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Vietnam, Australia Boost Multifaceted Cooperation

KIEN GIANG ADOPTS FLEXIBLE, SAFE AND
ADAPTIVE APPROACH TO TOURISM



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LEVERAGING VIETNAM-UK RELATIONS



Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh delivers his remarks at the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26)

At the invitation of UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Prime Minister of Vietnam Pham Minh Chinh led a high-ranking Vietnamese delegation to attend the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) hosted by the United Kingdom from October 31 to November 3. The trip achieved many important goals and meanings, with many activities both in multilateral forums and in bilateral relations between Vietnam and the UK.

GIANG TU

Strong commitment at COP 26

Attending and delivering an important speech at the COP26 Leaders Summit, with representatives of 197 member countries and more than 100 heads of State and the Government, COP26, Vietnam Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said climate change has truly become the greatest challenge to mankind. Extreme weather phenomena and sea-level rise are seriously affecting the food and water security, sustainable development, and even the survival of many countries and communities. This warning from nature compels us to put forward strong measures and act responsibly without further delay at the global level. As this is a global issue, a global approach is required. As this issue affects every person, an inclusive approach is necessary.

“Climate change response and the restoration of nature must become the highest priority in all development decisions. They must form the highest ethical standards for all levels, sectors, businesses and citizens. Science and technology must lead the charge, and financing must lend leverage to the transitioning of the development model towards a green, circular, sustainable, inclusive, and humanistic economy,” the Prime Minister stressed.

Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh affirmed that, as one of the countries most affected by climate change, Vietnam is making every effort to both respond to climate change and foster

economic development to grow and ensure an ever-better life for its people, while contributing responsibly alongside the international community. Vietnam looks forward to advancing cooperation with international partners through investment programs and projects, and sustainable development.

The speech of Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh was highly appreciated by many international partners. Many countries affirmed their willingness to cooperate with Vietnam in implementing measures to promote green growth, circular economy and support communities, especially vulnerable groups, to increase ability to withstand and adapt to unusual and extreme weather events caused by climate change impacts. In particular, the UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson recently announced that the FCDO-backed Private Infrastructure Development Group (PIDG) will commit more than £210 million in new investment to back transformational green projects in developing countries, including Vietnam.

Deepening Vietnam-UK relations

Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh hosted leaders of ten foreign corporations and leading British universities in Edinburg, Scotland, on October 31 (local time), as part of his visit to the UK for the COP26, aimed to promote trade and investment bilateral relations.

During the meetings with President of Pacific Land Group Patrick





**British Ambassador
to Vietnam Gareth Ward**

The UK impressed with Vietnam's new 2050 net-zero target at COP26
"We are really impressed with Vietnam's new 2050 net-zero target. This shows a real step forward in ambition and is a big contribution to keeping 1.5 degrees within reach, and stopping catastrophic global warming.

We look forward to continuing to work with Vietnam on a successful outcome to COP26, and to support the implementation of Vietnam's new climate commitments and its energy transition, drawing on international climate finance."



McKillen, Jardines Group Director Adam Keswick, Jardines Vietnam Chairman Alain Cany, leader of Rolls Royce, Prof. Mohammed Abdel, representative of the UK's University of Liverpool, Prime Minister held that despite impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Vietnam has been highly regarded by the international community for its efforts to fulfill the twin goals of keeping the virus at bay and boosting economic growth, and for remaining a safe and attractive FDI destination.

Sharing concerns of foreign investors in Vietnam over the COVID-19 fallout, Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh said the Vietnamese Government and public agencies will continue to create favorable conditions for them to grow successful and sustainable business in the long term in the spirit of "harmonizing benefits and sharing risks."

During the visit, the Prime Minister witnessed the signing and awarding of 26 cooperation agreements in the fields of trade, agriculture, energy, health, education, training, environmental protection and sports. Especially, Vietjet Air and Rolls-Royce Group signed an agreement to provide engines and engine services for the wide-body fleet with a total value of US\$400 million. The Prime Minister also attended the launching ceremony of the Vietnam-UK direct route and the announcement ceremony of Bamboo Airways' general agent.

In particular, the Prime Minister also attended a forum on the investment and business environment in Vietnam, informed about our important economic policies, and strengthened confidence and attracted more investment capital from investors, businesses and international partners.

British Ambassador to Vietnam Gareth Ward said that Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh's visit to the UK this time is a lever to bring the two countries' relations to a new height. Many commercial activities in the fields with which the two countries have good relations, such as healthcare and vaccines, transportation, aerospace, and education, have been promoted more strongly.

Vietnamese Ambassador to the UK Nguyen Hoang Long said that the relationship between Vietnam and the UK is at its best stage of development ever. Despite the recent changes in the situation, the Vietnam - UK Strategic Partnership continues to develop positively and achieve many important results. Currently, the UK is Vietnam's third-largest European trading partner. According to statistics of the General



Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh attends Bamboo Airways' announcement ceremony of its nonstop Vietnam-UK routes and general sales agent in the UK

Department of Customs, the growth rate of bilateral import and export turnover between Vietnam and the UK increased by an average of 1.4% per year for the period from 2015 to 2020. Vietnam's trade surplus to the UK is about US\$4.5 billion a year.

In investment, the statistics of the Foreign Investment Agency (Ministry of Planning and Investment) showed that, as of October 20, the UK had 439 valid projects with a total registered capital of US\$3.98 billion. The UK ranks 13th of 97 countries and territories investing in Vietnam.

The UK highly appreciates Vietnam's role and position in the region and wishes to promote comprehensive bilateral relations in many fields. In September 2020, British Foreign and Development Secretary Dominic Raab visited Vietnam and the two sides issued a new Joint Statement on a Strategic Partnership with seven priority areas of cooperation and the two sides affirmed to raise the relationship to a higher level in the next 10 years.

In November 2020, the British International Trade Minister also visited Vietnam and issued a statement ending the negotiation of the UK-Vietnam Bilateral Trade Agreement (UKVFTA). Security-defense cooperation has been maintained and strengthened, especially with the visit of Defense Minister Ben Wallace to Vietnam in July 2021. ■

AEBC Proposes Establishing RCEP Business Advisory Council



VCCI President Pham Tan Cong recently attended an emergency meeting of the East Asia Business Council (EABC) with 13 EABC member countries and the EABC Secretariat to seek opinions on three important issues.

THU HUYEN

VCCI President Pham Tan Cong at the meeting of the East Asia Business Council (EABC)

The first is the decision on the rotational chairmanship of EABC for the following years. The second is AEBC's proposal to ASEAN+3 leaders on the establishment of the RCEP Business Advisory Council. And the last is the discussion on cooperation with the ASEAN Secretariat in RCEP related activities.

At the meeting, VCCI President Cong highly agreed that the EABC will be chaired by the country that chairs ASEAN, while the co-chair will be one of ASEAN+3 countries (Japan, China and South Korea).

On the establishment of the RCEP Business Advisory Council, a majority of EABC members agreed that the formation of RCEP BAC is very necessary to represent the voice of RCEP businesses, especially when RCEP is ratified and enforced, expected early next year. This is also the largest-ever free trade agreement (FTA), and that catches the attention of many major countries.

According to the ASEAN BAC Secretariat, making RCEP BAC a subcommittee or working group of EABC (as it used to be) will not demonstrate its importance nor engage active members. EABC may act as a precursor and later develop RCEP BAC because this is also consistent with the current fact that EABC's programs and activities mostly focus on RCEP issues. In addition, if RCEP BAC membership is approved by member countries (as EABC),

it will be more appropriate and effective to raise the position of RCEP BAC.

The ASEAN BAC Secretariat also said that if the EABC is not active to establish RCEP BAC, other organizations will be likely to go ahead and do this. A particular example is the World Economic Forum, an RCEP summit of WEF that can easily lead to the formation of a formal platform on RCEP issues (in the same way that WEF used to do with the ASEAN BAC a few years ago).

However, if EABC is transformed into RCEP BAC and focused solely on RCEP, it may be possible to gradually reduce its role on ASEAN's internal issues (besides RCEP) which are currently overlapping with ASEAN BAC. Therefore, ASEAN BAC wants EABC to shift its focus to RCEP issues.

For its part, VCCI joins in both ASEAN BAC and EABC, thus ensuring the representative position and role of Vietnam even in the event that EABC is fully changed to RCEP BAC. However, if EABC keeps its current voice on ASEAN issues, it will maintain the diversity of multilateral organizations participating and supporting ASEAN.

As for EABC's coordination with the ASEAN Secretariat, EABC is collaborating with the ASEAN Secretariat to organize many webinars on RCEP themed "Capitalizing RCEP Opportunities for Business". In addition, the ASEAN Secretariat is proposing to develop RCEP promotional videos to prepare for RCEP enforcement next year. ■

STEPPING UP BUSINESS SUPPORT COOPERATION

Mr. Pham Tan Cong, President of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), hosted an online meeting with Mr. Charles Freeman, Senior Vice President for Asia at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

HUONG LY

At the meeting, VCCI President Pham Tan Cong said that Vietnam-U.S. relations have developed strongly in many fields, especially bilateral trade. In 2020, the bilateral trade value reached over US\$90 billion. He expressed his belief that, with the right development approach, the two countries' economic and trade cooperation will have vast room to maintain stable growth momentum in the coming time.

Affirming the close cooperation for special ties between Vietnam and the U.S., he said that VCCI will continue to work with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce in many fields and create conditions for businesses of the two nations to seek business opportunities. He suggested solutions for building institutions, developing supply chains and supporting businesses to overcome impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and seize positive opportunities in the context of global economic integration.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has caused significant impacts on nations, companies and people around the globe over the past two years. VCCI is currently chairing a high-level advisory group of the Government which will advise on the post-COVID-19 economic development and recovery program," said Mr. Pham Tan Cong.

"With the vision that Vietnam will become a developed country by 2045, the Vietnamese business community also needs to go global, learn from experience, acquire knowledge, and build a business culture. VCCI hopes that the U.S., as a developed and experienced country, can support Vietnam in this regard," Mr. Cong added.

"VCCI will always support and actively cooperate with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to foster trade and investment and support businesses of the two sides," he emphasized.

Sharing the same viewpoint, Mr. Charles Freeman expressed his willingness to participate in some VCCI's programs and events, including policymaking recommendations and commitments to boosting bilateral trade.

He said, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce has worked closely with VCCI over the past time and looks forward to continued cooperation with VCCI in upcoming important events, such as the Vietnam - U.S. Business Summit, scheduled for March 2022.

This event will bring together government, industry and business leaders of the two countries to discuss solutions and measures to promote trade, develop supply chains, expand investment and open up new opportunities to accelerate post-COVID-19 economic recovery. This event is an opportunity for businesses of the two countries to seek investment opportunities and strengthen cooperation. ■

VCCI President Pham Tan Cong hosted a meeting with Australian Ambassador to Vietnam Robyn Mudie on October 26.

HUONG GIANG

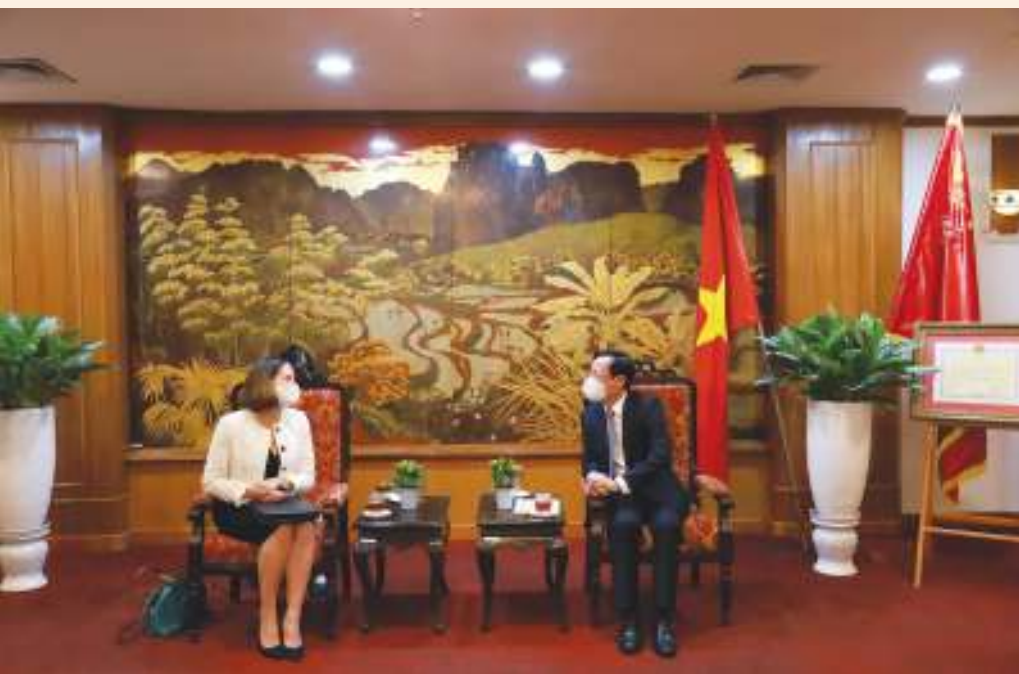
Ambassador Robyn Mudie said that since Vietnam and Australia upgraded their relations to the strategic partnership in 2018, one of three partnership pillars has been economic development and engagement. In the past time, the embassy has made great efforts to promote the mutual relationship, including cooperation with the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) in such activities as the Vietnam Business Forum (VBF) or international economic integration in the wake of Vietnam's entry to the World Trade Organization (WTO).

She added, during the Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison's visit to Vietnam in August 2019, the two governments agreed to build the enhanced economic cooperation strategy aimed to make Australia and Vietnam top 10 trade partners of each other and double investment. And in the last three years, the embassy has also endeavored to work with VCCI and related agencies to realize these goals.

The content of the Vietnam - Australia Enhanced Economic Engagement Strategy (EEES) was approved on October 8, 2021 at the Ministerial Conference on Vietnam - Australia Economic Partnership. And, the content is hoped to be officially approved by the Vietnamese and Australian governments soon. These positive signals promote the development of two-way relations.

She was also delighted to see leaders of the Vietnam-Australia Business Council at the meeting where representatives of pioneering enterprises - an integral component of EEES - are present. Therefore, she hoped to keep working closely with VCCI in the coming time to further promote common development goals of the two

VIETNAM, AUSTRALIA BOOST MULTIFACETED COOPERATION



VCCI President Pham Tan Cong (R) receives Australian Ambassador Robyn Mudie

countries, including promoting women in business and women-led enterprises.

VCCI President Pham Tan Cong affirmed that Vietnam's current development has also been helped by the Australian people. VCCI highly appreciated the relationship with the Embassy of Australia and thanked the Embassy and the Government of Australia for ongoing support for VCCI-led projects and programs, such as Aus4reform Project and responsible business program, and hopes to receive more support from the embassy in the coming time.

Vietnam wishes to expand agricultural exports to Australia. In the coming time, Vietnam will ask Australia to support Vietnam's products such as fresh shrimp and passion fruit that can soon be licensed for export to Australia. On imports, Vietnamese companies also seek to increase imports from Australia, including ores, coal, iron and steel and rare earths. In particular, it is important to attract high-quality Australian projects into Vietnam's innovation fields as well as boost Vietnamese investment in Australia.

Climate change and environmental protection also need support from Australia. VCCI is also developing the Green Index, expected to be launched next year, to encourage localities to pay more attention to production and environmental protection.

VCCI President Cong also mentioned the establishment of the Vietnam-Australia Business Council, hoping that the embassy will continue to support its operations.

In the coming time, VCCI will focus on building a

business culture and business ethics for the Vietnamese business community, enabling them to be on par with world enterprises when Vietnam achieves its goal of becoming a developed nation by 2045. VCCI hopes that Australia as a developed country with a lot of experience in building a business culture can support Vietnam in this regard.

In reply to the issues raised by the VCCI President, Australian Ambassador Robyn Mudie said that Vietnam-Australia economic relationship is complementary in agriculture and energy. Vietnam and Australia have a good cooperation tradition in energy and climate change. Australia has a wide range of technical assistance and capacity-building assistance programs for Vietnam through both the private sector and government programs. Continued cooperation in climate change, green energy and new green technology is also a priority of

Australia in the coming time.

