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BAC NINH

CREATING BREAKTHROUGH IN 2022

Vietnam Remains Safe Destination for Foreign Investors

Centurion 100 - Chạm tới kỷ quan



CATALAN JOINT STOCK COMPANY

Address: Dong Chua area, Dong Tho commune, Yen Phong district, Bac Ninh province
Phone: 0222 3883889 / Website: www.catalan.vn

Add: 8th Floor, VCCI Building, No. 9 Dao Duy Anh, Hanoi

Tel: 84-24-3577 1365 **Fax:** 84-24- 3577 1563, 3577 2595, 3577 2629

E-mail: patent@vcci-ip.com; trademark@vcci-ip.com **Website:** www.vcci-ip.com

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PHAM NGOC TUAN
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

PHAM THE NAM
DEPUTY EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
In Charge of VIETNAM BUSINESS FORUM

BOARD OF ADVISORS
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Chairwoman of Board of Directors, BRG Group

Designer: HOANG ANH
Sub-editor: STEVEN GROFF

HEAD OFFICE
4th Floor, 9 Dao Duy Anh St., Hanoi
Tel: (84-24) 35743985/35743063
Fax: (84-24) 35743985
Email: vbhanoi@gmail.com; vbf@vcci.com.vn
Website: www.vccinews.com

SOUTHERN REP. OFFICE
171 Vo Thi Sau St., Dist.3, HCM City
Tel: (84-28) 39321099/39321700
Fax: (84-28) 39321701

NORTHERN REP. OFFICE
4th Floor, 208 De La Thanh St.,
Dong Da Dist., Hanoi
Tel: (84-24) 6275 4809
Fax: (84-24) 6275 4835
Chief Representative
NGO DOAN KHUYEN

JAPAN
2nd Floor, Hirkawacho-Koizumi Bldg.,
1-9-5, Hirakawacho, Chiyoda - ku,
Tokyo 102-0093
Tel: 81-3-5215-7040
Fax: 81-3-5215-1716
Chief Representative
AKI KOJIMA



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VIETNAM, COLOMBIA SEEK TO STRENGTHEN BUSINESS COOPERATION



VCCI President Pham Tan Cong (R) and Colombian Ambassador Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Melo

President of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) Pham Tan Cong recently hosted a working meeting with Colombian Ambassador Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Melo.

HUONG LY

He highly appreciated the Vietnam-Colombia friendship and cooperation, growing in many fields, but admitted that it is still below its potential and has vast room for development. Vietnam is a member of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Colombia is a member of the Pacific Alliance (AP), a Latin American trade bloc, Mr. Cong added, saying that the two countries can, therefore, serve as a bridge for cooperation and connection with other members of these two trade blocs. VCCI President Cong also congratulated Colombia on successfully taking on the rotational chairmanship of the Pacific Alliance and Prosur.

He expressed his affection for the country, landscape and people of Colombia, and, at the same time, introduced the potential of Vietnam. In 2021, Vietnam imported nearly US\$330 billion and GDP reached US\$380 billion, expected to climb to US\$1,000 billion in the next 20 years. With their

available potential, the two countries will have many cooperation opportunities promising good results.

At the meeting, Ambassador Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Melo said that Colombia is actively looking for trade opportunities, increasing the presence of its goods in the Vietnamese market such as furniture, chemicals, leather, pork and beef. Colombia has experienced a complicated COVID-19 pandemic period and has now entered economic recovery and growth, with the GDP expanding by over 10% in 2021. At present, Colombia is fully open, well-positioned for its goods to be exported via waterways, roadways and airways.

On international cooperation, Colombia signed 17 trade agreements (FTAs), including FTAs with Singapore and South Korea, thus opening up convenient trade opportunities with ASEAN and Asian countries. Currently, Colombia has worked with many Vietnamese agencies to foster

cooperation policies and develop economic relations in the coming time. In 2020, the Bogota Chamber of Commerce and VCCI signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to create a premise for mutual support and coordination.

“We not only boost merchandise exports to Vietnam, but also want to find opportunities for Colombian businesses to visit and learn about the Vietnamese market and increase Vietnamese imports for Colombia. Therefore, we look forward to receiving VCCI support to accomplish these goals,” the Ambassador suggested.

Concurring with the proposal by Ambassador Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Melo, VCCI President Cong hopes that the cooperation will be effective. “Vietnamese companies do not really know much about Colombia’s market. I wish Colombia will provide more market information for Vietnamese businesses. The key is showing advantages and competitiveness of Colombian products over competitors, as well as the logistical capacity of Colombian businesses to Vietnam.”

VCCI President Cong said VCCI is the national representative of businesses in Vietnam, with over 220,000 member companies and over 200 member associations. VCCI has branches and chapters in many locations, supported by many experts. VCCI, the Embassy of Colombia in Vietnam and relevant agencies will jointly organize forums to promote and introduce potential capacity, facilitate businesses to meet each other, survey the market, seek business opportunities and deepen long-term cooperation ties in the coming time. ■

VCCI Pledges to Support Taekwang to Expand Investment in Vietnam

The Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) will support Taekwang and other businesses to seek partners and projects in Vietnam to foster Vietnam - South Korea business ties, said VCCI President Pham Tan Cong in his recent working session with Mr. Park Joo-Hwan, President of Taekwang Group, at VCCI Hanoi Head Office.

At the meeting, Mr. Park Joo-Hwan said Taekwang Group has been investing in Vietnam since 1994. Currently, with 70,000 employees and experts, Taekwang is one of the top footwear manufacturers in Vietnam and Asia. The group has many factories across southern Vietnam, in Dong Nai, Can Tho, Moc Bai (Tay Ninh) and Dak Lak. In the footwear business alone, Taekwang Group hires 135 contractors in Vietnam and spends US\$380 million on input purchases in Vietnam a year.

Nike-branded footwear products manufactured by the Group account for about 15% of Nike's total annual sales worldwide. In addition, the group has invested in real estate, entertainment, energy and materials trading in Vietnam. The firm is making efforts to complete high-quality residential complex projects that match Vietnam's development plans.

Mr. Park Joo-Hwan said, like most other foreign businesses in Vietnam, Taekwang has also been heavily



VCCI President Pham Tan Cong receives the delegation of Taekwang Group

affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, with its commitment to become a long-term investor in Vietnam, Taekwang will continue to boost business activity in Vietnam, he added.

"Receiving support from VCCI in the past years, Taekwang Group hopes that VCCI will further support the group in the future," he emphasized.

Highly valuing its operations in Vietnam, VCCI President Cong said that VCCI is always ready to support and listen to suggestions and recommendations from the group as well as other Korean businesses when they come to invest in Vietnam.

He hoped that Taekwang will further pay attention to environmental protection, renewable energy, and green energy. VCCI will always support Taekwang and other businesses to seek partners and projects in Vietnam.

Thu Ha

UK Minister for Asia Visits Vietnam to Forge Closer Economic Ties

The UK's Minister of State for Asia, Amanda Milling, made her first 4-day visit to Vietnam from March 27-30 to promote collaboration on bilateral and global issues.

During her visit, the Minister had a courtesy meeting with Vietnam's Foreign Minister Bui Thanh Son and co-chaired the 'UK-Vietnam Strategic Dialogue' with Vietnamese Deputy Foreign Minister Pham Quang Hieu. The dialogue covered trade and investment; cooperation on climate, education, science and technology. They also exchanged views on regional security and Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Minister also met Mr. Le Hoai Trung, Head of the Central Commission for External Relations of the Communist Party of Vietnam, and Mr. Luong Tam Quang Deputy Minister for Public Security, to discuss tackling global security issues, human trafficking and transnational crime.

While in Hanoi, the Minister delivered opening remarks at the launch of Vietnam's National Trade Repository. Supported by the UK Government, this free-to-access online information platform provides the latest trade regulations and information for businesses, who export and import to and from Vietnam.

Thu Huyen

Vietnam National Trade Repository Launched

The Ministry of Industry and Trade of Vietnam (MOIT), in partnership with the UK Government, recently launched the Vietnam National Trade Repository (VNTR).

Developed by the MOIT and funded by the UK Government, VNTR is a free-to-access online information portal that will provide all the latest information in both English and Vietnamese on major contents such as tariff commitment schedules under the Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to which Vietnam is a party under the ASEAN framework; MFN tariffs and preferential tariffs under the FTAs; rules of origins; non-tariff measures (which are presented with the assistance of UNCTAD and following the international procedures and standardization); trade and customs related legal documents; customs procedures; administrative rulings in trade-related issues relevant to ASEAN economic cooperation; best practices on trade facilitation adopted by ASEAN member states; and the list of authorized economic operators, which are prioritized when implementing import-export procedures and customs clearance, of ATIGA member countries and other countries which are signatories to the FTAs between ASEAN and its partners.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Minister Do Thang Hai emphasized that the establishment of the VNTR fulfills Vietnam's commitment within ASEAN to improve the transparency of trade policies, facilitate regional trade, and support the business community with easier access to information about trade policies of countries within the region, so that enterprises can be more proactive in business strategy development and enhance their competitiveness.

VNTR will officially operate at the website <https://vntr.moit.gov.vn> and will be linked to and become an integral part of the ASEAN Trade Repository (ATR), ensuring the transparency of trade-related policies, trade facilitation and support to the ASEAN business community.

Giang Tu

CONSOLIDATING RESILIENCE FOR WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES

“The COVID-19 pandemic has had severe consequences on businesses, especially small and medium-sized ones owned by women,” said Madam Nguyen Thi Tuyet Minh, Chairwoman of the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council, at the recent Workshop on “Strengthening resilience and adaptability for business recovery and development” in Hanoi.

ANH MAI

Women-owned companies account for about 24% of total enterprises in Vietnam. This rate will likely increase to 27% by 2025 and 30% by 2030 under the National Strategy for Gender Equality 2020-2030. Women-owned businesses are becoming an important driving force of the country's economy, thanks to their growth in number, scale and influence.

However, the COVID-19 pandemic is like a terrible hurricane that destroys the human health and economic strength of countries around the world. The pandemic has wrecked Vietnamese businesses, including women-owned ones, causing them to face market shrinkage, supply disruption, labor shortage, rising cost and uncontrollable cash flows.

A business survey conducted by VCCI in 2021 showed that up to 93.9% of businesses are negatively impacted by the pandemic. Against that backdrop, 119,800 companies left the market, an increase of 17.8% over 2020 (data released by the General Statistics Office in 2021).

A quick study by the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VWEC) in March 2020 also showed that up to 72.2% of surveyed businesses said that the pandemic will cause a loss/narrowing of the consumption market; 62.9% believed that enterprises will lack working capital/cash flow; 44.4% answered that they will have to reduce their workforce; 29.6% answered that they will not be able to repay their mature bank loans and 25.9% said that they will face input shortages.

Against this backdrop, the Party and the government have made many timely and flexible decisions to support businesses to overcome this difficult period, including funding packages, financial and credit support, tax and fee exemption and reduction, and other social security support packages, she said. The Prime Minister issued Decision 749/QĐ-TTg dated June 3, 2020 approving the “National Digital Transformation Program to 2025, with a vision to 2030” and especially Resolution 11/NQ –CP dated January 30, 2022 on Socioeconomic Recovery and Development Program and Resolution 43 of the National Assembly on fiscal and monetary policies to support the program with an expected budget of VND350 trillion for three target groups, including enterprises, cooperatives, business households.

According to Mr. Nguyen Hoa Cuong, Deputy Director of the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM), in the context of the complicated COVID-19 pandemic development, the National Assembly and the Government issued resolutions on socioeconomic business recovery and development program and enterprises need to actively work hard to restructure and achieve the highest result in finance, digital transformation, Industry 4.0, and business connectivity and sustainable development to enhance their resilience and adaptability.

2022 is also the 5th edition of #SheMeansBusiness (2017 - 2022) in Vietnam, an initiative of Meta Platforms Inc. One of the efforts of the Vietnam Women's Entrepreneurs Council in the #SheMeansBusiness program over the past five years is supporting micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to improve their digital skills in reaching and retaining customers, promoting and branding products, as well as enhancing financial literacy in crisis response. “Meta-backed #SheMeansBusiness Program comes to Vietnamese women entrepreneurs at the right time as they are preparing for adaptation to the COVID-19 pandemic and potential crises,” Ms. Minh said.

“Over the past two years, we have supported more women entrepreneurs through training programs, on-demand learning resources to strengthen digital skills and financial management to grow their businesses. As we approach this anniversary, digital transformation has become more important than ever, and we look forward to continuing strong partnership between the two organizations to achieve our shared mission of unlocking the potential of digital transformation for women's entrepreneurs and fostering inclusive economic recovery,” said Ms. Beth Ann Lim, Director of Policy Programs and Government Outreach for the Asia Pacific and Global Head of #SheMeansBusiness, Meta Platforms Inc. ■

Vietnamese Businesses Likely to Have Opportunities to Join PPP Projects in India



“Vietnamese businesses have many opportunities to join public-private partnership (PPP) projects in India,” emphasized Trade Vietnam's trade counselor in India Bui Trung Thuong at the webinar entitled “India's economic development policy, regulation of public-private partnership in India and opportunities for Vietnamese businesses” recently organized by Vietnam Embassy in India.

GIANG TU

At the conference, Dr. Pradhumna Dutt Kaushik, an experienced researcher and consultant on international business issues, said that PPP in India was started in 1853 with the introduction of the Indian Railway Company, but the law on PPP was officially established in 1972. Infrastructure investment projects are financially supported by the government and implemented by private enterprises. Accordingly, the government will support through forms such as one-time financial support, revenue subsidies, guaranteed minimum annual turnover or corporate tax relief.

“The public-private partnership model bolsters the development by attracting investment and human resources from the private sector, and promoting competition and innovation capacity, reducing corruption, waste, and the burden on taxpayers. Up to now, there have been 1,824 public-private partnership projects with a total value of about US\$327 billion in India,” said Dr. Pradhumna Dutt Kaushik.

