

RMIT co-hosts conference on Connectivity in Asia

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Photo: Hong Nhung (VET)

ECONOMIC TIMES Conference discusses opportunities in trade, transport, logistics and business in Vietnam.

by **Khanh Chi**

RMIT University Vietnam, in collaboration with Zhejiang University in China and Inha University in South Korea, co-hosted the “Connectivity in Asia: Trade, Transport, Logistics and Business” conference on June 25 and 26 at the university’s Saigon South campus.

The conference was attended by more than 100 keynote speakers, presenters, and delegates from countries including Indonesia, China, the Philippines, South Korea, Thailand, Taiwan, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Austria, and Australia.

RMIT Vietnam President Professor Gael McDonald said RMIT Vietnam was extremely happy to host the event.

“The forum was organized to explicitly explore the views of industry experts, policymakers, and academics on the issues surrounding the region’s logistical challenges,” Professor McDonald said.

The conference covered topics that play a vital role in Vietnam’s economy, as the country’s growth is fuelled by greater regional and international integration and collaboration, Professor McDonald added. “According to a World Bank estimate, Vietnam’s logistics costs currently account for 20.9 per cent of GDP, compared to China’s 19 per cent, Thailand’s 18 per cent, Japan’s 11 per cent, and the EU’s 10 per cent.”

“At a recent national logistics forum, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc stated that high logistics costs were one of the hurdles obstructing the national economy’s competitiveness in a highly-connected and integrated trade environment. He emphasized that efforts to lower logistics costs need attention, particularly as Vietnam increases its participation in major free trade agreements.”

Professor McDonald stressed that cutting logistics costs to 16-20 per cent of GDP by 2025 while raising its GDP contribution to 8-10 per cent requires additional effort to reform and simplify administrative procedures to improve the business climate.

“There were 63 papers presented by contributors from at least 13 different countries, as well as many other participants,” she said of the conference. “Together they explore the current challenges in logistics and hopefully provide a more enlightened road ahead.”

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