

INFORMATION OF SCIENTIFIC ACTIVITIES**Scientific workshop “Can Tho City - The driving force for the development of the Mekong Delta”**

On October 11, 2022, the Institute of Social Sciences Information (under the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences) in collaboration with the People’s Committee of Can Tho city held the scientific workshop “Can Tho City - The driving force for the development of the Mekong Delta” both offline and online in Hanoi and Can Tho city, respectively, with a large number of researchers from universities, institutes and representatives from agencies and departments of Can Tho city.

The workshop analyzed and clarified the potentials, advantages, and opportunities of Can Tho city as the development center of the Mekong Delta; and evaluated the situation of promoting its advantages in terms of the pilot implementation of specific mechanisms and policies, trade and services, digital transformation, and exploiting cultural identity for development, etc.

Workshop attendees agreed that Can Tho city has major advantages for development, especially its geo-strategic location, natural resources, characteristics of the river region, and cultural–historical heritages, etc. After nearly 20 years of development since becoming a city directly under the Central Government (2004), Can Tho city has made progress in several aspects, gradually affirming its role as the center of the Mekong Delta in terms of industry, services, health, culture, education and training, science and technology, etc. However, the development is far from its potential and advantages, and Can Tho city has not

become the center - the driving force of the Mekong Delta. The city has not identified a new growth driver while the traditional ones have revealed a tipping point. It also has no breakthrough mechanisms and policies to attract strategic investors. The socio-economic infrastructure, especially the transport infrastructure, is not modern and synchronous, lacks connectivity, and the potential of waterway transport has not been fully exploited in the dense river system. Besides, while it is an urban area with its own cultural identity of the river region, synchronous management and exploitation, conservation, and promotion of resources and cultural values which are required to form rich, diverse, and highly connected culture tourism products remain limited. Can Tho city is developing a system of universities and hospitals, gradually promoting the central role of the Mekong Delta in education and training, science and technology, and health, regardless of its slow progress, lack of breakthrough investment in scale, and limited scope of influence.

The attendees thereby proposed some solutions for the development strategy for Can Tho city in the coming time as follows: Innovate the way of thinking about management and development; Determine the roadmap and priority development goals; Strengthen the role of science and technology, innovation, digital transformation, linkage; Renovate mechanisms and policies, especially in attracting investment, managing and exploiting land resources; Promote administrative reform in association with digital transformation; Further attract

investment in digital technology application in key economic sectors, in association with conservation and promotion of specific cultural values and identities of river region; and increase investment in health, and education and training, etc.

HOAI PHUC

Scientific workshop “Reform and improve business investment environment: international experience and implications for Vietnam”

On August 10, 2022, in Hanoi, the Vietnam Institute of Economics (under the Vietnam Academy of Social Sciences) held a scientific workshop “Reform and improve the business investment environment: international experience and implications for Vietnam” which attracted several experts and scholars from domestic research institutes and universities.

The workshop focused on four main issues: (i) An overview of improving the business investment environment of foreign countries in the context of the Fourth Industrial Revolution; (ii) Lessons for Vietnam from international experience; (iii) An analysis of improving the investment environment in Vietnam over the past time; (iv) Proposing solutions to improve Vietnam’s investment environment in the coming time.

The workshop showed that while the applications of the Fourth Industrial Revolution are tools to help expand and diversify forms of business, production, and management, they also challenge countries. The need to innovate and develop in the industrial sector is increasing. Therefore, countries need to have a strategic vision to carry out the transformation and improve the business and industrial production environment to gradually adapt to new changes, technologies, and strategies at

both the national and international levels. Currently, there are two main economic trends in the world: i) economic restructuring to restore and develop the economy to overcome the Covid-19 pandemic; ii) taking advantage of the achievements of the Fourth Industrial Revolution to improve the business investment environment.

Reforming and improving the business investment environment is an inevitable trend in the new context. Technological change affects the global economic structure in that it has created great changes in the organization of production and trading of goods, capital investment, product development, etc.

Businesses completely change the way they operate and produce thanks to technology. In the European Union (EU), building a healthy, equitable, transparent, and open investment and business environment has always been one of the top priorities. Specifically, since the early 1990s, Estonia has built a legal basis to improve the business environment to meet the digital economy and society and has become a developed digital country. Its success comes from its efforts to build an e-Residency system - a borderless society for all global citizens, in parallel with maintaining a business-friendly tax rate policy and promoting strong digital transformation in both the public and private sectors.

Currently, Vietnam keeps attracting investment to recover and develop its economy after the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the business investment environment is still one of the biggest limitations. It’s said that Vietnam can flexibly apply lessons learned from other countries to improve the business investment environment in the coming time.

HOAI PHUC