

## THE PROSPECTS OF BUILDING VIETNAM'S CENTRAL REGION ACCORDING TO THE MODEL OF GREEN GROWTH AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE CONTEXT OF THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION 4.0

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### **Abstract**

Based on the analysis results of different sources of documents by qualitative and quantitative methods, the paper proves that Vietnam's Central region is not only a bridge for the country's two other ends, but also possesses numerous fundamental advantages to economic development and international integration. In spite of facing a wide variety of subjective difficulties and objective challenges, the Central region's localities are home to a system of natural conditions and inartificial resources as well as social-economic factors and open opportunities to be able to successfully build the model of green growth and sustainable development. The Central region has naturally the largest area within the country (150,479 km<sup>2</sup>) and the lowest level of population density (26,029,833 million people in 2019). In addition to the motivation to rise up and the increasing needs to connect for mutual development, the longest and widest coastline of the country (1,900km out of 3260 km (nearly 60%), 14 out of 28 coastal provinces and cities, and 14 groups of deep seaports), the Central region's heritage road (the country's most numerous world heritages), the East-West economic corridor (regional connection and integration), and the Central key economic region (economic locomotive) are the advantageous focuses that not only create momentum for the region's localities to take off, but also successfully implement the strategy of sustainable regional development. However, this strategy will be very difficult to become a reality as long as the improvement of science and technology level as well as the awareness of environmental protection of the people has not been properly enhanced. It is therefore recommended that the Central region's localities build regional planning to develop the model of green growth and sustainable development as soon as possible, while 42 universities of the area should be used appropriately to train high-quality human resources aside from attracting external skilled labors. Simultaneously, the awakening of agricultural potentials is

necessary, but the dependence on the natural resource exploitation should be avoided. Eventually, the the question of regional linkages should urgently be addressed to restrict the administrative boundary thinking, while the significance of the sub-regions' multi-centers should also be reconsidered.

**Keywords:** prospect, Central region, green growth, sustainable development, Industrial Revolution 4.0

## 1. Introduction

Green growth and sustainable development are the inevitable advancement trends of most industrial countries in today's era.<sup>1</sup> In Vietnam, despite many efforts and a certain number of successes have been achieved in practice, the model of green growth and sustainable development has in general not become a mainstream development trend and has fundamentally been still in its infancy for numerous localities and regions.<sup>2</sup> Vietnam's Central region (miền Trung Việt Nam) is a particularly important strategic area in terms of politics, socio-economy, defense, and security for the whole country.<sup>3</sup> Its importance is always placed in the priority position of the central government agenda in order to remember and act immediately,<sup>4</sup> as the region possesses a coastline of 1,900km out of 3260 km, 14 groups of deep-water seaports, and 11 out of 17 coastal economic zones of the country.<sup>5</sup> The Central region's sea is a strategic area for the implementation of the Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW on October 22, 2018 on the Strategy for sustainable marine economic development of Vietnam to 2030 and the vision to 2045.<sup>6</sup> Vietnam's Central region is therefore considered

<sup>1</sup> Phạm Thị Thanh Bình, *Phát triển bền vững có những tiêu chí gì?*, VNCP (Aug. 24, 2018), available at: <https://vncpc.org/phat-trien-ben-vung-co-nhu%CC%83ng-tieu-chi-gi/>, accessed on July 21, 2020

<sup>2</sup> Nguyễn Thùy Vân, *Nâng cao nhận thức về tăng trưởng xanh*, Nhân dân hàng tháng (Sept. 29, 2015, 08:14 AM), available at: <https://nhandan.com.vn/tieu-diem-hangthang/nang-cao-nhan-thuc-ve-tang-truong-xanh-243783/>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>3</sup> Nghi Lộc, *Miền Trung nỗ lực vươn ra biển lớn*, Thời báo Ngân hàng (Aug. 21, 2019, 08:57 AM), available at: <https://thoibaonganhang.vn/mien-trung-no-luc-vuon-ra-bien-lon-91266.html>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>4</sup> Trọng Hùng, *Miền Trung cần thể hiện khát vọng vươn lên mạnh mẽ*, Đà Nẵng online (Aug. 21, 2019, 08:21 AM), available at: <https://baodanang.vn/channel/5399/201908/hoi-nghi-phat-trien-kinh-te-mien-trung-mien-trung-can-the-hien-khat-vong-vuon-len-manh-me-3230764/>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>5</sup> Quang Minh, *Thúc đẩy tăng trưởng, phát triển bền vững vùng miền Trung*, Công nghiệp môi trường (Nov. 21, 2019, 10:22 AM), available at: <https://congnghiempmoitruong.vn/thuc-day-tang-truong-phat-trien-ben-vung-vung-mien-trung-4827.html>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>6</sup> Nguyễn Vy, *Biển miền Trung - địa bàn chiến lược*, Bình Phước online (Aug. 27, 2019, 15:13 PM), available at: <https://baobinhphuoc.com.vn/Content/bien-mien-trung---dia-ban-chien-luoc-591515>, accessed on July 20, 2020

as the backbone and lever of the two ends of the country.<sup>7</sup> However, the development level of the Central region in recent years has not only been incommensurate with the inherent potential and resources, but has also not yet fully met the basic standards of the model of green growth and sustainable development for which the major industrialized nations are aiming. So what are the reasons that the Central region's localities have not been able to exploit their full potentials and promote all of their strengths to develop as expected? What are the opportunities for this region to move forward according to the model of green growth and sustainable development in the coming time? What solutions are needed to both free up potential resources and turn the Central region into a driving force of economic development of the country?<sup>8</sup> Some studies have attempted to answer these questions by different forms and degrees, but many problems have hitherto not been completely clarified. Therefore, based on different sources of materials, the paper not only analyzes the potential possibilities and existing conditions to build the Central region under the model of green growth and sustainable development, but also offers a number of solutions to turn the inherent potentials of the region's localities into development reality in the years to come.

## 2. Literature review and database

Green growth and sustainable development are the advancement trends that have been of several industrialized economies' interests over the past few decades. Although the *World Conservation Strategy* of 1980 and the report on *Our Shared Future* in 1987 provided a number of different understandings on the model of green growth and sustainable development, it was not until the Earth Summit on Environment and Development in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil) in 1992 and the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (South Africa) in 2002 that the concept of sustainable development achieved some basic commonalities and became one of the United Nations' millennium goals.<sup>9</sup> However, there are still many different understandings and approaches to this concept.

In Vietnam, on August 18, 2004, the Government issued the Decision No. 153/2004/QĐ-TTg on the strategic direction for sustainable development in Vietnam, known

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<sup>7</sup> Ngọc Oai, *Các tỉnh thành miền Trung lấy lợi ích vùng làm ưu tiên phát triển*, Đầu tư Tài chính (Aug. 21, 2019, 07:22 AM), available at: <https://saigondautu.com.vn/kinh-te/cac-tinh-thanh-mien-trung-lay-loi-ich-vung-lam-uu-tien-phat-trien-71412.html>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>8</sup> Trọng Hùng, *supra* note 4.

