



Implementation of the National Action Plan on Circular Economy in Viet Nam: From theoretical basis to policy establishment

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The transformation from the linear economy model into the circular economy (CE) model is a major policy of the Communist Party that has been reflected in the 10-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy for the period of 2021 - 2030 and specified in Article 142 of the Law on Environmental Protection 2020 and concretized in the Government's Decree No. 08/NĐ-CP dated 10th January 2022. At the same time, along with the implementation of the provisions of the related legislation, the national master plan, sectoral master plans, provincial master plans for the period of 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050, the CE content has also been incorporated in these master plans. From that landscape, the National Action Plan on CE is a policy that needs to be implemented soon.

1. ISSUES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL ACTION PLAN ON CE

Currently, the National Action Plan on CE in Viet Nam is in the process of being developed, with first outlines for public consultation of policymakers and experts, local authorities, international organizations, businesses... to get the best available draft of the Action Plan. Thereby, the issues involving the implementation of the National Action Plan on CE (referred to as the Plan) are as follows.

1.1. Objectives and periods of implementation of the National Action Plan on CE

First, the Plan needs to define the objectives to be achieved for each period on the basis of the objectives outlined in master plans (from the national master plan to the current sectoral master plans, the basic timelines determined in the period of 2021 - 2030 with a vision to 2050). Thus, the Plan must also show specific objectives for these two periods. For the period of 2021 - 2030, the Plan should be divided into two time-

lines: the first 5 years of 2021 - 2025 and the next 5 years of 2026 - 2030 to be consistent with the implementation of the National Socio-Economic Development Strategy. For the long-term plan with a vision to 2050, the Action Plan on CE also needs to be considered, assessed and should be divided into two periods of 2031 - 2040 and 2041 - 2050 in line with the National Socio-Economic Development Strategy of these two periods.

1.2. Contents of implementation of the Action Plan on CE

For the implementation of the Action Plan, based on the periods as above, it is necessary to study and develop a plan for each period (short-term, medium-term, and long-term). To do so, it is necessary to carefully study the contents set out in the national, sectoral, and local strategies and master plans to have appropriate contents. On the other hand, at present, the Government has also issued a number of Decisions related to the implementation of CE, such as Decision No. 1658/QĐ-TTg dated 1st October 2021 approving the National Green Growth Strategy for the period of 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050; Decision No. 150/QĐ-TTg dated 28th January 2022 approving the Sustainable Agriculture and Rural Development Strategy for the period of 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050 and Decision No. 687/QĐ-TTg dated 7th June 2022 approving the Scheme on CE Development in Viet Nam. The guiding contents related to CE in those documents need to be carefully reviewed and studied at the level of implementation, the appropriate issues to be integrated into the Action Plan to avoid duplications, omissions, or contradictions with policy documents already promulgated by the Prime Minister. The implementation of the National Action Plan requires close coordination with line Ministries and agencies, especially the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development because these agencies are closely related to the guiding documents submitted to the Government for the implementation of the CE content in the National Strategy and Master Plan on CE.

1.3. Implementers of the Plan

The Prime Minister promulgates the implementation plan for the National Action Plan on CE, which clearly defines the roles of stakeholders as follows: Ministries and sectors, according to their functions and tasks, will carry out relevant tasks (in terms of leading and coordinating) that complied with their roles. The main task of the Min-

istries and sectors is to implement, review and consult the Government to amend, supplement and complete policies to implement CE in accordance with the transformation from linear economy into CE; to create a favourable mechanism for the practical implementation of CE models; to organize for implementation; to inspect and supervise the implementation of CE models outlined in the Action Plan by sectors and industries; to carry out preliminary and final reviews in each period by sector and industry to timely make additions and adjustments to policies for the implementation of the Action Plan, especially in the first two periods to 2026 and 2030.

For localities, mainly at the provincial level, based on the provincial master plans for the period of 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050, it is necessary to implement and integrate the implementation of the CE into the provincial master plans with models for sectors and sub-regions in line with the provincial socio-economic development practices. In particular, there is a link between development with other policies and programs that have been and are being implemented such as new rural development (product of the One Commune One Product Program - OCOP, associated with the CE model). Industrial parks, clusters, and economic zones in provinces need to be transformed into CE industrial parks, clusters, and zones. The provinces and cities that have been implementing the green economy, ecological economy models with supplementation of the criteria for the next transformation into the CE model will have advantages. Localities with traditional craft villages, as well as newly formed craft villages, need to plan the transformation of craft villages into the CE model. Besides, sectors and services with advantages such as waste treatment services, restaurants, hotels, other urban services such as planting trees, dismantling building materials will have many conditions to implement the CE model. Because each locality has its own characteristics, the implementation of the CE model in the locality in accordance with the socio - economic development master plan of the

province/city requires the smart and creative application, flexibility, taking economic efficiency as the basic criteria to implement CE model locally.

