

**MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING
NATIONAL ECONOMICS UNIVERSITY**

LE THANH DONG

**STATE MANAGEMENT OF
COASTAL ECONOMIC ZONES
IN THE NORTH CENTRAL
COAST OF VIETNAM**

**Major: INVESTMENT ECONOMICS
Code: 9310104**

**SUMMARY OF
DOCTORAL DISSERTATION**

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INTRODUCTION

1. Rationale for the study

The North Central Coast comprises six provinces, namely Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, Thanh Hoa, and Thua Thien Hue. This area holds significant importance in terms of socio-economic development, politics, and national defense and security, and occupies a strategic position in Vietnam's marine economic development planning. The North Central Coast region hosts 6 out of the country's 18 coastal economic zones (CEZs). With socio-economic infrastructure that has been increasingly invested in, developed, and improved, these CEZs have, in recent years, attracted a large volume of investment capital for infrastructure development as well as production and business activities within the economic zones. This serves as an important foundation enabling localities in the North Central Coast to ensure major macroeconomic balances, rationally restructure the industrial sector, promote socio-economic growth, and generate positive spillover effects that stimulate the development of neighboring areas.

However, from an objective perspective, the development of CEZs in the North Central Coast has not yet been commensurate with their inherent advantages and potential. Most projects in the region's CEZs are small in scale; the occupancy rates of industrial parks and economic zones remain low; and the structure of marine economic sectors and industries in some localities is still inappropriate.

Although Vietnam's institutional framework for the development of CEZs has been continuously renewed and refined in recent years, based on systems thinking and ecosystem-based marine management approaches, at the local level, state management of CEZs still reveals numerous limitations. Provinces in the region have not yet strongly applied intelligent and modern governance and management technologies.

The establishment of CEZs in close geographical proximity, together with a high degree of similarity in sub-zoning planning and the lack of inter-provincial linkage in CEZ planning, has resulted in CEZs in the North Central Coast not only failing to support one another in development and in the formation of value chains based on division of labor and production specialization, but also competing with one another, particularly in attracting investment.

In order to seize opportunities arising from international economic integration, refining state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast is an urgent requirement. This will contribute to accelerating the development of export-oriented industries within CEZs, enabling economic zones and local economies to rapidly innovate, enhance capacity, and improve competitiveness vis-à-vis other countries in the region and worldwide.

Therefore, the selection of the topic "*State management of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast of Vietnam*" as a doctoral dissertation topic in the

major of Investment Economics is of both theoretical and practical significance. The dissertation aims to systematize the theoretical framework on state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast, to formulate solutions to refine state management of CEZs in the region, and to create favorable conditions for attracting high-quality investment capital, high science and technology content projects, and key driving projects, thereby contributing to the rapid and sustainable socio-economic development of the North Central Coast provinces.

2. Research objectives and tasks

2.1. Research objectives

To evaluate state management activities and the factors affecting state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast, thereby proposing solutions to refine state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast toward sustainability.

2.2. Research tasks

- To review studies related to marine economic development and state management of CEZs, thereby developing a theoretical framework and drawing practical experience in state management of CEZs in localities.
- To review studies related to marine economic development, economic zones and CEZs, and state management of CEZs, to provide a general assessment and identify research gaps of the dissertation topic.
- To develop a theoretical framework and examine practical experience in state management of CEZs.
- To analyze the current state of state management of CEZs based on primary and secondary data, to test a model of factors affecting state management of CEZs, and thereby to draw assessments of state management activities for CEZs.
- To propose solutions to refine state management by provincial-level governments of CEZs in the North Central Coast toward innovation and creativity, with a view to promoting socio-economic development of each locality and the entire region in a sustainable, green, and clean manner.

3. Research objects and scope

3.1. Research objects

The research object of the dissertation is state management by provincial governments (Provincial People's Committees) of the North Central Coast provinces with respect to CEZs and the influencing factors, from the perspective of the Investment Economics discipline.

3.2. Research scope

In terms of content: The dissertation examines state management by provincial governments in the North Central Coast over CEZs in three aspects: formulation of development planning, plans, and policies for CEZs; organization and implementation of development planning, plans, and policies for CEZs; and inspection and supervision

of the implementation of state management of CEZs. At the same time, the dissertation examines factors affecting state management of CEZs, including: mechanisms and policies of the central government; the state management apparatus of provincial governments for CEZs; local socio-economic conditions; the capacity of state management officials for CEZs; mechanisms and policies of neighboring provincial governments toward CEZs; and the geographical location of CEZs.

In terms of space: The dissertation is conducted in six provinces of the North Central Coast region, namely Thanh Hoa, Nghe An, Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien Hue.

In terms of time: The dissertation examines the period 2018-2022; proposed solutions are formulated for the period 2024-2030, with a vision to 2045.

4. New contributions of the dissertation

The dissertation makes several new scientific contributions as follows:

- From the perspective of the investment economics discipline, the dissertation refines the theoretical framework on state management of CEZs based on the “developmental” and “service-oriented” approach; clarifies the contents of state management of CEZs by local governments; and proposes evaluation criteria as well as a model of factors affecting state management by provincial-level governments with respect to CEZs.

- The dissertation develops a model of factors affecting state management of CEZs, conducts empirical analysis, and evaluates the degree of influence of these factors on state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast during the period 2018-2022. Accordingly, the dissertation identifies groups of factors affecting state management by provincial governments over CEZs in the North Central Coast, ranked from strongest to weakest, including: mechanisms and policies of the central government; the state management apparatus of provincial governments for CEZs; local socio-economic conditions; the capacity of state management officials for CEZs; mechanisms and policies of neighboring provincial governments toward CEZs; and the geographical location of CEZs. On that basis, the dissertation proposes groups of common solutions for the entire region and specific solutions for each Provincial People’s Committee in order to refine state management of CEZs in the subsequent period.