<sup>9</sup> Phạm Thị Thanh Bình, *supra* note 1.

as the *Agenda 21 of Vietnam*.<sup>10</sup> On April 12, 2012, the Decision No. 432/QĐ-TTg approving *Vietnam's Sustainable Development Strategy for the period of 2011-2020* was issued by the Government.<sup>11</sup> On September 25, 2012, the Government of Vietnam approved the *National Strategy for Green Growth in the period of 2011-2020 and the vision to 2050* to realize the strategy of sustainable development and green economy in the Decision No. 1393/QĐ-TTg.<sup>12</sup> In June 2013, the Resolution No. 24-NQ/TW on *proactively responding to climate change, enhancing natural resource management, and protecting the environment* was taken into effect.<sup>13</sup> On November 11, 2013, the Government of Vietnam issued a *set of indicators for monitoring and evaluating local sustainable development for the period of 2013-2020* under the Decision No. 2157/QĐ-TTg.<sup>14</sup>

On 20 March 2014, the Government issued the Decision No. 403/QĐ-TTg approving the *National Action Plan on Green Growth for the period of 2014-2020*.<sup>15</sup> The 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam in 2016 affirmed to ensure rapid and sustainable development...<sup>16</sup> On August 26, 2016, the Resolution No. 73/NQ-CP approving the investment policy 21 for *Target programs in the period of 2016-2020* was signed.<sup>17</sup> On October 28, 2016, the Government of Vietnam issued the Decision No. 2053/QĐ-TTg on the *Plan to implement the Paris Agreement on climate change*.<sup>18</sup> On January 5, 2018, the Ministry of Construction issued the Circular No. 01/2018/TT-BXD<sup>19</sup> regulating targets for

<sup>10</sup> Thủ tướng Chính phủ, *Quyết định số 153/2004/QĐ-TTG của Thủ tướng Chính phủ: QĐ ban hành Định hướng chiến lược phát triển bền vững ở Việt Nam (Chương trình nghị sự 21 của Việt Nam)* (Hà Nội, July, 18, 2004).

<sup>11</sup> Thủ tướng Chính phủ, *Quyết định phê duyệt chiến lược phát triển bền vững Việt Nam giai đoạn 2011 – 2020*, Số: 432/QĐ-TTg (Hà Nội, Apr. 12, 2012).

<sup>12</sup> Thủ tướng Chính Phủ, *Quyết định phê duyệt chiến lược quốc gia về tăng trưởng xanh*, Số: 1393/QĐ-TTg (Hà Nội, Sept. 25, 2013).

<sup>13</sup> Nguyễn Thùy Vân, *supra* note 2.

<sup>14</sup> Thủ tướng Chính phủ, *Quyết định ban hành bộ chỉ tiêu giám sát, đánh giá phát triển bền vững địa phương giai đoạn 2013 – 2020*, Số: 2157/QĐ-TTg (Hà Nội, Nov. 11, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Thủ tướng Chính phủ, *Quyết định Phê duyệt Kế hoạch hành động quốc gia về tăng trưởng xanh giai đoạn 2014-2020*, Số: 403/QĐ-TTg (Hà Nội, Mar. 20, 2014).

<sup>16</sup> Văn phòng Trung ương Đảng Cộng sản Việt Nam, *Văn kiện Đại hội đại biểu toàn quốc lần thứ XII*, 270 (Nhà xuất bản Chính trị Quốc gia, Hà Nội, 2016).

<sup>17</sup> Chính phủ, *Nghị quyết phê duyệt chủ trương đầu tư các chương trình mục tiêu giai đoạn 2016 – 2020*, Số: 73/NQ-CP (Hà Nội, Aug. 26, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> Chính phủ, *Quyết định về việc ban hành kế hoạch thực hiện thỏa thuận Paris về biến đổi khí hậu*, Số: 2053/QĐ-TTg (Hà Nội, June 28, 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Bộ Xây dựng, *Thông tư quy định về chỉ tiêu xây dựng đô thị tăng trưởng xanh*, Số: 01/2018/TT-BXD (Hà Nội, Jan. 5, 2018).



*the construction of green growth cities.*<sup>20</sup> On October 22, 2018, the Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW on the Strategy for Vietnam's Sustainable Marine Economic Development to 2030, with the vision to 2045 was passed.<sup>21</sup> On November 19, 2019, the Prime Minister issued the Directive No. 27/CT-TTg<sup>22</sup> to require related central ministries and local agencies to implement 4 goals and 3 key solutions to promote<sup>23</sup> green growth and sustainable development in the Central region.<sup>24</sup>

Based on the aforementioned legal documents, development strategies, action plans of mass agencies and central ministries, the Central region's localities have also offered solutions to build their own models of green growth and sustainable development. For example, Danang is working with UN-Habitat and the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) to develop *the Green growth orientation for the development strategy of the city.*<sup>25</sup> Similarly, Ha Tinh has hired The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) of the US to complete the draft planning of Ha Tinh Province for the period of 2021-2030 and the vision to 2050 with the goal of *green growth and sustainable development.*<sup>26</sup> On January 20, 2020, Phu Yen province issued the Plan No. 20/KH-UBND on *sustainable development and green growth in Phu Yen province in 2020.*<sup>27</sup> On February 7, 2020, Thanh Hoa province issued the Plan No. 43/KH-UBND on *solutions to promote sustainable growth and development in Thanh Hoa and the*

<sup>20</sup> Lê Thị Bích Thuận, *Hướng tới xây dựng Đà Nẵng thành đô thị tăng trưởng xanh – phát triển bền vững*, Đô thị & Phát triển (Sept. 20, 2018), available at: <http://dothiphat trien.vn/huong-toi-xay-dung-da-nang-thanh-thi-tang-truong-xanh-phat-trien-ben-vung/>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>21</sup> Ban Chấp hành Trung ương Đảng, ***Nghị quyết Hội nghị lần thứ tám Ban Chấp hành Trung ương Đảng khóa XII về Chiến lược phát triển bền vững kinh tế biển Việt Nam đến năm 2030, tầm nhìn đến năm 2045***, Số 36-NQ/TW (Hà Nội, Oct. 22, 2018).

<sup>22</sup> Thủ tướng Chính phủ, *Chỉ thị Về các giải pháp thúc đẩy tăng cường và phát triển bền vững Vùng miền Trung*, Số 27/CT-TTg (Hà Nội, Nov. 19, 2019).

<sup>23</sup> Phương Nhi, *Thủ tướng chỉ thị thúc đẩy tăng trưởng, phát triển bền vững Vùng miền Trung*, Báo điện tử Chính phủ nước CHXHCN Việt Nam (Nov. 20, 2019, 18:20 PM), available at: <http://baochinhphu.vn/Xa-hoi/Thu-tuong-chi-thi-thuc-day-tang-truong-phat-trien-ben-vung-Vung-mien-Trung/380543.vgp>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>24</sup> Quang Minh, *supra* note 5.

<sup>25</sup> Lê Thị Bích Thuận, *supra* note 20.

