

Vietnam's Economy After Five Years of Implementing the Resolution of the 13th National Congress Resolution: Target Framework, Outcomes, And Strategic Orientations Toward A New Era of The Nation's Rise

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Received: 10th Oct 2025 | Received Revised Version: 17th Nov 2025 | Accepted: 28th Dec 2025 | Published: 15th Jan 2026

Volume 08 Issue 01 2026 | Crossref DOI: 10.37547/tajssei/Volume08Issue01-06

Abstract

The 2021–2025 period has been a challenging yet highly impressive period for Vietnam's economy. Amid complex global fluctuations—including the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitical conflicts, and supply chain disruptions—Vietnam has maintained macroeconomic stability and promoted sustainable growth. This research report provides an in-depth analysis of results over the past five years, focusing on the implementation of 23 key socio-economic indicators and three strategic breakthroughs in institutions, infrastructure, and human resources. Data indicate a robust recovery in GDP growth; furthermore, administrative reform efforts have eliminated over 3,200 business regulations, resulting in annual savings of approximately 49 trillion VND. Vietnam also set a new record in import-export turnover, estimated at 920 billion USD, while attracting the highest realized Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in five years. However, the report identifies bottlenecks in labor productivity and public investment disbursement that require resolution. Overall, the past five years provide a solid foundation for the nation to reach its goal of becoming a high-income developed country by 2045.

Keywords: Vietnam's economy, the 13th National Congress, era of the nation's rise.

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Cite This Article: Anh, L. L., & Ha, V. T. (2026). Vietnam's Economy After Five Years of Implementing the Resolution of the 13th National Congress Resolution: Target Framework, Outcomes, And Strategic Orientations Toward A New Era of The Nation's Rise. The American Journal of Social Science and Education Innovations, 8(01), 47–54. <https://doi.org/10.37547/tajssei/Volume08Issue01-06>

Introduction

The Resolution of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam was issued in January

2021, passed by the National Assembly in Resolution No. 16/2021/QH15 on the five-year socio-economic development plan for 2021 - 2025¹, and has become a

¹ Vietnam National Assembly (2021), Resolution No. 16/2021/QH15 on the five-year socio-economic

development plan for 2021 - 2025, <https://thuvienphapluat.vn/van-ban/Dau-tu/Nghi-quyet->

statutory strategic document and the Government's action program. This was a time when both the global and domestic economies faced historic trials. With a long-term vision, the Resolution not only sets targets for the 2021–2025 period but also defines a development roadmap to 2030 and a vision toward 2045². This is a phase where Vietnam must address a “dual” challenge: responding to external shocks while conducting a deep economic restructuring to escape the middle-income trap. Assessing the economic situation after five years is not merely a mid-term review; it serves as a scientific basis to identify new growth drivers in the digital era and green transition. As the global economic order shifts from multilateralism to fragmentation, new-generation Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) and shifting investment flows have created both opportunities and challenges for Vietnam³. This study aims to comprehensively analyze economic pillars—from macroeconomic stability to infrastructural breakthroughs and international standing—to provide a detailed picture of Vietnam's transformation.

Results

1. Strategic Objective Framework and Orientations for Socio-Economic Development Strategy for 2021-2030 Under the 13th National Congress Resolution

1.1. General Objectives & Vision

General Objectives of Vietnam in 2021-2030 is to enhance the Party's leadership, ruling capacity, and combativeness; to build a pure, strong, and comprehensive Party and political system; to consolidate and strengthen the people's trust in the Party, the State,

and the socialist regime; to kindle the aspiration to develop a prosperous and happy country, while promoting the will and strength of great national unity in combination with the power of the era; to comprehensively and synchronously accelerate the cause of renewal (Doi Moi), industrialization, and modernization; to build and firmly defend the Fatherland while maintaining a peaceful and stable environment; and to strive by the mid-21st century for our country to become a developed, socialist-oriented nation.

The most significant new feature of this framework is the definition of three development milestones, reflecting the aspiration for national prosperity:

- **By 2025**, marking the 50th anniversary of the total liberation of the South and national reunification, To be a developing country with a modern-oriented industry, surpassing the lower-middle-income level.
- **By 2030**, marking the 100th anniversary of the Party's founding, to be a developing country with a modern industry and upper-middle income.
- **By 2045**, marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, now the Socialist Republic of Vietnam, aims to become a developed, high-income country.

The 5-year Socio-Economic Development Plan (2021–2025) proposed a system of 23 key indicators—an increase of two indicators compared to the previous period—reflecting a more comprehensive scope across economic, social, and environmental sectors. The focus of this period is the transition of the growth model from breadth to depth, predicated on science, technology, and innovation.

