



# The Australia–Vietnam Business Champions Recommendation Report

Intensifying commercial engagement across  
the Australia–Vietnam relationship

APRIL 2023

# Acknowledgements

The Australia Vietnam Policy Institute (AVPI) and RMIT University in Vietnam are proud to support the Australia–Vietnam Business Champions initiative.

The AVPI acknowledges funding by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) to support the AVPI and the inaugural Australian Business Champions to Vietnam across 2022–2023, through the Australia–Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Grant Program (2021). Founding partners RMIT University, Asia Society Australia, Asialink Business, and the Australia–Vietnam Leadership Dialogue set up the AVPI in 2022 to lift the focus on Vietnam in Australia.

Likewise, RMIT University in Vietnam acknowledges funding by the Australian Embassy in Hanoi to support the inaugural Vietnamese Business Champions to Australia across 2022–2023, as well as support from the Vietnamese Ministry of Planning and Investment.

The inaugural Business Champions, with support from AVPI and RMIT Vietnam, commend this report to the Australian and Vietnamese Trade Ministers.

The AVPI and RMIT Vietnam thank the Australian and Vietnamese Business Champions for their time and leadership in 2022 and thank every Australian and Vietnamese firm that shared their experiences or insights on the bilateral relationship and two–way commercial engagement.

We thank AVPI Knowledge Partners, roundtable participants, key policy makers, and the AVPI Roundtable Policy Briefing team for their contributions. Report Editor: Kate Parker.

**Company references:** Company references in the report are drawn from public sources.

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**Acknowledgement of Country:** AVPI and RMIT Vietnam acknowledge the traditional owners of the lands and waters across Australia and overseas and pays respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging.



FOREWORD

# Australian Business Champions



The Australian and Vietnamese Business Champions are pleased to present the following report to the Australia-Vietnam Economic Partnership Meeting following a year of unprecedented deep engagement with the bilateral business community. We know that each of the six Business Champions feel privileged to have been appointed to support the Australia-Vietnam Strategic Partnership through this new engagement initiative.

As the inaugural Australian Business Champions, we have appreciated the opportunity to lead and participate in this conversation. We've viewed our role as Business Champions as boosting trade and investment with a friend with whom we have a long and deep history. Each of our companies have substantial investments and operations in Vietnam, contributing to cross-border job creation and economic development. We have had first hand personal and professional experience of the opportunities for Australian business in Vietnam's fast evolving markets and dynamic economy. Australian business has a lot to offer and to gain from Vietnam, and vice versa.

This year, with our Vietnamese counterparts, Nguyen Thi Thao Nguyen, Nguyen Manh Hung, and Hoang Cong Trang, we have heard stories and insights of over 250 companies involved in or considering opportunities under the bilateral partnership – leaders of enterprises of all sizes across the Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy priority sectors and beyond.

It has been a rich and rewarding conversation that spotlighted many issues impacting commercial activities. Business has spoken out strongly on what needs to happen to help expand trade and, vitally, to lift the level of two-way investment.

We commend this report to the Vietnamese and Australian Governments, with hopes that it fuels further, ongoing cross-border learning, collaboration, and action. This year has proven to us as Business Champions, that Australia and Vietnam achieve more together than apart – to understand and act on commercial opportunity, smooth the path for our companies to engage and do business together, moving towards a substantial full spectrum partnership and innovation-led growth.

**Louise Adams**  
COO, Aurecon

**Rob Gordon**  
Group CEO, SunRice Group

**Martin Bean CBE**  
CEO, Bean Centre,  
former Vice-Chancellor  
RMIT University

FOREWORD

# Vietnamese Business Champions



Australia has a dynamic economy and stable political system, advantageous geographic location and natural resources, as well as immense potential for various industries. Along with its strength in applied science and technology and a highly skilled workforce, Australia has become one of the destinations attracting significant attention for investment in various sectors.

Recognising that Australia is a promising market, and through decades of experience in identifying and seizing business opportunities in growing sectors, three Vietnamese industry leaders have joined forces with three Australian industry leaders in implementing the Business Champion initiative, with the hope that Vietnamese businesses interested in the Australian market can get one step closer to trade and investment opportunities in this country.

After a year of operation, the Business Champion initiative has established a strong network for knowledge and experience sharing, bridging the dynamic business contexts of both countries. The six Business Champions from both nations are proud to participate in the initiative and contribute to elevating the Strategic Partnership between the two countries to a new level.

As the first Business Champions from Vietnam, we are honoured and proud to represent the Vietnamese business community in participating in such an impactful initiative. Each of our companies are delighted to collaborate with the governments and key stakeholders from both countries to strive for the economic goals set forth by the two governments.

We want to express our deepest gratitude to the Vietnamese and Australian Governments for accompanying us throughout the project, our appreciation for the businesses and organisations that participated in and supported the initiative's activities in 2022. We sincerely hope that the Business Champion initiative will continue to be relevant and further developed in the future, thereby establishing meaningful relationships among the Vietnamese-Australian business community, creating more opportunities for cross-border cooperation, and contributing to a stronger and more sustainable bilateral economy.

**Hoang Cong Trang**  
CEO, TH Group

**Nguyen Manh Hung**  
Board of Directors, Vietcombank

**Nguyen Thi Thao Nguyen**  
Deputy General Director,  
Hoa Phat Group



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# Executive Summary



This is the Australia–Vietnam Business Champions Recommendation Report to Government to help intensify commercial engagement between Australia and Vietnam.

The report epitomises the discernible shift in the bilateral relationship to a stronger focus on trade and investment. It recommends a tranche of practical interventions, in Australia and Vietnam, to support this move, derived from a comprehensive consultation with industry, conducted in the leadup to Australia and Vietnam’s golden anniversary of diplomatic relations.

It is 50 years since the Australian Whitlam Government secured reciprocal recognition with Hanoi. Over the past five decades, patient, consistent, and considered interaction has created a harmonious, trusted, and productive relationship.

The 2023 celebrations will highlight key contributions and government–funded institutional and individual ties. It will also celebrate those companies that anchor bilateral trade and investment. As Canberra and Hanoi begin to contemplate moving to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, stronger business engagement would contribute to the substance that should underpin a full–spectrum partnership.

The centrepiece of the present Strategic Partnership, the 2021 Australia–Vietnam Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy (EEES), was Australia’s first ever co–developed strategy to strengthen bilateral economic ties. The EEES sets out jointly developed initiatives to lift economic engagement to become one of each other’s top ten trading partners and double bilateral investment.

Opportunities were highlighted in eight sectors. Grants were provided for pilot projects. And six recognised industry leaders – representing five of the eight sectors – were appointed to consult

with the bilateral business community: three in Vietnam and three in Australia. In 2022, the Business Champions led programs of unprecedented engagement in their respective business communities.

The three Australian Business Champions have conducted a comprehensive private sector consultation around bilateral trade and investment. Australian business has dug deep and provided insights for both governments on business needs and what governments can do to help. The outcomes, presented in this report, are key to meeting the EEES goals and supporting the development of a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership.

Similarly, the three Vietnamese Business Champions have engaged with Vietnamese industry and government focused on areas of Australian opportunity outlined in the EEES. This engagement has provided Vietnamese perspectives on the bilateral relationship and led to the development of a set of recommendations for both governments to consider as a pathway to boosting two–way trade and investment.

This report precedes the report by the former Macquarie Bank CEO, Australia’s Special Envoy for Southeast Asia Mr Nicholas Moore, on opportunities for Australian business in Southeast Asia to be delivered to the Albanese Government mid–year.

Our report argues for a strong and singular approach to elevate focus on the commercial dimension in the bilateral relationship, commensurate with the significant potential opportunities for Australian and Vietnamese companies of all sizes if they can build the skills and readiness to engage.

We recommend options to grow the bilateral business community and commercial activity.

## Australian and Vietnamese Business Champions



**PROFESSIONAL SERVICES**  
**Louise Adams**  
COO, Aurecon



**AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND MANUFACTURING**  
**Hoang Cong Trang**  
CEO, TH Group



**DIGITAL ECONOMY**  
**Martin Bean CBE**  
CEO, Bean Centre,  
former Vice-Chancellor RMIT University



**FINANCE AND BANKING**  
**Nguyen Manh Hung**  
Board of Directors, Vietcombank



**AGRICULTURE, FOOD AND MANUFACTURING**  
**Rob Gordon**  
Group CEO, SunRice Group



**INDUSTRIAL MANUFACTURING**  
**Nguyen Thi Thao Nguyen**  
Deputy General Director, Hoa Phat Group

# The Business Champions Initiative



The Business Champions initiative was announced in the EEES Implementation Plan 2021–2025 within a suite of initiatives to “promote awareness and uptake of opportunities in each other’s markets, streamline regulatory and investment frameworks, and improve the ease of doing business to increase two-way trade and investment.”

