



# Some results of implementing the sustainable marine economic development strategy of Vietnam to 2030, vision to 2045

NGUYỄN NGỌC SƠN, LƯƠNG MINH ĐỨC  
*Vietnam Administration of Seas and Islands*

Oceans provide half of the oxygen in the Earth's atmosphere, absorb half of all global carbon emissions, regulate climate, mitigate the impacts of climate change (CC), determine weather patterns, stabilize coastlines, temperature and water cycles. Oceans account for 80% of the planet's biodiversity (BD) and make a major contribution to food security and livelihoods.

The importance of seas and islands for each country and territory with a coastline is increasingly evident. The 21<sup>st</sup> century is identified as the "Century of the Oceans," set against a backdrop of economic growth, population growth, and increased use of natural resources, especially non-renewable resources on land. As a coastal nation, Vietnam has a coastline of over 3,260 km, with territorial waters under sovereign rights, jurisdiction over 1 million km<sup>2</sup>, with 2 archipelagoes, Hoang Sa and Truong Sa, and over 3,000 islands and other archipelagoes. Over 50% of Vietnam's population lives in 28 coastal provinces and cities, with great potential for marine economic development.

Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW dated October 22<sup>th</sup>, 2018, on the Strategy for Sustainable Marine Economic Development of Vietnam to 2030, with a vision to 2045 (referred to as the Sustainable Marine Economic Development Strategy of Vietnam), clearly demonstrates the viewpoint of sustainable marine economic development based on green growth, biodiversity conservation, marine ecosystems; ensuring harmony between economic and natural ecosystems, between conservation and development, between the interests of localities with and without the sea.

The Sustainable Marine Economic Development Strategy of Vietnam, promulgated in 2018, has been implemented for nearly 7 years. Right from its promulgation, this major Resolution with many new ideas has brought expectations to many localities and marine economic sectors for strong and sustainable development. After a period of implementation, the Resolution has achieved initial results.

## 1. ROLE OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, as the Standing Agency of the National Steering

Committee for the implementation of the Sustainable Marine Economic Development Strategy of Vietnam, has promoted the function of integrated management of marine resources and environmental protection of seas and islands; advised and submitted to the Government for promulgation Resolution No. 26/NQ-CP dated March 5, 2020, on the issuance of the Government's Overall Plan and 5-Year Plan for the implementation of Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW. Accordingly, the objectives, requirements, specific tasks, and solutions to be implemented by 2025 and 2030 are clearly defined, accompanied by a list of 51 schemes, projects, and tasks assigned to ministries, sectors, and localities for implementation in each phase.

The Ministry advises the Government to submit to the National Assembly for the promulgation of the National Marine Spatial Planning [1]; submits to the Government for promulgation the Overall Plan for Sustainable Exploitation and Use of Coastal Resources [2] as an important legal tool in the sustainable development of the marine economy.

Promoting the construction and improvement of the institution for sustainable marine economic development [3], implementing the review and improvement of the system of policies and laws on the sea in the direction of sustainable development [4]. In addition, many decisions, guidelines, and plans of the State are promulgated to create a legal framework in the establishment and construction of national marine spatial planning. With the motto of actively strengthening and expanding foreign relations and international cooperation on the sea. The issuance of these documents has gradually removed obstacles, difficulties, and inadequacies, creating a suitable legal basis for the effective operation of marine economic development activities.

## 2. SOME RESULTS OF IMPLEMENTING THE SUSTAINABLE MARINE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY OF VIETNAM

### 2.1. Specific objectives to 2030

*Marine economy:* The GRDP proportion of 28 coastal provinces and cities contributing to the total national GRDP from 2018 to 2022 is about 49



*Sustainable marine economic development based on green growth, biodiversity conservation, marine ecosystems*

- 51%, not yet achieving the target according to the Resolution of 65-70% of the country's GDP.

*Society:* The Human Development Index (HDI) of 28 centrally-run provinces and cities with the sea compared to the whole country is at an average level, not yet achieving the target according to the Resolution of being higher than the national average.

*Basic investigation of resources and marine environment:* Organized additional investigation of 130,927 km<sup>2</sup> of offshore sea area at a scale of 1:500,000, increasing the total area of basic investigation at a scale of 1:500,000 to 375,688 km<sup>2</sup> (about 38%) of the area of Vietnamese waters; investigating and assessing in detail the reserves and water quality for the construction of water supply projects for 14 islands.

*Management and protection of marine ecosystems, coastal and island areas:* To date, the country has established 12 marine protected areas (MPAs) with a total area of 206,224.93 ha, of which 185,000 ha are marine areas. The system of MPAs continues to be studied for expansion to achieve the target of MPAs accounting for 6% of the natural area of the national sea area.

## **2.2. Marine and coastal economic development**

*Marine tourism and services:* Over the past time, there has been a rapid development of infrastructure and modern, high-class technical facilities in coastal localities, especially in the provinces of Hai Phong - Quang Ninh, South Central Coast, Phu Quoc (Kien Giang).

*Maritime economy:* Many important achievements have been made, and transportation capacity has been increasingly improved. As of the end of 2022, the total number of Vietnamese seagoing ships is 1,477 ships with a total tonnage of 11.6 million tons. The

total volume of goods transported by the Vietnamese seagoing fleet has grown strongly, reaching 128.7 million tons.