Recently, the Indian government has encouraged and strongly developed public-private partnership projects, typically the 1,380km-highway project linking capital New Delhi to the financial center of Mumbai with a total cost of about US\$13.5 billion. Once completed, the project will reduce travel time from 48 hours by truck and 24-26 hours by car to 18-20 hours and 12-13 hours, respectively. This is said to be the longest highway project in the world,

expected to be completed in March 2023.

Mr. Bui Trung Thuong said that Vietnamese enterprises have many opportunities to join PPP projects in India. Many Indian enterprises are interested in PPP projects in Vietnam in such fields as hydroelectric dams, tunnels, power transmission projects and clean water supply.

“Vietnam can learn from PPP models in India, there are already a number of Indian partners developing PPP projects in Vietnam,” said Bui Trung Thuong.

Forms of PPP are used in cooperation projects in India include BOT (build-operate-transfer); BOO (build-own-operate), BOOT (build-own-operate-transfer), DBF (design-build-finance), DBFO (design-construction-finance-operation), DBO (design-build-operate), BLT (build-lease-transfer), BTO (build-transfer-operate); DBFOM (design-build-finance-operate-management), LROT (lease-renovation-operate-transfer); DCMF (design-build-management-finance), BOOR (build-own-operate-remove); leasing & joint venture; operation & maintenance contract, cooperation agreement.

“The Vietnamese Trade Office will support Vietnamese businesses to participate in PPP projects in India and encourage them to submit specific proposals. On that basis, the Trade Office will work with experts and Indian partners to organize suitable programs regarding their proposals,” pledged Vietnam Trade Counselor Bui Trung Thuong. ■

Open Banking - Inevitable Trend

Open banking enables banks to access a wide range of customers at a reasonable cost, using other applications of partners to reduce transaction processing time and manual work, build optimal business solutions and provide the most comprehensive and convenient services for customers.

Typically, commercial banks modernize multi-utility technologies such as mobile banking, internet banking, contactless payment and QR code. Open banking platforms also help connect and integrate banking services into payment of power, water, telecom, health, education and online public service bills.

Dr. Nguyen Quoc Hung, General Secretary of the Vietnam Bankers Association (VNBA), said that banks can create personalized products and services, thus helping them retain customers and increase customer loyalty. In addition, access to customer data helps banks accurately rate customer credit. Open banking allows third parties to develop better personal financial management (PFM) applications, foster competition in the banking industry, and force traditional banks to enhance financial services.

Open banking is one of the important milestones in fintech transformation enabling digital transformation towards smartness and openness and creating new business opportunities for banks. The results are very positive but there are also possible risks resulting from this open model. Therefore, banks need to consider and prepare well to deal with input risks, synergistic effects and unpredictable problems, he said, adding that there is a need to build a release and isolation policy that ensures API persistence.

According to Dr. Can Van Luc, a banking expert, there are many emerging financial services, including open banking, peer-to-peer (P2P) lending and crowdfunding. In open banking, there are three popular models. The first is a real plus (that is to say, the bank integrates third-party services in the ecosystem and sells them to its customers in addition to its core services). Currently, banks in Vietnam are mainly using this model. The second is the passive



Open banking is a new and potential business model that allows third parties to create applications and provide services with banks' data. The application programming interface (API) is a technology that allows third parties to access open data or secure access to an organization's closed data with the consent of the data owner and in compliance with relevant laws.

QUYNH CHI

model. With this model, the lender will be the agent and distributor for some large-scale third parties, such as bigtech. The third is a relatively optimal integrated model consistent with current trends. With this model, the bank will build its own platforms and have the right to allow a third party to close or open the connection, depending on its risk approach. Thus, banks can access many different products and services, both banking and non-banking services at the same time.

However, according to Mr. Hung, the shift of the banking business model from a closed ecosystem to an open one will be an important step that brings more benefits for the economy but also carries risks and challenges with it. Open banking is an inevitable trend of banking business in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Therefore, Vietnamese commercial banks need to actively transform, ensure competitive advantages and meet the requirements of the roadmap for building a

national digital banking system. Moreover, regulatory agencies also need to accelerate the completion of the legal framework related to digital technology application in banking activities.

Mr. Pham Tien Dung, Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Vietnam, said that open banking is a new topic that needs to be further researched because it will need to be fully understood before being added to the policy.

He added, in the near future, the SBV will finalize a draft to replace Decree 101/2012/ND-CP on non cash payment and issue a circular on open API in the payment field. The Government will also issue a decree on personal data privacy protection, electronic identification and authentication, directly related to operations of banks and the whole banking system. For that reason, banks and SBV units need to coordinate effectively in this matter.

He also noted that the Policy Committee and the VNBA need to continue to study this topic, specify and propose services deployed on Open API, thereby providing a basis to advise the SBV, ministries, branches and the Government to promulgate appropriate policies on open banking development in Vietnam. ■

Vietnam Remains Safe Destination for Foreign Investors



FDI business community increasingly confident

Actively improving the business and investment environment not only helps Vietnam increase opportunities to attract investment flows, but also enhances the competitiveness of the business sector and the economy in the new normal context. This is considered the driving force and a "key" for growth in 2022 and beyond.

In fact, the investment and business environment of Vietnam has improved in recent years, which is highly appreciated by domestic and international business communities. From 2014 to now, every year, the government has issued solutions for better investment and business environment and stronger national competitiveness, including Resolutions 19/NQ-CP (from 2014 to 2018) and Resolutions 02/NQ-CP (from 2019 to 2022). Resolutions 02/NQ-CP of 2022 was issued, with expansion in space, scope of content, goals and targets.

By 2019, Vietnam cut more than 50% of business conditions as reported by ministries and sectors. Besides, many indicators of the business environment also picked up. The number of conditional investment and business lines was slashed, from 267 occupations in 2014 to 243 in 2016 and further to 227 in 2020.

In addition, Vietnam's position on global prestigious rankings has been raised, which has built up the confidence of investors and businesses. Specifically, the Global Competitiveness Index 4.0 (announced by the

Vietnam's selective investment attraction policy, designed to reduce quantity, increase quality and eliminate small-scale projects with little added value, has begun to work effectively. Vietnam continues to be a safe, attractive and potential investment destination for foreign investors.

THU HA

World Economic Forum - WEF) ranked No. 67 out of 141 countries (in 2019), 10 places higher than in 2018. The Global Innovation Index (announced by the World Intellectual Property Organization - WIPO) ranked No. 44 out of 132 countries in 2021. The E-Government Development Index (announced by the United Nations - UN) ranked 86th in 2020, two places higher than in 2018. The Sustainable Development Goals Index (by the UN) ranked No. 51 out of 165 countries in 2021, climbing up 37 places over 2016.

In particular, Vietnam has recently officially restored the visa policy as before the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak in order to reopen the door to international tourists from March 15. This not only brings about a positive effect on tourism, but is also expected to make significant contributions to drawing more foreign investment into Vietnam.

Promoting qualified investment projects

As proof of these efforts, despite the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, FDI inflows have still poured into Vietnam in recent years. In the year to February 20, 2022, the total registered foreign direct investment (FDI) approximated US\$5 billion, down 8.5% year on year. 183 existing projects registered to invest an additional US\$631.8 million in the period, up 45.2% in projects but down 80.9% in value.

The fresh FDI fund decreased sharply in the first two months of 2022 from a year earlier because many large-scale projects of over US\$100 million were licensed in January and February of 2021. Sizeable projects accounted for 69.2% of the total new registered FDI fund in the first two months of 2021, especially the US\$1.3 billion O Mon II Thermal Power Project. Meanwhile, in the corresponding period of 2022, only one large project registered to invest US\$136.4 million.

According to economic experts, this decline may only be temporary as large-scale projects are still waiting for being licensed. Thus, it is likely not to affect the recovery FDI inflow trend into Vietnam. In the coming time, Vietnam will need to promote quality investment. Accordingly, it is not important to attract more FDI but high-quality FDI. Generally, those with less intensive land, energy and labor will be prioritized. The





☞ manufacturing and processing sector and service will be promoted to attract FDI capital in the coming time.

In fact, over the past time, Vietnam's investment attraction policy, aimed to reduce the quantity, increase quality and eliminate small-scale projects with little added value, has begun to work effectively. The share of FDI funds invested in highly polluted industries using outdated technologies such as textile dyeing has gradually diminished. Not only growing in number, FDI inflows to Vietnam are also bringing high-quality projects that use green technologies and renewable energy. Typically, LEGO Group (Denmark) signed a memorandum of understanding with Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park Co., Ltd (VSIP) to build a new factory in Vietnam. As planned, this is LEGO's first carbon-neutral factory energized by solar energy that causes no environmental pollution, dust or waste.

Minister of Planning and Investment Nguyen Chi Dung said that the Ministry is submitting seven criteria on FDI selection to the Prime Minister: Investment unit rate on the area of land, number of employees, high technology content; technology transfer commitment of investors, ability to link with the domestic business sector, environmental protection, and guaranteed national defense and security.

To do this, Vietnam will adopt active FDI attraction policies. In addition to proactively preparing infrastructure for FDI enterprises, many localities are also looking for investors through direct meetings rather than waiting for them to arrive. At the same time, Vietnam is committed to creating the most favorable conditions, promptly removing difficulties and obstacles for investors to work and develop stably in the long run. ■

Total Resources for Socioeconomic Development Plan

The socioeconomic system of a country, either developed or developing, is always a machine integrated with soft and hard infrastructure to move toward inclusive and sustainable development. Every year, countries make national policies to operate that conventional machine to develop the nation and bring well-being to their people.

Dr. DOAN DUY KHUONG

FORMER VCCI VICE PRESIDENT



In early 2022, the Government of Vietnam issued Resolution 01/NQ-CP on the main tasks and solutions to run the country's socioeconomic development engine. With six key points of view and 12 central tasks and solutions, the Government will strive to achieve a GDP

growth of 6-6.5% and GDP per capita of US\$3,900; disburse 100% of the planned public investment fund; develop culture in harmony and on par with socioeconomic development; and improve the capacity of the health system, especially preventive medicine and primary healthcare. However, to run that machine, it is necessary to have energy sources or resources or comprehensive resource models to work fully and sustainably in today's volatile global environment.

Resolution 01 and other following resolutions of the government early in the year underlined resources such as state budget, infrastructure development, culture and business environment among others. However, according to economists, at the macro level, to achieve sustainable development and fulfill socioeconomic development tasks, it is necessary to mobilize all national resources more comprehensively. Moreover, for sustainable and consistent socioeconomic development, it is necessary to have a comprehensive resource model for the socioeconomic machine to work smoothly and perfectly in a 3-D metaverse: Economy, Society and Environment

Five key resources

According to economists, in a market economy, capital sources are a key factor to run the entire economy, including five types of capital: Finance, resource, material, people and society. All resources are capable of creating output product lines to fulfill socioeconomic development tasks. Financial capital facilitates economic production even though it is not production itself. Finance plays an extremely important role in the development of any country. Therefore, finance is always a top instrument of sanctions of large countries against hostile countries. Resource capital is made up of natural resources and ecosystem services. Wherein, the geopolitical position of a country is also an important resource capital. Vietnam, with an important position on the East Sea, is always an indispensable partner in the agenda of the Indo-Pacific region. Physical material capital includes all the physical assets that a country produces. It shows not only the competitiveness but also the prestige and potential of a country when others often flaunt their security strength with advanced weapons they made. This resource also makes it possible for some countries without natural resources to make many material products and become rich. Human capital is an individual's productive capacity, inherited and acquired through education and training. Human strength will be maximized in a society with guaranteed salary, working conditions and social security policies. Social capital refers to institutions that help maintain and develop human capital through partnership. If social activity brings any potential benefit or cost, it may be reasonable to consider it a source of social capital. These can include factors that bolster social interaction and exchange, develop norms for these interactions, and even factors that form beliefs and values that are part of social culture. The strength of social capital comes from

the scale of political-economic institutions, legal environment, business, culture, education, social organization and family, among others.

Sustainable development toward a prosperous society requires quantifying, mobilizing, using effectively, and above all, increasing all capital sources, including natural resources, which are often exhausted due to economic production. In other words, national resources must be actively and effectively managed.

Active and effective resources management

Effective resources management means maintaining and, if possible, enhancing the five capital sources rather than depleting or degrading them. Should these also be core contents of action programs and resolutions of the Government, central and local authorities to achieve annual socioeconomic development goals consistently and realistically? In essence, the five resources must be linked together and must be managed synchronously with economic development. Socioeconomic goals can be successfully achieved, based on resources, often with only one optimal solution. A sustainable socioeconomic engine must be operated by the Government to create the desired flow of goods and services by using capital sources without depleting them.

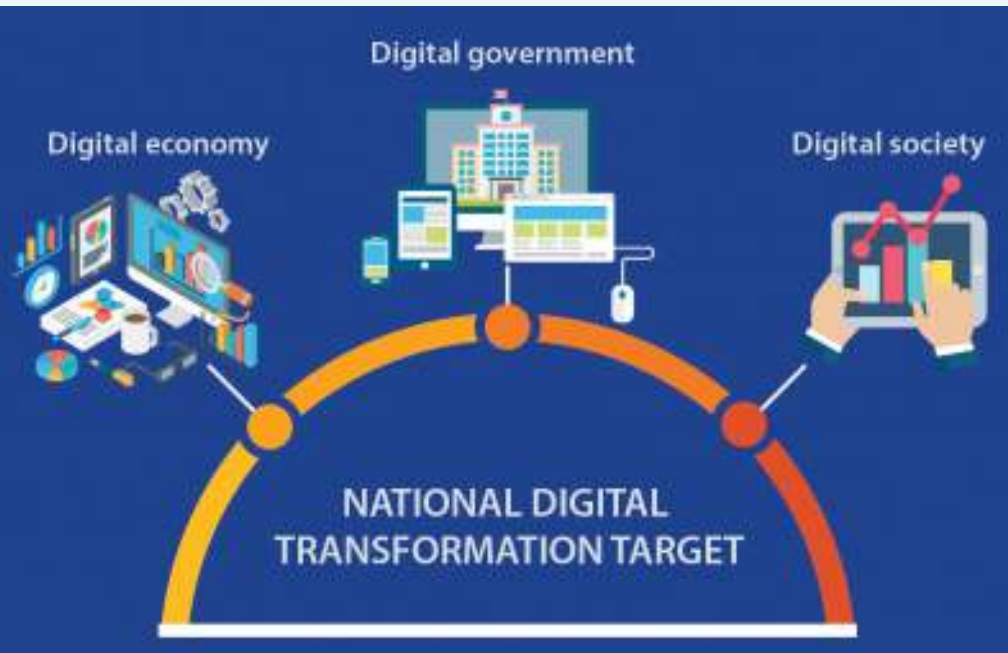
Should it be necessary to focus on restructuring and streamlining the apparatus as stated in the Document of the 13th National Party Congress: "...Continue to reform governmental organization and operation toward leanness and efficiency and effectiveness" to successfully manage the five resources to not only recover the economy in the wake of the pandemic but also carry out socioeconomic development plans and strategies. It is necessary to consider the five resources as a means and an end to lead the nation to prosperity.

