

ASSESSMENT OF SUSTAINABILITY IN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF PROVINCES IN MEKONG DELTA KEY ECONOMIC REGION OF VIET NAM

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Abstract

Mekong Delta key economic region (KER) was established in 2009, including 4 provinces and cities: Can Tho city, An Giang province, Kien Giang province and Ca Mau province. Mekong Delta KER has been assigned to the important role of a growth pole and development center of the big region of Mekong Delta. Using the method of calculating the component and aggregated sustainable development indicators, this study shows that the KER's development in general and the economic development in particular in recent years has only reached a relatively sustainable level, even less sustainable in terms of internal sustainability, spillover effects as well as regional connectivity. A number of recommendations for sustainable economic development and promote the role of the Mekong Delta KER in the coming years was proposed, focused in new mechanisms and policies to further improve the investment and business environment; human resources development; application of advanced science and technology in production; FDI attraction; building and upgrading infrastructure; promoting economic structure change; integrating climate change issues into development plans and strategies.

Key words: *sustainability, sustainable economic development (SED), Mekong Delta key economic region (KER)*

1. Introduction

Since 1997, in order to meet the actual needs of the country's development, Vietnam has selected a number of provinces and cities with favorable conditions for development which were capable of facilitating competitive advantages and become the leading growth for establishment of key economic region (KER) in order to promote the developing process for those regions, thus, it will play an important role in growth for the national economy (Prime Minister, 1997).

There are four KERs in Vietnam, they are: the Northern Vietnam, the Central Vietnam, the Southern Vietnam and the Mekong Delta KER. The Mekong Delta is the most recent KER of Vietnam which was established in 2009 according to the Decision of the Prime Minister, including 4 provinces and centrally-run cities: Can Tho City, An Giang Province, Kien Giang Province and Ca Mau Province. (Prime minister, 2009).

The Mekong Delta is located at the southernmost part of Vietnam. The Delta, consists of 12 provinces and 1 city directly under the central government, is a big region accounting for 12% of the area and 19% of the population of Vietnam (The Government, 2017). As the "nucleus" of the Mekong Delta, the Mekong Delta KER is determined to play as a major center in rice production, farming, fishing and seafood processing, making a great contribution to the export of agricultural and aquatic products of the whole country, playing an important role in biotechnology transfer, providing seeds, technical services, processing and exporting agricultural products for the whole Mekong Delta region. The KER is also a big center of energy and tourist service, a “bridge” for regional economic integration and an important location in national defense and security (Prime Minister, 2014). Thus, the sustainable development of the Mekong Delta KER in general and its sustainable economic development in particular, is very important not only to itself but also to the Mekong Delta region and other regions of the country due to its role as a growth pole with spillover effects.

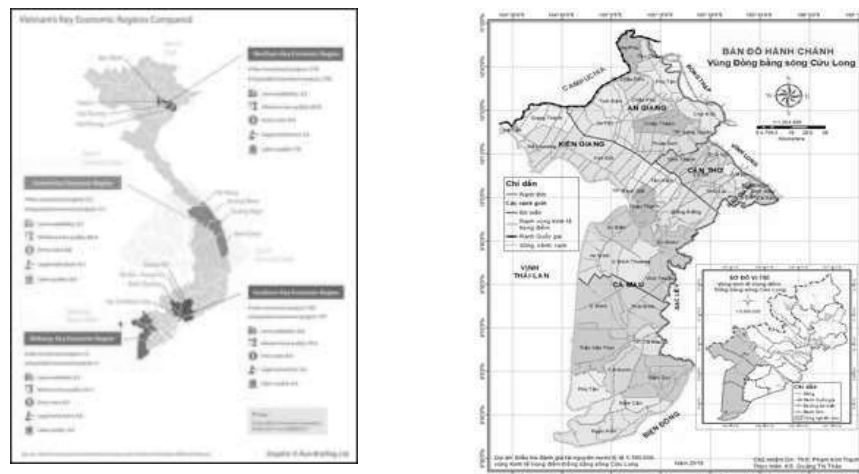


Figure 1: Vietnam's Four Key Economic Regions and Location of Mekong Delta Key Economic Region

However, there are still questions that need to be studied on whether the economic development of the Mekong Delta KER has been really sustainable, whether or not the KER can promote its role as a growth pole and its impact on the Mekong Delta region as well as on the country's economy.

