I. An Update of ESD Action Plan

1.1. Institutional Level

Research ESD
In order to strengthen our ESD research (our research focuses on key themes such as developing ESD national indicators for Vietnam and identifying ESD competences of secondary school teachers in Vietnam) we have already completed research project drafts, and are finding financial support from national and international institutions (for example the Ministry of Education and Training of Vietnam and UNESCO Office Hanoi) for implementing those research projects. Moreover, recently members of the Center for Education for Sustainable Development (CESD) of the HNUE have taken part in an ESD project financed by UNESCO Hanoi to research and compose case studies for ESD teaching & learning in schools in Vietnam.

Curriculum Development
Infusing ESD into relevant teacher education programs at the HNUE (Geography, History, Language, Vietnamese study…) is really a main focus of our university. To reach this goal, we have offered since the study year of 2007-2008 a course entitled “Education for sustainable development in teaching geography” for bachelor students of the geography faculty at HNUE. We have designed a program for this course and are now preparing to publish a textbook with the title “Education for sustainable development in school geography”. We believe that our experiences in designing and implementing ESD in teacher education programs will be gut lessons for educators from another faculties (Faculty of History, Faculty of Language, Faculty of Vietnamese study…), who want to infuse ESD into their teacher education programs.

Institutional Charge
The CESD has built a key group to support ESD in the University. Group members are lecturers and researchers from various faculties of the HNUE, who were and are actively taking part in ESD activities such as organizing workshops on ESD and researching and designing ESD programs at the HNUE.

In order to change the understanding and thinking of the university staff with respect to ESD, we have organized workshops on ESD and published articles on ESD in scientific magazines and newspapers. Recently, the Center for Research and Education of Environment (CERE) and the CESD of HNUE cooperated to organize a training workshop on biological ethics for scientists, lecturers of educational institutions and representatives from schools in Vietnam.

In cooperation with the Vietnamese Commission for UNESCO, the CESD have organized a workshop on “Enhancing cooperation in researching and implementing ESD in Vietnam” and set up an ESD network in Vietnam. UNESCO Vietnam and the CESD are implementing necessary measures (e.g. information and experience sharing, promoting cooperation in researching and designing ESD programs and courses…) to continue to develop activities of this ESD network.

1.2. Regional ESD-Net:
In cooperation with UNESCO Vietnam we are designing a website for the regional ESD net and intend to set up this website in the near future. Moreover, we want to research typical
II. Basic findings toward implementing your action plan

1. A brief summary on the progress toward implementing ESD at our institution since August:
   In the passing months, the HNUE has completed significant activities to implement our action plan on ESD at various levels. We think that such ESD activities contributed, and will contribute, not only in promoting the infusing of ESD into teacher education programs at HNUE, but also on implementing ESD in schools in Vietnam. The meaningful changes of understanding and thinking of the university staff, with respect to the importance and significance of implementing ESD for reforming schools and the university as well as for sustainable development of the whole country, can be seen as a positive signal and result of implementing our action plan on ESD.

2. What is the most significant 'challenge' we have experienced toward implementing ESD at our institution since August.
   Although a lot of people in educational institutions and schools recognize that environment education (EE) and ESD do not have the same meaning and that it is necessary to implement ESD with new approaches and methods, they still carry out ESD with the same approaches and methods of EE. This comes from the situation that they have a lack of ESD competency. Therefore, building and developing ESD competences for educators and university and school teachers has become the most significant "challenge" for us to overcome while continuing to implement ESD at our university.

3. What is the most significant 'lesson' we have learned from implementing ESD at our institution since August.
   Implementing ESD is a complex process and its success depends on the efforts and competency not only of one person or of a group, but also of communities at various levels. Even at a university level, ESD is not reachable if awareness and behaviour innovations of researchers and lecturers in infusing ESD into teacher education programs of various faculties do not receive appropriate support and promotion from university leaders. This means that besides the purposefulness and efforts of research and education staff in implementing ESD innovations, the understanding and thinking of university leaders with respect to ESD must be seen as a basic prerequisite for achieving success with ESD.