She reaffirmed the importance of enhancing dialogue between the private sectors of the two countries, adding that if businesses work together, understand each other and understand the legal and policy environments of the partner country, they will be able to easily help country development. Therefore, pioneering businesses and the Vietnam-Australia Business Council as well will also be the official dialogue channels for the two countries' governments and private sectors to upgrade their relationships.

VCCI is also working with the embassy to carry out the Program to strengthen business capabilities and train future business leaders to promote responsible business ethics and respect for human rights. At the same time, the Australian Government also has many educational support programs in Vietnam, including training students who will be young entrepreneurs in the future.

VCCI President Cong emphasized VCCI's roles in policy advocacy and hoped to receive continued support from the Australian Embassy for enhancing its capacity in policy advocacy. The Government of Vietnam also looks forward to receiving more policy recommendations from the private sector.

At the meeting, leaders of the Vietnam-Australia Business Council also revealed their upcoming investment plans in Australia, as well as some existing difficulties such as entry to Australia for experts. ■



This statement was delivered by VCCI President Pham Tan Cong at the meeting and working session with the AusCham business delegation led by AusCham Vice President Jimmy Pham on October 27, 2021 at the Headquarters of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI).

THU HUYEN

VCCI President Pham Tan Cong (R) at the working session with the AusCham business delegation

AUSTRALIAN INVESTMENT IS VERY IMPORTANT TO VIETNAM

According to the VCCI President, Australia is an important trade and investment market for Vietnam. Australian investors bring not only investment technology but also the business culture. With its role, VCCI will do its best to promote Vietnamese and Australian business relations to become more substantive and intensive.

The working visit aims to introduce some Australian businesses in Vietnam and it is hoped that the two sides will have a close connection to jointly promote the activities of Vietnamese businesses in Australia and Australian businesses in Vietnam.

Appreciating business cooperation between the two countries over the years, VCCI President Cong believed that, given business operations in Vietnam, Australian companies have contributed a lot to Vietnam's development as it is today. VCCI, representative of the business community, including both Vietnamese and foreign businesses in Vietnam, always supports businesses in Vietnam, including Australians.

With the update from the Australian Embassy, AusCham Vice President Jimmy Pham said that transport and logistics are attractive to Australia. He added that Australia has a strong network of businesses in these fields,

which are seeking to connect and cooperate with Vietnamese partners in Australia and Australian firms in Vietnam.

Mr. David Whitehead, President of Mavin Vietnam Group, which produces animal feeds, said that the group has invested in some livestock farms, not only for the Vietnamese market but also for export. He expressed his desire to cooperate with VCCI and Vietnamese businesses to upgrade Vietnam-Australia cooperation.

Sharing the same view, Mr. Anthony Jolly, Managing Director of Midway Metals Vietnam, which manufactures high-end components for yachts and the marine industry, said, Vietnam is strong in shipbuilding. The presence of high-quality component manufacturers like Midway Metals help raise the image of Vietnam in the eyes of international investors and consumers.

Mr. Aaron Funnell, Managing Director of Outward Bound Vietnam and member of AusCham Board of Directors, hoped that education will continue to be a potential area of cooperation for Vietnam and Australia.

VCCI President Pham Tan Cong said that Australia's investment is very important for Vietnam. He hoped that when Australian businesses invest in Vietnam, they not only bring technology but also the business culture.

Vietnamese businesses need to go global and they need to learn the best from foreign partners and from global companies. Further, VCCI hoped that Vietnamese firms can learn from Australian partners and create the best cooperation values.

At the meeting, the business representative of the Vietnam - Australia Business Council (VABC), spoke highly of the Australian market to Australian businesses and said that their business performances are growing well in Australia. They hoped to have more cooperation opportunities with Australian partners.

Mr. Nguyen Manh Hung, Chairman of VABC, member of the Board of Directors of Joint Stock Commercial Bank for Foreign Trade of Vietnam (VCB), said that VCB is currently working to open a branch in Australia and will be the first bank of Vietnam to do so. VCB is seeking the opportunity to further strengthen its relationship with Australian companies.

Mr. Nguyen Anh Tuan, Deputy General Director of SOVICO Group, said that Australia is an important market, so SOVICO's airline Vietjet has a plan to open direct flights to some major cities of Australia to facilitate movement as well as trade in goods, trade and investment. "Due to the COVID pandemic, the plan was delayed but will be restarted in 2022," he said.

Mr. Ta Tien Dung, Vice Chairman of VABC, Head of Research and Development Department of Hoa Phat Group, informed Hoa Phat's iron ore mine projects in Northern Australia and expected to expand to South Australia. Hoa Phat strives to increase its imports from Australia by more than US\$1 billion in the coming time.

Thus, businesses of both sides are very keen on promoting bilateral trade and investment ties to new highs. VCCI and AusCham leaders believed that Vietnamese and Australian businesses have many opportunities for cooperation and development.

On this occasion, Mr. Jimmy Pham also announced some outstanding activities of AusCham in 2020, including US\$300,000 donation raised for hospitals and COVID treatment centers in Vietnam and an online Australian education seminar for more than 300 guests. AusCham has an "Emerging Leader" training fund dedicated to training Vietnamese employees in Australian companies to management levels.

Preparing to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Australia-Vietnam diplomatic relations, AusCham plans to organize some events and looks forward to receiving support and advice from VCCI for a successful celebration.

In response, VCCI President Pham Tan Cong affirmed that VCCI will support Australian companies in their business activities in Vietnam as well as support the celebration of the 50th diplomatic anniversary.

At the end of the meeting, he emphasized: "VCCI always tries to help make the most favorable legal environment not only for Australian businesses but also for all foreign businesses investing in Vietnam. VCCI is currently chairing a high-level 'think tank' that advises the Government on a post-COVID economic recovery and development program."■

Plenty of Room for Vietnamese-Romanian Business Cooperation

Talking with President of the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI) Pham Tan Cong, Ambassador of Romania Cristina Romila said that she took office in Vietnam in April 2021 and wished to continue to promote the relations between the two countries.

Ambassador Cristina Romila appreciated the fine cooperation between the two countries. In particular, in 2020, Vietnam and Romania celebrated the 70th anniversary of bilateral relations. The two sides have signed many cooperation agreements and exchanged many high-level delegations. Vietnam is currently the second-largest partner of Romania in ASEAN and is one of Romania's important partners in the Asia Pacific region.

In the past three years, trade turnover between the two countries has been positive but still shy with the potential and expectations of the governments on both sides. Therefore, the Romanian Ambassador said that this is a good time to further promote cooperation between the two sides as the EVFTA and EVIPA have been signed.

Romanian Ambassador Cristina Romila requested VCCI to introduce reliable business partners to Romanian businesses. Romanian enterprises have strengths in the food industry (pork export), information technology, and robot production.

Agreeing with the opinion of the Romanian Ambassador, VCCI President Pham Tan Cong said that Vietnam and Romania have developed a nice relationship and to promote business cooperation between the two sides, VCCI President Pham Tan Cong suggested that the two sides need to further strengthen the exchange of information between VCCI and the Embassy to enhance business connectivity. "VCCI is always willing to cooperate with the Embassy to introduce partners to Romanian businesses," emphasized VCCI President Pham Tan Cong.■

Opportunities to Boost Agricultural, Aquatic Exports to Russia

Currently, Vietnam is the only strategic partner of the Russian Federation in Southeast Asia. The high level of political relations and good relations is a favorable condition for bilateral economic, trade and investment relations to develop strongly. In addition, the Vietnam - EAEU Free Trade Agreement (VN-EAEU FTA), effective from October 2016, is considered a solid foundation for promoting trade and investment relations between the two countries.

ANH MAI

Potential for agricultural and aquatic products

At an online training workshop on agricultural and aquatic exports to Russia and Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) jointly organized by the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI), Mr. Tsygankov Kirill, Trade Advisor, representative of the Russian Trade Representative Office in Vietnam, said that taking promising market segments for Vietnamese exports into account, great opportunities can be found in agricultural exports such as fresh and canned vegetables, coffee, seafood, apparels, wooden furniture, especially outdoor rattan tables and chairs which are popular in Russia.

Another promising segment is seafood like crayfish, lobster, tuna, Japanese amberjack (*Seriola quinqueradiata*), Japanese mackerel (*Scomberomorus*) and squid. These items do not compete with Russian goods in the domestic market but they complement northern cold-water seafood. These items should be shipped by sea in refrigerated containers.

"Vietnam has a great opportunity to increase agricultural and aquatic exports. We call on Vietnamese friends to be more active in promoting their goods to the Russian market," he said.

Mr. Duong Hoang Minh, Commercial Counselor of Vietnam in Russia, said that Russia is the largest import market for agricultural and aquatic products in Eastern Europe. According to data from Russia, since VN-EAEU FTA to which Russia is a signatory took effect in October 2016, the export value of Vietnam's agricultural and aquatic products to Russia increased significantly but it still accounted for a modest market share in the Russian market.

Vietnam's major exports include agricultural products like coffee, cashew nut, pepper, dried mango (a promising new product), fresh mango, banana, pomelo, lemongrass and seafood like fish fillet, shrimp, dried fish, smoked fish and squid.

Good marketing will result in good export opportunities

The Eurasian Economic Union recently excluded 76 countries (including many competitors to Vietnam's agricultural and aquatic exports in Russian and EAEU markets such as China, India, Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Peru) from the list of countries entitled to generalized systems of preferences (GSP), he said. Thus, Vietnamese exports to the EAEU and Russia will enjoy preferential tax tariffs as committed in the VN-EAEU FTA while imports from other countries into these markets will be subject to ordinary duties (previously 75% of standard duties).

To make the most of the FTA's incentives in this context, according to Mr. Minh, Vietnamese businesses need to actively survey the market, visit/participate in exhibitions in Russia, such as World Food Moscow (held in September every year) and Prodexpo (February every year) for agricultural products and foods to understand the market and consumer trends, look for potential customers. Tea, agricultural products, fruits, seafood and foods should be displayed at these exhibitions.

In particular, the government should have policies to encourage cooperatives and enterprises to expand their production scale and ensure product quality, invest in post-harvest preservation technology from harvesting, preserving, transporting, consuming, packaging, and designs to match market tastes. Besides, it is necessary to expand the product range with beautiful designs that fit consumer tastes. ■

"The 4th industrial revolution and the pandemic have set a strong demand for digital transformation in all areas of social life, especially in the economic field. This is both an opportunity and a challenge for Vietnamese enterprises. However, this is an inevitable trend for many types of businesses if they want to survive and develop," affirmed Vice President Vo Thi Anh Xuan at the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs' Forum themed "Digital Transformation: From perception to action".

LAN ANH

The event was co-organized by the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council (VCCI) in collaboration with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) in Hanoi. The forum attracted more than 300 delegates who are leaders of the State, ministries, agencies, associations of provinces and cities, and outstanding female entrepreneurs across the country.

This is one of the efforts of the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs Council, VCCI and UN Women to strengthen women's economic power through supporting

Inevitable Trend of Businesses



The overview of the Vietnam Women Entrepreneurs' Forum

women-owned businesses to transform digitally and restore business production, adapting to the context of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and under the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic in the world and in Vietnam.

According to Vice President Vo Thi Anh Xuan, along with the cause of gender equality, the contingent of female entrepreneurs in Vietnam is growing stronger, accounting for about 26.5% of the total number of enterprises in the country, ranking 6th among countries with the highest number of female entrepreneurs in the world. Not only growing in terms of number, the capacity and qualifications of women entrepreneurs and the operational efficiency of women-owned enterprises has also continuously grown, in which, many enterprises have risen to the national and international level. Women entrepreneurs are continuing to overcome difficulties due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, to help businesses be stronger in the coming time.

"I believe that female entrepreneurs will continue to promote the good tradition of Vietnamese women and the soft power of female entrepreneurs, turn challenges into opportunities, determine development strategies for their businesses, unite to create the common strength of the business community; proactively approach policies and contribute to policymaking and implementation; accelerate business restructuring, including digital transformation, to have sustainable development," said the Vice President.

According to Mr. Pham Tan Cong, President of VCCI, in the past two years, the COVID-19 pandemic has spread globally

and claimed the lives of over five million people, devastating the economies of other countries. In this context, digital transformation is a lifeline for businesses. In fact, the businesses that are most resilient to the COVID-19 pandemic are the ones that do digital transformation the best. Smart corporate governance, digital operations, e-commerce, online negotiations and meetings are the ways for businesses to maintain uninterrupted operations.

Mr. Pham Tan Cong also emphasized that, from the perspective of the Party and State's policy on digital transformation, or from the perspective of "COVID-19", digital transformation is now a matter of survival for businesses, not a question of whether or not to do it.

According to the assessment, digital transformation is no longer a distant prospect, but is and will be an inevitable trend, and it is also one of the important solutions to help businesses adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic. In order to become a digital enterprise and take advantage of unprecedented opportunities of Industry 4.0, businesses, especially women-owned enterprises, need to be constantly innovating and ready to take action and make "breakthroughs".

According to Mr. Nguyen Nhat Quang, Vice Chairman of the Vietnam Software & IT Services (VINASA), Chairman of Hai Hoa Software Technology Joint Stock Company, the digital transformation cannot

be overnight but it needs a roadmap and must start from the mindset and perception of employers and employees.

The most recognizable benefits of digital transformation for businesses are cutting operating costs, reaching more customers in the longer term, providing direction more quickly, and more accurate decision making, which help to increase operational efficiency and improve the competitiveness of organizations and businesses.

According to Ms. Dinh Thi Thuy, General Director of MISA Joint Stock Company, digital transformation is the application of digital technology to work and daily life, helping individuals and businesses change the way they think, operate and thereby change labor productivity. "Enterprises should apply digital technology - it will save a lot of time. Digital transformation will help us handle work more professionally, efficiently and intelligently. I think for women, let's start with such a digital transformation," shared MISA female CEO Dinh Thi Thuy.

According to Ms. Thuy, the specific solution for female businesses is to re-evaluate the current situation of their business, in essence what is most needed: sales, human resources, accounting, or production management. To manage the field which takes the most time and costs the most, we should think about technology. Next, we should look for digital technology suppliers and companies to help businesses transform digitally quickly and efficiently. In particular, when implementing, it is necessary to have a very clear mindset about the wishes and goals in the digital transformation roadmap.■



Safe, Flexible Adaptation to and Effective Control of COVID-19

Active adaptation

Speaking at a recent seminar on the implementation of Resolution 128/NQ-CP and Decision 4800/QD-BYT of the Ministry of Health, held by the Ministry of Information and Communications in collaboration with the Ministry of Health, Deputy Minister of Information and Communications Pham Anh Tuan said that the two regulations were issued in a timely manner to fight the COVID-19 pandemic and spur socioeconomic development and recovery. Resolution 128, much expected by people and businesses, creates a turning point in thinking and approach to prevent and control the pandemic and return to the new normal.

Specifically, the resolution clearly provides different conditions for reopening, depending on pandemic levels which are classified with given criteria. While the plague is still complicated, with provided regulations on pandemic levels, businesses can compare local epidemiological facts to adopt working plans to assure customers. The economic recovery is expected to be faster as businesses are more active in disease response.

However, according to Deputy Minister Tuan, some central and local agencies are confronting difficulty in executing Resolution 128/NQ-CP, thus affecting the livelihood of people and the operations of businesses. Some localities are even applying their own approaches although there is general guidance.

Sharing the same view, Ms. Nguyen Thi Lien Huong, Director of the Health Environmental Management Department under the Ministry of Health, emphasized that Resolution 128/ND-CP and Decision 4800/QD-BYT have enabled localities to actively and creatively respond to the pandemic and helped enterprises restore business operations and socio-economic development.

In fact, after the two regulations, provinces and cities across

Resolution 128/NQ-CP on safe and flexible adaptation to and effective control of the COVID-19 pandemic and Decision 4800/QD-BYT are seen by businesses as a timely solution for economic recovery.

HA THU

the country assessed and announced pandemic levels. More than 40 localities issued local adaptation plans or released guidance on pandemic prevention and control in production and mobility.

