HO CHI MINH NATIONAL ACADEMY OF POLITICS

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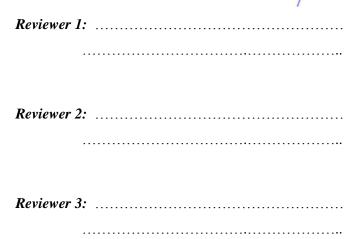
ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE MEKONG RIVER DELTA REGION

SUMMARY OF THE DOCTORAL THESIS
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INTRODUCTION

1. The Urgency of the Thesis

Currently, green tourism, ecotourism, agricultural tourism, experiential tourism, resort tourism, and Community-Based Tourism (CBT) are becoming prevalent trends, attracting an increasing number of tourists, and receiving a great deal of attention for development from many countries and localities. The Mekong River Delta (MRD) region of Vietnam possesses significant potential for the development of CBT due to its rich ecosystem, diverse natural resources, and well-known waterway culture. It is also home to a variety of ethnic communities with various traditional festivals and unique musical genres, such as 'đòn ca tài tử' and "cải lương".

In recent years, along with the entire country, the MRD has made considerable efforts to leverage its comparative advantages for socioeconomic development in general, and specifically in CBT, achieving certain results even in the post-COVID-19 pandemic context. However, to date, CBT in the MRD has not fully utilized its existing advantages for development. It remains small-scale, scattered, generates low value, and lacks sustainability. The direct reason of this situation is the lack of effective collaboration among stakeholders within the same province, as well as among provinces in the region, making it difficult to mobilize investment capital for CBT development. In addition, planning CBT development to be in accordance with the strengths of each locality has not been integrated into the overall development plan of the region; the human resources for CBT often lack the necessary skills and knowledge about tourism, foreign languages, etc.; and the infrastructure network for transportation and tourism is not synchronized and does not meet developmental demands. The development of value chains and the establishment of common CBT products and programs for the whole region have been monotonous, overlapping, and non-diverse...

The links among stakeholders in the CBT development in the MRD is still in its early stages, characterized by spontaneous and limited-scale partnerships, with low contract values; it occurs with short periodicity and is often interrupted, lacking sustainability. The frequent breakdown of cooperative contracts between stakeholders is a common issue. Local authorities are still confused in management activities, struggling to demonstrate a clear role in creating an environment, guiding, and leading the links for CBT development.

The limitations in linking CBT development in the MRD largely stem from weaknesses in the awareness of the direct stakeholders and those related

to the general development of CBT and economic linkages among stakeholders in CBT development in the region. Although there have been scientific studies both domestically and internationally focusing on economic linkages, the theoretical foundation regarding economic linkages in the development of CBT within national territorial areas, especially in the MRD, has yet to be clarified, particularly the objective socio-economic foundations of economic linkages in the CBT development. Therefore, a systematic, comprehensive, and profound research approach in terms of political economy regarding economic linkages among the direct and relevant stakeholders is essential to identify appropriate solutions to leverage advantages and promote fast and sustainable CBT development in the MRD in the coming time in both theory and practice.

To contribute to the above mission, the researcher has chosen the topic "Economic Linkages in Community-Based Tourism Development in the Mekong River Delta Region" as the title of the doctoral thesis in Political Economy at the Ho Chi Minh National Academy of Politics.

2. Research Purposes and Tasks

2.1. Research Purposes

To clarify the scientific basis of economic linkages in the CBT development, evaluate the current state of economic linages, and propose solutions to promote economic linages in the CBT development in the MRD up to 2030, with a vision for 2045.

2.2. Research Tasks

- To reference and inherit previous scientific works; collect documents to build a theoretical framework on economic linages in the CBT development in the region and study the experiences of other regions domestically and internationally to draw lessons for the MRD.
- To analyze the current state of economic linages in the CBT development in the MRD during the period of 2019-2023. To evaluate the successes, limitations, and identify the causes of the economic linkage activities in CBT development in the MRD.
- To propose viewpoints and solutions for effective economic linkage activities and suggest suitable forms of economic linkage in the CBT development in the MRD towards the year 2030, with a vision for 2045.

3. Research Subjects and Scope

3.1. Research Subjects

The research subject of the thesis is economic linages in the CBT development and the socio-economic relationships among the relevant stakeholders.

3.2. Research Scope

- Content Scope: The thesis focuses on the economic linages in terms of concepts, characteristics, contents, roles, and factors affecting the linkage activities among stakeholders from different localities and among stakeholders within the same locality involved in economic linages in CBT development across the stages of: "production distribution exchange consumption" of CBT products and services.
- *Temporal Scope*: The research to access the current situation is conducted over a period of five years (from 2019 to 2023). The solutions will be proposed for the period up to 2030, with a vision towards 2045.
- Spatial Scope: The thesis examines forms of economic linkages at the regional and territorial levels. The spatial scope investigated in the thesis is understood to encompass the MRD region of Vietnam, where the thesis identifies case studies from several localities with active CBT initiatives within the provinces and cities of the region that meet the requirements for each form of linkages discussed in the thesis.

4. Theoretical Basis and Research Methods

4.1. Theoretical Basis

This thesis is based on the theoretical foundation of Marxism-Leninism and Ho Chi Minh's ideology; the Party's viewpoints and policies, the State's legal policies and typical economic theories on economic linkages among the participating stakeholders.

4.2. Research Methods

The thesis employs the following research methods: scientific abstraction, analysis-synthesis methods, logical and historical methods, interdisciplinary research methods, statistical and comparative methods, deductive and inductive reasoning, document and data collection methods, and field research methods.

5. New Contributions of the Thesis

- The thesis introduces concepts and clarifies the content of linkages among stakeholders in the regions and territories in CBT development across two levels of linkages (among stakeholders from different localities and within the same locality, region or territory.)
- It evaluates the current state of economic linkages among stakeholders in CBT development in the MRD during the period 2019 2023, clarifying achievements, limitations, and the underlying causes to provide a basis for proposing appropriate solutions.
- The thesis proposes viewpoints and solutions to promote economic linkages in the CBT development in the MRD to 2030, with a vision towards 2045.