This research paper aims to assess the sustainability in economic development of Mekong Delta KER in the period 2016 – 2019, propose a number of recommendations for sustainable economic development and promote the role of the region in the coming years.

2. Research Method

Method to calculate the indices of sustainability

Being the important growth pole, the leading of economic development of the Mekong Delta region and the whole country, the sustainable economic development of the KER has to meet the requirements of internal sustainable development of the region, spillover effect and economic connectivity. Thus, assessment of the sustainability in economic development of the KER should be a combination of indicators which represent the above stated requirements.

In this research, we applied the aggregate index following the approach of UNDP (Charles Humana, 1991), and Nguyen Minh Thu (Thu, 2013). The indicators will be divided into three main groups: Internal sustainable development (I_{bvnt}); Spillover effect (I_{lt}) and Regional economic connectivity (I_{llk}). The procedure and method to calculate the indices follows the steps as showing in Figure 2, which are (1) Calculating individual indicator using the indicators of the statistic indicating system for sustainable development, (2) Calculating 3 component indicators correlating with 3 groups of statistic indicators for sustainable development, and (3) Calculating the aggregate index of sustainable development on the average basis.

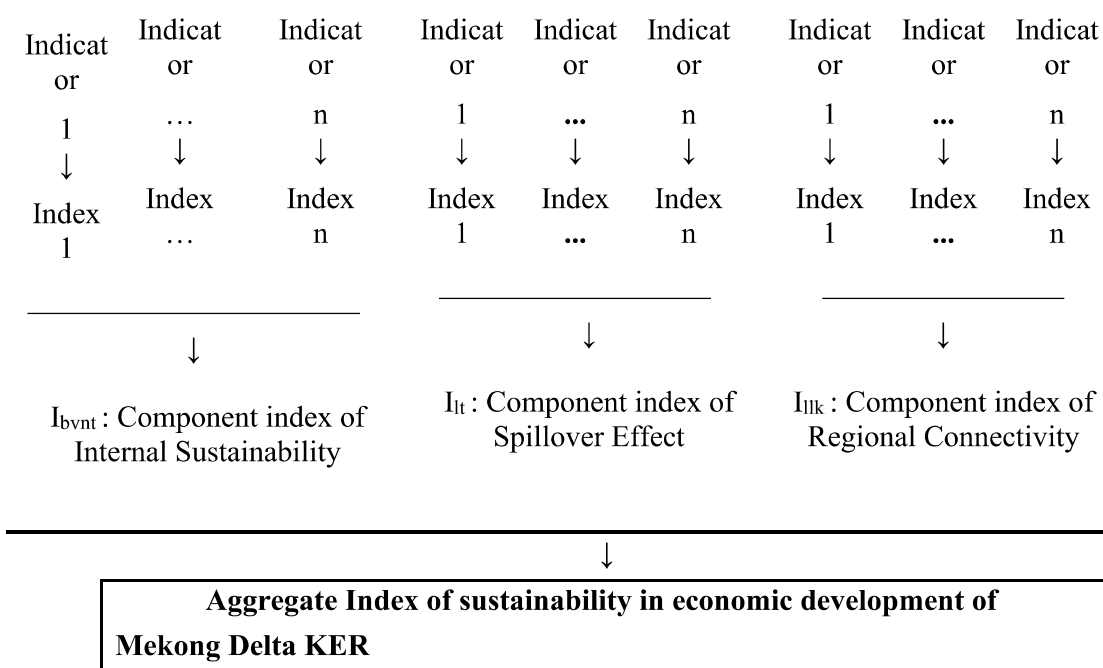


Figure 2. Procedure and method to calculate the indices of sustainability

The Aggregate Index of sustainability in economic development is calculated by the following formula:

$$i = \sqrt[3]{i_{bvt} \times i_{lt} \times i_{llk}} \quad (2.1)$$

Sustainability is assessed by a scale from 0 to 1 as follows:

- $I \leq 0.2$: Very unsustainable development
- $0.2 < I \leq 0.4$: Unsustainable development
- $0.4 < I \leq 0.6$: Relatively sustainable development
- $0.6 < I \leq 0.8$: Fairly sustainable development
- $0.8 < I \leq 1.0$: Sustainable development

The indicators are selected from the sets of indicators of UNDP, CSD, "Set of indicators for assessment of local sustainable development from 2013 to 2020" and "Set of indicators of Vietnam's sustainable development statistics", which are appropriate for the objectives in "National Green Growth Strategy" and "National Strategy on Climate Change"; including the specific indicators as shown in Table 1.