The business sector can identify new business models to create more national quality products in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to enhance resource efficiency during production processes and needs to understand that "less material" can mean "more value". Building a good business culture contributes to the increase of the country's social capital.

People need to be more aware of the role that each of us can play through product selection, cultural construction and social consumption behaviors by preserving sustainable traditions and respecting the law.

The Communist Party of Vietnam has determined that one of the key tasks of its 13th Congress is "Arousing aspiration for development towards a prosperous and happy country". In that process, actively and comprehensively managing the five resources - Finance, resource, material, people and society - will be the five golden stars that bring the socioeconomic machine into a metaverse of three pillars - Economy, Society and Environment - to work toward the vision of a country of rule of law and humanity as Vietnam celebrates the 100th anniversary. ■

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR VIETNAM DIGITAL GOVERNMENT TRANSFORMATION



“Vietnam needs to continue to better combine institutional process reform with technological opportunities for effective national governance in the digital age. The proposed digital government transformation program for 2021-2025 needs to go beyond aspirational statements or procedural measures to outline a clearly prioritized and sequenced action plan.”

QUYNH ANH

These are the main messages stated in the World Bank's policy report regarding Vietnam's digital government transformation.

Digital database systems and service platforms

All governments around the globe don't want to be left behind in digital transformation. Therefore, they are seizing opportunities and handling the challenges posed by the disruptive technology trend. However, among many competing pressures, many government apparatuses are focusing on technology, ignoring the need for extensive transformation for that

technology to become effective in order to improve the way the government provides services to the people.

For an emerging economy like Vietnam, digital government transformation not only implies adequate budgetary investment in information and communication technology (ICT) annually and in the medium term. The focus of digital government transformation is to modernize the ways the Government operates, with the support of technology-based applications. Because digital government transformation occurs at the intersection of technological and institutional transformation, it is very different from many other conventional infrastructure investment programs. Digital Government outcomes require a combined investment for institutional and organizational transformation, human capital improvements, and how and to what extent investment capital is mobilized. Adopting an extensive approach is a necessary condition for realizing tangible improvements, as opposed to simply being confused in the implementation or still performing the usual business operations as before.

Successful transformation involves not only digitizing public sector processes and data to transform the daily lives of citizens, businesses and officials, but also forming the foundations and features. According to the World Bank, the fundamental elements for digital government

include basic and universal digital connectivity, digital identifiers and payment mechanisms for people to exploit digital services, as well as security and data integration platforms. Feature elements are the ways in which those platforms are brought together to deliver real front-line service results. In areas such as digital connectivity, Vietnam has started with the right position, although it is expected that the next-generation 5G network will continue to be a new threshold to strive for in this area, including for investment by private investors. However, in areas such as digital identity, the ability to protect and operate digital data assets in the public sector, and digital payments, Vietnam is not only behind many correlated countries, but also lags behind in terms of potential to become a breakthrough country in digital government. According to the World Bank, while the pioneering countries in digital government in the world today have formed and maintained a trajectory towards results, Vietnam needs to learn about experiences and shortcomings in digital government initiatives at home and abroad.

The condition for a successful transition is to mobilize adequate resources for the Digital Government. However, international experience in digital government transformation shows that the problem is not just how many resources, but how to allocate resources and invest in digital government functions and levels of government. Today's data wallet is a new asset like oil was in the past; the Government needs to improve the way in which the public sector digital assets are formed, exploited and protected.

The main challenge – but also an opportunity – for the overall digital transformation in Vietnam remains the country-specific decentralized model. Although Vietnam is a unitary country, the country's 63 provinces are still responsible for most of the decision-making and implementation of public services at the grassroots level. Delivering critical Digital Government services requires securing digital database systems and service platforms to efficiently and securely exploit those resources.

Roadmap for successful digital government transformation

According to the report of the World Bank, whether it is the goal about the competitiveness of the digital economy, Industry 4.0, solutions for smart cities, or simply the government's ability to implement, Vietnam needs to take practical steps to transform digital government at both central and local levels to determine



the impact of using financial resources for this important area in the next phase of development in Vietnam.

Through the lens of institutional reform and technological modernization to prioritize and sequence the results of Digital Government, the World Bank report recommends three main pillars to address challenges in digital government transformation.

Firstly, it is necessary to concretize a digital government transformation program. This program must represent the communication vision of “Digital by Design” for investment in the foundation elements and features of Digital Government in the period 2021-2025 and beyond. The Digital Government Transformation Program also needs to outline a solid outcome framework for digital transformation in the medium term combined with overall cost-benefit analysis (CBA) approaches to investment for the fundamentals and features both at central and provincial level in the direction of selection. This program must change the mindset to move beyond a narrow focus on ICT projects to a mindset about digital assets that need to be owned and protected. This mindset can be extended through the lens of public asset governance (PAG) to review and share key digital data, with a view to improving digital government outcomes, including through strengthening options for gathering public feedback

In addition, it is necessary to empower and create incentives for local governments to continue to innovate in digital government: The national government needs to outline a facilitation mechanism to promote digital transformation and innovation, while ensuring the delivery of important foundational elements such as digital identity, data exchange standards, and payments.

In particular, it is necessary to retain and invest in skills for digital transformation, maintaining some skills internally, combined with modernization in the entire public sector. At the heart of this program is the need to focus on investing in people and managing changes. ■



Korea's Amkor Technology Inc. signs a cooperation deal with Bac Ninh province to embark on a plant to manufacture semiconductor products

BAC NINH

CREATING BREAKTHROUGH IN 2022

In 2021 Bac Ninh province stepped up efforts to prevent the COVID-19 pandemic and helped businesses recover, successfully attracting investment for local social-economic development, creating a breakthrough in 2022.

HA THANH

Business recovery

"Many new businesses were established in 2021; domestic and foreign investment capital both increased by 2.7 times compared to 2020 and now all businesses are continuing to stabilize production and recovering," said Mr. Nguyen Dinh Xuan, Director of Bac Ninh Department of Planning and Investment, talking with Vietnam Business Forum's reporter.

Bac Ninh is one of the first localities affected by the rapidly spreading outbreak of the 4th COVID-19 pandemic. The most dangerous situation was when the infection appeared in industrial zones, including clusters and factories, wearing down the resilience of businesses and workers. However, with great determination, Bac Ninh was committed to always working side by side with businesses. Provincial leaders made quick and bold decisions, turning pressure into dynamic adaptive motivation to realize "dual goals". The province organized dialogues, established quick response teams to support enterprises, promptly removed difficulties, created maximum conditions for enterprises to maintain and develop production and business activities, and stabilized jobs.

In order for the business community in Bac Ninh province to have more

room for development and recovery, Bac Ninh province has highly focused on implementing practical and specific solutions to remove difficulties and support business development, affirming Bac Ninh as an attractive and safe destination for investors.

Accordingly, in 2021, the Department of Planning and Investment actively and synchronously implemented many solutions to reform administrative procedures and improve the investment environment. The department systematized and publicized the order and procedures for business investment in the province. It also publicized administrative procedures on the Department's website and at the Provincial Public Administration Center, simplified administrative procedures, cut down the time to implement administrative procedures, and collaborated with the Provincial Public Administration Center in receiving, handling and returning administrative procedure results. The Department also strengthened the application of IT in solving problems and administrative procedures. The Department also continued to promote the implementation of online public services at level 3 and level 4 when carrying out business registration.

The Department has also implemented the program of free distribution of public digital signatures and return business registration results via postal service, strictly complying with regulations on citizen reception. The Department also regularly directs the Center for Investment, Trade and Tourism Promotion to actively promote business support activities through the provision of consulting services. The Department develops projects and programs to support startups in the province and supports women's entrepreneurship. The Department of Planning and Investment of Bac Ninh also coordinates with the People's Committees of districts to handle administrative procedures for business registration at the District Public Administration Center.

For the improvement of the business investment environment, Bac Ninh has focused on the effective and flexible control of the COVID-19 pandemic, promptly removing support and removing difficulties, improving supporting policies for small and medium businesses and start-ups.

The province has also focused on policy dialogue, on-the-spot investment promotion and strengthened the connection between the FDI sector and the domestic economic sector. Bac Ninh has reviewed and evaluated investment projects using large land areas, helping improve the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises. The province has also focused on investment support, technological innovation associated with corporate governance innovation, environmental treatment, quality management and social responsibility.

Besides, the province has promoted structural transformation, developed high-tech industries, supported industries, increased science and technology content and raised the proportion of prices localization value in the product.



A corner of intersection, Dai Phuc ward, Bac Ninh city, one of the axis connecting traffic and urban development of the province

Investment attraction prospect in 2022

Director of the Department of Planning and Investment Nguyen Dinh Xuan emphasized that by the end of 2021, Bac Ninh had a total newly registered investment capital of US\$2.2 billion. With this motivation, it is believed that, in 2022, Bac Ninh will continue to be a "safe destination for production and investment" of domestic and foreign investors.

Therefore, in 2022, Bac Ninh province will focus on completing the provincial planning for the period of 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050, and submit it to the Prime Minister for approval as a basis for promoting socio-economic development and investment attraction with the following objectives: developing synchronously technical and social infrastructure, protecting landscape and environment; and applying IT to urban planning and construction, housing and smart works, towards building a smart Bac Ninh urban area. In the coming time, Bac Ninh province will focus on attracting and selecting investors to implement technical infrastructure works in large-scale urban areas; commercial, service, tourism, educational, medical and entertainment zones at the regional level and urban infrastructure. Besides, the province will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of state management; promote digital transformation, develop a digital economy and digital society.

The province will effectively implement the PAR Master Program for the period of 2021-2030, and improve the management of State agencies. Bac Ninh will also modernize the overall architecture of e-government and promote smart urban development. It will accelerate digital transformation projects of industries and fields towards the digital government, digital economy and digital society. The province will implement the Digital Transformation Project for the period of 2021-2025, with a vision to 2030; promptly apply modern and advanced technologies in management and administration, contributing to the achievement of the goal of becoming one of the top 10 localities in the country on the ICT Index. ■

Extending High Growth Momentum



Ms. Dao Hong Lan, Secretary of the Bac Ninh Provincial Party Committee, addresses the meeting with the Department of Industry and Trade

Despite being affected by the complicatedly developed COVID-19 pandemic, Bac Ninh province achieved optimistic results in industry and trade in 2021, featuring the industrial production growth index of 9.67% and merchandise export growth of 15.7% (highest in the nation). This is an important driving force for the sector to keep going up in 2022.

HA THANH

Happily remarking on its achievements, Mr. Tran Ngoc Thuc, Director of Bac Ninh Department of Industry and Trade, said, with the close care and timely guidance of local authorities for successful application of the dual goals of containing the COVID-19 pandemic and effectively boosting socioeconomic development, the province endeavored to effectively utilize free trade agreements, expand and diversify export markets, and boost industrial output. The province's industrial structure continued to move toward the desired pattern. The index of industrial production (IIP) grew by 9.67% over 2020; and the sector's GRDP expanded 9.92%. The processing and manufacturing sector continued to account for a high share of industrial development, with 15 out of 24 growing key industrial products. Many products posted high growth like casual clothes (58.4%), water spoilers (35.6%), electronic components (29.6%), smart watches (27%), and vitamin-containing pharmaceuticals (24.2%).

Despite being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the province has adopted many effective solutions to promote trade and service, expand the market, stimulate consumer demand, and foster e-commerce development to ensure the supply and demand of goods for people and businesses.

In 2021, the total retail revenue of consumer goods and services was estimated at VND61.9 trillion (US\$3 billion), fulfilling 91.7% of the full-year plan, down 0.7% from 2020. In particular, the total import and export value was forecast at US\$84.1 billion,

22.2% higher than the yearly plan, 16.2% higher than in 2020. Of the sum, merchandise exports were valued at US\$45.2 billion, 24% higher than the plan and 15.7% higher than in 2020.

To uphold the results in 2021, the department has set out some key tasks for 2022, said Director Thuc. It seriously adhered to the leadership and direction of the Provincial Party Committee, the Provincial People's Council, the Provincial People's Committee and the Ministry of Industry and Trade to perform its tasks and achieve its targets. The department will carry out solutions to ensure the supply and demand balance and stabilize the supply for the market during high-demand seasons in 2022.

In addition, the Department of Industry and Trade will work with consultants to review the spatial arrangement of resources for the industry, trade and energy integrated into the provincial planning to lay the groundwork for maintaining and developing the province's industry and trade sector in 2021-2030. The department will urgently finalize the plan for Bac Ninh industrial zone development in 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050.

