

**JAN 8, 2009**

## **Vietnam, France strengthen customs cooperation**

Viet Nam and France have reached an administrative assistance agreement to strengthen cooperation between their respective customs sectors.

The agreement was signed by Director of the Viet Nam General Department of Customs Le Manh Hung and his French counterpart, Jerome Fournel, in Hanoi on January 8.

Under the terms of the agreement, which aims to strengthen Vietnamese customs agencies' capacity in the fight against trade fraud, the French Customs Department (FCD) will organise training courses and carry out exchanges of information, knowledge, experience and [technology](#) used in the discovery and prevention of crimes such as drug trafficking and money laundering.

The agreement represents a step forward in a series of cooperative activities between the two agencies and is part of the two countries' bilateral customs cooperation strategy throughout the 2008-2010 period.

According to Xavier Depouilly, Deputy Director of the Agency for Assistance to the Development of Exchange of Economic and [Financial Technologies](#) (ADETEF Vietnam), over recent years, France has continuously helped Viet Nam to improve its customs officers' professional capabilities by offering training courses in Vietnam and study tours to France.

Viet Nam is one of France's most important partners in customs cooperation, which Xavier said is demonstrated by their two-way trade exceeding 1.8 billion USD during 2008. He added that the Southeast Asian country, with a population of 86 million, has affirmed its important role in the international arena and trade between Vietnam and other countries, including France, has recently experienced significant developments.

The FCD said that this year, it will give priority to assisting Vietnam in the fight against counterfeit drugs, wine and auto parts.

Established in Viet Nam in 1993, ADETEF Viet Nam aims to provide technical assistance to France's partners to stimulate economic development and implement institutional reform projects. (VNA)

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