<sup>26</sup> Thanh Hoài, *Hà Tĩnh đặt mục tiêu tăng trưởng xanh và phát triển bền vững*, Báo Hà Tĩnh (May 1, 2020, 16:30 PM), available at: <https://baohatinh.vn/dau-tu/ha-tinh-dat-muc-tieu-tang-truong-xanh-va-phat-trien-ben-vung/191409.htm>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>27</sup> Ủy ban nhân dân tỉnh Phú Yên, *Kế hoạch về phát triển bền vững, tăng trưởng xanh tỉnh Phú Yên năm 2020*, Trang Thông tin Doanh nghiệp và Đầu tư (Jan. 31, 2020, 16:16 PM), available at: <http://ipcphuyen.gov.vn/van-ban-phap-luat/200-Ke-hoach-ve-phat-trien-ben-vung.-tang-truong-xanh-tinh-Phu-Yen-nam-2020.html>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

Central region.<sup>28</sup> On February 24, 2020, Thua Thien Hue province issued the Decision No. 524/QĐ-UBND on the Plan of Urban Green Growth Development in Thua Thien Hue Province until 2030.<sup>29</sup> Documents of the authorities and state management offices are in practice also the first source of materials for this investigation.

Green growth and sustainable development are not only reflected in horizontal space, but are also focused on vertical development. That is in reality the basis for the release of several research works and studies on this field. One of the most prominent papers among them is Vien The Giang's *Finance for green economic development in Vietnam - The policy framework of policy, law and implementation practice* in 2017.<sup>30</sup> Simultaneously, South Korean successes have been summed up in the report titled: *Experience on green growth of Korea: Process, Results, and Lessons Learned*.<sup>31</sup> Experts' research results that have been published in various forms and degrees in the field of green growth and sustainable development are also one of the most important sources of reference for this research.

Nevertheless, the authorities' statistics are also an indispensable source of information in the research process of a complex and extensive issue such as the model of green growth and sustainable development of the Central region. In this regard, all the authorities and state offices have offered different sources of statistics and information systems, but the most noticeable of these is *the Results of the Population and Housing Census at 0:00 am on April 1, 2019* in 2019<sup>32</sup> and the report on *the Area, population and population density in 2011 by locality* in 2011.<sup>33</sup> At the same time, the speeches of experts, leaders, information of press

<sup>28</sup> BDT, *Thúc đẩy tăng trưởng và phát triển bền vững Vùng miền Trung*, Thanh Hóa (Feb. 10, 2020, 09:52 AM), available at: <http://baothanhhoa.vn/kinh-te/thuc-day-tang-truong-va-phat-trien-ben-vung-vung-mien-trung/114203.htm>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Ủy ban nhân dân tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế, *Kế hoạch phát triển đô thị tăng trưởng xanh trên địa bàn tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế đến năm 2030*, Cổng Thông tin điện tử Thừa Thiên Huế (Feb. 24, 2020), available at: <https://thuathienhue.gov.vn/vi-vn/Thong-tin-kinh-te-xa-hoi/tid/Ke-hoach-Phat-trien-do-thi-tang-truong-xanh-tren-dia-ban-tinh-Thua-Thien-Hue-den-nam-2030/newsid/FE3A7E53-610C-456F-A9D3-ABBB00A9324A/cid/F0D52958-FF34-4B1C-9907-31868D1278B6>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>30</sup> Viên Thế Giang, *Tài chính cho phát triển kinh tế xanh ở Việt Nam - Khuôn khổ chính sách, pháp luật và thực tiễn thi hành*, Tập 20, Số Q2, Tạp chí Phát triển KH & CN, 55-69 (2017).

<sup>31</sup> Viện Tăng trưởng xanh toàn cầu, *Kinh nghiệm Tăng trưởng xanh của Hàn Quốc: Quá trình, Kết quả và Bài học rút ra*, Global Green Growth Institute (2015), available at: <https://gggi.org/site/assets/uploads/2019/07/Kinh-nghiem-tang-truong-xanh-Han-Quoc.pdf>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>32</sup> Ban Chỉ đạo Tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở Trung ương, *Kết quả Tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở thời điểm 0 giờ ngày 01 tháng 04 năm 2019* (Nhà xuất bản thống kê, Hà Nội, 2019).

<sup>33</sup> Tổng cục Thống kê, *Diện tích, dân số và mật độ dân số năm 2011 phân theo địa phương*, Tổng cục Thống kê (2011), available at: <https://www.gso.gov.vn/default.aspx?tabid=387&idmid=3&ItemID=12875>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

agencies, analyses of scholars, investment projects of businesses have also partly contributed to outlining the multidimensional picture of the model of green growth and sustainable development of Vietnam over the past few years.

In summary, sustainable development is a common trend that the advanced countries are striving towards. The Government of Vietnam has issued a lot of strategies, master plans, and plans for socio-economic development of the country as well as sectors and localities following the model of green growth and sustainable development.<sup>34</sup> However, Vietnam is basically considered as an inexperienced nation in developing and implementing this strategy in almost all aspects.<sup>35</sup> Studies on Vietnam's model of green growth and sustainable development in general and the Central region in particular are still relatively limited both quantitatively and qualitatively. In particular, in addition to the Directive No. 27/CT-TTg of the Prime Minister on November 19, 2019 to promote sustainable growth and development in the Central region and some local development strategies, no scientific work has studied the prerequisites of the entire Central region as a regional space in difference from the other ones according to the model of green growth and sustainable development. Therefore, this paper not only analyzes the possibilities and examines the conditions for building the Central region under the model of green growth and sustainable development, but also proposes the most possible options so that this model can be quickly applied successfully throughout the region by many different forms and degrees.

### 3. Research methods

This research has been carried out by qualitative and quantitative methods as well specialized and interdisciplinary approaches. While qualitative methods use criteria given in the definitions of the model of green growth and sustainable development to determine what favorable conditions the Central region possesses for this model of development and simultaneously point out the difficulties and challenges that the region's localities are facing in the pursuit of this growth road, the quantitative method employs statistics of the functional agencies, synthetic and analytical results quantified from a variety of sources of documents, and quantitative information from press agencies and experts to support the claims provided

<sup>34</sup> Cộng hòa Xã hội chủ nghĩa Việt Nam, *Thực hiện phát triển bền vững ở Việt Nam, Báo cáo quốc gia tại Hội nghị cấp cao của Liên Hợp Quốc về Phát triển bền vững (RIO+20)*, Chương trình Chính sách công và Quản lý Fulbright (2012), available at: <https://fsppm.fulbright.edu.vn/cache/MPP8-502-R12V-Thuc%20hien%20phat%20trien%20ben%20vung%20o%20Vietnam,%202012--Bo%20Ke%20hoach%20&%20Dau%20tu-2015-09-25-11073543.pdf>, accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>35</sup> Nguyễn Thùy Vân, *supra* note 2.