5. Structure of the dissertation

The dissertation is structured into 05 chapters comprising 20 sections:

Chapter 1: Review of studies related to state management of CEZs

Chapter 2: Research methodology

Chapter 3: Theoretical and practical foundations of state management of CEZs

Chapter 4: Current state of state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast

Chapter 5: Orientations and solutions to enhance state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast

CHAPTER 1 REVIEW OF STUDIES RELATED TO STATE MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL ECONOMIC ZONES

1.1. Studies on the marine economy

The dissertation conducts a review of literature related to the marine economy and marine economic development, focusing on studies on the formulation of policy frameworks for marine economic development, studies on feasible solutions for policy implementation in the marine economy, ensuring the effective achievement of socio-economic objectives and the protection of coastal resources, safeguarding the quality of oceanic and coastal waters, protecting marine resources, and strengthening linkages between national policies and international marine policies, among others (Patcharee P. et al., 2017); Le Thanh Son (2017).

1.2. Studies on economic zones and CEZs

The dissertation reviews studies related to economic zones and CEZs, including: studies on the nature and roles of economic zones and CEZs; studies on development models of economic zones and CEZs; and studies on the development of economic zones and CEZs... (Hoang Ngoc Phong, 2020); (Tran Thi Thu Huong, 2018); (Chan W. S., 2014); Farole T. & G. Akinci (2011); FIAS (2008); Farole, T. & G. Akinci (2011); Nguyen Chu Hoi (2017); Laura Stone (2015).

1.3. Studies on state management of CEZs

The review of studies on state management of CEZs focuses on research that: analyzes the roles of central and local governments in managing economic zones and CEZs; examines policies for the development of economic zones and CEZs; studies models of infrastructure development for economic zones and CEZs; and investigates state management of CEZs in three main aspects, namely: formulation of planning, plans, and policies for CEZs; organization and implementation of state management of CEZs; and inspection and supervision of state management of CEZs, as well as factors affecting state management of CEZs... Tran Duy Dong, 2010); Nguyen Mai (2011); Chen, X. (2019); Eston E. et al. (2019); OECD (2016); Nazzari K. et al. (2008); Patcharee P. et al. (2017); Douglas Z. Z. (2015); Ye Tong Ming (2014); Nguyen Thi Thanh Huyen (2019); Nguyen Huu Khieu (2016); Le Hong Giang (2019).

1.4. Overall assessment and research gaps

1.4.1. Overall assessment of existing studies

It can be observed that existing studies have focused on the following main issues:

- Studies have explored aspects related to the development of the marine economy and islands, as well as the development of economic zones and CEZs.

- Studies have clarified the conceptual content related to economic zones, CEZs, and state management of CEZs; clarified evaluation criteria; and identified factors

affecting state management of CEZs, thereby providing a relatively comprehensive perspective for the dissertation topic.

1.4.2. Research gaps of the dissertation

It can be observed that existing studies have examined and explored aspects related to the development of CEZs and state management of CEZs. However, there remain several research gaps relevant to the dissertation topic, specifically as follows:

- In terms of space: Although some studies have examined CEZs in the North Central Coast region, most of them have focused on individual CEZs in isolation, without placing CEZs in a comparative perspective or examining their interrelationships and mutual linkages in overall socio-economic development at the local level, among localities, and across the entire region and inter-regional context.

- In terms of time: Most studies on CEZs, including those in the North Central Coast region, were conducted prior to 2015; therefore, their timeliness and relevance are no longer fully ensured.

- In terms of content: Previous studies have primarily focused on analyzing concepts, roles, and contents of state management of CEZs; however, such analyses have not been conducted in a systematic manner, have not been examined from the perspective of the investment economics discipline, have not been closely linked to CEZs in the North Central Coast, and have not assessed state management activities from the perspective of regional linkage in the development of CEZs. Moreover, there have been limited studies that conduct reliability testing based on adequately collected secondary data. Studies on state management by provincial-level governments with respect to CEZs have largely been carried out in isolation, and there remains a lack of solutions for governance and management oriented toward smart, modern approaches and the application of digital technologies.

These constitute the research gaps that the dissertation aims to address.

1.4.3. Issues to be addressed by the dissertation

First, to further supplement and clarify the theoretical foundations for the development of CEZs from the perspective of the investment economics discipline; to clarify state management of the development of CEZs, as well as evaluation criteria for state management of CEZs, in line with the “developmental” and “service-oriented” approach.

Second, to analyze the current state of state management of CEZs, to identify influencing factors and the degree of their impact on state management of CEZs, thereby providing a comprehensive assessment of state management activities, and clearly identifying achievements, limitations, and their causes.

Third, to propose solutions to refine state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast provinces in the subsequent period.

CHAPTER 2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1. Analytical framework of the dissertation

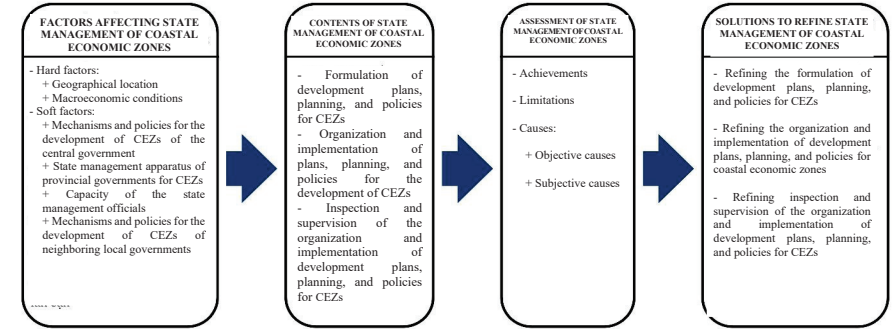


Figure 2.1. Analytical framework of the dissertation

2.2. Research process

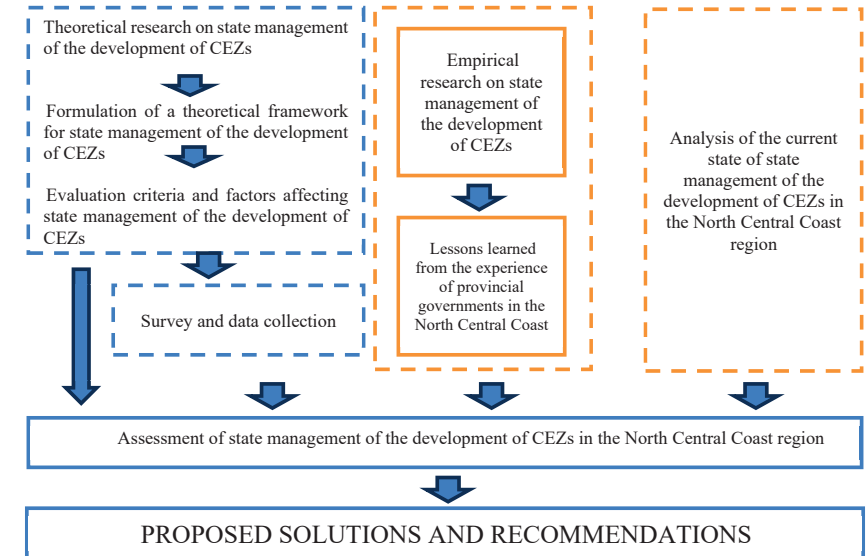


Figure 2.2. Research process of the dissertation

2.3. Development of a model for assessing factors affecting state management of CEZs

The theoretical model is specified as follows:

