



SUCCESS STORY

Linking Businesses to Global Clients

Vietnamese producers are building relations with global buyers



Photo: USAID

Foreign buyers visit the Minh Phu Stone Company, a home furnishing producer, to scout for products in Thuong Tin, in Vietnam's north-central Ha Tay province.

Foreign buyers provide insight into global preferences and demand for home furnishings.

Local and foreign companies are eager to collaborate with one another in Vietnam. But both sides find that they lack the information on business practices and contacts necessary to close business deals. Vietnamese companies are not familiar with the processes and standards required to sell products to international markets, while foreign companies have trouble negotiating the local business environment.

USAID is working with enterprises in Vietnam's home furnishing sector to improve access to high-value export markets. The USAID program is facilitating business transactions between local firms and foreign buyers by assisting direct marketing efforts that promote Vietnamese products to foreign buyers. In addition, the program assists visitors with trip logistics and introductions to local producers and agents. In addition to helping these businesses grow through purchases, the foreign buyers have provided Vietnamese firms with personalized feedback on market trends, suggestions about production and design techniques, and ideas for improving their businesses.

In just over a year, nine foreign companies have visited over 30 Vietnamese businesses. Collectively, they have purchased approximately \$250,000 worth of samples alone to exhibit in major U.S. trade shows. The Vietnamese products have proven their appeal — several pieces are even featured in National Geographic's Home Collection.

The results are promising and indicate potential for these new business relationships to continue expanding. Based on the enthusiastic response from their own customers, at least four of the foreign buyers plan to strike a deal with companies in Vietnam. Another positive result is that Vietnamese producers and agents are learning from their foreign partners — they are tapping into their expertise and adjusting their products and services to meet client demands. This will help both individual producers and the home furnishings industry as a whole, as they position themselves to meet demands of the global market.