

UK/Viet Nam Season 2023

Context

About Viet Nam

Viet Nam has a population of 98 million, with more than half of this population under the age of 35. It has 54 ethnic groups, with 53 minority ethnic groups making up around 13% of the national population. The country is fast moving up the ranks of political and economic importance in the Indo-Pacific region. Its strategic location, openness to trade, and potential for economic growth mean it has a wide range of international suitors. As a result of this increasing competition, relations between the UK and Viet Nam are also growing closer. The first anniversary of the UK-Viet Nam Free Trade Agreement (FTA) was marked on 1 May 2022.

Viet Nam is an important member of ASEAN, ten-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and has the widest network of FTAs within ASEAN. The UK became the 11th ASEAN Dialogue Partner on 6 August 2021, supporting closer cooperation between the UK and the region on issues such as trade, investment, climate change, the environment, science and technology, and education.

Viet Nam continues to be one of the fastest growing economies in the region. Despite the impact of Covid-19, the economy expanded 2.91% in 2020 and 2.58% in 2021 and remains on track to reach upper-middle income status by 2035. Rapid development has been accompanied by skills gaps, social inequality, human trafficking, high levels of pollution and environmental concerns. The Government's National Strategy on the Fourth Industrial Revolution by 2030 aims for robust and sustainable social and economic development based on science-technology, innovation and high-quality human resources. Addressing climate change and moving to renewables is a priority as much of the country, particularly the Mekong Delta (home to almost 20% of Viet Nam's population and supplying more than half of Viet Nam's rice production), are at risk of rising sea levels due to the impact of climate change.

Education

The Ministry of Education and Training (MoET) has formulated the new Higher Education Strategy/ Master Plan (2021-2030) based on the emergence of the University of the Future, training highly-qualified employable graduates and producing leading-edge research that can positively impact the national and regional economies.

Five Vietnamese universities are now in THE world university rankings. Viet Nam values the UK's global record in education, digital innovation science, although bilateral research collaboration ranks low at 8th. Viet Nam's outbound student market is the largest in South East Asia has been among its fastest growing, although the UK market share is the region's lowest.

English

There is a high demand for English language from employers, parents, and learners. There are numerous private language providers nationwide and increasing recognition of IELTS for high school exit/ university entrance test. Improving the provision of English language teaching, the development of digital learning, teacher training materials, assessment and accreditation of language centres are priorities for MoET, as part of modernising the country's workforce. Through its National Foreign Language Project, its ambition is for English to be Viet Nam's second language.

Arts and the creative industries

The cultural and creative sectors in Viet Nam have adapted and grown substantially over the past 10+ years. The Government of Viet Nam recognises the importance of cultural and creative organisations and enterprises in driving the cultural industries, in support of sustainable economic, social and cultural development. It also recognises the role of cultural heritage as an effective tool to foster economic development and welfare for inclusive growth.

In 2016, it ratified the National Strategy for the Development of Cultural Industries to 2020, vision 2030 (NSDCI). In November 2019, Hanoi was designated by UNESCO as a Creative City and is developing a long-term action plan to connect its policies to promote cultural industries and enrich cultural resources. In 2021, the Government furthered its commitment to investing in developing cultural sectors by ratifying the Strategy for the Development of Culture to 2030, with a focus on using culture to achieve sustainable growth and developing human capital.

The British Council in Viet Nam

The British Council has a well-developed presence in Viet Nam, with a dynamic portfolio spanning the arts and creative industries, education (higher, vocational and non-formal), and English teaching, learning and assessment, delivering a range of academic and professional UK qualifications. We have 330+ staff in Hanoi and in Ho Chi Minh City across six offices and teaching centres. Four more Young Learner language centres will open late 2022/ early 2023, with ten further centres planned in the coming two years.

We have built extensive networks, connections and partnerships between UK and Vietnamese individuals, organisations and institutions across all areas of our work, and with ambitions to further expand these networks.

- **Our work in Education:** strengthens partnerships between the UK and Vietnamese HE sectors through system collaboration, supporting quality and internationalisation of institutions, the curriculum, teaching and learning experiences, quality assurance and accreditation. This will further enhance science and research collaboration, creating more opportunities to learn from global and UK practice, promoting student mobility and growing the market for the UK sector. We will also work to enhance networking opportunities for UK alumni.
- **Our work in English:** improves standards of teaching, learning and assessment of English, supporting MoET and HEIs on English medium education. This involves connecting UK ELT providers with Vietnamese partners, increasing the number of teachers benefiting from professional development and resource provision, including increased digital engagement, and resulting in improved learning outcomes in for students.

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- **Our work in Arts and Culture:** increases collaboration and strengthens networks between UK and Vietnamese artists and arts organisations. This includes mutual cultural exchange, enhancing the capacity of UK and Vietnamese professionals, organisations and institutions in developing the creative economy. We focus on arts and cultural approaches to help address social and environmental issues, protecting human rights, and promoting inclusive growth. This includes cultural heritage, particularly involving young people and grassroots organisations. Our work in the Arts enables us to showcase collaboration and innovation by both countries and engage large scale audiences in partnerships with cultural venues and festivals in Viet Nam.

UK - Viet Nam Season 2023

In celebrating UK - Viet Nam collaboration and creativity across our two thematic areas of 'Climate and the Environment' and 'Shared Heritage', we look forward to drawing on the results of existing connections, as well as to creating new relationships. Marking 50 years of UK - Vietnamese diplomatic relations and 30 years of the British Council's presence in Viet Nam, the 2023 UK - Viet Nam Season will elevate the bilateral cultural relationship, providing new opportunities for UK and Vietnamese individuals and organisations, and contributing to the people-to-people links strand of the UK - Viet Nam Strategic Partnership.