$$QLNN = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \Delta L + \beta_2 KTXH + \beta_3 CSTW + \beta_4 CSLC + \beta_5 BM + \beta_6 NL\Delta N$$

The dissertation employs the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) method to test the model and to identify the degree of influence of the above factors on state management by provincial governments with respect to CEZs.

2.3. Research methodology

2.3.1. Research approach

The dissertation adopts a systems approach and a component-based approach to the research topic.

2.2.2. Specific research methods

2.2.2.1. Secondary data collection method

2.2.2.2. Primary data collection method

The dissertation conducts a sociological survey to collect primary data. The survey is carried out with the aim of collecting data for assessing state management of CEZs as well as evaluating the degree of influence of factors on state management of CEZs.

2.2.2.3. Data processing and analysis methods

First, methods used for processing secondary data include: synthesis and analysis; comparison and cross-checking; generalization and abstraction; and interpretation and induction.

Second, methods for processing primary data

After data screening, coding, and data entry into SPSS 20 software, the dissertation proceeds through the following sequential steps: descriptive statistics of the research sample; reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha; exploratory factor analysis (EFA); Pearson correlation analysis; and testing of the linear regression model using the OLS method.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL FOUNDATIONS OF STATE MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL ECONOMIC ZONES

3.1. Overview of CEZs

3.1.1. Concepts of economic zones and CEZs

First, the concept of economic zones

According to Ma Duc Han (2022), "An economic zone is an area with clearly defined geographical boundaries established by decision of the Government, located in places with favorable conditions for production and commercial exchange; it is an area that enjoys special preferential policies aimed at attracting investment capital, promoting science and technology transfer; fostering socio-economic development and strengthening national defense and security; and plays an important role in regional development and regional economic linkage." Within the scope of this dissertation, the author agrees with Ma Duc Han's concept and adopts it as the basis for analyzing related issues.

Second, the concept of CEZs

According to Ma Duc Han (2022), "A coastal economic zone is a type of economic zone located in coastal border areas, established in locations with favorable coastal geographical conditions; enjoying special preferential policies and organized into functional zones in order to attract investment capital, promote socio-economic development, and strengthen national defense and security; and playing an important role in regional development and economic regional linkage." This concept inherits and further develops previous perspectives on CEZs. Within the scope of this dissertation, the author likewise concurs with Ma Duc Han's view on CEZs.

3.1.2. Conditions for the formation and development of CEZs

The establishment of CEZs requires meeting criteria related to geographical location and the scale of CEZs; the ability to possess specific advantages in order to attract large-scale enterprises with advanced technologies and a high degree of specialization to invest in CEZs; and flexible state management mechanisms and policies for CEZs with multiple preferential incentives

3.1.3. Roles of CEZs

First, the establishment and development of CEZs enable localities and the nation to exploit comparative advantages in marine-oriented economic development

Second, CEZs contribute to the formation of specialized economic areas, becoming growth drivers for local, regional, and national economies.

Third, CEZs promote production activities and the export of goods of localities and the nation

Fourth, CEZs facilitate the experimentation of special mechanisms and policies at both local and national levels

3.2. State management of CEZs

3.2.1. Concept of state management of CEZs

State management of CEZs is understood as the organized intervention of state management agencies in economic activities taking place within CEZs, with the aim of utilizing local and national economic resources in the most efficient manner in order to achieve economic development objectives not only within CEZs but also for localities and the nation as a whole, in the context of current international economic integration.

3.2.2. Contents of state management by provincial-level governments of CEZs

3.2.2.1. Formulation of development planning and plans for CEZs

First, formulation of development planning for CEZs

Second, formulation of development plans for CEZs

3.2.2.2. Organization and implementation of development planning and plans for CEZs

The organization and implementation of development planning and plans for CEZs follow a process consisting of three stages:

Stage 1: Dissemination and communication of development planning and plans for CEZs.

Stage 2: Implementation of development planning and plans for CEZs through five steps

Stage 3: Evaluation of the results of the implementation of development planning and plans for CEZs, and the introduction of refinements and adjustments where necessary.

3.2.2.3. Inspection and supervision of state management of CEZs

First, inspection of the legality of state management activities of local governments with respect to CEZs.

Second, inspection of compliance with development planning and plans for CEZs by state management agencies and investors within economic zones.

3.2.3. Criteria for evaluating state management by provincial governments in the development of CEZs

First, the group of criteria for evaluating the development of CEZs, including: criteria related to the location of establishment of CEZs; criteria for assessing the development of CEZs; and criteria for evaluating investment efficiency in CEZs (occupancy rate of CEZs; capital intensity for infrastructure development of CEZs; volume of investment capital actually implemented for infrastructure construction in economic zones; total number of registered investment projects; total registered investment capital; total realized investment capital; investment capital disbursement rate (%); industrial output value per unit of investment capital).

Second, the group of criteria for evaluating state management of CEZs, including criteria for assessing activities related to the formulation of development planning, plans, and policies for CEZs; assessment of the organization and implementation of development planning, plans, and policies for CEZs; and assessment of inspection, examination, and handling of violations in the development of CEZs

3.3. Factors affecting state management of CEZs

3.3.1. Hard factors

First, advantages in geographical location.

Second, local macroeconomic conditions

3.3.2. Soft factors

First, mechanisms and policies for the development of CEZs of the central government

Second, mechanisms and policies for the development of CEZs of neighboring provinces in the region

Third, the state management apparatus of provincial governments with respect to CEZs

Fourth, the capacity of civil servants and public employees directly engaged in state management of CEZs

3.4 Experience in state management of coastal economic zones and lessons for provincial governments in the North Central Coast

3.4.1. Experience of localities in state management of coastal economic zones

First, experience in the formulation of development planning and plans for CEZs

Second, experience in the organization and implementation of development planning and plans for CEZs.