in the study. Simultaneously, although the model of green growth and sustainable development has not experienced a long historical tradition in Vietnam, its recent achievements are also analyzed in a certain number of chronological orders of historical methods, while many challenges of this area are presented according to the thinking series of scientific logical methods. In addition, green growth and sustainable development are not only the pursuing goals of just a couple of the Central region's localities, but also of the whole country and other countries. Therefore, apart from comparing the models of green growth and sustainable development of the region's localities, the paper also compares the actual conditions of this model in the Central region with those of other regions of the country, as well as the successes of Vietnam's strategies of green growth and sustainable development with those of other countries. In addition to making comparisons of synchronic and chronological nature, the research also utilizes comparative methods of qualitative and quantitative combinations. The development conditions of the Central region are not only compared with the criteria of the agreed model of green growth and sustainable development, but the development achievements of the region's localities are also compared and contrasted with their own goals, state strategies, and projects implemented by businesses. However, the Central region here not only includes the North and South Central Coastal regions,<sup>36</sup> but also the Central Highlands (Western Highlands),<sup>37</sup> including 19 provinces and cities,<sup>38</sup> with a total population of 26,029,833 million people in 2019<sup>39</sup> and the total natural area is 150,479 km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>40</sup>

#### 4. Research results and contributions

*The motivation to rise and the linkage need for mutual development:* The Central region has enough all the conditions for faster and more sustainable development at high speed, but much potential and many resources have not been used economically.<sup>41</sup> Vietnam's

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<sup>36</sup> TTXVN, *Thủ tướng: Miền Trung cần thể hiện khát vọng vươn lên mạnh mẽ*, Trang tin điện tử Đảng ủy Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh (2019, ngày 20 tháng 8, 21:01 PM), available at: <https://thanhuypthcm.vn/tin-tuc/thu-tuong-mien-trung-can-the-hien-khat-vong-vuon-len-manh-me-1491857170>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>37</sup> Phùng Nguyễn, *Tìm lời giải cho bài toán phát triển vùng miền Trung-Tây Nguyên*, Kiểm toán (Aug. 15, 2019, 14:05 PM), available at: <http://www.baokiemtoannhanuoc.vn/tai-chinh---ngan-hang/tim-loi-giai-cho-bai-toan-phat-trien-vung-mien-trung-tay-nguyen-141765>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>38</sup> Japan International Cooperation Agency, *Dự án nghiên cứu hỗ trợ xây dựng cực tăng trưởng tại miền Bắc - miền Trung - miền Nam Việt Nam*, JICA (2013), available at: [https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/12120226\\_02.pdf](https://openjicareport.jica.go.jp/pdf/12120226_02.pdf), accessed on July 20, 2020

<sup>39</sup> Bản chỉ đại Tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở trung ương, *Kết quả Tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở thời điểm 0h ngày 01 tháng 04 năm 2019*, 54 (Nhà xuất bản Thống kê, Hà Nội, 2019).

<sup>40</sup> Tổng cục Thống kê, *supra* note 33.

<sup>41</sup> Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.



Central region is naturally offered a lot of advantages in sea and landscapes<sup>42</sup> to the extent that can be said to be *silvery sea and golden forest*.<sup>43</sup> The region owns a quite synchronous transport infrastructure system which not only serves the socio-economic development in the Central region, but is also connected with the East-West economic corridor<sup>44</sup> and international links.<sup>45</sup> In reality, the average GRDP growth rate of the whole region in the period of 2016-2018 was annually around 7.62%.<sup>46</sup> The region's GRDP growth rate in the first 6 months of 2019 was 8.05%, higher than the national average.<sup>47</sup> Budget revenues of localities in the region have all met and exceeded the yearly estimates in the period of 2016-2018.<sup>48</sup> By the end of June 2019, the total budget balance revenue was equal to 57% of the central assigned estimate and was 52.8% higher than the national average, the highest ever. The total export turnover of goods in the first 6 months of 2019 of the Central region increased by 22.2% compared to that of the same period in 2018 (the whole country increased by 9.05%).<sup>49</sup> The tourism industry has become the growth engine of the whole region with approximately 54 million visitors and collected about 121,670 billion VND for the whole region in 2018.<sup>50</sup>

*The country's longest, widest, and most potential coastline:* Vietnam's coastline is 3,260 km long with 12 areas of sea territories and 200 nautical miles of continental shelf and exclusive economic zone stretching from Mong Cai to Ha Tien.<sup>51</sup> The Central region's sea stretches from Thanh Hoa to Binh Thuan with around 1,900-2,000 km,<sup>52</sup> accounting for 50% of the total number of the country's coastal provinces (14/28 provinces and cities) and nearly

<sup>42</sup> Thành Long, *Nhiều khó khăn trong phát triển liên kết Vùng kinh tế trọng điểm miền Trung*, Công Thương (Aug. 27, 2019, 17:19 PM), available at: <https://congthuong.vn/nhiieu-kho-khan-trong-phat-trien-lien-ket-vung-kinh-te-trong-diem-mien-trung-124354.html>, accessed on July 20, 2020

<sup>43</sup> Trọng Hùng, *supra* note 4.

<sup>44</sup> Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.

<sup>45</sup> Phùng Nguyên, *supra* note 4.

<sup>46</sup> TTXVN, *supra* note 36.

<sup>47</sup> Nguyễn Vy, *supra* note 6.

<sup>48</sup> Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.

<sup>49</sup> Trọng Hùng, *supra* note 4.

<sup>50</sup> Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.

<sup>51</sup> Hà Xuân Thông, *Đặc điểm của cộng đồng các dân cư ven biển Việt Nam*, Viện Chính sách và Chiến lược phát triển nông nghiệp nông thôn, 2 (2003), available at: <http://agro.gov.vn/images/2007/02/Dac%20diem%20cua%20cac%20cong%20dong%20dan%20cu7030.pdf>, accessed on July 20, 2020

<sup>52</sup> Hà Xuân Thông, *supra* note 51, at 13.

60% of the length of Vietnam's coastline.<sup>53</sup> This includes Vietnam's North and South Central Coastal regions, including: 14 provinces and cities from Thanh Hoa to Binh Thuan with more than 20 million people (21% of the country) and nearly 29% of the natural area of the country.<sup>54</sup> The Central region's sea is the national resource,<sup>55</sup> Vietnam's frontage, the area of sea that has a particularly important position in *the Strategy for sustainable marine economic development* under the Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW<sup>56</sup> and coastal economic activities,<sup>57</sup> especially in the tourism and service sectors.<sup>58</sup> The Central region's sea is also the gateway to the great seas and the pedestal connecting the East-West economic corridor of the Central Highlands provinces.<sup>59</sup> The Central region's long coastline has great potentials and advantages for marine economic development and coastal economic activities,<sup>60</sup> creates the position to advance further into the sea, and firmly defend Vietnam's sovereignty over the sea and islands.<sup>61</sup> The most typical of these are marine tourism and services, seaport systems, the exploration and processing of oil, gas, seafood.<sup>62</sup> Vietnam's Central region has 14 groups of deep seaports,<sup>63</sup> the most numerous in the country. About 30-40 km of the sea route is averagely the location of one seaport<sup>64</sup> and countless beautiful beaches.

