 1993 to around 10% in 2012 and recently the country reached the status of a lower-middle-income country. The country is a regional and global leader in achieving many Millennium Development Goals (MDG's), several before the deadline of 2015. This highlights the success of the Government in implementing poverty reduction programs.

Viet Nam has also performed remarkably well on gender equality. It had already made considerable progress in addressing gender disparities in education and health and achieved a major decline in maternal mortality. The expansion in economic opportunities has benefitted women as well as men. Women's labor force participation rates are among the highest in the region, and the gender gap in earnings is lower in Viet Nam than many other East Asian countries<sup>1</sup>. Women account for 51% of the population and 48.6% of labour force in Viet Nam. Women play an important role in economic activities.

However, gender inequality still persists, and it is undermining women's capacity to benefit from processes of growth and development. Women typically earn significantly less than men, are frequently discriminated against when applying for high level professional positions, and have a legal age for retirement five years below that of men. Women's wages are now about 75% of men wages<sup>2</sup>, not taking into account differences in education or job experience. Evidence shows that sub groups of women are especially vulnerable, manifested through high poverty rates among widows and single mothers, and lower education rates for ethnic minority girls. Ethnic minorities, especially women, benefit less from economic opportunities. Finally, women are also in more vulnerable jobs, for example, own-account work and unpaid family labor, the two categories seen as a minimum estimate of the lack of decent work.

The National Strategy on Gender Equality (2011-2020) provides a framework for the Government of Vietnam's support for gender equality until 2020 and sets the objective to narrow the gender gap in the economic, labour and employment domain; and to increase access of rural poor women and ethnic minority women to economic resources and labour market.

During the 2007-2012 tenure, the Vietnam Women's Union (VWU) has carried out many activities, including providing micro-finance support, vocational training, science and technology transfer and job creation for women. VWU-launched movements “Women study actively, work creatively and nurture happy families”, “Women help each other to develop the household economy” and “Doing savings following Uncle Ho” have stimulated great efforts from women across the country to move up the production value chain, increase income and improve women's economic status. During these movements, many special individuals and groups of women have emerged as great examples of how to do successful business. They have made significant contributions to the country's economic development.

<sup>1</sup>World Bank (2011), Viet Nam Gender Assessment

<sup>2</sup>ILO, MOLISA, 2009 Labor Force Survey



## INTRODUCTION OF THE PROGRAM

To encourage women's economic empowerment, the Vietnam Women Union, the World Bank in Vietnam and UN Women co-organize the Women's Innovation Day, which will consist of 2 main activities: 1) Showcase the most innovative products by women in the course of economic development and 2) Identify and provide seed-money to the most feasible and innovative ideas in promoting women's economic empowerment. In addition, a series of seminars/discussions will be held to engage policy-makers and a wide range of leading figures in the development community and private sector to share their experiences. These activities will also provide valuable networking and capacity building opportunities.

## GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS ON PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FOR BOTH ACTIVITIES:

### 1. Activity 1: Highlighting and Promoting Women's Innovative Products

This activity is to select, reward and showcase women's innovative products, which have been successfully applied in practice as a contribution to promote socio-economic development.

#### **Criteria:**

- Products created by individual women or a women's collective in the process of production or research between January 2011 and May 2013 (*"the women's collective" is a collective represented by at least 70% female employees and which has a woman leader and manager*).
- Products that were created from the new ideas or through using new methods, they could also be improved products from existing ones.
- Products that have copyright or certification by local authority/ministries/ departments. Products that violate the national and international intellectual property rights will not be accepted.
- Products that have been successfully applied in practice, can demonstrate the socio-economic effectiveness.
- Priority is given to innovative products which are applied or can be used for the remote, border and island areas; the products which are awarded by the ministries, departments of its innovation during the period 2011-2013.

**Quantity:** an individual woman or a women's collective can submit more than one innovative product.

#### **Requirements:**

Applicants must fill in the Application form (Appendix 1), which can be downloaded from the website of the Vietnamese Women's Union (<http://www.hoilhpn.org.vn>.)

The Vietnam Women's Union encourages applicants to submit a one-page explanation of the product (A4), in accordance with the criteria of the program. The Vietnam Women's Union will keep all submitted products for the selection process and for showcasing at the Ceremony and at the Vietnam Women's Museum.

Further details of the Program, instructions on how to apply, and Application forms in hard copies can be obtained at the VWU's headquarters (39 hang Chuoi, Hanoi) and offices of Provincial Women's Unions. The relevant documents can also be provided via fax, post, and email upon request.