6. Scientific and Practical Significance of the Research

6.1. Scientific Significance

This research summarizes previous findings, clarifies, and supplements theoretical perspectives, providing additional methodologies for research on economic linkages among stakeholders in in regions and territories participating in economic linkage activities in CBT development.

6.2. Practical Significance

The findings of the thesis serve as a reliable scientific reference for formulating policies and strategies for the CBT development in general and specifically for CBT development in the MRD.

7. Structure of the Thesis

In addition to the introduction, conclusion, a list of previous research works published by the author, a bibliography, and appendices, the thesis consists of four chapters and ten sections.

Chapter 1

OVERVIEW OF RESEARCH RELATED TO ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONS AND TERRITORIES

- 1.1. RESEARCH STUDIES RELEVANT TO ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONS AND TERRITORIES
- 1.1.1. Research Studies on Community-Based Tourism Development
- 1.1.1.1. Research Studies on the Role and Benefits of Community-Based Tourism Development

Võ Quế, CTB: Theory and Application; Bùi Thị Hải Yến et al., CTB; Trọng Hoàng, Concerns About Attractiveness of CBT; Đỗ Thúy Mùi, Labor Source Solutions for CTB Development in Northwest Region; Nguyễn Văn Lưu, Tourism and Community Development; Dương Thị Hồng Nhung, Solutions to Develop Responsible Tourism in Vietnam; Thái Thảo Ngọc, Benefits and Directions for CTB Development in Quảng Nam Province; Andrea Giampiccoli and Janet Hayward Kalis, Tourism, Food, and Culture: Community-Based Tourism, Local Food, and Community Development in Mpondolan; Amran Hamzah, Chapter 47: Critical Success Factors for Creating Community-Based Tourism.

1.1.1.2. Research Studies on Forms of CBT

Tuệ Nam, CTB: New Pathways for Farmers; Đào Thị Minh Hương, CBT and Development; Nguyễn Bảo Thoa, What You Need to Know About

CBT Development; Salem Al-Oun and Majd Al-Homoud, The Potential for Developing Community-based Tourism Among the Bedouins in the Badia of Jordan.

1.1.1.3. Research Studies on Content and Evaluation Criteria for CBT Development

Đặng Trung Kiên, Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory to Developing CBT Products in Northwest Subregion; Seweryn Zielinski, Seong-il Kim, Camilo Botero and Andrea Yanes, Factors That Facilitate and Inhibit Community-Based Tourism Initiatives in Developing Countries.

1.1.1.4. Research Studies on Factors Affecting CBT Development

Đào Thị Minh Hương, CBT and Development; Đặng Trung Kiên, Applying Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory to Developing CBT Products in Northwest Subregion; Phạm Thị Hường, Assessing the Impact of Livelihood Capital on CBT Development in Ba Vì District, Hà Nội; Nguyễn Công Thảo, One Model, Multiple Paths: Lessons from CBT Activities in A Lưới District, Thừa Thiên Huế Province; Nguyễn Công Thảo, Nguyễn Thị Thanh Bình, World CBT: Some Theoretical and Practical Issues; Nguyễn Công Viện, Study of Factors Affecting Satisfaction of CBT Visitors in Northwest Region; Hoàng Ngọc Hải, Chu Thị Lê Anh, CBT in Tuyên Quang Province; Trần Thị Thu Huyền, Hà Thanh Tú, Creating CBT Experiences in the "New Normal" in Vietnam; Andrea Yanes, Seweryn Zielinski, Marlenny Diaz Cano and Seong-il Kim, CBT in Developing Countries: A Framework for Policy Evaluation; Seweryn Zielinski, Yoonjeong Jeong and Celene B. Milanés, Factors That Influence CBT in Developing and Developed Countries.

1.1.1.5. Research Studies on Strategies for Developing CBT

Nguyễn Văn Lưu, Promoting Overseas Vietnamese Communities to Promote Tourism Development; Dương Thị Hồng Nhung, Solutions to Develop Responsible Tourism in Vietnam; Nguyễn Văn Lưu, Tourism and Community Development; Đỗ Thủy Mùi, Potential and Strategies for CBT Development in Sơn La Province; Đào Minh Anh, Vũ Nam, CBT Development in Nặm Đăm Village, Quản Bạ Commune, Hà Giang Province; Nguyễn Quang Hợp, CBT Development in Western Hà Giang Province: Opportunities, Challenges, and Potentials; Vương Mạnh Toàn, Strategies for Sustainable Community-Based Ecotourism Development in Bá Thước District, Thanh Hóa Province; Lê Văn Đính, Current Status and Strategies for CBT Development in Quảng Nam Province; Trần Thị Vân Anh, Nguyễn Thảo Nguyên, CBT Development in Nặm Đăm Village, Quản Ba Commune, Hà Giang Province.

1.1.2. Research Studies on CBT Development in MRD Region

1.1.2.1. Research Studies on Strengths, Potential, and Advantages in Developing CBT in the MRD Region

Phạm Văn Đấu, Thinking About the Tourism Development in MRD from the Way of Ecotourism of Vinh Long Farmers; Ngô Thị Ái Thi, Rural Tourism Development Based on Khmer Community in Tịnh Biên District, An Giang Province; Trần Thị Xuân Mai, MRD Tourism Potential and Development Strategies; Phạm Văn Luân, Management of Historical-Cultural Heritage Sites in Tourism Development in Bến Tre Province; Đặng Thị Thanh Quỳnh, Ecosystem Service Value Assessment of Mountain Forests in An Giang Province.

1.1.2.2. Research Studies on Weaknesses, Difficulties, and Challenges in Developing CBT in MRD Region

Trần Thị Xuân Mai, MRD Tourism Potential and Development Strategies; Ngô Nguyễn Hiệp Phước, State Management of Tourism in Cần Thơ City in International Integration Context; Dương Trần Thanh Thủy, MRD Development: Challenges, Obstacles, and Development Strategies.

1.1.2.3. Research Studies on Factors Affecting CBT Development in MRD Region

Lê Minh Hiếu, Tourism Development in Đồng Tháp in International Integration Context; Nguyễn Hoàng Phương, MRD Tourism Development in International Integration Context; Nguyễn Công Thảo, Obstacles or Resources: Two Perspectives on Champa People's CBT Development in An Giang; Nguyễn Huỳnh Phước Thiện, Local Marketing Strategies to Promote Tourism Development in Cần Thơ City.

