



Khanh Hoa Province Party Committee Leads the Implementation of Sustainable Development of Marine Economy-Practices and Issues

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Abstract

The article analyzes the leadership practices of the Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee in the process of implementing the Vietnam Marine Economic Sustainable Development Strategy from 2018 to present in the spirit of Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW of the 12th Central Executive Committee. From a comprehensive approach between economy, society, environment and national defense - security, the study points out outstanding achievements, and at the same time clarifies the comprehensive leadership role of the Provincial Party Committee in planning, directing, decentralizing, supervising and coordinating between levels and sectors. The article also points out the limitations and challenges in marine spatial planning, regional linkages, environmental resource management and high-quality marine human resources. On that basis, the author proposes a number of solutions to enhance the leadership effectiveness of the Khanh Hoa Party Committee in sustainable marine economic development in the coming period.

Keywords: Khanh Hoa, Party Committee, Marine Economy, Sustainable Development, Resolution 36-NQ/TW, Party Leadership.

1. Make a problem

Vietnam's sea has a particularly important geo-political and geo-economic position, is a living space, a gateway for trade and a strategic defense line of the country. Since Doi Moi, the Party and State of Vietnam have gradually formed a strategic mindset on "maritime nation", considering the development of the marine economy associated with protecting sovereignty, ensuring national defense - security and sustainable development as a long-term and consistent orientation. In particular, Resolution No. 09-NQ/TW (2007) and Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW (2018) of the Central Committee have established the viewpoint that "Vietnam must become a strong maritime nation, rich from the sea", with a vision to 2045 to make the marine economy an important driving force for the country's development. Khanh Hoa is one of the localities with outstanding potential and advantages for comprehensive marine economic development, with 385 km of coastline, a territorial sea of more than 10,000 km², Cam Ranh Bay - the leading natural deep-water port in Southeast Asia, and Truong Sa archipelago - an important position in terms of national defense - security and international cooperation. In the new context, the Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee has clearly demonstrated its core role in leading, directing, concretizing and organizing the implementation of the Party's major policies on sustainable marine economic development. Research and evaluation of the leadership practices of the Provincial Party Committee not only have theoretical significance, contributing to clarifying the Party's leadership capacity in the conditions of a socialist-oriented market economy, but also have practical value for perfecting mechanisms and policies for marine economic development in Vietnam in general and the South-Central region in particular.

2. Research content and results

2.1. Theoretical basis and Party policy on sustainable development of marine economy

2.1.1. Concept of sustainable development of marine economy

Sustainable development of the marine economy in Vietnam is understood as the process of economic growth associated with environmental protection, rational exploitation of resources, ensuring social progress and equity, while maintaining national

independence and sovereignty at sea. This is a balanced development model between three pillars: economy - society - environment, specified in the Vietnam Sustainable Development Strategy (Decision No. 153/2004/QĐ-TTg), and updated in Resolution 36-NQ/TW (2018) on the Strategy for sustainable development of the marine economy in Vietnam to 2030, with a vision to 2045. Accordingly, sustainable development of the marine economy is not only about quantitative growth but also about restructuring the development model towards a "blue marine economy", based on science - technology, innovation and integrated management of marine space.

2.2. Party's policy on sustainable development of marine economy

The Party's guidelines on marine economic development have been consistently formulated through the Congresses, especially from the 10th to the 13th Congresses. Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW dated October 22, 2018 of the 12th Central Executive Committee identified 6 key marine economic sectors including: tourism and marine services; maritime; exploitation of oil and gas and marine mineral resources; aquaculture and seafood exploitation; renewable energy and new marine economic sectors; urban development and coastal economic zones. At the same time, the Central Committee emphasized the requirement for comprehensive resource management, environmental protection, proactive adaptation to climate change, and ensuring national defense and security at sea. On that basis, the Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee has thoroughly grasped and concretized these policies through documents such as Action Program No. 54-CTr/TU (2019) to implement Resolution 36-NQ/TW, Resolution of the 18th Provincial Party Congress (2020 - 2025), and component projects such as the Master Plan for Socio-Economic Development of Khanh Hoa Province for the period 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050. These documents clearly demonstrate the orientation of sustainable development of the marine economy as the "central development axis" of the province, while emphasizing the leadership role of the Party Committee in coordinating, decentralizing, and coordinating between departments, branches, sectors and coastal localities.

