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INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY LAW

Vietnam: Is a New Approach to Examining the First-to-File Principle Needed?

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An important question in examination for novelty and inventiveness is the position of earlier filed patent applications, which were not published at the priority date of a later application for the same invention. Before 1 July 2006 in Vietnam, the earlier filed but unpublished patent applications were used as prior art for novelty consideration. Both double patenting and patenting already disclosed invention therefore were successfully dealt with. Under the terms of the Intellectual Property Law 50/2005 of Vietnam (IP Law 50/2005), which came into effect as of 1 July 2006, such secret prior art can no longer be utilized as prior art both against third-party applicants and the later-filing applicant himself. Instead, the secret prior art now shall be taken as a ground to refuse the issuance of patent to later applications filed for the same invention in accordance with the first-to-file principle.

In different parts of the world, such secret prior art has been applied in different ways. However, different approaches should aim at two main purposes: first, to avoid granting two patents to the same invention, and second, to avoid patenting an already disclosed invention. The approach that National Office of Intellectual Property of Vietnam (NOIP) is now using cannot in certain circumstances eliminate patenting two patents to the same or slightly different invention either to different parties or the same applicant. It may not prevent the granting a patent to an already known invention in some exceptional case as discussed below.

What is secret prior art?

Secret prior art means previously filed, unpublished patent applications, which are not yet published at the filing of a later filed application that is being examined. Since they are obviously not available to the public as they have not yet been published, the later inventor may not have known of such an unpublished earlier application. No one, except the applicant of the earlier filed application could access that secret information. On this basic, it seems little unfair to expect they should be regarded as part of the state of the art. However, neither is it just if more than one patent should be granted for the same or indistinct inventions either to different parties or the same applicant. It is also against the basic principle of patent laws that a patent may be granted to an already disclosed invention. Secret prior art is an evidence that someone else invented the invention, disclosed it to the patent office in an patent specification in accordance with the requirement of patent laws, and got certain filing date. Therefore, it seems unfair to disregard it as prior art for the later filed application against which it may be cited.

Current Applications of Secret Prior Art

Generally, there are two different views to utilize secret prior art against all third parties as well as against the applicant. The first way is the “prior claim approach”

and another one is the “full content approach”. The former one only compares the claims of the earlier filed patent application against those of the later-filed application. Its basis is that patents shall be granted to inventions claimed in the claims, therefore the claims of two applications should be compared to each other no matter if the invention claimed in the later application has been disclosed (but not claimed) in the earlier application. The more widely accepted approach is the “whole contents approach”. In this case, the entire text of the first patent application is utilized as prior art to be applied against what is being claimed in the second application. Its philosophy is that it is unfair to grant a patent to an invention already disclosed in the earlier application though secretly disclosed only.

The EPC adopted the whole content approach under which the prior art is defined to comprise unpublished earlier filed applications. This simple expedient greatly simplifies the situation although is inequitable in the sense that undisclosed matter should not be counted as prior art. Japan and the United States have also applied the same manner of entering earlier applications into the state of the art, with the exception of applications filed by the same applicant. Lightly diverging from the EPC system, in the US, unpublished earlier applications are used to attack both novelty and inventiveness. And both the US and Japan patent laws make it clear that the prior applications must be owned by “another”.

Under the terms of Vietnam IP Law, earlier filed applications now shall be taken as a ground to refuse the issuance of patent to later applications filed for the same invention in accordance with the first-to-file principle, not as the prior art. However, the NOIP of Vietnam follows the prior claim view when comparing the earlier and later filed applications. That is, the NOIP’s examiners shall compare the claims of two applications with each other in order to find out if two applications are for the same invention. There are, for example, two circumstances under which either a patent may have been granted to an already disclosed invention, or two patents may have been granted to the same invention as discussed below.