1.1.2.4. Research Studies on Strategies for Developing CBT in MRD Region

Trần Thị Xuân Mai, MRD Tourism Potential and Development Strategies; Phạm Văn Đấu, Thinking About the Tourism Development in MRD from the Way of Ecotourism of Vinh Long Farmers; Đoàn Thị Mỹ Hằng, Bùi Thị Quỳnh Ngọc, Rural Tourism Development in MRD: Transition to Service-Oriented Economy; Nguyễn Phước Quý Quang, Sustainable Tourism Development Strategy for Cần Thơ City until 2030; Hồ Diệu Mai, MRD Tourism Management Vision to 2030; Vòng Thình Nam, Potential for CBT Development in Kiên Giang Province; Nguyễn Hồng Hà, Hà Minh Thảo, Household-Level CBT Development Strategies in Nam Du Island District, Kiên Giang Province.

1.1.3. Research Studies on Economic Linkages in CBT Development

1.1.3.1. Research Studies on Content and Evaluation Criteria for Effectiveness of Economic Linkages in CBT Development

Nguyễn Viết Thái, Strategies for Inter-provincial Tourism Development Among Three Localities: Hà Nội, Hải Phòng, and Quảng Ninh; Đỗ Quỳnh Anh, CBT Development in Northwest Region; Trần Xuân Quang, Tourism Development in North Central Coast Region; Nguyễn Thị Minh Phượng, Thái Thị Kim Oanh, Economic Linkage Development for Intermountain Central Vietnam Tourism: Theory and Practice; Lê Minh Hoan, Bùi Văn Huyền, Collective Economy and Economic Linkage Viewed From Ethnic Club Model in Đồng Tháp Province; Nguyễn Hồng Nhung, Economic Linkage in History Book Development in Vĩnh Phúc Province.

1.1.3.2. Research Studies on Factors Affecting Economic Linkages in CBT Development Across Regions

Nguyễn Thị Thanh Ngân, Collaboration Among Relevant Parties in Sustainable Rural Tourism Development: Case Study in Lâm Đồng Province; Nguyễn Minh Tuân, Factors Affecting and Solutions for Promoting Regional Tourism Development in Current Context; Trần Thị Huyền Trang, Factors Affecting the Cooperative Relationship Between Travel Companies and Suppliers in Tourism Supply Chain; Nguyễn Thị Quỳnh Hương et al., Factors Affecting Local Residents' Decision to Participate in CBT in Lâm Bình District, Tuyên Quang Province; Đặng Thị Bích Huệ, Lành Ngọc Tú, Household Participation in CBT Development in Tả Van Commune, Sa Pa District, Lào Cai Province; Nguyễn Quốc Nghi et al., Factors Affecting People's Decisions to Participate in CBT Organizations in An Giang Province; Lê Thị Lài, Factors Affecting Household Decisions to Participate in CBT in Tien Giang Province; Nguyễn Phú Thắng, Tourism Development of An Giang Province in Linking surrounding areas; Nguyễn Thanh Lâm, Pham Đào Ngọc Thảo, Family Participation in Khmer Cultural Tourism Village Activities in Trà Vinh; Regina M. Thetsane, Local Community Participation in Tourism Development: The Case of Katse Villages in Lesotho; Cristina Bittar Rodrigues & Bruce Prideaux, A Management Model to Assist Local Communities Developing CBT Ventures: A Case Study from Brazilian Amazon; Rachel Dodds, Alisha Ali & Kelly Galaski, Mobilizing Knowledge: Determining Key Elements for Success and Pitfalls in Developing CBT; Nguyễn Hồng Nhung, Economic Linkage in History Book Development in Vĩnh Phúc Province.

1.1.3.3. Research Studies on Implementation Strategies for Economic Linkages in CBT Development in Regions and Territories

Nguyễn Thị Thanh Ngân, Collaboration Among Relevant Parties in Sustainable Rural Tourism Development: Case Study in Lâm Đồng Province; Nguyễn Thị Mỹ Hạnh, Local Community Participation in Mountain Tourism Development: Case Study in Sa Pa, Lào Cai; Đào Minh Anh, Vũ Nam, CBT Development in Vietnam: Case Study in Ancient Village Đường Lâm and Bản Lác; Nguyễn Thị Hồng Nhung, Economic Linkage in History Book Development in Vĩnh Phúc Province; Phạm Thị Hồng Tân, Huỳnh Thị Kim Phượng, Promoting Cluster Tourism Cooperation Among Western Provinces in MRD Region.

1.2. OVERVIEW OF RESULTS FROM PREVIOUS RESEARCH AND AREAS REQUIRING FURTHER RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT FOR THE THESIS

1.2.1. Conclusions Drawn from Previous Studies on Economic Linkages in CBT in the MRD Region

In general, the research studies examine issues from various angles and across different disciplines relevant to the thesis. Many studies delve deeply into regional linkages, economic linkages between stakeholders in overall industry or field development, or in-depth research on CBT in various disciplines. However, they all share common points in identifying the necessity for cooperation, regional linkages, and links among participating stakeholder... Notably, there is currently no scientific research that conducts a direct, comprehensive, and systematic examination of economic linkages in CBT development in the MRD region from the perspective of political economy.

1.2.2. Areas Requiring Further Research Development for the Thesis

The research conducted for this thesis contributes to filling the "gap" left by previous studies that did not or has not addressed the following areas: (1) The content of economic linkages among different local stakeholders in the territory and among stakeholders within the same locality on the territory; (2) The content, evaluation criteria, and factors affecting economic linkages in CBT development across regions; (3) The current status of economic linkages among different stakeholders in different localities and among stakeholders within the same locality in the MRD region during 2019-2023; (4) Perspectives and solutions to promote economic linkages in CBT development in the MRD until 2030, with a vision towards 2045.