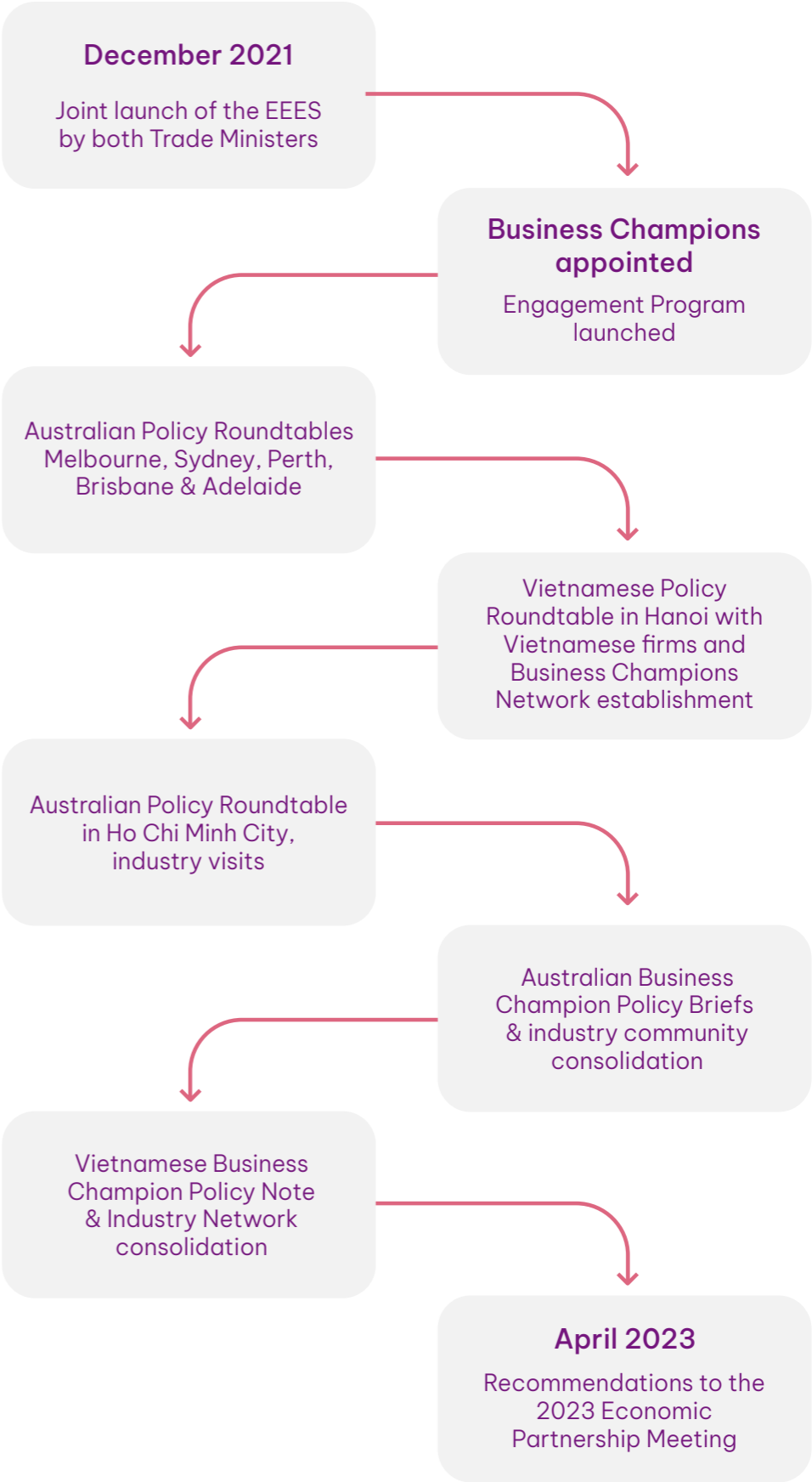
Each country appointed three industry leaders as Business Champions to engage their respective business communities on ways to lift bilateral commercial impetus.

The Business Champion initiative has proven to be an invaluable and powerful first step to increase business engagement and lift bilateral trade and investment. It fostered valuable cross-border connections at the highest level of industry and allowed them to engage with the top tier of Australian and Vietnamese Government.

The initiative, with its business leadership and commercial focus, was warmly welcomed by the private sector in both countries. In each country, the Business Champions galvanised the bilateral business communities – existing and prospective participants, policy makers and stakeholders – to consider the next chapter of trade and investment. It sparked an unprecedented business-led conversation. A clear consensus emerged in both countries that the time appears to be right for industry and government to continue to work in concert in the coming decade within the special friendship and partnership to lift the focus on commercial engagement and optimise potential reciprocal benefits.



## Business Champion Activities 2022–2023



# Australian Business Champions Engagement Program

The Australian Business Champions represent three leading Australian companies with investments and commitment to Vietnam: Aurecon, SunRice, and RMIT University.

With support from the Australian Vietnam Policy Institute (AVPI) and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australian Business Champions developed an engagement program centred on bringing together Australian industry in successive roundtables in five Australian cities and then in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC), along with industry visits.

The Australian Business Champions proved to be a powerful convening agent to draw out, for the first time, elements of a tangible community of enterprises involved in, or interested in trading or investing in Vietnam in key EEES sectors and beyond. Over one hundred Australian exporters, importers, and investors took part.

All State Governments in roundtable locations signalled a strong commitment. This inaugural business-led outreach collated thorough and illuminating insights around the Australia-Vietnam commercial opportunities, and kickstarted a rich conversation about growing business engagement to exploit more opportunities, in line with the EEES and to support progress towards a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. In Vietnam, Australian firms SunRice, Maas Group Holdings, and Fashion Enterprise hosted the Business Champions and senior policy makers at their Vietnam-based operations.

The program also built a community of Australian businesses interested in trade and investment opportunities with Vietnam. This community provides a growing network for business connection, collaboration and advocacy around mechanisms to improve bilateral commercial outcomes into the future.

“Deepening engagement with Southeast Asia is a key priority for my government – we want to maximise the significant trade, investment and other economic opportunities for Australia and our region.... amplify our existing two-way commercial engagement and champion new trade and investment opportunities with Southeast Asia.”  
(2022) Prime Minister Anthony Albanese

## Australian Industry Perspectives on Vietnam

One outcome of the Business Champions initiative was to highlight the spectrum of perspectives in the Australian business community on Vietnam and potential commercial opportunities. The following table illustrates the three principal perspectives drawing on the roundtables, a small supplementary survey of roundtable participants, and the annual surveys by AustCham ASEAN and the Export Council of Australia of Australian business attitudes around trade and investment options.

### Perspectives by level of engagement

#### Engaged Firms

- Strong but measured optimism about present and fast emerging opportunities in Vietnam.
- Confirmed improving conditions and environment for business operations and investments in Vietnam.
- Realistic appreciation of challenges for Australian enterprises but urge more firms to consider entry now.
- Clear-sighted view that commercial success is achievable with the right approach and support.
- Reiterated that learning local business culture and establishing relationships is key.
- Success is helped by an approach that delivers genuine benefits for Vietnamese partners and Vietnam.
- Provided insightful inspiring lived experiences.

#### Prospective Firms

- Prospective and recent entrants drawn by emerging opportunities in Vietnam.
- Includes interest from small-to-medium enterprises (SMEs) in new sectoral niches including technology, wine, education, and tourism.
- Attracted by Vietnam’s dynamism, demographic advantages, and improving business environment.
- Responding to new push and pull factors such as diversification, digital opportunities, mounting demand.
- Concerns: information gaps, limited cultural and market familiarity, advice on legal, regulatory & approval processes, and scant opportunities to build connections and relationships.
- Would benefit from support and knowledge exchange to prepare and build readiness.

#### Other Firms

- Many companies with possibly outdated views on Vietnam and the bilateral relationship.
- Vietnam rated by many as not in top ten markets and in the top three most difficult markets.
- Understate commercial opportunities.
- Overstate market entry and operating difficulties in contrast to the experience of companies.
- Discernible gaps in awareness and knowledge.
- Reflect preferences for traditional trade and investment destinations/perennial issues for bilateral business.

Australian companies already importing, exporting and/or invested in Vietnam have a thoroughly informed perspective based on lived experience. There was strong participation by this group, particularly at the Australian policy roundtable held in Ho Chi Minh City (HCMC) where senior Australian business leaders shared experiences and insights about opportunities, challenges, and essential success factors. Some participants have been in Vietnam for decades whilst others were newer market entrants, reflecting newer 'push' and 'pull' factors.

It is estimated, based on Vietnam Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) data and the current AusCham Vietnam membership, that there are about 500 Australian companies in Vietnam, with many more trading from Australia. This indicates a potential repository of hundreds of unique company stories, large and small in many sectors. Many of these stories show that doing business together can deliver substantial mutual benefits such as furthering sustainable economic development in Vietnam whilst delivering jobs and growth to Australian companies.

A second group – companies assessing Vietnam as a potential market/ investment destination or preparing for entry – offer a different perspective that focuses on what many firms typically need in order to get that initial foothold and succeed. Input from this group, largely through the Australian roundtables, helped to highlight the requirements and additional challenges faced by smaller enterprises. SMEs represent the bulk of Australia's companies, production, and employment across ASEAN. Implementing appropriate policies, programs, and grant support, and ensuring this is well communicated to SMEs, could expand the cohort of smaller businesses engaging with Vietnam and spur greater two-way economic outcomes.



The Australia's International Business Survey (AIBS) conducted annually by the Australian Export Council gives some insights into a less encouraging perspective. In 2021, the survey reported many respondents did not rank Vietnam in the top ten of markets with attractive commercial opportunity and ranked Vietnam in the top three markets with challenging market entry and operating conditions.

It is possible these views are based on tropes or an outdated understanding of Vietnam as a low-income, under-developed economy. These views could be challenged by a campaign to update awareness of the success of Australian companies in Vietnam, overturn perceived-risk biases, and raise understanding of contemporary opportunities in and in partnership with Vietnam.

## AUSTRALIAN BUSINESS CHAMPIONS ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

### Vietnam's Current Phase of Economic Transition and Development

#### Perceptions of Vietnam as a business and investment destination

AUSTRALIA



Export Council of Australia AIBS Survey: Vietnam not in top ten markets and identified as most difficult market to enter by Australian company participants.

UNITED STATES



An AmCham 2020 survey reported 61.54 percent of U.S. firms are considering shifting operations to Vietnam from People's Republic of China, making Vietnam the most frequently cited alternative to all ASEAN countries.

JAPAN



A 2022 survey by Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO) reported that Vietnam was considered by the Japanese business circle as the second most attractive investment destination, with many firms planning to expand investments in Vietnam in the near future.

The Ho Chi Minh City roundtable emphasised the need for more Australian businesses (and elements in the broader Australian community) to understand that contemporary Vietnam is a rapidly growing and transitioning economy, replete with emerging trade and investment opportunities. It was felt that Australian appreciation of Vietnam's potential as a business and investment destination lagged significantly behind other countries, confirmed in the comparison below of surveys in Japan and the US.