In the first circumstance, assuming that applicant A generated the description disclosing new compound X and method Y for the preparation of compound X. However, in the patent application that A filed to the NOIP entitled “new compound X,” A claimed only new compound X (hereinafter referred to as “A’s Invention”). One month later, applicant B somehow learned about A’s invention and filed another application comprising exactly the same description and a single claim, claiming solely method Y (hereinafter referred to as “B’s Invention”).

Thus, although B’s Invention was already disclosed in the compound application, the NOIP’s examiner shall potentially regard B’s Invention as new since the earlier compound application is no longer used as the prior art to anticipate the method claimed in the later filed method application (Art. 60, IP Law 50/2005). Also, the examiner cannot reject the later method application for B’s Invention in light of the earlier compound application based on the first-to-file principle because according to the NOIP’s Guidelines on Patent Examinations (GPE), they are not the same applications. According to Vietnam patent laws and regulations, two applications are the same if they contain the same claims (Item 24, GPE). That is, the first-to-file principle is applied to the same invention while compound X invention and method

Y invention are different from each other. Thus, the new IP Law fails to prevent granting patent for already known invention.

Next, the granting two patents for the same invention to two different applicants may happen in the following situation. Further to the situation specified in the above paragraph, we assume that the NOIP issued a compound patent A1 to inventor A for his compound invention fifteen months after A's filing date, and a method patent B1 to inventor B ten months after B's filing date (that is, eleven months after A's filing date, supposing that inventor B filed a request for early publication and expedited examination to get patent B1 for his method invention. Let us also assume that eleven and a half months after the filing date of his first compound application, inventor A decided to file a second application as a divisional one claiming method Y. Since A's method application has the priority date as the filing date of A's compound application, the method invention claimed therein is novel over the prior art (as the prior art does not comprise B's method application). The NOIP shall potentially issue a method patent A2 to A. Thus, two method patents B1 and A2 were granted to inventor B and A, respectively for the same method Y for manufacture of composition X. This hypothetical situation when it occurs shall contravene Art. 90 of the IP Law.

Apart from two above cited examples, the conflict may even occur in the following situation. Assuming the earlier filed application claims invention 1 having technical features A, B, and C. The later filed application claims invention 2 having technical feature A and B only. Since the earlier application was not published yet, its content shall be kept secret according to Art. 111, IP Law 50/2005. The examiner may not be able either to refer to or to use its content including claims therein as ground to refuse the later application. And since invention 1 and invention 2 are not the same, invention 2 shall not be rejected in accordance with the first-to-file principle. If the situation arose, the later application would mature into patent though sooner or later it would come out to have already been disclosed in the earlier application (as soon as it is published).

Conclusion

It is therefore seen that Vietnam patent system, in the first place, may use some compromised novelty approach for applying secret prior art, both against other applicants and in connection with the applicant himself. Alternatively, if it wants to rely on the first-to-file rejection, should it consider a new compromise type of the first-to-file examination: to compare the claims of the later filed application with the whole content of the earlier application, not only with its claims as presently applied./.

Other Sectors

Finance

- Decision No. 106/QD-TTg dated 19 January 2012 of the Prime Minister approving the scheme on orienting to attract, manage and use ODA capital source and other preferential loans of the sponsors for the period from 2011 to 2015.
- On 19 January 2012, the Ministry of Finance stipulated Circular No. 09/2012/TT-BTC amending and supplementing Circular No. 245/2009/TT-BTC dated 31 December 2009 of the Ministry of Finance providing for the implementation of a number of contents of Decree No. 52/2009/ND-CP dated 3 June 2009 detailing and providing guidelines for the implementation of a number of articles of Law on Management and Use of the State's Properties.
- Circular No. 03/2012/TT-BTC dated 5 January 2012 of the Ministry of Finance providing guidelines for the collection rates and the regime on collection, payment, management and use of the fees for auction, participation in auction, and issuance of Asset Auction Practicing Certificates.
- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Finance issued Circular No.201/2011/TT-BTC providing for the loan interest rates applicable to investments credits and export credits of the State and the difference between interest rates calculated as post-investment supports.

