

Identification of The Barriers in Implementing Decision No. 79/2005/QĐ-TTg of Prime Minister on Socio-Economic Development and National Defense and Security for the Northern Midland and Mountainous Region¹

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Abstract: Barriers to the implementation of Decision No. 79 should be considered from a systematic approach. (1) The most important barrier is in Decision No. 79 itself, showed by the development of only infrastructure, unclear objectives of economic and social development; (2) Barriers at macro-level management, manifested in the absence of the direction of the macro-management agencies; (3) Barriers at micro-level management, demonstrated by proactive implementation and scattering target; and (4) Barriers from economic environment and social policy are the dispersion of resources on the target that is not to develop the Northwest.

Keywords: Barriers, systems approach, implicit restriction, indicator, Macro, Micro, Environment

1. Introduction

Decision No. 79/2005/QĐ-TTg (Decision No. 79 for short) is a very important document to implement the Party's policies on socio-economic development for the Northwest region. However, until now Decision No. 79

has been promulgated for ten years, but we still continue raising the research question to “overcome the barriers in implementing Decision No. 79”. Although there is no detailed analysis under evaluation indicators, we can boldly bring out the logical inferences, to explain why the basic content of Decision No. 79 has not gone into life.

Certain barriers make it difficult for good intentions of Decision No. 79 to come into life smoothly. Therefore, within the framework of the project “Research, review and assessment of the results, impacts and proposal of solutions to effectively implement Decision No. 79/2005/QĐ-TTg of the Prime Minister, Code: KHCVN-TB.02X/13-18”, it is the requirement to

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research and find the solutions to overcome the barriers in implementing Decision No. 79.

2. The theoretical framework of barriers

It is needed to clarify the definition of a barrier. What are the barriers to the implementation of a good policy on development for the Northwest?

The concept of barrier can be understood widely. We limited the understanding to unify preliminarily the identification of the barriers and solutions for those barriers.

1) The concept of barrier

Literally barrier is a *physical fence* that gets in the way, slows and stops progress through a certain limit. We call it *visible barrier*.

Then the barriers to the implementation of a work, a guideline, or a policy can be understood as the *non-physical barriers* that hinder the implementation of that work, guideline or policy. We call it *invisible barrier*, for example awareness of the inadequacies, since the instruments do not match with the objectives of the policy, or the implementer does not abide accidentally or intentionally.

2) Classification of barriers

In this article, we only discuss about the invisible barriers. The invisible barriers include many types, which are:

(1) The *internal implicit institutions* that existed in the document impede the implementation of good guideline and policy that are expressed in the objective section of the document. This is a common mistake in the policy documents of our country.

(2) The barriers belong to an *error in the stage of organizing and directing the implementation at macro-level*: either ignoring the stage of organizing and directing the implementation at the macro-level; or the stage was suffered from undesired impacts, led to the disablement of policy announced.

(3) The *external implicit institutions* that existed in other documents impede the implementation of good guideline and policy that are expressed in the considerable documents. The external implicit institutions are very wide; they exist in all the areas, sectors and localities.

(4) The barriers belong to an *error in the stage of implementation at micro-level*: Micro-level is the grassroots level where receiving and implementing policies. We can see that either micro-levels do not organize the stage of implementation well; or the capacity of implementers is not qualified enough.

3) Indicators for the identification and evaluation of the barriers

The indicators are formed according to these four types of barriers above:

(1) **Indicator 1**: The *internal implicit institutions* that existed in the document itself in Decision No. 79.

(2) **Indicator 2**: The ability to direct for the implementation at macro-level, in which this is the direction and guidance of the ministries/agencies on the implementation of Decision No. 79.

(3) **Indicator 3**: The *external implicit institutions* that exist in relevant, indirect documents of Decision No. 79 but have impacts on the implementation of Decision No. 79.

(4) **Indicator 4**: The ability to implement at micro-level is the ability to implement in localities of the considerable areas in Decision No. 79.

The above indicators are mostly qualitative assessment. We have carefully considered that in fact it is impossible and unnecessary for quantitative assessment.