The leadership of the Party is a decisive factor for the success of the process of sustainable development of the marine economy. For Khanh Hoa, the Provincial Party Committee plays a central role at three levels: (i) Strategic planning: issuing resolutions and action programs to concretize the Central guidelines; (ii) Implementation organization: directing, assigning, decentralizing, supervising and coordinating specialized agencies; (iii) Inspection and supervision: ensuring consistent implementation among Party committees, authorities, businesses and coastal communities. In this model, the Provincial Party Committee is not only a political entity, but also a development governance center, ensuring the principle of "marine economy linked to sovereignty, security, national defense and long-term interests of the people".

2.2. Leadership practices of Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee in sustainable development of marine economy from 2018 to present

2.2.1. Awareness and direction of the Provincial Party Committee

After Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW was issued, the Khanh Hoa

Provincial Party Committee identified sustainable development of the marine economy as the "central development axis" and at the same time a strategic breakthrough to turn the province into a strong marine economic center of the country. The Provincial Party Committee issued Action Program No. 54-CTr/TU (June 20, 2019) specifying the goals, targets and key solutions in the direction of "developing a modern, focused, blue marine economy, associated with environmental protection and national sovereignty at sea". The Provincial Party Committee directed Party committees, authorities, departments, branches and sectors to synchronously deploy 5 groups of tasks: (1) Planning and managing marine space; (2) Restructuring marine economic sectors towards sustainability; (3) Improving the efficiency of exploiting and using marine resources; (4) Protecting the environment, responding to climate change; (5) Strengthening national defense and security, protecting sovereignty over seas and islands. The Provincial Steering Committee for Marine Economic Development was established in 2020, headed by the Provincial Party Secretary, to strengthen the coordination mechanism between sectors such as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Tourism, Department of Industry and Trade and the Provincial Border Guard.

Propaganda and dissemination work has been widely deployed through training courses for cadres, thematic conferences and coastal Party cell activities, contributing to changing awareness throughout the political system. In particular, the combination of "resolution building - implementation organization - inspection and supervision" is maintained regularly, ensuring comprehensive and unified leadership of the Party Committee in the process of sustainable marine economic development.

2.2.2. Achievements in the pillars of the marine economy

From 2018 to now, thanks to the comprehensive leadership and direction of the Provincial Party Committee, Khanh Hoa's marine economy has achieved many important results, reflected in all pillars, specifically as follows:

Tourism and marine services

Khanh Hoa has identified marine tourism as a key economic sector, accounting for over 60% of the total tourism revenue of the whole province. In the period of 2018 - 2023, the number of tourists reached an average of over 6 million/year, of which international visitors accounted for about 25%. The province focuses on developing high-quality tourist areas in Nha Trang, North Cam Ranh Peninsula, Bai Dai, Van Phong; at the same time, promoting models of marine eco-tourism, community tourism along islands and international tourist port services. The Provincial Party Committee has led the re-planning of tourism space in the direction of reducing the density of coastal urbanization, encouraging the "green tourism" model, thereby creating a strong shift in the structure of added value.

Maritime economy and seaport services

With the advantage of having Cam Ranh Bay - the leading natural deep-water port in Southeast Asia, Khanh Hoa strongly develops the maritime economy associated with the system of general ports, specialized ports and logistics services. In 2023, the output of goods through seaports will

reach more than 25 million tons, an increase of 1.6 times compared to 2018. The province also cooperates with Saigon Newport Corporation and the Vietnam Maritime Administration to build Van Phong International Transit Port, oriented to become a logistics center in the South Central region. The Provincial Party Committee has effectively led the implementation of the "port - industrial park - urban - service" coordination mechanism, both developing the economy and ensuring national defense and security in important sea areas.

Aquaculture, exploitation and processing

Khanh Hoa currently has more than 13,000 fishing vessels, of which nearly 1,000 are offshore fishing vessels. In the period 2018 - 2023, the average exploitation output reached 95,000-100,000 tons/year, the aquaculture output reached about 8,000 hectares, concentrated in Cam Ranh, Van Ninh, Nha Trang. The province focuses on converting the industrial marine farming model with HDPE cages, offshore farming in an environmentally friendly direction, gradually reducing onshore farming. Many enterprises such as Australis Seafood Company Limited, Yanmar Company and coastal cooperatives are encouraged to invest in high technology in production and processing for export. The Provincial Party Committee regularly directs the Agriculture sector to coordinate with the Border Guard and the Department of Fisheries in the work of combating IUU fishing, creating positive changes in fisheries management according to international standards.