Note that, in the indicator system, there are indicators that positively reflect the increase in the level of sustainability (social labor productivity, GRDP, contribution to the country's GRDP, etc.); On the contrary, there are indicators that reflect the negative/ opposite direction of sustainability (damages caused by natural disasters, poverty rate, etc.). Some indicators have radial values that represent sustainable optimal values (unemployment rate, etc.); In addition, there are a number of limiting indicators, that is, if a certain value is not reached, sustainability requirement is not meet (GRDP per capita compared to the country's GDP per capita, GRDP growth rate compared to the national average, economic density, etc.).

For the positive, negative and radial indicators, we employed the min-max standardization method (used by the United Nations to calculate the HDI and by Vietnam to calculate the provincial PCI) to convert the values of the indicators into separate index that give values in the range (0÷1). The formulas for calculating the indicators are as in Nguyen Minh Thu's research (Thu, 2013), as follows:

$$I = \frac{\text{Real value} - \text{Minimum value}}{\text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value}} \quad (2.2)$$

$$I = \frac{\ln(\text{Real value}) - \ln(\text{Minimum value})}{\ln(\text{Maximum value}) - \ln(\text{Minimum value})} \quad (2.3)$$

$$I = \frac{\text{Maximum value} - \text{Real value}}{\text{Maximum value} - \text{Minimum value}} \quad (2.4)$$

$$I = \frac{\ln(\text{Maximum value}) - \ln(\text{Real value})}{\ln(\text{Maximum value}) - \ln(\text{Minimum value})} \quad (2.5)$$

$$I = 1 - \frac{|\text{Real value}| - |\text{Median value}|}{|\text{Maximum value}| - |\text{Median value}|} \quad (2.6)$$

Where:

- Formula (2.2) applies to the positive indicators when the actual indicators usually just reach a certain level and there is no significant difference if compared by space and time. Relative value regularly have limited variation from 0 to 100%.

- Formula (2.3) applies to the positive indicators when the actual indicators usually increase without limitation and there is often a significant difference among the levels.

- Formula (2.4) applies to the negative indicators when the actual indicators usually just reach a certain level and there is no significant difference.

- Formula (2.5) applies to the negative indicators when there is a significant difference in the indicators of actual research.

- Formula (2.6) applies to the radial indicators.

The values will be determined respectively as follows:

- Maximum value: determining based on the maximum possible limit of the indicator. For indicators that are unknown or do not have any guidance on sustainability limits, the maximum value will be the trend value: the maximum value of the indicator in the research period.

- Minimum value: determining based on the minimum possible limit of the indicators. In other cases, the trend value is selected as the minimum value of the indicator in the research period.

- Median value: For the indicator that has information about the proclaimed optimal value, the median value is selected as that value. In the other cases, each indicator will be selected appropriately to its characteristics.

For other limiting indicators such as Gross Regional Domestic Product (GRDP) compared to the average country's GDP, the growth rate of GRDP compared to the national average, GRDP per capita compared to the national average. These indicators have to reach a limit value to be sustainable. Thus, if any indicator that have real value greater than the limit value, then $I = 1$, means sustainable development; if any indicator that have real value less than the limit value, then $I = 0.2$, means very unsustainable.

Table 1 presents the ways to define the indicators' values in this research.

Sources of Data

The data used in the analysis and calculation of the indices of sustainability is from statistics of the General Statistics Office of Viet Nam (GSO), Statistic Office of Can Tho, Kien Giang, Bac Lieu and Ca Mau Provinces; the reporting of Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, UNDP and Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI). The data is in the time period from 2016 to 2019.