Third, experience in inspection and supervision of state management of CEZs.

3.4.2. Lessons for the provinces in the North Central Coast

First, state management of CEZs is not solely the task or function of provincial-level governments, but a responsibility of the entire political system, based on the principles of a “developmental” and “service-oriented” government, aimed at generating the greatest benefits for all stakeholders.

Second, the formulation of development planning and plans for CEZs should be grounded in scientific evidence and a strategic vision, and aligned with the overall development framework. Priority should be given to the development of economic sectors in which localities possess comparative advantages and strong potential for spillover effects and linkages.

Third, due attention should be paid to the formulation of programs and key projects and to investment attraction for the development of CEZs. Emphasis should be placed on establishing essential foundations and necessary socio-economic infrastructure to attract enterprises to invest in CEZs.

Fourth, administrative procedure reform should be emphasized, together with bold application of modern governance and management technologies, in line with the “developmental” and “service-oriented” approach”.

CHAPTER 4

CURRENT STATE OF STATE MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL ECONOMIC ZONES IN THE NORTH CENTRAL COAST

4.1. Overview of the North Central Coast region

4.1.1. Socio-economic conditions of the North Central Coast region

4.1.2. Overview of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast region

The North Central Coast hosts 6 out of the country’s 18 coastal economic zones, with an average density of one CEZ per province. This is the region with the highest concentration of CEZs nationwide, including two CEZs designated by the Government as priority development zones, namely Nghi Son CEZ and Vung Ang CEZ. In 2022, in the post COVID-19 context, CEZs in the North Central Coast were among the more dynamically developing areas, demonstrating a strong capacity to attract both domestic and foreign investment compared to several other regions of the country (Figure 4.1).

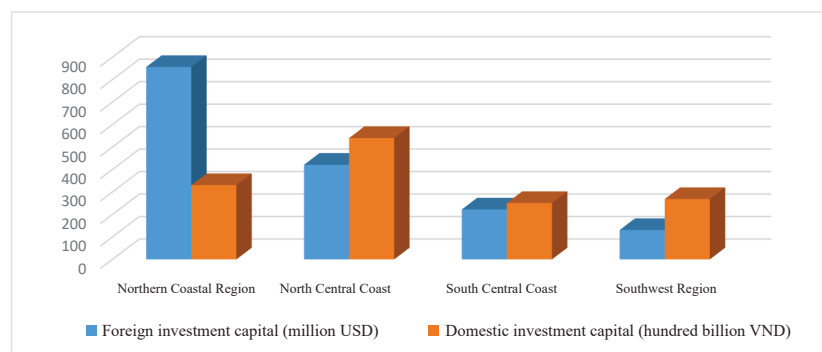


Figure 4.1. Comparison of the capacity to attract investment capital for production and business activities in CEZs in the North Central Coast compared with the nationwide level in 2022

Source: Department for Economic Zone Management, Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2022

The occupancy rate of CEZs in the region remains at a moderate level, with three CEZs achieving high occupancy rates of over 50%, namely: Nghi Son, Southeast Nghe An, and Vung Ang Ha Tinh.

4.2. Current state of state management of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

4.2.1. Formulation of development planning and plans for coastal economic zones

4.2.1.1. Formulation of development planning for coastal economic zones

Based on the Strategy for Sustainable Development of Vietnam's Marine Economy to 2030, with a vision to 2045, Vietnam has formulated development planning for CEZs in the North Central Coast based on the following fundamental perspectives:

First, coastal economic development and the development of coastal cities are regarded as centers of the marine economy.

Second, spatial planning of CEZs should be appropriate and adaptable to each new stage of development of localities and the region.

Third, planning of functional sub-zones within CEZs should enable the maximization of the potential and advantages of economic zones and localities.

Based on these perspectives, the development planning of CEZs in the North Central Coast has been formulated and adjusted in the following directions:

First, development planning of CEZs is associated with the development of coastal cities in the North Central Coast toward becoming an economic corridor oriented toward the sea.

Second, planning and expansion of the spatial scale of CEZs in the region are adapted to development orientations and stages of development at the local, regional, and national levels; facilitating economic restructuring and the formation of the "port - urban - marine" model.

Third, gradual formation of inter-provincial linkages in development planning among provinces in the North Central Coast region

4.2.1.2. Formulation of development plans for coastal economic zones

First, formulation of plans for mobilizing and allocating investment capital

Second, formulation of plans for the development of economic-technical infrastructure and the development of key economic sectors within CEZs, in a manner that ensures a balance between socio-economic benefits and environmental protection, minimizes the increase in environmental pollution and biodiversity degradation, and is based on an integrated, unified, cross-sectoral, and inter-regional management approach.

Third, organization of the development of the social infrastructure system

Fourth, organization of the formulation of plans for implementing administrative procedures for primary and secondary investors in CEZs

4.2.2. Organization and implementation of development planning and plans for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

4.2.2.1. Dissemination and communication of development planning and plans for CEZs

During the period 2018-2022, in order to disseminate and communicate mechanisms, policies, and legal regulations related to marine economic development in general and development planning and plans for CEZs in particular to relevant stakeholders, provincial governments in the North Central Coast organized a wide range of diverse communication activities. As a result, development planning for CEZs in the North Central Coast was widely publicized to relevant stakeholders, including enterprises investing both inside and outside CEZs, local residents, and workers within economic zones.

4.2.2.2. Implementation of development planning and plans for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast provinces

4.2.2.2.1. Implementation of development planning for CEZs in the North Central Coast provinces

Based on the approved planning, provincial governments in the North Central Coast have implemented the development planning of CEZs as follows:

First, the development planning of CEZs is associated with the development of coastal urban areas to become an economic corridor oriented toward the sea, including: Sam Son City - Thanh Hoa; Cua Lo Town - Nghe An; Ha Tinh City and Ky Anh Town - Ha Tinh; Dong Ha City - Quang Tri; Dong Hoi City - Quang Binh; Hue City - Thua Thien Hue, etc., with the orientation of becoming centers of tourism and services, international exchange, science and technology, and education providing a highly qualified workforce for the entire region.