Coastal industry and integrated economic zones

Van Phong Economic Zone is identified as the "strategic growth pole" of Khanh Hoa. By 2024, this area will attract more than 200 investment projects with a total registered capital of over VND 170,000 billion, focusing on energy industry, shipbuilding, processing and port services. The Provincial Party Committee has directed the completion of the Master Plan for Van Phong Economic Zone to 2040, with a vision to 2050 in the direction of "green economy – clean energy – international logistics center". At the same time, the province has gradually formed coastal industrial zones in Ninh Hoa, Cam Lam, Dien Khanh associated with urban residential and service areas, creating a sustainable regional linkage chain.

Other marine economic sectors

Regarding marine renewable energy: Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee has led the promotion of attracting investment and researching marine renewable energy projects, especially offshore wind power, floating solar power and wave power. According to a survey by the Ministry of Industry and Trade, Van Phong Bay and Cam Ranh sea area have the potential to develop wind power of over 2,000 MW (13). Currently, many domestic and foreign enterprises are promoting a pilot project of offshore wind power with a scale of 500 MW. The Provincial Party Committee has identified this as a new direction in green energy conversion, contributing to reducing carbon emissions and increasing the value of the modern marine economy.

Regarding science - technology and training of marine human resources: Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee always considers the development of science - technology

and marine human resources as the foundation for sustainable development. Institutes and schools such as Nha Trang Institute of Oceanography, Nha Trang University, and the Central Institute of Marine and Island Research are oriented to become centers for research, training, and transfer of modern marine technology. From 2018 to 2024, more than 40 scientific topics and projects on marine environmental management, offshore aquaculture, renewable energy, and marine medicinal herbs have been implemented. Vocational training for marine workers has been promoted, with the rate of trained workers reaching 58%, an increase of 12% compared to 2018.

Regarding the exploitation of medicinal herbs and marine organisms: Khanh Hoa has more than 350 species of marine organisms with high medical and economic value. Under the leadership of the Provincial Party Committee, the Institute of Oceanography and science and technology enterprises have promoted research, exploitation, and extraction of active biological compounds from seaweed, algae, soft corals, and marine microorganisms for pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, and functional foods. Some products such as "Collagen from Nha Trang jellyfish" or "Fucoidan extract from brown seaweed" have been commercialized, contributing to the formation of a new "marine pharmaceutical economy" sector in the locality. Regarding the environment, marine conservation and climate change adaptation: Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee considers marine environmental protection as a pillar of sustainable development. The province has implemented many programs: "For a green Nha Trang", "No ocean plastic waste", "Green Truong Sa"; invested more than 1,200 billion VND in the wastewater treatment system along the coast of Nha Trang and coastal industrial zones. Marine protected areas such as Hon Mun and Hon Lao have been strengthened in monitoring and restoring coral and reef ecosystems. The inter-sectoral coordination mechanism between the Department of Natural Resources and Environment, the Border Guard and local authorities has been strengthened, contributing to improving the capacity to respond to natural disasters, climate change and coastal erosion.

Regarding coastal and urban transport infrastructure: Khanh Hoa has been investing synchronously in coastal infrastructure systems, including the North-South expressway section Nha Trang - Cam Lam, the coastal route Tran Phu - Pham Van Dong - Vinh Hoa - Van Gia, and the sea-crossing bridge connecting Cam Ranh - Bac Van Phong. Under the leadership of the Party Committee, the province advocates developing coastal urban areas associated with landscape conservation, forming a chain of smart and sustainable coastal urban areas; typically Nha Trang, Cam Ranh, Van Gia and Bac Van Phong. This infrastructure system not only promotes socio-economic development, but also contributes to ensuring national defense - security and effective management of marine space.

2.2.3. Coordination mechanism and role of departments, branches, and armed forces in sustainable development of the marine economy

One of the highlights in the leadership model for sustainable development of the marine economy of Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee is the close coordination between the local political system and the armed forces stationed in the area, creating a combined strength in managing,

exploiting, protecting, and developing the marine economic space associated with national defense and security.