Consistent application

Deputy Minister Pham Anh Tuan said the Government is currently directing the implementation of Resolution 128/NQ-CP in the new context. These are stepping-stones for the introduction of two strategies: Safe COVID-19 Pandemic Adaptation Strategy and Economic Recovery and Development Strategy. Currently, both strategies are being developed.

Director Nguyen Thi Lien Huong added, “One of the most concerning issues in the implementation of Resolution 128 and Decision 4800 is to ensure uniform application across the country and increase the activeness and creativity of localities.”

Agreeing with these views, many attendants pointed out that the “Living with COVID-19” policy is very appropriate and it has now started to work in the fight against the pandemic and boost economic recovery. However, it is necessary to soon improve institutions relating to pandemic prevention to make sure that the smallest lockdown is applied, depending on pandemic levels labeled red, orange, green and yellow. Localities are discouraged to upgrade their pandemic level to a higher status such as district-wide or province-wide.

In addition, in order to increase the effectiveness of Resolution 128, relevant authorities should soon release specific instructions and consistent implementation from central to local levels.

In this regard, Deputy Minister of Health Do Xuan Tuyen affirmed that the Government assigned relevant agencies to advise and propose establishing an interdisciplinary inspection team to check regulatory compliance to ensure consistency between central and local governments.

Previously, in Notice 277/TB-VPCP dated October 24, 2021, the Prime Minister requested the Ministry of Health to urgently train localities across the country in Resolution 128 and Decision 4800 to remove difficulties, obstacles and inadequacies in carrying out, sharing and exchanging experiences among localities, thereby raising awareness and unifying implementation nationwide. When being placed, revisions and supplements are recommended to match local reality. ■



The economic recovery is expected to be faster as businesses are more active in disease response

Companies Cautiously Restore Business Operations

After Resolution 128/NQ-CP took effect on October 11, 2021, pandemic prevention and control across the country entered a new phase and businesses focused on post-lockdown recovery with caution.

HUONG LY

According to economic experts, the easing of social distancing measures in the wake of good control of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country has helped revive economic activity. In the world, the decline in COVID-19 infections and the increase in market demands toward the end of the year will create good conditions for export recovery, especially for Vietnamese products with competitive advantages. Economic locomotives of the country like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are also adopting economic recovery scenarios as guided by the Government. As a result, business performance

there has been continuously improved as compared to the lockdown time.

Mr. Tran Thanh Hai, Deputy Director of the Import-Export Department under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, said, if the pandemic continues to be controlled well, businesses are expected to regain growth momentum in the last months of 2021. In 2021, Vietnam can continue to take a trade surplus if the situation is favorable.

According to the Ministry of Planning and Investment, after Resolution 128/NQ-CP was applied, in just 10 days, 3,753 enterprises were established, accounting for 45.6% of total new corporate foundations in October. Notably, 45 out of 63 provinces and cities across the country witnessed an increase in businesses that resumed operation in October, as compared to September. In particular, the worst COVID-19-affected localities had impressive recovery such as Da Nang (up 167.3%), Can Tho (58.3%), Ho Chi Minh City (31.6%), Hanoi (17.8%) and Dong Nai (3.8%).

The Binh Duong Industrial Zones Authority said that, by the end of October, more than 2,000 tenants in Binh Duong province's industrial zones had restored business operations, or over 96% of the total. More than 76% of workers returned to companies.

However, for businesses to return to effective operations,



The easing of social distancing measures in the wake of good control of the COVID-19 pandemic has helped revive business activities



experts recommend that they need to actively innovate their business models and restructure operations on digital platforms; improve productivity and competitiveness; pay attention to retaining employees, and arranging and restructuring labor appropriately.

Mr. Choi Joo Ho, General Director of Samsung Vietnam, said that newly approved support policies on businesses, cooperatives and business households amid the COVID-19 pandemic are good news for foreign investors. These policies show that Vietnam will simultaneously implement effective epidemic prevention and control measures and enhance favorable conditions for distribution and supply networks to work stably.

Doing so not only helps businesses maintain production, but also attracts investment flows in the coming time.

He affirmed that Samsung will not change its investment strategy in the Vietnamese market although the COVID-19 pandemic has caused a lot of difficulties for its manufacturing plants. Samsung Vietnam is building a US\$220 million R&D center in Hanoi, which will research and develop 5G, bigdata and artificial intelligence technologies, among others, in Vietnam.

Supported by central and local authorities, Samsung will continue to expand manufacturing and invest in equipment for six factories in Vietnam in the coming time. While Samsung only invested in manufacturing and assembling in the past, it will now upgrade and invest more in research and development to turn Vietnam into a major global production base in the coming time, Mr. Choi Joo Ho stressed.

Mr. Binu Jacob, General Director of Nestlé Vietnam, said the group recently decided to invest US\$132 million to build a new factory in Dong Nai province, Vietnam in the next two years, thus making Vietnam a production center of Nestlé in Asia and Oceania.

Mr. Ho Quoc Luc, former Chairman of the Vietnam Association of Seafood Exporters and Producers (VASEP),

Chairman of the Board of Directors of FIMEX Vietnam, said that after the Resolution 128/NQ-CP was applied, his company resumed normal operations. However, as exposure to pandemic outbreaks is still high while vaccinations have yet to reach herd immunity, enterprises, including shrimp producers, need to be very urgent and serious to maintain production safety. This takes a lot of effort and money, but it is extremely necessary and cannot be disregarded.

"At the same time, they must monitor demand changes and competitor capacity in order to have suitable strategies and steps for their circumstances, to accelerate safe production recovery and progress towards long-term stable development," he said.

Business support policies in the wake of social distancing have started to come to life. However, in order for many businesses to access preferential policies, support from ministries and sectors is needed. For example, the Ministry of Industry and Trade is carrying out many solutions to remove difficulties in business, especially for large manufacturing enterprises in industrial zones to maintain supply chains and production chains. For textile and garment, footwear, furniture, seafood processing, electronics industries, it focuses on providing maximum support for factories to maintain and restore production to maintain the market foothold and supply chains and complete signed orders to take advantage of year-end shopping demand in European and American markets to scale up production.

The Ministry of Industry and Trade has also fostered close cooperation with foreign-led multinational corporations (such as Samsung and Toyota) to facilitate the search for and connection with domestic parts vendors in lieu of imported sources in the short term and in the long term. In addition, the ministry regularly updates and upgrades the processing, manufacturing and supporting database system in order to network domestic and foreign businesses and investors to form domestic supply chains. ■

Total Retail Sales of Goods and Services Rises 18.5% in October

The total retail sales of goods and services in October increased by 18.5% compared to the previous month thanks to the easing of COVID-19 pandemic prevention and control measures in many localities.

According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, the market in a number of localities gradually recovered in October with the reopening of many traditional markets.

However, total retail sales of goods and services in October decreased by 19.52% compared to the same period last year.

The retail sales of goods occupied the largest proportion in the structure of total retail sales of goods

and services in 10 months, accounting for 82.8%, while accommodation and catering services accounted for 8.3%, tourism accounted for only 0.1% and other services accounted for 8.8%.

In Hanoi, total retail sales of goods and services in October saw a sharp increase of 59.8% compared to the previous month and 5.1% compared to the same period last year.

The industry and trade sector will implement measures to promote the circulation of goods across the domestic market in the remaining months of this year while boosting the application of e-commerce in their circulation and distribution.

In addition, the Ministry of Industry and Trade will continue to conduct domestic consumption stimulation programs and trade promotion activities.

NDO

Supporting Businesses to Overcome COVID-19

In response to difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the General Department of Vietnam Customs submitted trade facilitation mechanisms and policies to the Ministry of Finance and the Government, especially specific policies on solutions to deal with obstacles in export and import of goods for pandemic prevention and control.

HA HIEN



Customs agencies provide the best support for businesses and individuals to carry out customs procedures

Given the complicated development of the COVID-19 pandemic, the customs sector has introduced many support policies for businesses and helped them overcome difficulties. Customs authorities are also leading governmental agencies in administrative reform, and always assist enterprises to carry out customs procedures; listen to their opinions and accept their recommendations for policy changes to create favorable conditions for them.

At a recent online conference on business support to overcome COVID-19 held by the General Department of Customs, attended by more than 100 connection points of 15 domestic industry associations and their member businesses, customs authorities informed the business community of business support results of dealing with difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The General Department requested relevant customs units to implement support solutions and provide the best assistance for businesses and individuals.

Especially for goods used for pandemic prevention and control, the General Department exempted physical inspection for COVID-19 vaccines; and directed customs offices at international airports to facilitate intraday customs clearance for imported vaccines, and accept electronic signatures on drug and medicinal ingredient test sheets filed by manufacturers to ensure the quality of items used for medical examination and treatment amid the raging pandemic outbreak.

Customs agencies in localities where the pandemic raged such as Ho Chi Minh City, Binh Duong and Dong Nai provinces made efforts to support local enterprises to deal with difficulties. Ho Chi Minh City Customs Department encouraged its employees to overcome hardships and work overtime to ensure the fastest clearance of goods. The department arranged employees to work in shifts and groups to work and live safely while ensuring COVID-19 pandemic prevention and 24/7 customs clearance; use scanners to inspect containerized goods, streamline customs procedures, and allow enterprises to submit original import documents late.

As soon as the COVID-19 pandemic showed signs of complications, Dong Nai Customs Department established and launched a steering committee to assist enterprises to deal with emerging difficulties and expedite customs clearance. It rationally arranged personnel to keep all work smooth, even if infections were detected.

In addition, the department carried out many support solutions such as allowing businesses to delay submission of original customs documents (submitting scanned copies first); halted inspections at enterprises; gave answers to questions and provided instructions online; consulted import procedures for items used for pandemic prevention; and recommended mobility permits for import-export staff.

Besides, to ease congestion at Cat Lai Port as guided by the General Department of Customs, Dong Nai Customs Department directed Tan Cang Long Binh and Tan Cang Nhon Trach to receive and clear goods for businesses.

Also at the conference, representatives of the General Department of Customs said that, to further support them to restore business operations amid complicated COVID-19 pandemic development, the General Department will open three online conferences on "Support for businesses to overcome COVID" from October 26, 2021 to November 15, 2021 to learn about their opinions, answer their questions and collect their recommendations. It will host job conferences with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and foreign-invested enterprises in Vietnam.

Online conferences in this context are highly appreciated by associations and the business community, showing support of the General Department of Customs in particular and the customs sector in general for business development. ■

Consistent Solutions to Facilitate Importers, Exporters

Following the directions of the Government and the Ministry of Finance, the General Department of Vietnam Customs (GDC) has adopted several solutions to speed up customs clearance for commodities and promptly support business operations of enterprises.

THU HA

The COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected socio-economic development and import-export activity in particular since May 2021, especially in localities with many large industrial parks like Ho Chi Minh City, Dong Nai and Binh Duong. Business performance stalled and distribution was disrupted. In such a context, the Government required central authorities to direct settlement of emerging matters to facilitate merchandise distribution, facilitate importers and exporters and speed up commodity clearance.

The General Department has deployed solutions for smoother customs procedures, customs inspection and export-import supervision. The agency allowed enterprises to submit electronic customs documents for merchandise clearance; set up export and import support and problem-solving teams for customs procedures together with officer lists and contact telephone numbers of related units at all levels working around the clock to promptly receive and solve problems, and ensure support for fast customs clearance of goods. For post-clearance inspection, the agency is temporarily suspending compliance inspection and assessment for enterprises without any signs of violations to help them deal with existing hardships and maintain business operations.

For agricultural export across northern borders, the General Department of Customs directed relevant bodies to carry out solutions like urgently facilitating and executing intraday customs clearance, and immediately solve export procedural problems.

For import of medical supplies, equipment, medicines, vaccines and biomedical products for pandemic prevention and control, the General Department instructed quick clearance of bulk goods; and allowed enterprises to ship items that require special preservation to their storage locations where inspection will be conducted.

Besides, the General Department applies different taxation policies on imported and exported goods. It signed

cooperation agreements with commercial banks to apply for the 24/7 tax payment program. Up to now, it has signed such electronic tax payment agreements with 44 banks, of which 37 lenders launched the 24/7 electronic tax payment program.

Given the complicated COVID-19 pandemic, the customs industry also managed and arranged human resources to ensure merchandise clearance. The General Department of Customs directed customs agencies to make ready plans with actionable solutions to ensure uninterrupted customs clearance, not disrupt the goods supply chain and provide maximum support to customers but still ensure customs management as guided by the Government and the Ministry of Finance.

To support businesses, the General Department reported to the Ministry of Finance and proposed the Prime Minister include the following contents to the cabinet meeting and issue a resolution on settlement of COVID-caused difficulties in allowing extension of time of temporarily closing duty-free shops and allowing companies in export processing zones to hire warehouses outside industrial parks, export processing zones, high-tech parks and economic zones to store their commodities, imposed to the administration of the Government.

In addition, the General Department advised the Ministry of Finance to give opinions on guidelines and policies in disease prevention and control and import and export management policies to facilitate and support businesses, especially when they purchase, import and receive vaccines, including the Government's Resolution 21/NQ-CP on purchase and use of COVID-19 vaccines; the Ministry of Health's Plan for fund reception and COVID vaccination; the Government's Resolution on socialized COVID vaccine purchase, import and vaccination. ■



Non-cash Payment Value Projected to Be 25 Times Higher than GDP by 2025



“By the end of 2025, the value of non-cash payments will be 25 times higher than GDP; non-cash payment in e-commerce will reach 50%; and 80% of people aged 15 years and over will have transaction accounts at banks or other authorized institutions.”

QUYNH CHI

This is one of the specific goals in the Project on Non-Cash Payment Development in Vietnam in 2021-2025, which was approved by Deputy Prime Minister Le Minh Khai.

According to Decision 1813/QĐ-TTg, the overall goals of the project are to create a positive change in high-growth non-cash payment in the economy, making non-cash payment a habit in society for people in urban areas as well as in rural, remote and isolated areas; reduce social costs associated with cash; and strongly apply Industry 4.0 achievements to upgrade and develop non-cash payment infrastructure and services.

The Project also aims to increase people's access to payment services; and increase non-cash acceptance points to over 450,000.

It also sets the targeted annual growth of 20-25% in

non-cash payment transactions and value; a 50-80% growth of mobile transactions and an 80-100% growth of mobile value; a 35-40% growth of transactions and value via the Internet; and a 40% growth of non-cash payment of individuals and organizations.

In public services, the targets of non-cash payment will be: from 90% to 100% of educational institutions in urban areas accept tuition payment through non-cash payment method; from 90 - 100% of universities and colleges in urban areas deploy online tuition payment on the National Public Service Portal; 60% of hospitals and medical facilities in urban areas accept non-cash payment for medical services; 60% of people in urban areas receive pensions, social insurance benefits and unemployment benefits through non-cash payment methods.

According to the State Bank of Vietnam (SBV), the non-cash payment system in Vietnam has developed strongly in recent years, driven by the participation of many organizations. As of mid-2020, 78 internet payment service providers, 49 mobile payment service providers, 30 commercial banks and six payment intermediary service providers cooperated to deploy about 80,000 QR Code points.

During the five-year period from 2016 to 2020, internet-based payment transactions and value increased by 262.5% and 353%; and mobile payments by 1,000% and 3,000%, respectively.

Without a doubt, the COVID-19 pandemic has given a strong boost to non-cash payments. In 2020 and the first months of 2021, as many social and economic activities were affected by social distancing measures, non-cash payment still achieved a good growth rate.

SBV data showed that transactions through the interbank electronic payment system reached 97.36 million items valued VND954 trillion in the first eight months of 2021 (up 3.32% in transactions and 41.37% in value over the first eight months of 2020).

Non-cash payment grew well in popular channels in the first eight months of the year: The Internet channel saw 435.25 million transactions valued VND2,278 trillion (up 54.13% in transactions and 30.70% in value year on year); the mobile channel witnessed a respective growth of 74.98% and 93.69%; and the QR code channel recorded a respective growth 66.81% and 133.12%.