The department will continue to coordinate with relevant bodies and localities to deploy consistent measures to safely and flexibly adapt to, and effectively control the COVID-19 pandemic, and promptly address difficulties in supporting enterprises and people to restore their business and livelihoods and stabilize the market. The agency will effectively implement the action plan for implementation of Conclusion 306-TB/TU dated 10/11/2021 of Bac Ninh Provincial Party Committee. ■



Bac Ninh province will strive to obtain a total import and export value of US\$92.07 billion in 2022, of which exports will account for US\$48.65 billion. Retail revenue of consumer goods and services will amount to VND69.55 trillion (US\$3 billion).



ADVANCING DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION AND INTEGRATION



Mr. Nghiem Van Hach, Deputy Director of Bac Ninh Department of Information and Communications

According to the announcement of the Ministry of Information and Communications (MIC) on October 19, 2021 on the results of the assessment of digital transformation at ministerial and provincial levels in 2020, Bac Ninh province ranked 3rd out of 63 provinces/cities nationwide, with its Digital Government Index ranking 8th, its Digital Economy Index ranking 2nd and its Society Index ranking 2nd. These remarkable results are attributed to the information and communication industry in Bac Ninh province.

Accordingly, the IT technical infrastructure in the state agencies of the province has been gradually improved, basically meeting the needs of deploying information systems in the province. Currently, at the Smart City Data Center, there are shared information systems of the province managed by the Department of Information and

Communications and a number of information systems and databases of some other agencies. In addition, data from the surveillance camera system in Bac Ninh city is also stored centrally at the Smart City Data Center. It has deployed a dedicated data transmission network of Party and State agencies in the province with 177 points connecting all the departments, committees and sectors under the Provincial People's Committee; People's Committees of districts, cities and 126 communes, wards and townships. All State agencies at provincial, district level and People's Committees at commune levels have been connected to LAN and high-speed Internet; 100% of computers of cadres, civil servants and public employees are connected to the internet. The rate of cadres and civil servants who have computers to use is high: 100% of provincial-level cadres and civil servants; 100% of district-level cadres and civil servants, and over 80% of commune-level cadres and civil servants have computers to use in their work.

The industry has also deployed a three-level Online Video Conferencing system in the whole province with 160 connection points on the basis of specialized data transmission networks of the Party and State agencies to serve internal online meetings in the province as well as online meetings between the Provincial People's Committee and the Government and ministries and sectors at the Central level. In particular, during the complicated development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Online Video Conferencing system contributed greatly to the prevention and control of the pandemic, as well as strongly promoting the process of digital transformation implementation in the province. In addition, it provides free Wifi coverage in Bac Ninh city with more than 50 free wifi hotspots.

The province has effectively implemented the IT application and digital transformation such as the unified Document Management and Administration system from the provincial to commune levels and Party agencies, mass organizations with integrated digital signatures; The official email system of Bac Ninh province has granted more than 11,000 email accounts to agencies and units.

The provincial electronic information portal is deployed and provided at <http://bacninh.gov.vn/> supporting two languages: Vietnamese and English. The portal is integrated with the function of receiving, processing and responding to complaints from people and businesses, connecting with the administrative document management system. In addition, the integration with the "E-Government of Bac Ninh province" channel on Zalo application makes sending feedback and recommendations quick and convenient for people and businesses. ■

Effective Administration of Natural Resources and Environment



Bac Ninh provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment has gained a lot of important achievements; worked as a significant advisor to the Provincial People's Committee on effective implementation of many solutions regarding State administration of natural resources and environment and facilitated citizens and enterprises to carry out administrative procedures. Vietnam Business Forum's reporter has an interview with Mr. **Nguyen Xuan Thanh**, Director of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment of Bac Ninh province, on this issue. **Nguyet Tham** reports.

Could you please tell us about outstanding achievements in the State administration of natural resources and environment in Bac Ninh province in the past year?

In 2021, facing the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment performed well in the State administration of natural resources and environment in Bac Ninh province. We promptly issued regulatory documents for the enactment of Decree 148/2020/ND-CP of the Government dated December 18, 2020; summarized implementation results of Resolution 19-NQ/TW of the Party Central Committee on continued reform of land policies and laws; reviewed the enforcement of the Land Law and amendments to the Land Law; strengthened rectification of State land management; assessed three years of applying Directive 29-CT/TU dated September 25, 2018 of the Standing Board of the Provincial Party Committee on strengthening Party leadership in land management.

Besides, we completed approving the land use plan in 2021-2030 and the land use plan in 2021 for eight districts and cities; devised the 5-year land use plan for Bac Ninh province in 2021-2025; handed over land and carried out land compensation and site clearance for some important projects to provide the land fund for domestic and foreign investors in industrial parks such as Yen Phong Industrial II Park - Phase C; VSIP Bac Ninh II Industrial, Commercial and Service Park; Nam Son - Hap Linh Industrial Park; Thuan Thanh II Industrial Park; Thuan Thanh III Industrial Park - Section B; Gia Binh II

Industrial Park; Thuan Thanh III Industrial Park - Division B; and serviced residential land projects.

We coordinated with other relevant agencies to guide medical facilities, quarantine facilities and households to handle infectious waste of COVID-19. We focused on dealing with environmental pollution in some environmental hotspots in longstanding handicraft villages in Phong Khe Ward and Phu Lam Industrial Complex to significantly improve the Cau River's environment.

We also carried out and scaled up sorting and treatment of municipal organic solid waste with indigenous microorganisms (IMO); and launched the project on collection, transportation and treatment of solid waste backlog in Van Mon commune, Yen Phong district. Administrative procedures are handled at public administration centers of the province and districts, thus enhancing public and business satisfaction with administrative services and procedures. We made gradual progress in addressing violations of natural resources and the environment in the province.

How have you improved administrative procedures?

We've delivered online public services (Level 3 for one administrative procedure; Level 4 for two administrative procedures); and reviewed and provided one administrative procedure on the single-window portal at Provincial and District Public Administration Centers. We've publicized new administrative procedures and revised and

supplemented regulations on land, water resources and the environment under our jurisdiction. We've maintained effective application of social networks and mobile platforms in receiving and responding to feedback, recommendations and measuring public satisfaction; used electronic documents and digital signatures; and implemented digital transformation, data integration and sharing to improve public service efficiency.

We've also completed rearranging and reorganizing affiliated units and employees. We've reduced one affiliated service office. The Environmental Protection Office no longer has any affiliated units. We've strictly received and handled complaints from individuals and organizations; raised the spirit and responsibility of public employees, especially agency leaders, in performing public administration reform (PAR) tasks. In 2021, as many as 81,921 records were received at the Provincial and District Public Administration Centers.

In general, the settlement of administrative procedures pertaining to natural resources and environment within the jurisdiction of the department is always on time and highly appreciated by people and businesses, helping increase investment inflows and create momentum for local socioeconomic development.

What solutions have you taken to improve the management of land, natural resources and environmental protection?

In 2022 and beyond, the management of natural resources and the environment will be increasingly important and complicated due to pressures from population growth, industrial development, handicraft production and urbanization in the province. The environment of handicraft villages, residential areas and industrial zones, exposed to high pollution risks and the complicated COVID-19 pandemic development, are difficult and challenging for economic development of the province and the sector. In order to perform its functions and tasks, in the coming time, we will focus on a number of key tasks and solutions as follows:

Closely following directives and work programs of the Provincial Party Committee, the Provincial People's Council and Provincial People's Committee to well carry out tasks in 2022; strengthening communications to

raise awareness of protection and use of natural resources and environment in the community, organizations and individuals through the mass media; implementing flexible prevention, control and adaptation measures to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seriously carrying out public administration reform, with a focus on settlement of administrative procedures; actively reviewing, promptly amending and supplementing administrative procedures or abolishing inappropriate ones; enhancing publicity and transparency of administrative procedures within its authority; receiving applications and delivering results at the Provincial and District Public Administration Centers and on relevant websites; stepping up the information technology application to administration; and integrating online payment services for financial obligations on land of households and individuals on the National Public Service Portal.

Actively coordinating with branches and localities to solve and remove difficulties and obstacles in enacting policies and laws on natural resources and environment in the province; intensifying inspection of regulatory compliance of policies and laws on natural resources and environment; resolutely handling and proposing strict violation handling; and strengthening the organization and apparatus of personnel to address limitations and weaknesses to minimize frustrations to people, organizations and businesses.

Last but not least, improving the effect of mobilizing investment resources to carry out programs and projects for State administration of natural resources and environment; carrying out programs, projects and schemes to ensure higher quality and quicker progress of natural resource management and environmental protection in the province.

Thank you very much!



Conference on tasks of Provincial Department of Natural Resources and Environment in 2022

TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

LAUNCHPAD FOR DEVELOPMENT

To create a launchpad for new breakthrough development enabling Bac Ninh province to become a centrally run city by 2025, Bac Ninh has focused on carrying out key projects with a total public investment budget of VND43,427 billion (US\$1.9 billion), including Phat Tich - Dai Dong Thanh Bridge, Kenh Vang Bridge and ring road 4 - Hanoi region.

HA THANH**Specific goals**

Based on the Bac Ninh urban area planning to 2035, with a vision to 2050, Bac Ninh aims to become a centrally run first-grade city, laying the groundwork for building Bac Ninh into a centrally governed city by 2025, a core activity of the Department of Transport, said Mr. Nguyen Minh Hieu, Deputy Director of the Department, in a talk with to the reporter of Vietnam Business Forum.

Therefore, from now to 2025, the total public investment budget is expected to amount to VND43,427 billion. The priority for medium-term public budget disbursement will be key industries and fields, especially transport projects that will enhance connectivity, create motivation and improve inter-regional effects.

Practical work

Most notably, Kenh Vang Bridge connecting Bac Ninh with Hai Duong province was approved for investment at the end of May 2021. The project is invested by Bac Ninh Traffic Construction Project Management Board with a total cost of nearly VND1,600 billion from 2022 to 2025.

Its main items include building Kenh Vang Bridge and two roads leading to the bridge. It runs from National Highway 17 in Gia Binh district to National Highway 37, Hai Duong province.

According to the design, Kenh Vang Bridge is 740 m long, 23.5 m wide, built with prestressed reinforced concrete. The leading roadways to both ends of the bridge



**Mr. Nguyen Minh Hieu, Deputy Director of
Bac Ninh Department of Transport**

are 12.6 km long, 15 m wide.

Currently, Bac Ninh Traffic Construction Project Management Board is coordinating with relevant localities and agencies to actively start the project on time.

Also according to the Bac Ninh urban development master plan to 2030, with a vision to 2050, another important project expected to be embarked in late 2022 or early 2023 is ring road 4 of Hanoi region. The road, 111.2 km in total length, costs more than VND94 trillion. It will run 24.2 km through Bac Ninh province (Thuan Thanh, Que Vo and Gia Binh districts, and Bac Ninh City).

The 6-lane ring road is 120 - 135 m wide, flanked by two green corridors. In the first phase, the project will carry out site clearance and build a 4-lane road of 17 m

BREAKTHROUGHS

wide. This new traffic route includes the construction of Hoai Thuong Bridge over the Duong River, interest National Highway 38 and National Highway 17, Noi Bai - Ha Long Expressway and various provincial roads.

When surveying the project, Bac Ninh province proposed, and gained approval, to invest in a 9km extension from Noi Bai - Lao Cai Highway to Hanoi - Bac Giang Expressway, aiming to encircle ring road 4 as planned. The purpose is interconnecting localities (Hanoi, Hung Yen, Bac Ninh, Bac Giang and Vinh Phuc).

At the same time, Phat Tich - Dai Dong Thanh Bridge, which is more than 1.5 km long and costs nearly VND2,000 billion, is expected to open for traffic in June 2022 and be completed before December 31, 2022. The project starts in Canh Hung commune (Tien Du district) and ends at Dai Dong Thanh commune (Thuan Thanh district).

The bridge is of special significance, helping form a closed traffic network for Bac Duong and Nam Duong areas of Bac Ninh province. Accordingly, it will connect Red River Delta provinces and neighbors such as Hanoi, Bac Giang, Thai Nguyen, Hung Yen and Hai Duong along National Highway 1, National Highway 38, National Highway 5, National Highway 17, Provincial Road 276 and Provincial Road 287.

Moreover, Bac Ninh is also trying its best to launch some new projects like an urban road (costing VND182 billion) in Que Vo district (from Nhan Hoa to Dai Xuan); Provincial Road 278 (VND298 billion) from National Highway 18, Phuong Mai commune to Provincial Road 287, Yen Gia commune, Que Vo district; Provincial Road



Infrastructure projects in Bac Ninh province are a driver of local economic development

282B (VND230 billion) from Provincial Road 285 to Binh Than Bridge, Gia Binh district; and extended Ly Anh Tong Road (VND166 billion) from Provincial Road 295B to Bac Ninh City.

When these traffic investment projects are completed, they will create a launchpad to accelerate local urbanization and an important economic growth driver in the greater Hanoi region. It is also the driving force of the northern key economic region. ■

Fostering Talents

In response to the rapid socioeconomic development of Bac Ninh province, the education and training sector has made every effort to overcome hardships in the way to build a solid foundation and create momentum for breakthrough and strong development. To find more information, Vietnam Business Forum's reporter has an exclusive interview with Mr. **Nguyen The Son**, Director of the Department of Education and Training, Bac Ninh province. **Bao Ngoc** reports.



The opening ceremony for the 2021-2022 school year in Bac Ninh province

Could you please introduce some remarkable achievements of the education and training sector in the past time?

With the lasting cultural tradition of Bac Ninh province, historically known as Kinh Bac land, plus the leadership of local authorities, the efforts of the people and the society to the cause of education and training, Bac Ninh has emerged to be one of the leading education and training hubs in the country. The sector has achieved outstanding outcomes as follows:

The scale and network of schools are increasingly being expanded to meet the learning needs of local people. All schools and classrooms meet national standards. Many education projects are launched, including gifted schools, swimming pools for schools, smart classrooms and friendly libraries.