Based on Resolution No. 36-NQ/TW of the Central Committee and Action Program No. 54-CTr/TU of the Provincial Party Committee, the Provincial Party Committee has established a Steering Committee for Marine Economic Development, headed by the Provincial Party Secretary, Vice Chairmen of the Provincial People's Committee, leaders of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, Department of Natural Resources and Environment, Department of Tourism, Van Phong Economic Zone Management Board, and commanders of the Navy Region 4, the Provincial Military Command, and the Provincial Border Guard. This mechanism ensures the principle of unified leadership of the Party - centralized management of the State - coordination of forces at sea, towards the common goal of developing the marine economy associated with protecting national sovereignty and security.

In particular, the coordination between the Provincial Party Committee and the military forces is considered a prominent feature in the process of implementing the Strategy for sustainable development of the marine economy.

The Navy Region 4 and Saigon Newport Corporation are both the core forces protecting sovereignty and directly participating in socio-economic activities such as logistics services, search and rescue, maritime transport, and construction of civil infrastructure on islands in the Truong Sa archipelago and Cam Ranh area. The Provincial Border Guard not only patrols and controls but also coordinates with localities to support fishermen in going offshore, staying at sea, and building "living landmarks" to protect sovereignty. Party committees of military units stationed in the area are invited to attend regular meetings of the Provincial Party Committee, thereby forming a regular coordination mechanism between the local Party Committee and the military Party Committee in handling economic development issues associated with national defense and security.

Along with that, political and social organizations such as the Union of Science and Technology Associations, Fisheries Association, Women's Union and Provincial Youth Union are also mobilized to participate in the programs "Homeland Sea and Islands", "Towards Truong Sa", "Fishermen Unite - Stick to the Sea", creating a multi-layered coordination network between the civil and defense systems.

Thanks to the unified, synchronous and effective coordination mechanism, Khanh Hoa has formed an integrated leadership model between economy, politics and defense, maximizing the combined strength of the political system, armed forces and people in sustainable marine economic development.

2.3. Some issues raised in the leadership of sustainable development of the marine economy of Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee

Despite achieving many outstanding results, the process of implementing sustainable development of the marine economy in Khanh Hoa still faces many difficulties and challenges, requiring stronger innovation in the leadership of the Provincial Party Committee in the coming period.

First, Regarding marine spatial planning and regional linkage

One of the reasons leading to limited results in sustainable development of the marine economy in Khanh Hoa is the

delay and lack of synchronization in marine spatial planning. Although the Provincial Planning for the period 2021 - 2030, with a vision to 2050, has been approved by the Prime Minister, the detailed planning of functional marine areas (ports, tourism, aquaculture, conservation areas) still overlaps and lacks connectivity with neighboring provinces such as Gia Lai, Kon Tum, etc. The lack of integrated marine spatial planning leads to low efficiency in resource use, many marine areas are overexploited or not exploited properly, causing pressure on the environment and community livelihoods. Inter-regional coordination in developing seaport infrastructure, logistics, and coastal tourism is still limited, and the "South Central Coast marine economic value chain" has not been formed. This requires the Provincial Party Committee to strengthen regional coordination mechanisms and promote the central role of Khanh Hoa in the marine economic network of the Central region.

Second, the issue of human resources and marine science and technology capacity

High-quality marine human resources are still a limitation of Khanh Hoa. Currently, the rate of trained workers in marine economic sectors is only about 58%, while the requirement to meet the standard of "strong marine province" is over 70%. The team of managers, engineers, and experts in offshore exploitation, marine biotechnology, and renewable energy is still lacking and weak. In addition, the capacity for scientific research and application of new marine technology (such as satellite monitoring, digital management of marine resources, offshore industrial aquaculture technology) is still limited, not creating a foundation for model transformation to "blue marine economy".

The provincial Party Committee has led the construction of a number of specialized training and research facilities such as Nha Trang Institute of Oceanography, Nha Trang University, and the Central Institute for Marine and Island Research. However, the connection between these facilities with businesses and local authorities is still loose, not creating a marine innovation ecosystem.

Third, Issues regarding mechanisms, policies and investment resources

Although identified by the Central Government as a "key province for marine economic development", investment resources for marine infrastructure, environmental protection and human resource development in Khanh Hoa are still limited. Total development investment capital for the period 2018 - 2023 has only reached about 320,000 billion VND, of which the investment rate for the marine sector is less than 40%. The medium-term capital allocation mechanism has not given due priority to strategic projects such as Van Phong transit port, marine renewable energy infrastructure, or marine island eco-tourism areas.

