

## OVERVIEW OF THE AGRI-FOOD INDUSTRY

Agri-food is one of the most important economic sectors in Vietnam. Besides production for an increasing domestic demand, Vietnam is a major exporter of agricultural and food products. Pre-pandemic, Vietnam's agri-food sector demonstrated strong contributions to the national economy. Findings from the report show that in 2019, Vietnam's agri-food sector made a GDP contribution of US\$86.4 billion. The sector is also responsible for half of the entire workforce with 27.5 million jobs, making it the single most critical source of employment in the economy. The sector also contributed a total of US\$13.2 billion in tax revenues. This was largely driven by Vietnam's dominant agricultural industry, which contributes over US\$55.3 billion in GDP, which is nearly two-thirds of the entire sector. However, the agri-food industry saw greater diversification over the years as both food and beverage manufacturing and distribution saw double-digit growth between 2015 and 2019 (Vietnam Economic news, 2021).

Throughout a tumultuous period for the Vietnamese economy, the agri-food sector has demonstrated its very important role. It has placed food on the table at stable prices, provided an income and employment for a huge proportion of the country's workforce, and created opportunities for businesses at each stage of the value chain. From farm to fork, the Vietnamese agri-food sector holds an unparalleled position in the economy and plays a pivotal role in its future economic development. Its performance is critical to household wellbeing and it is an economic powerhouse, responsible for millions of jobs, as well as being a major contributor to total economic output and government tax receipts. As a key pillar of the national economy, Vietnam's agri-food sector remained resilient during the COVID-19 pandemic and has great potential to drive economic recovery, ranking second in the region (Food industry Asia, 2021).

Labor intensive sectors continue to be the growth drivers for Vietnam's economic development. However, globalization, international competition, innovation and technology advancements have emphasized the importance of human resource management. Several studies have focused on some component of human resource management and their impact on higher education institutions and universities. In this context, Vietnam National University of Agriculture (VNUA) with the support of the Commission of the European Union and the coordination of University Degli Studi Padova is implementing the project "Lab-Movie - Labour Market Observatory in Vietnam universities" with the objective to increase the capacity of several target institutions – with a special focus on application of IT to close the linkage between the universities – human resource provider – with the labour market. In order to achieve this goal, VNUA firstly survey to assess a labor needs of agrifood enterprises in Vietnam, mainly in the northern provinces.