Chapter 2

THEORETICAL BASIS AND PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE ON ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONS AND TERRITORIES

2.1. CONCEPTS, CHARACTERISTICS, ROLES, AND PRINCIPLES OF ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONS AND TERRITORIES

2.1.1. Definitions

2.1.1.1. Economic Linkages

Drawing upon the perspectives of scholars on economic linkages, the author of this thesis defines economic linkages as collaborative and coordinated activities among economic stakeholders based on social division of labor to best promote the resources, advantages, and potential of each stakeholder for maximizing the benefits for participating stakeholders.

2.1.1.2. CBT and CBT Development

Based on the above-mentioned concepts, this thesis will use the term CBT to mean a method of organizing tourism business implemented by the community. CBT development is referred as the increase in scale and continuous improvement in the quality of tourism business implemented by local communities.

2.1.1.3. Economic Linkages in CBT in Regions and Territories

Building on the concepts and approaches in previous research, the author proposes the following definition for this thesis: Economic linkages in CBT development in regions and territories refer to collaboration and linkages among stakeholders within the territory based on social division of labor, specialization, and cooperation to exploit resources, advantages, potential, and differences to develop CBT towards maximizing benefits for stakeholders. Stakeholders participating in economic linkages under this concept operate on two levels: one is the economic linkages among stakeholders from different localities in the region and territory, and the other is the economic linkages among stakeholders within the same locality, region or territory.

2.1.2. Characteristics, Roles, and Principles of Economic Linkages in CBT Development in Regions and Territories

2.1.2.1. Characteristics of Economic Linkages in CBT Development in Regions and Territories

Stakeholders participating in linkages are often disproportionate in terms of capacity, purpose, and operational direction; have organic, mutually

binding relationships through specific agreements; participate in linkages based on the spontaneous trend of CBT; support, complement, and compensate each other to drive development.

2.1.2.2. Role of Economic Linkages in CBT Development in regions and territories

Implementing labor division and specialization in production and business; Creating stability and competitiveness, contributing to improved product and service quality, value; Exploiting corresponding strengths and inherent advantages of each entity and locality; Innovating thinking and promoting economic restructuring; Removing difficulties for stakeholders, eradicating poverty, and community development; Promoting the formation of tourism value chains to develop territorial economic and social development.

2.1.2.3. Principles of Economic Linkages in CBT Development in Regions and Territories

Principles of voluntariness, equality, self-agreement, and self-responsibility; Economic linkages among stakeholders in CBT development must comply with legal regulations; Principle of harmonious distribution and combination of economic interests among participating stakeholders in CBT development.

- 2.1.3. Mechanisms of Economic Linkages in CBT Development in Regions and Territories
- 2.1.3.1. State Support Mechanisms for Stakeholders Participating in CBT Development
- 2.1.3.2. Mechanisms for Balancing Interests Among Stakeholders Participating in Economic Linkages
- 2.1.3.3. Risk Handling Mechanisms for Stakeholders Participating in Economic Linkages
- 2.1.3.4. Dispute Resolution Mechanisms Among Stakeholders Participating in Economic Linkages
- 2.1.3.5. Binding Mechanisms to Ensure Stakeholders Fulfill Their Rights and Obligations When Participating in Linkages
- 2.2. CONTENT, EVALUATION CRITERIA, AND FACTORS AFFECTING ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN CBT DEVELOPMENT IN REGIONS AND TERRITORIES
- 2.2.1. Content of Economic Linkages in CBT Development in regions and territories
- 2.2.1.1. Content of Linkages Among Stakeholders from Different Localities Within the Region or Territory

Linkages in mobilizing investment capital for CBT development

based on suitable CBT development plans aligned with the strengths of each locality within the overall territorial development framework; Training and developing human resources for CBT development; Building integrated tourism infrastructure and transportation infrastructure for CBT development; Developing value chains, creating CBT products and programs for the entire region; Organizing promotion campaigns for economic linkages, marketing, and branding CBT; Facilitating interregional coordination to negotiate, sign memoranda of understanding, and collaborate with other regions and international organizations.

2.2.1.2. Content Linkages Among Stakeholders Within the Same Locality, Region or Territory

Linkages among farmers; Linkages among tourism enterprises; Linkages among farmers and tourism enterprises; Linkages among local authorities and tourism enterprises and farmer households.

- 2.2.2. Evaluation Criteria for Economic Linkages in CBT Development in regions and territories
- 2.2.2.1. Time, Sustainability, and Scale of Economic Linkages in CBT Development in regions and territories
- 2.2.2.2. Effectiveness of Economic Linkages in Community-Based Tourism Development (Economic, Socio-cultural, and Environmental Effects)
- 2.2.3. Factors Affecting Economic Linkages in CBT Development in regions and territories
- 2.2.3.1. Factors Affecting Linkages Among Stakeholders from Different Localities Within the Territory

Role of the state and related policy systems and legal environment for economic linkages aimed at developing CBT; Tourism market and tourists; International integration context and tourism industry development in the post-COVID-19 period.

2.2.3.2. Factors Affecting Linkages Among Stakeholders Within the Same Locality, Region or Territory

Perception, psychology, mindset, and motivations of participating stakeholders; Qualifications and capabilities of stakeholders participating in linkages in local CBT development.

- 2.3. PRACTICAL EXPERIENCES AND LESSONS LEARNED REGARDING ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN CBT AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MRD REGION
 - **2.3.1. Domestic Experiences**
 - 2.3.1.1. Experience of the Northwest Region

Local authorities of provinces have collaborated and linked up with each other to sign cooperation programs with Phu Tho and Ha Giang Provinces, and intra-regional linkages. Linked with tourism enterprises and farming households in the region to develop CBT. Various forms of linkages were developed, rich in diversity. CBT models always have close collaboration and linkage among stakeholders to create unique CBT products and services for tourists. Participating stakeholders in linkages receive attention and support from the government. Income from linkage activities for CBT development has been distributed back to the community, significantly improving the economic living standards of people and the community.

2.3.1.2. Experience of the Central Highlands Region

Local authorities of provinces have organized training sessions, workshops, and knowledge-building events for developing CBT products, organized cultural and art programs, etc; signed cooperation programs with major cities like Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City; signed agreements with five central provinces, focusing on three fields: "state management of tourism, developing tourism products, and tourism promotion." These agreements have established legal basis for cooperation and linkage between provinces within and outside the region to exploit and utilize the potential and advantages of CBT, providing legal basis for supporting and facilitating tourism enterprises and farmer households in the linkage program.

