



GE Foundation to Support Vietnam Project on Rule of Law

Washington, DC (December 10, 2008) – The US-Vietnam Trade Council Education Forum (USVTC-EF) and STAR Vietnam are pleased to announce they have received a one-year, \$225,000 grant from the GE Foundation, the philanthropic organization of the General Electric Company, for a program centered on the rule of law in Vietnam. Through the program, **Advancing the Rule of Law in Vietnam**, GE Foundation will enhance USVTC-EF and STAR Vietnam’s work to improve the rule of law in Vietnam, as mandated by the WTO and other international commitments, through partnerships with the US Government and private sector support.

For the program, set to last through October 2009, USVTC-EF and STAR Vietnam will work in collaboration with Vietnamese state agencies, including the Office of Government, Ministry of Justice and the National Assembly, as well as NGOs, business associations, academic institutions and others.

The program will focus on increasing transparency and public participation in the law and rule making process, a key requirement of the WTO, which will strengthen the rule of law and should lead to increased economic development and growth as well.

The program will include:

- International experts on public participation in law and rule making to work directly with the Vietnamese Government in drafting the governing regulations,
- A fellowship program for Vietnamese policymakers interested in advancing transparency and the rule of law,
- Workshops to train government officials on the obligations of their agencies under Vietnam’s new “Law on Laws” to post draft laws and regulations for a minimum of 60 days for public comment, to study the comments, and to report on whether and why the comments were accepted or not accepted; and other transparency rulemaking.
- A public education campaign to increase awareness of the rights of individuals and businesses to comment on all draft laws and regulations proposed by state agencies.

Founded in 1989, The U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council (USVTC) and its educational affiliate, the U.S.-Vietnam Trade Council Education Forum (USVTC-EF), have worked towards the goal of building a new relationship between the U.S. and Vietnam, contributing to normalization of

relations and improving the bilateral trade and investment environment. For more information on USVTC-EF, please go to <http://www.usvtc.org>.

The USAID-funded STAR-Vietnam project has been a leader in supporting the strengthening of the rule of law in Vietnam since 2001. STAR's primary mandate has been to support Vietnam's successful efforts to make the many legal, policy and institutional reforms required to implement the U.S.-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement (BTA) and the WTO Agreements. For more information on STAR, see www.starvietnam.org.

GE is Imagination at Work - a diversified technology, media and financial services company focused on solving some of the world's toughest problems. GE was one of the first American companies to return to Vietnam and opened its representative office in Hanoi in 1993 before the US embargo was lifted and in Ho Chi Minh City in 2001 to work with Vietnamese customers in Aviation, Healthcare, Energy and Oil and Gas. GE will invest \$61 million to manufacture high-tech components for GE Energy in Haiphong .

The GE Foundation, the philanthropic organization of the General Electric Company, works to solve some of the world's most difficult problems. In coordination with its partners, it supports U.S. and international education, the environment, public policy, human rights, and disaster-relief around the globe. In addition, the GE Foundation supports GE employee and retiree giving and involvement in GE communities around the world. In 2007, the GE family including businesses, employees, retirees and GE Foundation contributed more than \$210 million to community and educational programs, including \$93 million from the GE Foundation. For more information, visit www.gefoundation.com.