Second, provinces in the region focus on implementing planning and expanding the spatial scale of CEZs in adaptation to development orientations and development stages of localities, the region, and the nation; this process has created conditions for

localities in the region to strongly restructure their economic structure toward industrial, tourism, service, and commercial sectors. At the same time, large industrial centers of regional and national scale have been gradually formed, such as: the Nghi Son Refinery and Petrochemical Complex; the Formosa Steel Complex; thermal power centers in Ha Tinh, Quang Binh, and Quang Tri; and the battery manufacturing center in Vung Ang, Ha Tinh. Thereby, the “port - urban - marine” model has been formed, contributing to socio-economic development and promoting linkages between enterprises within the region and enterprises outside the region.

Third, linkages in development planning among provinces in the North Central Coast region have initially been formed; however, such linkages are still mainly limited to planning coordination between two or three neighboring and adjacent localities

4.2.2.2.2. Implementation of development plans for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast provinces

First, implementation of plans to attract investment capital into CEZs in the North Central Coast.

In order to attract investment capital into CEZs, local governments have formulated priorities and incentive schemes based on the provisions of the Law on Investment, as well as Government Decrees regulating industrial parks, export processing zones, and economic zones, together with other relevant legal regulations.

Within the content of investment attraction plans, local governments focus on two main sources of capital:

- Attracting capital from reputable and financially capable infrastructure investors to develop socio-economic and environmental infrastructure within economic zones in a synchronized and modern manner.

- Attracting secondary investment capital through the formulation of a list of priority sectors and projects for investment in economic zones, thereby contributing to the screening and selection of high-quality secondary investment projects and the development of key and priority industries.

Table 4.8. Investment capital for production and business activities in CEZs in the North Central Coast, 2018-2022

No.	Year	Foreign investment capital (million USD)	Domestic investment capital (billion VND)
1	2018	29,939.08	166,729.32
2	2019	30,333.90	262,638.60
3	2020	32,248.30	268,585.10
4	2021	33,052.98	269,300.80
5	2022	34,755.32	271,622.14

Source: Department for Economic Zone Management, Ministry of Planning and Investment

Second, implementation of plans for the development of economic-technical infrastructure in CEZs

- CEZs in the North Central Coast have basically completed transport infrastructure both inside and outside economic zones, and are currently implementing the construction of transport routes connecting CEZs with other economic regions; investing in the development of power supply systems; constructing water supply and drainage systems; building information infrastructure systems; developing human resources; and organizing the implementation of environmental protection legislation within CEZs.

- Compared with other regions nationwide, the volume of investment capital attracted by CEZs in the North Central Coast is relatively impressive. In terms of FDI projects, infrastructure investment capital of FDI projects in CEZs in the North Central Coast ranks second nationwide. Meanwhile, in terms of domestic investment capital, total infrastructure investment capital in CEZs in the North Central Coast ranks first nationwide. This is considered an extremely important source of capital, enabling CEZs to rapidly complete their infrastructure systems.

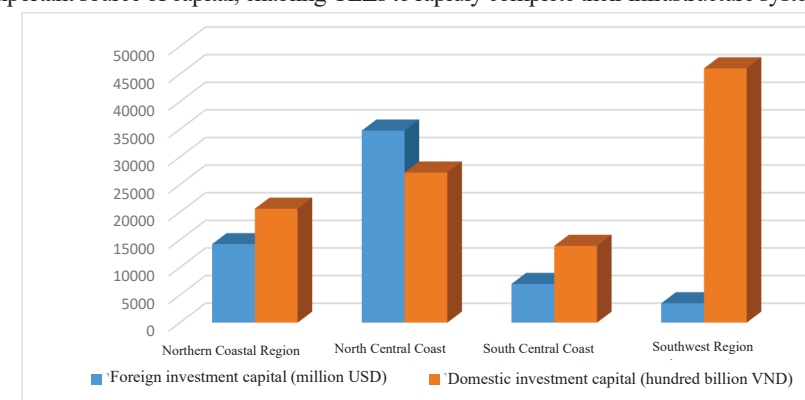


Figure 4.8. Comparison of infrastructure investment capital in CEZs nationwide

Source: Department for Economic Zone Management, Ministry of Planning and Investment, 2022

Third, implementation of plans for the development of social infrastructure systems in coastal economic zones

- (1) Investment in public works serving production activities and daily life of residents and enterprises in CEZs.

- (2) Implementation of site clearance activities and construction of resettlement areas.

Fourth, development of support services and implementation of administrative procedures in CEZs in the North Central Coast

During the period 2018-2022, provincial governments in the North Central Coast organized the implementation of administrative procedures related to enterprises and residents in CEZs. Survey results show that enterprises’ assessments of the capacity of provincial

governments and CEZ management boards to provide support services for socio-economic development accurately reflect the rankings of localities in the PCI and PAPI indices. Among the six localities, the scores assigned by enterprises to provincial governments indicate that the Nghe An Provincial People's Committee ranks highest, followed by Thanh Hoa and Ha Tinh provinces; meanwhile, scores for the provincial governments of Quang Binh, Quang Tri, and Thua Thien Hue remain relatively low across most criteria.

4.2.3. Inspection and supervision of state management of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

First, inspection of compliance with laws and regulations on CEZs by enterprises, residents, and workers within CEZs; including inspection of the conformity of construction activities in CEZs with approved planning and plans; and inspection of compliance by investing enterprises in key areas such as labor and environmental protection.

Second, inspection of state management activities of state management agencies with respect to CEZs, focusing on examining the quality and conformity of development planning and plans for CEZs, as well as guiding documents issued by local governments and CEZ Management Boards with the development orientations and plans for CEZs approved by the Prime Minister; and inspection of compliance by state management agencies with procedures and development plans for CEZs.

4.3. Assessment of factors affecting state management of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

Based on the theoretical model analyzed in Section 2.3, after data screening and entry into SPSS 20 software, the author conducted a reliability test using Cronbach's Alpha (Table 4.23). The results indicate that all measurement scales have reliability coefficients greater than 0.811 (> 0.8), and item-total correlations exceeding 0.503 (> 0.3). According to Hoang Trong and Chu Nguyen Mong Ngoc (2008), all scales used in this study satisfy the requirements for quantitative research.

