

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**Press conference**

**“Stories of Water,” free film and insight festival  
hosted by the Agence Française de Développement, 12 - 13 November in Hanoi**

**Hanoi, (11/6/2013).** Running on 12 and 13 November 2013 in Hanoi, on the occasion of the France Vietnam / Vietnam France Year 2013–2014 and the United Nations International Year of Water Cooperation, the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) is hosting a series of events (film showings, discussions) open to the public and free of charge that focus on development challenges regarding access to and management of water. The two evening events will start at 6 p.m. at ESPACE, 24 Trang Tien, Hanoi.

A press conference to introduce the festival, the challenges facing Vietnam and the support offered by France in the water sector will take place on:

**Wednesday 6 November 2013, at 2 p.m**  
**at the premises of the Agence Française de Développement, 6 – 8 Ton That Thiep, Ba Dinh, Hanoi**

Nowadays, water is seen as a rare and fragile resource and a major issue on the international scene. In 2000, 193 countries committed themselves under the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to reduce by half the percentage of people without sustainable access to drinking water and sanitation. Vietnam has made considerable progress toward achieving the MDGs. In 2010, 83% of its rural communities had access to drinking water compared with 30% in 1990. Nevertheless, Vietnam is now confronted with major challenges relating to water – salt water intrusion, sea level rise, drinking water shortages, urban and industrial pollution – with serious implications on the quality of water and people’s standard of living.

Since 1997, France, via its different financial cooperation instruments (AFD and French Treasury), has implemented 30 drinking water and sanitation projects to support the Vietnamese authorities, representing nearly €350 million in commitments. Especially, AFD’s 13 projects, with over €270 million in commitments, contributed to a better sharing, distribution and control of the waters in Mekong, Dong Nai and Red River Delta watersheds.

As an illustration, AFD provided funding for a capacity-building project focusing on water resources management and rehabilitation of the Bac Hung Hai hydraulic system, which has led to improved rice field yields in the Red River Delta’s largest irrigation and drainage system and to promote a spirit of cooperation and solidarity concerning water use. To achieve that, AFD has made available a loan of €20 million and a grant of €800,000 to build and rehabilitate pumping stations in order to improve irrigation and raise awareness among local stakeholders regarding a more efficient distribution of the water resource. This project also offered an opportunity to do a climate change study.

Another emblematic feature of AFD’s initiatives includes the comprehensive rural development project in central provinces through a €40 million loan and a €1 million grant. This package has made it possible to improve and develop basic infrastructure in 13 provinces of central Vietnam, including the construction of 1000 km of rural roads, irrigation infrastructure and flood control devices. In coastal areas, the project also is working on dune stabilisation, aquaculture and control of the saltwater rise.

In terms of knowledge production, AFD also co-financed “Days of Tam Dao” Summer School, who offered a course on “Water and its related issues: methodology and pluri-disciplinarity of analysis”, valorised by a free trilingual publication in French, Vietnamese and English, in the AFD Collection *Conferences&Seminars* (No.8).

The festival is designed as an opportunity for informal discussions and a think tank for all levels of the public. It will include an open event on the first evening to which all are invited and the second evening more focusing on school and university students. The program will include two short films, two documentaries and one photographic report. The films, with French and Vietnamese subtitles, will be followed by a discussion to provide additional information to viewers on the selected topics and allow them to talk with experts.

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