

Agriculture in Vietnam gets a boost with new public-private sector project

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Twelve global companies have joined with the Government of Vietnam to launch a public-private task force to advance sustainable agricultural growth in the country. Developed through discussions of the Forum's New Vision for Agriculture Initiative, the task force will take an innovative approach to improve food security and agricultural sustainability nationwide.

As the first of its kind in Vietnam, the task force will work to coordinate and leverage public and private sector investments in agriculture to increase high-quality production while benefiting farmers. The task force will operate both on a strategic level, exchanging best practice and addressing policy issues and on an operational level, working to scale effective initiatives by combining public and private sector capacities.

"Government and business share the same goal: we both want to see strong and sustainable growth in Vietnam's agriculture sector," said Cao Duc Phat, Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development. "We have identified a number of ways in which we can work together more effectively towards that goal."

"Growing Asian demand for food means we must increase both production and quality to meet that growth while operating within the constraints of climate change. If companies combine efforts with the government and each other, we can operate more effectively along the full value chain," said Frans Muller, Member of the Management Board of METRO Group and Co-Chair of the World Economic Forum on East Asia.

The task force will work to develop an initial action plan in the coming six months for presentation at the World Economic Forum Annual Meeting 2011 in Davos-Klosters, Switzerland. The group's activities will likely include:

- Undertaking research to identify high leverage opportunities and exchanging best practices
- Undertaking a policy dialogue to build support across key stakeholders and industries
- Fast-tracking and scaling implementation of select initiatives to achieve rapid progress on several "quick wins"

Participating companies include Archer Daniels Midland (ADM), Bunge, Cargill, Dupont, METRO Group, Monsanto, Nestlé, PepsiCo, Swiss Re, Syngenta, Unilever and Yara International.

The World Economic Forum's New Vision for Agriculture facilitates partnership-building and action among key stakeholders including business, government, civil society, international organizations and academia. It claims to promote models of agricultural growth that contribute to food security, environmental sustainability and economic opportunity.

The programme for the 19th World Economic Forum on East Asia will explore the many facets of the region's rising economic influence such as how high-growth economies can improve their competitiveness through developing innovation-driven, green economies. At the same time, the discussions will consider to what extent ongoing regional integration will serve as the basis for Asian leaders to assume a greater leadership role in global cooperation.

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World Economic Forum, 91-93 route de la Capite, CH-1223 Cologny/Geneva
Tel. +41 (0)22 869 1212, Fax +41 (0)22 786 2744, <http://www.weforum.org>