

Denmark looks to boost investments into Vietnam

By Bao Tram

Denmark's Minister for Trade and Development Co-operation Mogens Jensen last week said his country's businesses had a keen interest in investing in agriculture, logistics, infrastructure and green energy in Vietnam.

"Given the Vietnam-Denmark Comprehensive Partnership Action Plan signed in 2013, the two nations had a chance to lift the bilateral cooperation to a new height," Jensen said at the 4th meeting of the Joint-Governmental Committee between Vietnam and Denmark which he co-chaired with Vietnam's Minister of Planning and Investment Bui Quang Vinh.

He added the Danish government supported a free trade agreement between Vietnam and the European Union (EU) that is expected to be completed this year.

By the end of January 2015, Denmark is ranked the 25th among 101 countries and territories investing in Vietnam, with 111 investment projects worth \$705.26 million, according to the Ministry of Planning and Investment. So far, 130 Danish companies are operating in the Vietnamese market, that Jensen believed the number reflected the attractiveness of Vietnam to Danish investors.

Among them, APM Terminals invested in the deep-sea port Cai Mep International Terminal through a joint venture with Vietnam's national shipping lines Vinalines and Saigon Port. Vetas, a renewable energy investor in Denmark, late last year signed an agreement with a Vietnamese company to build a \$2 billion wind power project in Vietnam's central region. And during the

visit of Minister Jensen to Vietnam, Vissing Agro A/S, Danbred and Haldor Topsoe also signed cooperative agreement with Vietnamese companies.

On development cooperation, Danish aid to Vietnam remained at a high level in recent years, reaching approximately \$64 million per year on average. In September 2013, the two sides signed a new framework agreement on the DANIDA business finance, under which Vietnam will continue to be prioritised using preferential loans in the future to invest in such sectors as green growth, education, foods, agriculture and health care. Jensen said the Danish government intended to disburse \$90 million in official development assistance (ODA) until 2015 in Vietnam.

In addition to the achievements made in economic cooperation and trade, Vietnam and Denmark agreed to further strengthen the role and responsibilities of government agencies and enterprises from both countries by developing mechanisms for effective exchange of information. This aims to timely handle difficulties for businesses in the commercial and investment cooperation.

During his visit, Jensen also launched a growth council comprising Danish companies already operating in the Vietnamese market. "This council is expected to strengthening co-operation between Vietnamese and Danish firms," he said.

Danish investments in Vietnam have almost tripled since 2007, while Vietnamese investments in Denmark have almost doubled over the same period, according to Jensen. Bilateral trade has developed significantly since 2009 with a growth of around 75 per cent. ■