3. Analysis of barriers under the indicators

This section, we use the proposed indicators to identify and analyze all types of barriers.

3.1. Indicator 1. Analysis of barriers that exist inside the documents

This analysis is under indicator 1 on the intrinsic default institutions that exist in Decision No. 79. This barrier is considered to be the most important barrier and will be analyzed as follows.

3.1.1. The Content of Decision No. 79

In the first seminar of the project dated on 25/01/2015, we had a presentation about *the internal implicit institutions*, but at that time we have not used this concept yet. This concept is formed after a process of research.

We have reviewed the entire 54 missions that are mentioned in Decision No. 79 and divided as follows [1]:

(1) Reviewing, adjusting, and supplementing the overall planning on socio-economic development, planning on sector development, attaching the planning to the five-year 2006-2010 plan.

This part brings up **24 missions** on reviewing the overall planning on socio-economic development and planning on sector development, attaching to the five year plan, from 2006 to 2010. These plans revolve around the following contents:

- Overall regional planning, including specialized cultivation regions
- Overall sectoral planning, including industrial and agricultural products
- Planning on economic development for the Northern border regions
- Urban planning; rural planning
- Electrical network planning; traffic planning
- Planning on telecommunications and broadcasts network
- Planning on security system

The contents mentioned above are actually orientations for the relevant agencies to carry out the plan. Meaning that, after the publication of Decision No. 79, *a certain agency will be*

assigned to organize the planning, but through the surveys that we have participated in the framework of the project, we have realized that, there are no agencies which have been assigned for the implementation of this work.

(2) In term of investment projects for the construction of socio-economic infrastructure

Decision No. 79 specifies **12 missions** on the projects of infrastructure development

- Investment preparation for highway projects: Lang Son - Bac Giang - Hanoi - Viet Tri; the railway sections that connect industrial centers to major mining centers in the region;
- Building some traffic routes that links the provinces of Cao Bang - Lang Son - Thai Nguyen - Son La - Vinh Phuc;
- Building some railway routes, for example, Yen Vien - Cai Lan; increase the capacity of the Northern route; upgrading the existing routes in the area: Hanoi - Lao Cai, Hanoi - Lang Son, Hanoi - Thai Nguyen, Kep - Luu Xa;
- Renovating and upgrading a number of river ports and main river routes of the region;
- Building a series of irrigation works and water transport systems which will serve hydropower projects;
- Building project on protection and restoration of protection forests in Da River Basin;
- Renovation and new construction of water supply facilities for production and daily life of the urbans;
- Development of the financial services, banking, import, export, post and telecommunications;
- Project on gate economic zones, shopping mall, wholesale markets of agricultural products, seafood. Construction of infrastructure in gate economic zones;

- Construction of infrastructures in industrial zones along the Yunnan - Lao Cai - Hanoi - Hai Phong corridor, the Lang Son - Bac Giang - Hanoi corridor and the Hoa Binh - Son La - Dien Bien - Lai Chau corridor;
- New construction, expansion and upgrading of universities, colleges, ethnic boarding and vocational schools, medical facilities, and addiction recovery centers;
- Construction of regional medical centers in Thai Nguyen and Son La; upgrading the infrastructure and equipment for district hospitals and commune health stations;
- Implementation of cultural development projects in particularly difficult provinces at the Northern mountains (Ha Giang, Cao Bang, Lao Cai, Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Son La);
- Implementation of investment projects to build socio-economic infrastructure for difficult communes, border communes, safety communal areas and commune cluster along the Vietnam-China and Vietnam-Laos borders.