16-2021-QH15-phat-trien-kinh-te-xa-hoi-5-nam-2021-2025-484259.aspx

² Resolution of the 13th National Congress of the Party, <https://tulieuvankien.dangcongsan.vn/ban-chap-hanh-trung-uong-dang/dai-hoi-dang/lan-thu-xiii/ngghi-quyet-dai-hoi-dai-bieu-toan-quoc-lan-thu-xiii-cua-dang-3663>

³ Ministry of Industry and Trade (2025), Promoting CPTPP dissemination, increasing implementation efficiency and exports, <https://moit.gov.vn/tin-tuc/day-manh-tuyen-truyen-cptpp-de-gia-tang-hieu-qua-thuc-thi-va-xuat-khau.html>

Table 1: Key Economic Indicators for 2021–2025 (Resolution XIII Targets)

Economic Indicator Group	Resolution XIII Target
Average 5-year GDP growth rate	6.5 - 7.0% / year
GDP per capita by 2025	4,700 - 5,000 USD
Contribution of Total Factor Productivity (TFP) to growth	Approx. 45%
Average growth rate of social labor productivity	Over 6.5% / year
Share of manufacturing and processing industry in GDP	Over 25%
Share of the digital economy in GDP	Approx. 20%
Urbanization rate by 2025	Approx. 45%

Source: Documents of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam

These indicators reflect the political will to enhance the quality of growth. Notably, setting the digital economy target at 20% of GDP is a bold step, confirming Vietnam's determination to capitalize on the opportunities presented by the 4th Industrial Revolution.

2.2. Five Core Development Viewpoints:

The 2021-2030 Strategy shifts the mindset from “fast growth” to “growth based on quality and sustainability”:

- **New Drivers:** Rapid and sustainable development based primarily on **Science and Technology, Innovation, and Digital Transformation**.
- **Development Center:** People are the center, the subject, the most important resource, and the ultimate goal of development.
- **Economic Model:** Comprehensively and synchronously perfecting the socialist-oriented market economy institutions.
- **Autonomy:** Building an independent and self-reliant economy; enhancing the economy's adaptability and resilience.

2.3. Three Strategic Breakthroughs

These breakthroughs have been updated with new content suitable for the 4.0 era:

- **Breakthrough 1: Institutions.** Focus on removing bottlenecks, especially in factor markets (land, finance). Establishing legal frameworks for new economic models (digital, sharing, and circular economies).
- **Breakthrough 2: Human Resources.** Prioritizing **high-quality human resources** and talent for leadership, management, and key high-tech sectors.
- **Breakthrough 3: Infrastructure System.** Prioritizing national key transport infrastructure (North-South expressway, airports, seaports). Special emphasis on **Digital Infrastructure** (5G, national databases) as essential infrastructure.

2. Implementation Results (2021-2025)

2.1 Growth Performance and Macroeconomic Stability

Over the past five years, Vietnam's economy has experienced various phases. 2021–2022 was a period of hardship as COVID-19 disrupted production. However, through a flexible adaptation strategy, the economy recovered strongly during 2023–2025. By 2025, Vietnam will return to a high-growth trajectory. According to the General Statistics Office, GDP growth in the first nine

months of 2025 reached an estimated 7.85%, approaching the annual target of 8%⁴.

This recovery resulted from unlocking internal resources rather than short-term stimulus packages. Final consumption in the first nine months of 2025 increased by 8.07%, contributing 73.83% to the overall growth rate. This indicates that the domestic market of 100 million people is becoming a vital pillar, reducing dependence on external export shocks. Simultaneously, the manufacturing and processing sector maintained

impressive momentum, with the Industrial Production Index (IIP) rising by 10.4% in the same period⁵.

2.2. Inflation Control and Major Balances

A highlight of the Government's performance is the ability to maintain inflation below 4% despite significant global cost-push pressures. In the 12 months of 2025, the average Consumer Price Index (CPI) rose by 3.31% year-over-year⁶. This stability has fostered a predictable business environment, strengthening investor confidence.