*Central key economic region:* The central key economic region was established in 2008 and consists of 5 provinces and cities: Thua Thien Hue, Da Nang, Quang Nam, Quang Ngai, and Binh Dinh<sup>65</sup> with an area of 8, 5% (28,114 km<sup>2</sup>) and the population accounted for

<sup>53</sup> Hà Chinh, *Phát triển các mũi nhọn kinh tế biển miền Trung*, Tuyên giáo (Aug. 18, 2019, 14:35 PM), available at: <http://tuyengiao.vn/kinh-te/phet-trien-cac-mui-nhon-kinh-te-bien-mien-trung-123726>, accessed on July 20, 2020

<sup>54</sup> Phùng Nguyên, *supra* note 4.

<sup>55</sup> TTXVN, *supra* note 36.

<sup>56</sup> Hà Chinh, *supra* note 53.

<sup>57</sup> Phùng Nguyên, *supra* note 37.

<sup>58</sup> Phùng Nguyên, *supra* note 4.

<sup>59</sup> TTXVN, *supra* note 36.

<sup>60</sup> Phùng Nguyên, *supra* note 37.

<sup>61</sup> Trần Trình Lâm, *Phát triển kinh tế biển miền Trung: "Không phải chuyện riêng của 14 tỉnh"*, Vinh Tan Port (2020), available at: <https://vinhtanport.com/phet-trien-kinh-te-mien-trung-khong-phai-chuyen-rieng-cua-14-tinh.html>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>62</sup> Nguyễn Vy, *supra* note 6.

<sup>63</sup> Hà Chinh, *supra* note 53.

<sup>64</sup> Anh Minh, *Cuộc đua "ngầm" giữa các cảng biển miền Trung*, Đầu tư online (July 30, 2016, 07:39 AM), available at: <https://baodautu.vn/san-bay-cang-bien-mien-trung-hut-nha-dau-tu-d81160.html>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>65</sup> Hoàng Anh, *Vùng kinh tế trọng điểm miền Trung: Thiếu liên kết, nhưng lại cạnh tranh nhau khốc liệt*, Đầu tư online (May 5, 2018, 16:10 PM), available at: <https://baodautu.vn/vung-kinh-te-trong-diem-mien-trung-thieu-lien-ket-nhung-lai-cananh-tranh-nhau-khoc-liet-d81125.html>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

7% of the whole country<sup>66</sup> with the coastline of around 600 km.<sup>67</sup> On October 13, 2014, the Government of Vietnam issued the Decision No. 1874/QĐ-TTg approving *the Master plan on socio-economic development of the central key economic region to 2020 and the orientation to 2030* to turn this region into a strong marine economic center, a driving force for the whole Central region, a region of marine industries and other modern services,<sup>68</sup> and a gateway to the sea of the Central Highlands provinces and East-West economic corridor.<sup>69</sup> The Central key economic region is intentionally invested to create favorable positions for going to the sea to protect Vietnam's interests in the most effective way.<sup>70</sup> The Central key economic region plays not only an important role in national security and socio-economic development orientation of the Central region, but has also many advantages to become a transshipment hub and a trading and processing center of the Mekong region and Asia-Pacific area.<sup>71</sup> Vietnam's 3<sup>rd</sup> largest economic region<sup>72</sup> has many favorable conditions to develop into a national economic corridor, a commercial hub for North-South connection,<sup>73</sup> and other marine economic activities.<sup>74</sup> The Central key economic region has currently 4 coastal economic zones, 19 industrial zones (5.8% of the nation and around 45.2% of industrial zones in 14 central region's provinces),<sup>75</sup> 14 deep water seaports, and 12/22 airports of the country. All of them are very favorable for the development of industries and logistics in line with seaports and tourism.<sup>76</sup> The Central key economic region has been developing strongly and positively contributing to the overall growth of the national economy.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Phùng Nguyễn, *supra* note 4.

<sup>67</sup> Thanh Tùng and Quốc Tuấn, *Bước phát triển mới của Vùng kinh tế trọng điểm miền trung*, Nhân dân điện tử (Feb. 3, 2020, 18:14 PM), available at: <https://nhandan.com.vn/tin-tuc-kinh-te/buoc-phat-trien-moi-cua-vung-kinh-te-trong-diem-mien-trung-448612/>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>68</sup> Cục phát triển doanh nghiệp, *Quy hoạch tổng thể vùng kinh tế trọng điểm Miền Trung đến 2020*, Công thông tin doanh nghiệp (2020), available at: <http://business.gov.vn/tabid/98/catid/10/item/13710/quy-ho%E1%BA%A1ch-t%E1%BB%95ng-th%E1%BB%83-v%C3%B9ng-kinh-t%E1%BA%BF-tr%E1%BB%8Dng-%C4%91i%E1%BB%83m-mi%E1%BB%81n-trung-%C4%91%E1%BA%BFn-2020.aspx>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>69</sup> Trần Trình Lâm, *supra* note 61.

<sup>70</sup> Hà Chính, *Vùng kinh tế trọng điểm miền Trung thiếu cơ chế điều phối đủ mạnh*, Báo điện tử Chính phủ nước CHXHCN Việt Nam (Aug. 19, 2019, 06:52 AM), available at: <http://baochinhphu.vn/Tin-noi-bat/Vung-kinh-te-trong-diem-mien-Trung-thieu-co-che-dieu-phoi-du-manh/373163.vgp>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>71</sup> Thành Long, *supra* note 42.

<sup>72</sup> Trần Trình Lâm, *supra* note 61.

<sup>73</sup> Hoàng Anh, *supra* note 65.

<sup>74</sup> Thành Long, *supra* note 42.

<sup>75</sup> Hoàng Anh, *supra* note 65.

<sup>76</sup> Thành Long, *supra* note 42.

<sup>77</sup> Thanh Tùng and Quốc Tuấn, *supra* note 67.

*The Central region's heritage road*: the concept of the *World Heritage Road* was proposed by Mr. Paul Stone in 2002, was put into operation in 2004, and has annually contributed around 8-10 billion VND to the region's economy.<sup>78</sup> In 2004, the participation in *the Central region's heritage road* was only limited to Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park (Quang Binh), the ancient capital of Hue (the complex of monuments of Hue ancient capital and Hue royal music), Quang Nam province (My Son Sanctuary and Hoi An Ancient Town), the ancient capital of Luang Prabang (Laos), and the complex of Angkor (Cambodia) on the *One-destination three-country tour*,<sup>79</sup> but it was one of the highest-evaluated destinations for tourists in Vietnam. The list of participants in *the Central region's heritage road* was therefore expanded to the Central Highlands' cultural spaces<sup>80</sup> and Ho Dynasty citadel (Vinh Loc, Thanh Hoa). This reality has made heritage tourism become a potential and strength for tourism development in the sunny and windy Central region.<sup>81</sup> The UNESCO's recognized world heritages stretch along the Central region and contain attractive natural scenes, cultural traditions, and national specialties.<sup>82</sup> Of these, after more than 20 years of being recognized as the World Cultural Heritage, Hue Citadel has been rated by UNESCO experts and international organizations as a bright spot in heritage conservation with the comprehensive and sustainable development for the entire region.<sup>83</sup> That means the world heritages have contributed to making the Central region's tourism industry possess a more prosperous