Table 4.25. EFA factor extraction results

Rotated Component Matrix^a

	Component						
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
QLNN2	.857						
QLNN1	.850						
QLNN3	.840						
QLNN4	.815						
DL3		.805					
DL2		.797					
DL4		.729					
DL1		.727					
DL5		.669					

CSLC1			.929				
CSLC2			.919				
CSLC3			.912				
BM3				.894			
BM2				.884			
BM1				.778			
NLDN3					.862		
NLDN1					.853		
NLDN2					.844		
KTXH1						.858	
KTXH2						.839	
KTXH3						.820	
CSTW2							.847
CSTW1							.829

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

a. Rotation converged in 5 iterations.

Subsequently, the author calculated the mean values of the seven variables and constructed new variables, including DLtb, KTXHtb, CSTWtb, CSLCtb, BMtb, NLDNtb, and QLNNtb, and then conducted Pearson correlation analysis. The results show that the dependent factor QLNNtb has a positive and direct relationship with the independent factors DLtb, KTXHtb, CSTWtb, CSLCtb, BMtb, and NLDNtb, with correlation coefficients of 0.160, 0.235, 0.543, 0.221, 0.431, and 0.302, respectively. The Sig. values for the correlations between the dependent variable and the independent variables are all less than 0.05, indicating that these correlations are statistically significant.

The author then conducted OLS regression testing based on the proposed model. The results of the linear regression coefficients presented in Table 4.16 indicate that the overall Sig. values of all independent factors—DLtb, KTXHtb, CSTWtb, CSLCtb, BMtb, and NLDNtb—are less than 0.05. This demonstrates that all six independent factors have a statistically significant impact on the variable QLNNtb at the 5% significance level.

The ANOVA table provides the F-test results to assess the goodness-of-fit of the regression model. The F value is 22.489, and the Sig. value of the F-test is $0.000 < 0.05$ (i.e., less than 5%). Therefore, the linear regression model is statistically appropriate, meaning that the combination of independent factors included in the model is able to explain the variation in the dependent factor. In other words, there is at least one independent factor that has an effect on the dependent variable QLNNtb. In addition, it can be concluded that the R-squared values obtained from SPSS, AMOS, STATA, and R are all different from zero, indicating that the linear regression model is generalizable and can be applied to the population.

Based on the results reported in the Coefficients (Test) table, the regression equation describing the relationships among the factors can be written using the unstandardized coefficients as follows:

$$QLNNtb = -0.302 + 0.079*DLtb + 0.166*KTXHtb + 0.417*CSTWtb + 0.097*CSLCtb + 0.132*BMtb + 0.134*NLDNTB + ei$$

Using the standardized coefficients (SPSS, AMOS, STATA, and R), the equation is:

$$QLNNtb = 0.053*DLtb + 0.135*KTXHtb + 0.415*CSTWtb + 0.107*CSLCtb + 0.200*BMtb + 0.118*NLDNTB + ei$$

Accordingly, it can be concluded that all six factors in the model influence provincial governments' state management of coastal economic zones (CEZs). In descending order of effect size, these factors are: (1) mechanisms and policies of the central government; (2) the provincial government's state management apparatus for CEZs; (3) local socio-economic conditions; (4) the capacity of the state management staff for CEZs; (5) mechanisms and policies of neighboring provincial governments regarding CEZs; and (6) the geographic location of the CEZs.

4.4. Overall assessment of state management of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast region

4.4.1. Achieved results

First, the quality of development planning, plans, and policies for coastal economic zones (CEZs) in the North Central Coast has enabled the region's economic zones to achieve notable results. During the 2018–2022 period, all six economic zones attracted a substantial number of large-scale infrastructure investors and made initial progress in completing transport infrastructure, water supply systems, and information infrastructure within the CEZs.

Second, the organization and implementation of development planning, plans, and policies for CEZs by the North Central Coast provinces have been carried out in a serious, flexible, and responsible manner.

Third, inspection and supervision of state management activities for CEZs have received increasing attention from provincial authorities through reporting mechanisms and thematic inspections. As a result, several violations in state management of CEZs have been identified, and remedial solutions have been proposed in a timely manner.

4.4.2. Some shortcomings and limitations

(1) Regarding the formulation of development planning, plans, and policies for CEZs

- Although the development of coastal economic zones (CEZs) to promote the economic development of localities and the country as a whole is a sound policy, the simultaneous establishment of a large number of economic zones without adequately considering key criteria such as the ability to sustain comparative advantages in the long term and clear future development potential commensurate with the role of CEZs in the North Central Coast has resulted in CEZs in this region failing to develop as expected.

- While inter-provincial linkages in planning among adjacent localities have received attention and have been implemented, regional-level coordination in selecting CEZ locations, prioritizing industries and sectors for development, choosing functional sub-zones, and identifying key infrastructure remains very loose. There is also a lack of effective mechanisms and enforcement tools for formulation, implementation, monitoring, and

supervision of compliance with regional planning commitments. This has led to CEZ plans in the North Central Coast being quite similar, lacking innovation, and posing the risk of intra-regional competition in attracting investment capital and development.

(2) Regarding the organization and implementation of development planning, plans, and policies for CEZs

- The decentralization and delegation of authority in state management of CEZs remain inappropriate in certain aspects.

- Although CEZs in the North Central Coast have attracted substantial capital for infrastructure development as well as numerous production and business projects, the level of investment attraction varies significantly among individual CEZs.

- The solutions adopted by provincial governments in the North Central Coast for organizing and implementing CEZ development plans and policies remain relatively passive, standardized, and similar across provinces, with financial incentives often used as the primary tool to attract investors.

(3) Regarding inspection and supervision of state management activities for CEZs

Inspection and supervision activities have been conducted periodically; however, in many instances, violations of the law have not been detected and addressed in a timely manner.

4.4.3. Causes of the limitations

The limitations identified stem from several groups of causes, including the geographic location of coastal economic zones (CEZs) in the North Central Coast; persistent difficulties in the macroeconomic conditions of provinces in the region; the state management apparatus of provincial governments for CEZs operating in a manner that is insufficiently coordinated, synchronized, and effective, with no clearly defined region-wide mechanism; limitations in the capacity of civil servants and public employees directly responsible for state management of CEZs; and the relatively limited depth and breadth of integration of local economies into the international economy.