Table 1: Indicators to assess the sustainability of economic development in the Mekong Delta KER

	Indicator	Unit	Maximum value	Minimum value	Limit value	Formula
	Internal sustainability					
1	GRDP	Billion dongs	Trend value	Trend value		(2.2)
2	GRDP growth rate/ national GDP growth rate	Times			1,5	Limit
3	GRDP per capita/ national GDP per capita	Times			1	Limit
4	Poverty rate (multidimensional approach)	%	Maximum value: 100	Minimum value: 0		(2.4)

5	Labor productivity	VND mil. per person	Trend value	Trend value		(2.3)
6	Trained workforce for aged 15 and over	%	Maximum value: 100	Minimum value: 0		(2.2)
7	Unemployment in the working age	%	Trend value	Median value: 3		(2.6)
8	Damage caused by natural disaster	VND bil.	Trend value	Minimum value: 0		(2.5)
9	State budget deficit / GRDP	%	Trend value	Trend value		(2.4)
10	Production value of scientific and technological activities	VND bil.	Trend value	Trend value		
Spillover effects						
11	Working force	Person	Trend value	Trend value		(2.2)
12	FDI by registered capital	USD mil.	Trend value	Trend value		(2.3)
13	Economic density	VND mil./km ²	Trend value	Trend value		(2.2)
14	Net migration rate	%	Trend value	Minimum value: 0		(2.4)
Regional connectivity						
15	Volume of goods transported	Thousand tons	Trend value	Trend value		(2.2)
16	Number of passengers carried	Thousand people	Trend value	Trend value		(2.2)

3. Results

In 2019, the population of Mekong Delta KER was 6,061,000 people, accounting for 36% of the Mekong Delta's population and 6.9% of the country's population. The population density of 367 people/km² which was lower than the average population density of the

Mekong Delta, but it was nearly 1.4 times higher than the national average. An Giang and Kien Giang were the provinces with the largest population, accounted for 31.4% and 28.4% of the Mekong Delta's population, respectively.

The statistics of 2019 have shown that the per capita income of provinces in the KER had increased over the years; However, Can Tho was the only province that had the per capita income of VND 4.713 millions/ month, higher than the average income per capita of the whole country which is VND 4.295 millions/ month. Other provinces' income per capita were lower than the national average: An Giang (VND 3.841 millions), Kien Giang (VND 4.079 millions). Ca Mau province's income per capita was even lower than the average of the whole Mekong Delta (VND 3.214 millions compared to VND 3.886 millions).

Provinces in the KER had annual contribution to the state budget increasing over the years. However, the contribution of provinces in the Mekong Delta KER was still very limited when compared to other KERs. In 2019, the Mekong Delta KER contributed only 4.71% to the total budget revenue from provinces of the country. For details, Kien Giang contributed 1.95%, Can Tho contributed 1.62%, An Giang contributed 0.77 % and Ca Mau only contributed 0.37% to the whole country's state budget. The total budget revenue of the 4 provinces in Mekong Delta KER in 2019 reached VND 73,037 billions, it was just 17% compared to the contribution of Ho Chi Minh City and 27.7% compared to Hanoi City.

In the period of time from 2016 to 2019, although the region's labor productivity tended to increase rapidly, it did not meet the stated requirements. Statistics have shown that Can Tho was the only province that had a higher labor productivity than the national average (VND 133.42 millions/worker/year compared to VND 110.5 millions/worker/year). Other provinces' labor productivity were lower than the national average: Kien Giang (VND 101.29 millions/worker/ year), Ca Mau (VND 91.01 millions/worker/ year), An Giang (VND 52.81 millions/worker/ year). It was reported that the standard of labor, science and technology of provinces in the region, except for Can Tho that still had many limitations which led to low labor efficiency and productivity compared to the national average.

In recent years, the economic development results of provinces in the Mekong Delta KER and the whole Mekong River Delta region have not met the requirements, the economic indicators of the KER are still lower than the national average and disproportionate to its economic potential and its role as the motivative region and the leading of the country's economic development.

The data on economic development - also be used to assess and calculate the sustainability in economic development of provinces in the Mekong Delta KER, are collected and summarized by the researchers as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Statistics for economic development in the Mekong Delta KER