There was a consensus that a campaign was needed to convey a contemporary case for Vietnam to yet-to-engage Australian business, emphasising that opportunity is bigger than 'more of the same' and includes many niches where a prepared firm can build a profitable market presence and compete successfully – pointing to recent trade and investments from larger firms in renewables projects to SMEs meeting growing demand for reputable pet foods. Ongoing revision of sectoral opportunities and roadmaps is required to keep up with the evolving situation in Vietnam. Now is also the time to ramp up support for interested SMEs, including from regional areas with flight connections to Vietnam. This could be complemented by ongoing promotion by Business Champions to businesses and the broader community, including mainstream media, and increasing the number and diversity of case studies and success stories.

**Australian Roundtable Policy Note HCMC:** "Vietnam has experienced rapid growth and change with an exponential increase in the quality of education, manufacturing, and digital skills. Nevertheless, some in the Australian business community still maintain an outdated mindset toward the skills, capabilities, and opportunities in Vietnam. Business executives and boards in Australia who have not recently engaged with Vietnam are at risk of making decisions based on what Vietnam was, not what it is now."

# Australian Findings and Recommendations

Across the six roundtables and visit to Vietnam, the Australian Business Champions developed an intimate understanding of the challenges and opportunities Australian industry faces when looking to engage with, or in, Vietnam. This experience has led to the development of eight recommendations for consideration by both governments, including suggested actions for Australian Government, Vietnamese Government, and industry in both countries.

The inaugural Business Champions also identified two areas for further exploration by future Business Champions, should the recommendation to continue the initiative be accepted and actioned. The recommendations and areas for exploration are outlined in detail below, including the narrative and insights from the roundtables and associated policy briefs that were integral to their development.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

### Amplify the Vietnam Commercial Opportunity in Australia

#### Recommendations

- The **Australian Government** should develop and promote to Australian industry a series of case studies raising awareness of commercial success stories across the bilateral relationship.
- The **Vietnamese Government** should consider adopting a similar approach to raise the profile of Australia as an attractive trade and investment partner.
- **Industry** should openly provide information around their success stories and learnings to support greater two-way engagement.

Through the roundtables, Australian industry has identified a need for **greater awareness and understanding of the commercial opportunity** Vietnam presents, as well as insights on how to navigate barriers to entry, and methods for successful trade and investment engagement.

There is an opportunity to raise awareness of Vietnam as an attractive trade and investment partner for Australian business looking to engage in Southeast Asia.

The Australian Government should celebrate success stories across the depth of the reciprocal relationship, drawing out the long history of cooperation in key sectors such as agriculture. This will increase awareness of the opportunities Vietnam presents and encourage Australian industry to engage more deeply in bilateral trade and investment. The Government should work with businesses successfully operating in Vietnam to tell the story of the people, processes and projects that helped them to overcome barriers and thrive in the local market. This approach will build confidence with other businesses looking to capitalise on market opportunities. It will also shift the perception of Vietnam from a development destination to a growing commercial opportunity supported by Vietnam's contemporary economic position.

The case studies should be promoted to Australian industry through a social media campaign highlighting business journeys, barriers, lessons learnt and achievements. The campaign will refresh and increase understanding of the trade and

investment relationship, sectoral opportunities, and market conditions, highlighting real risks and rewards. It should amplify the network of Australian large businesses and SMEs present in market to build confidence in Vietnam as a strong and tangible option for Australian organisations looking to diversify in Southeast Asia. Consistent messaging should flow into public statements and websites, creating a consistent knowledge repository around how Australian business is engaging with Vietnam and the flow-on opportunities from this existing success.

The Vietnamese Government should consider adopting a similar approach to raise the profile of Australia as an attractive trade and investment partner and destination for Vietnamese businesses. This could also include collaboration with the Australian Government to tell joint success stories highlighting the mutual benefits from both sides of the bilateral partnership.

#### ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

**Showcasing Success Stories (HCMC):** In conjunction with the Vietnamese Government, the Australian Government should consider investing in developing a series of case studies (and subsequent marketing promotion) that showcase new, innovative, and not-yet-seen examples of Australia-Vietnam SME success stories.

**Celebrating reciprocal partnership (Melbourne):** Contributing expertise, partnerships, and networks to solving global and regional challenges with Vietnamese counterparts.

**Consistent Messaging (Brisbane):** Reframing the messaging around current aid and development initiatives to emphasise Vietnam's rising consumer class and future high-income country status will assist the Australian business community in its openness to engage in and with Vietnam as equal business partners.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Boost Business Literacy and Capability for Engaging with Vietnam

Recommendations

- The **Australian Government** should invest in micro credentials and partnered research roadmaps to fill information gaps, deepen understanding of the potential of the bilateral relationship, and equip businesses and government with the skills required beyond language to engage successfully in and with Vietnam.
- The **Vietnamese Government** should also invest in education and research to increase capacity for two-way engagement, and work with the Australian Government to increase accessibility and digestibility of information about bilateral opportunities.
- **Industry** should work with Government to contribute these offerings and utilise the new resources to upskill employees and build organisation-wide cultural literacy.

The roundtables confirmed that many Australian businesses **lack the cultural and business literacy** to effectively engage with trade and investment opportunities across the bilateral relationship.

Australian businesses have raised the need for greater knowledge exchange and education around Vietnam’s cultural and business landscapes to equip their leaders and teams with the skills to successfully engage.

To support the shared trade and investment ambitions set out in the EEES, the Australian Government should invest in education and research offerings to meet this need. This should include short-form education offerings such as micro credentials on Vietnam cultural and business literacy, market conditions, and sectoral landscapes, including regulatory frameworks and access points to in-market advisory services and partnership networks.

It should also include the development of partnered research between industry, academia and think tanks, maximising networks, and expertise to provide roadmaps for engagement in priority sectors aligned to the EEES. These roadmaps could be supported by business and policy briefs to convey up-to-date information for partnering, entering, and expanding in Vietnam. This approach would build on the momentum of existing work

including the Path to Vietnam and Path to Australia reports by the Asia Society Australia and Australian APEC Study Centre (RMIT), and the Australia-Vietnam Business Champion Roundtable Policy Briefings. It should also support the Vietnamese language studies program signalled by the Labor Government in 2022, augmenting this offering with cultural and business training to increase overall capacity to engage in the Australia-Vietnam trade and investment relationship.

Creating open access to guidance materials is also integral to this approach. There is existing information on the opportunities for business in both countries but finding that information is somewhat difficult and there could be better sign-posting. Both governments should work to increase accessibility and digestibility of information about opportunities, incentives, and facilitation for businesses. One early reform would be to place the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) guidance on Vietnam into a well sign-posted and publicised spot.

ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

- Fostering educational bridges (Sydney):** Education needs to highlight best-practice that is already being offered in Vietnam, offering skills development that is culturally relevant, sensitive, and aware of showcasing the incredible talent, case studies and offerings that already exist in Vietnam.
- Highlighting real risks and rewards over perceived risk (Perth):** In-depth analysis of the market response to expansion in Asia is required. Many publications are using US data sets, but few focus especially on the Australian market.
- Continue investment in soft power initiatives (Brisbane):** Australian companies already established in Vietnam rank local relationships, not linguistic skills, as the most significant contributor to their success.

RECOMMENDATION 3

A ‘Team Australia’ Approach to the Vietnam Commercial Opportunity

Recommendations

- The **Australian Government** should work with industry and other levels of Government to pilot a national ‘Team Australia’ approach to promote a visible and aligned ‘Brand Australia’ to Vietnam.
- **Australian industry** should embrace and leverage this approach in their engagements with Vietnam during the pilot period.
- As part of this national approach, the **Australian Government** should facilitate commercial project connections through creating a publicly accessible inventory of live and prospective Australian Government funded projects in Vietnam.

The roundtables found that Australian business engagement in-market is not **supported by a coordinated approach to projects or messaging to differentiate Australia as the trade and investment partner of choice** for Vietnamese businesses.

Currently, Australian Federal and State and Territory Governments are working largely independently

to boost trade and investment outcomes with Vietnam, while many Australian businesses are also operating in Vietnam in isolation. This is resulting in a lack of connection across Government-funded projects in Vietnam as well as engagement lacking coordinated messaging, leading to duplication of efforts and a missed opportunity to differentiate Australia as a trade and investment partner of choice above foreign competitors.

The Australian Government should work with industry to pilot an innovative approach to engagement with Vietnam, working as ‘Team Australia’ to align messaging around a simplified ‘Brand Australia’. This pilot should amplify Australia’s unique strengths, such as our quality standards and education system, to position Australia as a partner of choice for Vietnam in future economic growth and regional impact. Australian Government strategies, collateral, and activities should be explicitly aligned to support this messaging. Australian industry should embrace this approach by leveraging the ‘Brand Australia’ messaging in all relevant engagements.

As part of this national approach, the Australian Government should also include the introduction of a national inventory of live and prospective Australian Government-funded projects in Vietnam, creating opportunities for Australian businesses to connect in-market and boost shared commercial outcomes. This inventory could be rolled out in stages with an initial focus on areas with multiple live Government-funded projects, such as sustainability in the Mekong Delta.

Industry have indicated they would welcome further opportunities to partner with Government in the ‘Team Australia’ approach to lift the pace and calibre of cross-border commercial engagement. This national approach could also be supported by collaboration with the Government of Vietnam, promoting the ‘Brand Australia’ value proposition to Vietnamese industry, facilitating connections across Australian and Vietnamese projects, encouraging more Vietnamese delegations to Australia, and working together to present a joint Australia-Vietnam partnership to the region.

ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

- Team Australia - putting our best (coordinated) foot forward (Melbourne):** Establishing a trade and investment Commonwealth group across all states, territories, and industry bodies ensures greater coordination of trade and investment activities between Australia and Vietnam.
- Building ‘Brand Australia’ awareness (Sydney):** Australia is not currently perceived by Vietnamese nationals as a country associated with the future and economic growth of Vietnam. Increasing awareness of ‘Brand Australia’ could be achieved by increasing the number of Vietnamese delegations to Australia, showcasing investment opportunities within Australia, increasing already strong diplomatic ties, and leveraging the higher education space.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Build on the Tempo of Business-led Engagement

Recommendations

- The **Australian Government** should work with industry to establish an advisory body to support ongoing business-led engagement with Vietnam.
- A second set of **Australian Business Champions** to Vietnam should be appointed in mid-2023 to continue to build a truly national and cross-sectoral community of Australian businesses focused on Vietnam.
- The **Vietnamese Government** should consider adopting a similar advisory body to foster greater business-led engagement with Australian opportunities and create a forum for two-way business-led engagement.