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<sup>78</sup> Ngọc Dung, *Đà Nẵng và Con đường Di sản miền Trung*, Báo Đà Nẵng (Nov. 21, 2021, 07:24 AM), available at: <https://baodanang.vn/channel/5405/201111/da-nang-va-con-duong-di-san-mien-trung-2138083/>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>79</sup> Trần Trung Sáng, *Con đường Di sản, 15 năm nhìn lại*, Người Lao động (Feb. 5, 2019, 07:31 AM), available at: <https://nld.com.vn/du-lich/con-duong-di-san-15-nam-nhin-lai-20190214215223044.htm>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>80</sup> Trịnh Thúy Quỳnh, *Con đường di sản thế giới ở miền Trung Việt Nam từ góc nhìn Văn hóa học*, Văn hóa học (Feb. 6, 2009), available at: <http://www.vanhoahoc.vn/dao-tao-huan-luyen/dao-tao-o-khoa-vhh/ket-qua-dao-tao/1047-trinh-thuy-quynh-con-duong-di-san-the-gioi-o-mien-trung-vn-tu-goc-nhin-vhh.html>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>81</sup> Bùi Minh, *Con đường di sản miền Trung: Thách thức giữa phát triển và bảo tồn*, Dân sinh (Feb. 12, 2016, 05:45 AM), available at: <http://baodansinh.vn/con-duong-di-san-mien-trung-thach-thuc-giua-phat-trien-va-bao-ton-25272.htm>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>82</sup> Thanh Tuyết, *Những điểm dừng chân trên con đường di sản miền Trung*, VnExpress (Aug. 29, 2014, 09:17 AM), available at: <https://vnexpress.net/nhung-diem-dung-chan-tren-con-duong-di-san-mien-trung-3036756.html>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>83</sup> Bùi Minh, *supra* note 81.



appearance.<sup>84</sup> In 2019, *the Central region's heritage road* turned into a period of fifteen years of development. The successes of *the Central region's heritage road* have contributed to promoting potentials, developing economy, improving social welfares, and bringing Vietnam's image closer to international visitors. In reality, *the Central region's heritage road* has successfully combined with *the legendary Ho Chi Minh Road, the North Central ecological, spiritual, cultural road, and the Central Highlands green road...*<sup>85</sup> to create attractive tourist routes. It is *the Central region's heritage road* that has made the advantages of tourism development of the Central become clearer.<sup>86</sup>

*The East-West economic corridor* (EWEC) is one of the main development cooperation programs in the greater Mekong sub-region initiated by the Asian Development Bank and Japan. The 6<sup>th</sup> ASEAN Summit officially put it into action program in 1998<sup>87</sup> to facilitate economic development and international integration for the countries of the Mekong sub-region and Indochinese peninsula<sup>88</sup> with a length of 1,450 km and across 13 provinces and cities<sup>89</sup> of 4 countries (Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam).<sup>90</sup> In Vietnam, EWEC starts with Lao Bao international border gate (Quang Tri), runs along the National Highway 9, connects to the National Highway 1A in Dong Ha, runs straight into Thua Thien Hue, and goes through Hai Van Tunnel to Da Nang seaport. The dynamic development of the region's national economies and the Asian Development Bank's investment have improved EWEC's core infrastructure significantly and initially took very positive effects. Three major projects are being implemented, namely the project to upgrade the National Highway 9 with the total length of 83.5km and the international checkpoint in Lao Bao-Dansavanh (Laos), the project of Hai Van Tunnel, and the project of Tien Sa seaport with the capacity of 4 million tons per

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84 Trịnh Thúy Quỳnh, *supra* note 80.

85 Trần Trung Sáng, *supra* note 79.

86 Khánh An, *Trong bất kỳ hoàn cảnh nào, miền Trung phải đứng vững trên lợi thế phát triển*, *Đầu tư online* (July 18, 2020, 10:04 AM), available at: <https://baodautu.vn/trong-bat-ky-hoan-can-nao-mien-trung-phai-dung-vung-tren-loi-the-phat-trien-d125951.html>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

87 *Quảng Trị nắm bắt cơ hội "vàng" từ hành lang kinh tế Đông Tây*, *Dân trí* (Oct. 30, 2019, 09:30 AM), available at: <https://dantri.com.vn/bat-dong-san/quang-tri-nam-bat-co-hoi-vang-tu-hanh-lang-kinh-te-dong-tay-20191030092620526.htm>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

88 Ngọc Hải, *Diễn đàn Doanh nghiệp Hành lang Kinh tế Đông Tây 2019*, Quảng Bình Department of Industry and Trade (June 27, 2019, 14:08 PM), available at: <https://sct.quangbinh.gov.vn/3cms/dien-dan-doanh-nghiep-hanh-lang-kinh-te-dong-tay-2019.htm>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

89 *Quảng Trị nắm bắt cơ hội "vàng" từ hành lang kinh tế Đông Tây*, *supra* note 87.

90 Lê Vũ and Thành Long, *Bắt cập hạ tầng căn bước phát triển logistics trên hành lang kinh tế Đông- Tây*, *Công thương* (Nov. 22, 2019, 19:12 PM), available at: <https://congthuong.vn/ba-t-ca-p-ha-ta-ng-ca-n-buo-c-pha-t-trie-n-logistics-tren-ha-nh-lang-kinh-te-dong-tay-128721.html>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

year in Vietnam's territory.<sup>91</sup> On the whole route, More than 200 projects and 60 billion USD are being invested along EWEC.<sup>92</sup> In 2006, the transport infrastructure of the friendship bridge across Mekong River was basically completed and it has connected all the member countries of EWEC into a regional route. Simultaneously, the commercial and trade procedures on the EWEC have also been simplified and minimized to the maximum extent possible.<sup>93</sup> This reality shows that the development potential of the EWEC is very abundant, especially logistics activities. If the seaports of Da Nang and Nghi Son of Vietnam are adequately invested, these will be potential cargo transshipment points for the region in the near future.<sup>94</sup> It is similarly located in a prime location on the EWEC, Quang Tri fully converges all the necessary conditions for economic development within the province and attracts both domestic and foreign investors. This is in reality a golden opportunity for the provinces such as Quang Tri of Vietnam to take off in the coming years.<sup>95</sup> That means EWEC will soon be one of the leading manufacturing centers of the region.<sup>96</sup>

In conclusion, Vietnam's Central region is a potential area of golden forests and silvery sea, but has hitherto not been efficiently utilized.<sup>97</sup> In addition to the motivation to advance further and the determination to successfully integrate into international communities, the Central region's provinces also own the country's largest coastal system. The Central region's sea plays not only the key role in the country's sustainable marine economic development strategy, but is also the particularly important area for national security, defense, and environment in the twenty-first century Vietnam's seaward strategy. Historical facts have proven that the Central region's sea is both the gateway to many seaports and the location of the most numerous coastal beaches and economic zones of the country. Those conditions allow the Central region's provinces to not only develop potential coastal economic sectors, but also make marine tourism become one of the key industries of the country. Meanwhile, although the Central key economic region is facing many problems

91 *Giới thiệu về Hành lang kinh tế Đông Tây*, Cổng Thông tin điện tử Bộ Công thương (Mar. 12, 2018), available at: <https://www.moit.gov.vn/tin-chi-tiet/-/chi-tiet/gioi-thieu-ve-hanh-lang-kinh-te-%C4%91ong-tay-11104-22.html>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

92 Linh Đan, *Phát triển hành lang kinh tế Đông - Tây từ góc nhìn logistics*, VnEconomy (Nov. 22, 2019, 18:49 PM), available at: <http://vneconomy.vn/phat-trien-hanh-lang-kinh-te-dong-tay-tu-goc-nhin-logistics-2019112215554224.htm>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

93 *Giới thiệu về Hành lang kinh tế Đông Tây*, *supra* note 91.