The Application Form must be signed by the representative of individuals/units/organizations which participate in the competition, and be certified, stamped and sent by post to the Organizer Committee by **17:00 on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2013** (as attested by date on postmark in case the application forms are sent by post) to the following address:

***Vietnam Women's Innovation Day 2013 –Highlighting and promoting innovative products***  
*Vietnam Women's Union*  
*39 Hang Chuoi, Ha Noi*

Co-organizers:



For further information, please contact:  
Ms. Tran Thi Thu Ha/ Bui Lan Anh/ Ngo My Mai,  
Department for Supporting Women in Economic Development,  
Vietnam Women Union  
Tel: (04)3.9720249/39715149  
Email: phunusangtao@gmail.com

### **Selection process:**

- From 1<sup>st</sup> July – 25<sup>th</sup> August, 2013: select innovative products to be rewarded with VWU's certificate of merit.
- October, 2013: Showcase the selected products.
- Inform and invite the author/ representative of collective author of innovative products to participate in the main event of the Vietnam *Women's Innovation Day 2013* and receive certificates of merit, participate in activities to exchange and share their experiences in seminars and forums.

## **2. Activity 2: Innovation Grants**

The innovation grants seek the best initiatives at the grassroots level to provide seed-funding for implementation to address development challenges that hinder women's economic potential and promote women's economic empowerment.

Under the theme "*Women's Economic Empowerment*", this activity is an open competition with an independent jury panel. The jury panel will evaluate proposals against assessment criteria and select winners to receive grants for implementation of their initiative.

Proposals should be focused on, but not limited to the following 3 sub-themes. In each sub-theme, the Organizing Committee will give priority to proposals which support women entrepreneurs and women from ethnic minority groups and in rural areas.

### ***i. Women entrepreneurs:***

Women entrepreneurs contribute significantly to Vietnam's socio-economic development. It is estimated that 30% of small and medium sized enterprises are owned by women; about 25% of leaders and CEOs in Vietnamese enterprises in all economic sectors are women, and an estimated 60% of household businesses are owned by women. Despite these contributions, women entrepreneurs continue to face significant gender-related challenges in setting up and in expanding their businesses, such as in relation to accessing human resource development and vocational training, commercial credit from formal financial service providers, more lucrative markets, technology, information, and networks to establish and expand their businesses.

Below are some possible entry points for the proposals focusing on this sub-theme:

- Improving business conditions for women-owned enterprises,
- Business and Family – how to create a better Work-Life Balance for women entrepreneurs
- Reducing and eliminating gender-related obstacles for female entrepreneurs in Viet Nam.

### ***ii. Women's Empowerment in Business and Production***

Women play a crucial role in a country's transition from low income to middle and high income and from a factor-driven economy to one based on efficiency and innovation. This is illustrated by the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Gap Report 2011: "*Over time, a nation's competitiveness depends significantly on whether and how it utilizes its human resource pool. Furthermore, innovation requires unique ideas, and the best ideas thrive in a diverse environment. Countries and companies thrive if women are educated and engaged as fundamental pillars of the economy*"<sup>3</sup> The report also

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid.



illustrates the correlation between competitiveness and gender equality by plotting their Global Gender Gap Index (GGGI) against their Global Competitiveness Index.

This points towards the importance for companies of employing and investing in female as well as male employees. It also illustrates the importance for a country such as Vietnam of promoting women's employment. There is strong gender segregation by sector in Vietnam, where women are much less likely to work in what is seen as traditional male sectors such as engineering or financial services.

The focus of this sub-theme is on how to promote female employment and the empowerment of women in businesses and production and how to increase women's participation in male dominated sectors:

- Promote ideas for how to increase women's employment
- Promote women's participation in 'traditional male' sectors
- Develop incentives for companies to employ women – especially in 'traditional male' sectors
- Promote education, training and professional development for women
- Promote women's employment through community initiatives and advocacy.

### *iii. Decent Work for Women*

Women often lack decent work. Women tend to be found in the poorest jobs with the lowest incomes in the informal economy, and their access to formal sector employment is more limited than that of men. Women typically earn significantly less than men<sup>4</sup>. They are also more frequently discriminated against when applying for high level professional positions, and women are more likely than men to be in vulnerable jobs, own-account and unpaid family work. Finally, the early retirement age for women hinders career development and training opportunities for many women.

Below are some possible entry points for the proposals focusing on this sub-theme:

- Develop and improve the use of sex-disaggregated data and gender statistics on women's economic empowerment;
- Promote fair treatment of women and men in the labor market
- Ensure the health, safety and well-being of women and men workers
- Promote equal wages for women and men
- Reduce the vulnerability of women in the labor market, especially in the informal sector
- Promote skills development focused on reducing vulnerability and improving access to decent work
- Promote young women's employability to reduce their vulnerability
- Gender-sensitive legal and social protection for Domestic workers
- Promote a change in attitude towards a more equal share of the burden of unpaid family work

### **Eligibility Criteria**

- **Eligible Applicants:** The innovation grants program is seeking proposals from all Vietnamese organizations with legal status, with the exception of the Army and Police services; agencies, organizations and units at central level of co-organizer(s) and co-sponsor(s). Foreign and international organizations may only apply in partnership with local organization(s) bearing primary implementation responsibilities.
- **Award Size:** the maximum award size will be US\$15,000.
- **Implementation Period:** up to one year from the date of fund disbursement.
- **Thematic Relevance:** The proposal must adhere to the theme of the competition, have a clear objective to be met within one year of the award and meet the demands of the local development process where the project will be implemented for the benefit of the poor and underserved communities.