Bac Ninh is the first province to achieve the highest level of education universalization and illiteracy eradication according to Decree 20/2014/ND-CP of the Government and Circular 07/2016/TT-BGDĐT dated March 22, 2016 of the Ministry of Education and Training. The province is also the first in the country to reach preschool universalization.

Bac Ninh is one of the first two localities to effectively implement the “milk for students” program in all preschools and primary schools.

Educators and teachers at all levels have high standards and qualifications, ranking highest in the country, to meet requirements for educational innovation and carry out the 2018 General Education Program. All levels of schools actively apply information technology to management, teaching and learning.

The quality of mass education and gifted education is high. The province always maintains a high rate of excellent students, usually 80.0% or more, and stands among the Top 10 best performers in the country.

In 2020-2021, how was the goal of “Safely containing COVID-19 and improving education quality” applied?

In addition to applying pandemic prevention and control measures to ensure the safety of employees, teachers and students, the Department of Education and Training directed educational institutions to make thorough preparations to fight the pandemic, with a focus on equipping children and students with the necessary skills to live safely with the pandemic; established the “COVID-19 Safety Team”; launched COVID-19 pandemic safety criteria in schools.

In addition, the department combined physical and online learning; ensured program completion and improved education quality without creating pressure for students.

We also directed educational institutions to review and upgrade technical infrastructure, internet connection and students' learning conditions; mobilized businesses to support and donate learning equipment to poor students; and strengthened cooperation with parents to support and accompany students to learn online.

In particular, we provided psychological support for students; strengthened student engagement in classrooms; coordinated with parents in managing and guiding students to



The Provincial Director of the Department of Education and Training and the Chairman of the Provincial Education Union visit and present gifts to teachers and students affected by COVID-19

study at home and at school safely and effectively; and monitored and managed student health.

In the coming time, to successfully carry out fundamental and comprehensive renovation of education and training, which key contents will you focus on?

To further implement Resolution 12-NQ/TU of the Provincial Party Committee on a fundamental and comprehensive renovation of education and training in Bac Ninh province in the 2021 - 2025 period and to 2030, the department will focus on the following tasks:

First, further reviewing the all-level school and class network planning to 2030, with a vision to 2050, thus advising the Provincial Party Committee, the Provincial People's Council and the Provincial People's Committee to issue policies on education and training development.

Second, continuing to effectively implement Resolution 04-NQ/TU of the Provincial Party Committee on strengthened education of revolutionary ideals, morality, lifestyle and cultural traditions for young generations of Bac Ninh province; and ensure a healthy, safe and happy educational environment.

Third, firmly maintaining the position and quality of education and training, aiming to reach regionally and internationally advanced levels; ensuring good conditions for staff and school facilities to execute the 2018 General Education Program and improve education quality.

Fourth, effectively applying information technology and digital transformation in education and training.

Fifth, encouraging international education and training cooperation, promoting investment in facilities to meet local development requirements, attract high-quality human resources and meet the learning demands of local people.

Thank you very much!



A lesson amid COVID-19 pandemic at Ly Nhan Tong High School

Efficiently Utilizing State Budget

In 2021, the provincial Department of Finance successfully completed the assigned tasks. It coordinated with other departments, committees and sectors to review proposals to cut fees and charges for businesses and people facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic; advised the Provincial People's Committee to well implement the State budget management, investment finance, price management, and public property management. The total State budget revenue was estimated at nearly VND33,260 billion, up 19.5% compared with the estimate, an increase of 8% compared to the implementation in 2020; the total local budget expenditure was estimated at nearly VND21,220

In the context of the complicated development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Financial sector of Bac Ninh province has done a good job of advising and proposing many financial mechanisms and policies, implementing many solutions to ensure effective budget collection, and promoting the efficiency of budget capital.

NGUYET THAM

efficiency of State budget use; promote administrative procedure reform; control inflation, and strengthen inspection and supervision of State budget use. The department will continue to improve professional qualifications for cadres, civil servants, public employees, employees. Bac Ninh province aims to achieve the total State budget revenue of VND30,567 billion in 2022, up 9.8% compared to the 2021 estimate. The total budget expenditure is VND18,807 billion, of which, the investment and development expenditure is VND6,552 billion; the regular spending is VND10,615 billion.

Mr. Nguyen Kim Thoai, Director of Bac Ninh Department of Finance said, "Right since the beginning of 2022, the Department has managed State budget expenditures strictly; improved the efficiency of the use of

State budget; thoroughly reduced recurrent expenses, increased development investment spending, and improved the efficiency of budget allocation. It has strictly implemented the conclusions of the Standing Committee of the Provincial Party Committee on strengthening the management of public investment and the management and use of the State budget; implemented Directive 10/CT-UBND dated September 20th, 2021 of the People's Committee of Bac Ninh province on strengthening the State management and improving the efficiency of public investment activities; implementing State budget expenditure according to the assigned estimate. It has coordinated with the Provincial Tax Department and the Customs Department to well manage revenue sources, effectively exploit the budget revenue; and ensure correct, sufficient and timely collection of revenues into the State budget."

In order to complete the 2022 estimate, the Financial sector of Bac Ninh has proposed the following key solutions: Promoting investment attraction, developing a number of industries and fields

into the driving forces for growth of the province. It will harmoniously combine basic and fundamental industries with new industries, high-tech industries, supporting industries, and consumer industries; and step up the processing industry and value chain links. It will develop agriculture in a modern and sustainable manner.

The department will promote administrative reform in the financial sector, focusing on tax, customs, and State treasury to improve the business environment, encourage start-ups, and better serve people and businesses. ■



The provincial Department of Finance is honored as an excellent unit of emulation

billion, up 11% compared to the estimate. The budget spending was efficient, well supporting the socio-economic development goals, ensuring national defense and security, and dealing with urgent pandemic problems.

In 2022, the provincial Department of Finance will synchronously implement solutions to complete the assigned financial and State budget tasks. It will organize the administration and management of State budget expenditure closely in accordance with regulations, improve the

ATTEMPTS TO FULFILL SOCIAL SECURITY TARGETS

In 2021, as the COVID-19 pandemic was complicated, adversely affecting people and businesses in the area, the Department of Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs of Bac Ninh province proactively and timely advised implementing support policies.

MANH DUNG



In 2021, despite being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Labor - Invalids and Social Affairs Department managed to basically complete the plan. The whole province created nearly 28,000 jobs. The enrollment in vocational education institutions reached 56,000 people. The province supported nearly 800 rural workers with vocational training, increasing the rate of trained workers to 76%. The preferential policies for people with meritorious services were fully and promptly implemented. Localities in the province built and repaired 482 houses for people with meritorious services (with the total cost of VND29 billion), mobilized more than VND5.5 billion to the "Gratitude" fund; and spent more than VND8 billion on home-based nursing and health rehabilitation for more than 7,200 people with meritorious services. The province implemented Government Resolution 68/NQ-CP and Decision 23/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister on a number of policies to support employees and employers affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with a total of nearly VND250 billion. In addition, the province greatly improved the work of gender equality, child protection and care, social protection, prevention and control of social evils, and multidimensional poverty reduction. According to the latest review results, the rate of poor households according to the multidimensional poverty standard in the period of 2022-2025 in the whole province is 1.15%; the rate of near-poor households is 1.55%.

In 2022, the Labor-Invalids and Social Affairs Department of Bac Ninh province will continue to maintain and promote the achieved results. It will continue to focus on flexible and effective solutions, create jobs, increase incomes for employees, improve the quality of vocational education and focus on training high-quality human resources associated with the transformation of

labor structure and job demand. It will synchronously and effectively implement social security and social welfare policies; continue to improve and raise the lives of people with meritorious services, the poor and disadvantaged groups in society; raise people's awareness on the prevention of accidents, injuries, child abuse, prevent social evils, gender equality to ensure social security, sustainable and inclusive poverty reduction, to promote the task of economic recovery and development and ensure social security.

Mr. Nguyen Nhan Chinh, Director of the Department of Labor-Invalids and Social Affairs of Bac Ninh province, said the Department had set out key targets and tasks to achieve the provincial socio-economic development targets and plans in social security. Currently, the labor demand of enterprises across the province is over 494,000 people. Despite being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the demand for human resources in the area is very large, and especially the demand for high-quality human resources is gradually increasing. Therefore, the department will continue to promote the training of high-quality human resources to meet the needs of the labor market of domestic and foreign enterprises; expand the implementation of training under the mechanism of ordering or contracting between enterprises and vocational education institutions.

The department will continue to implement policies for people with meritorious services to the revolution and social protection beneficiaries. It will promote the National Target Program on sustainable poverty reduction; diversify resources and methods to achieve sustainable poverty reduction. It will ensure that 100% of the poor and near-poor people are supported with health insurance, accelerate administrative reform, and speed up the application of information technology. ■

Maximally Facilitating Taxpayers



In addition to collecting taxes for the State Budget, the tax sector of Bac Ninh province has further reformed administrative procedures to better serve taxpayers, and supported taxpayers to quickly access new preferential tax policies, thus helping create a fair and healthy business environment and strengthening investment attraction.

NGO SAN

Effort for the highest budget revenue

Last year, Bac Ninh Taxation Department collected more tax than expected for the State Budget, totaling VND25,100 billion, nearly 148 times higher than in 1997, 12.5% higher than the target and 3% higher than in 2020. Of the sum, VND21,050 billion came from taxes and fees, 12% higher than the target and 13.5% higher than in 2020, and VND4,000 billion was from land use fees, 14.3 % higher than the plan.

Despite being strongly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the tax debt did not increase in the province. Specifically, its overdue tax was estimated at VND898.4 billion as of December 31, 2021, a drop of VND2 billion or 0.3% from a year earlier. The Bac Ninh Provincial People's Committee decided to write off interest of VND3,827 million arising out of overdue tax incurred by 2,868 taxpayers. In 2021, the department handled taxes in arrears and proposed writing off some tax as per Resolution 94 of the lawmaking National Assembly, reaching 98% of impacted entities.

To effectively prevent tax loss, Bac Ninh Taxation Department audited 1,091 enterprises as expected, 13% more than in 2020. The department collected VND330

billion of tax in arrears and fines, 5% more than in 2020. The agency did not refund VND25 billion of tax, reduced the amount of loss by VND570 billion as reported by taxpayers and reduced VND28 billion of deductions. The amount of tax paid to the State Budget was VND320 billion. In addition, the department inspected a total of 15,082 tax declaration forms, of which 14,600 forms were accepted for the first time, 410 forms needed supplementing and 72 forms were requested for audits of taxpayers. It revised up VND90 billion of tax; reduced VND46 billion of value-added tax and lowered loss reported by taxpayers by VND50 billion.

Facilitating business and people

To build an increasingly transparent and professional tax sector, Bac Ninh Tax Department accelerated administrative reform and enhanced administrative performance by applying information technology solutions. Currently, 95.3% of taxpayers have registered for online tax payment, while 100% of tax records and tax amounts are settled online.

With the motto "Be attentive to people and taxpayers", the department stepped up visual communications like posters, banners and public announcements; provided direct instructions at tax offices, via telephone, in writing, via email, via online Q&A channel, on its website and via Zalo messaging application.

In 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic affected taxpayer support. However, it made every effort to launch five online dialogues and problem-solving conferences for taxpayers via its website. This helped ensure maximum cost efficiency in the context of pandemic prevention.

Furthermore, to facilitate people and businesses, Bac Ninh Tax Department focused on the effective enactment of support policies for enterprises and taxpayers affected by the pandemic. The department informed and promptly provided preferential support policies for taxpayers; synthesized a list of district-level areas affected by the COVID-19 pandemic to guide taxpayers to submit records for tax and land rent exemption and reduction.

Mr. Ngo Xuan Tong, Director of Bac Ninh Tax Department, said that to remove difficulties for taxpayers, attract investors and build and maintain a transparent environment, in the coming time, the department will continue to quickly, effectively implement tax support packages for taxpayers according to policies adopted by the National Assembly and the Government. At the same time, it will step up public administration reform to boost the performance of online services and electronic invoices to reduce costs for taxpayers and better manage tax sources. ■

BAC NINH CUSTOMS

SUPPORTING BUSINESSES TO ADDRESS CHALLENGES

Efforts to accomplish the tasks

Bac Ninh Customs Department was established on July 3, 2012 and officially came into operation on August 11, 2012. According to the assigned functions and tasks, the Department is in charge of customs in the three provinces of Bac Ninh, Bac Giang and Thai Nguyen. The organizational structure includes 11 units, including 5 Customs Sub-departments and 6 affiliated advisory units with 232 staff members.

In 2021, the provinces of Bac Ninh and Bac Giang were hardest hit by the 4th wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. To ensure "dual goals", the Customs Department directed its affiliated customs branches to implement measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic. The Department deployed special working groups to work 24/7 in all possible situations such as isolation to ensure smooth import and export activities of enterprises. The Department also developed an anti-pandemic plan, and organized for officials and employees to alternately work remotely to ensure job settlement during the implementation of social distancing.

Thanks to that, despite managing the localities that were heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, for the first time, the import-export turnover in the area was more than US\$166 billion, reaching the top position in the whole industry with the highest revenue contribution to the state budget of VND11,800 billion, reaching 124.6 % of the target assigned by the ordinance and reaching 106.3% of its own target. During the year, the Department implemented customs procedures for nearly 7,000 businesses, an increase of 10.9 % compared to 2020. The total number of registered declarations reached 1,160,242, an increase of 10.88% over the same period in 2020. This result not only has many positive meanings in terms of attracting businesses, but also shows the efforts of Bac Ninh Customs officials and employees after nearly a year of overcoming difficulties at the pandemic center.

Promoting administrative procedure reform

Administrative procedure reform is considered the most important task of the customs sector. Bac Ninh Customs



**Mr. Tran Duc Hung - Director of
Bac Ninh Customs Department**

With the motto "Customs in close partnership with businesses", Bac Ninh Customs Department has synchronously implemented many practical solutions to support businesses to overcome the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating favorable conditions for production.

