

The Role Of The Intellectual Workforce In Promoting Green Economic Development To Ensure Sustainable Development In The Mekong Delta Region Of Vietnam Today

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ABSTRACT: Under the impact of climate change, the natural advantages of the Mekong Delta will change, with the agricultural sector expected to be the most affected. The region's agricultural production systems and strengths must therefore be adjusted accordingly. It is necessary to propose diverse agricultural development solutions that meet market demands under climate change and the "new normal", aiming for sustainable development; strengthen value chain linkages in agricultural production; orient cooperation between localities and research institutes/universities; and address environmental protection and disaster mitigation issues to support sustainable development in the Mekong Delta. To achieve sustainable development in the Mekong Delta, it is essential to promote a spirit of self-reliance and resilience. In addition to government investment, local authorities should proactively mobilize resources from enterprises and communities to focus on developing transportation infrastructure and enhancing the capacity of systems that adapt to climate change, considering this a breakthrough in the region's sustainable development process. It is also necessary to strengthen the application of science and technology, utilize information technology to innovate growth models, and aim to transform the Mekong Delta into a modern, dynamic agricultural economic center that efficiently uses available resources. To realize these goals, promoting a green economy toward sustainable development in the Mekong Delta requires the active participation of the intellectual workforce as a highly educated, well-trained, and creative labor force.

KEYWORDS: Intellectual workforce; Green economy; Sustainable development; Mekong Delta.

I. INTRODUCTION

At present, sustainable development has become a global trend and a common goal for all humankind, built upon three fundamental pillars: economic sustainability, social sustainability, and environmental sustainability. This is also a strategic objective that Vietnam is determined to pursue. Specifically, the Government of Vietnam promulgated and has been implementing the Vietnam Agenda 21 on August 17, 2004, marking a concrete step toward sustainable development. To achieve sustainable development, it is essential to harness human resources, among which the intellectual workforce plays a particularly crucial role. President Ho Chi Minh once affirmed that "intellectuals are the precious capital of the nation." He emphasized that "intellectuals are needed to serve the people in all periods — during resistance and nation-building, during the transition to socialism, and even more so in the path toward communism" The Communist Party of Vietnam has also affirmed that "Vietnamese intellectuals are a particularly important creative labor force in the process of accelerating industrialization, modernization, and international integration, as well as in building a knowledge-based economy and developing an advanced culture imbued with national identity. Building a strong intellectual contingent is a direct means to enhance the nation's intellect, strengthen national power, improve the Party's leadership capacity, and increase the effectiveness of the political system. Investing in the intellectual workforce is an investment in sustainable development." In the context of the Mekong Delta, ensuring sustainable development requires that all labor forces — especially the intellectual community — actively demonstrate their responsibility and role in promoting both overall economic development and the advancement of the green economy. To achieve sustainable development in the Mekong Delta, it is essential to promote a spirit of self-reliance and resilience. In addition to government investment, local authorities should proactively mobilize resources from enterprises and communities to focus on developing transportation

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infrastructure and enhancing the capacity of systems that adapt to climate change, considering this a breakthrough in the region's sustainable development process. It is also necessary to strengthen the application of science and technology, utilize information technology to innovate growth models, and aim to transform the Mekong Delta into a modern, dynamic agricultural economic center that efficiently uses available resources. To realize these goals, promoting a green economy toward sustainable development in the Mekong Delta requires the active participation of the intellectual workforce as a highly educated, well-trained, and creative labor force. This paper analyzes the theoretical foundations, current realities, and proposed solutions to enhance the role of the intellectual workforce in fostering green economic development in the Mekong Delta region of Vietnam today.

II. THEORETICAL BASIS ON THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECTUAL WORKFORCE IN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEKONG DELTA REGION

2.1. Some concepts: Intellectual workforce; Sustainable development

- *Concept of Intellectual Workforce*

There are many different definitions of the term "intellectual" around the world. Many studies suggest that the term originated from the Russian word "интеллигенция" (intelligentsia) in the 19th century. Accordingly, intellectuals are considered "people with a formal educational background, who possess a critical spirit toward reality and uphold social moral values"[1]; or "a group of mental laborers in society, mainly engaged in complex creative activities, developing and disseminating education and culture, and distinguished by their spiritual and moral aspirations, sense of duty, and honor"[2]. Other viewpoints argue that the term "intellectual" derives from the French word "intellectuel", which first appeared in 1898 in a petition demanding the exoneration and restoration of honor for a French soldier. In 1906, French Prime Minister Clemenceau signed and issued a document titled "Manifeste des Intellectuels" (The Manifesto of Intellectuals)[1]; since then, the term "intellectual" has gradually been officially used in French dictionaries to refer to matters related to spiritual and intellectual life, mental labor, or to describe a cultured social class that defends conscience and social justice.

