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VIETNAM

SUCCESS STORY

Promoting Business-Media Relations

Business and media discuss improving information flows



Photo: USAID

Ta Thi Ngoc Thao shares her insights on how to use the media as an advocacy tool during the “Media and Private Sector Development” conference in Hanoi.

“The media should provide comprehensive, relevant, and insightful information that helps businesses make crucial decisions and encourages the government to adopt reforms,” said Ta Thi Ngoc Thao, an expert on the media in Vietnam.

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As Vietnam’s economy continues to grow rapidly and integrate into global markets, the media plays a vital role in disseminating economic information. For a market economy to function effectively, businesses, investors, consumers, and policy-makers need timely and reliable information to make decisions.

Despite an increasingly active media in Vietnam, businesses lament the overall quality of business reporting. Although the country has over 600 print and electronic newspapers, businesses say that only a handful regularly provide content that is useful to entrepreneurs and private businesses. Also, relations between companies and journalists are often uneasy — there is a climate of distrust between the two sectors. Business leaders are wary of talking to the press because they say journalists have occasionally misrepresented facts, leading to damaging consequences for some firms. Nguyen Gia Quy, Vice President of the Hanoi Journalists Association, asserts “the media has great power in society, but has occasionally abused this privilege.”

USAID sponsored a conference in Hanoi with media, government, and business representatives to discuss these and other issues in an effort to improve business reporting in Vietnam. The Media and Private Sector Development conference attracted over 80 journalists, private business leaders, and government officials. Participants shared their concerns and outlined suggestions for improving the current situation and building strong working relationships between journalists and business leaders.

Conference participants said the event initiated a necessary and constructive dialogue between the media and business. Participants also expressed interest in continuing discussions of this nature at future events.

By improving public awareness and facilitating communication between these groups, USAID is helping Vietnam’s media and private sector strengthen and improve their contribution to the country’s economic growth.