Items	2016	2017	2018	2019
<i>GRDP, VND Billions</i>				
Can Tho	67,270.78	73,448.88	83,215.97	91,471.49
An Giang	65,464.53	70,719.78	78,152.97	84,459.60
Kien Giang	71,543.43	79,245.61	87,734.19	93,375.70
Ca Mau	46,063.38	51,700.02	57,631.20	61,666.55
<i>GRDP growth, %/ year</i>				
Can Tho	7.82	6.28	8.15	7.73
An Giang	4.50	4.38	5.67	6.27
Kien Giang	6.26	6.04	6.34	5.92
Ca Mau	1.93	4.38	5.28	6.12
<i>GRDP per capita, VND Millions</i>				
Can Tho	55,385.59	60,084.97	67,779.57	74,008.82
An Giang	33,124.79	36,188.99	40,471.63	44,279.94
Kien Giang	40,902.18	45,419.81	49,952.04	54,117.16
Ca Mau	38,446.07	43,192.07	48,204.23	51,635.25
<i>Poverty rate (multidimensional approach), %</i>				
Can Tho	4.60	3.90	2.70	2.20
An Giang	6.75	5.24	3.67	2.63
Kien Giang	4.52	4.80	4.68	4.59
Ca Mau	7.96	5.96	4.04	2.52
<i>Labor productivity, VND mil. / person/ year</i>				
Can Tho	98.80	107.52	121.52	133.42
An Giang	58.98	66.30	73.92	86.88

Kien Giang	77.89	85.34	95.38	101.29
Ca Mau	68.92	77.76	85.68	91.01
<i>Trained workforce for aged 15 and over, %</i>				
Can Tho	20.40	21.10	24.20	16.40
An Giang	10.40	12.45	13.50	14.56
Kien Giang	12.40	10.80	15.20	13.60
Ca Mau	10.52	10.44	12.38	12.30
<i>Unemployment in the working age, %</i>				
Can Tho	3.19	3.21	3.54	3.76
An Giang	1.88	3.05	2.51	3.18
Kien Giang	3.36	2.98	3.04	3.56
Ca Mau	2.60	3.12	2.54	2.10
<i>Damage caused by natural disaster, VND Billions</i>				
Can Tho	5.62	4.00	33.30	8.40
An Giang	262.83	402.38	198.08	91.07
Kien Giang	7.75	1,342.30	5.59	10.85
Ca Mau	3.42	7.80	6.71	44,823.00
<i>State budget deficit / GRDP, %</i>				
Can Tho	(6.23)	(7.02)	(7.21)	(7.84)
An Giang	8.49	8.99	8.89	3.40
Kien Giang	(2.87)	(3.28)	(3.36)	(2.92)
Ca Mau	8.69	10.40	8.05	7.16
<i>Production value of scientific and technological activities, VND Billions</i>				
Can Tho	763.91	817.79	878.11	947.07

An Giang	470.80	527.50	579.70	637.80
Kien Giang	215.56	237.85	256.72	292.88
Ca Mau	104.61	115.43	368.72	393.68
<i>Working force, Person</i>				
Can Tho	680,845.00	683,115.00	684,811.00	685,611.00
An Giang	1,110,014.00	1,066,628.00	1,057,267.00	972,159.00
Kien Giang	918,530.00	928,533.00	919,814.00	921,843.00
Ca Mau	668,389.00	664,852.00	672,622.00	677,617.00
<i>FDI by registered capital, USD Millions</i>				
Can Tho	223.97	8.40	11.24	43.42
An Giang	0.02	7.35	3.02	58.00
Kien Giang	7.75	1,342.30	5.59	10.85
Ca Mau	12.41	12.32	314.12	393.62
<i>Economic density, VND mil./km²</i>				
Can Tho	46.75	51.04	57.83	63.57
An Giang	18.51	20.00	22.10	23.88
Kien Giang	11.27	12.48	13.82	14.71
Ca Mau	8.82	9.90	11.04	11.81
<i>Net migration rate, %</i>				
Can Tho	(2.70)	4.70	(1.80)	1.80
An Giang	(9.10)	(3.70)	(9.90)	(14.40)
Kien Giang	(9.10)	(8.70)	(5.90)	(8.50)
Ca Mau	(8.20)	(9.30)	(6.60)	(12.50)
<i>Volume of goods transported, Thousand tons</i>				

<i>Can Tho</i>	10,107.00	10,488.00	10,911.00	12,209.00
An Giang	30,745.00	33,069.00	35,208.69	38,955.00
Kien Giang	10,010.00	10,651.00	11,488.00	12,372.00
Ca Mau	2,275.00	2,384.00	2,501.00	2,627.00
<i>Number of passengers carried, Thousand people</i>				
Can Tho	15,026.00	16,190.00	17,621.00	19,225.00
An Giang	118,382.00	125,108.00	129,874.96	145,597.00
Kien Giang	71,570.00	75,220.00	81,139.00	87,386.00
Ca Mau	68,979.00	70,471.00	74,738.00	79,729.00

Source: Calculation from statistic of GSO and Provinces Statistical Office

The results of indicators and indices calculations and assessment are shown in Table 3, Figure 2, and Figure 3.