In order to achieve the above objectives, the Project proposed some solutions like completing the legal framework to amend and supplement payment terms at relevant laws; completing and issuing regulations on electronic identification and authentication; applying regulations on personal data privacy protection. ■

Depleting Resources for Rapid Development Makes Prosperity Less Likely

Vietnam's economy in recent years has grown but has not been stable, with internal weaknesses: a long-term high fiscal deficit compared to GDP, rapid increase in public debt, inefficient public investment, and bad debts of banks. Therefore, the Document of the 13th Congress emphasized: "Continuing to accelerate the economic restructuring. Restructuring and improving investment efficiency, especially public investment. Restructuring and developing healthy markets of all kinds, especially the market for factors of production in order to effectively mobilize and use resources."

Dr. DOAN DUY KHUONG

CHAIRMAN OF ASEAN BAC VIETNAM, VICE PRESIDENT OF VCCI

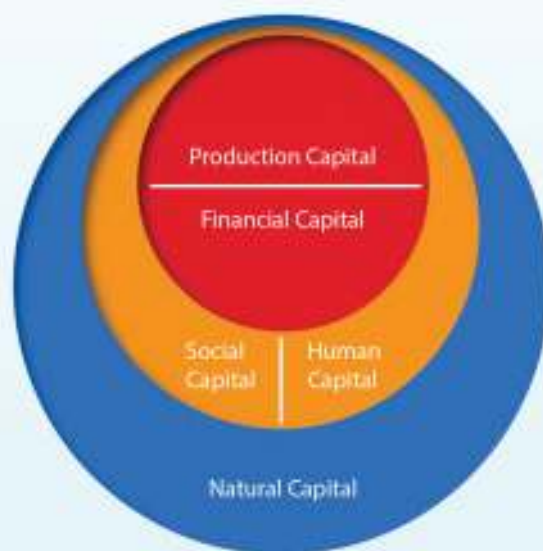
However, now, the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic have made the country's ability to restructure the economy even more difficult when financial, human and social resources are not available. Society is eroded and exhausted due to prolonged non-productive social distancing policies. ADB has revised down its GDP growth forecast for Vietnam in 2021 from the previous 6.7% forecast to 3.8%. In that context, determining the country's resource model to promote economic restructuring for sustainable development plays a particularly important role.

Identifying five major resources

The concept of resources, also known as capital, has an important meaning in the market economy. According to managers, it is necessary to distinguish five types of capital: financial capital, natural capital, production capital, human capital and social capital. All are resources capable of creating output product lines that meet economic needs. The use, maintenance and development of all five types of capital is essential to the sustainability and prosperity of each nation.

Financial capital facilitates economic production, even though it is not production in itself. Natural capital is made up of the resources and ecosystem services of the natural world. Production capital includes physical assets created by human productive activities into natural capital and capable of providing a flow of goods or services. Human capital is an individual's productive capacity, inherited and acquired through education and training. Social capital (the most controversial and most difficult to measure) includes trust, mutual understanding, shared values, and social knowledge such as culture and ethics.

Sustainable development in order to progress to a prosperous society requires maintaining or increasing all sources of capital, including natural capital, which are often depleted by economic production. Therefore, the traditional triad of essential economic activities - production,



consumption and distribution - must be supplemented with a fourth function, which is to maintain resources and build social moral civilization. Therefore, the concept of a circular economy is becoming more and more popular.

The road ahead

From the point of view of economists, in a market economy capital is the key to the operation of any entity, whether it is a family, a small business, a large corporation or an entire economy. The five-capital model provides the basis for understanding the sustainability of the economic concept of wealth creation or "capital." Any organization will use five types of capital to produce its products or services. A sustainable organization will maintain and, if possible, enhance these capital assets, rather than depleting or degrading them.

In essence, the five resources must be linked together in the implementation of economic development. Projects can achieve successful outcomes across all resources, often with only one optimal solution. Sustainable development can only happen if this production takes place in ways that maintain or increase all necessary capital resources. A sustainable socio-economic system generates the flow of desired goods and services using its renewable capital without depleting them. Over the course of economic history, the focus has shifted from material-intensive technology to information-intensive technology. These technologies can simultaneously save the three classical factors of production: land, labor and production capital.

The government should restructure the economy and scale up existing policies to further reduce the use of physical resources in economic growth. Measures that can be considered include wage policy, social security, land law amendments, promotion of life-cycle-oriented integrated approaches, application of resource usage fees, fees of environmental damage, socio-culturalism, or support longer product life, such as through increasing the statutory minimum warranty period.

The private sector can identify new business models related to improving the resource efficiency of production processes and realize that “less raw materials” can mean “more value”.

Consumers need to be more aware of the role each of us can play through better product choices and behavior.

The world today has experienced more than 250 years of unprecedented economic prosperity. More than a dozen generations of experienced predecessors have taught us more about the world in which we live, through the science we have developed, than any other time in history. And of course we now know that no resource is infinite. Indeed, the world is very finite; we realize that our impact on it must not erode the ability of resources to not only maintain the level of production in the economy, but also to sustain our very existence.

The five-source model represents this complex organic relationship well. It shows the development resources in a market economy: natural capital, human capital, social capital, productive capital and financial capital. Moreover, it will be an effective tool of the National Assembly agencies and civil organizations to develop standards to evaluate the effectiveness of the management of government agencies, the quality of business activities and the behavior of the Government agencies. Clearly identifying five economic resources and having an appropriate economic restructuring policy will be a better representation of the quality and quantity of input capital needed for production. And because of this, it allows us to better manage and maintain the necessary capital for the economic production of the country especially during the difficult times of the COVID-19 pandemic, and therefore, we can better analyze context of sustainable national development to build a prosperous society.■

When human capital increases in areas such as science, education and management, it leads to increase in innovation, social well-being, equality and productivity



BIGGEST THREAT TO BUSINESS GROWTH POTENTIAL



Data from PROFIT500 Ranking - the list of the 500 most profitable companies in Vietnam in 2021 showed that 53.1% of 339 listed companies maintained profit growth momentum in 2019 - 2020 and the first six months of 2021. Besides, 24.4% started to recover and regain profit growth momentums in the first six months of 2021 and 14.2% of them witnessed slowing and declining profit in this six-month period as compared to a year-ago period. The remaining 8.3% had slow profit recovery as they witnessed two consecutive periods of year-on-year profit decline, in 2020 and in the first 6 months of 2021.

Difficulties in personnel, remote operation and supply chains

In a survey conducted by Vietnam Report in August 2021, PROFIT500 companies faced huge challenges due to the 4th COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, mainly resulting from insufficient production personnel caused by physical distancing regulations; difficulty in remote operation and administration; supply chain disruption; decreased purchasing power and increased input price.

Although corporate profit performance was positive in the second quarter, the 4th prolonged and dangerous outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic significantly reduced profitability in the third quarter as large-scale social distancing measures disrupted recovery momentum. Growth prospects of many

Given negative COVID-19 pandemic developments, businesses will continue to face numerous business difficulties in the domestic market and obstacles to import and export activities with other countries, according to Vietnam Report.

ANH MAI

industries were challenged when at least 70% of southern manufacturing factories had to suspend operations as a result of lockdowns. For factories still in operation, they had to ensure all mandatory requirements regarding production, distancing and accommodation and test COVID-19 every three days. Therefore, they incurred high operating costs while shrinking their working capacity by 40-50%. Besides, inflation risks still exist from now until the end of the year.

Experts pointed out that the 4th wave of the COVID-19 outbreak has caused numerous difficulties for the economy to date. Vietnam's GDP was estimated to decrease by 6.17% year on year in the third quarter of 2021, the deepest decline since Vietnam announced the quarterly GDP. According to an updated report of the World Bank (WB), Vietnam's growth was estimated at 2-2.5% this year, significantly lower than its forecast of 4.8% in September. This new forecast was based on a deep decline in third-quarter GDP and a strong economic recovery in the fourth quarter when the two economic locomotives of Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City are gradually lifting restrictions.

Priority strategies in the last months of 2021

According to the PROFIT500 report, the strategic priorities of enterprises in the last months of 2021 have changed a lot as compared to the survey conducted by Vietnam Report in August 2020. Accordingly, their priority strategies are to increase profitability in the last months of 2021: Strengthening PR activity and exercising social responsibility; increasing revenue by driving sales through enhancing customer service, increasing discounts/promotions, seeking and expanding markets, researching and developing new products; developing high-quality human resources and increasing labor productivity; cutting costs by regular budget monitoring and performance reviews; and digital transformation application.

Notably, strengthening PR and exercising activity are new factors in top priority strategies this year and are assigned the top position. This is proven in practice. Despite many difficulties and obstacles caused by the pandemic, businesses have joined hands to support the Government in the fight against COVID-19. They

Meeting Eurasian Businesses in Vietnam in 2021

Delta E&C Vietnam and the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam (ICHAM) recently organized the "Eurasian Enterprises Meeting in Vietnam 2021". The event was an opportunity for leaders of FDI companies to share their experiences in handling crises and stabilizing business performances during the pandemic.

At the meeting, Mr. Tran Thanh Huan, Director of the Foreign Affairs Department under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, said 2021 is a tough year and business operations stalled. The Vietnamese government has endeavored to seek measures to contain the pandemic and help businesses restore normal operations.

Mr. Antonino Tedesco, Commercial Counselor of the Italian Embassy in Vietnam, said, currently, more Italian and European projects are coming to Vietnam in particular and Southeast Asia in general. Therefore, the Embassy and Italian businesses in Vietnam as well hope that Vietnam will deploy the vaccination strategy in the best way to keep investment and trade activities in a good place.

Representatives of the European Chamber of Commerce, the Italian Chamber of Commerce and the Korean Chamber of Commerce in Vietnam all shared the same opinions: To overcome the pandemic crisis and not leave severe economic consequences, Vietnam should roll out vaccination rather than large-scale lockdowns to avoid production stagnation, supply disruption and avoid losing the opportunity to attract foreign investors into Vietnam.

Thu Ha

FDI Value Increases in Both New and Existing Projects

Foreign investors invested US\$23.74 billion as of October 20, 2021, up 1.1% over the same period of 2020, according to the Foreign Investment Agency (FIA) under the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI).

Foreign investors have invested in 18 out of 21 industries. The processing and manufacturing sector took the lead with US\$12.74 billion, accounting for 53.7% of the total. The electricity production and distribution sector ranked second with US\$5.54 billion, accounting for 23.3%, followed by real

estate and retail sectors with US\$2.12 billion and over US\$803 million, respectively.

By project, processing and manufacturing, wholesaling and retailing, and technological profession sectors attracted most projects, accounting for 33.1%, 27.8% and 16% of total projects, respectively.

As many as 97 countries and territories invested in Vietnam. Singapore was the biggest investor with US\$6.77 billion, accounting for 28.5% of the total. South Korea ranked second with US\$4.15 billion (accounting for 17.5%), up 21.3% year on year. Japan ranked third with nearly US\$3.4 billion (accounting for 14.3%), up 89.9% year on year.

Thu Ha

Digital Transformation Index Debuted to Measure Central and Local Agencies

This is the first year the Digital Transformation Index (DTI) was launched to measure the digital transformation of central and local bodies and localities. This is also the time the Ministry of Information and Communications surveys, collects and checks reported data to assess digital transformation via its website <https://dti.gov.vn>.

According to the DTI 2020 report, among 18 ministries and agencies that provide online public services, the Ministry of Finance took the lead with a DTI score of 0.4944. Among seven ministries and agencies that do not provide public services, Vietnam Television ranked first with a DTI score of 0.2995.

Notably, among provinces and cities, Da Nang was the best performer of digital transformation in 2020, scoring 0.4874. It also led all three pillars of Digital Government, Digital Economy and Digital Society. The top 10 followers included Thua Thien Hue, Bac Ninh, Quang Ninh, Ho Chi Minh City, Tien Giang, Can Tho, Ninh Binh, Kien Giang and Bac Giang.

Remark on DTI 2020 results, a representative of the Authority of Informatization Technology Application (AITA) said that currently, the Digital Transformation Index is low. Ministries, sectors and localities need to promote digital transformation under all three pillars of Digital Government, Digital Economy and Digital Society. Also based on DTI, they should pay attention to raising low indicators.

Ha Thu

have raised their sense of responsibility to society, created a positive image and enhanced their reputation in the hearts of customers and partners. Furthermore, instead of reducing costs by staff downsizing as seen in last year's survey, in 2021, PROFIT500 companies focused on implementing the core strategy of increasing productivity and workforce quality in addition to digital transformation application and regularly assessing operational efficiency in a close and timely manner.

The biggest difficulty for businesses today is the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, PROFIT500 companies believed that quick pandemic control is a decisive factor for Vietnamese business recovery and growth. At the same time, the Government also needs to pay attention to fiscal and monetary

policies to stabilize the macroeconomy and control inflation. Regarding fiscal policy, accelerating public investment disbursement will help stimulate aggregate demand and create momentums for economic growth. Besides, together with an active and flexible monetary policy, it is essential to reduce lending interest rates, loosen and allow debt restructuring to support businesses to overcome difficulties. Furthermore, the government should continue to adopt urgent solutions to deal with emerging hardships for them, including support to cut and extend tax payment; minimize procedures to help them access support packages and enhance digital transformation application; and foster delivery of public services and administrative procedures in the digital space. ■

Improving Capacity of Private Sector

Persistent weaknesses are obstructing the capacity building of the private sector in Vietnam. In addition, some policies and mechanisms are discouraging businesses and households from growing larger in size.

THU HA

Private businesses still grow slowly

Vietnam's private economy has gradually matured. More private firms are named in the Top 500 largest companies in Vietnam. Six private corporations are even rated large in scale in Asia and the world. The private economy also makes up 40% of the country's GDP, generates millions of jobs with an average monthly individual salary of VND8.3 million in 2020. This shows that the private sector is playing an increasingly important role in the economy.

However, the overall capacity of the private sector is still limited. Despite being big in number, they are mainly small and even micro in scale, have low technology and management levels, remain weak in business connectivity and cooperation; have weak integration into regional and global value chains; and have uneven performance across the sector.

Dr. Nguyen Thi Luyen, Deputy Director of Business Reform and Development Research Department under the Central Institute for Economic Management (CIEM), said that inherent weaknesses are hindering the capacity building of the Vietnamese private sector. In addition, policies and mechanisms are discouraging businesses and households from growing larger in size. In particular, the private sector's resilience to the COVID-19 pandemic remains weak. A lot of private businesses had to shut down.

Besides internal weaknesses, she pointed out policy setbacks and shortcomings in State administration and business environment.

Sharing the same view, Dr. Tran Dinh Thien, former Director of the Vietnam Institute of Economics, also said that the private sector is mainly weak in governance and lacks a development environment. Discrimination still exists between the private sector and other sectors. Many strong policies are in favor of FDI enterprises, not privately owned ones.

"The 'slow growth' of the private sector needs to be compared with the FDI sector. The former still lacks timely and proper support as compared to the FDI sector which is offered a lot of incentives," he emphasized.

Creating resilience in a new period

To improve the Vietnamese private sector capacity, Dr. Nguyen Thi Luyen said that it is necessary to immediately focus on solutions for businesses to restore operations and minimize negative impacts of the pandemic, such as employment, cash flow and loans for restoring production and business.

In the medium and long run, it is necessary to further perfect mechanisms and policies for a better business investment environment; accelerate technological application, development, innovation and digital transformation; promote private companies to join value chains; make effective use of new-generation free trade agreements; strengthen connectivity along the value chain between private enterprises and FDI enterprises.

Businesses must focus on improving quality and scale to meet demand. They need to coordinate with their peers to enhance competitiveness, share opportunities and difficulties, accelerate technology application, apply digital transformation for higher productivity and quality, and adapt to uncertainties such as natural disasters and pandemics.

Regarding inadequacies of current policies on private business support, Dr. Tran Dinh Thien said that support policies should be fair to all enterprises, regardless of being private or foreign-owned, in the coming time. If there are more supportive policies, they will certainly be an impetus for private sector development. ■





Mr. Nguyen Thanh Phuc, Director of the Authority of Information Security, addresses the Vietnam Security Summit

CYBERSECURITY

Core of Digital Transformation

Digital trust is the foundation for socio-economic activity. Building digital trust is key to successful digital transformation. This will be a huge challenge for Vietnam as well as other countries around the world.