94 Linh Đan, *supra* note 92.

95 *Quảng Trị nắm bắt cơ hội "vàng" từ hành lang kinh tế Đông Tây*, *supra* note 87.

96 Linh Đan, *supra* note 92.

97 Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.

of institutions and driving forces for development, it has basically shaped a growth pole for the entire Central region. Nevertheless, the Central region's heritage road is the true specialty of this region. Starting with the participation of only three localities with world heritages in Vietnam's Central region, namely Quang Binh, Thua Thien Hue, and Quang Nam in 2004, the Central region's heritage road now connects not only all the world heritages of the region from Thanh Hoa to Lam Dong, but also with many other domestic world heritages in Hanoi and the world heritages of neighboring countries such as Luang Prabang in Laos and Angkor in Cambodia. This system of wonderful beaches and world heritages has made the tourism industries become a key economic point for the region's localities. At the same time, the establishment of the East-West economic corridor has not only opened up a lot of opportunities for the region's economy, but has also truly become a mode of international integration of the Central region in the era of regionalization and globalization. All of the aforementioned advantages indicate that although the Central region's provinces are currently facing a certain number of difficulties, the prospects for building the Central region under the model of green growth and sustainable development are very bright in the coming time.

## 5. Some recommendations and solutions for the Central region's model of green growth and sustainable development

Based on the results of the analysis of the aforementioned sources of materials, the study proposes some solutions to quickly turn the Central region into a modern economy under the model of green growth and sustainable development.

*Firstly*, the most prominent feature of the Central region is the richness in potential and many advantages to develop further, but it has not been properly promoted and effectively employed. The Central region has naturally the largest area within the country (150,479 km<sup>2</sup>),<sup>98</sup> the longest and widest sea of the country (60%),<sup>99</sup> the most numerous world heritages in the country.<sup>100</sup> However, the potentials and strengths of localities in the region are relatively similar. Most of the Central region's provinces and cities have beaches,

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<sup>98</sup> Tổng cục Thống kê, *supra* note 33.

<sup>99</sup> Hà Chính, *supra* note 53.

<sup>100</sup> Nguyễn Thế Kỷ, *Đọc theo Con đường di sản miền Trung (kỳ 1)*, Thanh niên (Dec. 5, 2005), available at: <https://thanhnien.vn/van-hoa/doc-theo-con-duong-di-san-mien-trung-ky-1-107780.html>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

seaports, airports, economic zones, industrial zones,<sup>101</sup> and use tourism as a spearhead of development. As a result, most of the tourism products of the Central region's provinces are fairly similar, so they are not really attractive to tourists and investors.<sup>102</sup> If these advantages were viewed and approached by localized points of view, it would easily lead to chaotic competitions rather than association and cooperation to develop. Therefore, a system of holistic solutions and regional planning to develop according to the model of green growth and sustainable development is very urgent.<sup>103</sup>

*Secondly*, the human factor often plays the decisive role in the development of industrialized countries.<sup>104</sup> Although the Central region is a large area with a low level of population density<sup>105</sup> and the Central region's people are not only industrious and hardworking, but also very important assets for the region's localities,<sup>106</sup> the Central region has currently the highest rate of emigration of the country.<sup>107</sup> The rate of trained workers with certificates only reaches 22-23%.<sup>108</sup> Even the Central key economic region is also facing the challenges of shortage of high quality human resources,<sup>109</sup> especially in the marine economic development sectors. It is therefore necessary to use around 42 universities in the area<sup>110</sup> to develop marine human resources of high-quality,<sup>111</sup> experts and engineers, skilled workers,<sup>112</sup> and managers in the field of urban development according to the model of green growth and sustainable development<sup>113</sup> in addition to attracting human resources<sup>114</sup> from other regions.

<sup>101</sup> Hà Minh, *Kinh tế miền Trung: Không phát triển được nếu bị chia cắt về không gian địa lý*, Đầu tư (Sept. 25, 2017), available at: <https://baodautu.vn/kinh-te-mien-trung-khong-phat-trien-duoc-neu-bi-chia-cat-ve-khong-gian-dia-ly-d70093.html>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>102</sup> *Du lịch biển miền Trung: Tiềm năng đan xen rào cản*, Tài nguyên & Môi trường (Apr. 28, 2019), available at: <https://baotainguyenmoitruong.vn/du-lich-bien-mien-trung-tiem-nang-dan-xen-rao-can-276589.html>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>103</sup> Trọng Hùng, *supra* note 4.

<sup>104</sup> Phùng Nguyễn, *Miền Trung cần thể hiện khát vọng vươn lên mạnh mẽ*, Kiểm toán (Aug. 21, 2019), available at: <http://www.baokiemtoannhanuoc.vn/trong-nuoc/mien-trung-can-the-hien-khat-vong-vuon-len-manh-me-141805>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>105</sup> Bản chỉ đại Tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở trung ương, *supra* note 39, at 103.

<sup>106</sup> Trọng Hùng, *supra* note 4.

<sup>107</sup> Bản chỉ đại Tổng điều tra dân số và nhà ở trung ương, *supra* note 39, at 103.

<sup>108</sup> Phùng Nguyễn, *supra* note 104.

<sup>109</sup> Thành Long, *supra* note 42.

<sup>110</sup> Hồng Hạnh, *Phát triển du lịch miền Trung: Khó có dịch vụ 5 sao nếu nhân lực 1-2 sao*, Ngân hàng (Aug. 20, 2019), available at: <https://thoibaonganhang.vn/phat-trien-du-lich-mien-trung-kho-co-dich-vu-5-sao-neu-nhan-luc-1-2-sao-91246.html>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>111</sup> Phùng Nguyễn, *supra* note 104.

<sup>112</sup> Lê Sơn, *Miền Trung-Tây Nguyên đủ 'thiên thời, địa lợi, nhân hoà' để phát triển*, Vn Economy (July 19, 2020), available at: <http://vneconomy.vn/xay-dung-cuc-tang-truong-cho-mien-trung-20190819001342259.htm>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>113</sup> Ủy ban nhân dân tỉnh Thừa Thiên Huế, *supra* note 29.