Table 3. Calculated indices of SED of provinces in Mekong Delta KER

Indicator	Year			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Can Tho				
I _{bvnt}	0.57	0.59	0.59	0.62
I _{lt}	0.74	0.74	0.69	0.79
I _{lk}	0.57	0.63	0.69	0.76
Aggregate index of SED	0.62	0.65	0.66	0.72
An Giang				
I _{bvnt}	0.38	0.43	0.45	0.54
I _{lt}	0.44	0.61	0.50	0.32
I _{lk}	0.47	0.55	0.60	0.73
Aggregate index of SED	0.43	0.52	0.51	0.50

Kien Giang				
I _{bvnt}	0.51	0.50	0.57	0.56
I _{lt}	0.36	0.47	0.44	0.43
I _{lk}	0.54	0.58	0.64	0.70
Aggregate index of SED	0.46	0.52	0.54	0.56
Ca Mau				
I _{bvnt}	0.28	0.32	0.45	0.34
I _{lt}	0.28	0.32	0.45	0.35
I _{lk}	0.42	0.46	0.52	0.59
Aggregate index of SED	0.32	0.36	0.47	0.41
Mekong Delta KER				
I _{bvnt}	0.42	0.45	0.51	0.50
I _{lt}	0.42	0.51	0.51	0.44
I _{lk}	0.50	0.55	0.61	0.69
Aggregate index of SED	0.44	0.50	0.54	0.53

Source: Calculation from statistic of GSO and Provinces Statistical Office

4. Discussion and Conclusion

In the recent years, the assessment has shown that the development of Mekong Delta KER was impressive in general. The level of sustainable economic development of the whole region increased from 0.44 points in 2016 to 0.54 points in 2019. However, the economic development of each provinces in the region as well as the whole region was still not really sustainable, both in the internal aspect and leading role/ spillover and connectivity aspect in the development of the Mekong Delta region.

