



The National Environmental Protection Master-Plan for the period 2021 - 2030, vision toward 2050

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On July 8th, 2024, Deputy Prime Minister Tran Hong Ha signed Decision No. 611/QĐ-TTg approving the National Environmental Protection Master-Plan for the period 2021 - 2030, vision to 2050 (The Plan). The Plan is built with perspectives consistent with the Party's guidelines, policies, State laws and international commitments on environmental protection that Vietnam participates and signs; meet the requirements of implementing the goals of the Socio-Economic Development Strategy, National Environmental Protection Strategy, National Master Plan, National Marine Spatial Plan, National Land Use Plan, climate change scenarios. The National Environmental Protection Plan is associated with national defense and security tasks throughout the country.

The National Environmental Protection Master-Plan is the environmental protection orientation for national sector plans, regional plans and provincial plans, ensuring the principle of not trade-off between environment and economic development, environmental factors must be taken into account in each socio-economic development activity, in harmony with nature, respecting natural laws, economic development with green economic thinking, circular economy, and sustainable economy, low carbon economy to minimize waste generated, aiming for the goal of net zero emissions by 2050, equitable energy transition, contributing to the successful implementation of the country's socio-economic targets in the current period of 2021 - 2030; ensuring openness and flexibility to be integrated into other related plans, in order to realize the goals of sustainable development, adapt to climate change, and prevent early and remotely environmental problems; promote integrated management methods and a comprehensive approach based on natural ecosystems; strengthening harmonious connection in environmental management and protection activities between socio-economic regions, provinces and centrally run cities; proactively prevent, control, overcome pollution and improve environmental quality, protect areas with environmentally sensitive factors; focus on handling cross-border, inter-regional and inter-provincial environmental issues: combined with preserving natural values and biodiversity, promoting economical, effective and sustainable use of natural resources...

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN

The Plan identifies the general goal of proactively preventing and controlling pollution and environmental degradation; restore and improve environmental quality; prevent decline and improve the quality of biodiversity in order to ensure the People's right to live in a clean environment on the basis of arranging and orienting reasonable spatial distribution, zoning and environmental quality management; Orientation for establishing protected areas which preserving nature and biodiversity; Forming centralized waste treatment zones at national, regional and provincial levels; Orientation for building an environmental monitoring and warning network at national and provincial levels; Sustainable socio-economic development towards green economy, circular economy, low carbon economy, in harmony with nature and environmentally friendly, proactively responding to climate change. Accordingly, specific goals are set for 4 target groups:

Regarding environmental zoning: Orientation for unified environmental zoning nationwide according to the criteria of environmentally sensitive factors vulnerable to the impacts of pollution, in order to minimize negative impacts on the life and normal development of people and creatures.

Regarding nature conservation and biodiversity: Orientation to preserving natural values, biodiversity, and natural heritage to restore and maintain natural ecosystems, preventing the trend of biodiversity loss on the basis of consolidating, expanding, establishing new and effectively managing nature reserves, biodiversity corridors, high biodiversity areas, important natural landscapes, important wetlands and conservation facilities to store, conserve and develop endemic, endangered, precious and rare genetic resources, plant and animal varieties. By 2030, increase the area of nature reserves; protect and restore important natural ecosystems, improve biodiversity quality; the total area of the protected area system nationwide is expected to reach about 6.7 million hectares. Accordingly, specific targets for nature and biodiversity conservation subjects are determined in the National Biodiversity Conservation Plan for the period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050.

Regarding the centralized waste treatment area: Orientation to synchronously form a system of centralized waste treatment zones at national, regional and provincial levels with appropriate capacity and treatment technology, meeting the requirements of



receiving and treating the entire amount of domestic solid waste, ordinary industrial solid waste and hazardous waste generated nationwide, minimizing the amount of solid waste directly buried, classify waste at source, promote recycling and reuse of waste. By 2030, the orientation is to form at least 2 national-level centralized waste treatment zones, at least 7 regional-level centralized waste treatment zones, and at least 1 provincial-level centralized waste treatment zone in each province and centrally run city.

