

Luxembourg and Belgium to provide \$71 mln aid to Vietnam

This is wonderful meaningful assistance to the health of Vietnam and a much better way to win over a population than the wars waged by the Dutch, the French and the Americans in the past.

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Luxembourg pledged aid worth €50 million (US\$59.8 million) and Belgium pledged €10 million (\$11.9 million) to Vietnam when a Vietnamese delegation visited the two countries last week.

Luxembourg, which will provide the money under official development assistance (ODA) for 2006–2010, will continue to prioritize poverty alleviation in rural and mountainous areas. Belgium's aid will be used to build a national radioactive isotopes center for research and application of nuclear medicine in Vietnam.

The agreements were reached during a visit by Vietnamese Deputy Minister of Planning and Investment Cao Viet Sinh to the European nations on March 6–10. He attended a regular meeting of the Vietnam–Luxembourg joint cooperation committee which announced the latter would consider Vietnam's long-term needs before deciding the ODA focus.

The 2006–2010 period would also see a test run of a cooperative model among Luxembourg, Vietnam, and Laos, the meeting heard.

Under it, Luxembourg would finance joint Vietnam–Laos healthcare projects, initially in vaccine production and manufacture of health equipment. During 2002–2005 Luxembourg provided Vietnam ODA worth €35 million (\$41.8 million).

Sinh also met entrepreneurs in Luxembourg who showed interest in telecommunications, steel, and satellite manufacturing.

Healthcare modernization

A high-speed accelerator for diagnosis and treatment of diseases, manufactured by Belgium's Ion Beam Application (IBA) group, would be assembled in Vietnam, according to an agreement between the two countries.

It will help Vietnam produce radioactive isotopes for healthcare, scientific research, and treatment of deadly diseases, including cancer.

Vietnam's 108 Army Hospital, the National Atomic Energy Centre, Natural Sciences University, and Technology University will all be partners in the project.

IBA group is famous worldwide for its cancer diagnosis and treatment equipment