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<sup>4</sup> Women's wages are about 75% of men's in the formal sector and estimated to be only 50% of that of their male counterparts in the informal sector according to the World Bank's 2011 Vietnam Gender Assessment



- **Language:** The application and any related documents should be in Vietnamese or both Vietnamese and English.
- **Number of Proposal(s):** An enterprise /organization may submit more than one proposal. However, one enterprise /organization can receive only one award

### **Proposal Submission Method and Format**

Proposals should follow the format outlined in the application form (Appendix 2) issued by the VWID Organizing Committee and available from the website of the World Bank Vietnam at <http://www.worldbank.org/vietnam>, the website of Viet Nam Women’s Union at <http://www.hoilhpn.org.vn>, the website of UN Women at <http://www.un.org.vn> and the websites of other Program Partners.

Applicants are encouraged to provide a summary (maximum one page) of the project objective, outcomes and link to the VWID2013 theme.

Full details of the program, instructions on how to submit a proposal and application forms in hard copies can also be obtained at the reception desk of the World Bank Country Office located at 63 Ly Thai To St., 8th Floor, Ha Noi, the Vietnam Development Information Center on the 2nd floor of 63 Ly Thai To St., Ha Noi, UN Women Office at 72 Ly Thuong Kiet, Ha Noi, and at offices of Vietnam Women’s Unions in provinces. The documents can also be provided by fax, post or email attachment upon request.

The proposal should be signed off by the Head of the enterprise/ organization and must be submitted in hard copy by post and as soft version via email to the VWID Organizing Committee by 5:00 pm on 30th June, 2013 (for those outside Hanoi, the deadline is based on the date of the post-office) address to:

Vietnam Women Innovation Day 2013 – Innovation Grants  
 World Bank Vietnam Office  
 8th Floor, 63 Ly Thai To St. Hoan Kiem dist., Hanoi  
 Email: [lchu1@worldbank.org](mailto:lchu1@worldbank.org)

Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be considered.

For more information, please contact:  
 Ms. Chu Thị Thúy Linh, the World Bank Office in Vietnam  
 Telephone: (04) 39346600 (ext: 335);  
 Fax: (04)39346597;  
 Email: [lchu1@worldbank.org](mailto:lchu1@worldbank.org)

### **Proposal Assessment Criteria**

- Innovation in approaches, objects and contents
- Link to theme
- Potential for upgrading, scaling up, and sustainable commercial production
- Clear and measurable results that will have a direct impact on communities
- Realism/Organizational Capacity
- Sustainability



### **Selection Process:**

- Review of proposals: Proposals will be reviewed against the assessment criteria mentioned above from 1/7 to 25/8/2013. Finalists will be selected.
- Finalists will be announced and invited to the VWID 2013 main event scheduled in October 2013 and present their ideas before a jury panel.
- An independent jury panel comprising of leading Vietnamese and international experts invited by the organizers will evaluate each finalist proposal and select winners to receive grants for project implementation.

### **PROPOSED TIMELINES:**

13/03/2013	The Launch of Vietnam Women's Innovation Day 2013
20/3 - 15/04/2013	Introductory workshops in Hanoi and other provinces
30/06/2013	Deadline for proposal submission for Activities 1&2
10/2013	Vietnam Women's Innovation Day 2013 shall comprise the following main events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Exhibition of the most innovative products</li><li>- Final round of the Innovation Grants Competition</li><li>- Knowledge Sharing forum, Conference for promoting exemplary women in doing business</li><li>- Award ceremony</li></ul>

### **General information on the main activities of Vietnam Women's Innovation Day 2013:**

- **Activity 1 –Showcasing of women's innovative products in economic area**—is an event hold by Vietnam Women's Union biennially with varied themes each time. In 2011, the Event was held for the first time, receiving entries from 29 Agencies/Ministries and Provincial Women's Unions at 49 provinces on culture, education, science, technology and economy.
- **Activity 2 –Innovation Grants**— is part of the Vietnam Innovation Day (VID) Program which is held annually by the World Bank and government counterparts in partnership with many multilateral and bilateral donor organizations and business entities. The Program identifies and provides seed-funding for innovative, early stage ideas at the grassroots level that exhibit high potential for development impacts. Vietnam Innovation Day was first launched in 2003. More than US\$2.4 million in grants have so far been awarded to 231 diverse and innovative projects over the past 9 years.