Table 2: Macroeconomic Indicators (12 Months of 2025)

Indicator	Value (compared to 2024)
GDP Growth	8.02%
Consumer Price Index (CPI)	3.31%
Core Inflation	3.21%
Industrial Production Index (IIP)	9.2%
Growth in Export of Goods and Services	18.2%

Source: General Statistics Office, 2025

The close coordination between fiscal and monetary policies has helped Vietnam maintain major economic balances. Budget revenue is ensured, and the budget deficit is controlled at 3.1-3.2% of GDP, creating room for investment,

⁴ General Statistics Office - Ministry of Finance (2025), Statistical information: Export and import data for the months of 2025, <https://www.nso.gov.vn/du-lieu-va-so-lieu-thong-ke/>

⁵ Viet Hang (2025), Industrial production in Q3/2025 will grow by double digits, <https://tapchicongthuong.vn/san-xuat-cong-nghiep-quy-iii-2025-tang-truong-hai-con-so-257241.htm#:~:text=T%C3%ADnh%20chung%209%20th%C3%A1ng%20n%C4%83m,nhi%C3%AAn%20gi%E1%BA%A3m%204%2C7%25.>

⁶ Phuong Anh, Trinh Tuan (2025), Infographics: Some results of implementing the Economic Development Plan for 2025 and the 5-year period 2021-2025, <https://thoibaotaichinhvietnam.vn/infographics-mot-so-ket-qua-thuc-hien-ke-hoach-phat-trien-kinh-te-nam-2025-va-5-nam-2021-2025-185438.html>.

National Statistic Office (2025), Consumer price index archive, <https://www.nso.gov.vn/en/cpi/>

development, and social welfare activities⁷. Even during periods of strong fluctuations in the gold and foreign exchange markets (gold prices in September 2025 increased by more than 55% compared to the same period), the State has maintained the relative stability of the Vietnamese Dong, actively supporting import and export activities.

2.3. Implementation of Three Strategic Breakthroughs

Firstly, Institutional Breakthrough: Reform and Deregulation:

Over the past five years, Vietnam has undertaken a revolution in administrative reform and the reduction of business barriers. Vietnam has undergone a revolution in administrative reform. Resolution 66/NQ-CP led to a widespread legal review, resulting in the simplification of over 3,200 business regulations by late 2025⁸. This directly reduced compliance costs for businesses, saving an estimated 48.6 trillion VND annually.

The political system has shifted from “management” to “service,” evidenced by a Satisfaction Index of Public Administration Services (SIPAS) reaching 83.94% in 2025. In particular, the implementation of Project 06 on the development of population data applications, electronic identification, and authentication has completely changed the method of administrative transactions, eliminating paper household registration books and connecting national databases. This is the foundation for building a transparent and efficient digital economy, minimizing informal costs.

Secondly, Infrastructural Breakthrough: Large-Scale National Projects:

The 2021–2025 period is considered an explosion of national key projects³⁶.

- *Aviation:* Long Thanh International Airport is striving to exceed progress for its first flight in December 2025.
- *Energy:* The inauguration of the first LNG power plant marked a turning point in energy security and emission reduction.
- *Road Transport:* Numerous highway projects were inaugurated across 34 provinces in December 2025, reaching a record mileage. This helps to narrow the gap between key economic regions.

The disbursement of public investment capital still faces many challenges. As of August 2025, the disbursement rate had not reached 50% due to obstacles related to land clearance, planning, and the impact of natural disasters. This requires more decisive institutional solutions for investment in the coming period to transform this “golden” capital into a real growth driver.

Thirdly, Human Resources and Innovation:

In the era of AI, human capital is central. Vietnam's Global Innovation Index (GII) remained impressive, ranking 44th out of 139 countries in 2025.

⁷ Minh Anh (2025), Budget 2026: Large scale, pressure of budget deficit and fiscal discipline, <http://baokiemtoan.vn/ngan-sach-nam-2026-quy-mo-lon-ap-luc-boi-chi-va-ky-luat-tai-khoa-43946.html>

⁸ Chinhphu.vn (2025), Tập trung hoàn thành mục tiêu cắt giảm, đơn giản hóa thủ tục hành chính, điều kiện kinh doanh, <https://baochinhphu.vn/tap-trung-hoan-thanh-muc-tieu-cat-giam-don-gian-hoa-thu-tuc-hanh-chinh-dieu-kien-kinh-doanh-102251221222446831.htm>

Table 3: Vietnam's GII Ranking within ASEAN (2025)

Rank	Country
1	Singapore
2	Malaysia
3	Vietnam
4	Thailand
5	Philippines

Despite these gains, average social labor productivity growth (5.24%) remains below the 6.5–7% target⁹. This indicates that the quality of training and the application of technology in practical production are still not commensurate with their potential. The decline in education spending in international rankings (down to 116th place) is a wake-up call about the need for stronger reinvestment in education and training, especially in high-tech fields such as semiconductors¹⁰.

2.4. New Drivers: Digital, Green, and Circular Economies

The Resolution of the 13th National Congress of the Communist Party of Vietnam opened a new direction by prioritizing the development of the digital economy and green growth. After five years, these concepts have become a reality. The digital economy is expected to reach 20% of GDP by 2025, creating new business models based on e-commerce and digital finance.