*Thirdly*, regarding the development achievements: A lot of localities in the Central region have experienced a sublime development period and consistently achieved a number of very positive economic results over the past few decades. However, the economic starting point of the Central region's most localities is usually relatively low, investment accumulation is small, investment efficiency is not high, and growth engine of the region is still weak. The total import-export turnover of the Central region accounted for only approximately 4.76% of those of the country. Except for Da Nang and Khanh Hoa, which have often recorded trade surplus, the remaining provinces in the Central region have mainly suffered trade deficits.<sup>115</sup> Industries are still predominantly exploiting natural resources, employing simple labors, and running inadequate technologies. A variety of potentials of golden forests and silvery sea have not been effectively utilized, the quality of the business environment has not yet been very high, and the governance ability has not always been satisfactory. It is hence necessary to awaken agricultural potentials such as medicinal herbs, fruit trees, forest ecotourism, and forest economy in the Central region in the coming time, but it should absolutely be forbidden for the increase of the output of natural aquatic product exploitation. It is instead recommended to enhance the processing to add more values to the products.<sup>116</sup>

*Furthermore*, regional linkage: localities in the region are not only in shortage of adequate connections and regional linkages have still faced a lot of shortcomings, but they have also developed fiercely mutual competitions against each other.<sup>117</sup> One of the barriers that have made the regional connection ineffective is that the economic benefits of localities are being divided according to administrative boundaries. The phenomenon that each locality has operated as an independent economy makes the provinces and cities in the region not only uninterested in developing linkages, but even compete with each other in attracting investment to the extent that could damage the advantages of the whole region.<sup>118</sup> In other words, each locality of the Central region is an economic vertebra, but it is very fragmented and loose<sup>119</sup> as suffering herniated disk.<sup>120</sup> It is therefore the time to address the question of

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<sup>114</sup> TTXVN, *supra* note 36.

<sup>115</sup> Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.

<sup>116</sup> TTXVN, *supra* note 36.

<sup>117</sup> Hoàng Anh, *supra* note 65.

<sup>118</sup> Hà Chính, *supra* note 70.

<sup>119</sup> Trần Trình Lâm, *supra* note 61.

<sup>120</sup> TTXVN, *supra* note 36.

regional linkages in the frankest way. In addition to the need for a powerful and competent regional institution,<sup>121</sup> localities also need to get rid of the administrative boundary thinking, but the role of directing, managing, and regulating regional linkage activities of the central government is also indispensable in the most cases.<sup>122</sup>

Finally, the center for regional connections: the Central region is an increasingly longer and heavier train, but the locomotives have become even stronger. The strength here is aside from a leading center,<sup>123</sup> there are also a number of geographical ones around the Central region.<sup>124</sup> If the Northern region is proud of Hanoi and Haiphong and the Southern region is based on Ho Chi Minh City and Cantho, the Central region is home to not only Danang and Hue, but also Thanh Hoa, Vinh, Quy Nhon, Nha Trang, Da Lat, Buon Ma Thuot as the centers of the sub-regions.<sup>125</sup> While the Central key economic region has demonstrated its role as the growth nucleus and the leading economic driver of the whole region, the Central region has witnessed an increasing number of large corporations and investors which come to do business and create more values for the regional economy.<sup>126</sup> Simultaneously, the Central region's industrial zones have also emerged rapidly over the past few decades.<sup>127</sup> However, they are often located far from each other along the coastline.<sup>128</sup> The improvement of regional connections for the Central region's industrial zones therefore plays a vital part in the development of the Central region in the coming years, but the contributions of the multi-centers of the sub-regions should also not be underestimated.<sup>129</sup>

## 6. Conclusion

While *the brown economic model* is destroying the environment and degrading the resources of many countries around the world, the National strategy on green growth and the National strategy on climate change with the vision to the year of 2045 has clearly demonstrated the political determination of Vietnam in the efforts to build the country

<sup>121</sup> Hoàng Anh, *supra* note 65.

<sup>122</sup> Hà Minh, *Vùng Kinh tế trọng điểm miền Trung: Kích hoạt dự địa tạo động lực phát triển*, Đầu tư (July 18, 2020), available at: <https://baodautu.vn/vung-kinh-te-trong-diem-mien-trung-kich-hoat-du-dia-tao-dong-luc-phat-trien-d125963.html>, accessed on July 19, 2020.

<sup>123</sup> Hà Minh, *supra* note 101.

<sup>124</sup> Ngọc Oai, *supra* note 7.

<sup>125</sup> PV, *Kinh tế miền Trung: Thiếu vắng "hạt nhân"*, VnEconomy (Aug. 19, 2019), available at: <http://vneconomy.vn/kinh-te-mien-trung-thieu-vang-hat-nhan-20190819105819376.htm>, accessed on July 20, 2020.

<sup>126</sup> Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.

<sup>127</sup> PV, *supra* note 125.

<sup>128</sup> Ngọc Dung, *supra* note 78.

<sup>129</sup> Ngọc Oai, *supra* note 7.

according to the model of green growth and sustainable development.<sup>130</sup> The Central region is a strategic area for sustainable marine economic development and a green growth model of Vietnam.<sup>131</sup> The Central region not only possesses the largest coastline of the country, but is also home to most of Vietnam's world heritages, the starting point of the East-West economic corridor, and the location of the Central key economic region. However, the economic scale of the region is still relatively small and accounted for a fairly moderate proportion of the Vietnamese economy.<sup>132</sup> One of the reasons that have made the Central region's economy to be incommensurate with its potential is the regional linkage.<sup>133</sup> At the same time, the connections on human resource training and labor usage are not really focused on the central points, while investment linkages are fragmented and inconsistent.<sup>134</sup> For this reason, although it is difficult to succeed without the will to rise and high determination, one of the most important solutions for the Central region at the moment is to solve the questions of connection. In addition to the problem of linking to avoid fragmentation, isolation, and disconnectedness, the region's localities need to continuously improve the business investment environment, enhance competitiveness ability, and promote the model of green growth and sustainable development.<sup>135</sup>

<sup>130</sup> Trần Thị Hương, *Phát triển kinh tế xanh ở Việt Nam trong bối cảnh biến đổi khí hậu toàn cầu*, (Nov. 7, 2019), available at: [https://www.vnba.org.vn/index.php?option=com\\_k2&view=item&id=12126:phat-trien-kinh-te-xanh-o-viet-nam-trong-boi-can-bien-doi-khi-hau-toan-cau&lang=vi](https://www.vnba.org.vn/index.php?option=com_k2&view=item&id=12126:phat-trien-kinh-te-xanh-o-viet-nam-trong-boi-can-bien-doi-khi-hau-toan-cau&lang=vi), accessed on July 21, 2020.

<sup>131</sup> Nguyễn Vy, *supra* note 6.

<sup>132</sup> Hoàng Hồng Hiệp, Chu Ngọc Hòa, and Hoàng Thị Thu Hương, *Phát triển kinh tế vùng kinh tế trọng điểm miền Trung*, 01 (63), *Tạp chí Khoa học Xã hội miền Trung*, 4-17 (2020).

<sup>133</sup> Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.

<sup>134</sup> Hà Chính, *supra* note 70.

<sup>135</sup> Nghi Lộc, *supra* note 3.