2.3.2. Foreign Experiences

2.3.2.1. Experience of Thailand

The Thai government has offered special incentives for tourism enterprises, allowing them to enjoy up to 20% annual profit, but they have obligations to the community regarding social and environmental issues... Stakeholders participating in linkages are guided on how to distribute profits, also raising awareness about voluntary contributions to the community; Profits earned from CBT will be returned to develop the community; The community has proposed ideas for regulations, pricing policies, and fair adjustments between stakeholders participating in economic linkages to ensure solidarity and shared benefits. People participating in linkages who provide CBT services earn 80% of income, contribute 5% to community development fund, and 15% to the village tourism management board. This has solved employment problems for local residents.

2.3.2.2. Experience of Malaysia

The Malaysian government has allowed homestay tourism associations to issue licenses for service providers, implemented promotion and development programs, and builded model sites. There has been relatively close coordination between local residents and local authorities,

and these households are encouraged to participate directly in overseas tourism promotion. Several mechanisms and policies have been issued, such as: Providing low-interest loans to farming households, guaranteeing tourism enterprises' access to government loans, tax support for enterprises, consulting expertise, market research, and developing local CBT product strategies. Hundreds of millions of ringgits have been invested in upgrading infrastructure, supplementary services, and environmental improvements to prioritize CBT development.

2.3.3. Lessons Learned for the MRD Region

- Implementing the planning and investment for CBT development;
- Establishing support policies for participating stakeholders;
- Promoting cooperation, linkage, and balancing interests among stakeholders to improve the quality of CBT products and services.

Chapter 3

CURRENT STATUS OF ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE MRD REGION DURING 2019-2023

3.1. OVERVIEW OF TOURISM AND COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN THE MRD REGION DURING 2019-2023

3.1.1. Overview of Tourism in the MRD Region

During the period 2019-2023, the tourism industry faced numerous challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic. After the pandemic, the tourism industry in the MRD region experienced strong recovery and development. Many provinces and cities implemented plans, schemes, policies for tourism development; promoted garden tourism and agricultural tourism; and showed a trend towards developing CBT. The MRD region has a "Master Plan for the MRD Region 2021-2030, Vision to 2050," which includes a tourism component. The region has two internal tourism clusters: Eastern Cooperation Cluster (6 provinces), Western Cooperation Cluster (7 provinces and cities), and international cooperation links between members of the MRD Tourism Association with international organizations, as well as tourism linkages among provinces and cities in the region.

3.1.2. Overview of CBT the MRD Region

Most CBT models in the MRD region were initiated by local residents transitioning from farming, gardening, etc., to tourism business. CBT in this region is still in its initial stage and has common characteristics such as "finding its own way." Recently, CBT has developed significantly

and has various models and approaches. Many provinces and cities in the MRD region have set directions for developing CBT. However, CBT in the region faces difficulties such as (1) CBT in the MRD region is still in its early stages, with small scale, overlapping products, scattered, unprofessional, low value, and vulnerable to erosion and unsustainability. Farmers entering CBT face significant difficulty in finding their own way. (2) CBT in the MRD region lacks sufficient attention and support from relevant sectors, levels, and appropriate policy mechanisms to exploit the MRD's existing advantages for tourism development.

3.2. ECONOMIC LINKAGE SITUATION IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE MRD REGION DURING 2019-2023

3.2.1. The Implementation of Economic Linkage Mechanisms in CBT Development in the MRD Region

3.2.1.1. State Support Mechanisms for Stakeholders Participating in Economic Linkages in CBT Development

The stakeholders participating in linkages have evaluated the current status of implementing six support mechanisms and the role of the state. They acknowledged that the state provides support, but the implementation of these mechanisms remains somewhat weak.

3.2.1.2. Mechanisms for Balancing Interests Among Stakeholders Participating in Economic Linkages

The division of profits and interests among stakeholders generally follows established principles. However, there there is still a proportion of stakeholders that believe that the profit distribution among parties is not guaranteed.

3.2.1.3. Risk Handling Mechanisms for Stakeholders Participating in Economic Linkages

When risks occur during the implementation of cooperation contracts, most stakeholders have chosen self-negotiation and risk sharing. To minimize, limit and control risks, they have maintained close contact, ensured smooth communication, and guaranteed the feasibility of implementing the terms of signed contracts.

3.2.1.4. Dispute Resolution Mechanisms Among Stakeholders Participating in Economic Linkages

The frequency of disputes among stakeholders is relatively low. When conflicts arise in implementing cooperative contracts, most of them prefer self-negotiation resolution, followed by choosing an option based on contract terms, paying the fine accordingly and relying on the mediation by local authorities.

3.2.1.5. Binding Mechanisms to Ensure Stakeholders Fulfill Their Rights and Obligations When Participating in Economic Linkages

The stakeholders have recognized the importance of signing contracts as a basis for fulfilling rights and obligations of participating stakeholders. Assessing the level of assurance of implementing the cooperation contracts, most of the stakeholders rated it as very secure and assured.

3.3.2.1. Status of Economic Linkage Activities of Different Local Stakeholders in CBT Development in the MRD

The thesis summarizes the situation of economic linkage activities in mobilizing investment for CBT development based on suitable plans aligned with the strengths of each locality within the overall regional development framework; training and developing human resources for CBT development; synchronously building tourism infrastructure and transportation infrastructure for CBT development; developing value chains, creating CBT products and programs for the entire region; organizing propaganda for economic linkages, marketing, and branding CBT; facilitating inter-regional coordination to negotiate, sign memoranda of understanding, and collaborate with international organizations.

3.3.2.2. Status of Stakeholders' Economic Linkage Activities in the Same Locality in the MRD

The thesis provides an overview of the status of linkage activities among farming households; linkages among tourism enterprises; linkages between farming households and tourism enterprises; linkages among local authorities and tourism enterprises and farming households.

