

# KPMG: now is the time for consulting to have impact



*You have had 34 years of hands-on multi-sector experience across both emerging and mature markets, encompassing Europe, the Middle East, North America, and Asia-Pacific. What made you decide to stay in Vietnam and join KPMG?*

During my career, I have

Leading audit, tax, and advisory service provider KPMG has just appointed **Ross Macallister** as the new managing director and head of Consulting Services at KPMG Vietnam. Macallister, who was part of China's "1,000 Foreign Experts" programme and has spent decades advising clients on complex business and IT programmes and projects, talked to **VIR's Tuan Quang** about the opportunities he sees in Vietnam for the business and how the team would take advantage of these opportunities.

been privileged to visit many countries in Southeast Asia, but never Vietnam. I did some research, and it was clear that Vietnam was a high-growth market with just about the right level of readiness for consulting solutions to really make an impact. Moreover, there is a "can-do" attitude wherever

you go, and I like that.

*As the leader of Consulting Services at KPMG Vietnam, what sorts of trends do you see emerging in the industry?*

In many ways, I see similar trends happening in Vietnam as in other parts of Asia. Many local firms have grown

quickly, and now need to professionalise, and align internally if they are to sustain their growth. They are big but they are not strong, as the saying goes. As Vietnam continues to integrate with the global economy, we will see excellent opportunities as well as challenges for Vietnamese businesses. Right now, our clients are seeking help with gaining competitive advantage from enabling technology and building strength into their back-office functions. However, in the not-too-distant future I expect that we will start to see an increasing demand for more customer-related consulting services, as the business environment matures.

*This context presents a lot of opportunities for KPMG Consulting Services. What steps is the division taking to make the most of these opportunities?*

Our consulting services have grown at a terrific pace over the last couple of years. To continue to thrive, firms like ours must always ensure we satisfy the three goals of "service, satisfaction, and success". That means getting the right balance between the demands of the client marketplace, the realities of the talent market, and our own economic ambition. There are many steps that will need to be taken – and that's exciting, as well as challenging.

*What about the challenges and difficulties? What will be the most significant challenge for the team over the next five years?*

My biggest concern is without doubt acquiring the right talent. Professional Services is a growing market and I feel the opportunities in the short- to medium-term are far greater than the available pool of local talent in the market to serve them. This means we need to be able to draw upon a resource pool of global talent, as and when required, to serve our Vietnam-based clients' needs. With 155 offices around the world, and 170,000 professional staff, we can do this. ■

## The Grand Ho Tram Strip drives tourism with sports

By Hong Anh

The Grand Ho Tram Strip, host of the 2015 Ho Tram Open golf event, has been using sports as an effective way to promote Vietnam's tourism to the world.

Last week at a conference in Danang, the integrated resort and casino shared its experiences promoting tourism through sports at the Ho Tram Open. The event – which was broadcast to 100 million households – was the most-watched sports event Vietnam has ever hosted.

The United Nations World Tourism Organisation's International Conference on Tourism and Sports, held from September 23 to 25, discussed the inter-connection between tourism and sports and their contribution to sustainable socio-economic development in Asia-Pacific countries. Leading a panel discussion that included some of Asia's leading sports and tourism authorities,

"We brought the eyes of the world to the beauty of Vietnam," The Grand Ho Tram Strip's senior advisor to the chairman, Pham Quang Vinh said of the Asian Tour event. "We had players from around the world, who had never even considered Vietnam to be on the map of world sport tourism, offer nothing but praise for the incredible facilities we have at The Grand Ho Tram Strip, and for the warm and welcoming reception that they received from everyone they met in Vietnam."

Tourism accounted for 6.6

per cent of Vietnam's GDP in 2015. At the national conference on tourism development held in Hoi An in August, Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said he wanted this figure to reach 10 per cent.

Michael Kelly, executive chairman of The Grand Ho Tram Strip, said the company takes this 10 per cent target as a guideline in setting their own growth targets.

"It was an honour to highlight the successes of our Ho Tram Open to delegates from the region. With over \$1 billion in deployed and committed investment capital to date, we are the largest international investor in Vietnam's tourism history, and uniquely qualified to present our case," he said.

With \$4.2 billion in the total investment earmarked, The Grand Ho Tram Strip is now the largest US private equity investment in Vietnam. The first phase of the five-star resort, located on Ho Tram Strip in the southern province of Ba Ria-Vung Tau, opened in July 2013 with 541 rooms.

The first residential component of The Grand Ho Tram Strip, Gallery Villas, was launched in March. The second hotel tower – with 599 rooms and amenities – and more residential towers are planned for the future.

In September, Ho Tram Project Company Limited, the operator of The Grand Ho Tram Strip, received in-principle approval from the Ba Ria-Vung Tau People's Committee to build a specialised airport in Loc An commune to transport tourists to the complex. ■



10,000 industrialists assembled at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre, host to four major trade expos

## Expos provide common ground for FTA industry

By Thanh Van

Four mega expos were held in Ho Chi Minh City last week, opening new opportunities of collaboration for Vietnam's manufacturing industry.

The trade fairs, which were held simultaneously at the Saigon Exhibition and Convention Centre, included METALEX Vietnam 2016, NEPCON Vietnam 2016, Business Alliance for Supporting Industry 2016, and Industrial Components & Subcontracting Vietnam 2016. These expos are known for bringing together international experts to discuss challenges and opportunities in their industries.

Isara Burintramart, managing director of Reed Tradex, said that Vietnam is becoming a determined participant in the global economy by engaging in free-trade agreements

(FTA). Vietnam is the only country in ASEAN which has signed an FTA with the Eurasia Economic Union – which includes Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Moreover, Vietnam's strategic position in the middle of the ASEAN cluster allows companies operating in Vietnam easier integration into existing regional and global supply chains. Seaports in northern, central, and southern Vietnam allow accessible and practical shipments to any part of the world.

"The future of the manufacturing industry depends on its ability to embrace the new investment landscape, adapt suitable technologies, and drive efficiency," Burintramart said. "These four shows combined will foster better collaboration through the exchange of best practices from over 500

leading brands and 10,000 industrialists."

Celebrating its 10th anniversary, METALEX Vietnam 2016 has gotten closer to its goal of becoming a comprehensive platform for industrialists. Over the past decade, METALEX has been providing industrialists with the tools they need to thrive on a global competitive stage. METALEX has gained a reputation as an international exhibition that provides unique opportunities for all participants to learn, source new machinery, and see the latest developments in metalworking.

Alongside METALEX, there were also opportunities for electronics manufacturers to see new technologies at NEPCON Vietnam. The only exhibition for the electronics industry in Vietnam, NEPCON gives Vietnamese manufacturers access to new surface-

mount technology (SMT) and machinery to ensure that local electronics parts are on par with global standards.

For Japanese-Vietnamese trade, Business Alliance for Supporting Industry 2016 has been developed by the Japan External Trade Organization (JETRO), Ho Chi Minh City Office and Investment & Trade Promotion Centre (ITPC), and Reed Tradex. The expo aims to serve companies specialising in Japanese-Vietnamese trade, and cement stronger relationships on the back of increasing Japanese investment into Vietnam.

The last event of the weekend, Industrial Components & Subcontracting Vietnam 2016, gave this free-trade foursome a platform where parts makers and buyers could discuss how best to take advantage of the coming economic opportunities. ■