The success of the roundtables and the Business Champion program speaks to the **need for an ongoing, formalised approach to business-led engagement** across the bilateral relationship.

The current Australian Business Champions to Vietnam have enabled higher levels of engagement around the Australia-Vietnam opportunity, bringing together a strong community of Australian businesses with an interest in Vietnam. The Australian

Government should leverage this momentum to develop an advisory body that supports business-led engagement with Vietnam going forward. This advisory body should be commissioned by the Australian Government as a way of working closely with industry to support the proposed elevation to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership and could comprise of past Business Champions and other key influential stakeholders with a strong knowledge and passion around Vietnam. Its function should be to consult with the industry community created through the Business Champion engagement program to represent industry's voice to Government, enabling business to play a more active role in policy development to support two-way trade and investment.

The Vietnamese Government should consider adopting a similar advisory body function to encourage Vietnamese industry to lead greater engagement with Australian trade and investment opportunities. If adopted by both countries, the two advisory bodies could connect around shared bilateral opportunities and aspirations, creating a platform for business-led dialogue and further strengthening two-way trade and investment links.

In addition, a second set of Australian Business Champions to Vietnam should be appointed in mid-2023 to continue business-led outreach around bilateral and sectoral opportunities, with a focus on engaging geographic areas that were not included in the inaugural program, such as Tasmania and the Northern Territory, as well as new priority sectors including energy and resources and the other areas for further exploration recommended as part of this report. This program should consist of a smaller quantity of high-impact engagements, rounding out the scope of the community built during the first year to establish a truly national network of Australian businesses focused on trade and investment with Vietnam. At the end of their tenure, the second set of Business Champions should be invited to join the advisory body alongside the inaugural Champions.

Going forward, the advisory body should continue to consult the community and be supported by key initiatives focused on knowledge brokering around Australia's commercial engagement with Vietnam, such as the Australia Vietnam Policy Institute.

ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

**Greater regulatory clarity and improved supportive architecture (Sydney):** There is an opportunity for advisory bodies, formed through Australian-Vietnamese collaboration avigating Vietnamese customs regulations, to help firms to enter the market.

**Highlighting real risks and rewards over perceived risks (Perth):** Australian business can offer capability development in governance and governance frameworks beyond the Australian expat community to joint ventures and wholly owned Vietnamese corporations.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Establish a 'Clearing House' to Support Investment

Recommendations

- The **Australian Government** should facilitate greater investment through establishing a new transactionally focused 'clearing house' mechanism to resolve commercial concerns around regulatory barriers that act as deterrents for Australian investment into Vietnam. This should include creating detailed business cases highlighting key legal and regulatory assumptions underpinning investment and providing comprehensive responses that cover both provincial and national jurisdictions.
- **Industry** should work with **Government** to provide experiences as case studies and identify perceived and existing barriers to investment.
- The **Vietnamese Government** should work with the **Australian Government** to address identified challenges. The **Vietnamese Government** should also consider creating a similar mechanism to identify issues deterring Vietnamese investment into Australia.

Whilst recognising Vietnam's efforts to improve the environment, Australian companies report **ongoing concerns around ambiguous regulatory and legal frameworks**, and complex and uncertain trade and investment processes.

Key to realising the ambitions set out in the EEES is for both governments to better define, promote and support contemporary and emerging opportunities in the bilateral context with a stronger focus on investment promotion and facilitation.

The Australian Government should facilitate greater investment through active economic diplomacy that speaks to Vietnam's transactional business nature, including establishing a new transactionally focused 'clearing house' mechanism to resolve commercial concerns around regulatory barriers that act as deterrents for Australian investment into Vietnam.

This mechanism should involve consultation with Australian industry around existing and

perceived challenges, such as customs processing times, tariff and non-tariff barriers, as well as advocacy and consultation with the Government of Vietnam around shared strategies to simplify the trading environment.

The issues identified should be explored through the creation of detailed business cases highlighting key legal and regulatory assumptions underpinning investment and seeking comprehensive responses that cover both provincial and national jurisdictions. The issues identified should also inform funding areas for research roadmaps to facilitate greater two-way flows of investment.

The 'clearing house' should consider shared approaches for assisting industry to navigate existing frameworks, creating, and promoting regulatory clarity and informing proactive bilateral policy development. It should also focus on continued cooperation between governments and technical and regulatory bodies to streamline investment and enable the growth of complementary industries.

ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

**Governance and regulatory frameworks (Melbourne):** The call was for a government-to-government partnership to help businesses in navigating the current regulatory pathways and learning from one another.

**Greater regulatory clarity and improved supportive architecture (Sydney):** Improved processes, greater clarity of customs regulations, and assurances of strict timelines for the clearance of consumable goods would make Vietnam more attractive for Australian exporters.

**Championing investment over trade (Perth):** There is an opportunity for the Australian Government to proactively facilitate investment relationships between Australia and Vietnam.

**Establish an in-country presence (Brisbane):** Investing on the ground and setting up an in-country presence with local employees will help companies develop the people-to-people relationships of trust that are crucial to market success in Vietnam.

Through adopting a listening posture this approach will avoid assumption-based interventions and facilitate action on shared opportunities to simplify and boost engagement in and through the Australia-Vietnam relationship. Open dialogue and a commitment to harmonising regional regulatory frameworks will provide security to support industry players to invest long-term.

This mechanism should be supported by communications around outcomes in both countries, signalling to industry both governments' practical, ongoing commitment to working together to achieve the shared ambition to double two-way investment. These communications should highlight the unique potential of the bilateral relationship beyond the export

commodity market, championing investment over trade, and focus on the broad spectrum of investment opportunities, including impact investing across the social innovation ecosystem. Adopting this approach will encourage more Australian direct investment into Vietnam, boosting Australian industry's in-country presence, and fostering a greater network for knowledge sharing and partnership into the future.

The Vietnamese Government should also consider establishing a similar and connected 'clearing house' mechanism to address issues impacting Vietnamese industry and limiting the flow of Vietnamese direct investment into Australia. These two mechanisms could form a coordinated part of the activity around the elevation to a Comprehensive



## RECOMMENDATION 6

# Investigate Opportunities to Free Up Mobility of Talented Individuals

### Recommendations

- **Both governments** should investigate options to streamline processes around work and training visas for short-term exchange, strengthen post-study work rights, and drive coordinated regulatory review to enable certainty around long-term talent pipelines.
- **Industry** should openly share their existing and emerging skills mobility needs to assist with this process.

The roundtables found that for many Australian companies, **friction around mobility is a principal issue** affecting engagement with bilateral trade and investment opportunities and business development.

The Governments of Australia and Vietnam should work together to review visa settings and processes

to improve short and longer-term mobility of labour, talent, and skills between Australia and Vietnam to better meet business requirements and foster commercial engagement. This should include consultation with industry and Government-to-Government cooperation to streamline processes around work and training visas for short-term exchange, strengthen post-study work rights, and drive coordinated regulatory reform to enable certainty around long-term talent pipelines.

Streamlining visa processes will increase the pool of talent with bicultural and bilingual competencies, strengthening business' ability to navigate successfully across the Australia-Vietnam relationship. It will also enable organisations to shift workers between locations and increase control over their talent pipeline through investing in cross-location upskilling and reskilling or partnering with vocational

or higher education institutes to ensure there is a consistent flow of new talent.

Moving toward greater openness in visa arrangements will better position both countries to achieve the shared objectives of the EEES, fostering rich knowledge exchange that will support increased two-way trade and investment outcomes. It will also allow businesses on both sides of the bilateral relationship to attract the right talent for a shared future, creating greater pathways for the cultivation of business and government leaders with an understanding and appreciation of the potential of the Australia-Vietnam strategic partnership for regional leadership and engagement.

### ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS CONTINUED

**Continued technical and regulatory cooperation for complementary industries (Adelaide):** Continued cooperation between governments and technical and regulatory bodies will remain essential to enable the growth of complementary industries – where regulation may not have progressed due to domestic necessity.

**Increase impact investment for greater all-round Return on Investment (ROI) (HCMC):** Investors can realise long-term impact and enhance employee attraction and retention by broadening Return on Investment (ROI) measures beyond a dollar figure.

**Update regulations to align with contemporary global work practices (HCMC):** Consider adjusting visa arrangements that increase the free flow of talent across borders, enabling long-term certainty around the talent pipeline.

**Showcasing success stories (HCMC):** In conjunction with the Vietnamese Government, the Australian Government should consider investing in developing a series of case studies (and subsequent marketing promotion) that showcase new, innovative, and not-yet-seen examples of Australia-Vietnam SME success stories.

### ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

**Removing barriers to entry (skilled migration) (Melbourne):** Moving toward greater openness in visa arrangements, including longer-term visas and better post-graduation pathways to work are all elements of the immigration landscape that the Australian Government may consider to improve our engagement with Vietnam.

**Championing labour mobility (Sydney):** Government support to increase labour mobility whilst maintaining industry standards will help meet growing demands.

**Attracting the right talent for a shared future (Perth):** For organisations in or looking to expand to Vietnam, recruitment committees for boards should consider 'Asia-capability' and time in-market as core skillsets they need.

**Increase control over talent pipeline (Adelaide):** Australian firms should consider exerting greater control and influence over their talent pipeline right from the start – investing in education and training of teams and partnering with vocational or higher education institutes for a consistent flow of new talent.

**Streamline work and skilled visa processes (Adelaide):** Streamlining visa processes to encourage more skilled Vietnamese immigration will help provide bilingual workers to assist Vietnamese companies in accessing the Australian market.