3.3. OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE MRD REGION IN THE PERIOD OF 2019-2023

3.3.1. Achievements and Causes

3.3.1.1. Achievements

- Regarding the timeframe, sustainability, and scope of economic linkages in CBT development in the MRD region:
- + Stakeholders have regularly collaborated and linked up to effectively implement various linkage contents. Local authorities have promoted their role in support, direction, and management, contributing to promoting linkages among stakeholders. Linkage cycles among stakeholders are relatively long-term and stable, with infrequent interruptions.
- + Economic linkages among stakeholders are relatively sustainable. Provincial/city governments, tourism businesses and relevant stakeholders in the MRD region have strengthened numerous cooperative and linkage activities. The rate of contract breaches and withdrawals from linkages is

not high. The common tendency to resolve conflicts is based on the principles of voluntariness, self-agreement, and self-negotiation. Stakeholders have recognized their responsibilities, duties, and rights when participating in economic linkages. They only depend on local authority and intermediary support when needed, so legal action is very uncommon. Farming households and tourism businesses tend to participate in linkages for CBT development.

- + The scale and level of economic linkages increase, contributing to improved tourist attraction capacity, product diversification, quality enhancement, competitiveness improvement, cost reduction, and profitability increase. Local authorities expand inter-provincial/city cooperation, forming two linkage clusters for CBT development in the East and West regions and at the same time increasing the scale of linages in CBT development among tourism businesses and related stakeholders; among provinces and cities in the MRD with other provinces, cities and regions across the country. Stakeholders participating in linkages within the same province/city can leverage each other's strengths, enhance synergy, and utilize resources effectively for sustainable CBT development.
- Regarding the effectiveness of economic linkages in CBT development in the MRD region:
- (1) Economic aspects: i) Due to linkage activities, CBT in the MRD region has progressed and shown positive changes, contributing to community funds and local budgets, and poverty reduction cities/provinces in the region, especially in difficult areas. Tourism businesses in the MRD region have opportunities to generate revenue through CBT-related linkage activities; ii) Local authorities and tourism enterprises have provided support and investment for farming households during economic linkages regarding financial matters and physical infrastructure development...; iii) Visitors to CBT highly evaluate the quality and reasonable prices of CBT products compared to those of the pre-linkage period. iv) Income and profits of farming households and tourism businesses have improved through participation in cooperation and linkage. Some have changed their livelihoods by converting from pure production to agricultural production agricultural development. v) Economic linkages in CBT development have encouraged technology application in tourism development in general and CBT activities in particular. Recent developments in the Fourth Industrial Revolution and ongoing digital transformation initiatives have prompted local authorities and tourism businesses in the MRD region to actively support farming households in technology transfer and digitalization efforts related to CBT development. vi) Economic linkages in CBT development in the MRD region over recent years have accelerated investment process

and infrastructure development in both tourism and transportation sectors compared to previous periods.

- (2) Cultural and social aspects: i) Economic linkages have contributed to arousing the people's community pride in ethnic cultural identity, especially among the youth recognizing their roles and responsibilities in preserving cultural values and traditions; facilitating the enhancement of cultural knowledge within communities, promoting integration into the global community. Simultaneously, these linkages contribute to the elevation of awareness among community members, fostering a tightly-knit social structure; ii) Economic linkages have created jobs and increased income for locals thanks to the sale of tourism products and service to visitors, contributing to improving community life, eliminating hunger and reducing poverty, reducing the rural-urban gap; iii) Economic linkages have improved access to capital for farming households to participate effectively in economic linkages for CBT development in the MRD region compared to the pre-linkage period;
- (3) Regarding environmental aspects: i)Through economic linkage activities in CBT development, some farming households have been trained, developed, and instructed in tourism service-related skills and directly participated in protecting and maintaining natural scenery and environmental protection for sustainable tourism development in the MRD region; ii) Economic linkages have improved efficiency and enhanced environmental issues compared to pre-linkage periods.

3.3.1.2. Causes for Achievements

Firstly, Many provinces/cities in the MRD region have paid attention to developing and implementing tourism development plans, including CBT, resulting in numerous effective solutions for implementing economic linkages in CBT development.

Secondly, Awareness of participating stakeholders (provincial/city authorities, tourism businesses, and farming households in the community) regarding the importance, position, and role of economic linkage has improved.

Thirdly, The policy of building new rural areas in the MRD region has received proper attention from all levels and sectors, as well as community participation.

Fourthly, The MRD Tourism Association has fulfilled its role as a representative, protector of legal rights and interests of its members, and facilitator between tourism businesses and state management agencies for tourism and farming households.

Fifthly, During the economic linkage process, participating stakeholders have implemented the regulations, conventions of the

community and adhered to linkage principles, memoranda of understanding, partnership agreements, and binding mechanisms.

3.3.2. Limitations and Causes

3.3.2.1. Limitations

Firstly, regarding the linkage activities of stakeholders from different localities in the MRD region: it is difficult to link and mobilize investment for CBT development; the CBT development planning has not been placed in the overall development of the region; human resources lack skills, knowledge of tourism, foreign languages,...; there are difficulties in cooperation, joint training and development of CBT human resources; the tourism infrastructure network and transportation infrastructure are not synchronized and do not meet the development requirements of tourism; there is lack of value chain development, product creation, and regional CBT program development for the entire region, so CBT products are not diverse, monotonous, and overlapping; activities for promotion of economic linkages, branding, and international cooperation are infrequent and inconsistent.

Secondly, Regarding the linkage activities of stakeholders within the same locality in the MRD region: Current linkage activities are still in their early stages, facing various challenges and limitations. Linkages among stakeholders are often short-term, intermittent, and unstable, resulting in frequent contract breaches and partnership breakdowns; The scale and value of these linkages are relatively small, and participating stakeholders often operate independently, leading to internal competition and erosion of partnerships. Local authorities have not yet fully demonstrated their roles and are still confused in CBT management activities. Stakeholders face difficulties in accessing capital and have not significantly improved their incomes. The adoption of technology transfer and digital transformation has been limited, and government support has been inconsistent. Moreover, existing linkages have not effectively addressed rural employment challenges.

3.3.2.2. Causes of Limitations

These limitations have many objective and subjective causes, such as the absence of a 'coordinating' stakeholder to manage these linkage activities at the regional level, as well as the incomplete, inconsistent institutional, policy, and regulatory framework for economic linkages, and the existence of awareness, skill, capability, and motivation issues among participating stakeholders, which have hindered the promotion of economic linkages among stakeholders involved in CBT development in the MRD region.