Taxation

- Decision No. 05/2012/QD-TTg dated 19 January 2012 of the Prime Minister on the pilot implementation of value-added tax refund applicable to goods purchased by foreigners in Vietnam and carried out through Noi Bai and Tan Son Nhat International Airports.
- On 19 January 2012, the Prime Minister stipulated Decision No. 04/2012/QD-TTg on extending the term of tax payment for further 3 months with respect to corporate income tax amounts payable in the first and the second quarters of 2011 by small and medium enterprises, which employ lots of labour.
- Decision No. 104/QD-BTC dated 16 January 2012 of the Ministry of Finance correcting Circular No. 163/2011/TT-BTC dated 17 November 2011 of the Ministry of Finance issuing Special Preferential Import Tariff of Vietnam to implement ASEAN - Korea Free Trade Area for the period from 2012 to 2014.
- On 10 January 2012, the General Department of Vietnam Customs issued Decision No. 114/TCHQ-TXNK on exemption from import tax and no collection of value-added tax applicable to gift items.

- Decision No. 02/QD-BTC dated 3 January 2012 of the Ministry of Finance correcting Circular No. 152/2011/TT-BTC dated 11 November 2011 of the Ministry of Finance providing guidelines for the implementation of Decree No.67/2011/ND-CP dated 8 August 2011 detailing and providing guidelines for the implementation of a number of articles of Law on Environmental Protection Tax.
- On 5 January 2012, the Ministry of Finance stipulated Circular No. 05/2012/TT-BTC providing guidelines for the implementation of Decree No. 26/2009/ND-CP dated 16 March 2009 and Decree No. 113/2011/ND-CP dated 8 December 2011 amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 26/2009/ND-CP dated 16 March 2009 detailing the implementation of a number of articles of Law on Special Sales Tax.

Trade

- Decision No. 06/2012/QD-TTg dated 20 January 2012 of the Prime Minister on consultation with the community of enterprises about the international trade agreements.
- On 16 January 2012, the Ministry of Industry and Trade issued Decision No.267/QD-BCT promulgating the Program on elaborating the legal documents in 2012.
- Decision No. 232/QD/TCHQ dated 20 January 2012 of General Department of Customs promulgating the customs branch's Plan on popularization and education of law; propaganda, support, and provision of information to customs declarers and taxpayers in 2012;
- On 13 January 2012, the Prime Minister stipulated Decision No. 02/2012/QD-TTg promulgating the list of essential goods and services, of which the contracts under templates or general trading conditions must be registered.
- Circular No. 02/2012/TT-BCT dated 18 January 2012 of the Ministry of Industry and Trade providing for the import of tobacco raw materials imported under tariff quota in 2012.
- On 3 January 2012, the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Finance jointly issued Inter-ministerial Circular No. 01/2012/TTLT-BCT-BTC amending and supplementing a number of provisions of Inter-ministerial Circular No. 14/2009/TTLT-BCT-BTC dated 23 June 2009 of the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Finance providing guidelines for the issuance of certificates of and procedures for import and export of rough diamonds in order to implement the provisions of the Kimberley Process Certification Scheme.
- Circular No. 01/2012/TT-BTC dated 3 January 2012 of the Ministry of Finance providing guidelines for the clearance of exported and imported goods subject to quarantine.

- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Industry and Trade stipulated Circular No. 48/2011/TT-BCT providing for the management of quality of products and commodities under heading 2 within the scope of the Ministry of Industry and Trade's management.

Labour

- Decision No. 51/QD-BHXX dated 10 January 2012 of Vietnam Social Insurance promulgating "Plan on training and fostering public officials and servants of social insurance branch for the period from 2011 to 2015".
- On 6 January 2012, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 36/QD-TTg on establishing the National Council of Human Resource Education and Development with the office term from 2011 to 2015.
- Circular No. 01/2012/TT-BLDTBXH dated 5 January 2012 of the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs providing for the adjustment in rates of wages, remunerations and monthly incomes after payment of social insurance contributions.
- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Finance stipulated Circular No.203/2011/TT-BTC providing guidelines for the support to organizations and units employing labour of the minorities legally residing in the provinces of Central Highlands under Decision No. 75/2010/QD-TTg dated 29 November 2010 of the Prime Minister.