HA LINH

Heightened risks in the digital environment

The COVID-19 pandemic rocked all economies across the globe. Many businesses and services were disrupted as people had to work from home as a result of social distancing. Many businesses, especially SMEs, had to shift to work online from home and immediately set up remote working solutions for employees.

Mr. Sam Cheng Qingjun, Director of Public & Government Affairs, Huawei, said, the global impact of COVID-19 is a testament to the importance of having strong, secure and stable telecommunications networks for the digital economy to withstand the pandemic. However, security risks are a concern today.

In 2020, the world witnessed a new record of security

vulnerabilities and cyberattacks in both occurrence and scale. Ransomware and data leaks kept turning up. According to the WHO, cyberattacks in 2020 increased fivefold over 2019, and according to a Gartner survey, 61% of technology executives said they would increase investment in networks and information security.

In Vietnam, according to Deputy Minister of Information and Communications Nguyen Huy Dung, in the last two years, more online activities have been shifted to cyberspace. Every day, each Vietnamese internet user is online for nearly seven hours. This duration will continue to increase, meaning that cybersecurity risks will be higher. Global data show that 900 cyberattacks happen every second, five new malicious codes are created and 40 weaknesses and vulnerabilities are detected every day.

Vietnam ranked 25th globally on the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2020, he said. This is the result of the efforts of security agencies in ensuring cybersecurity. In the coming time, the Ministry of Information and Communications will disseminate basic cybersecurity campaigns for people, provide information security services and applications on mobile platforms. The recent launch of the internet security application Visafe is just the opening.

Eight specific goals to improve Vietnam's global rankings

With respect to information security, Mr. Nguyen Thanh Phuc, Director of the Authority of Information Security under the Ministry of Information and Communications, said that Vietnam's GCI 2020 standing will be a challenge for it to keep this position and build digital trust in the years to come as it is forecast that every second will witness 3,000 cyberattacks and 12 new malicious codes by 2025, an increase of 3 times and 2.4 times over 2020, respectively. New vulnerabilities and weaknesses appearing every day will climb to about 70 in 2025, an increase of 1.75 times over 2020.

The authority put forth eight specific goals to create digital trust and improve Vietnam's global rankings: Maintaining the 25th place on the GCI rankings, aiming for 20th place; each citizen has a "guarding knight"; each agency, organization or enterprise has a professional protection body; all ministerial agencies and People's Committees ensure information security with four layers; protecting information infrastructure in 11 important sectors such as banking, finance and transportation. Other goals include: all users have access, raise awareness and improve information security skills to create digital trust and keep Vietnam's cyberspace secure and healthy; negative information is kept below 10%; and all digital platforms comply with the law.

The Authority of Information Security also proposed very specific solutions for 2021-2022: Cyberspace is for all and no one is left behind; Vietnam's GCI rankings are maintained and elevated; all digital platforms comply with legal regulations; negative information is kept below 10%; all digital platforms comply with privacy regulations; and "Made in Vietnam" platforms are developed for over 10 million users. ■



Resolute to Speed up Public Investment Disbursement

Public investment disbursement is seen as one of the key tasks and solutions in the last months of 2021 to give a strong boost to economic recovery.

HA THU

Just over 60% of the plan

In 2021, the total State investment fund (excluding VND16 trillion for national target programs which was not assigned by the Prime Minister) is more than VND584 trillion, including more than VND74 trillion of planned capital rolled over from previous years to 2021 and more than VND510 trillion of planned capital allocated in 2021.

According to the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the State investment fund disbursed in October 2021 was estimated at VND41.7 trillion, down 17.4% year on year, including VND7.7 trillion of a centrally managed fund, down 19.5% and VND34 trillion of a locally managed fund, down 16.9%. In the first 10 months of 2021, the disbursement reached VND318.6 trillion, equaling 64.7% of the full-year plan and down 8.3% year on year (fulfilled 67.8% and rose 31.6% in the same period of 2020).

Public investment disbursement is being affected by many new factors this year, including social distancing, mobility restrictions and rising input prices. Besides, other subjective reasons are unfocused and undetermined leadership of governments at all levels in inspection and supervision; slowed site clearance; and ineffective communications to the masses.

In fact, the COVID-19 pandemic has slowed investment capital flows, including social investment and State investment. However, given processing impacts, public investment is one of the important solutions to deal with existing difficulties; generate jobs and increase incomes for workers; and boost economic growth. According to the General Statistics Office (GSO), every 1% of the investment will help increase GDP by 0.06%. This is also a prime source of seeding capital to attract social investment, especially for “hungry” health infrastructure. Particularly in Ho Chi Minh City, VND1 of public investment capital attracts VND10 of social investment capital. Therefore, it is necessary to speed up public investment in order to attract social investment.

Close guidance, specific solutions

From now until the end of the year or just two months, nearly 40% of the public investment funds must be disbursed.



Public investment in infrastructure is one of important solutions to boost economic growth

This is a huge challenge that requires a great deal of effort and determination to get it done.

Before this reality, to create a driving force to “revive” and develop the economy, the Government took drastic measures to speed up the disbursement of this important fund, including Resolutions 01/NQ-CP and 45/NQ-CP; Resolutions of regular cabinet meetings; Resolution 63/NQ-CP on key tasks and solutions to accelerate economic growth, public investment disbursement and sustainable export in the last months of 2021 and early 2022; Dispatch 1082/CD-TTg of the Prime Minister; and many directives of the Prime Minister on accelerating disbursement of public investment in 2021.

Most recently, on October 25, the Government Office issued Official Dispatch 7776/CD-VPCP to ministers and heads of central government agencies; chairpersons of the People's Committees of centrally-run provinces and cities on accelerating public investment disbursement in 2021. Accordingly, Deputy Prime Minister Le Minh Khai requested them to review and solve difficulties, obstacles and bottlenecks in public investment disbursement immediately to strive for the highest disbursement rate of public investment in 2021.

They need to further raise the sense of responsibility and accountability in leading, directing and checking; urgently review and immediately handle difficulties, obstacles and bottlenecks in public investment disbursement within their jurisdiction.

In order to strive for the highest disbursement rate of public investment in 2021, the Prime Minister also requested the Ministry of Planning and Investment to review and minimize administrative procedures and increase online working to reduce time and cost and not cause trouble for central and local agencies. ■



SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE MARINE FARMING

To protect marine resources, which are being overexploited, and boost the sustainable marine economy, mariculture or marine farming is a strong development approach.

HUONG GIANG

Untapped mariculture

Vietnam's mariculture potential is huge. According to the Directorate of Fisheries, the country's marine farming area is about 5,000 square kilometers. In 2010 - 2019, marine farming made significant progress in area and output. The total mariculture area in 2019 was over 256,000 ha, 23.3% larger than a year earlier. The output was nearly 598,000 tons in the year, up 16%.

Boosted by strong growth, Vietnam has over 50 marine hatcheries that produce over 510 million fish a year. Artificial reproduction technology has been completed and seed production technology has been successfully transferred in many localities, helping develop commercial marine resources.

However, mariculture is still fragmented and small, not fully tapping its potential and natural advantages. Marine farming infrastructure investment is limited, scattered, inconsistent and ineffective.

In addition, most marine varieties have to be imported through unofficial channels, with precarious quality and low farming efficiency. Cage farming is not properly planned and densely installed near the shore, leading to environmental degradation and affecting other economic sectors such as tourism and shipping.

Solutions for sustainable mariculture development

To create branded products, meet domestic and export market needs, generate jobs and increase incomes for coastal communities, the marine farming development project to

2030, with a vision to 2045, was launched.

According to the project, by 2025, the marine farming area will reach 280,000 ha, the cage fishing capacity will reach 10 million cubic meters; the marine farming output will climb to 850,000 tons; the export value will rise to US\$0.8-1 billion, expected to reach US\$1.8-2 billion by 2030.

With a vision to 2045, Vietnam's marine farming industry will be advanced and modernized. It will become an important sector of the fisheries, account for over a quarter of total output and earn an export value of over US\$4 billion.

The most important approach of the project is synchronous marine farming infrastructure development: Building technical infrastructure for offshore fishing development; forming logistics service fleets for mariculture, from transporting seeds and feed to harvesting, processing and preservation; applying industrial farming methods, with priority given to multi-species farming development suitable for each ecological region and environmental capacity, coupled with resource protection, development and management in intertidal areas, lagoons and coastal mangroves.

Modern, large-scale industrial farming is adopted to ensure food safety, protect the ecological environment, and adapt to climate change. Weather-resilient structures and materials are used in cage fishing.

The project focuses on tapping local advantages. Accordingly, Hai Phong and Quang Ninh will become a marine farming center where large fisheries are formed, coupled with marine conservation and national tourism. Coastal provinces from Thanh Hoa to Binh Thuan will develop mariculture, seafood processing, logistics services, marine farming infrastructure, effective and sustainable management.

Provinces from Ba Ria - Vung Tau to Kien Giang will build and develop mariculture based on their favorable conditions; harmonize mariculture with services, tourism, oil and gas, wind power and seafood processing.

Offshore marine farming zones will be established in key provinces such as Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Quang Ngai, Phu Yen, Khanh Hoa, Ninh Thuan, Binh Thuan, Ba Ria - Vung Tau, Ca Mau, Kien Giang and some other locations. ■

Social Security Development Strategy for 2030,

The Vietnam Social Security (VSS) recently held an online international consultative webinar on "Social Security development strategy for 2030 and version toward 2045". Attendants put forth scientific opinions on the long-term development goals of the country and the social security industry in the coming decades.

Approach to international integration and cooperation to match regional and world trends

The Vietnam Social Security (VSS) can improve infrastructure, institutions and organizational structure to strengthen international and regional integration. Specifically, regional integration requires cooperation among countries in trade, investment and domestic regulation; transport infrastructure, information and communication technology; energy; macroeconomic and financial policy; and public goods (e.g. natural resources, security and education). To achieve this, the VSS can work with social security partners, regional banks and international institutions to receive support for international integration.

Ensuring sustainable finance

Firstly, the VSS can apply fixed operating costs with the Fund Investment Management Department. Fixed costs can be planned and calculated annually to measure fund progress and assess the long-term sustainability of social insurance provided by the VSS. In addition, any change in benefits or

services provided must be based on a fixed cost plan and calculation to determine its short- and long-term effects on the fund. These recommendations can be made simultaneously with the regular participation of national and international consultants, who can provide control and balance of valuation.

In addition to continuously monitoring long-term sustainability, the VSS may consider implementing responsive contribution policies. Depending on the fund status, a law/decreed may be enacted to allow the VSS to float the contribution rate. This allows the VSS to change the contribution rate according to its needs and the current economic situation. For example, in the context of declining growth, the contribution rate can be reduced to encourage people to participate in social insurance.

Shifting from management to service thinking

To increase digital users globally, the VSS can also leverage social media platforms to better distribute information to large audience groups in a short time. Regarding official government websites, internet users can frequently use popular social networks such as Facebook, Instagram and Twitter. Social media also makes it easy for people to share information or news about VSS to their socially connected communities. Another option is adopting a chatbot that can answer general questions. This reduces the need for people to receive and respond to customer inquiries and these people can be mobilized into deeper strategies for innovative solutions that reduce costs in the long run.

Universal health insurance and 50% of socially insured workers by 2030

By requiring health insurance as a condition to get government support or subsidies, the VSS can achieve higher levels of social insurance coverage. Besides, it requires all individuals aged 18 to register for social insurance. Through this approach, individuals will be less likely to skip insurance once they are employed. This must go hand in hand with the effective and active enforcement of the VSS to ensure compliance and set an example of consequence for uninsured individuals.

The VSS may also consider organizing campaigns for all people in Vietnam, such programs as public employment services including public career fairs, seminars and public



Delegates at the international consultative webinar on Social Security Development Strategy for 2030 and Version toward 2045

Version toward 2045

talks can engage more people. The VSS can then reach out to program beneficiaries to convince them to sign up for health insurance and social insurance.

Diversifying voluntary, flexible and competitive social insurance packages

In the draft Vietnam Social Insurance Industry Development Strategy, by 2025, 2.5% of the workforce will be farmers and the informal sector. Understanding the size of the informal sector, gender segments and reasons for no insurance can provide better insights into how sustainable insurance can be achieved.

The VSS may consider linking social insurance and unemployment insurance with health insurance (currently more successful) or combining these three social security programs with social allowances and other government support. By doing so, Vietnam's social security landscape will be less fragmented as data and enforcement can be consolidated. Then, the rate of evasion and dropout will decrease and the cohesion of the social security system in Vietnam will be enhanced.

Adapting to post-pandemic situations

As the COVID-19 pandemic affects everyone, it is important for the VSS to consider other groups of participants besides registered employers and employees. The VSS may consider taking advantage of the pandemic period to expand and promote coverage to other uninsured people such as household workers, freelancers and workers in technology platforms, as well as people outside the workforce such as housewives and students. The VSS may implement programs that specifically target groups of people previously uninsured. Such programs may have appropriate fee rates or online fees to incentivize participants.

In addition to physical health, the pandemic has affected the mental health of many people due to social distancing and reduced income. To ensure health and safety for people, mental health should also be considered an important aspect of health.

Global social security issues in 2021-2025 and requirements

In addition to challenges stated in the draft strategy, the VSS can refer to 10 global social security challenges suggested by ISSA. For the Asia and Pacific region, challenges include closing the coverage gap; health care and long-term care; digital transformation; high public expectations; population aging; labor market and digital economy; jobs for young workers; life inequality; new risks, mutations and extreme events; and protection for migrant workers.

Each challenge requires its own complicated solutions although VSS is recommended to adopt a flexible approach to activity and policy management. Given increased challenges, the VSS needs to quickly adapt to changes and prepare active strategies and response policies to address specific challenges. ■

157 Projects Calling for Foreign Investment in 2021-2025

Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh signed Decision 1831/QĐ-TTg dated November 1, 2021 on a national list of projects seeking foreign investment in the 2021-2025 period.

These projects are involved in traffic infrastructure; industrial and economic zone infrastructure; energy infrastructure; information technology infrastructure; solid waste and wastewater treatment systems; education and health infrastructure; cultural, sports and tourism infrastructure; agriculture, forestry and fishery; and manufacturing and service sectors.

Regarding transport infrastructure, notable projects include City Railway No. 4, Hon Khoai Seaport, Trang Bom - Hoa Hung Railway, Thong Nhat Railway and Tran De Port.

Industrial and economic zone infrastructure projects feature construction and operation of industrial park infrastructure in the north of Ben Luc district, infrastructure construction and operation in Ninh Co Economic Zone, and infrastructure construction and operation in Hoa Ninh Industrial Park.

Education and health infrastructure projects consist of building a 1,000-bed hospital in Hoa Lac under the construction investment project of the Vietnam National University of Hanoi and building the College of International Studies under Vietnam National University.

Ha Linh

Vietnam Issues First Public Sector Accounting Standards

The Ministry of Finance of Vietnam recently launched the first set of Public Sector Accounting Standards (VPSAS), in full compliance with International Public Sector Accounting Standards. A set of 21 standards will be applied between now and 2024.

This event marks an important milestone in Vietnam's quest to establish a good public financial reporting framework in line with the development of the consolidated whole of Government Financial Statements.

The launch and application of VPSAS standards in Vietnam will provide a reliable basis for the evaluation of the financial performance of the public sector, leading to improved decision-making and enhanced accountability. It also supports Vietnam in improving its sovereign credit rating by having better fiscal discipline and as a result, could help lower borrowing costs.

The development of the first set of VPSAS is supported by the Public Financial Management Analytical and Advisory Assistance Program in the 2016-2021 phase, co-financed by the Swiss Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the Global Affairs Canada, and entrusted through the World Bank. The program's overall objective is to support Vietnam's reforms in Public Financial Management at both national and sub-national levels.

Reportedly, more than 40 countries have adopted IPSAS international public accounting standards, including many countries in the region like Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore.

