

Sustainability Alliance of Urban Networks in Asian Cities (SAUNAC) – a Project Overview

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Vietnam has been one of the most dynamically developing countries during the past two decades. The significant growth of the economy is accompanied by a rapid urbanisation process. It is expected that by 2020, 45% of the population will live in urban areas. The adverse impacts that this development has on the environment, the infrastructure and the sustainability are tremendous. In 2012, the Vietnamese Government therefore

approved the Vietnam National Green Growth Strategy, targeting a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, promoting the deployment of clean and renewable energy, as well as greening both production and lifestyle. The Sustainability Alliance of Urban Networks in Asian Cities (SAUNAC) will contribute to the implementation and delivery of these targets through its integral and multi-faceted approach in improving related skills and



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expertise through innovative teaching and learning programs, fostering innovation transfer, and involving national, regional and municipal governments.

SAUNAC comprises a partnership of 5 European and 6 Vietnamese Universities. The European partner Universities represent the Consortium on Applied Research and Professional Education (CARPE) and consist of the Turku University of Applied Sciences (Finland), the Stichting Hogeschool Utrecht (Netherlands), the Universitat Politècnica de València (Spain), Manchester Metropolitan University (UK), and the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences (Germany). The Partner Universities in Vietnam encompass the Hanoi University of Civil Engineering, the Danang University of Science and Technology, the Ho Chi Minh City University of Natural Resources and Environment, the Vietnam National University, the Haiphong University, and the Hue University of Sciences.

Funded by the European Union's ERASMUS+ programme, the central aim of SAUNAC is increasing the capacity of Vietnamese Universities and their stakeholders by providing them with essential tools required to transition Vietnam through a range of activities that will enable both students and professionals to develop viable solutions for smart, sustainable cities. By establishing opportunities for learning mobility, the project will improve competences and skills required to benefit the society and the environment. It will also increase the capability of innovation transfer through transcontinental cooperation. The benefits of SAUNAC are manifold: Firstly, Vietnam's higher-education institutions are expected to significantly gain from both new University and industry linkages and from increased capacity and novel delivery tools. Secondly, Vietnamese students will be actively engaged in the project, through pilot teaching, participation in surveys, post-pilot teaching evaluation, and other project activities. Thirdly, Vietnamese enterprises will benefit from innovations developed at the higher education institutions, plus gain access to a new talent pool of students for employment. Among the key benefits from a European perspective, higher education institutes in Europe will greatly gain from SAUNAC's efforts in fostering the foundation for furthering collaborations in education, research as well as student and staff exchanges. In the longer-term perspective, SAUNAC will additionally facilitate the expansion of European businesses across the Vietnamese market, supported by the employment of European-trained Vietnamese graduates.

In its basic structure, the project is subdivided into the following nine work packages (WPs), each of which is jointly led by one Vietnamese and one

European partner University. A tenth work package is assigned to the project management.

- WP1: Getting ready for the Smart Sustainable Vietnamese Cities (SSVC) module implementation (jointly led by Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany, and the Vietnam National University).
- WP2: Development of the SSVC module (jointly led by Stichting Hogeschool Utrecht, Netherlands, and the Hanoi University of Civil Engineering, Vietnam).
- WP3: Creating regional networks in sustainability (jointly led by Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, and Ho Chi Minh City University of Natural Resources, Vietnam).
- WP4: eLearning platform for SSVC (jointly led by Stichting Hogeschool Utrecht, Netherlands, and the Haiphong University, Vietnam).
- WP5: Piloting the SSVC module in Vietnamese partner Universities (jointly led by Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain, and Ho Chi Minh City University of Natural Resources, Vietnam)
- WP6: Quality Assurance (jointly led by Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany, and Danang University of Science and Technology, Vietnam)
- WP7: Evaluation (jointly led by Turku University of Applied Sciences, Finland, and Hanoi University of Civil Engineering, Vietnam)
- WP8: Dissemination (jointly led by Manchester Metropolitan University, UK, and the Vietnam National University)
- WP9: Exploitation (jointly led by the Universitat Politècnica de València, Spain, and the Vietnam National University)
- WP10: Management (coordinated by Turku University of Applied Sciences)

One of the key milestones within this process is the development and delivery of a 15 ECTS course on Smart Sustainable Vietnamese Cities (SSVC). The SSVC development is of the utmost significance for the rapidly growing nation of Vietnam. The SSVC module will be integrated into the curricula of the Vietnamese partner Universities and thoroughly evaluated with respect to its efficacy and its impact during the piloting stage. The SSVC course

module will be mainly taught by Vietnamese University staff, initially in English, and subsequently in Vietnamese after successfully completing various test runs. Workshops will be conducted under the guidance of the European partner Universities to equip Vietnamese teaching staff with modern teaching methodologies required to efficiently deliver the course content. A suitable E-Learning platform for the SSVC module has already been developed.

SAUNAC pursues the creation of regional networks in sustainability, consisting of cities, private companies, regional public authorities, NGO's and other relevant stakeholders. The project will likely yield several novel cooperation agreements between European and Vietnamese partner Universities.

The project commenced in October 2016 and is initially funded for three years. The European partner Universities are closely accompanying and supporting the project across the entire time span through multiple visits in Vietnam, transfer of content-based knowledge, implementing novel teaching and learning methodologies and various other support activities. Following three meetings in Da Nang (Nov. 2016), Hanoi (May 2017) and Ho Chi Minh City (Oct. 2017), the current project stage tackles the development of the SSVC module, which is scheduled to be piloted in Hai Phong in March 2018 and to be implemented at all Vietnamese partner Universities by the end of 2019. A final conference in Turku, Finland, will round off the initial project time frame. Follow-up projects in other countries are planned. ■

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