Chapter 4

PERSPECTIVES AND SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE MRD REGION UNTIL 2030

- 4.1. PERSPECTIVES ON PROMOTING ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN CBT DEVELOPMENT IN THE MRD REGION UNTIL 2030
- 4.1.1. Global and Domestic Contexts Affecting the Trend of CBT in the MRD Region Until 2030
- 4.1.2. Perspectives on Economic Linkages in CBT Development in the MRD Region Until 2030
- 4.1.2.1. Perspectives on Economic Linkages Among Local Stakeholders in the MRD Region

Firstly, Emphasize the role of provincial/municipal authorities in coordinating activities linking various local stakeholders in the MRD region.

Secondly, the content of economic linkages must align with the overall development goals and development orientation of Vietnam's tourism industry in general and the orientation of "developing MRD tourism as an international brand for agricultural/natural resource-based tourism and ecotourism" according to the MRD Regional Master Plan for 2021-2030 with a vision to 2050.

Thirdly, recognize the importance of the MRD region in Vietnam's tourism sector and gradually enhance the position and role of CBT linked with agricultural tourism and new rural area development in the socioeconomic development of the region.

4.1.2.2. Perspectives on Promoting Linkages Among Stakeholders Within the Same Locality in the MRD Region

Firstly, the key factor determining the development of CBT at the local level is the formation of basic economic linkages among stakeholders within the same locality based on voluntary participation, mutual trust, and support, which is crucial for building sustainable linkages.

Secondly, implement the principles of economic linkage effectively.

Thirdly, The main form of economic linkage among stakeholders within the same locality in the MRD region until 2030 is collaboration and partnership among farming households, tourism businesses, and local government agencies.

- 4.2. SOLUTIONS TO PROMOTE ECONOMIC LINKAGES IN COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN THE MRD REGION UNTIL 2030
- 4.2.1. Group of Solutions Regarding the Completion of Policies, Mechanisms, and Regulations to Promote Economic Linkages in CBT Development in the MRD Region

4.2.1.1. Perfecting Policies and Regulations to Promote Linkages Among Stakeholders in Different Localities in the MRD Region

Promptly establish and put into operation of the MRD Tourism Coordination Community to play the role of "coordinator" for linkage activities; Develop linkage guidelines, action plans with specific timelines and steps; Alternatively, research the mechanism for establishing an organization in the form of a project management board or "MRD CBT Development Center" to coordinate economic linkage activities in CBT development in the MRD region; Specify legal documents so that agricultural land is not only reserved for agricultural activities but also for investment cooperation and development of agri-tourism, CBT, including the development of accommodation facilities and restaurants in farms and orchards... to provide legal basis for cooperation and linkage among stakeholders; Issue uniform policies supporting people engaging in tourism in general and CBT specifically; Support human resource training, incentives for organizations and individuals involved in human resource training; Establish the MRD Tourism Development Fund to support CBT.

4.2.1.2. Perfect Mechanisms and Policies to Promote Linkages among Stakeholders Within One Locality in the MRD Region

Review and develop mechanisms and policies for investment support for farmers in shifting the economic structure from agriculture to services, linked with agricultural tourism to develop CBT, support farmers in changing occupations from pure farming to CBT; Issue mechanisms and policies encouraging local residents and tourism businesses to participate in CBT through preferential policies on land, finance, credit for tourism businesses and farming households participating in CBT; Each province should develop rules and operating procedures for its own CBT model; Build mechanisms for cooperation and sharing of benefits among stakeholders participating in linkage activities; Research and issue mechanisms for establishing "CBT Associations" to promote the role of "community leaders" in CBT development; Have mechanisms to utilize the role of Provincial/Territorial Tourism Associations in the MRD region to promote linkage activities among stakeholders within a locality and even inter-regional linkage in tourism development in general and CBT specifically.

4.2.2. Group of Solutions to Promote Activities Linking Stakeholders in Different Localities in the MRD Region

4.2.2.1. Solutions for Linking Capital Mobilization, Planning for CBT Development in Accordance with the Strengths of Each Locality in the Overall Development of the MRD Region

Mobilize investment capital from annual state budget and socialized funding with the motto "state and people work together"; Each locality will work together to develop planning and development strategies appropriate to each locality's strengths and the overall socio-economic development

space of the region. The planning should aim for economic, socio - cultural, and environmental effectiveness.

4.2.2.2. Solutions for Training and Developing Human Resources for CBT Development in the MRD region

There should be linkage between provincial/municipal authorities and tourism businesses to build and implement training, capacity-building, and training programs aligned with actual needs, focusing on core competencies for each stakeholer, prioritizing tourism knowledge, skills, foreign languages, and CBT knowledge related to the unique characteristics of the MRD region.

4.2.2.3. Solutions for Building a Synchronous Tourism Infrastructure and Transportation Infrastructure to Contribute to the Development of CBT in the MRD Region

On a comprehensive scale, the MRD region needs to strengthen investment, upgrade tourism infrastructure towards green and sustainable development; Invest in coordinated transportation infrastructure among localities in the region; Continue implementing the National Target Program for New Rural Area Development to leverage resources for developing rural transportation infrastructure in remote areas; Promote the development of construction projects and technical facilities to serve tourism, focusing on developing river port tourism systems along the Mekong River and cruise ports in coastal provinces.

4.2.2.4. Solutions for Developing Value Chains, Building Products, and CBT Programs for the Entire MRD region

There should be linkages among tourism businesses, travel agencies, and service providers at destinations to form value chains, linking to create distinctive products to enhance competitiveness in the whole region; Provincial/municipal authorities collaborate and link with each other and relevant stakeholders to organize idea competitions and brainstorming sessions for developing products and types of CBT services for the entire MRD region for reference or as a basis for drafting local tourism development strategies and projects in general and CBT specifically; Strengthen linkage, cooperation, and coordination in developing intraregional, inter-local, and inter-regional tours and tourist routes based on exploiting the advantages of each locality.