L.A



Farmers Should Be Professional, Entrepreneurial

The new rural development program needs to have new values in addition to further developing infrastructure to facilitate farmers to access urban utilities in which soft utilities and new values are sought.

MINH NGOC



As an actor of all economic processes in rural areas, farmers choose their own production, business and service methods. They organize production, make products and trade products of production processes. As economic actors, farmers carry out all policies, programs and plans of the Party and the Government for rural economic development. This means that they turn those programs and plans into reality. However, in order for farmers to implement these programs and plans well, it is necessary to have close and effective direction and guidance from leaders at all levels.

Among 19 new rural development criteria, many are related to infrastructure such as transport, irrigation system, grid, roads, schools, hospitals, markets, amusement parks and community activities. Apart from contributing funds for rural infrastructure development, farmers also take part in discussions and comments on infrastructure planning, design, scale and location. Moreover, they also construct and finish these works.

National Assembly Chairman Vuong Dinh Hue recently concluded that it is important how to integrate agricultural restructuring with rural construction because the latter is fundamental and the former is foundational, while farmers are the key actors. They are three inseparable pillars.

According to Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development Le Minh Hoan, in addition to creating the "core" (investing in infrastructure construction) for rural people to access urban utilities, it is necessary to preserve and promote the "spiritual value" to form a living space and production space for thousands of years. It must be regarded as a resource for rural development. Besides, it is important to improve the community capacity to make farmers the subject of rural socio-economic development. To be capable, they must have access to the source of knowledge

and access to new things, cooperate with each other, and master their own destiny.

"We will attach great importance to the intellectualization of farmers when we carry out the Program in the coming time. Besides, protecting the rural environment, rural culture, gender equality, and nutrition for people will be important. Rural people will also be valued to have a sustainable new countryside, improve life quality and increase the income of people," said Minister Le Minh Hoan.

In a recent talk show on "Agriculture: Firm support in volatility", sharing the same viewpoint with Minister Le Minh Hoan, Dr. Vu Tien Loc pointed out that farmers must change their minds. "I think all farmers are now facing the chance to start a business. When we believe that agriculture is not agricultural production but the agricultural economy and agricultural business, the subject of that economy must have a business mind. Farmers must now consider where to invest, what to do and where and how to sell for best. Therefore, they need to have a business spirit. They are entrepreneurial farmers. Entrepreneurs are not only the ones who work with factories. Farmer households must also act in the spirit of entrepreneurs: Investing to seek profits and get rich."

"Let's go to the countryside, let's do agriculture but do it with an entrepreneurial spirit, knowledge, know-how and digital transformation," he said.

Minister Le Minh Hoan said, in foreign countries, farmers talk like scientists and no one knows they are farmers. There is no other way than to be professional.

The upcoming program on new rural development is oriented to boost sustainable development, enhance value, and focus more on changing farmers' perceptions of the countryside, a place that is worth visiting, working and living. ■



Speeding Up Digital Transformation in Rural Areas

Tinh province has quickly developed the Agricultural Digital Transformation Plan and the One Commune One Product (OCOP) Program. Specifically, the province operated the Ha Tinh OCOP Program management system; the OCOP grading and rating system; the OCOP product management and the OCOP product trade information channel integrated on the website <https://dlsntm.vn/>, initially bringing certain economic benefits to people.

Digital transformation has produced positive results: Not only improving quality and productivity but also significantly enhancing management and business methods in the agricultural sector.

Toward a smart new countryside

According to the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, digital transformation application in new countryside construction in some localities is spontaneous. Hence, it is necessary to take an overall, comprehensive and active approach with appropriate steps and roadmaps to more sustainable rural development. Given this reality, in the Program for New Rural Development in 2021-2025, the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development will implement six key thematic projects to further improve life quality of rural people and address current pressing problems in new countryside construction after 10 years of implementation, including digital transformation in new countryside construction towards the smart countryside in the 2021-2025 period. Recently, the National Assembly approved the investment policy for the National Target Program for New Rural Development in 2021-2025.

According to the National Coordination Office for New Rural Development, the project will aim at many important goals, including digitization acceleration, information technology application and digital technology in new countryside construction. At the same time, it will foster information technology and digital technology in order to fundamentally change management, administration and supervision of all-level government agencies, especially at the grassroots level, and in manufacturing and business activities of enterprises, cooperatives and trade villages, especially the One Commune One Product

(continued on P.38)

Digital transformation is being seen as a requirement in the next phase of new countryside construction. Applying digital technology is key to opening a new future for agriculture and ending segmented, inefficient production and weak connectivity in the value chain that has lasted for years.

BAO DAN

Remarkable progress

To apply digital transformation in new countryside construction, localities need to solve many problems. For example, digital infrastructure must have synchronous machinery and equipment. At present, some people, especially the elderly, do not have or do not use personal devices that meet digital transformation requirements such as computers and smartphones. Besides, Internet and wifi coverage must be fully invested for people to access them anytime, anywhere. In digital commerce, it is difficult to launch it early because production in rural areas is segmented. To join digital commerce, production needs to be adjusted to standard processes to ensure production output and quality, and carry full stamps and labels of traceability and origin. In particular, it is necessary to establish a chain link from production to consumption. Currently, the province has just a few products brought into value chains, including cow's milk, vegetables, tubers and fruits produced with safety standards.

Mr. Bui Cong Anh, Deputy Director of the Thanh Hoa Provincial Coordination Office for Rural Development, said, in addition to fostering scientific and technological application to agricultural production, Thanh Hoa has accelerated digital application to management and administration of new countryside construction. The coordination office always focuses on information technology application to management and administration like using TDOOffice document management software, facilitating localities to grasp and update documents and instructions on the New Rural Development Program and the OCOP Program.

To avoid being left behind in digital transformation, Ha

Within the Project for Digital Transformation in New Rural Development Toward Smart Countryside in 2021-2025, priority projects will be launched for 2021-2023. Pilot models of smart villages and communes in some provinces will be reviewed for better implementation in 2024-2025. Smart village and commune criteria will be supplemented to match development trends and demands of the Vietnamese countryside in the 2026-2030 period.

Launch Pad for Digital Transformation-driven OCOP Products



Strengthening digital transformation and promoting the circular economy is the goal put forth by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) in the One Commune One Product (OCOP) Program in 2021 - 2025. However, to keep the program in the right direction and orbit and bring real benefits to people, it requires efforts of all levels of government and people.

DO NGOC

According to MARD Deputy Minister Tran Thanh Nam, the OCOP program should be linked to the circular economy in rural areas in the coming time to ensure efficiency and sustainability of six contents: Managing sustainable resources and conserving biodiversity; developing a sustainable food program; rationally improving small and medium processing capacity for each locality; ensuring the organic agriculture development program; conserving and developing rural industries in association with input supply sources; and developing community tourism. In addition, it is necessary to build socialized local innovation centers to boost the OCOP Program.

Mr. Nguyen Minh Tien, Chief of National Coordinating Office for New Rural Development, said, on digital transformation platforms, we help customers exchange, share and sell OCOP products; strengthen product inspection towards a unified criterion of the international market and the domestic market; and apply digital technology to inspect input supply sources and apply common standards.

To bring OCOP products to e-commerce platforms, the Ministry of Information and Communications is committed to accompanying farmers, cooperatives and businesses in expanding sales channels on digital platforms.

Ms. Nguyen Vu Hong Thanh, Head of Group 1034 of the Ministry of Information and Communications, said that the ministry is working with Vietnam Post Corporation and Viettel Post Corporation to deploy many positive activities.

Lam Dong province currently has 60,288 ha of high-tech arable land out of a total of more than 300,000 ha of cultivated land. Notably, 100% of OCOP products meet food safety and hygiene standards, quality standards and regulations. Many have beautiful designs and environment-friendly packages. Many models have synchronously applied effective IoT (internet of things) technology solutions and earned more than VND3 billion per hectare a year. According to the Lam Dong Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the province will focus on supporting entities to achieve national and international certifications for OCOP products in the coming time, such as VietGAP, GlobalGAP and HACCP. It will scale up and apply management systems, models and tools to improve quality and productivity such as ISO 9001-2008, ISO 22000 and ISO 14001 and support intellectual property and geographical indications.

Bac Kan province started implementing the OCOP Program quite late but it managed to obtain a lot of successes by applying digital transformation in promoting OCOP products. Currently, the province has hundreds of OCOP products put up for sale on electronic exchanges like Shopee, Lazada, Sendo, Tiki and Voso. In addition, Bac Kan vermicelli made by Tai Hoan Cooperative is exported to the Czech Republic. According to the survey into 30 outperforming participants in the OCOP program launched by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, the strong application of digital transformation has helped increase 73% in revenue.

"The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has actively built an OCOP consultant network, with a focus placed on training and capacity building for the OCOP consultants. Investment in technical infrastructure and digital transformation has been considered a launching pad for OCOP products in the next five years," Mr. Tien said. ■

Significant Economic Growth in Ethnic Minority Areas

Hanoi has used a considerable amount of resources to carry out the National Target Program on New Rural Development with a priority always given to allocating financial funds for development projects in ethnic minority areas and mountainous areas. As a result, people's livelihoods have been constantly raised and great national unity has been increasingly solidified.

NGOC DAN

The city currently has nearly 108,000 ethnic minorities living in all 30 districts and towns, accounting for 1.3% of the population. Ethnic minorities in Hanoi densely live in communities in 14 communes in five districts of Ba Vi, Thach That, Quoc Oai, My Duc and Chuong My.



not able to meet new countryside development criteria. In July 2021, the city's judge committee examined and concluded that Van Hoa and Ba Vi communes of Ba Vi district successfully met all 19 criteria, thus being eligible for being certified by the Hanoi People's Committee to complete new rural development standards in 2021. An Phu commune (My Duc district), the only commune that has not completed the new countryside standards, is making

efforts to complete them in 2021.

Knowing that implementing the National Target Program on New Rural Development is key to changing the face of ethnic minorities, Hanoi has issued many special support mechanisms and policies for deep-lying and remote communes which are usually poor. In 2013, the city allocated nearly VND838 billion through Plan 166/KH-UBND on socio-economic development in ethnic minority and mountainous areas in 2013 - 2015. In 2016-2020, although investment resources were limited, the city still invested in socioeconomic development projects under Plan 138 in 14 communes where many ethnic minorities lived.

Without a doubt, thanks to the National Target Program, livelihoods of ethnic minorities have been significantly improved and the countryside face has been uplifted. From now to 2025, Hanoi will strive to realize all new rural development criteria in all communes and mountainous areas where many ethnic minorities are living, with at least three communes fulfilling advanced rural development standards. In order to realize the above goal, the city will integrate policies, programs and projects for higher investment efficiency, in which priority is given to important investment. Furthermore, the city will expand preferential credit for economic development projects in ethnic minority and mountainous areas.

By the end of 2020, five communes with ethnic minorities in Ba Vi and My Duc districts of Hanoi were

Indeed, in more than 10 years, five communes made a facelift from the lowest starting point among 14 communes with ethnic minorities in Hanoi. They mobilized VND210.5 - 305 billion to upgrade and complete the given criteria. Although their economic life is tough, residents volunteer to act for the common goal. Van Hoa commune mobilized nearly VND4 billion from local people for development. Many economic development models have been effectively adopted and per capita income increased to over VND50 million a year. No temporary houses or dilapidated houses are seen in the commune now. Chairman of the Van Hoa People's Committee Nguyen Gia Tue said, "This outcome results from the commune's endeavor to digest all opinions and suggestions from people and work out plans and solutions to overcome limitations, complete criteria and maintain its achieved results."

The "Meeting Place" in 2022 is not distant and the goal of all 14 communes with many ethnic minorities in Hanoi certified to meet new rural development standards is near. This is a very inspirational achievement, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic has evolved complicatedly in recent years. From this foundation, they will continue to upgrade their criteria towards higher goals of new rural development set by the city. ■



Kien Giang Province Boosting PCI for Sustainable Economic Development



From the beginning of the year until now, despite COVID-19 pandemic impacts, the whole political system of Kien Giang province has made efforts to effectively carry out Resolution 02/NQ-CP of the Vietnamese Government on the continued implementation of major tasks and solutions for a better business environment and national competitiveness in 2021; and Plan 174/KH-UBND dated September 20, 2021 of the Provincial People's Committee on improving and enhancing the Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI). This move also partly confirms the province's determination for better PCI in 2021.

CONG LUAN

Positive highlights

By the end of 2020, Kien Giang's PCI scored 60.01 points, ranking No. 62 out of 63 provinces and cities nationwide and No. 12 out of 13 Mekong Delta provinces and cities. Ms. Nguyen Duy Linh Thao, Director of Kien Giang Investment, Trade and Tourism Promotion Center, acknowledged that the government has been very determined to improve the business and investment climate in the past, although it has not completely met the requirements of enterprises. This directly affected Kien Giang province's PCI 2020.

To overcome these limitations and further improve the open and enabling business and investment environment to support enterprises to boost production, business, investment and development and help Kien Giang raise the PCI Index, right from

the beginning of 2021, the Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee requested agency leaders to fulfill their assigned functions and tasks to closely follow each and every indicator of 10 PCI component subindices to urgently and actively work out specific action plans suitable for each indicator; and clearly defined their responsibility in delivering indicators.

Regarding leadership and administration, the Provincial People's Committee issued Official Dispatch 870/UBND-KT dated June 23, 2021 on implementation of conclusions of the Standing Board of the Provincial Party Committee on provincial competitiveness over the past time; and Official Dispatch 1068/UBND-KT dated July 20, 2021 on implementation of some urgent tasks for PCI improvement to deploy and urge provincial and local agencies to execute their assigned tasks. Besides, it promulgated Decision 2034/QĐ-UBND dated August 19, 2021 on the establishment of steering committees and working groups of steering committees to raise the Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI), the Public Administration Reform Index (PAR Index), the Vietnam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) and the Satisfaction Index of Public Administrative Services (SIPAS). It announced Plan 174/KH-UBND dated September 20, 2021 on improving and enhancing the PCI, PAR Index, PAPI and SIPAS of Kien Giang province.

With the firm direction of provincial leaders and determined engagement of departments, agencies and localities, in the first nine months of 2021, carrying out solutions for a better PCI Index, Kien Giang province achieved positive performance of each component index. Specifically for the Market Entry Cost Subindex, the Department of Planning and Investment regularly reviewed and simplified administrative procedures relating to business registration and investment registration, effectively implemented the single-window for handling administrative procedures relating to enterprise registration, reduced the time for handling business establishment procedures to 1.5 days and granting revised business registration certificate to less than one day. As a result, in the first eight months of 2021, the province had 927 new companies, up 5% in companies and 55% in registered capital over the same period of last year.

For the Land Access Index, the Department of Natural Resources and Environment promptly directed solutions to emerging difficulties relating to administrative procedures for land, land acquisition and site clearance, especially monitoring and checking behaviors of officials towards people and businesses so as to prevent any harassment. The department has not detected any violations or received reports from the business community since the beginning of the year.

Regarding the dynamism and leadership of the provincial government, by the end of the third quarter of 2021, according to surveys and assessments, basic limitations were already addressed. The compliance with policies and directions of the Provincial People's Committee, the Chairperson and Vice-Chairpersons of the Provincial People's Committee were seriously performed by departments, agencies and localities which actively handled and removed difficulties and created favorable conditions for businesses. The Provincial People's Committee directed the Kien Giang Investment, Trade and Tourism Promotion Center to work with relevant authorities, agencies and business associations to

collect opinions and recommendations from the business community. In the year to date, the center gathered 61 opinions and recommendations from local enterprises. The Provincial People's Committee planned to host a business dialogue conference at an appropriate time after the COVID-19 pandemic is contained to provide guidance for businesses in the new normal.

As for the Business Support Services Index, provincial departments, agencies and localities continued to implement Decision 1875/QĐ-UBND dated August 12, 2020 on Kien Giang SME Support Project to 2025 and Plan 178/KH-UBND dated November 13, 2020 on implementation of this project in 2021. The Department of Industry and Trade effectively performed its tasks such as surveying and monitoring business difficulties to promptly support or advise competent authorities on solutions. It facilitated enterprises to boost industrial development and ensured electricity supply for production. In addition, the agency introduced policies; helped local enterprises boost sales of local potential products, supported connecting buyers and sellers of typical OCOP products and rural industrial products; and opened a hotline to exchange information on market prices of essential commodities.