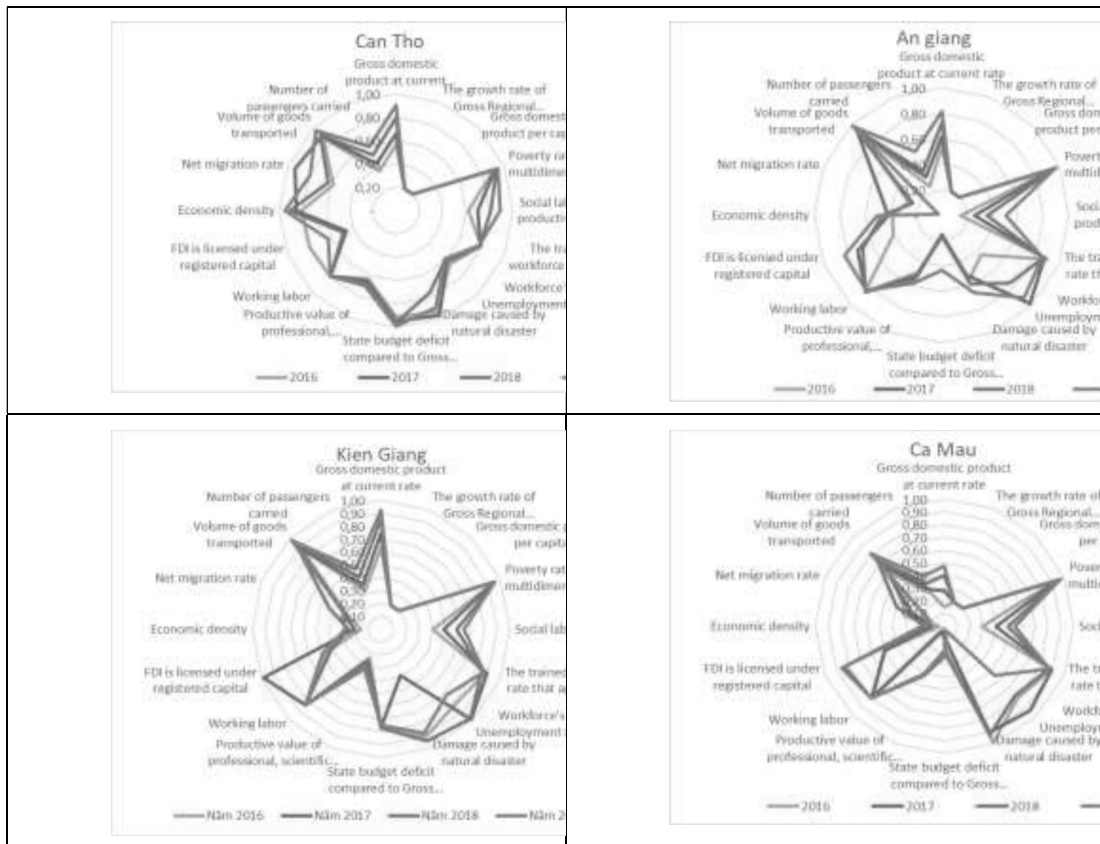


Figure 2. Assessment indices of SED of provinces in Mekong Delta KER

There is clear differentiation among provinces in the region, especially, Can Tho and Kien Giang cities always tend to lead in the general economic development of the region. From 2016 to 2019, Can Tho's economic development level towards sustainability has always remained at 0.6-0.8, which is at fairly sustainable development level. However, the development of other provinces could only have been maintained at a relatively sustainable level, especially, from 2016 to 2017, Ca Mau has just maintained at the level of unsustainable economic development (0.32 and 0.36 points). In this period, thus, the economic development of the region is relatively sustainable with 0.44 - 0.53 points at best.

In recent years, the internal sustainability indicator of Can Tho and An Giang have a steady increased; Kien Giang and Ca Mau, on the other hand, continue to slow down in 2019 – since Ca Mau was severely affected by natural disasters, salinization, and landslides in 2019. According to the General Statistics Office, in 2016, the whole region lost about VND 279.62 billions due to natural disasters. In 2019, it was up to VND 44,933 billions. Especially, Ca Mau suffered the loss of VND 44 trillions at least.

Can Tho was the only province with GRDP per capita and GRDP growth rate higher than the national average, otherwise, other provinces were lower. Especially, An Giang is

only 70% of the country's GDP per capita. Similar to labor productivity indicators, only Can Tho had a slightly higher productivity than the national average (1.1 times), other provinces were lower. Number of trained labors has increased over the years in provinces, though they were lower than the national average. Especially, provincial statistics have shown that the number of trained labors in 2019 was lower than in 2018, thus, this index only reached the relatively sustainable level.

For the index of spillover effect, the assessment results have shown that Can Tho and Ca Mau are the provinces with the improving spillover effect in recent years. Mean while, other provinces were slow down. Especially, in An Giang, the component index of spillover effect decreased from 0.5 points to 0.32 points, from relatively to unsustainable development. During the research period, Can Tho was the only provinces with immigration rate higher than migration rate. This matter has partly shown the weak attraction of provinces in the region compared to others in the country.