Regarding sustainable development, Vietnam has taken concrete actions to realize its Net Zero commitment. Over 1.4 billion new trees were planted between 2021 and 2025, contributing to improved environmental indicators¹¹. Circular economy models in localities such as Hue City have significantly reduced waste (by 89%) and are expected to contribute an additional 4.5% to the local GRDP by 2030¹². However, the pressure for energy transition remains significant as the low-carbon energy

index shows signs of decline, requiring stronger support policies for renewable energy.

3. Several Existing Barriers and Challenges

Besides the bright spots, the economy still faces internal barriers that could hinder growth in the coming period:

1. Quality of growth and labor productivity: Slow labor productivity growth (5.24%) compared to the target is a major challenge in enhancing national competitiveness. Without a great improvement in the technical and vocational skills of the workforce, Vietnam will find it difficult to overcome the middle-income trap.
2. Bottlenecks in public investment disbursement: Overlapping legal procedures and difficulties in land clearance have prevented hundreds of trillions of VND of public investment capital from being injected into the economy promptly. This directly slows down the pace of infrastructure completion and reduces the effectiveness of the spread of state capital.

⁹ Nguyen Van Anh, Nguyen Ngoc Diem (2025), Improving labor productivity in Vietnam today, <https://www.quanlynhanuoc.vn/2025/07/15/nang-cao-nang-suat-lao-dong-o-viet-nam-hien-nay/>

¹⁰ Thao Le (2025), Global Innovation Index (GII) 2025 Report: Vietnam Maintains Position 44/139, <https://nhandan.vn/bao-cao-chi-so-doi-moi-sang-tao-toan-cau-gii-2025-viet-nam-giu-vung-vi-tri-44139-post908516.html>

¹¹ Thanh Tam (2025), More than 1.4 billion trees have been planted in the 1 billion tree planting project, <https://nhandan.vn/hon-14-ty-cay-da-duoc-trong-trong-de-an-trong-1-ty-cay-xanh-post928165.html>

¹² Mai Lam (2025), Circular economy helps Hue reduce waste by 89%, <https://thoibaotaichinhvietnam.vn/kinh-te-tuan-hoan-giup-hue-giam-89-chat-thai-189553.html>

3. Health of the private sector: The state of domestic businesses still has many dark spots. Although the number of new businesses is increasing, the dissolution rate is also soaring (60% in 2025), indicating that small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are struggling to cope with market shocks and new international tariff pressures.

4. Risks from the international environment: Vietnam's heavy reliance on exports to key markets such as the US (accounting for 30% of export value) makes it vulnerable to reciprocal tax policies and new technical barriers.

4. Prospects and Vision 2045: Vietnam in the New Era

Vision 2045 extends beyond income figures to represent a fundamental shift in **national quality**:

- **Mid-tier Technology Power:** Moving beyond outsourcing to owning patents and core technologies in niche sectors such as high-tech agriculture, cybersecurity, and telecommunications.
- **Prosperous and Civilized Society:** Establishing a universal social security system; keeping the wealth gap under control; and transforming Vietnamese cultural values into "soft power" on the international stage.
- **International Standing:** Deeply participating in shaping the "rules of the game" for trade and security within the Asia-Pacific region.

Table 4: Strategic Shifts from 2021-2025 Period to 2026-2030 Period

Factor	2021-2025 Period	2026-2030 Period (Projected)
Main Drivers	Export, Public Investment, FDI	Digital Economy, Innovation, Domestic Consumption
Industry	Outsourcing, Assembly	Semiconductors, Smart Manufacturing, New Energy
Infrastructure	Expressways	High-speed Railway, Digital Infrastructure, Green Seaports
Management Mindset	Macroeconomic Stability, Inflation Control	Breakthrough Growth, Controlled Risk-taking

Conclusion

Looking back at the five years since the implementation of the Resolution of the 13th National Congress, the Vietnamese economy has achieved many significant results. From macroeconomic stability amidst the pandemic to setting new records in foreign trade and attracting investment, Vietnam has affirmed its position in the region and the world. The implementation of the three strategic breakthroughs has created substantive changes in the economic structure, from a burgeoning

digital government to the development of expressways connecting the country.

However, the road ahead remains challenging. To achieve the goals of 2030 and 2045, Vietnam cannot be complacent. More groundbreaking solutions are needed to remove institutional bottlenecks in investment and enhance labor productivity based on high technology. Preparations for the 14th National Congress need to focus strongly on unleashing the nation's internal strengths, using science and technology as the main driving force, and persistently pursuing the path of green

growth to ensure a prosperous future for future generations. Vietnam is facing a new opportunity, a “new era of prosperity” unfolding on the solid foundation of the past five years.

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