The Kien Giang Investment, Trade and Tourism Promotion Center cooperated with domestic and foreign trade offices, trade promotion agencies and business associations to organize or participate in trade events with foreign partners, mainly online, to introduce information about local potential products and connect businesses from other countries. It also took part in foreign trade networking events hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency (Vietrade) under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ernst and Young and ASEAN. The center also coordinated with Vietrade, the Vietnam E-commerce and Digital Economy Agency (IDEA) under the Ministry of Industry and Trade, business associations to bring typical exports, agricultural products, OCOP products and agricultural industrial products to distribution and retail networks nationwide and on e-commerce platforms; supported selling 60 local agricultural and aquatic products into the supermarket system in the province.

In addition, other component indexes such as access to land; transparency and access to information; time cost for fulfilling legal regulations; informal charges; fair competition; labor training; and legal institutions and security and order also picked up and gained recognition and appreciation of the business community and investors.

Ongoing reforms for businesses

Ms. Nguyen Duy Linh Thao said that Kien Giang province will continue to focus on overcoming difficulties relating to component indices; further improve the investment and business environment, and enhance local competitiveness from now until the end of the year. The province will continue to improve the quality of management and administration, strengthen administrative reform, enhance mechanisms and policies and publicize legal information in order to build an open, attractive and transparent business and investment environment to entice investment flows for business development. The province will strive to uplift Kien Giang's PCI Index in 2021 to lift up its rankings to the Good category.

To realize these targets, on September 20, 2021, the Provincial People's Committee issued Plan 174/KH-UBND on improving and enhancing the PCI Index. Accordingly, in order to achieve this, it introduced a specific and clear assignment and required



The working group of the Ministry of Health inspects the anti-pandemic measures in the industrial parks in Kien Giang province

agency leaders and chairs of district-level People's Committees and relevant agencies to have the high political determination to raise awareness of PCI importance of the business community to local economic development management so as to effectively carry out assigned tasks in Notice 384/TB-VP dated June 4, 2021 of the Office of the Provincial People's Committee on conclusions of Chairman of the Provincial People's Committee Lam Minh Thanh to the PCI Index 2020 Online Conference and Official Dispatch No. 870/UBND-KT dated June 23, 2021 of the Chairman of the Provincial People's Committee on implementation of conclusions of the Standing Board of the Provincial Party Committee on provincial competitiveness.

The province advocates strictly reviewing official direction and administration to clearly identify what has been done, what has not been done and the responsibility of agency leaders. Thus, Kien Giang applies forms of handling violations or rearranges irresponsible and underperforming officials. The locality regularly monitors, assesses, cares for and nurtures a contingent of young, capable, qualified, ethical and enthusiastic cadres, civil servants and public employees in performing their official duties.

The Provincial People's Committee established a steering committee responsible for improving and enhancing the PCI Index and working groups in charge of 10 component subindices. It also strengthened inspection and examination of official duties at provincial and local administrative bodies, especially public employees who are directly working with people and businesses handling administrative procedures. It suggested the Kien Giang Business Association further promote its role as a bridge between enterprises and authorities at all levels to work out solutions to emerging business difficulties; coordinate with agencies and local authorities to disseminate the significance and importance of the PCI Index to the local business community.

Kien Giang province is determined that the PCI Index directly relates to the outcome of drawing and promoting investment, boosting local economic development in 2022-2025 and improving the business investment environment. Raising the PCI Index is one of the important solutions to ensure sustainable economic growth. In the current difficult context, when the economy needs to increase investment absorption to expand business activities, gradually push up growth momentum which has been significantly weakened by the COVID-19 pandemic, this solution becomes more important and urgent than ever. Improving the PCI Index not only expresses political determination in building an appealing business and investment environment but also helps build the image of a dynamic and dedicated Kien Giang which is always ready to support the business community and investors. ■

Investment Flows into Vinh Phuc IPs Rise in Jan-Sep

Local industrial parks attracted 10 new DDI projects and witnessed two projects expand their investment fund with a total value of VND5,015.41 billion (VND4,848.51 billion for fresh projects and VND166.9 billion for existing projects), equal to 699% of the value in the same period of 2020 (as they drew three infrastructure investment projects for industrial parks) and equal to 108% of the plan in 2021. They welcomed 24 new FDI projects and witnessed 19 projects raise their investment budget with a total registered value of US\$928.99 million (US\$840.91 million for new projects and US\$88.08 million for existing projects), equal to 405% of the value in the same period of 2020 and equal to 99% of the full-year plan in 2021.

To date, industrial parks in Vinh Phuc province have accommodated 404 projects, including 75 domestic investment projects (VND19,428.61 billion of investment capital) and 329 FDI projects (US\$5.38 billion.)

By destination, Khai Quang Industrial Park attracted 90 projects, including 12 DDI projects (VND820.6 billion) and 78 FDI projects (US\$1,221.49 million). 84 projects are in operation. The occupancy rate reached 94%.

Binh Xuyen Industrial Park attracted 122 projects, including 38 DDI projects (VND3,790.63 billion) and 84 FDI projects (US\$1,275.27 million). 101 projects are in production. The occupancy rate is 92%.

Binh Xuyen II Industrial Park (Phase 1) attracted 57 FDI projects (US\$303.45 million), all already in operation. The occupancy rate is 100%.

Ba Thien Industrial Park drew 36 projects, including five DDI projects (VND2,883.35 billion) and 31 FDI projects



The Vinh Phuc Industrial Parks' Authority licensed 34 investment projects capitalized at US\$928.99 million and allowed 21 domestic and foreign investment projects to increase their investment by VND5,015.41 billion (US\$210 million) in the first nine months of 2021.

NGUYET THAM

(US\$886.72 million). 30 projects have been put into production. The occupancy rate is 75%.

Ba Thien II Industrial Park attracted 56 projects, including three DDI projects (VND1,738.21 billion) and 53 FDI projects (US\$875.64 million.) 46 projects are in operation. The occupancy rate is 68%.

Thang Long Vinh Phuc Industrial Park attracted 31 projects, including six DDI projects (VND1,109.58 billion) and 25 FDI projects (US\$720.76 million). 11 projects are operational. The occupancy rate is 63%.

Tam Duong II Industrial Park- Zone A drew six DDI projects (VND3,037.20 billion), with one put into production. The occupancy rate is 42%.

Son Loi, Song Lo I, Song Lo II and Tam Duong I - Section 2 are under construction.

In the first nine months of 2021, investors in industrial parks disbursed VND518.34 billion for DDI projects, raising the total disbursed value to VND8,011.36 billion, or 41% of the registered investment capital. They spent US\$303.31 million for FDI projects, bringing its total disbursed value to US\$2,935.39 million or 55% of registered investment capital.

In the last months of 2021, the Vinh Phuc Management Board of Industrial Parks will further boost investment promotion, and selectively attract investment projects that feature sustainable development and environmental protection. It is expected to woo 5-8 new FDI projects (US\$30-40 million) and three DDI projects (VND270 billion).

At the same time, it will speed up the implementation of 5-6 more projects. FDI projects will disburse US\$92 million and DDI projects will spend VND60 - 70 billion. ■



Vinh Phuc IPs Seek to Recruit More Workers

Currently, the COVID-19 pandemic has been well controlled in Vinh Phuc province. Many enterprises in industrial parks are actively restoring manufacturing activity and seeking to recruit a large number of workers.

NGUYET THAM

Wholly foreign-invested Compal Vietnam Co., Ltd (in Ba Thien Industrial Park, Binh Xuyen district), which manufactures laptops and smart electronic devices, is employing more than 5,000 workers. The company's Director of Administration - Human Resources Department said the pandemic is being well controlled in the province and this is helpful for the company. To restore its business operations, the company is speeding up manufacturing and recruiting a large number of workers.

The company plans to hire more than 500 high-quality employees experienced in electronics, automation, engineering, electromechanics and information technology. The firm is seeking qualified workers in both Vinh Phuc and neighboring localities such as Hanoi, Bac Ninh and Bac Giang. However, the company is facing difficulty because some neighboring provinces are applying social distancing measures. Currently, the company manages to employ 5-10 workers per week on average. This progress significantly affects its business.

Wholly South Korea-invested Shinwon Ebenezer Co., Ltd (Khai Quang Industrial Park), which manufactures apparel for export, plans to recruit more than 300 highly skilled and experienced workers from now until the end of 2021. In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, recruitment is carried out online. Foreign workers must strictly apply pandemic prevention measures such as medical tests and quarantine. Therefore, its recruitment is facing hardships. Despite accepting to pay training costs and providing regular COVID-19 tests and vaccinations for employees, Shinwon Ebenezer Vietnam can reach only more than 40% of the target.

To meet the personnel demands of local enterprises, in 2021, the Department of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs of Vinh Phuc province will develop a master program on worker supply for industrial parks in 2021-2025. At the same time, the department will require local businesses to work out plans to use and recruit workers and strengthen cooperation with vocational training facilities and employment service centers to provide workers fitting their needs.

Furthermore, the department will closely coordinate with the Vinh Phuc Industrial Parks' Authority to sign coordination programs on business-needed vocational training and cooperate with neighboring provinces such as Tuyen Quang, Phu Tho, Yen Bai and Ha Giang to inform and recruit workers there. ■

Prioritizing High-quality Human Resource Development

Vinh Phuc province has prioritized its resources for human development, including solutions to create significant breakthroughs in personnel quality improvement.

THANH LOAN

Applying focused solutions for better human resources has significantly improved training quality and industry structure to better meet recruitment needs of local enterprises and labor market, importantly contributed to socioeconomic development; increased the rate of trained workers and the PCI Labor Training Index; attracted investors to Vinh Phuc; and maintained stability and social order, raised incomes and life quality for workers.

In the last five years, Vinh Phuc has recruited 142,226 new trainees, including 5,764 at the college level, 26,878 at the intermediate level, and 109,584 at the basic level. The rate of trained workers was hence raised from 74.2% in 2019 to 76.1% in 2020, of which 33.4% were certified. Besides, in pilot training transfer programs (with Australia, Germany and France), Vinh Phuc has joined five occupations: Industrial Electronics (86 students); Automotive Technology (38 students); Metal Cutting (36 students); Electricity (20 students) and Welding (34 students). In addition, the province has 236 students attending high-quality training programs.

Moreover, vocational training facilities and equipment have been put in place for the modernization by Vinh Phuc and planned vocational training networks by sector and by region. In the last five years, Vinh Phuc has invested VND176.451 billion in training equipment for vocational training facilities, including VND44 billion from the central budget and VND132,451 billion from the local budget. The Vinh Phuc province-based vocational training network is relatively diverse in training types, qualifications and professions. Enrollment and training at all levels are flexibly diversified for vocational training. Teachers have increased both in number and in quality and gradually standardized.

In the coming time, Vinh Phuc province will reform and make transformational changes in the number of trainees, training quality and effectiveness; develop a vocational training system with different training methods and levels, especially high-quality training to better meet employment demands; help improve labor productivity, growth quality, and economic competitiveness in the context of the Industrial Revolution 4.0 and international integration. At the same time, the province will develop human resources with an appropriate structure of qualifications and occupations for local socio-economic development requirements. ■





Timely Care, Best Support for Businesses

“The province will provide timely care and support and provide most favorable conditions for enterprises,” said Mr. Le Duy Thanh, Chairman of the Provincial People's Committee of Vinh Phuc, at the recent meeting and working session with Mr. Choi Joo Ho, General Director of Samsung Vietnam Complex.

NGUYET THAM

At the working meeting, Mr. Choi Joo Ho said that he has made three working visits to Vinh Phuc province since May. This clearly shows the good relationship and special interest of Samsung Group to Vinh Phuc province. He thanked Vinh Phuc province for timely help and support for Samsung Group's supporting businesses in the province to overcome difficulties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, keep production chains undisrupted and maintain the stable operation of Samsung Vietnam.

He suggested Vinh Phuc work more closely with Bac Ninh and Bac Giang provinces where Samsung Vietnam's factories are located. The three provinces should sign a cooperation agreement to facilitate customs clearance of goods of Samsung Vietnam's subsidiaries in the fastest time. Samsung Vietnam has helped develop more than 130 parts providers in Vietnam and stayed ready to assist Vinh Phuc to develop parts manufacturers by sending free experts to Vinh Phuc province for this purpose. He also suggested Vinh Phuc consider and settle entry procedures for experts as soon as possible for Samsung factories in the province.

For his part, Chairman Le Duy Thanh expressed his deep thanks to South Korean businesses for supporting Vinh Phuc to hire special planes to bring home Vinh Phuc citizens in Ho Chi Minh City and southern provinces. At the same time, he highly appreciated the contributions of Samsung's companies in Vinh Phuc to local socio-economic development. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the Party Committee to provide timely support and facilitation for businesses, including parts providers of Samsung, in Vinh Phuc province.

Regarding Mr. Choi Joo Ho's proposals, Chairman Thanh said that Vinh Phuc is actively asking Bac Ninh and Bac Giang provinces to sign a memorandum of understanding as soon as possible to speed up transportation and distribution of goods as expected by Samsung. Thanking Samsung Group for its goodwill to help local parts producers improve productivity and product quality, he assigned the Department of Industry and Trade and the Industrial Parks' Authority to complete necessary procedures to send a list of businesses in need of support to Samsung Group.

As for the proposal for reduced time for immigration, Chairman Le Duy Thanh said that this work relates to many stages, from central to local authorities. Vinh Phuc pledges to deal with this within a week under its jurisdiction and ask relevant bodies for support to speed up settlement of administrative procedures.

Also at this meeting, he emphasized that Vinh Phuc is stepping up investment promotion programs, completing infrastructure for investors in relation with Samsung Group. As many Korean people are living and working in Vinh Phuc province, Chairman Thanh hoped that Samsung Vietnam, in addition to investing in industrial development, will further invest in education and medical care for foreigners, including South Koreans.

At the same time, he hopes that Samsung Group will support Vinh Phuc to carry out policies on cultural development, social security, and new rural construction, thus helping promote cultural exchanges between Vietnam and South Korea. ■

COVID-19 Vaccination Is Best Solution to Protect “Green Zones” in IPs

Vaccinating workers in industrial parks is considered the best solution to ensure safety in production and business activities, prevent the risk of disease contagion in industrial parks, and help fulfill the "dual goals" of Vinh Phuc province.

Industrial parks are one of the factors that fulfill the "dual goals" for economic development, but the COVID-19 virus spreads very quickly there. Being aware of this reality, Vinh Phuc leaders have focused on ensuring safety for production, protecting "green zones" early, with the top priority placed on early pandemic prevention and control measures in industrial parks, based on the point of view that "each company" is a "fortress against the pandemic" and their



production and business activities are kept normal in the new adaptive context.

Vinh Phuc province has accelerated COVID-19 vaccinations and prioritized vaccinations for workers in industrial parks. Given limited vaccines distributed to the province, besides frontline forces against the pandemic, Vinh Phuc always gives priority to vaccines for workers whenever available. Out of a total of nearly 400,000 vaccine doses allocated to Vinh Phuc province by the Ministry of Health, the province has reserved 100,000 doses for workers in industrial parks, accounting for a quarter of all vaccine doses.

By the end of September 2021, 331 tenants in Vinh Phuc industrial parks hired more than 116,000 employees. As of October 5, 2021, more than 93,500 workers were proposed for COVID-19 vaccinations by the Vinh Phuc Management Board of Industrial Parks. Among them, more than 1,000 workers were fully vaccinated while the rest have not yet received the second dose. If only workers in industrial parks proposed for vaccination by the Management Board of Industrial Parks and vaccinated by the health sector are counted, the vaccination rate will reach 86% (based on all 100,000 doses allocated and vaccinated). In addition, some industrial park workers were vaccinated in localities where they reside, bringing the vaccination rate of all workers in industrial parks to over 90%. Unvaccinated workers are largely people with high blood pressure, pregnant women and breastfeeding women.

