

## Press Release

### **Open source software can boost economy, battle pirated software in Vietnam, concludes International Conference COSGov**

Hanoi, 01 October 2005 – More than 300 IT-Experts, governmental representatives and entrepreneurs gathered in Vietnam's capital Hanoi from 28-30 September 2005 for the international conference "COSGov Vietnam - Building cooperation via open-source for eGovernance". COSGov is the first ever event in Vietnam to extensively cover the topic of free and open-source software (FOSS) for e-governance.

In Vietnam, the issue open source software, which can be freely copied and modified, gets more and more attention. The country is in the process of ratifying international trade agreements with great impact on intellectual property protection. Experts estimate that as much as 97% of all software currently used in the country is pirated. FOSS allows users to freely access the source-code and use, copy and modify the software under a system of public licences.

The conference was opened on Wednesday by the Vietnamese Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Science and Technology Mr Bui Manh Hai, EC's Ambassador Mr Markus Cornaro, the Vice Ambassador of the German Embassy to Vietnam, Mr Oliver Schnakenberg and the Vice President of the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology, Mr Nguyen Khoa Son.

During the three days of exchange and discussions on free and open-source software (FOSS), more than 30 international and national experts and policy makers presented global and local solutions to e-government challenges, FOSS-based business models and market opportunities. Among the keynote speakers of the conference were Mr Jon "maddog" Hall, Executive Director of Linux International, Mr François Bancelhon, Chief Executive Officer of Mandriva S.A., Mr Jean-Pierre Laisné, Chairman of the ObjectWeb consortium and Open-Source Strategy Manager of Bull S.A., Mr Harish Pillay, Manager for Partner Development Asia Pacific of Red Hat Asia Pacific Ltd, Mr Vo Tan Long, Deputy General Manager Vietnam of IBM and Mr Sunil Saxena, Senior Principal Engineer in Software Solutions Group from Intel Corporation.

The third day was dedicated to hands-on training sessions in two open source PC-labs. About 200 open source developers were trained on FOSS software solutions such as web portals and CMS, system and network security and J2EE solutions.

The three-day event was organized by InWent - Capacity Building International of Germany, the Institute of Information Technologies from Vietnam (IOIT), and the National Institute for Research in Computer Science and Automation of France (INRIA).

In his address to the conference, Vietnam's Deputy Minister of Science and Technology, Mr Bui, stressed, that free and open source software is a way for developing countries to get access to state-of-the-art technology, while benefiting from a "global commons of intellectual property of the world". Mr Cornaro from the European Commission affirmed that "the EU Asia IT&C programme sponsoring the conference has been a success in Vietnam. By tackling the strategic issues of e-governance and fostering the principles of good governance, the results of the COSGov project should provide useful elements for shaping future initiatives". Germany's Vice Ambassador Mr Schnakenberg explained that "transparency, openness and access are key principles of FOSS. This is why the use of free and open source software for e-

governance rhythms very well with Vietnam's ongoing reforms under the 'doi moi' policy'. The Vice President of the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology, Mr Nguyen Khoa Son, stressed that Vietnam's planned accession to WTO will "reinforce the need to comply with international copyright and other intellectual property rights".

All speakers agreed that the COSGov conference was a most timely initiative to boost business development through exchange of knowledge, creation of business partnerships and jobs. This would require reinforced capacity-building, such as training for communities of developers and local administrators for schools and government agencies. InWent's Balthas Seibold, in his welcoming remarks, stressed that FOSS is a fast moving area, which triggers the organizer's focus on international capacity-building and research. "A world run by open source will require open societies run by lifelong learning".

COSGov Vietnam was jointly funded by the EU-ASIA IT&C Programme and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and was supported by the Vietnamese Ministry of Science and Technology (MOST), the Vietnamese Academy of Science and Technology (VAST) and the French Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry (MINEFI).

The German Federal Government, through its Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), has launched a number of initiatives which promote the use of ICTs in development efforts in areas such as education, health or e-governance, and underline the role of FOSS in this regard. In this context, the COSGov conference is part of a larger German project called it@foss, which is implemented through InWent. Its main objective is to promote the use of free and open source software (FOSS) in Southeast Asia in fields such as business development and e-governance and to raise awareness among decision-makers about FOSS options and best practices.

The proceedings of the conference including all presentations and multimedia recordings will be online soon at [www.cosgov.org](http://www.cosgov.org).