NGO SAN

Department has directed Customs Sub-Departments and professional units to regularly strengthen propaganda, guide and mobilize import-export enterprises in the area to actively participate in customs clearance procedures through the online public service system, the national single window system and the ASEAN single window system.

Bac Ninh Customs always promotes reform and simplification of administrative procedures toward modernity, publicity and transparency; timely solves problems arising within their competence related to customs procedures, tax policies, tax administration, accounting regimes, tax refund and tax exemption regimes; removes difficulties and creates favorable conditions for enterprises engaged in import and export activities. The Department applies international standards and modern customs management processes to create maximum convenience for the business community while ensuring strict supervision and management in accordance with the provisions of law.

According to Mr. Tran Duc Hung, Director of Bac Ninh Customs Department, over the years, the efficiency and quality of operations of Bac Ninh Customs Department have made important contributions to the socio-economic development of localities in general and support

to facilitate production and business activities of enterprises in the localities in particular.

In 2022, the Customs Department of Bac Ninh province will strive to achieve the budget revenue targets assigned by the Ministry of Finance and the General Department of Customs. It will continue to promote administrative reform and customs modernization in the period of 2021-2026. The department will continue to closely follow the direction of the Ministry of Finance and the General Department of Customs to proactively propose solutions to the province to improve customs management in the area. It will continue to coordinate well with other departments, agencies and branches in the province to perform well the task of the budget collection; coordinate with industrial parks to support investors, export processing enterprises in customs procedures, ensuring goods clearance. ■

Aggressively Fighting Unsafe Foods



In 2018, Bac Ninh is one of three provinces and cities chosen by the Prime Minister to pilot a food safety authority. As its economy is booming, companies and industrial zones are growing and the role of a food safety authority is increasingly important as it gives a helping hand to socioeconomic development, community health and safety and environmental protection. To learn more about this issue, Vietnam Business Forum's reporter has an interview with Mr. **Nguyen Vinh Thanh**, Director of Bac Ninh Food Safety Management Authority.

Could you please introduce the tasks of the Bac Ninh Food Safety Management Authority in 2021, especially the inspection and monitoring of food contamination hazards in the province?

In 2021, despite being adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, food safety was always closely directed by Bac Ninh province, based on levels of the pandemic. The Bac Ninh Food Safety Management Authority advised the Provincial Party Committee, the Provincial People's Committee and the Cross-sector Steering Committee on Food Safety to issue documents and plans regarding food safety in the province. We worked closely with relevant departments, organizations, Fatherland Front Office, mass organizations and local authorities. We also continuously improved administrative reform and information technology application, enhanced communication, raised awareness, knowledge and responsibility of all levels of government, sectors, mass organizations, businesses and people on food safety assurance, and achieved certain results as follows:

On advice on leadership and direction: The authority advised the Cross-sector Steering Committee to issue plans and launch a conference on the deployment of the month of action for food safety; carry out inspection and post-inspection plans; and promulgate guiding documents on food safety assurance in the province.

On food safety: In 2021, we organized 187 inspection and monitoring teams (including 160 inter-sector inspection teams and 27 specialized and post-inspection teams) to probe 1,045 establishments. By monitoring food contamination hazards, we took 3,669 food samples to test safety criteria and found that 2,931 samples were qualified (accounting for 80%) and 1,456 samples were disqualified (accounting for 20%).

To help consumers easily distinguish and access safe agricultural products and foods as well as easy traceability of products, we also guided, supervised and confirmed 26 safe food chains in the province, and joined with nearly 50 producers inside and outside the province, including large producers in Bac Ninh province.

In addition, we continued to launch projects such as the "Project on building organic agricultural, forest and aquatic production and supply chains in Bac Ninh province" and "food safety and food poisoning prevention model for feasts and gatherings".

In 2021, we further focused on strengthening information and communication.

Bac Ninh province has many industrial zones. How is food safety assured in industrial zones?

Bac Ninh currently has 16 industrial parks, 26 industrial complexes and many traditional handicraft villages employing a lot of workers. Thus, there is a huge demand for daily food and strong potential for supporting service development. Administering food producers and suppliers for industrial zones is always a major concern of the authority.

Most food suppliers and service renderers in industrial

zones have certificates of food safety or have written commitments to food safety, qualified standard facilities, equipment, tools and personnel. However, in order to assure food safety in industrial zones, we have strengthened state management of food safety, from appraising and issuing certificates of food safety; stepped up inspection; intensified hazard monitoring; and improved the capacity of poisoning investigation and settlement.

We attach great importance to reforming administrative procedures, reducing licensing time and easing trouble for businesses. Currently, 100% of administrative procedures and public services are assigned Level 3 and Level 4 service.

We continue to promote information and communication. We cooperate with the Bac Ninh Labor Confederation to organize a workshop on “Solutions to improve the effectiveness of communication and supervision of collective kitchens of trade unions in enterprises in the province”. We worked with the Bac Ninh Industrial Zones Authority and the Bac Ninh Labor Confederation to open six training courses on food safety for six companies with 2,106 union members, workers and kitchen staffs; organized training courses on food safety for managers, producers and suppliers of food, especially those working with industrial zones, with about 45,316 attendants.

Nevertheless, we still faced difficulties and challenges in ensuring food safety but our employees, including me, are working hard to study and find effective and practical solutions to advise the Provincial Party Committee and the Provincial People's Committee to direct food safety assurance to achieve the highest efficiency.

Food safety is an increasingly difficult and complicated matter. So, what are you most concerned about?

In my opinion, contaminated, disqualified, unsafe food is still circulated on the market, while it is hard to control food safety and traceability in populace markets and roadside eateries.

Moreover, some small producers and traders lack knowledge of the bad effects of origin-unknown and unsafe foods, especially when advertising and trading of such foods is complicatedly booming in the technology era and the reach of authority is unlikely. Therefore, the risk of food safety is still high.

The root of this is still awareness and business ethics of companies and perception of consumers. To solve those time-consuming matters, it is necessary to flexibly apply many solutions.

In order to arouse business ethics and deepen the awareness of food safety among producers, suppliers and consumers, we will further communicate on food safety by launching various content-rich forms like conferences and communication channels on mass media, the Radio and Television Broadcasting Station, Bac Ninh Newspaper and grassroots public speakers. We also actively communicate on



websites of the provincial government, the Bac Ninh Food Safety Management Authority, the fanpages on social media networks, Zalo accounts, billboards, LED screens, banners and leaflets to convey messages appropriate to target groups.

What are the goals and tasks that you have set for 2022?

In 2022, in the accelerated section on the roadmap to get rid of unsafe food out of Bac Ninh province, the Bac Ninh Food Safety Management Authority aims to complete its main targets: Bring down food poisoning cases; have no deaths from food poisoning; have 95% of food producers, processors and traders, 100% of authorities, and 85% of consumers with right knowledge and practices on food safety; have 100% of province-level food producers and traders licensed with the certificate of eligibility of food safety and 90% of commune-level entities thus certified; and build 25 safe food production, processing, trading and supply chains in the province.

Sticking to the direction of central and provincial governments, as an administrator of food safety, the Bac Ninh Food Safety Management Authority is aggressively proposing many consistent solutions, from advising and promulgating documents, plans and proposals to ensure food safety; strengthening coordination of departments, agencies, organizations, mass organizations and local authorities to improve the capacity and effectiveness of governmental agencies on food safety; and fostering information and communication on food safety with diverse content-rich forms.

Thank you very much!



Competent authorities conduct an inspection of food safety in a business establishment



A corner of Bac Ninh City

BAC NINH CITY SUCCESSFUL DUAL GOALS

In 2021, given the complicated development of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bac Ninh City managed to successfully achieve the "dual goals" of boosting business development, effectively containing the COVID-19 pandemic, and maintaining political security and social order.

HA THANH

Consensus in COVID-19 pandemic containment

Bac Ninh City made great efforts to successfully contain the COVID-19 pandemic. Especially during the fourth outbreak in 2021, all levels of authority, sectors, mass organizations, businesses and people in Bac Ninh province unitedly and effectively carried out directives, resolutions, decisions and plans of the central government and the province, and Bac Ninh City proved to achieve the "dual goals".

These are central cross-cutting tasks consistent with the views of the Party Committee, the People's Council and the People's Committee of Bac Ninh City on effective implementation of COVID-19 containment and socioeconomic development, said Mr. Chu Thanh Hai, Vice Chairman of the Bac Ninh City People's Committee.

The city closely followed directions

of higher authorities, promoted information and communications; actively developed plans and scenarios, prepared physical facilities and human resources; provided financial support; arranged quarantine areas and concentrated accommodations for workers; synchronously deployed plans to respond immediately and promptly to each level of the pandemic. With the fast lockdown and rapid tracing of infections, the city built up high trust and consensus among people and businesses. Therefore, in the 4th outbreak starting in 2021, Bac Ninh City basically controlled and minimized community outbreaks.

The city's leaders directly coordinated with the Bac Ninh Industrial Zones Authority to discuss with business leaders to deal with COVID-19 infections in their companies to adopt factory-based

production and preventive measures to work safely amid the pandemic to ensure continuous production and avoid supply disruption.

Surveys into some enterprises in industrial zones in Bac Ninh City showed that the city's government, relevant agencies and mass organizations always provided timely support for enterprises to overcome difficulties to continue production. Local enterprises, including members of Bac Ninh Young Entrepreneurs Association, actively participated in voluntary activities and joined with the city in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. The city funded over VND20 billion for medical equipment and essential goods.



Companies make great efforts to maintain business operation

Successful dual goals of pandemic prevention and socioeconomic development

Mr. Chu Thanh Hai, Vice Chairman of Bac Ninh City People's Committee, said that in 2021 alone, the City People's Committee issued more than 8,000 administrative instructions for various fields, adopted measures to "safely, flexibly adapt to, effectively control the COVID-19 pandemic"; and supported enterprises to tackle difficulties arising out of their production and business operations to continue and accelerate development in all aspects.

The city overcame all difficulties and carefully prepared the best options, scenarios and conditions to prevent and control the pandemic contagion. With the decisive and drastic engagement of the entire political system from the city to the grassroots, the quick response and active participation of all classes of people, Bac Ninh City successfully held the election with a voter turnout rate of 99.26%. This result was recognized and appreciated by the province and the Prime Minister.

The city also focused on removing difficulties against enterprises and supporting them to handle administrative procedures, capital sources, site clearance, security and order, and infrastructure; and applied mechanisms and policies to facilitate them to invest in production and business expansion. In 2021, the city basically completed and exceeded 15 out of 20 key targets, featuring year-on-year economic growth of 7% - as much as 0.9% higher than the plan; industrial production growth of 10.7%, up to 10.5% higher than the plan; estimated budget revenue of VND3,469.9 billion, equal to 171.9% of the target; and per capita GDP of US\$8,007. In addition, the city directed cultural and information activities, paid attention to healthcare, labor, employment, social security and welfare, education and training. Especially, after seven years, the city

ranked first in the provincial talent exam in both quantity and quality in the 2020 - 2021 school year; ensured social security; and reduced the poverty rate to 0.62%.

Bac Ninh City strengthened urban planning, order, discipline and civilization, upgraded environmental sanitation in residential areas, with 95.6% of neighborhoods meeting "clean residence" criteria, markedly enhanced environmental treatment in Phong Khe handicraft village; remarkably modernized social, economic and urban infrastructure, with many key projects launched for stronger socioeconomic development and better service for people. Typical projects included the traffic intersection in the southwest of the city, expanded and extended Ly Anh Tong Street; intersections of National Highway 1 - National Highway 38 and National Highway 1 - National Highway 18; Thi Cau - Dap Cau regulating reservoir; Phuc Ninh regulating lake; Van Mieu, Nguyen Van Cu and Huu Nghi parks with regulating lakes; Quan Ho Theater and Quan Ho Ancestor Temple Lake; new urban areas with high-rise buildings, apartments and large commercial centers such as Him Lam, Phuc Ninh, HUD B, Vincom, Viglacera, Royal Park, Cat Tuong and Phoenix which continued to affirm the role and position of central urban areas and important development drivers of Bac Ninh province.

The ongoing effort to impressively achieve the "dual goals" in 2021 will be a driving force for the city to make new strides in 2022; a solid foundation for building the fast-growing and sustainable Bac Ninh City into a modern, safe and distinctive city and a cultural, ecological, smart and modern city in the spirit of Resolution 25 dated July 12, 2021 of the Standing Board of the Provincial Party Committee on Bac Ninh City construction and development to 2030 and further to 2045. ■

TU SON CITY

Making Breakthrough Development



Chairman of the National Assembly Vương Đình Huệ (R) hands over the Resolution on the establishment of Tu Son city

Successful planning

Mr. Hoang Ba Huy, Chairman of Tu Son City People's Committee, said 2021 was an eventful year amid the fourth outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Fortunately, under the direction of the Provincial Party Committee, the Provincial People's Council, the Provincial People's Committee, the Provincial Fatherland Front, provincial agencies, branches and mass organizations in the province, especially the solidarity, unity and resolution of the City's Party, government, people and business community, Tu Son successfully performed the "dual tasks" of containing the COVID-19 pandemic and ensuring socioeconomic growth.

For example, the Gross Regional Domestic Product

Despite being a "young" city, Tu Son has much potential to make more breakthroughs to become a second-grade city and help to drive Bac Ninh to be a centrally governed city by 2025.

(GRDP) in 2021 rose by 7.2% from 2020; State budget revenue was estimated at VND4,047.4 billion, equal to 104.4% of the targeted plan; domestic budget revenue was VND1,934.5 billion, up 7% year on year. Five remaining communes were upgraded to wards, including Huong Mac, Phu Chan, Phu Khe, Tam Son and Tuong Giang. Bac Ninh City and Tu Son City now have the highest urbanization rate in Bac Ninh province, reaching 100%. Tu Son Town was approved to become a provincial city by the National Assembly Standing Committee in Resolution 387/NQ-UBTVQH15 dated September 22, 2021. The city successfully hosted the election of deputies to the 15th National Assembly and People's Councils at all levels



Local authorities inspect a quarantine checkpoint in Tu Son city



A corner of Tu Son city

Breakout targets

Chairman Huy emphasized that 2022 is an important year for creating a stronger foundation for achieving the 5-year development goals in 2021-2025. Anticipating intertwined domestic and international advantages, opportunities and difficulties and challenges, and complicated COVID-19 pandemic development, including the Omicron variant, Tu Son City will make full use of new potential and opportunities, urgently deal with difficulties and challenges caused by economic competition, the pandemic and natural disasters.