RECOMMENDATION 7

Upskill Local Talent

Recommendations

- The **Australian Government** should promote to business the importance of intentionally partnering to train and educate the workforce in Vietnam, understanding the pre-eminence of family in business and the value of board members with skills and experience in Vietnam.
- **Australian industry** should consider investing in training and education in Vietnam, including partnering with local institutions to build local capability.

The roundtables found that many Australian business are not harnessing **opportunities in training and education to upskill Vietnam talent.**

An important part of deepening reciprocal business connections between Australia and Vietnam is investing in the upskilling of local talent, by training and education but also by promulgating companies, such as Allens Linklaters and Aurecon, where embedding Australians into Vietnamese teams and vice-versa is being successfully applied.

The family is the most important unit of Vietnamese culture. Family businesses in Vietnam are evolving through digital innovation and are the backbone of the economy with the top 100 family businesses in Vietnam accounting for 25 per cent of the economy.

Opportunities abound for education and training businesses to build talent and facilitate business exchanges. Specific opportunities for training and upskilling are emerging in areas reflective of the changes in the local economy such as in supply chain logistics. Incoming Australian businesses should consider investing in training and education in Vietnam, including partnering with local institutions to build local capability, creating a pipeline of skilled talent to facilitate long-term success. Investing in Vietnam’s workforce development, including in bicultural graduates, provides the building blocks for more business.

One other aspect of the upskilling equation is for Australian boards to lift capability by attracting the right talent, including those with first-hand know-how of doing business in Vietnam.



ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

- Investing in local talent (Melbourne):** Investing in local talent signals long-term commitment to the reciprocal relationship between Australia and Vietnam. Australian businesses should consider investing in recent graduates who are bicultural, strengthening partnerships between Australia and Vietnam at a grassroots level.
- Business as family (Brisbane):** As Vietnamese family businesses diversify and upskill in digital, innovation and technology there are opportunities for Australian companies.
- Attracting the right talent for a shared future (Perth):** Australian organisations can deliver diversity on their boards by targeting individuals with relevant skills/experience in Vietnam.

RECOMMENDATION 8

Leverage Diaspora and Strengthen People-to-People Links

Recommendations

- The **Australian Government** should partner with industry and academia to deepen alumni networks, support people-to-people links and harness the intercultural expertise vested in members of the Vietnamese diaspora.
- **Australian industry** should hire with cultural capability in mind, focusing recruitment processes to tap into the bicultural fluency of the Vietnamese diaspora.
- **Vietnamese Government** and industry should similarly harness bicultural fluency across alumni communities, connecting and leveraging Vietnamese alumni that have studied at Australian institutions to strengthen capacity for bilateral engagement.

There is unmet potential for Australian industry to **leverage the Vietnamese diaspora and effectively deploy people-to-people links** to grow business opportunities.

People-to-people links and the evolving diaspora between Australia and Vietnam are effective ways to harness intercultural expertise. Recruitment processes focused on tapping into bicultural fluency will enable more effective business-to-business and cross-country connections. Similarly, consciously collaborating with successful Vietnamese-Australian businesspeople will deepen two-way business connections and networks.

Fellowship programs and study centres in Australia have created valuable personal links. The John Allwright Fellowship and the John Dillon Fellowship are both Australia Award programs run by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) that promote cutting-edge scientific research. Previously funded initiatives such as the Endeavour Fellowships also served to establish strong people-to-people ties across the two nations. More recently, the Australia-Vietnam Leadership Dialogue (AVLD) is bringing together cohorts of young leaders from Australia and Vietnam.

Cultivating and deploying networks of tertiary alumni is a powerful potential force to build business between both countries. The Australia Alumni in Vietnam strategy (2016-2021) set the stage for intentional community building among Australia-Vietnamese alumni. Building on this strategy, the Australian Government, by partnering with universities, the AVLD, business networks and peak bodies, should seek to deepen alumni networks, focusing on identifying potential Australian and Vietnamese-based business connections. Similarly, Vietnamese Government and industry should tap into networks of Vietnamese alumni who have studied at Australian institutions to leverage bicultural competencies and increase capacity for engaging with Australian trade and investment opportunities.

ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

- Engaging the Australian-Vietnamese diaspora (Sydney):** Australian firms can harness the intercultural abilities of members of the Vietnamese diaspora to meet cultural and linguistic challenges and develop local relationships.
- The power of people-to-people links (Brisbane):** Many existing Australian-Vietnamese business partnerships that enjoy economic success developed out of relationships made over the course of education programs or work placements.
- Alumni links (Adelaide):** There is a clear appetite for strategic and up to date resources, learning and advice to better utilise the Australia-Vietnam diaspora to grow business activities.

AREAS FOR FURTHER EXPLORATION

- 1. Harness the power in precincts and ecosystems
- 2. Support emerging sectoral opportunities

Recommendations

- **Harness the power in precincts and ecosystems: Future Business Champions** should explore the potential of precincts and ecosystems to promote Industry 4.0, explore ways to better connect start-up communities, create incubator environments, and foster SME collaborations.
- **Support emerging sectoral opportunities: Future Business Champions** should work with both governments to explore the possibilities in three areas of potential growth – wine, the visitor economy, and the international secondary school market.

The roundtables found that start-up precincts and ecosystems may present the potential to build deeper SME connections especially in digital.

Both governments should explore pathways to better connect start-up precincts and ecosystems as a way of building deeper bilateral business connections, especially in the digital economy. This should leverage the significant business-to-business innovation connections already operating within and between Australia and Vietnam, as well as shared ambitions around the Industry 4.0 Revolution and new and emerging technologies.

Exploring ways to better connect the start-up communities across the relationship and create a

bilateral incubator environment for enterprises will foster greater SME collaborations (where those Australian SMEs are ready and equipped for the opportunities), contributing to more trade and investment partnerships as well as a pipeline for future shared innovation and transformation that will boost trade and investment outcomes.

The roundtables also found that there are emerging sectoral opportunities over the next 12 months worthy of further exploration in wine, the visitor economy, and the international secondary school market.

Reflecting ongoing growth in the Vietnamese economy, and a rising middle class, there are sectoral opportunities emerging in Vietnam

that would benefit from more exploration by both governments.

On wine, there is scope for both governments to work with peak bodies such as Wine Australia to look to improve market access by addressing technical regulation, labelling requirements, capability development, and initiatives that strengthen inter-governmental cooperation.

On the visitor economy, growth areas of eco-tourism and high-end tourism experiences are increasing in popularity and provide opportunities for more business-to-business capability development and knowledge sharing across the two economies. Establishing a microcredentialing framework with industry partners

could lead towards a framework for upskilling and consistent industry standards in Vietnam and Australia

On the international secondary school market, supporting the Australian international secondary school market will pay dividends, and work to strengthen the overall education system, improving the quality of labour and lifting the capacity of business. There is also scope for both countries to work together to explore building market share in the eLearning market.

There may also be other areas to examine in the future, such as the potential for industry to draw on the existing research work of the Export Council of Australia and Food Innovation Australia Ltd (FIAL) on niche food services and

manufactured goods. Business has responded well to similar research undertaken by Beanstalk and Data 61.

ROUNDTABLE INSIGHTS

**Power in precincts and ecosystems (Brisbane):** There is potential to use startup precincts and ecosystems as a way of building deeper connections in the long run.

**Regional approach to Industry 4.0 (Brisbane):** Australia can benefit from learning from its Vietnamese counterparts in its digitisation and Industry 4.0 readiness.

**Harnessing SME networks and know-how (Sydney):** There is a considerable untapped opportunity for SMEs regarding Australian foreign investment in Vietnam. Australian organisations seeking to expand internationally would benefit from engaging with their SME counterparts in Vietnam.

**Investing in Inbound missions (Adelaide):** Showcasing Australian ventures that have created success, by industry and by state highlights to the SME business community in Australia that business partnerships are both possible and profitable.

**Winning in wine (Adelaide):** Both governments have an opportunity to work together with industry partners to facilitate market access, address regulation and build capability to increase the Australia-Vietnam wine trade.

**The visitor economy (Adelaide):** Australia and Vietnam service providers work together for capability development, a microcredential framework and to create higher customer experiences including in eco-tourism and high-end tourism.

**Strengthening partnerships in secondary education (Adelaide):** A greater spotlight on servicing and supporting the international secondary school market will pay dividends for the tertiary education market in the long term.



# Vietnamese Business Champions Engagement Program

The Vietnamese Business Champions represent three leading Vietnamese companies with a focus on commercial connections with Australia: TH Group, Vietcombank and Hoa Phat Group. With support from RMIT University in Vietnam, supported by the Australian Embassy in Hanoi and Vietnamese Ministry of Planning and Investment, Vietnamese Business Champions developed an engagement program centred on bringing together the Vietnamese business community throughout 2022 and 2023.

The program convened diverse Vietnamese businesses to analyse opportunities and challenges for Vietnamese and Australian companies in bilateral trade and investment.

Across the program, the Vietnamese Business Champions brought together more than 125 stakeholders from Government and industry and built a network of 35 businesses interested in the Australian market. They also led high-level meetings with Vietnamese and Australian Government leaders and engaged with their Australian counterparts as part of the inaugural program.

“2023 marks the 50th anniversary of diplomatic relations. This is a time for the two ruling parties, national assemblies, governments, and people to bolster substantive cooperation, promote innovation, seize new opportunities, and overcome challenges... It is necessary to bolster economic and trade ties and consider this the core driver of the two countries’ Strategic Partnership.”

(2022) Vietnam National Assembly President Vuong Dinh Hue



## VIETNAMESE BUSINESS CHAMPIONS ENGAGEMENT PROGRAM

### Vietnamese Perspectives on the Commercial Relationship

The Vietnamese Business Champion initiative highlighted an array of challenges across the Australia-Vietnam trade and investment relationship, acting as barriers to realising the ambitions set out in the EEES. Removing these obstacles will be the key for both countries to increase bilateral trade and investment in the future.