In particular, the system of legal documents regulating the province's marine economic activities is not unified. Some investment, tax and land incentives in Van Phong Economic Zone are still lacking in specificity and are not commensurate with the potential and strategic position of the locality. The Provincial Party Committee needs to proactively advise the Central Government to issue pilot mechanisms on resource management, offshore wind energy exploitation, and public-private partnership (PPP) models in marine infrastructure development.

Fourth, Environmental management and climate change adaptation issues

Climate change, rising sea levels, coastal erosion and plastic waste pollution are becoming increasingly serious challenges. Every year, Nha Trang, Cam Ranh and Van Ninh areas generate more than 70,000 tons of household waste, of which about 15% flows into the sea. The work of classifying, recycling and treating ocean plastic waste is still on a mass scale and not sustainable. Some aquaculture areas still experience local pollution due to untreated wastewater.

The Provincial Party Committee has directed the implementation of the National Action Plan on Ocean Plastic Waste by 2030, however, inspection and supervision at the grassroots level are still not regular. In that context, the requirement is to improve the capacity for comprehensive management of marine resources and environment, promote the application of monitoring technology, early warning and restoration of marine ecosystems.

Fifth, the issue of combining economic development with ensuring national defense and security

Khanh Hoa is an important area for national defense and security on the sea, where Cam Ranh Military Port and Truong Sa archipelago are located. However, the combination of economic development with strengthening national defense and security still lacks a unified coordination mechanism. Some coastal investment projects are not closely linked to the requirements of protecting sovereignty; the control of foreign investment in sensitive areas still has loopholes(18).

The provincial Party Committee needs to continue to strictly implement the principle of “economic development associated with strengthening national defense and security”, promote the role of the Navy Region 4, the Border Guard and the maritime militia, and build a national defense posture associated with a people’s security posture at sea. This is a prerequisite to ensure political sustainability and sovereignty in long-term maritime economic development.

3. Conclusion and Recommendations

The practice of leadership in sustainable development of the marine economy of Khanh Hoa Provincial Party Committee from 2018 to present has demonstrated the Party's comprehensive, in-depth and effective leadership capacity in concretizing the Central's policies and guidelines into practical actions. With a strategic vision, the Provincial Party Committee has shaped a marine economic development model based on three pillars: green economic development - environmental protection - ensuring national defense and security, thereby creating a strong shift in the economic structure, people's lives and the province's position on the national marine economic map.

However, for more sustainable development in the coming period, it is necessary to focus on a number of key orientations:

First, continue to perfect the overall marine spatial planning, closely linking the planning of the mainland and the sea, ensuring regional connectivity and effective exploitation of resources.

Second, build a specific mechanism for Van Phong Economic Zone, aiming at a model of a blue-sea economic zone, clean energy and an international logistics center.

Third, develop high-quality marine human resources, linking institutes, schools, businesses and authorities in training,

research and technology transfer.

Fourth, strengthen marine environmental management, implement programs to monitor, restore ecosystems and reduce ocean plastic waste.

Fifth, promote regional linkages and international cooperation on marine economy, attract capital and technology from strategic partners (Japan, Korea, Norway...) for blue-sea projects.

Sixth, closely combine economic development with strengthening national defense and security, build a "marine economic security belt", strengthen coordination between armed forces and local authorities in protecting sovereignty.

With its strategic position and outstanding potential, Khanh Hoa has all the conditions to become a strong center for sustainable development of the marine economy in Vietnam. The creative, decisive and flexible leadership of the Provincial Party Committee continues to be the decisive factor, ensuring that the marine development process is not only an economic driving force, but also a solid foundation for national security, sovereignty and prosperity in the 21st century.

The article affirms: (i) Sustainable development of the marine economy in Khanh Hoa is not a situational choice but a strategic orientation that the Provincial Party Committee has firmly grasped from Resolution 36-NQ/TW; (ii) The decisive factor is the comprehensive and direct leadership of the Provincial Party Committee through the mechanism of "planning - decentralization - coordination - supervision"; (iii) The practice of sustainable development of the marine economy in Khanh Hoa from 2018 to present shows that the pillars of the marine economy have all developed, contributing to raising the position of the province in the South Central Coast region. However, to move towards a blue, high-tech marine economic model, linked to national defense and security, Khanh Hoa must address issues related to: marine spatial planning; marine human resources; investment institutions and resources; environmental governance and climate adaptation. These are also the next research directions to perfect the leadership model for implementing the Strategy for sustainable development of the marine economy of the local Party Committee in the new context.

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