Each definition only reflects a certain aspect of cognition, aiming to abstract and generalize specific features or characteristics of the subject; therefore, none can fully encompass its complex connotations. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify several common attributes mentioned in various conceptions of intellectuals. Definition of the intellectual workforce: At the 7th Plenum of the 10th Central Committee, the Communist Party of Vietnam for the first time introduced a definition-like concept of intellectuals: "*Intellectuals are those engaged in mental labor, possessing a high level of education in a specific field of expertise, capable of independent and creative thinking, disseminating and enriching knowledge, and creating spiritual and material products of value to society.*"[5]

- *Concept of Sustainable Development:*

Sustainable development is the development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is based on a harmonious balance among three main pillars: economy, society, and environment. To achieve this goal, there must be a close integration between effective economic growth, social equity, and environmental protection.

Main Pillars and Goals of Sustainable Development:

- *Economy:* Focuses on stable and efficient growth through the use of resource-saving technologies, the promotion of green production, recycling, reusing, and adjusting consumption demands.

- *Society:* Aims toward fairness, equality, poverty reduction, improved quality of life, and ensuring rights for all people, including access to education, healthcare, and other basic services.

- *Environment:* Protects natural resources, maintains biodiversity, limits pollution, manages waste effectively, and minimizes the impacts of climate change.

- *Goal:* To create a world where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life while preserving the planet and the future of humanity.

- *Solutions:* Require cooperation and joint efforts from governments, enterprises, social organizations, and individuals. Solutions include applying green economic models, using resources efficiently, and raising community awareness and responsibility. The intellectual workforce, as a highly skilled and knowledgeable production force, plays a key role in meeting the growing demands of national socio-economic development in the Mekong Delta to ensure the country's sustainable growth.

2.2. Strategy for Green Economic Development and Its Key Pillars

The green economic development strategy in the Mekong Delta focuses on *promoting sustainable agriculture, eco-tourism, renewable energy exploitation, and regional linkages* to adapt to climate change. Specific solutions include adopting the "thuận thiên" (living in harmony with nature) model, enhancing agricultural productivity by reducing greenhouse gas emissions, fostering green tourism based on local resources, and attracting investment in clean energy and high-tech marine aquaculture.

The main pillars in the green economic development strategy: Sustainable agriculture (Applying low-emission rice cultivation models to improve quality and production efficiency; Transitioning to sustainable and high-tech aquaculture models, especially in saline and brackish water areas); *Renewable energy development* (Utilizing solar energy to reduce costs and greenhouse gas emissions; Attracting investment in renewable energy projects); *Eco-friendly and sustainable tourism* (Developing tourism based on local resources and community culture, such as agricultural tourism and waste-recycling tourism models; Creating marine eco-tourism products to diversify livelihoods for coastal communities); *Regional linkages and innovation* (Strengthening cooperation among provinces and cities in the region to create synergistic momentum for green economic development; Encouraging innovation in agriculture, tourism, and other sectors; Mobilizing financial resources from international climate funds, ODA, and FDI to invest in the green economy); *Support mechanisms and policies* (Establishing green financial policies and facilitating access to green capital for enterprises; Providing incentives for green agricultural businesses; Supporting research, training, and market promotion for green products).

III. THE ROLE OF THE INTELLECTUAL WORKFORCE IN THE GREEN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY IN THE MEKONG DELTA

3.1. The role of the intellectual workforce in green economic development in the Mekong Delta

Practical lessons from Vietnam show that the intellectuals' advisory role in pioneering innovative thinking, especially economic thinking, has helped the country overcome socio-economic crises, gradually integrate into the global economy, provide scientific foundations, propose ideas, conduct social critique, and organize implementation and innovation. They have created ideas, inventions, and products that contribute to promoting industrialization, modernization, and innovation, leaving a significant mark on the nation's development. The intellectual workforce plays a crucial role in green economic development in the Mekong Delta by **providing expertise, driving technological innovation, advising on policy formulation, raising community awareness, and promoting multilateral cooperation**. They serve as an essential resource for building circular, sustainable, and environmentally responsible economic models while helping the region adapt to climate change and protect its natural resources. Specifically:

Firstly, providing expertise and scientific research: Conducting studies, analyses, and proposing solutions tailored to the specific characteristics of the Mekong Delta, based on knowledge in environmental science, ecology, agriculture, aquaculture, and social sciences. At the same time, assessing the impacts of current economic models and suggesting new, more sustainable directions.

Secondly, promoting technological innovation and creativity: Applying scientific and technological advances in agriculture, aquaculture, and industry to minimize pollution, use resources efficiently, and increase product value. Furthermore, developing new technologies such as organic agriculture, sustainable aquaculture, renewable energy, and waste treatment.

Thirdly, policy consultation: Participating in the development, evaluation, and improvement of policies and planning related to green economic development, from local to national levels. Ensuring that policies are practical, feasible, and promote balanced development among the economy, society, and environment.

Fourthly, raising community awareness: Organizing seminars, training sessions, and forums to enhance public and business awareness of the green economy, climate change, and environmental protection. Through these activities, spreading good models and best practices, inspiring and encouraging collective community action.

Fifthly, promoting cooperation and networking: Building connections and partnerships among scientists, policymakers, enterprises, and communities to jointly implement green economic development projects. Representing the region in international cooperation forums to attract external resources and expertise.