CHAPTER 5

ORIENTATIONS AND SOLUTIONS TO ENHANCE STATE MANAGEMENT OF COASTAL ECONOMIC ZONES IN THE NORTH CENTRAL COAST

5.1. International and domestic contexts affecting state management of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast region

The increasing number of bilateral and multilateral free trade agreements (FTAs), together with the growing trend toward protectionism, has led to a rise in foreign direct investment (FDI) activities as firms seek to overcome trade barriers. In this context, investment in coastal economic zones (CEZs), which are advantageously located for international trade and offer various preferential policies, has become a top priority for FDI enterprises. This trend is further reinforced by the rapid development of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (Industry 4.0). However, as an increasing number

of countries recognize the advantages of developing CEZs, competition among CEZs in attracting FDI has become increasingly intense.

In Vietnam, the rapid and large-scale development of CEZs in the initial stages resulted in unhealthy competition not only among economic regions but also among economic zones within the same region.

5.2. Orientations for state management of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast region

First, the state management apparatus for coastal economic zones (CEZs) should be organized in a streamlined, efficient, and lean manner, with only one to two levels of management maintained, while boldly applying new, smart, modern, and highly effective management processes and technologies.

Second, it is necessary to define the provincial-level state management authority as an entity that can simultaneously act as a regulator and as an investor responsible for the management, operation, and exploitation of CEZs.

Third, the overall construction planning of CEZs should be improved toward shaping development models that are consistent with natural conditions, socio-economic circumstances, and the future development potential of CEZs. Clear and close intra-regional and inter-regional linkages are required in the planning and development of CEZs.

Fourth, greater emphasis should be placed on the organization and implementation of CEZ development plans, programs, and policies in order to complete, synchronize, and modernize infrastructure in economic zones, thereby creating favorable conditions for attracting projects with high levels of science and technology, advanced technologies, strong application of digital transformation, environmental friendliness, and significant spillover effects on local, regional, and national economies.

Fifth, in formulating development policies for CEZs, creativity within the permissible framework is required, with priority policies designed to leverage both the static and dynamic comparative advantages of each CEZ.

Sixth, inspection and supervision activities should be strengthened and conducted effectively in state management of CEZs to ensure sustainable development.

5.3. State management objectives for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

- General objectives
- Specific objectives

5.4. Solutions to enhance state management of coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

5.4.1. General solution groups

5.4.1.1. Strengthening intra-regional and inter-regional linkages in the formulation of development planning, plans, and policies for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

First, based on local and regional needs, proposals should be submitted to the central government to develop regional linkage mechanisms and policies for socio-economic development in general, and for marine economic development and coastal economic zones (CEZs) in particular.

Second, regional linkages in the North Central Coast in the formulation of CEZ development planning and plans should aim at creating a shared economic space for the region, enabling a smooth and efficient investment and business environment, and ensuring the free movement of factors such as capital, technology, and labor.

Third, it is necessary to unify perspectives and enhance the effectiveness of state management in linking the formulation of planning and development plans for CEZs in the North Central Coast region.

Fourth, based on central government orientations, consultation and consensus should be reached on key linkage contents such as development visions, orientations, and scope of cooperation; the identification of fundamental principles of linkage; CEZ development models; priority development sectors; and driving sectors and projects, as well as the potential for developing supporting industries in localities.

Fifth, research should be conducted to develop a digital database on the overall master plan, as well as the planning and development plans of CEZs in the region, together with unified mechanisms to ensure comprehensive updating and regular information sharing.

5.4.1.2. Strengthening intra-regional and inter-regional linkages in the organization and implementation of development planning, plans, and policies for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

First, it is necessary to establish mechanisms for close linkage and coordination in the implementation of planning and development plans for coastal economic zones (CEZs) in the region.

Second, greater emphasis should be placed on regional cooperation in mobilizing and effectively utilizing investment capital for the development of infrastructure in CEZs across the region.

5.4.1.3. Forming value chains between coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast and other key economic regions nationwide

Local governments need to clearly identify the roles of each provincial People's Committee in promoting and supporting the formation of value chains, thereby creating products with strong regional branding.

5.4.1.4. Improving the quality of human resources across the region

It is necessary to promptly conduct surveys and assessments of the overall quality of human resources across the region, the labor demand of enterprises, and the needs of economic sectors within coastal economic zones (CEZs), thereby

accurately forecasting the future requirements in terms of labor quantity, quality, and structure. Based on these needs and forecasts, provincial governments in the North Central Coast should develop coordinated plans for training and human resource development for CEZs across the region.

5.4.2. Specific solutions for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

5.4.2.1. Improving the planning and development plans for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

First, it is necessary to promptly finalize the overall master plan for the construction of coastal economic zones (CEZs), together with public disclosure and strengthened management of the approved plans.

Second, greater emphasis should be placed on selecting consulting partners with proven experience and capacity to conduct surveys and develop planning products, thereby ensuring long-term planning quality. Planning solutions for individual CEZs must be consistent with the overall regional master plan.

Third, clear and specific criteria should be established to assess planning quality and serve as a basis for inspecting and supervising compliance with approved plans by localities, avoiding disruptions to local and regional planning, while promoting the application of digital technologies and digital databases for planning management and supervision.

Fourth, sustainable development objectives should be integrated into the implementation solutions for CEZ development planning.

Fifth, detailed CEZ development plans should be formulated in close alignment with the approved overall construction master plan.

5.4.2.2. Improving development policies for coastal economic zones

First, develop a list of priority investment sectors and preferential investment areas.

Second, formulate capital plans and financing mobilization methods that are appropriate to the conditions and needs of each coastal economic zone (CEZ).

Third, strengthen the development and implementation of investment promotion policies.

Fourth, improve policies to encourage and support the development of production and business activities within CEZs.

5.4.2.3. Improving the organization and implementation of development planning, plans, and policies for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast provinces

5.4.2.3.1. Improving the implementation of infrastructure development for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast provinces

First, solutions for formulating socio-economic infrastructure development plans.

Second, solutions for attracting investment capital for the development of socio-economic infrastructure in coastal economic zones.