Education

- Decision No. 179/QD-BGDDT dated 13 January 2012 of the Ministry of Education and Training promulgating the Plan on organizing the deployment of Decision No. 1640/QD-TTg dated 21 September 2011 of the Prime Minister approving the Project on consolidating and developing the system of boarding schools for ethnic pupils for the period from 2011 to 2015.
- On 13 January 2012, the Ministry of Education and Training issued Decision No.178/QD-BGDDT on the transfer of tasks from the Department of Higher Education to the Bureau of Examination and Education Quality Verification.
- Decision No. 01/QD-BGDDT dated 3 January 2012 of the Ministry of Education and Training promulgating the pilot Program on Universal Education of English discipline at Secondary School level.
- On 19 January 2012, the Ministry of Education and Training, the Ministry of Finance, and the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs jointly stipulated Circular No. 03/2012/TTLT-BGDDT-BTC-BLDTB providing guidelines for the implementation of learning support policy for children, pupils and students of very small ethnic minorities according to Decision No.2123/QD-

TTg dated 22 November 2010 of the Prime Minister approving the Scheme on Education Development for very small ethnic minorities for the period from 2010 to 2015.

- Circular No. 02/2012/TT-BGDDT dated 13 January 2012 of the Ministry of Education and Training promulgating the Framework program of higher education for Defence - Security pedagogy education at college level.
- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Education and Training issued Circular No. 67/2011/TT-BGDDT promulgating the regulations on standards for evaluation of primary schools.
- Circular No. 66/2011/TT-BGDDT dated 30 December 2011 of the Ministry of Education and Training promulgating the learning program of communications skills proportion in training program at professional intermediate-school level.
- On 29 December 2011, the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs stipulated Circular No. 42/2011/TT-BLDTBXH providing for the implementation process of vocational training quality verification.

Health

- Decision No. 22/QD-BNN-HTQT dated 6 January 2012 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development approving the Strategic framework of partnership relation in the field of water supply and rural sanitation for the period from 2011 to 2015.
- On 4 January 2012, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 20/QD-TTg approving the National strategy on food safety for the period from 2011 to 2020, with orientation to 2030.
- Decision No. 12/QD-UBND dated 3 January 2012 of the People's Committee of Hanoi announcing the amendment of and supplement to administrative procedures within the jurisdiction of the Hanoi Department of Health.
- On 19 January 2012, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Finance stipulated Circular No. 02/2012/TTLT-BYT-BNV-BTC providing guidelines for the implementation of Decree 56/2011/ND-CP dated 4 July 2011 providing for the regime on career incentive allowances applicable to public officials and servants working in the public health establishments.
- Circular No. 04/2012/TT-BTC dated 05 January 2012 of the Ministry of Finance providing for the regime on collection, payment, management and use of fees and charges in the animal health work.
- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Health issued Circular No. 49/2011/TT-BYT promulgating and providing guidelines for the application of attrition rates to traditional medicines in processing, preserving and sharing balance.

Transport

- Decree No. 03/2012/ND-CP dated 19 January 2012 amending and supplementing a number of articles of Decree No. 109/2006/ND-CP dated 22 September 2006 detailing and providing guidelines for the implementation of a number of articles of Law on Railways.
- On 18 January 2012, the Ministry of Transport stipulated Decision No. 148/QD-BGTVT approving this Ministry's Plan on checking administrative procedures in 2012.
- Decision No. 137/QD-BGTVT dated 17 January 2012 of the Ministry of Transport approving the detailed planning of wharfing area of Vung Ang - Son Duong sea port belonging to Vung Ang – Son Duong sea port (Ha Tinh Province) for the period upto 2020.
- On 20 January 2012, the Ministry of Transport issued Circular No. 03/2012/TT-BGTVT amending and supplementing a number articles of Decision No.56/2005/QD-BGTVT dated 28 October 2005 of the Minister of Transport on the organization and operation of the Vietnam Maritime Rescue Co-ordination Centre.
- Inter-ministerial Circular No. 68/2011/TTLT-BGTVT-BTC dated 30 December 2011 of the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Finance providing guidelines for the financial management regime applicable to the Vietnam Register.
- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Finance stipulated Circular No.198/2011/TT-BTC providing guidelines for the collection, management, use and submission of marine pilot fees to the State budget and the regime on ordering supply of marine pilot service.