At the same time, the city will foster innovation and administrative reform; achieve progress in politics, economy, culture, society, urban development and ecological environment protection; speed up construction progress of key projects; particularly uphold the 2022 theme of "Continuing solidarity - creativity - discipline - responsibility; stepping up construction and rectification of the Party and the political system; controlling the COVID-19 pandemic; fostering sustainable socioeconomic development; and improving urban infrastructure development planning." ■

for the term 2021-2026; celebrated the 100th birthday of National Assembly Chairman Le Quang Dao and announced the Resolution on recognition of Tu Son City under Bac Ninh province from November 1, 2021.

Besides, the city has firmly and effectively contained the COVID-19 pandemic; built urban public works such as cultural centers; upgraded the headquarters of the City Party Committee and the City People's Committee; invested in traffic routes and social infrastructure works such as schools and cultural houses to raise people's life and spirit. The city took care of people's health and social security; maintained national defense, security, social order and safety; and concentrated and resolutely handled land violations, hence strengthening public and business trust and consensus.



Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park in Tu Son city

LUONG TAI DISTRICT

EFFECTIVELY CONTAINING COVID-19, BOOSTING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



Provincial authorities inspect agricultural production in Luong Tai district

The year 2021 elapsed amid difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. In the context of complicated pandemic development, Luong Tai district of Bac Ninh province continued to realize the dual goal of effectively preventing the COVID-19 pandemic and restoring manufacturing, business and socioeconomic development.

In 2021, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, under the close leadership of local authorities and the support of the people, Luong Tai district achieved remarkable socioeconomic development results. The economic growth was estimated at 6%, an increase of 1.2% over 2020; and per capita income was VND53.6 million, up 8.5% year on year. Its agricultural production value grew by 12.7%; industrial production value climbed 12.2%; State budget revenue was VND176.5 billion and the poverty ratio decreased to 1.64%.

The district intensified urban and infrastructure construction management; ensured environmental sanitation; and created a fresher and better living environment. The locality effectively contained the COVID-19 pandemic and guaranteed political security, social order and safety in 2021.

In the coming time, the district will continue to strengthen the clean and strong political system; improve the leadership capacity and develop the Party and the quality of Party members. It will strictly observe regulations on the responsibility of Party members, especially qualified, capable and prestigious agency leaders to perform their tasks well to meet the

requirements of the new period. The district will actively carry out the Project on industry and handicraft development in 2020-2025; build infrastructure for Lam Binh Industrial Complex and establish Quang Bo



Local authorities at a working visit to Luong Tai district

Handicraft Industrial Complex. In addition, Luong Tai will continue agricultural restructuring comprehensively and effectively to form many concentrated agricultural production areas and apply advanced technology to increase added value and improve sustainable development; build new rural residential area models, new rural commune models and one commune one product (OCOP) program. The district will focus on site clearance of Kanh Vang Bridge Project, making Luong Tai the southern trade gateway of Bac Ninh province.

The district will implement some key tasks and solutions in 2022 - the second year of executing the



Provincial authorities inspect pandemic safety measures in Luong Tai district

Resolution of the 13th National Party Congress and resolutions of all-level Party congresses. The district will uphold solidarity and creativity, promote the role and responsibility of leaders, strive to successfully achieve development goals and improve living standards. The

district will continue to carry out action programs and effectively enforce Party resolutions and conclusions based on the local context; regularly review and update plans and scenarios for pandemic prevention and control. The district will improve the working capacity of pandemic prevention bodies at all levels; foster information and communication on pandemic prevention and control measures; step up administrative reform, increase investment and upgrade business climate, business support and worker support; accelerate economic restructuring and form technologically driven supply value chains to create driving forces for economic development. ■



BAC NINH COLLEGE OF INDUSTRY

Productive "Dual Training" Model

In recent years, Bac Ninh College of Industry has made great efforts to carry out the task of training highly skilled human resources to effectively serve the province's socio-economic development, meeting the labor needs of industrial parks in the province and other localities in the country.



Mr. Nguyen Duc Luu, Rector of Bac Ninh College of Industry addresses a conference on human resources development

Being creative, improving the quality of learning and practice

Bac Ninh is now a strongly developed province in the fields of industrial production, so the demand for highly skilled human resources is very large. To serve development as well as to meet the needs of businesses, Bac Ninh College of Industry has continuously researched and innovated teaching and learning methods associated with practice and international cooperation. At the same time, it has opened new training professions, in line with the socio-economic development orientation of the province in particular and the country in general.

One of the bright spots in the College's training activities is the coordination with large enterprises inside and outside the province to implement the "Dual training" model, closely linking learning and practicing, as well as equipping students and pupils with many soft skills to adapt to the modern industrial working environment.

The "dual training" model has helped businesses participate in the training process, facilitating the recruitment of quality human resources; at the same time, it has helped the College to improve the quality of training and also created opportunities for students to have jobs right after graduation. The skill levels of the College's students and pupils have become higher, earning businesses' trust for recruiting with the employment rate of students after graduation at more than 95%.

With the effect brought to the College, businesses and society, this model has attracted many large enterprises to participate such as Canon Vietnam Co., Ltd - Tien Du Branch; Samsung Display Vietnam Co., Ltd in Yen Phong;

and JAT Auto Parts and Industry Equipment Production Joint Stock Company.

In the school year 2021-2022, the College has enrolled 786 students, bringing the total number of students and pupils in the whole school to 2,186. In addition to the current professions, the College also provides training to a number of new professions such as E-commerce; training in metal cutting according to German standards.

In the context of being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, the College has implemented many innovative activities in enrollment, in accordance with the new situation. With the goal of both preventing and combating the pandemic, while ensuring the progress and training time for students and pupils, the plan of organizing teaching and learning activities has been flexibly changed by the College; theoretical lessons will be learned online, while practical lessons will be directly attended by students.

For final year students who need to practice regularly, the College has developed a plan to coordinate with businesses to organize internships according to the "3 on-site" model (studying, eating and resting) right at the school. Under the support, supervision and guidance of technicians from enterprises, teachers and students have the opportunity to practice in many professions, such as machine manufacturing, mechanical design, mechatronics, industrial electronics and automation. This is a breakthrough innovation in the organization of teaching and learning activities by the College this school year.

Aiming to become a high-quality vocational training school by 2025



Bac Ninh College of Industry signs a cooperation agreement with its partners

Promoting the achievements, in the coming time, the College will actively plan and organize "dual training" activities, and complete the development of training programs according to vocational education innovation associated with employers. It will maintain and increase the scale of formal training, especially at the College level. It will strengthen facilities, foster and develop the quality of lecturers and administrators according to the roadmap of the High-Quality School Project. The College will update new technologies, continuing to strongly digitalize major activities of the school, effectively organize research activities and science application

in teaching, production practice, and technical services. It will promote production linkages at high-tech centers, automobile and electrical - electronic workshops.

It will continue to implement the step-by-step roadmap for Bac Ninh College of Industry to become a high-quality school before 2025. In the next period, it will strive to build the school into a training school with high-quality human resources, multi-disciplinary and multi-field, with an orientation towards international integration, becoming a prestigious and high-quality vocational education institution in the ASEAN region. ■



"People are the most important factor..."

Determining "People are the most important factor which is decisive for the quality of training and the success of the school", so the Board of Management of Bac Ninh College of Industry always focuses on fostering and improving the quality of staff and lecturers.

Over the years, with positive solutions, the College has gradually improved the professional qualifications and pedagogical capacity of the staff. The staff members have also been regularly trained and given practical experience at the enterprises to promptly update and improve knowledge and new skills for teaching. In addition, the College has also invited engineers and experts to participate in the teaching and guidance process, ensuring the best quality for students' practical learning and practice. These have contributed to improving the quality of vocational training of the school.

BAC NINH IP_s

SUCCESS STORY OF INVESTMENT



Endowed with a lot of favorable conditions to attract investment, Bac Ninh has become increasingly attractive as more large-scale enterprises and investors come to set up business investment projects. This success is partly contributed by the Bac Ninh Industrial Zones Authority. Vietnam Business Forum's reporter has an interview with Mr. **Nguyen Van Phuc**, Director of the Bac Ninh Industrial Zones Authority, on this topic. **Ngo San** reports.

Could you please tell us about development status and investment results in local industrial zones up to now?

By the end of 2021, Bac Ninh province had 16 large-scale industrial parks covering 6,397.68ha, approved by the Prime Minister. Ten industrial parks are operational, with nine having centralized wastewater treatment systems that meet environmental standards. The province established 15 industrial parks whose average occupancy is approximately 53.57%.

Regarding investment management, in 2021, industrial parks received 125 new tenants (including 84 FDI projects and 41 domestic projects) with a total registered investment value of US\$1,813,532 million (including US\$1,433.462 million from FDI projects and VND9,155.62 billion (US\$398.07 million) from domestic projects). Many big investors came from Singapore and South Korea.

In addition, the business performance of tenants in industrial parks usually outdid their plans and made important

contributions to the overall provincial development. Their production value reached VND1,259.21 trillion (US\$54.7 billion) and the export value was estimated at US\$38.5 billion. They paid VND12.53 trillion (over US\$500 million) to the State Budget, accounting for 40.27% of the province's budget revenue. Industrial parks are now employing 337,272 workers whose average monthly personal income is VND8.75 million. In 2022, workers in industrial parks are expected to increase by 15,000 - 20,000.

What solutions did you adopt to remove difficulties and support tenants?

Faced with complicated COVID-19 pandemic development, we have upheld pandemic prevention and control. We have coordinated with the Department of Health, the Provincial Public Security and relevant sectors to devise an action plan for 40 working groups to guide and support the Steering Committee for Pandemic Prevention and Control at enterprises. In addition, we cooperated with the Department of Health to organize three online training sessions for nearly 1,000 participants. We also instructed worker flow, quarantine and testing to ensure "safe and flexible adaptation to, effective control of COVID-19 pandemic development"; and developed plans to review and roll out vaccinations for workers.

Together with active solutions to reform administrative procedures and promote investment in various and effective forms, in 2021, we received and handled 9,648 administrative records on the single-window location. Among them, 6,074 records were settled online, accounting for 63%, of which 72.5% were completed in time or before time and 865 records were requested for paper supplementation. We also worked with over 100 domestic and foreign investors who studied investment opportunities in Bac Ninh industrial zones and inked many cooperation agreements and

ATTRACTION



programs, which added new impetus for development.

Infrastructure is important to increase investment. So, how have you improved the infrastructure system in industrial zones?

Industrial zone construction and development planning is defined as a breakthrough stage to accelerate economic restructuring towards the modern industry. To create space for new investment projects, the province directed relevant bodies to request infrastructure investors of Yen Phong II-B, Thuan Thanh I, Gia Binh I, Gia Binh II and Que Vo II - Phase 2 industrial parks to quicken land clearance compensation to start infrastructure construction. Infrastructure investors of Dai Dong - Hoan Son (Phase 2), expanded Yen Phong, Que Vo III (Phase 1), Que Vo II (Phase 1), Hanaka, Thuan Thanh II, Thuan Thanh III - B and Nam Son - Hap Linh are speeding up infrastructure construction and completion in industrial zones as per approved planning.

In addition, we are drawing investment capital to build and complete technical infrastructure outside industrial parks to create favorable conditions and new looks that are attractive to investors. By doing so, we will help increase the occupancy rate of industrial parks and improve the investment attraction of Bac Ninh in the coming time.

Needless to say, with the ongoing

effort of the Bac Ninh Industrial Zones Authority and infrastructure investors, Bac Ninh province has become a "golden address" for investors.

Could you please tell us about the goals of investment attraction and industrial zone development in Bac Ninh province in the coming time?

In 2022, we aim to attract 105 projects with a total newly registered capital of about US\$1.15 billion into local industrial parks, including 85 FDI projects with US\$1 billion and 20 domestic projects with US\$150 million. Industrial production value will climb to VND1,300 trillion (US\$56.5 billion); export value to US\$37

billion USD; import value to US\$25.5 billion and tax payment value to VND12.5 trillion (US\$540 million).

To accomplish these goals, we will concentrate on implementing the following key tasks and solutions:

First, actively reforming administrative procedures; speeding up digitization and digital transformation in line with building and operating an information system for management of industrial zones in the province.

Second, quickening construction of key projects, site clearance, directing the start of newly established industrial parks, creating a clean ground for investors.

Third, being active, creative and flexible in supporting and promoting investment, taking the initiative from opening the door to knocking on the right door, and carrying out focused investment targeting large projects with strong ripple effects.

Fourth, strengthening review and supervision to promptly resolve difficulties and problems against investors.

Fifth, supporting labor supply; training workers to improve their qualifications and skills.

Sixth, strengthening environmental protection.

Seventh, launching emulation and commendation movements for businesses.

“ To improve investment attraction, Bac Ninh province will consistently apply the following investment criteria: less labor-intensive, less land-intensive, high investment value, high economic efficiency, high technology, available space, available human resources, ready support and ready pandemic prevention, and zero pollution. ”

Thank you very much!



AN IDEAL DESTINATION FOR INVESTORS

“Once you visit Kinh Bac
Poetic Cau River catches your soul
Quan Ho song enchants your heart
Never can you forget, be together forever”

The charming land of Bac Ninh enchants people far and wide. Known not only for its long-standing historical and cultural traditions, Bac Ninh also impresses with its spectacular resilience and its leadership in industrial development in the country. The Vietnam-Singapore Industrial Park (VSIP Bac Ninh) contributes significantly to that success. After 15 years, the project has become very attractive to investors, creating momentum for innovation, growth and socioeconomic development of the province.