Regarding the environmental monitoring and warning network: Orientation to establish a national environmental quality monitoring network in inter-regional, inter-provincial, cross-border areas, focusing on monitoring in areas of important, areas with significance roles for nature conservation and socio-economic development of the country; The national environmental monitoring and warning network must be synchronous and linked with provincial environmental monitoring systems. Orientations for provinces and centrally run cities to establish local environmental quality monitoring networks, focusing on areas at risk of pollution due to socio-economic development activities; areas affected by many waste sources and important landscape, ecological and environmental areas in local management areas, in harmony and closely linked with the National environmental monitoring and warning network to effectively use environmental quality monitoring data sources across the country.

The Plan also defines a vision that by 2050, Vietnam's environment will have good quality, ensuring a healthy living environment for the people; effectively conserve biodiversity and maintain ecological balance; proactively respond to climate change; society develops in harmony with nature, the country develops sustainably in the direction of green transformation based on the development of a circular economy, green economy, and low carbon economy with the aim of bringing net emissions to zero in 2050; ensuring environmental security associated with the goal of rapid and sustainable socio-economic development.

2. SOME TASKS ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

Minimize environmental impacts from socio-economic development activities: Implement unified environmental zoning nationwide to deploy appropriate environmental protection activities according to environmental zoning to control, prevent and minimize the impact of environmental pollution on the life and normal development of humans and organisms; Develop a roadmap to upgrade and improve waste treatment technology for production, business and service establishments according to environmental zoning; Develop a roadmap for relocation of production, business and service establishments that do not meet the environmental protection requirements of environmental zoning and environmentally safe distance from residential areas; Monitor, proactively prevent and respond to incidents of pollution of the air environment, sea water environment, inter-national, inter-regional and inter-provincial river basins.

Management of domestic solid waste, industrial solid waste, and hazardous waste: Investigate, evaluate and identify suitable areas to establish centralized waste treatment zones at national and regional levels, provincial level. Invest in the construction and completion of infrastructure of centralized waste treatment zones at national, regional and provincial levels; Invest in collection equipment, build domestic solid waste transfer stations in urban areas, expand the domestic solid waste collection service network in rural areas; Encourage rural households and individuals to take advantage of the most of food waste to make organic fertilizer and animal feed; Organize the classification of household solid waste at source, implement measures to minimize waste generation, increase reuse and recycling of waste to meet environmental protection regulations and technical requirements; reduce plastic waste and ocean plastic waste; Develop and implement measures to prevent the import of old and outdated technology which is generating a lot of waste and consuming a lot of raw materials, materials and energy; Implement regulations on responsibility for recycling and handling products, packaging, and waste of producing and importing organizations and individuals (EPR)...

Manage, improve and enhance environmental quality: Develop and implement a plan to manage surface water environmental quality for rivers and lakes. Proactively control and warn of environmental pollution of surface water in inter-national river basins; Prevent, control, overcome pollution, improve water environment quality in river basins. Focus on handling serious environmental pollution in some river basins; Preventing and controlling pollution and protecting the underground water environment in underground water prospecting and exploitation activities. Control the impact of socio-economic development activities on the groundwater environment; Prevent and control incidents that pollute the marine and ocean environment; Build a coordination mechanism between relevant countries to handle marine environmental issues...

Conservation of nature and biodiversity: Establish new, consolidate, expand and effectively manage natural heritage systems, nature reserves, biodiversity corridors, important natural landscapes, important wetlands and facilities, conservation department. Develop mechanisms and policies

to promote socialization in the establishment, management and development of nature reserves and voluntary biodiversity conservation areas; Investigate, evaluate and identify areas of high biodiversity, important natural landscapes, and important wetlands; Provide guidance on implementing effective biodiversity conservation measures in these areas; Develop regulations and guidelines for environmental protection of natural heritage, biodiversity compensation, and investment policies for natural heritage and nature reserves; Assess and evaluate biodiversity value; Continue to effectively deploy the payment mechanism for natural ecosystem services; Expand payments for ecosystem services for mangrove forests, wetlands, rocky mountains, caves, geoparks...