Through our direct surveys, **except for highway projects which were implemented by the ministries before Decision No. 79, all the results show that, the localities have not received any guide documents of the ministries/agencies about the missions related to the content of Decision No. 79 as mentioned above.**

(1) In term of manufacturing projects for main products

In Decision No. 79, there are **4 missions** on the production of main products. Analyzing those four missions, we realized that some specific tasks produce the following products:

- Cultivating specialty plants and raising animals that have the competitive advantages in consumer markets and forming the focus commodity production, in association with industrial processing facilities;
- Aquaculture concentrates in reservoirs and produces specialty seafood with the scale from 30 - 50 hectares or more across the region;
- Speeding up the construction and rehabilitation projects for cement factories,
- Expanding Cam Duong Apatite Ore Sorting Factories (Lao Cai) with the capacity of 100,000 tons/year;
- Expanding manufacturing factory of Bac Giang Nitrogenous Fertilizer;
- Investing in Bac Nhat Son Apatite Ore Sorting Factories (Lao Cai) with the capacity of 350,000 tons/year; Thai Nguyen Cement Projects with the capacity of 1.5 million tons/year.
- Speeding up the construction project of Steel Rolling Factory (with the capacity of 300,000 tons/year) of Thai Nguyen Iron and Steel Company, Nguom Trang Irons Mining (Cao Bang); renovating cast iron stove to increase the capacity of steel billet to 750,000 tons/year.
- Speeding up the implementation of the complex project, including: Sinh Quyen (Lao Cai) with the capacity of 10,800 tons/year, Thai Nguyen electrolytic zinc with capacity of 10,000 tons/year, irons mining: Quy Sa (Lao Cai).
- Speeding up the expansion of Bai Bang Paper Factory phase II: new construction of investment projects on Thanh Hoa Pulp and Paper Factory with the capacity of 60,000 tons/year.

Beside these production projects, the documents of Decision No. 79 also mention the energy production projects, as follows.

- Taking Son La hydropower project into operation earlier than the prescribed time limit. This project was made before Decision No. 79.
- Performing the immigration and resettlement in sync with the progress of construction works.

- Ensuring the construction progress of Tuyen Quang hydropower project (Na Hang hydropower project);
- Developing irrigation in combination with hydropower.

All these sections in fact have been *put into planning before Decision No. 79 and the relevant ministries have been assigned directly from the Government*, there is no relationship with the Steering Committee for implementation of Decision No. 79.

(2) Improvement of the policies

This section outlines **14 missions**, including the contents on promulgation of the policy to serve the development projects in the Northwest, in which set the task to review the current policy, construction research and promulgation of new policy for the provinces in the Northern midland and mountainous region. We divided into the following types of policies:

1) Construction of specific policy framework for socio-economic development in the Northern midland and mountainous region, submitted to the Government in the fourth quarter of 2005:

- Special incentives to attract foreign investment, strengthen cooperation with China and Laos;
- Border economic policies, created a stable source of export goods across borders, strengthen economic cooperation with China and Laos;
- Management of border protection, the use of capital, integration of the national target program with the border protection funds;
- Management and rational allocation of budget funds for the local;
- Signing of the Agreement between Vietnam - China and Vietnam - Laos on building a system of cross-border traffic;
- Supporting and incentives policy to encourage industrial development at the northern midland and mountainous region;

- The policy for improving the method of the distribution of agricultural products, develop markets;

- Special incentives policies and encourage to invest in research and technology transfer in the Northwest.

2) Development Policies for Specific Seedlings

- Policy for encouraging the research and production of crop varieties, and high-quality fish farming

- Policy for encouraging the development of aquatic strains and development policy for aquaculture areas of focused specialty

3) Development Policy for Resources:

- Developing vocational training and job creation for poverty reduction, social security and detoxification in Northern midland and mountainous provinces, especially for ethnic minorities.

- Human resources training for the Northern midland and mountainous areas, implementation of scholarships for boarding students in public schools, semi-public school.

- Financial support for healthcare fund of the poor in Northern areas, more efficient coordination for military health care and protection at the border provinces and special treatment for healthcare workers of sustainable border.

- Policies support, promote and encourage the development of postal and telecommunications infrastructure and Internet facilities in Northern midland and mountainous provinces.

- Strengthening the organization, such as decentralization of local authorities to improve the autonomy and creativity in management and administration.

4) Preventing activities that affect security, politics, social order and safety such as: fighting drug abuse, prostitution and trafficking of women across the border on the key areas of Northern midland and mountainous region.

Through interviews and discussions that we have made in the surveys, we came into a conclusion that all the reports on the activities implementing Decision No. 79 are made by localities themselves; no policy has been announced for the deployment of the policies listed above.