Construction

- Decision No. 70/QD-BXD dated 19 January 2012 of the Ministry of Construction promulgating this Ministry's Program on popularization and education of law and legal support for enterprises in 2012.
- On 18 January 2012, the Ministry of Construction issued Decision No. 62/QD-BXD on the grant of certificates of suitable technological lines.
- Decision No. 61/QD-BXD dated 18 January 2012 of the Ministry of Construction promulgating the Program on elaborating legal documents and schemes of the Ministry of Construction in 2012.
- On 16 January 2012, the Prime Minister stipulated Decision No. 03/2012/QD-TTg amending and supplementing a number of articles of the Regulation on

management of foreign contractors' activities in the construction field in Vietnam accompanying Decision No. 87/2004/QĐ-TTg.

- Decision No. 44/QĐ-BXD dated 16 January 2012 of the Ministry of Construction on the establishment of the Department of Anti-corruption directly under the Ministry of Construction's Inspectorate.
- On 16 January 2012, the Ministry of Construction issued Decision No. 42/QĐ-BXD promulgating the administrative procedures within the scope of the Ministry of Construction's management function.
- Decision No. 41/QĐ-BXD dated 16 January 2012 of the Ministry of Construction on the recognition of establishments training and fostering the professional skills of construction investment project management.

Natural Resources - Environment

- On 20 January 2012, the Prime Minister stipulated Decision No. 116/QĐ-TTg approving the project on investigation, integrated evaluation and forecast of fluctuations in natural conditions, natural resources, environment and natural hazards of sea from Thanh Hoa Province to Binh Thuan Province serving marine economic development.
- Decision No. 355/QĐ-UBND dated 13 January 2012 of the People's Committee of Hanoi approving the "Planning on fixed air observation network in the area of Hanoi upto 2020".
- On 9 January 2012, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 45/QĐ-TTg approving the adjustment in and supplementation to planning on exploration, exploitation, processing and use of minerals being construction materials in Vietnam up to 2020.
- Decision No. 43/QĐ-TTg dated 9 January 2012 of the Prime Minister on the establishment of the National Committee on Climate Change.
- On 9 January 2012, the Prime Minister stipulated Decision No. 60/QĐ-TTg approving the planning on development of Vietnam's coal industry up to 2020, with orientation up to 2030.
- Decision No. 161/QĐ-UBND dated 9 January 2012 of the People's Committee of Hanoi approving for final acceptance of Scheme on "Survey and evaluation for circling zones where the exploitation and use of the natural resource being water in the area of Hanoi is prohibited, restricted or allowed" and the list of "zones where the exploitation and use of the natural resource being water in the area of Hanoi is prohibited, restricted or allowed".
- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment jointly issued Inter-ministerial Circular No.47/2011/TTLT-BCT-BTNMT providing for the management of import,

export and temporary import for re-export of substances that deplete the ozone layer under the provisions of the Montreal Protocol on Substances that deplete the Ozone Layer.

Science - Technology

- Decision No. 57/QD-BKHCN dated 19 January 2012 of the Ministry of Science and Technology approving the List of the projects of Program on supporting the development of intellectual property to be additionally selected and implemented in two years 2012 and 2013.
- On 5 January 2012, the Prime Minister stipulated Decision No. 27/QD-TTg approving the scientific and technological programs serving the new rural construction for the period from 2011 to 2015.
- Circular No. 38/2011/TT-BKHCN dated 30 December 2011 of the Ministry of Science and Technology providing for the requirements on ensuring security of nuclear materials and establishments.