In terms of trade, 97% of enterprises in Vietnam are small and medium enterprises (Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2021), many of which lack the resources and capabilities to conduct in-depth research into market conditions such as complex Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and regulatory landscapes. As such, many Vietnamese businesses are not engaging in the trade opportunities presented by Vietnam’s strategic partnership with Australia. This may constrain the ability for Vietnam to sustain its position as one of Australia’s top-ten trading partners.

In the investment environment, the Business Champions identified a number of challenges limiting flows of two-way investment. These challenges are present on both sides of the bilateral relationship, requiring collaboration by both governments and industry to overcome.

#### Challenges for Vietnamese investors into Australia:

- Vietnamese businesses lack financial capacity and understanding of local tastes and business culture in Australia.
- Vietnamese Government is implementing a relatively strict management and control policy on foreign investment due to the high demand for domestic investment.
- Depending on the specific field or scale, an overseas investment project may need the National Assembly’s or the Prime Minister’s approval. This is a considerable obstacle for Vietnamese businesses wishing to invest in the Australian market or overseas in general.
- Human resources in Vietnam have not met the requirements of foreign language proficiency, information technology and foreign investment professional skills required to succeed in foreign markets. Currently, there are very few formal training courses at enterprises, especially SMEs, dedicated to professional skills in legal procedures, market research, finding partners and appraising investment opportunities. In addition, foreign language training courses specialising in investment and trade, although available, are still spontaneous and have not yet recognised skills for learners according to international standards.

#### Challenges for Australian investors into Vietnam:

- Incomplete legal framework leading to difficulties in extending investment licenses, access to land and financing.
- Lack of clear and comprehensive information on Vietnam’s investment environment due to limited credible sources and channels.
- Limited law enforcement capacity hindering productivity and fair competition in the market.
- Inconsistent administrative procedures, especially concerning permits, taxes, fees, and charges; environmental protection; social insurance, labour, fire prevention, construction, import and export processes.
- The land planning and visa issuance for foreign investors is limited.
- The distribution of resources and administrative procedures among provinces is not transparent.
- Vietnam still lacks a high-skilled and foreign-language workforce that can meet the needs of Australian businesses.

# Vietnamese Findings and Recommendations

Throughout their inaugural term the Vietnamese Business Champions gained significant insights from the business community about the challenges and opportunities Vietnamese industry are facing in the process of trading with, and investing in, Australia. These insights have been distilled in seven practical recommendations for consideration

by both governments to accelerate the realisation of the two challenging goals set out in the EEES: becoming one of each other's top ten trading partners and doubling two-way investment. Each recommendation is focused on suggested actions for the Vietnamese Government, Australian Government, and industry in both countries.

## RECOMMENDATION 1

### Increase Bilateral Efforts to Resolve Issues for Existing Enterprises

#### Recommendations

- **Both governments** should focus their resources on resolving existing issues in the legal frameworks and administrative procedures for enterprises already operating across the bilateral relationship.
- The **Vietnamese Government** should simplify investment-related procedures – with a focus on procedures for permits, land, taxes, environment, construction, imports and exports – to encourage Vietnamese businesses to invest in Australia and vice versa.
- The **Australian Government** should develop opening strategies specific to Vietnam that identify the trade and investment sectors with high growth potential aligned to Vietnam's strengths, and offer special incentives and support for Vietnamese businesses to invest in these areas.

The Vietnamese Business Champions gained insights into the **challenges in navigating unclear legal frameworks and administrative procedures** which businesses looking to engage with bilateral opportunities are facing.

They found that the incomplete legal framework in Vietnam is creating immense challenges for new and existing Australian firms looking to invest in Vietnam, especially in extending investment licenses, access to land and financing, as well as other complexities in regulatory compliance.

On top of the unclear regulatory framework, inconsistent and unpredictable administrative procedures are also hindering Australian businesses from operating effectively and seamlessly in Vietnam. The biggest administrative hurdles often reside in the following areas: permits, taxes, mobility, environmental protection, fire prevention, construction, import and export, domestic distribution service for certain products. There's also a lack of regulatory guidance and governmental support for existing Australian investments in Vietnam, although they account for roughly half of the average annual increase in investment capital in the country.

Similarly, for Vietnamese firms looking to invest in Australia, the Business Champions found that the Vietnamese government is implementing a relatively strict management and control policy on foreign investment due to

the high demand for domestic investment, which is hindering investment in foreign markets such as Australia. Depending on the specific field or scale, overseas investment projects may need the National Assembly's or the Prime Minister's approval. This is a considerable obstacle for Vietnamese businesses wishing to invest in the Australian market in particular and the international market in general.

The Vietnamese and Australian governments should focus their resources on resolving existing issues in terms of legal framework and administrative procedures for enterprises already operating in each other's markets. This is especially true for Vietnam since existing Australian foreign direct investments (FDIs) represent one of the highest potential sources of investment growth in the short and long term.

Particularly, on one hand, the Vietnamese Government needs to simplify investment-related procedures, especially procedures for permits, land, taxes, environment, construction, import and export, domestic distribution service for certain products, to strongly encourage Vietnamese businesses to invest in Australia and vice versa. On the other hand, the Australian Government should have opening strategies specific to Vietnam that identify the trade and investment sectors with high growth potential and align Vietnam's strengths to offer special incentives and support for Vietnamese businesses.

## RECOMMENDATION 2

# Establish a Virtual Policy Communication Channel

### Recommendations

- **Both governments** should establish a Virtual Information Desk (VID) as a mechanism to provide regulatory guidance and support for enterprises. The VID would connect businesses with government experts in bilateral trade and investment policies from both countries, acting as a transmitter of information and a communication tool, compiling policy-related inquiries from enterprises and disseminating official responses from relevant Vietnamese or Australian authorities.
- **Industry** should work with government to support the development of a VID, providing experiences to ensure the VID provides relevant information and targets tangible challenges in two-way trade and investment.

Vietnamese enterprises looking to invest in Australia often have **difficulties seeking official communications from government authorities** for inquiries relating to investment policies and regulations in Australia. Given the ambiguity around Vietnamese outbound investment policies, as well as the unfamiliarity with Australian policies and principles, potential Vietnamese investors frequently run into regulatory issues that hinder their operation and decision-making process.

Such issues, which are often case-specific and highly nuanced, could be significantly reduced if enterprises had access to frequent consultation and direct communication with relevant government officials from both countries. It's observed that businesses greatly value the ability to regularly connect with relevant governmental entities from both Vietnam and Australia, who can provide official responses to their specific circumstances. Consequently, there has been a pressing need for a formal communication channel to connect enterprises with the

Vietnamese and Australian Governments, both at the federal and state levels. Such demand not only originates from Vietnamese enterprises wishing to invest in Australia, but also from existing Australian businesses in Vietnam wishing to continue their operations in an ever-changing regulatory environment.

As a mechanism for the governments to provide official regulatory guidance and support for enterprises, a Virtual Policy Communication Channel (VPCC) would connect businesses with government experts in bilateral trade and investment policies from both countries. The VPCC would act as a transmitter of information, compiling policy-related inquiries from enterprises and disseminating official responses from relevant Vietnamese and Australian authorities. Since businesses tend to prefer a more customised approach to solving their problems as they are often unique and nuanced, the VPCC would provide a practical approach to process such requests, through establishing a consistent communication channel between public and private stakeholders.

## RECOMMENDATION 3

# Revamp Digital Resources and Reshape Offline Info-Sharing

### Recommendations

- **Both governments** should develop an interactive digital forum that enables businesses to share experiences in trade and investment with Australia and Vietnam, creating an open platform for knowledge exchange, building a community to enable potential business matching collaborations, and creating a database of customised market intelligence that can assist businesses to engage.
- Additionally, the **Vietnamese and Australian Governments** should collaborate to uplift offline information-sharing approaches – such as information sessions, workshops, and networking activities – to accommodate industry's evolving needs.

The engagement program found Vietnamese businesses are encountering **difficulties** obtaining in-depth understanding and **actionable insights**, both **offline and virtually**, relating to trade and investment with Australia, including market intelligence, local preferences, business culture, and other relevant characteristics.

Current digital resources available are limited in scope of coverage, depth of insights, and interconnectivity with other information channels. While a lot of resources have been established by the governments and trade organisations, the information is often generic and scattered across various channels. Few information-sharing apps exist, such as the 'Viet-Aus Trade' app, and there is immense opportunity to enhance the functionality and interconnection of such tools with other official resources to better serve specific needs of businesses.

Regarding offline channels, bilateral trade and investment information is usually disseminated through seminars, forums, or roundtables. Nonetheless, the majority of these activities focus on high-level engagements with a broad range of stakeholders while enterprises are expressing a growing need for more industry-focused and targeted activities.

The enhancement of existing digital resources is crucial to spreading knowledge and insights while fostering connections in the

business community. One of the recommended features that would elevate existing digital information platforms is an interactive forum that allows businesses to share firsthand experiences in trade and investment with Australia and Vietnam, as well as building a community that can enable potential business matching and collaborations.

The data collected from the enhanced digital resources may also fuel a database which the Vietnamese and Australian governments could utilise to generate customised market intelligence reports for businesses. These reports may encompass tailored information on market size, consumer preferences, regulatory requirements, and other pertinent factors relevant to the information needs of individual businesses.

Along with revamping digital resources, the Vietnamese and Australian Governments could also collaborate to improve offline information-sharing approaches to accommodate enterprises' demand. For example, offering targeted information sessions or workshops focusing on highly demanded topics in bilateral trade and investment, or activities organised by industries, sectors, or geographies, will greatly complement digital revamping efforts.

## RECOMMENDATION 4

## Run an In-depth Free Trade Agreement (FTA) Workshop Series

**Recommendations**

- The **Vietnamese Government** should run an in-depth series of workshops for Vietnamese industry to improve understanding around FTAs and build capacity for Vietnamese businesses to comply with international trade requirements.
- The **Australian Government** should consider adopting a similar approach to enhance Australian industry's capabilities for engaging around FTAs.
- **Industry** should actively seek out information, guidance and training on FTAs to increase their ability to engage across the bilateral relationship.