Promoting sustainable growth models: Transforming growth models based on increased productivity, scientific and technological progress, innovation, and digital transformation; effectively use resources, aiming to achieve the dual goal of economic growth, while reducing pollution, environmental degradation and reducing net emissions to “zero” by 2050; Developing industry in an environmentally friendly direction; Greening industrial production and promoting the development of green industries, high-tech industries, and ecological industrial parks; Developing ecological agriculture, high-tech agriculture, and organic agriculture; increase reuse of agricultural by-products; Limit and control the use of inorganic fertilizers, plant protection chemicals and antibiotics in farming, animal husbandry and aquaculture; Implement sustainable urbanization, urban development associated with technical infrastructure development for environmental protection; Focus on developing green cities, ecological cities, smart cities, adapting to climate change...

3. SOLUTIONS FOR ORGANIZING AND SUPERVISING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Strengthen propaganda and raise public awareness: Disseminate and raise awareness of all levels and sectors on strengthening resource management and environmental protection. Gradually change the awareness and thinking of all levels and sectors about the role of environmental protection in socio-economic development; Disseminate and propagate the contents of the National Environmental Protection Plan to socio-political organizations, residential communities, enterprises, production, business and service establishments. Promoting the sense of compliance with the law, performing well the environmental social responsibility of businesses, the responsibility of recycling products, packaging, and waste treatment of manufacturing and importing organizations and individuals. Raise awareness and understanding of circular economy, green economy, low carbon economy; Encourage businesses to implement voluntary environmental standards and commitments...

Improve mechanisms, policies and legal systems on environmental protection: Review, amend and supplement administrative sanctions in the direction of increasing fines. Develop and promulgate regulations and technical regulations on wastewater and exhaust gases in accordance with the protection requirements of environmental zoning. Review, develop and promulgate regulations on environmental protection for areas with environmentally sensitive factors, such as natural heritage areas, nature reserves, biodiversity corridors, areas of high biodiversity, important natural landscapes, important wetlands, historical and cultural relics ranked according to regulations, surface water sources used for domestic water supply. Develop technical and economic norms for pollution treatment, renovation and environmental restoration of landfills; Develop technical guidelines for renovating polluting waste landfills...



▲ Conservation of nature and biodiversity is one of the important goals of the National Environmental Protection Plan for the period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050



Improve organizational structure and promote reform of administrative procedures in environmental protection: Continue to strengthen the organizational apparatus of the system of environmental management agencies from central to local levels to ensure consistency, professionalism, effective and efficient operation. Promote decentralization and increase the responsibility of local governments for environmental protection; At the same time, strengthen the capacity of provincial, district and commune level governments; Strengthen links and coordination between socio-economic regions and localities in environmental protection. Promote reform and simplify environmental administrative procedures in the direction of improving the effectiveness and efficiency of state management, while minimizing legal risks and compliance costs for people and businesses...

Strengthen the implementation of policies and laws on environmental protection: Strengthen inspection and supervision of production and business establishments with high risk of causing environmental pollution; Apply the mechanism of unexpected inspection when there are signs of violations. Promote effective coordination between state environmental management agencies, inspection agencies and people's police units with functions and tasks to prevent and combat environmental crimes. Strengthen the provision, publicity, and transparency of information in environmental management to the community, while improving the accountability of environmental management officials at all levels. Strengthen the supervision of residential communities, the Vietnam Fatherland Front, organizations, individuals and media agencies on environmental protection; Developing and applying digital platforms, social networks, hotlines... to promote environmental monitoring ...

Increase financial investment: Review, amend and improve mechanisms and policies to mobilize investment from non-budget sources for environmental protection, and regulations on bidding for public environmental services. Deploy public-private partnerships (PPP) in the collection, transportation, and treatment of domestic solid waste and domestic waste water. Mobilizing investment from domestic and international socialization, properly arranging state budget, improving efficiency in using resources for environmental protection; Prioritize strengthening management capacity and solving key and urgent environmental issues. Arrange the state budget to increase gradually in each period, in accordance with the requirements and tasks of environmental protection and budget capacity; Review and research to restructure budget spending tasks for environmental protection in a focused and key direction at the same time improving efficiency of budget use...