Thus, we can fully recognize, the steering activities for policy completion to deploy the implementation of Decision No. 79 is not taken seriously.

3.1.2. The problem based on the systems approach

From the analysis of 54 tasks outlined in Decision No. 79, we only see two contents on the production of special products in agriculture, forestry and fisheries in the localities, but they have only been in the “research project formulation” phase to produce plans for a future that has not been determined yet.

Based on the Decision No. 79, we fully recognized that there are only those few projects. All remaining tasks revolve around the following items:

- 1) Construction of infrastructure, such as railways, roads, waterways, and ports.
- 2) Ensure the power sources for the production and irrigation water of agriculture.
- 3) Develop and upgrade training and medical facilities.
- 4) The system of services for businesses.
- 5) Improving the policy to implement the aforementioned tasks.

Thus, the assessment of the implementation of Decision No. 79 will aim to:

- 1) First of all, the formation of industry and agriculture characterized by region. Studying Decision No. 79, we can see that this goal is very thin. Nevertheless it is likely that Ministries and localities have implemented well, but the survey results show none of that.
- 2) Secondly, the infrastructure system to ensure the production of those industries. This

section accounts for the main contents of Decision No. 79. From systematic approach, we have not found a relationship between the preparation of infrastructure and the development goals.

3) Third is the policy to ensure the operation that serves the development goals.

From the above analysis, we boldly made the following comments:

Overall, we can imagine that Decision No. 79 is a draft program preparing for development strategies in the Northwest region, rather than a development program.

3.1.2. Preliminary identification of Decision No. 79

From the analysis presented in Part II and Part III, we noted the following points:

Firstly, if this decision is considered as a preparation for a development strategy, the consideration will be toward the evaluation of the preparing results:

- + Preparing development projects.
- + Preparing the infrastructure.
- + Preparing the policies.

If it is considered from the approach of a preparation development project, perhaps, an inevitable question will be in which development goals are these preparations for? This is unclear in the document of Decision No. 79.

If it is seen as a development platform, it is necessary to clarify the development goals, such as:

- + First of all are the social objectives. Which level of social development can be reached?
- + Economic objectives must clearly indicate what products, which level of development can be reached, and the consumer market of those products.
- + With this existing development goals to ensure the energy resources?

+ The target market for the product considering the conditions of the infrastructure.

+ With all of the above requirements for development, it is necessary to continue researching policies to ensure the development goals according to the premium plan.

Of all the approaching options, we can strongly identify that, Decision No. 79 is not eligible for the above two possibilities.

3.2. Indicator 2. Steering at the macro level

We use two approaches for evaluation under this indicator:

1) Firstly, we searched in the Government Gazette², and then realized; only the Ministry of Planning and Investment has written an implementation guide of the Decision No. 79.

2) Secondly, the interview results in several localities show that they did not receive any guidance circulars of Ministries, except for the Ministry of Planning and Investment [2].

3.3. Indicator 3: External implicit institution

Evaluating the effects from the perspective of border security related to Northwest region on the implementation of Decision No. 79, analysis of potential problems in the document, both positive and negative, in the arrangement of the categories shows that:

Field of industrial development

The industrial projects have impacts on many aspects of border security, including positive effects and negative effects.

The construction of hydropower plants built too close with each other will make it difficult for water distribution, affecting energy security; at the same time will depend on China on the volume of water in Hydropower Lake in upstream rivers that flow from this country.

To make the hydropower plants, forests are destroyed in many places, water pollution was quite severe in some places, threatening the sustainability of agricultural development. Displaced people in large numbers, leading to guaranteed life more difficult, especially in the

mountainous, remote and border areas, etc. are the complex causes of security and social order; crime rate will rise.

Field of agriculture, forestry, and irrigation works

The irrigation works are invested and exploited inefficiently, led to the regulation of water for agriculture on the season was not good; people moved to places that are favorable for farming or deforestation for agriculture. That affects a lot to border security, people may have to go across the border (China) for employment or lease farmland in Laos. When having troubles in life, the crimes become more rampant, especially drug crime; hire shipment of transport drugs from foreign countries into Vietnam.

