



ASIA INVEST PROGRAMME  
Building a FOSS Bridge  
between Europe and Vietnam



FOSS Bridge Press Release  
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## **FOSS Bridge EU-Vietnam: Over 40 companies from Vietnam and Europe seek joint business with Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) – First meeting of this kind started in Hanoi, Vietnam**

Hanoi, 13. November 2007 - How can you kick-start joint software projects over the distance of more than 8.000 kilometers? This is one of the questions, that over 40 Vietnamese and European FOSS companies from countries such as France, Germany, Spain, Sweden and Belgium are discussing. They started this week the first EU-Vietnamese meeting of this kind in Hanoi, Vietnam. The EU/German sponsored workshop runs from November 12 to 16. It is organized by an international consortium of InWEnt from Germany, INRIA from France, the Institute of Information Technology from Vietnam and associate partner CENATIC from Spain.

The main goal of "FOSS-Bridge EU-Vietnam" is to develop business partnerships between software players in Vietnam and Europe. Cooperation is based on the innovative model of "Free and Open Source Software" (FOSS), which fosters open collaboration and joint building of software code worldwide. For that, each company from Vietnam is twinned with a counterpart from Europe for joint projects - increasing knowledge base, competitiveness and cooperation of the partners.

The project started with an online collaboration over a dedicated website ([www.foss-bridge.org](http://www.foss-bridge.org)). Now more than 45 registered participants from 22 Vietnamese enterprises meet for the first time face to face with 17 European representatives of FOSS companies, who are active in the FOSS environment<sup>1</sup>. The final goal of a series of meetings is to establish long-term relations between Vietnamese and European companies working in similar fields for mutual benefit, business growth and international networking. Such is also the main aim of the European Union's Asia Invest Program, which co-funds the FOSS-Bridge together with the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). Its it@foss initiative supports capacity-building in this sector with a special focus on small and medium sized (SMEs) ICT companies in Southeast Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Germany (8), Spain (3), France (4), Belgium (1) and Sweden (1). For a full list of companies, please see attachment.

During the meetings Vietnamese FOSS companies will get more acquainted with open business models and will be able to consider together with European counterparts possible development paths of their current business models.

In contrast to a traditional business model of proprietary software vendors, who offer software for money, business models in the world of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) usually work differently. The turnover of many FOSS companies is generated mainly by selling additional services or add-ons to software programs, which are jointly maintained through a community. Therefore Catherine Nuel of INRIA stresses, that FOSS Bridge "EU-Vietnam" is not about outsourcing: "We want to establish a degree of co-operation between companies that is nurtured by both sides equally and which is beneficial to customers in both countries - to build a bridge."

"An example of a business model based on free and open source software are companies using the telephony software Asterisk ([www.asterisk.org](http://www.asterisk.org)).", explains Corinna von Hartrott, the project manager of InWEnt. "The software itself is freely licensed which means customers and developers can download it for free from the Internet, redistribute it and change the code according to their needs". In order to install a complex telephone system in a company with 200 phone lines or even in a ministry with several thousand telephones, however, more expertise is required. "In providing services like this lies a huge potential for small and medium sized FOSS companies." Hartrott continues.

On the level of the operating system, the free Linux system is well known and easy to install on a single computer nowadays. But for a laptop vendor with an output of several thousand notebooks a day things look differently. With open source, the producer is able to adapt the software to changes in its hardware configuration swiftly without enquiring to a software company or owner. "More and more opportunities like this arise in the field of FOSS and we want to engage more Vietnamese companies to profit from this fast growing lucrative market.", adds Vu The Binh from the Institute of Information Technology from Hanoi.

Welcoming and opening statements of the event are held by the delegate of the European Commission to Vietnam, Mr. Patrick Cooney and Mrs. Nguyen Thuy Nhi, deputy director of the National OSS Project of the Ministry of Science and Technology of Vietnam. Besides participating companies the Association for Information Processing as the National organization of Vietnamese IT companies are present through vice president Mr. Le Hong Ha. The Academic community are presented by the Mr. Nguyen Hong Quang from the Francophone Institute of Informatics.

Further on, members of the Linux community ([www.vnlinux.org](http://www.vnlinux.org)) in Vietnam are offering a special show case of Linux in Vietnam to European participants.

Balthas Seibold, senior project manager of InWEnt concludes: "We have planned a very extensive program and we are confident that participants from Vietnam and Europe make the most out of it." First collaboration agreements on specific joint projects are already to be expected at the end of the week.

Links and Contact:

FOSS Bridge EU-Vietnam, [www.foss-bridge.org](http://www.foss-bridge.org)

InWEnt - Capacity Building International, Germany  
([www.inwent.org](http://www.inwent.org), [www.it-inwent.org](http://www.it-inwent.org)),

INRIA - National Institute of Research in Information Technologies France / Institut Nationale de Recherche en Informatique et Automatique France, [www.inria.fr](http://www.inria.fr) /

IOIT - Institute of Information Technology member of the Vietnamese Academy of Sciences & Technology (VAST) / Viện Công Nghệ Thông Tin, [www.ioit.ac.vn](http://www.ioit.ac.vn)

CENATIC - Centro Nacional de Referencia de Aplicación de las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación or National Reference Centre for the Application of Open Source Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), [www.cenatic.net](http://www.cenatic.net)

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