5.4.2.3.2. Improving the organization and implementation of the development of support services in coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast provinces

First, it is necessary to consolidate and reorganize the state management apparatus for coastal economic zones in a streamlined, effective, efficient, and results-oriented manner; priority should be given to developing professional, service-oriented management boards that are aligned with assigned tasks; periodic application of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) should be implemented to evaluate the performance of state management staff.

Second, decentralization and delegation of authority to relevant units in state management and development of coastal economic zones should be implemented in line with practical requirements, following a “facilitating” and “service-oriented” governance approach.

Third, administrative reform should be accelerated toward a one-stop-shop mechanism, reducing cumbersome and unnecessary administrative procedures, and establishing an integrated, single-point-of-contact mechanism.

Fourth, the role and effectiveness of provincial centers responsible for enterprise support and investment promotion should be strengthened in providing investor assistance, attracting investment, and collecting business feedback on provincial investment policies.

Fifth, investment promotion and trade promotion activities should be intensified both domestically and internationally.

5.4.2.3.3. Improving the quality of human resources serving enterprises investing in coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

First, it is necessary to formulate human resource development planning and plans for coastal economic zones (CEZs) that are consistent with the development orientations of economic zones as well as the socio-economic development strategies of localities.

Second, policies should be developed to support vocational training for local residents in line with the needs of enterprises.

Third, inter-provincial and inter-regional labor markets should be established to facilitate labor mobility among localities.

Fourth, support should be provided for the development of high-quality employment service centers; mechanisms for coordination in training and recruitment in accordance with the needs of enterprises and investors should be oriented and established.

Fifth, specialized electronic information portals and digital platforms should be developed to connect and introduce job opportunities and the local labor supply capacity of provinces.

Sixth, attention should be paid to the development of trade unions and mass organizations within CEZs in order to promptly capture workers’ aspirations and ensure adequate care for and protection of the legitimate rights and interests of employees working in CEZs.

Seventh, regular inspection and supervision of vocational training institutions should be conducted, with timely rectification and adjustment as appropriate; new

policies should be researched and developed in response to practical requirements of vocational training and enterprise labor demand.

5.4.2.3.4. Strengthening inspection and supervision of the implementation of development planning, plans, and policies for coastal economic zones in the North Central Coast

First, provincial People's Committees and management boards of coastal economic zones (CEZs) should place strong emphasis on inspection and supervision in order to conduct serious and comprehensive assessments of the implementation of development objectives and tasks for CEZs, compliance with legal regulations, and the execution of policies issued by the State and local authorities.

Second, supervision and evaluation of the effectiveness of investment projects should be strengthened to promptly identify and rectify violations by enterprises in investment, construction, production, and business activities within CEZs; at the same time, sector-specific databases for CEZs should be established.

Third, attention should be given to improving the digital government architecture of provinces, in conjunction with the synchronized development of large-scale data repositories that meet the criteria of being "accurate, sufficient, clean, dynamic, unified, and shareable," moving toward comprehensive, regular management, operation, and inspection through Intelligent Operation Centers (IOCs).

CONCLUSION OF CHAPTER 5

In Chapter 5, based on the current state of state management of coastal economic zones (CEZs) in the North Central Coast in recent years, as well as the limitations and their causes identified in Chapter 4, and taking into account the domestic and international context and the perspectives on state management of CEZs in the North Central Coast in the coming period, the dissertation proposes solutions to improve state management of CEZs. These solutions are divided into two groups: general solutions, which are primarily grounded in a regional linkage perspective and a systems approach to the development of CEZs in the North Central Coast; and specific solutions, which are tailored to the needs and practical conditions of each locality in the development of the marine economy and CEZs.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Recommendations to the Government

First, it is necessary to promptly improve mechanisms and policies for the development of coastal economic zones (CEZs), particularly those related to mobilizing and effectively utilizing investment capital within economic zones. This should be pursued through decentralization and delegation of authority to provincial People's Committees, thereby allowing greater flexibility for provinces in formulating preferential policies on land, taxation,

technology application, and infrastructure investment in economic zones. In addition, more specific and timely guidance should be provided for approved legal documents and economic zone development plans.

Second, an overall coordination mechanism and modern governance framework should be established to promote linkage and cooperation among localities and regions in the formulation and implementation of CEZ development planning, in order to fully exploit potential, enhance comparative advantages, and enable localities to support one another in developing the marine economy and CEZs along value chains.

Third, inspection and audit activities should be strengthened, with appropriate approaches and methods, particularly with regard to the implementation of CEZ development planning, including assessment of the mobilization and allocation of local resources, the efficiency of resource utilization, and the achievement of CEZ development objectives in accordance with approved orientations and plans.

2. Conclusions

The North Central Coast is a region with substantial potential for marine economic development, characterized by its strategically important geopolitical position and abundant, diverse natural resources. The development of the marine economy, with a focus on the development of coastal economic zones (CEZs), is an inevitable direction and a key driver of socio-economic growth for localities across multiple dimensions.

In recent years, the development of CEZs in the provinces of the North Central Coast has generated many positive outcomes, transforming the region's economic landscape. This process has contributed to the formation of large economic zones and industrial parks, attracted both domestic and foreign investment, accelerated economic growth, and shifted the economic structure of individual provinces and the region as a whole toward modernization. Several industries have been promoted, including steel manufacturing, construction, seaports and port services, tourism, and services.

However, due to limitations in socio-economic conditions, financial resources, human capital, and technology, investment attraction and the development of CEZs have not yet met expectations in terms of scale, quality, and socio-economic efficiency.

State management of coastal economic zones (CEZs) in recent years has revealed a number of shortcomings that have created constraints, preventing CEZs in the North Central Coast from developing in line with their potential and advantages; some economic zones have not yet generated strong spillover effects or served as powerful drivers for local and regional economic development. Therefore, research aimed at identifying solutions for linkage-based management of CEZ development in the North Central Coast is significant both theoretically and practically.

Based on empirical surveys and assessments of state management of CEZs and the factors affecting such management, the dissertation proposes two groups of solutions-general and specific-for CEZs in the North Central Coast. These solutions are intended to seize emerging opportunities and proactively address the challenges posed by domestic and international contexts, both current and prospective, thereby promoting effective development of the marine economy and CEZs in the region.

LIST OF THE AUTHOR'S DISSERTATION-RELATED PUBLICATIONS

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