

## PRESS RELEASE

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### THE EU SUPPLIES TOURISM SCHOOLS AND LOCAL COMMUNITIES WITH EQUIPMENT TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TOURISM SERVICES

Can Tho and Kien Giang- Today the EU-funded Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Programme (ESRT) has officially handed over equipment and furniture to the Community Centre in My Khanh (Can Tho) and Kien Giang Economic and Technical College, in presence of the Ambassador, Head of the EU Delegation to Vietnam, Dr. Franz Jessen and the Vice-Chairman of Vietnam National Administration for Tourism, Mr. Nguyen Manh Cuong. This is the final handover of equipment and furniture by the ESRT, contributing to improving the quality of vocational training in 5 tourism vocational schools and 10 community centres over the country.

Speaking at the handover event, the Ambassador, Head of the EU Delegation to Vietnam, Dr. Franz Jessen stated that "The quality of tourism services is key to Vietnam's tourism competitiveness and development. But this can only be delivered by a professional workforce, trained to meet the demands of both the national and international travellers. We support these efforts. we hope that the EU assistance to schools and communes will create a more enabling environment for the teachers and trainers to conduct responsible tourism training courses".

The support for the Community Centre in My Khanh as well as in other nine Community Centres is aimed to provide training to local communities in view to encourage and support tourism initiatives and activities. Target groups for training are local people and households who are willingly engaged in tourism activities as well as community advisors, including district cultural officers, commune officers, community activists, local secondary school teachers, active representatives of local youth and women's organisations.

The furniture and equipment handed over to Kien Giang Economic and Technical College as well as other four colleges will support tourism training and occupational practice with four main occupations: Front Office, Tour Guiding, Housekeeping and Food and Beverage Service. In addition, the ESRT programme will continue to support the colleges in reforming methods and content of tourism vocational training to address the needs of the tourism industry in the future. The ESRT program in collaboration with the tourism stakeholders has developed a set of new "Vocational Training Occupancy Standards" (VTOS), which will support the delivery of responsible tourism in this region.

In the handover event, Vice Chairman of Vietnam National Administration of Tourism Mr. Nguyen Manh Cuong informed that this is a follow-up from the previous EU-funded Human Resources Development in Tourism project. "These emerging tourism destinations require increased and improved skills, therefore the project has been working closely with the provinces, regions and communities to assist them in the delivery of tourism vocational training towards sustainable responsible tourism development", Cuong said.

## → ABOUT THE ESRT PROGRAMME

The ESRT Programme is the biggest tourism technical support programme to Vietnam to mainstream responsible tourism principles into Vietnam's tourism sector to enhance competitiveness and contributing to achieving the Socio Economic Development Plan. It is funded by the European Union with 11 million Euros and the Vietnamese Government contributes 1.1 million Euro, implementing from 2011 to 2015. Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism is the Executing Authority, while Vietnam National Administration of Tourism is the Implementing Agency.

Key strategic pillars of the ESRT Programme: Policy Support and Institutional Strengthening; Establishing useful Organisational Structures and Networks between the public and private; Developing a Skilled Tourism Labour Force; Improvement of Tourism Competitiveness; Awareness Raising for Responsible Tourism.

Overall five tourism vocational training colleges/schools and ten community centres were approved by Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT), Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism and the European Union Delegation to Vietnam culminating in an overall investment of 1,100,000 euro of which 300,000 for schools and communes. The rest has been allocated for equipping VNAT and its agencies for capacity building.

## [The End]

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