NGO SAN

Bac Ninh - Ideal place for business

Compared with other provinces, Bac Ninh has many comparative advantages in geographical location. The province lies in the key economic triangle of Hanoi - Hai Phong - Quang Ninh, works as a northeast gateway of Hanoi, and lies near major northern economic centers. The convenient traffic system, powered by Hanoi - Bac Ninh Highway together with important roads linked to northern economic, cultural and commercial centers such as National Highways 1A-1B, 18 and 38, and the trans-Vietnam Railway to China, has created good opportunities for economic exchange and merchandise distribution of the province.

Seeing these potential strengths, VSIP decided to develop VSIP Bac Ninh Industrial Park to woo investors. This is also its first industrial park in the north out of nine in total across Vietnam.

Built in 2007 at a cost of US\$169 million, VSIP Bac Ninh is located on nearly 700 ha in Tu Son district, Bac Ninh province. 500 ha is for rent, prioritized for tenants with environmental standards and advanced production technology; and 200 ha is for urban development, including trade facilities, hotels, supermarkets, schools, offices, sports areas, houses and high-grade apartments. Currently, VSIP Bac Ninh has leased almost 100% of rentable industrial areas to tenants which employ

thousands of workers inside and outside the province and actively help investment attraction and socioeconomic development of Bac Ninh province.

To draw more investment flows and advance its long-term investment commitment to the province, VSIP Bac Ninh II was launched in 2019, covering more than 273 ha in Tam Giang commune, Yen Phu commune, Hoa Tien commune and Cho Town, and costing nearly VND2,360 billion for investment. This is a well-located commercial and service industrial park with synchronously connected transport infrastructure linked to seaports, airports and large industrial parks in the north. VSIP Bac Ninh II is designed for clean and high-tech industries. Currently, the project has completed site clearance of 180 ha and will soon be put into operation to join Bac Ninh province on the path to be a centrally-run city in 2022.

Mr. Bui Dang Thoan, Deputy General Director of VSIP Bac Ninh Company, said that in the context of fierce competition, Bac Ninh is still a potential destination for businesses. The licensing of VSIP Bac Ninh I and VSIP Bac Ninh II by the Provincial People's Committee shows the success and effect of the projects and confirms their important position in the province. At the same time, this is also the basis for VSIP development and expansion. In the coming time, the company will continue to study the construction of VSIP Bac Ninh III and ask the Provincial People's Committee for approval. These projects will be an important focal point for businesses to find markets and invest in Vietnam in general and Bac Ninh in particular.

Golden address for investors

Since its inception, VSIP Bac Ninh has quickly attracted many international investors from Japan, South Korea, Singapore, the United States and other nations. Many tenants are big firms like Microsoft, Suntory PepsiCo, Foster, Mapletree and Nittan. This remarkable growth is supported by the development approach of VSIP Bac Ninh, which always closely follows the province's selective investment policy which facilitates, supports and prioritizes new investment projects using environmentally friendly advanced technologies.

VSIP Bac Ninh projects provide industrial infrastructure of international standards that meet all manufacturing requirements of tenants and are provided with synchronous and highly-connected infrastructure systems, including administrative quarters, factories, enterprises, green spaces



and technical infrastructure (power stations, water supply stations, wastewater treatment stations, communications, internet services, land and traffic).

Besides, as a member of VSIP Group, VSIP Bac Ninh inherits the group's strengths in governance, including a well-functioning system and professional customer service. The company always seriously fulfills its commitments to investors and provides support and guidance for customers to carry out their legal procedures, recruit workers and introduce partners when they launch their projects.

In particular, the unique attractiveness of VSIP Bac Ninh projects lies not only in complete infrastructure and single-window services, but also rests in green vision and steadfast strategic planning for sustainable development for the whole community. VSIP Bac Ninh I and VSIP Bac Ninh II are examples of green, sustainable investment and pioneering technology application in modern, green industrial parks. These are also unique competitive advantages of VSIP Group to woo investors.

Mr. Bui Dang Thoan affirmed: "With experience and positive results in industrial park infrastructure investment and operation, VSIP Bac Ninh is always ready, with its willingness and resources, to meet the needs of investors. We will always accompany, support and be a reliable friend. We promote our position as an attractive destination; create a solid foundation for enterprises to improve business performance and achieve success.

Remarking on the investment environment in Bac Ninh, he said that VSIP Bac Ninh's success also comes

from the support of local authorities at all levels. Over the years, the provincial government has supported and facilitated investors. In the coming time, VSIP Bac Ninh will continue to reform its investment promotion methods, give priority to attract production and business projects and complete the infrastructure to become a leading industrial park developer in Bac Ninh in particular and Vietnam in general. ■

With the vision and core value "to be the developer of a complete, environmentally friendly urban area, always place people at the heart, anbuild the best living, learning, working and playing environment for all", VSIP Bac Ninh promises to be an effective supporter for FDI enterprises to feel secure in their manufacturing and branding in Vietnam in particular and in global supply chains in general.

CATALAN JSC

15 Years of a Strong Brand



After 15 years of sustained growth, Catalan Joint Stock Company has solidly built up its market position with high-class ceramic tiles. On that journey, Catalan is always proud of its European-class products with Vietnamese soul and wisdom.

Set up in 2007, Catalan Joint Stock Company is headquartered in Dong Chua, Dong Tho commune, Yen Phong district, Bac Ninh province. Living through the twists and turns of development and market challenges, with the resolution, capacity, intelligence and devotion of all employees, the company has

firmly asserted itself as one of the pioneering brands in construction material investment and production, and played an important role in the development of Vietnam's construction industry.

Leadership in technology

After 15 years of development, the company's brand of ceramic tiles has attained many achievements. To reach this success, what reminds people of Catalan from its early days is investment in technological breakthrough innovations. The factory was scaled up to 50 ha by 2019 and has constantly promoted technological innovations. Catalan invested in two more lines, PH6500 compressors and PH7500 compressors. Catalan is proud to be the first factory in Vietnam and the second in Asia to own PH7500 compressors - the largest and most modern compressors from SACMI, Italy. As a result, it helps improve product quality, targeting middle and high-end customers. In addition, Catalan is always aware of its responsibility to the community and society by investing in green technology, a wastewater treatment system, a green campus and a specialized kiln powered by CNG and LPG technology.

Technology investment is an important factor for the success of every business because advanced and high-quality products are always a market trend. Catalan has made this factor its development goal. Boldly making large-scale investment and constantly applying modern technology to production lines to create differentiated products of high value has promoted production and business and ensured sustained growth. This also shows the strategic operational mindset of the leadership.

Besides technology investment, Catalan pays special attention to training and developing human resources, improving professional qualifications and creating the best working environment for employees. One of its outstanding achievements in human training is an experienced, well-trained workforce.

Sustainable value, progress to the future

2021 was considered a difficult and challenging year for the global economy, including Vietnam, due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Before this reality, the Bac Ninh Provincial People's Committee directed relevant agencies and localities to guide local companies to adopt a production model that combined continued production and effective pandemic prevention. From April to June 2021, Bac Ninh province started to apply this combined option - a great effort of the province to help companies with production models like Catalan keep production and supply chains undisrupted. This is a tough but necessary measure to ensure



both pandemic prevention and business development. By maintaining “three-on-site production” and taking this issue very seriously, the company did not have any COVID-19 infections. The company advantageously possesses its own trading system - Danko Group chain that only sells Catalan products. Therefore, during the pandemic period, the company still maintained production and developed operating scale and quality. Specifically, the factory is still maintaining seven production lines out of a total of eight lines, or over 80% of its capacity.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the company arranged for employees to work to adapt to pandemic development. At the same time, it focused on the research and development of new products and launched them onto the market. “COVID-19 is an unexpected big challenge that no one wants, but it is a test of corporate governance capacity. Any business that has a development investment strategy and dares to look directly at the problem will see that this is a good opportunity to complete working processes to create momentum for faster growth right after the COVID-19 pandemic is under control,” said Mr. Nguyen Van Nguyen, Deputy General Director of Catalan Joint Stock Company.

Continuing the 15-year development journey was the launch event of the “CENTURION 100” Collection in November 2021. The “Centurion 100” Collection is the convergence of the unique ideas of creative designers and talented artists. The crystallization of the very best, the name “Centurion 100”, is reminiscent of the commander of the Roman centurion - a man who converged superior qualities and had a great influence on his force. Applied with advanced techniques and technology, “Centurion 100” is not

only a story about the product but also a wish to join you in creating an artistic living space where energy is regenerated, emotions are climaxed and personal messages are expressed. Inspired by nature, “Centurion 100” offers 12 designs of 100x100 large-size tile styles with diverse and unique colors. The collection is developed on three criteria: Technology, creativity and passion.

Mr. Nguyen Van Nguyen affirmed: “Thoroughly studying customer needs, we are proud that ‘Centurion 100’ can meet a variety of architectural styles, rich in colors for different aesthetic tastes of customers. The upmarket ceramic tile collection ‘Centurion 100’ promises to bring the best value and experiences to customers.”

The 15-year journey marks a spectacular transformation for Catalan, a valuable time for Catalan to make plans for the future and reach greater achievements. With the operating motto, “Customer benefit is the working goal of the Company” together with its mission to bring inspiration and impressive experiences to homeowners, investors and architects to create separate living spaces that carry unique personal imprints, the search for a space to live, relax and love is what Catalan is aiming for.

15 years is an important milestone for Catalan to assess its internal capacity and set new development strategies in the next period. With firmly built foundations and values for years, this is the time for Catalan to realize its dreams to go far. ■



Vietnam Tourism Reopening



The Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism recently issued Plan 829/PA-BVHTTDL on reopening tourism activities under new normal conditions. It clearly states the solutions that businesses in the hospitality industry need to deploy in order to safely and effectively welcome domestic and foreign.

TRAN THUY NGA, HANOI TOURISM COLLEGE

Plan to welcome guests safely needed

According to Plan 829/PA-BVHTTDL, travel businesses need to develop a plan to welcome guests safely and apply related regulations of the tourism, health and local industries. They also need to actively develop plans to contain the COVID-19 pandemic and handle cases of COVID-19.

Travel enterprises must notify tourists of regulations and requirements before the trip and guide visitors to comply with Vietnam's regulations to ensure safe tourism activities. They are also responsible for ensuring that travelers have medical or travel insurance that covers COVID-19 treatment with the minimum liability required.

In addition, businesses also need to actively coordinate with authorities in tourist management to ensure compliance with Vietnamese laws and local regulations. They are supposed to guide employees to strictly observe the regulations on prevention and control of the COVID-19 pandemic of the tourism industry, the health sector and functional agencies.

In order to ensure effective reception of guests, businesses need to actively check and review the quality and upgrade technical facilities and customer service, meeting the following conditions and current standards. They need to foster human resources to ensure timely service quality to meet the reopening of tourism; stimulate domestic and international tourism, connect destinations, develop new products, and

improve the quality of tourism products and services.

Currently, Vietnam's provinces and cities have prepared plans to welcome guests, simultaneously launching attractive and preferential programs and products to attract tourists. For example, the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism of Lam Dong province has just issued a plan to organize the Golden Week of Lam Dong Tourism in 2022 from April 23 to 30, 2022 with the theme "Da Lat - Holiday paradise"; Hai Phong gives priority to renewing and developing tourism products, deploying Famtrip to survey tourism "Defensive Sea Frequency - New Perspective" with spiritual-cultural tourism destinations, agricultural experience tourism associated with OCOP products, and Hai Phong Food tour.

Businesses have simultaneously built new products to attract tourists, such as Vietnam Airlines applying fares on all domestic routes of Vietnam Airlines from only VND69/way or VND645,000/way including taxes and fees. Round-trip fares on international routes to Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, Japan, Korea, Europe, Australia and the U.S. are only from US\$49 (about VND1,120,000 or US\$155 including taxes and fees).

International tourists not required medical isolation when entering Vietnam

According to Plan 829/PA-BVHTTDL of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism dated March 15, on reopening





tourism activities under new normal conditions, international tourists only need to have tested negative for entry to Vietnam.

Specifically, international tourists entering Vietnam by air need to have a negative test result for COVID-19 (except for children under 2 years old) within 72 hours if using RT-PCR/RT-LAMP method or within 24 hours if rapid antigen test method is used and certified by the competent authority of the country performing the test.

For those entering via land, rail or sea, the above test is required. In case there is no negative test result, the test will be carried out at the border gate before entry. If the test results are negative, they will be allowed to enter and participate in tourism activities, if the test results are positive, they are supposed to follow the instructions of the health authorities.

Children aged under two are not required to be tested, even if they have not been vaccinated or have never been infected with COVID-19; they are allowed to enter and participate in activities outside the accommodation with parents or relatives.

In addition, tourists must make a medical declaration before entry and use the Medical Declaration Application (PC-COVID), and take preventive measures as prescribed during their stay in Vietnam.

If the travelers have symptoms of COVID-19 infection at the border gate (fever, cough, sore throat, runny nose, stuffy nose, body aches, fatigue, chills, decreased or lost taste, decreased or lost sense of smell, feeling, headache, diarrhea, shortness of breath, respiratory inflammation, etc.), they must immediately notify the health agency at the border gate to take medical measures as prescribed.

Within 10 days from the date of entry, tourists self-monitor their health; if there are symptoms of COVID-19 infection, they must immediately notify the nearest medical facility for timely instructions and take preventive measures.

Travelers are also required to have medical or travel insurance that covers COVID-19 treatment with a minimum liability of US\$10,000.■



VSIP BAC NINH CO., LTD

Address: No.1, Huu Nghi Road, Phu Chan Ward,
Tu Son Town, Bac Ninh Province

Tel: (84-222) 3765 668 / **Fax:** (84-222) 3765 666

