

INFORMATION OF DOCTORAL DISSERTATION

Doctoral thesis title: Improving income of smallholder mango farmers in the Mekong Delta participating in the global value chain

Major: Political Economy

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1. DISSERTATION SUMMARY

Based on the theory of smallholder farmers' income and global agricultural product value chain, the thesis has selected the theory of improving small-scale and smallholder farmers' income by participating in the global value chain, thereby building the analytical framework of the thesis that is to improve income of smallholder mango farmers in the Mekong Delta participating in the global value chain. The global mango value chain is a high-value chain. To join it, in addition to the quality factor, it is crucial to meet the strict food hygiene and safety requirements. Meanwhile, most smallholder farmers in developing countries are small-scale, produce spontaneously, are not linked to the market and do not attach special importance to food hygiene and safety, leading to their exclusion from the chain. Therefore, smallholder farmers' income is always low and highly fluctuating. The thesis shows that there are still opportunities for small-scale and smallholder farmers in developing countries to participate in the global agricultural product chain if their capacity is improved through four criteria: (i) market accessibility, (ii) accessibility to training, (iii) connectivity and connectivity organization, (iv) financial accessibility.

Analysis of the actual situation shows that there are many different types of chains of mango production and consumption in the Mekong Delta: traditional chain, modern chain, unofficial-quota export chain and global chain in which the traditional chain is dominant and the global chain is still limited (accounting for 5% of the area). The survey results of two groups of smallholder farmers (participating and not participating in the official-quota mango export chain) show that income of the group of smallholder mango farmers participating in the global chain is 18.7% higher than that of the group of

smallholder farmers not participating in the global chain. Although some localities in the Mekong Delta have made great efforts to promote the official-quota mango export, the speed of transition from the traditional chain to the global chain is still slow, leading to difficulties, instability and high fluctuations in improving smallholder mango farmers' income in the Mekong Delta during the last time. The thesis has pointed out the achievements, shortcomings and causes of shortcomings in mango production and consumption in the Mekong Delta upon participation in the global value chain in order to improve smallholder mango farmers' income. Hence, the Thesis has proposed three groups of solutions to improve smallholder mango farmers' income in the Mekong Delta participating in the global value chain: (1) improving smallholder farmers' competitiveness, (2) upgrading the mango value chain in the Mekong Delta and (3) improving the business environment to support and promote the development of the mango chain.

2. THE NEW SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS

The new point of the thesis is to clarify the opportunities for small-scale and smallholder mango farmers in the Mekong Delta participating in the global value chain, a chain with high added value and many barriers to entry, thereby improving their income and reducing fluctuations. The thesis gradually clarifies:

- Firstly, clearly demonstrating that when participating in the global value chain, mango farmers' income in the Mekong Delta is improved and fluctuations are reduced.
- Secondly, clarifying the ability to participate in the global value chain of small-scale and smallholder mango farmers in the Mekong Delta through 04 criteria (i) market accessibility, (i) accessibility to training, (iii) linkage and organization capacity, (iv) financial accessibility; clarifying the actual situation of smallholder mango farmers' competitiveness; the factors affecting the participation in the global value chain of smallholder mango farmers in the Mekong Delta; pointing out the shortcomings, limitations and weaknesses in the current mango production and consumption that affects the improvement in smallholder farmers' income.
- Thirdly, proposing three feasible groups of solutions to enhance smallholder farmers' capacity, upgrade the chain and improve the business environment so that small-scale and smallholder mango farmers in the Mekong Delta can participate in the global value chain to improve income and reduce fluctuations.

3. APPLICATIONS/ APPLICABILITY IN PRACTICE AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

The research findings can apply in practice in the aspects: (1) Firstly, it serves as a theoretical basis on the opportunities to participate in the high value chain (the global chain) of small-scale and smallholder farmers in general and the mango industry in particular in order to improve income. In addition, these findings serve as a reference to those interested in this field. (2) Secondly, it proposes solutions to improve income of small-scale and smallholder farmers by participating in the global value chain. This solution applies not only to the mango industry but also to other agricultural products. (3) Thirdly, it helps agents participating in the mango chain in the Mekong Delta to recognize the shortcomings, thereby taking measures to overcome, upgrading the chain and helping to link the agricultural product production and consumption chain more and more effectively. (4) Fourthly, it provides central and local agricultural managers with an overview of agricultural product production and consumption according to the value chain.

Despite the efforts, due to limitations in many aspects, both objective and subjective factors, the thesis still has some issues that need to be further studied.

Firstly, the thesis uses the HS-080450 code to analyze the world mango trade. This code is used for 3 types of products including mango, guava and mangosteen by countries around the world (except for China). The reason is that the world mango trade has just developed in recent years, therefore, the mango product has not been separated. Using the HS-080450 code as a basis for analysis and evaluation will reduce the accuracy of the analysis of the world mango trade as well as Vietnamese mango trade. Thus, it is essential to conduct further research on the mango chain in the Mekong Delta to clarify this issue in order to provide a more accurate picture of mango production and consumption.

Secondly, the thesis provides an overview of smallholder farmers' income in countries around the world, but the analysis only focuses on the overview smallholder farmers' income in developed countries because these countries have strong and long-standing data systems. Although the thesis also points out that data collection in developing countries is difficult due to weak statistical systems, household living

standards surveys are the only source of data. Although UNECE, (2007) points out that the change in smallholder farmers' income in developing countries is similar to the trajectory that developed countries have experienced. However, it is essential to conduct further research on smallholder farmers's income in developing countries in order to provide a more complete picture of smallholder farmers's income in countries around the world.

Thirdly, the proposed solutions are based on the shortcomings and limitations that the thesis has pointed out from the perspective of political economy. It is necessary to have further research in other fields such as economics, administration, economic management, etc. in order to have a more comprehensive view of this issue.

Academic Supervisor	Ph.D. Candidate
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