3.2. Current Situation and Solutions for Implementing the Role of the Intellectual Workforce in the Green Economic Development Strategy in the Mekong Delta

Characteristics of the Mekong Delta: The Mekong Delta is one of Vietnam's key regions, possessing a favorable geographical location, abundant natural resources, and great potential for the development of agriculture, processing industries, services, and tourism. However, the region is facing numerous challenges as it is highly sensitive to natural changes. Climate change and sea level rise are occurring faster than predicted, causing extreme weather phenomena that affect the livelihoods and living conditions of local residents. Water resource exploitation in the upstream areas has altered river flows, reduced silt deposition and aquatic resources, and caused saltwater intrusion deep into inland areas, negatively impacting the region's socio-economic development. The negative consequences of high-intensity economic activities have become increasingly apparent, leading to environmental pollution, severe ecological imbalance, land subsidence, declining groundwater levels, forest area reduction, and coastal erosion. In addition to the complex and unpredictable impacts of climate change, the region is also facing

major challenges in ensuring sustainable development amid the influences of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, the acceleration of industrialization and modernization, the expansion of the market economy, and deeper international integration.

Current situation: In recent years, the intellectual workforce in the Mekong Delta has played an active role in research, technology transfer, and the application of socio-economic development initiatives, environmental protection, and climate change adaptation in response to contemporary demands. They have also contributed to preserving and promoting national culture, improving the quality of education and human resource training, and enhancing public health—thereby contributing to the region’s sustainable development. However, the role of this workforce has not yet been fully utilized; the mobilization of intellectual potential to meet the requirements of sustainable development remains limited; and working conditions and environments still face many constraints. There is also a situation of “brain drain” and underutilization of intellectual resources. A portion of intellectuals have not yet met professional requirements or fully recognized their responsibilities. Therefore, practical solutions are needed to further promote the role of this workforce in sustainable development.

Solutions: To enhance the role of the intellectual workforce in socio-economic development in the Mekong Delta, the following comprehensive solutions should be implemented:

Firstly: Regarding mechanisms and policies

Improving policies for talent attraction and utilization: Develop both material incentives (such as salary, bonuses, and housing) and spiritual incentives (such as working environment, career advancement opportunities, and recognition of intellectual contributions) to attract talented intellectuals, especially those originally from the Mekong Delta who are currently working in more developed regions to return and contribute.

Innovating management and utilization mechanisms: Create favorable conditions for intellectuals to work proactively and creatively by reducing administrative burdens. Implement flexible mechanisms in recruitment and utilization, particularly for leading experts in specialized fields.

Task assignment and commissioning policies: Assign scientific research tasks and socio-economic development projects to intellectuals, ensuring adequate funding and necessary conditions for them to carry out their work effectively.

Secondly: Regarding working environment and research conditions

Building a professional and open working environment: Create conditions for intellectuals to maximize their capabilities, respect diversity, and encourage critical thinking.

Investing in modern facilities and equipment: Provide sufficient advanced research tools and infrastructure at institutes, universities, and research centers to support the professional activities of intellectuals.

Promoting cooperation and linkages: Strengthen connections between research institutes, universities, enterprises, and international organizations to create a multidimensional working environment and foster technology transfer.

Thirdly: Regarding training, fostering, and developing the intellectual workforce

Improving the quality of local human resource training: Focus on fields in which the Mekong Delta has strengths or urgent development needs, such as high-tech agriculture, climate change, irrigation, and logistics.

Enhancing retraining and professional development: Update new knowledge and skills for existing intellectuals to meet the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the region’s sustainable development.

Paying attention to developing young intellectuals: Implement support policies and create opportunities for young intellectuals to participate in key local projects.

Fourthly: Regarding the promotion of practical roles

Listening to and incorporating intellectuals’ opinions: Establish regular dialogue channels between local authorities and the intellectual community to receive proposals and constructive feedback on regional socio-economic development issues.

Encouraging intellectuals to address urgent challenges: Assign intellectuals to lead research projects aimed at solving pressing issues such as salinity intrusion, erosion, climate change—adaptive agriculture, and economic restructuring.

Strengthening advisory and social criticism roles: Enhance the participation of professional associations and intellectual organizations in policy formulation and supervision of local planning and implementation.

IV. CONCLUSION

To realize these goals, promoting a green economy toward sustainable development in the Mekong Delta requires the active participation of the intellectual workforce as a highly educated, well-trained, and creative labor force. It is also necessary to strengthen the application of science and technology, utilize information technology to innovate growth models, and aim to transform the Mekong Delta into a modern, dynamic agricultural economic center that efficiently uses available resources. Require cooperation and joint efforts from governments, enterprises, social organizations, and individuals. Solutions include applying green economic models, using resources efficiently, and raising community awareness and responsibility. The intellectual

workforce, as a highly skilled and knowledgeable production force, plays a key role in meeting the growing demands of national socio-economic development in the Mekong Delta to ensure the country's sustainable growth.

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