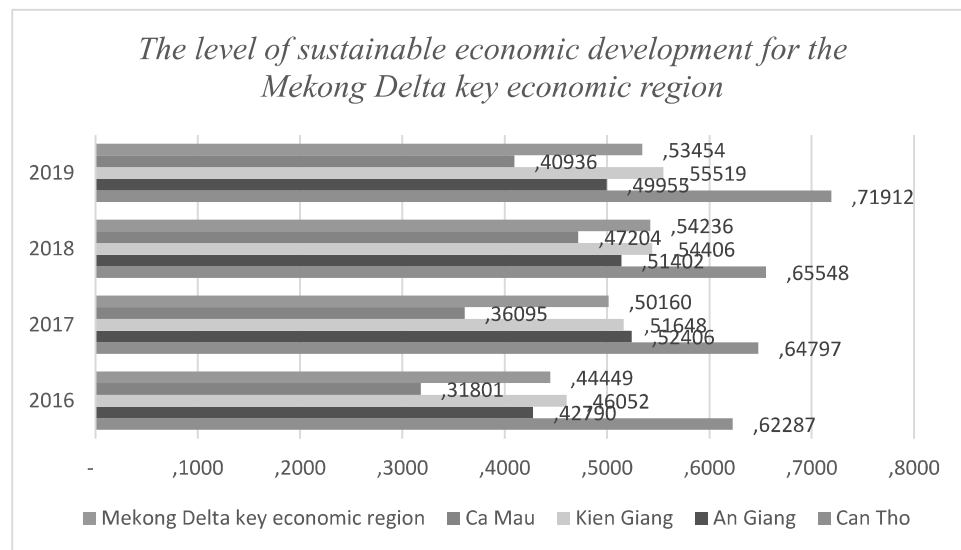


Figure 3. The level of SED for the Mekong Delta KER from 2016 to 2019

The index of regional connectivity also had a differentiation among provinces in the region. In recent years, Can Tho and Kien Giang had this index increased; on the other hand, An Giang’s and Can Tho’s index had decreased. Moreover, the index of regional connectivity was only calculated according to the number of people and goods transported, which did not fully reflect the connectivity among provinces in the region.

The imbalance has shown not only in provinces but also in interior of each provinces in the region. Figure 2 has shown the imbalance in sustainability among the separate indices in each provinces and their interior. In Can Tho, for example, a number of indicators have

shown a high level of development that is fairly sustainable and sustainable, such as: the poverty rate (multidimensional approach), the labor productivity and the damage caused by natural disasters while indicators, the GRDP growth rate compared to the national average and GRDP per capita compared to the national average were low. In Ca Mau, the indicator of damage caused by natural disasters was at an extremely unsustainable level (loss of over VND 44 trillions in 2019 caused by natural disasters); or the net migration rate, the growth rate of GRDP compared to the national average, GRDP per capita compared to the national average was at a below/ very unsustainable level while the index of poverty rate (multidimensional approach) was high, accounting for 2.52%, that was just higher than Can Tho City (2.2%) and lower than An Giang (2.63%) and Kien Giang (4.59%).

Although the economic development of provinces in the Mekong Delta KER has achieved many important achievements, people's living standards have been increasingly improved, but there are still many inadequacies. Internal sustainability issues of each province tend to be precarious and differentiated. Can Tho city is a “symbol” in the economic development for the whole region but it has not really shown its important role. Moreover, the assessment has also shown that the economy of the region is not really sustainable, highly depended on external factors such as natural disasters and climate change and it lacks regional connectivity which has shown the indicators that are very high. Otherwise, in other provinces, they are very low and vice versa.

In the scope of the study, in order to ensure sustainable economic development of provinces in the KER in particular and the Mekong Delta in general, a number of solutions/recommendations are proposed as follows:

(1) Solutions to ensure internal sustainable development:

- Review, supplement, adjust and develop new mechanisms and policies to further improve the investment and business environment;
- Enhance the investment to human resources development towards high-quality labor force;
- Promote investment in the application of advanced science and technology in production;
- Adjust the master plans and plans for sector development in line with climate change context;
- Take advantages of climate change financial and policy incentives, invest in technology improvement, process innovation in industrial production, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and protect the environment through NAMA, CDM, etc.
- Develop and update action plans to respond to climate change according to climate change and sea level rise scenarios announced and will be announced by MONRE in order to minimize and take measures to respond to climate change, sea level rise and other extreme

weather phenomena;

- Integrating climate change issues into development plans and strategies of sectors and localities in the region.

(2) Solutions to promote spillover effects

- Promote FDI attraction for suitable projects, especially rural infrastructure development projects;

- Continue to invest in upgrading infrastructure, creating favorable conditions for the development of trade, transportation and trade within and outside the region, increasing the level of regional connectivity;

- Continue to promote economic structure change in the direction of reducing the proportion of the agricultural, forestry and fishery sectors to the industrial, construction and service sectors;

- Strengthen training and development of trained human resources and high-quality human resources for economic sectors inside and outside the region, and at the same time adopt policies to attract and improve the quality of human resources in science and technology. policies for the technology application sector;

(3) Solutions to improve regional connectivity

- Strengthen cooperation in industrial development, training, healthcare, tourism, scientific research and technology and labor transfer between localities in the region and other localities in the country, especially Ho Chi Minh City;

- Build synchronous infrastructure, ensuring trade and regional linkages taking into account climate change issues;

- Upgrade and expand roads in districts with economic development potential and high volume of goods transport to provincial level roads. Upgrade and expand existing roads, upgrading inter-commune roads to district level roads.... to ensure smooth transportation/circulation to all localities in the Mekong Delta;

- Develop and implement plans for economic cooperation for comprehensive socio-economic development among provinces, enterprises inside and outside the KER.

5. References

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