Energy

- On 19 January 2012, the Ministry of Industry and Trade issued Circular No.03/2012/TT-BCT amending and supplementing a number of articles of Circular No. 14/2010/TT-BCT dated 15 April 2010 of the Ministry of Industry and Trade providing for the preparation method, order, procedures for setting up, issuance and management of electricity transmission prices.
- Circular No. 46/2011/TT-BCT dated 30 December 2011 of the Ministry of Industry and Trade providing for the preparation method, order, procedures for appraisal and approval of the annual norm cost of the strategic multi-purpose hydroelectric power plants.

Culture – Sports - Tourism

- On 4 January 2012, the Government stipulated Decree No. 01/2012/ND-CP on amending, supplementing, replacing or repealing, cancelling the regulations related to administrative procedures within the scope of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism's management function.
- Decision No. 57/QD-BVHTTDL dated 9 January 2012 of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism on the establishment of the Council for assessment and appraisal of "Overall planning on the development of Vietnam tourism up to 2020, with orientation to 2030".

Administration - Judiciary

- On 20 January 2012, the Government issued Decree No. 04/2012/ND-CP amending and supplementing Article 5 of Decree No. 79/2007/ND-CP dated 18 May 2007 on the grant of copies from the original records, certification of copies from originals and certification of signatures.
- Decree No. 02/2012/ND-CP dated 11 January 2012 detailing and providing guidelines for the implementation Ordinance on Procedures for arrest of airplanes and procedures for handling airplanes dropped.
- On 20 January 2012, the Ministry of Justice stipulated Decision No. 172/QD-BTP promulgating the working program of judiciary branch in 2012.
- Decision No. 402/QD-UBND dated 20 January 2012 of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City promulgating the Plan on implementation of the Prime Minister's first scheme on "Popularizing, fostering and educating laws for people living in rural areas" in 2012 in the area of Ho Chi Minh City.
- On 12 January 2012, the People's Committee of Hanoi issued Decision No.315/QD-UBND on the adjustment in working time, learning time and business time in the area of Hanoi.
- Decision No. 23/QD-BNV dated 10 January 2012 of the Ministry of Home Affairs promulgating the list of legal documents issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, which are expired.
- On 9 January 2012, the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs stipulated Decision No. 19/QD-LDTBXH approving the plan on implementation of the National strategy for drug prevention, combat and control in Vietnam through 2020, with orientation to 2030 in the field of drug detoxication and post - drug detoxication management for the period from 2012 to 2015.
- Decide No. 108/QD-UBND dated 9 January 2012 of the People's Committee of Ho Chi Minh City promulgating the list of expired documents.
- On 5 January 2012, the Ministry of Justice issued Decision No. 29/QD-BTP on "Ranking Departments of Justice in 2011".
- Decision No. 01/2012/QD-UBND dated 4 January 2012 of the People's Committee of Hanoi providing for the positions, functions, tasks, powers, organizational structure and apparatus of the Office of the People's Committee of Hanoi.
- On 19 January 2012, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour, War Invalids and Social Affairs jointly stipulated Inter-ministerial Circular No.10/2012/TTLT-BTC-BLDTBXH providing guidelines for the management and use of expenditures for implementing Program on prostitution prevention and combat for the period from 2011 to 2015.