In addition, businesses and people are the implementers of CE model, so they need to be fully provided with knowledge and skills to implement. For businesses, to implement CE model, in addition to their knowledge of CE, they need to improve their awareness of policies and legislation related to CE, especially incentive policies when implementing CE model.

On the other hand, the CE model requires implementation from design to production, consumption, the transformation of waste streams to form a closed circle to bring the best economic efficiency for businesses. Therefore, businesses need to actively invest, transform technology in production, train staff to operate and many other related contents. The initiative of the businesses is the most important, especially the role of the business owners, when the business owners are aware of the advantages of implementing CE model then it will be much easier to implement CE model locally. This reality has been proven in several businesses that have successfully transformed into the CE model in our country. Besides businesses, the CE model must also be fully understood by the people, so that they can see the benefits of the CE (such as through waste separation at source, valuable wastes must be reused by the people themselves and treated as a resource). The National Action Plan on CE must put businesses and people at the centre, as they implement the CE model.



▲ Conference "Launching to develop the National Action Plan on CE in Vietnam" in Hanoi on June 28th, 2022



In addition, socio-political, socio-professional organizations play an important role in reviewing policies for implementing the Plan, implementing, and supervising the implementation of CE models. The good promotion of the role of socio-political organizations, especially socio-professional organizations will create more motivation and perfect the CE models in the locality, because the CE model is diverse and abundant, belonging to many different sectors and industries, therefore, the participation of socio-professional organizations will make an important contribution to each sector and industry.

For science and technology (S&T) organizations and experts, the implementation of the CE model requires investment and model innovation, based on S&T as the core. Therefore, the role of S&T organizations and accompanying scientists to implement the CE model is important. Depending on each type of CE model deployed in practice, it requires the participation of different S&T organizations and experts, suitable for each different type of model. S&T organizations and experts are also the bridge to transfer advanced technologies in the world, new technologies suitable for each type of production to implement the CE model during the implementation of the Plan in Viet Nam.

2. SOME RECOMMENDATIONS TO IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

To effectively implement the Plan, some recommendations are proposed as follows:

Firstly, based on the tasks assigned by the Government, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MONRE) has been developing an Action Program on CE. The MONRE needs to continue to improve and collect opinions from organizations, businesses, line Ministries and agencies in time to submit to the Government before December 2023.

Secondly, for the Plan to be effective and of high quality, it is necessary to have coherence and synchronization with other relevant documents and regulations, avoiding contradictions, duplications, and conflicts with already issued documents.

Thirdly, the National Action Plan on CE must be based on the basic principles and operation of the market, taking market forces to promote the development of CE models; create conditions to encourage economic sectors to participate, especially emphasize the role of the private economic sector in investment and development of CE models for different sectors and industries.

Fourthly, the transformation from the linear economy model into the CE model will bring a fundamental change in awareness, policy, technology, and a transformation of the whole society in production and consumption associated with economy, natural resources, environment, and climate change. Therefore, it is required to have a specific strategy in the short-term, as well as in the long-term, and is clearly reflected in the Action Plan on CE.

Fifthly, many CE models have been successful in the world, especially in developed countries with high science and technology capability, which is a good opportunity for Viet Nam to learn and receive transfer. Along with opportunities, there are great challenges, therefore the implementation of the Plan needs proper selection and priorities in accordance with each period and practical conditions, feasibility when deploying the CE model in Viet Nam for optimum efficiency.

3. CONCLUSION

The National Action Plan on CE is the concretization of the master plan and legislation on encouraging the development of the CE model in Viet Nam. This is a big change in the economic development model in Viet Nam, in line with the general trend of the world, which is the transformation from the linear economy model that consumes significant natural resources and pollutes the environment into the CE model, minimizing resource usage, extending product life cycle and reducing waste to the environment, towards zero emissions in the entire economy. To do so, the National Action Plan on CE needs to be implemented soon and in line with the practical conditions of Viet Nam, promoting the role of stakeholders in the implementation of the CE models ■

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