The Business Champion's discussions found that **many Vietnamese businesses are not aware of the provisions and benefits of FTAs**, as well as how they can leverage such FTAs to expand their opportunities.

There are also high costs and limited guidance when it comes to interpreting and complying with the rules of origin, tariff classification, and other regulatory requirements to qualify for preferential treatment under major FTAs. Such hurdles are especially cumbersome for SMEs with limited resources and expertise to navigate the complexities of FTAs.

Examples of the major barriers that prevent enterprises from utilising FTAs for optimal benefits are:

- **Rules of origin:** FTAs typically have specific rules of origin that products must meet to qualify for preferential tariff treatment. Businesses need to keep track of the source and composition of all their inputs to ensure that their products meet the FTAs' requirements. This can be taxing on companies with complex supply chain activities or inputs sourced from many different countries.

- **Certification:** Businesses need to provide proof their products meet the rules of origin requirements to qualify for preferential treatment. This involves obtaining certification from an authorised party, which can be time-consuming and costly to obtain, especially given the lengthy and inconsistent administrative procedures in Vietnam.

These findings highlight the need to design targeted training and education programs for Vietnamese businesses, ideally by sector, to improve their understanding of FTAs and build their capacity to comply with international trade requirements.

As observed, Vietnamese enterprises desire hands-on instructions, expert support, and practical case studies to fully reap the benefits from FTAs and international trade policies. Thus, a series of in-depth FTA Workshops to provide detailed guidance and support for Vietnamese businesses, especially SMEs, would add significant values to bilateral trade activities between the two countries.

## RECOMMENDATION 5

## Leverage the Business Champion Network

**Recommendations**

- **Vietnamese industry** should utilise the new connections facilitated by the development of the Business Champion Network to exchange knowledge, pool resources, leverage opportunities for collaboration, and advocate for businesses' interests with government agencies to address trade barriers.
- **Australian industry** should utilise the inverse opportunity created by the AVPI Business Champions roundtables to increase shared capabilities for engaging with and in Vietnam.
- **Both governments** should support and engage with these industry communities to encourage greater business-led engagement across the two-way trade and investment relationship.

The high levels of industry engagement with the inaugural Business Champion program in Vietnam highlighted the **appetite for knowledge exchange and collaboration** to leverage Australia-Vietnam commercial opportunities.

Vietnamese culture places a strong emphasis on building relationships and establishing trust before engaging in business transactions. This is especially true when it comes to exploring a new market in a new geographic location. Therefore, having a network of peers and participating in a business community such as the Business Champions Network can offer a number of immense benefits for Vietnamese businesses interested in bilateral trade and investment with Australia.

The Business Champions Network has been formed through the Vietnamese Business Champions engagement program, bringing together a community of 35 Vietnamese businesses with an interest in trade and investment with Vietnam. The Network provides a new platform to represent the interests and priorities of member enterprises. Working collaboratively, businesses can identify key sectors and priorities that are strategic to accelerating bilateral trade and investment goals, thereby magnifying the voices of its members and harnessing joint effort for policy advocacy purposes.

Ideally, the Network will continue to be embraced by industry and supported by government to grow to include a large number of enterprises from key areas of the EEES such as agriculture, infrastructure, energy, financial services, education and training. By representing the collective voice of member enterprises, the Network can help to advance key sectors and ensure that the interests of the business community are reckoned by relevant policymakers.

Additionally, by joining the Business Champions Network, Vietnamese enterprises can tap into the collective resources and knowledge of the group to achieve greater success in their investments in Australia. With the participation of government representatives, industry partners, organisations and experts, the Network enables members to exchange knowledge, share experience, pool resources and collaborate with one another on impactful initiatives.

The Network will play a critical role in initiating public-private collaborations, policy dialogues, and practical activities that contribute to the materialisation of the EEES bilateral trade and investment goals. The Network also provides opportunities for connection with Australian industry through the industry community built by the Australian Business Champions and maintained by the AVPI.

## RECOMMENDATION 6

## Invest in Capacity Building for Enterprises

**Recommendations**

- **Both governments** should support Vietnamese Industry to invest in upskilling programs that focus on closing the gap between Vietnam's current workforce capability and the requirements of international opportunities.
- **Vietnamese Industry** should invest in upskilling programs. This could be done in partnership with international training institutions to develop and implement enterprise capacity building programs focused on both enabling skills (foreign language proficiency, digital literacy, cross-cultural business communications) and technical skills (foreign investment procedures, regulatory compliance, market research, partner due diligence, investment opportunities appraisals).

The engagement program highlighted the Vietnamese workforce is facing **critical limitations in enabling skills and technical skills** that are essential to engaging with international trade and investment opportunities.

Many Vietnamese enterprises showed concerns for their employees' lack of enabling skills, including foreign language proficiency, digital literacy, and cross-cultural business communication. These skills are basic requirements to learn about foreign business landscapes and interact with overseas partners. The current level of capability of Vietnamese employees in these areas creates significant barriers to entry into the Australian markets and limits the ability of Vietnamese enterprises to effectively deploy opportunities and network with key stakeholders in Australia.

Aside from enabling skills, technical skills in foreign trade and investment also present immense challenges for Vietnamese employees. There are very few formal and comprehensive training courses for Vietnamese enterprises dedicated to hard skills such as foreign investment procedures, regulatory compliance, market research, partners due diligence, and investment opportunities appraisal. Existing training programs offered by enterprises

and market vendors are often scattered and not dedicated to either the Vietnamese workers or the Australian market. Learners also do not get internationally recognised credentials for such skills despite their significant value-add to the business.

To close the gap between Vietnam's current workforce capability and the requirements of international opportunities, enterprises, with the support of the two governments, should invest in upskilling programs that focus on developing skillsets that are in high demand in the international markets. These include both enabling skills (e.g., foreign language proficiency, digital literacy, cross-cultural business communication) and technical skills (e.g., foreign investment procedures, regulatory compliance, market research, partners due diligence, and investment opportunities appraisal).

Vietnamese businesses can partner with international training institutions to develop and implement these enterprise capacity building programs. Such programs will maximise learners' benefits through access to global resources, enhanced digital and cultural exposure, and internationally recognised credentials for the skills obtained.

## RECOMMENDATION 7

## Establish a Comprehensive Mechanism for Business Matching

**Recommendations**

- **Both governments** should collaborate to develop a comprehensive business matching mechanism, utilising technology platforms to promote business matching between Vietnam and Australia, covering both the breadth and depth of cross-border business engagements.
- **Industry** should actively engage in this mechanism, embracing matches and continuing to work with the governments and business community in relevant fields to deepen relationships and increase their chances of successful cross-border engagements.

Vietnamese enterprises expressed a **strong demand** for a structured method for **finding and connecting with potential business partners in Australia**. Although there have been many initiatives to promote cross-border business matchmaking, including trade missions, trade shows and exhibitions, the approach is rather passive for businesses and does not accommodate ad-hoc requests from enterprises.

Additionally, there is limited on-going support from government and the business community for cross-border partnerships that have been formed. While large enterprises may resort to external consultants for advisory and groundwork related to cross-border transactions, this is a luxury SMEs with limited capability and resources may not be able to access. Regardless of size, enterprises will benefit greatly from a consistent and comprehensive business matching and support mechanism that involves both governments and field experts.

The Vietnamese and Australian governments should collaborate to develop a comprehensive business matching mechanism,

covering both the breadth and depth of cross-border business engagements. At the broad level, the two governments can utilise technology platforms such as online marketplaces, business directories, and social media to promote business matching between Vietnam and Australia. These platforms provide a quick and low-cost way for businesses to connect and explore new opportunities. In the long-run, this approach can be elevated to a dedicated business-matching tool powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning to match businesses with potential partners based on their preferences, industry, and other specifications.

Once matched, business partners should continue to access support from the governments and the business community, such as the Business Champions Network, through on-demand consultation and mentorship with peers and experts in relevant fields, as well as introductions to key government and industry contacts. Such on-going support is critical to deepening business relationships, allowing opportunities to be executed with professional assistance, and increasing the chances of successful cross-border engagements.

# What Does Success Look Like?



In 2022, as the Australian and Vietnamese Business Champions concluded their initial engagements, COVID-19 was receding, and Vietnam's profile was rising as a leading growth economy in the region, and the world. The bilateral relationship was and is becoming increasingly important to Australia and Vietnam. It is a leading relationship in a region growing in economic and strategic importance.

In the wake of the 50th anniversary of Australia–Vietnam diplomatic relations on 26 February 2023, there is a clear political commitment on both sides to strengthening economic engagement, and new consideration of how to secure a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. The focus is as much on securing a bigger bilateral future as it is on celebrating past achievements. In coming decades, the bilateral relationship will be less defined around the continuing development partnership and more around business engagement.

This report and the enclosed recommendations have been shaped to reflect these developments, and to help shape a new narrative and approach to successfully pivot to the next phase of the relationship. Thought has been given to how to characterise the economic dimension of the relationship to lift the profile of commercial engagement and awareness of present and emerging commercial opportunities. There are initiatives to showcase existing and potential high-value business engagement and the clear reciprocal benefits that result. Securing greater two-way trade and investment requires action by both the Australian and Vietnamese Governments, in partnership with their respective business communities. It also requires elevated Government cooperation to lift bilateral business engagement to new levels.

Looking ahead, adopting the recommended measures will help Government and business to work together in Australia and Vietnam on an energetic forward-focused approach to grow bilateral trade and investment through:

- Continuing to emphasise commercial potential with further business-led promotion.
- Replacing superficial narratives to become genuine, favoured growth partners.
- A larger and more engaged community working on commercial transactions.
- Broader trade with expanding value chains competing in regional and global markets.
- Increased confidence by Australian companies setting up a presence or operations in Vietnam, and vice versa.
- More Australian FDI in Vietnam and Vietnamese FDI in Australia. More bilateral partnerships.
- Cross-border teams and skills utilisation through effective mobility and migration.
- Discernible familiarity and confidence in engaging including across cultural divides.
- Engagement by new-growth businesses as a significant share of the overall activity, getting Australian goods and services into the Vietnam market faster, more easily, and with lower costs, and vice versa.