The focused and accelerated priority of COVID-19 vaccination for workers in industrial parks has motivated and encouraged workers and tenants to rest assured to continue manufacturing, supply products on schedule, maintain the market and boost reputation to partners and customers.■

(Vinh Phuc Industrial Parks' Authority)

Sustaining Industrial Parks

Knowing that planning is a stepping-stone for building a developmental foundation for sustainable industrial parks, Vinh Phuc province always well prepares the master plan and industrial park plans in particular and aligns them with regional and local economic and sector-specific development plans.

BAO NGOC

Assigned to administer industrial parks, the Vinh Phuc Industrial Parks' Authority has actively advised and proposed mechanisms on industrial park construction and development. The Authority manages industrial park planning in line with the law to meet investors' demands

and the province's socio-economic development requirements. Up to now, construction order in industrial parks has been strengthened. Reasonable planning and construction of industrial parks, combined with strict and methodical construction management according to detailed planning, has helped draw investment flows into industrial parks, strongly improve the investment environment and boost socio-economic development. Vinh Phuc has gradually formed regional industrial centers where some large corporations are investing, making key products of high quality and strong competitiveness and helping increase exports and local budget revenue. They are also hiring a lot of workers in Vinh Phuc and neighboring provinces.

To date, Vinh Phuc province has 14 industrial parks covering 2,773.948 ha, including 2,041.07 ha of industrial land. Eight are operational: Khai Quang (216.24 ha), Binh Xuyen (286.98 ha), Kim Hoa (50 ha), Ba Thien (325.75 ha), Binh Xuyen II - Phase 1 (42.21 ha), Ba Thien II (308.83 ha), Tam Duong II - Section A (135.17 ha) and Thang Long Vinh Phuc (213 ha). The infrastructure system of industrial parks has been built synchronously to meet investors' demands (such as wastewater treatment plants). Some industrial parks have already leased out 100% of industrial land like Kim Hoa, Khai Quang, and Binh Xuyen II - Phase 1. The rest are under construction.

In the first quarter of 2021, Vinh Phuc was approved by the Prime Minister to build six new industrial parks: Song Lo II, Tam Duong I - Section 2, Song Lo I, Nam Binh Xuyen, and Thai Hoa - Lien Son - Lien Hoa (Area II - Phase 1) and Ba Thien - Section I. These facilities are being cleared for construction.

In 2021-2030, Vinh Phuc province will plan 23-25 industrial parks with a total area of 7,000 ha. Currently, Vinh Phuc province is making the master plan for the 2021-2030 period, with a vision to 2050, which is integrated with the industrial park planning.■





Vinh Phuc Strives to Have High Percentage of Trained Workers by 2025

The Vinh Phuc Provincial People's Committee recently announced Plan 241/KH-UBND dated September 17, 2021 on vocational training in the 2021 - 2025 period, under which the province will strive to have 82% of workers trained, including 40% certified, by 2025.

NGUYET THAM

In 2021, trained workers in Vinh Phuc province accounted for 77.2%, of which 34.8% were certified. The province expected respective rates of 78.4% and 36.1% in 2022; 79.6% and 37.4% in 2023; 80.8% and 38.7% in 2024; and 82% and 40% in 2025.

In 2025, the province will enroll and provide vocational training for 285,166 people; including 31,464 people with the college degree, 87,767 with the intermediate degree, 163,846 with the elementary level, and 2,089 with advanced training programs. On average, Vinh Phuc province will enroll and train over 57,000 people a year, including about 25,000 fresh recruits. By 2025, the province will have at least 42% of junior secondary graduates and at least 50% of high school graduates adopt vocational education and training.

To achieve these goals, tasks and solutions of Vinh Phuc province include: Centrally informing and raising awareness of Party members, public employees and people about the role and importance of human resource development in socio-economic development; reforming management methods,

improving training capacity, effectiveness and operational efficiency of governmental agencies; further completing vocational training network planning; developing vocational training system in scale and quality, with a focus placed on high-quality training programs for key economic sectors and industries of the province; accelerating socialization and mobilization of private investment resources to rapidly increase the number of trained workers at all levels.

At the same time, the province will build vocational training cooperation programs to link vocational training entities with enterprises in worker training and employment; train, retrain or supplement the knowledge and improve skills for workers. ■



(from P.29)

(OCOP) Program. The project will develop a safe and popular digital environment in rural areas, enhance the quality and sustainability of new countryside construction to move towards the smart new countryside and successfully carry out the national digital transformation program. In addition, digital transformation will help develop a set of national criteria for a smart countryside to submit to competent authorities for approval in the 2026-2030 period. Digital transformation, part of the project, defines people, cooperatives and agricultural enterprises as the center of digital transformation in new countryside construction.

Mr. Nguyen Minh Tien, Chief of the National Coordination

Office for New Rural Development, said digital transformation is a broad trend of society and digital transformation in rural construction is a new approach to create a driving force for development. This trend will change the perception of officials and people and give a facelift to the countryside. At the same time, it will support changing this approach and carry out new countryside construction in the coming time. When this project is implemented, it will be difficult to avoid confusion. Hence, localities need to be active and resolved to bring digital transformation into smart countryside construction. The National Coordination Office for New Rural Development and the Policy Institute are determined to soon carry out the project and component projects. ■

Revenue of FDI Tenants in Vinh Phuc IPs Rises 4% YoY

Vinh Phuc province-based industrial parks are housing 331 operational projects, including 287 FDI projects and 44 DDI projects, according to the Vinh Phuc Industrial Parks' Authority. They are working with the provincial government to overcome difficulties caused by COVID-19, steadfastly carrying out the dual goal of "fighting the pandemic and boosting economic development". As a result, a majority of FDI enterprises have maintained their business operations and helped achieve economic growth of 3-7% year on year.

FDI firms posted revenue of US\$4.9 billion in the first nine months of 2021, up 4% year on year; achieved export value of US\$3.77 billion, up 7%; and paid VND2,770.88 billion to the State budget, up 3%. Tenants in industrial parks generated 11,604 new jobs in the period, 6.6 times more than a year earlier and 37% higher than the full-year plan. Currently, they are employing over 101,300 workers, including 69,151 Vinh Phuc people, accounting for 68%.

In the last three months of the year, tenants in Vinh Phuc-based industrial parks will continue to extend its stable operations and achieve development targets; and employ 3,000 more workers to bring the total workforce to more than 109,000 people.

Thanh Loan

Binh Xuyen IP Leads FDI Inflows

Industrial parks in Vinh Phuc province attracted 24 new foreign direct investment (FDI) projects and witnessed 19 projects adding investment funds in the first nine months of 2021, according to the Vinh Phuc Industrial Parks' Authority. FDI inflows rose 405% year on year to US\$928.99 million, fulfilling 99% of the yearly plan.

With asynchronous and modern technical infrastructure and a separate wastewater treatment system, Binh Xuyen Industrial Park has attracted the most projects and the largest value in the nine-month period. By the end of September, it served 122 projects, including 84 FDI projects (over US\$1,275 million) and 38 DDI projects (over VND3,790 billion). The occupancy rate reached 92%. Most of the tenants are involved in auto and motorcycle parts manufacturing, mechanical engineering, electrical equipment, chemicals and construction materials. They are hiring more than 10,000 employees. Good performers in Binh Xuyen Industrial Park include Piaggio Vietnam Company, Prime Group Joint Stock Company, Kohsei Multipack Co., Ltd and De Heus Co., Ltd.

In the face of the complicated COVID-19 pandemic, by effectively preventing and controlling the COVID-19 pandemic, improving the investment environment, and promptly introducing business support mechanisms and policies, Vinh Phuc continued to affirm itself as an attractive destination for investors.

Nguyet Tham

Five Localities Piloted to Welcome Int'l Vacationers from November

The Government has agreed that the five localities of Kien Giang, Khanh Hoa, Da Nang, Quang Nam and Quang Ninh are allowed to pilot welcoming international tourists from November 2021.

The Government Office issued Official Letter 8044/VPCP-KGVX dated November 2, 2021 conveying the opinion of Permanent Deputy Prime Minister Pham Binh Minh agreeing with the coverage on the pilot plan to welcome worldwide vacationers to Vietnam at the proposal of the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism.

Visitors must have a certificate of vaccination with a full dose of COVID-19 vaccine recognized in Vietnam, with a duration of at least 14 days and no more than 12 months by the time of entry, or have a certificate of having recovered from COVID-19 with the hospital signature more than 12 months from the time of entry. A SARS-CoV-2 test by RT-PCR/RT-LAMP method is also required within 72 hours before boarding. Customers must have a premium COVID-19 insurance plan with a minimum liability of US\$50,000, and buy a tour package from a travel agency.

The Deputy Prime Minister assigned the ministries of Culture, Sports and Tourism, Health, Public Security, National Defense, Foreign Affairs, Transport, and Information and Communication, People's Committees of provinces and cities: Da Nang, Kien Giang, Khanh Hoa, Quang Nam, Quang Ninh and related agencies, based on their assigned functions, tasks and authority, to take the initiative in implementing, ensuring safety and efficiency.

Previously, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism proposed an orientation and roadmap to reopen worldwide tourism actions together in 3 phases.

Accordingly, phase 1 (from November 2021) pilots worldwide arrivals for tourism packages, via charter flights and business flights in Phu Quoc (Kien Giang), Cam Ranh (Khanh Hoa), Quang Nam and Da Nang.

Phase 2 (from January 2022) will increase the scope to welcome worldwide vacationers, allowing multiple destinations via domestic and worldwide flights.

Guests can take part in travel packages combining a number of locations after finishing the tour program on the first location within 7 days, connecting Phu Quoc (Kien Giang), Nha Trang (Khanh Hoa), Da Nang, Quang Nam and Quang Ninh.

The third phase (from the second quarter of 2022) is to totally reopen to the worldwide vacationer market, with the condition that the epidemic prevention and management plans are ensured in keeping with rules.



Giang Tu



Kien Giang Adopts Flexible, Safe and Adaptive Approach to Tourism



Night market in Phu Quoc island

Together with the national tourism industry, the tourism sector of Kien Giang province is carrying out a roadmap for flexible, safe and COVID-adaptive tourism.

CONG LUAN

Restoring and attracting domestic tourists

In response to Official Dispatch 259-CV/TU dated October 7, 2021 of the Provincial Party Committee on socio-economic recovery measures in Kien Giang province, the Provincial People's Committee issued Plan 201/KH-UBND dated October 21, 2021 on domestic tourist restoration and attraction, while ensuring the dual goal of economic development and COVID-19 prevention. Kien Giang province will gradually reopen the market and entice tourists back to the province.

Kien Giang planned to welcome back domestic tourists in November 2021. Four districts and cities - Rach Gia, Phu Quoc, Ha Tien and Kien Hai - are selected to be tourist destinations. The domestic tourism recovery roadmap is divided into two phases. In Phase 1 (from November 1 to 30, 2021), the tourism sector will pilot reception of domestic and external visitors who come from low-risk areas; focus on tourists in Kien Giang and neighboring provinces. Tourist destinations are expected to be entertainment spots, tourist attractions and green zones such as Rach Gia, Phu Quoc, Ha Tien and Kien Hai.

In Phase 2 (from December 1 to December 31, 2021), Kien

Giang will expand to new markets, based on new developments, targeting at traditional markets with direct flights to Phu Quoc such as Hanoi, Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Lam Dong, Da Nang and Hai Phong. It will concentrate on Vietnamese and foreign tourists. During this period, the province will also expand the scope of destinations which basically contain the pandemic, including Rach Gia, Hon Dat, Ha Tien, Kien Luong, Phu Quoc, Kien Hai and U Minh Thuong.

To ensure safety against the pandemic, the tourism sector of Kien Giang province will apply policies of the Provincial People's Committee on restoring passenger transport to carry visitors. Specifically, road travelers must have certificates of full vaccination against COVID-19 or be recovered from COVID-19 infection within six months by the time of arrival in Kien Giang.

For island-visiting tourists and air visitors must meet the same conditions as road travelers in addition to SARS-CoV-2 tests using the RT-PCR method or quick test on negative antigens within 72 hours before coming to Kien Giang for sightseeing. Tourists from high-risk pandemic areas or medically quarantined areas (lockdowns) must have a negative PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 within 72 hours from the date of receipt of the test result. Foreigners living and working in Vietnam must meet the same criteria as domestic tourists when they come to visit Kien Giang province.

All visitors must have a commitment to strictly abiding by regulations on pandemic prevention and control when visiting and traveling in Kien Giang. They must comply with the anti-pandemic measures, provide medical declarations and follow local pandemic prevention and control instructions. During their time in Kien Giang, they must adhere to testing requirements as guided by local authorities and the Center for COVID-19 Prevention and Control. In all circumstances, safety and pandemic prevention is the top priority of the Kien Giang tourism industry.

In addition to attracting more tourists, the tourism industry has planned to engage hotels, travel agencies, restaurants, shopping malls, transport firms, resorts, tourist attractions and other service businesses in the province to review, consolidate and refresh products and services. It will encourage tourism businesses to research and develop new products and services; boost online promotion with major press agencies and social media to introduce discounts to domestic tourists.

Moreover, Kien Giang also considers organizing programs to introduce and connect local tourist destinations with Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi, Hai Phong, Da Nang, Central Highlands, Northwest and Mekong Delta, using appropriate forms of domestic tourism.



Many beaches in Kien Giang province boast pristine beauty with emerald blue water

Phu Quoc pilots 'vaccine passports' for international visitors

Remarking on advantages for Kien Giang tourism reopening, Nguyen Duy Linh Thao, Director of Kien Giang Investment, Trade and Tourism Promotion Center, said, there are currently four flight routes to Kien Giang: Rach Gia - Ho Chi Minh City, Phu Quoc - Ho Chi Minh City, Hanoi - Phu Quoc and Hanoi - Rach Gia. Passengers on these flights only need to meet any of three conditions (full vaccination, hospital discharge certificate on COVID-19 treatment within six months or negative PCR test for COVID-19). Relevant bodies are working with each other to advise the Provincial People's Committee to propose more flights to/from Phu Quoc from/to Thanh Hoa, Da Nang, Vinh, Binh Dinh and Lam Dong. With many flights in service, more tourists are expected to arrive in Kien Giang.

In response to directions of the Government, the Kien Giang Provincial People's Committee issued Decision 200/KH-UBND dated October 21, 2021 on a pilot plan for receiving international tourists with "vaccine passports". The deployment will last six months, divided into two phases, right after Phu Quoc people are fully vaccinated.

Accordingly, from November 20, 2021, Kien Giang will receive charter flights to Phu Quoc Island to test the process of picking up and serving tourists and assessing and drawing experience from this. From December 20, 2022, the province will officially follow the roadmap. In Phase 1 (from December 20, 2021 to March 20, 2022), the province will pilot receiving 3,000-5,000 tourists a month on charter flights. In Phase 2 (from March 20, 2022 to June 20, 2022), after assessing Phase 1 results and getting good results, Kien Giang will propose expanding the scope to 5,000 to 10,000 visitors a month to the Government.

Selected international tourists come from countries and



territories with low-risk pandemic prevention and control such as Europe, the Middle East, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, North America and Australia. They must have full COVID-19 vaccination certificates or have recovered from COVID-19 and be recognized by a competent authority in Vietnam. At the same time, they must have a negative PCR test for SARS-CoV-2 within 72 hours before departure (displayed in English).

Ms. Nguyen Duy Linh Thao said that, in addition to researching and promoting domestic and international tourism markets, the center will support tourism businesses in surveying, advertising and promoting tourism in potential markets and new markets. It will mobilize, encourage and facilitate the business community to respond to and participate in tourism programs, plans and events.

Implementing Plan 200/KH-UBND of the Provincial People's Committee, the Kien Giang Investment, Trade and Tourism Promotion Center has built a pilot promotion program to receive international visitors with so-called "vaccine passports" to Phu Quoc. The highlight of the program is the slogan "Live Fully", meaning that Phu Quoc is ready to welcome international visitors and give them the most complete experiences. The program period is from October 2021 to December 31, 2021, focusing on international tourists in low-risk potential markets such as Europe, the Middle East, Northeast Asia, Southeast Asia, North America and Australia. ■



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