- Inter-ministerial Circular No. 08/2012/TTLT-BTC-BTP dated 19 January 2012 of the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Justice providing guidelines for the collection rates and the regime on collection, payment, management and use of notary fees.
- On 17 January 2012, the Ministry of Justice and the Committee for Ethnic Minorities jointly issued Joint Circular No. 01/2012/TTLT-BTP-UBDT providing guidelines for the legal assistance to ethnic minorities.
- Circular No. 02/2012/TT-BTC dated 5 January 2012 of the Ministry of Finance providing for the regime on collection, payment, management and use of fees in the field of practicing lawyer in Vietnam.
- On 3 January 2012, the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs jointly stipulated Inter-ministerial Circular No. 01/2012/TTLT-BCA-BNG amending and supplementing Inter-ministerial Circular No.04/2002/TTLT/BCA-BNG and Inter-ministerial Circular No.05/2009/TTLT/BCA-BNG dated 12 May 2009 of the Ministry of Public Security and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the field of immigration.
- Circular No. 01/2012/TT-BCA dated 3 January 2012 of the Ministry of Public Security providing for and promulgating the types of set forms and monitoring books to used in the management of the temporary custody and detention.
- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism issued Circular No. 23/2011/TT-BVHTTDL providing for the collection and processing of information about families and domestic violence prevention and combat.

Agriculture

- Decision No. 135/QD-BNN-VP dated 19 January 2012 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development promulgating the administrative reform program of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development for the period from 2011 to 2020.
- On 11 January 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development stipulated Decision No. 49/QD-BNN-KH approving the addition to list of basic investigation projects newly opened in 2012 and the assignment of management tasks.
- Decision No. 01/2012/QD-TTg dated 9 January 2012 of the Prime Minister on a number of policies supporting the application of process of good agriculture production in agriculture, forestry and aquaculture.
- On 16 January 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issued Circular No. 04/2012/TT-BNNPTNT on removing products, which contain Cypermethrin or Deltamethrin, from the Lists of products for handling and

restoration of aquacultural environment, and of veterinary medicines allowed to be marketed in Vietnam.

- Circular No. 03/2012/TT-BNNPTNT dated 16 January 2012 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development amending and supplementing Circular No.15/2009/TT-BNN dated 17 March 2009 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development issuing the list of medicines, chemicals and antibiotics prohibited from use or limited to use.
- On 9 January 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development stipulated Circular No. 02/2012/TT-BNNPTNT promulgating the National technical regulation on conditions for ensuring food safety with respect to establishments manufacturing fish sauce and seafood products in the forms of sauce and dried aquatic products, which are used as foods.

Forestry

- Decision No. 58/QD-TTg dated 9 January 2012 of the Prime Minister on the establishment of the National Steering Committee for forest protection and development plan for the period from 2011 to 2020.
- On 9 January 2012, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 57/QD-TTg approving the forest protection and development plan for the period from 2011 to 2020.
- Decision No. 28/QD-BNN-HTQT dated 9 January 2012 of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on extending the implementation duration of program on "Integrating forest research and strengthening capacities into the National and international development programs".
- On 4 January 2012, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development stipulated Circular No. 01/2012/TT-BNNPTNT providing for the dossiers of legal forest products and inspection of forest products' origin.

Enterprise

- Decision No. 01/QD-BKHDT dated 3 January 2012 of the Ministry of Planning and Investment on checking the list of enterprises.
- On 16 January 2012, the Ministry of Home Affairs issued Circular No.01/2012/TT-BNV detailing the implementation of Decision No. 51/2010/QD-TTg dated 28 July 2010 of the Prime Minister on the Regulation on the management of the organization of considering and honouring titles and award for entrepreneurs and enterprises.

Miscellaneous

- Decision No. 113/QD-TTg dated 20 January 2012 of the Prime Minister on the approval of the overall planning on socio-economic development of Vinh Phuc Province up to 2020.
- On 10 January 2012, the Ministry of Finance stipulated Decision No. 62/QD-BTC approving the Scheme on restructuring the securities companies.
- Decision No. 45/QD-BTTTT dated 6 January 2012 of the Ministry of Information and Communications providing for the functions, tasks, powers and organizational structure of the Centre for Information and Communication Services.
- On 30 December 2011, the Ministry of Finance issued Circular No.199/2011/TT-BTC providing guidelines for the implementation of organization of fostering and granting the Chief Accountant Fostering Certificates.

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