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# Appendix: Summary of Recommendations

## Australian Business Champions’ Recommendations

Recommendation	Australian Government	Vietnamese Government	Australian Industry	Vietnamese Industry	Link to Vietnamese Business Champions’ Findings
RECOMMENDATION 1 Amplify the Vietnam commercial opportunity in Australia	The <b>Australian Government</b> should develop and promote to Australian industry a series of case studies raising awareness of commercial success stories across the bilateral relationship.	The <b>Vietnamese Government</b> should consider adopting a similar approach to raise the profile of Australia as an attractive trade and investment partner.	<b>Industry</b> should openly provide information around their success stories and learnings to support greater two-way engagement.		
RECOMMENDATION 2 Boost business literacy and capability for engaging with Vietnam	The <b>Australian Government</b> should invest in micro credentials and partnered research roadmaps to fill information gaps, deepen understanding of the potential of the bilateral relationship, and equip businesses and government with the skills required beyond language to engage successfully in and with Vietnam.	The <b>Vietnamese Government</b> should also invest in education and research to increase capacity for two-way engagement, and work with the Australian Government to increase accessibility and digestibility of information about bilateral opportunities.	<b>Industry</b> should work with Government to contribute these offerings and utilise the new resources to upskill employees and build organisation-wide cultural literacy.		The Vietnamese Business Champions to Australia also identified the need for both governments to support greater experience sharing and access to information through developing case studies, policy analysis and applied research roadmaps. They also recommend Governments encourage training programs to guide Vietnamese businesses to take advantage of bilateral opportunities.
RECOMMENDATION 3 A ‘Team Australia’ approach to the Vietnam commercial opportunity	The <b>Australian Government</b> should work with industry and other levels of Government to pilot a national ‘Team Australia’ approach to promote a visible and aligned ‘Brand Australia’ to Vietnam.		<b>Australian industry</b> should embrace and leverage this approach in their engagements with Vietnam during the pilot period.		
RECOMMENDATION 4 Build on the tempo of business-led engagement	The <b>Australian Government</b> should work with industry to establish an advisory body to support ongoing business-led engagement with Vietnam.  A second set of <b>Australian Business Champions</b> to Vietnam should be appointed in mid-2023 to continue to build a truly national and cross-sectoral community of Australian businesses focused on Vietnam.	The <b>Vietnamese Government</b> should consider adopting a similar advisory body to foster greater business-led engagement with Australian opportunities and create a forum for two-way business-led engagement.			The Vietnam Business Champions to Australia also found a need for greater commercial knowledge and experience sharing between Vietnamese and Australian businesses.

Recommendation	Australian Government	Vietnamese Government	Australian Industry	Vietnamese Industry	Link to Vietnamese Business Champions’ Findings
RECOMMENDATION 5 Establish a ‘clearing house’ to support investment	The <b>Australian Government</b> should facilitate greater investment through establishing a new transactionally focused ‘clearing house’ mechanism to resolve commercial concerns around regulatory barriers that act as deterrents for Australian investment into Vietnam. This should include creating detailed business cases highlighting key legal and regulatory assumptions underpinning investment and providing comprehensive responses that cover both provincial and national jurisdictions.	The <b>Vietnamese Government</b> should work with the <b>Australian Government</b> to address identified challenges. The <b>Vietnamese Government</b> should also consider creating a similar mechanism to identify issues deterring Vietnamese investment into Australia.	<b>Industry</b> should work with Government to provide experiences as case studies and identify perceived and existing barriers to investment.		The Vietnamese Business Champions to Australia also identified a need for both governments to focus their resources on simplifying investment-related procedures and resolving existing issues in the legal framework to facilitate greater Australian FDI into Vietnam.
RECOMMENDATION 6 Investigate opportunities to free up mobility of talented individuals	<b>Both governments</b> should investigate options to streamline processes around work and training visas for short-term exchange, strengthen post-study work rights, and drive coordinated regulatory review to enable certainty around long-term talent pipelines.		<b>Industry</b> should openly share their existing and emerging skills mobility needs to assist with this process.		
RECOMMENDATION 7 Upskill local talent	The <b>Australian Government</b> should promote to business the importance of intentionally partnering to train and educate the workforce in Vietnam, understanding the pre-eminence of family in business and the value of board members with skills and experience in Vietnam.		<b>Australian industry</b> should consider investing in training and education in Vietnam, including partnering with local institutions to build local capability.		The Vietnamese Business Champions to Australia identified a need for Government and Australian industry to upskill Vietnamese enterprises and workers in technical skills and enabling skills to close the gap between current workforce capability and the requirements of international opportunities.
RECOMMENDATION 8 Leverage diaspora and strengthen people-to-people links	The <b>Australian Government</b> should partner with industry and academia to deepen alumni networks, support people-to-people links and harness the intercultural expertise vested in members of the Vietnamese diaspora.	<b>Vietnamese Government</b> and industry should similarly harness bicultural fluency across alumni communities, connecting and leveraging Vietnamese alumni that have studied at Australian institutions to strengthen capacity for bilateral engagement.	<b>Australian industry</b> should hire with cultural capability in mind, focusing recruitment processes to tap into the bicultural fluency of the Vietnamese diaspora.		
Areas for further exploration	<i>Harness the power in precincts and ecosystems:</i> <b>Future Business Champions</b> should work with both governments to explore the potential of precincts and ecosystems to promote Industry 4.0, explore ways to better connect start-up communities, create incubator environments and foster SME collaborations.  <i>Support emerging sectoral opportunities:</i> <b>Future Business Champions</b> should work with both governments to explore the possibilities in three areas of potential growth – wine, the visitor economy, and the international secondary school market.				

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The Australia-Vietnam Business Champions Recommendation Report

Appendix

# Vietnamese Business Champions’ Recommendations

Recommendation	Australian Government	Vietnamese Government	Australian Industry	Vietnamese Industry
RECOMMENDATION 1 Increase bilateral efforts to resolve issues for existing enterprises	<p>The <b>Australian Government</b> should develop opening strategies specific to Vietnam that identify the trade and investment sectors with high growth potential aligned to Vietnam’s strengths, and offer special incentives and support for Vietnamese businesses to invest in these areas.</p>	<p>The <b>Vietnamese Government</b> should simplify investment-related procedures – with a focus on procedures for permits, land, taxes, environment, construction, imports and exports – to encourage Vietnamese businesses to invest in Australia and vice versa.</p>		
	<p><b>Both governments</b> should focus their resources on resolving existing issues in the legal frameworks and administrative procedures for enterprises already operating across the bilateral relationship.</p>			
RECOMMENDATION 2 Establish a Virtual Policy Communication Channel	<p><b>Both governments</b> should establish a Virtual Policy Communication Channel (VPCC) as a mechanism to provide regulatory guidance and support for enterprises. The VPCC would connect businesses with government experts in bilateral trade and investment policies from both countries, acting as a transmitter of information and a communication tool, compiling policy-related inquiries from enterprises and disseminating official responses from relevant Vietnamese or Australian authorities.</p>		<p><b>Industry</b> should work with government to support the development of a VPCC, providing experiences to ensure the VPCC provides relevant information and targets tangible challenges in two-way trade and investment.</p>	
RECOMMENDATION 3 Revamp digital resources and reshape offline info-sharing	<p><b>Both governments</b> should develop an interactive digital forum that enables businesses to share experiences in trade and investment with Australia and Vietnam, creating an open platform for knowledge exchange, building a community to enable potential business matching collaborations, and creating a database of customised market intelligence that can assist businesses to engage.</p> <p>Additionally, the <b>Vietnamese and Australian Governments</b> should collaborate to uplift offline information-sharing approaches – such as information sessions, workshops, and networking activities – to accommodate industry’s evolving needs.</p>			
RECOMMENDATION 4 Run an in-depth Free Trade Agreement (FTA) workshop series	<p>The <b>Australian Government</b> should consider adopting a similar approach to enhance Australian industry’s capabilities for engaging around FTAs.</p>	<p>The <b>Vietnamese Government</b> should run an in-depth series of workshops for Vietnamese industry to improve understanding around FTAs and build capacity for Vietnamese businesses to comply with international trade requirements.</p>	<p><b>Industry</b> should actively seek out information, guidance and training on FTAs to increase their ability to engage across the bilateral relationship.</p>	
RECOMMENDATION 5 Leverage the Business Champion Network	<p><b>Both governments</b> should support and engage with these industry communities to encourage greater business-led engagement across the two-way trade and investment relationship.</p>		<p><b>Australian industry</b> should utilise the inverse opportunity created by the Australian Business Champion roundtables and AVPI to increase shared capabilities for engaging with and in Vietnam.</p>	<p><b>Vietnamese industry</b> should utilise the new connections facilitated by the development of the Business Champion Network to exchange knowledge, pool resources, leverage opportunities for collaboration, and advocate for businesses’ interests with government agencies to address trade barriers.</p>
RECOMMENDATION 6 Invest in capacity building for enterprises	<p><b>Both governments</b> should support <b>Vietnamese Industry</b> to invest in upskilling programs that focus on closing the gap between Vietnam’s current workforce capability and the requirements of international opportunities.</p>		<p><b>Vietnamese industry</b> should invest in upskilling programs. This could be done in partnership with international training institutions to develop and implement enterprise capacity building programs focused on both enabling skills (foreign language proficiency, digital literacy, cross-cultural business communications) and technical skills (foreign investment procedures, regulatory compliance, market research, partner due diligence, investment opportunities appraisals).</p>	
RECOMMENDATION 7 Establish a comprehensive mechanism for business matching	<p><b>Both governments</b> should collaborate to develop a comprehensive business matching mechanism, utilising technology platforms to promote business matching between Vietnam and Australia, covering both the breadth and depth of cross-border business engagements.</p>		<p><b>Industry</b> should actively engage with this mechanism, embracing matches and continuing to work with the governments and business community in relevant fields to deepen relationships and increase their chances of successful cross-border engagements.</p>	



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