4.2.2.5. Solutions for organizing propaganda on economic linkages, advertising and promoting CBT in the MRD region

There should be utilization of the roles of organizations and relevant stakeholders in promotion activities with diverse forms; Provinces should coordinate in organizing promotional and branding efforts for CBT to save and concentrate resources for the whole region under limited local budgets; Enhance linkage with companies in the tourism and travel sectors to promote images of local CBT models in company tours.

4.2.2.6. Solutions for Promoting Cooperation, Linkage, Negotiation, and Signing of Memoranda of Understanding, External Cooperation and with International Organizations to Develop CBT in the MRD region

Provincial/municipal authorities should build new awareness about interests and responsibilities in regional-level economic linkage to change their thinking and practices appropriately with the process of creating unity in diversity in the economy, culture, and society of the MRD region; Find common voices and actions, together formulate specific cooperation and linkage programs through memoranda of understanding, agreements, commitments, and responsibility contracts; Strengthen linkage and cooperation among localities within the MRD region, among tourism businesses, tourism centers across the country, Southeast Asian countries with the MRD region to fully exploit the potential and strengths of river tourism in general and CBT in particular.

4.2.3. Group of Solutions for Promoting Linkage Activities among Stakeholders in Each Locality in the MRD Region

4.2.3.1. Enhancing the Capacity of Stakeholders in Economic Linkages

Enhance competitive capabilities for tourism businesses; Enhance capabilities for farming households in terms of professional skills, foreign languages, CBT management skills... Utilize the role of local authorities in strengthening support activities for stakeholders.

4.2.3.2. Harmoniously Resolving Interest Relationships in Economic Linkages among Stakeholders Participating in CBT Development at the Local Level

Harmoniously resolve interests based on the principle that all parties benefit according to the contributions of the stakeholders and the need to respect each other's interests, and strictly comply with agreements among the parties. Utilize the role of local authorities and intermediary organizations as mediators.

4.2.3.3. Perfecting the Organization of Linkage Activities among Stakeholders Participating in Economic Linkages in CBT Development at the Local Level

In localities with CBT activities, it is necessary to form intermediate organizations such as cooperatives, cooperative groups, CBT Management Boards, or CBT clubs, playing the role of "community leaders" to resolve and harmonize interest relationships on the basis of collective negotiation.

4.2.3.4. Promoting the Application of Achievements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to Enhance the Effectiveness of Economic Linkages in CBT Development in the MRD region

Promote the application of information technology and digital transformation in the tourism industry, supporting stakeholders in linking in the field of promoting the image of CBT in the community. The application of information technology, digital technology, and artificial intelligence helps provide information links among stakeholders conveniently. On the other hand, local authorities manage tourism activities in general and CBT in particular more effectively.

CONCLUSION

CBT represents a new direction in modern tourism development, holding special significance for the MRD region. CBT development has had positive impacts on promoting socio-economic development, particularly improving income, creating jobs for local residents, and contributing to environmental protection, conservation, and promotion of local culture, as well as marketing the image of the MRD region. However, in CBT development, economic linkages play a crucial role that requires attention based on theoretical research and practical experience to formulate and implement appropriate policies suitable for specific conditions of each locality and the entire region.

The research on "Economic Linkages in Community-Based Tourism Development in the MRD Region" reveals that economic linkages among stakeholders participating in CBT development across the region have differences in scope among various localities within the region and within each locality ò the region. To leverage the role of economic linkages in promoting CBT development within the region, it is necessary to clarify the characteristics, content, evaluation criteria, and influencing factors of economic linkages in CBT development within the region. This research aims to synthesize and inherit domestic and international experiences in economic linkages for CBT development in the region.

Through an analysis of the current state of economic linkages in CBT development in the MRD from 2019 to 2023, considering aspects such as linkage mechanisms, the results of linkage activities among stakeholders in different localities and in several typical localities in the MRD in terms of time, sustainability, scale, level of linkage, and the economic, cultural, social, and environmental effectiveness of linkages, along with challenges and limitations, it is evident that CBT is facing three major weaknesses: tourism infrastructure, human resources, and a lack of a mechanism for coordinating regional linkages, value chain linkages, and

tourism space linkages. These weaknesses are attributed to the absence of clear legal frameworks and models for directing and coordinating economic linkages among stakeholders from different localities in the Mekong Delta; the linkages among stakeholders within the same locality are still short-term, intermittent, unstable, and have low sustainability, with a significant number of contract breaches occurring; the scale of linkages and the value of contracts remain low; linkages among stakeholders are still spontaneous, leading to internal competition and erosion; local authorities have not yet fully demonstrated their roles and are still hesitant in managing CBT; stakeholders face difficulties in accessing capital; income has not improved significantly; technology transfer and digital transformation have not been given adequate attention by stakeholders; the role of the state has been inconsistent; and existing linkages have not been able to effectively address the labor and employment situation in rural areas.

To promote the positive outcomes, overcome limitations, and address challenges in economic linkages to promote CBT development in the MRD until 2030 with a vision to 2045, it is necessary to adhere to the following viewpoints: emphasizing the role of government coordination; ensuring consistency with the goals and orientations of regional tourism development; integrating with agricultural development and new rural area construction; effectively implementing the principles of economic linkages; focusing on the relationship among farming households, tourism businesses, and local government; and simultaneously organizing the implementation of general solutions to improve institutions, mechanisms, and policies to promote economic linkages in CBT development in the MRD region, along with solutions to promote linkage activities among stakeholders in different localities as well as within each locality in the MRD region.

The issue of economic linkages in CBT development at the regional level of the country generally and specifically for the MRD region encompasses a wide range of content and scope, reflecting extremely complex socio-economic relationships between multi-level stakeholders with both unified and conflicting economic interests based on appropriate labor division to maximize potential benefits of each stakeholder through interconnected strength... Despite efforts, due to time constraints and data limitations, the research results of this thesis are inevitably subject to shortcomings. The researcher highly appreciates the comments of scientists to further improve the quality of this thesis.

LIST OF SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH WORKS OF THE AUTHOR RELATED TO THE THESIS

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- 3. Huynh Hai Dang (2023), "Economic Linkages in Community-Based Tourism Development in the Mekong River Delta: A Case Study in Can Tho City and Kien Giang Province", *Economy and Forecast Review*, (September 2023 No. 25), p. 92-95.
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