*Total export turnover of seafood:* Increased from USD 8.8 billion in 2018 to over USD 10.9 billion in 2022, exporting seafood to 160 countries and territories. The structure of the seafood industry has changed dramatically in the direction of increasing the proportion of high-value farmed products, especially exports.

Completed the acceptance and direct sale of electricity in 11/12 island districts, 82/85 island communes, contributing to improving people's lives, socio-economic development, ensuring national defense, security, and firmly maintaining sovereignty over seas and islands.

*Economic zones, coastal urban areas:* As of the end of 2022, coastal economic zones across the country have 553 foreign investment projects with a total registered investment capital of USD 54.36 billion; there are 1604 domestic investment projects with a total registered investment capital of VND 1,371,723.5 billion. The whole country has 600 coastal cities with a population of about 19 million people.

## **2.3. Organizing the implementation of breakthroughs in improving the Institution of Sustainable Marine Economic Development**

The Government promulgated Resolution No. 48/NQ-CP dated April 3, 2023, on the Strategy for Sustainable Exploitation and Use of Resources, Protection of Marine Environment and Islands to 2030, with a vision to 2050. Accordingly, marine and island resources must be exploited rationally, used efficiently, and equitably to serve socio-economic

development associated with ensuring national defense, security, foreign affairs, and international cooperation; marine environmental pollution is prevented, controlled, and significantly reduced; marine, coastal, and island biodiversity is protected, maintained, and restored; the values of natural heritage and marine cultural heritage are preserved and promoted; the impact of natural disasters is minimized, proactively and effectively responding to climate change and sea level rise, towards the goal of making Vietnam a strong maritime nation, rich from the sea.

Regarding National Marine Spatial Planning; Master Plan for Sustainable Exploitation and Use of Coastal Resources: National Marine Spatial Planning is an important legal tool in the sustainable development of the marine economy. The formulation of National Marine Spatial Planning is a large, complex, multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary task that has been implemented for the first time. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development has drastically focused resources on completing and advising the Government to submit to the National Assembly for the promulgation of the National Marine Spatial Planning; submitting to the Government for the promulgation of the Overall Plan for Sustainable Exploitation and Use of Coastal Resources; Plan to implement the National Marine Spatial Planning with a vision to 2050. The purpose is to specify the views, objectives, key tasks, breakthroughs, orientations, solutions, and important national projects approved by the National Assembly in the National Marine Spatial Planning.

### 3. SOME DIFFICULTIES

Over the past time, the implementation of the Sustainable Marine Economic Development Strategy of Vietnam has achieved certain results, contributing to the sustainable development of the marine economy. However, it is still slow compared to the set plan, and the implementation process has faced many limitations and difficulties, specifically: (i) The apparatus and human resources for state management of the sea are still limited, not keeping up with the development of the marine economy; (ii) The mechanism and policies to attract investment, especially from the private sector, for the development of marine economic sectors are not attractive enough; (iii) Lack of financial resources to implement projects, tasks, and tasks for marine economic development, the focus is on investment in the key program of basic investigation of resources, marine environment, and islands.

### 4. PROPOSED SOLUTIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE MARINE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

*Firstly*, continue to review, evaluate, and propose amendments, supplements, and new construction of the system of laws on seas and islands to fully and comprehensively implement the contents set out in the Sustainable Marine Economic Development Strategy of Vietnam. At the same time, establish a system of integrated and unified state management agencies on seas and islands from central to local levels to ensure modernity, synchronization, and meet the requirements of state management tasks on seas and islands, sustainable marine economic development.

*Secondly*, make synchronous investments in basic investigation, scientific research, technology, and training of marine human resources; form a Center for research and application of marine biotechnology, and exploitation of deep seabed.

*Thirdly*, strengthen coordination in organizing implementation on a national scale, inspecting and guiding the organization of implementation of projects and tasks mentioned in the Sustainable Marine Economic Development Strategy of Vietnam, in the programs and plans promulgated by ministries, sectors, and localities with the sea.

### REFERENCES

1. On June 28, 2024, at the 7th session, the 15th National Assembly passed Resolution No. 139/2024/QH15 on the National Marine Spatial Planning for the period 2021-2030, with a vision to 2050.
2. On October 7, 2024, the Prime Minister issued Decision No. 1117/QĐ-TTg in 2024 approving the Overall Plan for Sustainable Exploitation and Use of Coastal Resources for the period 2021-2023, with a vision to 2050.
3. Directive No. 31/CT-TTg, dated November 24, 2021, of the Prime Minister, "On renewing and strengthening the organization of the Sustainable Marine Economic Development Strategy of Vietnam to 2030.
4. Decree No. 42/2024/ND-CP dated April 16, 2024, of the Government on marine reclamation activities; Decree No. 65/2025/ND-CP of the Government amending and supplementing Decree No. 40/2016/ND-CP dated May 15, 2016, of the Government detailing the implementation of a number of articles of the Law on Natural Resources and Environment of Seas and Islands; Decree No. 11/2021/ND-CP stipulates the assignment of certain sea areas to organizations and individuals for exploitation and use of marine resources.