Application of science and technology, innovation, digital transformation; Building technical infrastructure, monitoring network and environmental database: Encourage the application of clean technology, economical and efficient use of raw materials, fuel and energy. Promote innovation and digital transformation; improving, converting technology, applying best available techniques (BAT), high technology in industries and fields to protect the environment, conserve nature and biodiversity. Applying



▲ *Building a monitoring network to ensure consistency across the country, meeting the need for environmental information and data for environmental management*



scientific and technological achievements, the fourth industrial revolution, digital transformation, information technology, remote sensing technology and modern technology in management, monitoring, supervision and surveillance environmental newspaper; Promote the provision of online public services for environmental administrative procedures. Promote the application of solid waste treatment technologies, prioritizing advanced, modern and environmentally friendly technologies, energy recovery, reuse, recycling and treatment of solid waste and hazardous waste in a synchronous and effective manner, without causing environmental pollution, reducing the amount of solid waste treated by direct landfill.

International cooperation on environmental protection: Actively participate in negotiations and shape international commitments on environmental issues, climate change, biodiversity, and plastic waste; Organize the implementation of international treaties and international commitments in the field of environment of which Vietnam is a member; Promote the implementation of cooperation agreements, technical assistance, capacity building, technology transfer and international projects on environmental protection. Strengthen and advocate for cooperation with bilateral and multilateral partners, international financial institutions, international organizations... to support resources (financial, technical, technological, capacity) to implement COP26, sustainable development goals and green transition.

With the above goals, tasks, and solutions, the National Environmental Protection Plan for the period 2021-2030, with a vision toward 2050, includes the main contents to contribute to the implementation of the National Strategy on Environmental Protection to 2030, vision to 2050 and the Law on Environmental Protection in 2020. At the same time, the Plan also includes content on orientation of spatial distribution, zoning, environmental quality management, and conservation of nature and biodiversity, waste management, environmental monitoring and warning in defined territories to protect the environment, serving the country's sustainable development goals for a specified period as prescribed in the Law on Environmental Protection 2020 ■

In the context of plastic pollution becoming increasingly serious and becoming one of the global environmental crises, in 2022, United Nations member countries agreed to negotiate to develop a binding legal instrument to end plastic pollution. The fourth conference of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee to develop an international legally binding instrument (the Agreement) on plastic pollution (INC-4 Conference) took place from April 21st to 30th, 2024 in Ottawa, Canada, following the previous Conferences. INC-1 in 2022 and INC-2 and INC-3 in 2023, where a number of important outcomes were achieved towards concluding negotiations and possibly adopting a global agreement on plastic pollution by the end of 2024 to respond to the above crisis.

SOME IMPORTANT NEGOTIATION CONTENTS AND RESULTS

The INC-4 Conference marked the first time countries officially negotiated on the basis of revised draft No.0 of the Agreement with the following contents: managing plastic products along the entire life cycle of plastic; financial mechanisms and capacity building, technology transfer; national plan, implementation and compliance, progress report, evaluation, periodic progress monitoring, international cooperation, information exchange, awareness raising, stakeholder participation... The discussion focuses on the following issues:

Regarding primary polymer plastics: This is a controversial issue and shows a large division in the views of countries. Some petroleum oil producing countries such as Russia, China, India, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Malaysia, Kazakhstan... (about 20 countries) proposed not to stipulate this content in the Agreement. While in the meantime, developed countries proposed to include mandatory regulations on primary polymer plastics in the Agreement and called for measures to control the production and consumption of sustainable plastics throughout the life cycle of plastics. Vietnam also supports not including regulations on primary plastic management in the document and suggests compliance must be carried out according to each country's capacity.

Chemicals and polymers of concern: Developed countries propose globally binding provisions (as opposed to nationally determined measures) to control or regulate the use of chemicals, group of chemicals and polymers, through the list set out in the annexes and implemented through domestic measures and reflected in national plans. A group of countries proposed to include two lists in an annex, which would differentiate between chemicals in plastics that should be banned or removed and those that should be avoided and minimized, and propose criteria for identifying chemicals of concern.

Regarding the issue of microplastics: This is also an issue on which countries have many different views. Many countries such as India, countries of European Unions, United Arab Emirates, South Korea, and Thailand believe that this content has been mentioned in other sections such as plastic emissions, removal and suggest not regulating it. This content