Field of road traffic

Convenient transportation, facilitating the exchange of goods between regions, income from cultural activities and tourism, especially in moving maneuver forces for national defense when required.

However, transport development also created hotspots in security and social order: Drugs, smuggling and abuse of national security.

Besides, illegal trafficking of drugs developed with convenient transportation, smuggling becomes mobile, fast and powerful. With the consequences of drugs, security and social order in the Northwest border become more and more complex.

On the other hand, although having large investment, the border patrol is still slow, with low quality and below expected efficiency.

Also, if there is the presence of war, enemies will also have the conditional mobility to attack us faster

Other unexpected possibilities

The program of population stabilization by Decision No. 79 also raises many complex issues. When life is hard, people will compare with their kin living across the border

² Government Gazette, 2005-2010

(especially China). Cross-border employees are developing in the minorities in our country. On the other hand, China will continue to increase "black" cultural venues and gambling dens in the gate area to attract tourists [3].

Ethnic relations across borders, their culture will affect the culture of the ethnic groups in our country, especially ethnic groups near Chinese border. Culture can also act in a negative direction, such as differentiating communities, abetting social ills.

3.4. Indicator 4. Implementation steering of Decision No. 79 at the micro level

From the working results in all the places gathered for the study including the reports received, we come to the realization that localities have implemented Decision No. 79 by themselves,

Most of them did not receive a written guidance from the macro level, meaning the ministries/departments/branches, whether they are Party committees or Government departments.

From here we come to the realization, that the localities were very creative in implementing Decision No. 79.

4. Remedy of barriers

From the analysis of barriers according to the indicators above, we can identify preliminarily a reality that is barriers at the macro level are the most important ones.

Ten years since the issuance of Decision No. 79, from 2005 to 2015, is not a short time. We can recognize from the history:

- Ten years from 1981 - 1991, with Directive 100/BBT on assigning products to households and workers, Vietnam has changed from a poor country to a ranked rice exporting country in the world

- In Korea, ten years since Pak Chung Hee was in power, from 1961 - 1971, it has changed

from a poor backward country (with \$100/person) to leading industrialized countries in Asia.

We mentioned the events above to convey a message about the delay in the implementation of Decision No. 79, and important barriers, described at the macro level.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

1) With the above analysis, I think that the barriers for the implementation of development goals and the means for development outlined in Decision No. 79, including policy barriers are at macro level.

2) Results of the implementation of Decision No. 79 probably only in the development of infrastructure. It could be double-edged sword, when the enemy leverages that infrastructure to harm the national security of our country.

3) The immediate problem is the need to focus on understanding the Northwest Development Goals by Decision No. 79, so that the northwestern provinces can achieve powerful development, and worthy of a strategic area on the junction of three countries: Vietnam - Laos - China.

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Nhận diện rào cản trong việc thực hiện Quyết định số 79/2005 / QĐ-TTg của Thủ tướng Chính phủ về phát triển kinh tế xã hội và an ninh quốc phòng cho các vùng trung du và miền núi Bắc Bộ

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Tóm tắt: Rào cản thực hiện Quyết định 79 cần được xem xét từ từ tiếp cận hệ thống. (1) Rào cản quan trọng nhất nằm trong bản thân Quyết định 79, thể hiện ở chỗ, mới quan tâm phát triển cơ sở hạ tầng, chưa rõ mục tiêu phát triển kinh tế và xã hội; (2) Rào cản ở cấp quản lý vĩ mô, thể hiện ở chỗ thiếu vắng sự hướng dẫn của các cơ quan quản lý vĩ mô; (3) Rào cản ở cấp quản lý vi mô, thể hiện ở việc họ chủ động thực hiện, phân tán mục tiêu; và (4) Rào cản từ môi trường kinh tế và xã hội, chính là những chính sách làm phân tán nguồn lực vào các mục tiêu không nhằm phát triển vùng Tây Bắc.

Từ khóa: Rào cản, Tiếp cận hệ thống, Tiết chế ngầm định, Chi báo, Vĩ mô, Vi mô, Môi trường.