

Back-naming the Mekong river

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(LĐ) - On December 17th 2009, the Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has officially launched the construction commencement of the improvement project of navigational channel to the Bassac river in Dan Thanh commune, Duyen Hai ditrict.

This is a national focal project which aims the construction of navigational channel for full-load 10.000 DWT and partial-load 20.000 vessels to navigate at the ports on the Bassac river. This is a gateway channel to the open sea....

Promoting the competitiveness on rice and shrimps of the Mekong Delta

According to Mr. Vuong Dinh Lam, the Director of Vietnam Maritime Administration - the project Owner, the Mekong

Delta's export/import cargo volume reaches approximately 15 million tons whilst the river and sea port system is under poor development.

Can Tho and Cai Cui ports, the Mekong Delta's two biggest ports, are now capable of receiving vessels of 3000-5000 tons due to the fact that Dinh An estuary from Can Tho port to the sea is unstable and frequently covered with deposits, with a depth of 6.-7 meters only at spring tide and 3-4m only at neap tide.

Annually, Vietnam Maritime Administration has to spend VND 14-15 billion in the dredging work at Dinh An estuary in order for up-to 5.000 ton vessels' navigation. But, the re-sedimentation occurs following 2-3 months.

Correspondingly, 70-80% of imports and exports must be transited at the ports at Ho Chi Minh by road, which results in an on-land traffic burden on the National Highway No 1, traffic gridlock, and accidents in HCM city, increasing the transportation and storage costs by \$170-180/container or 47-8/ton, lengthening the transportation time and taking adverse impacts on as well as lessening the competitive advantage of the Delta's agricultural products.

The construction investment in the improvement project of navigational channel to the Bassac river shall help facilitate the cargo transport at the Mekong Delta instead of transiting at the ports in Ho Chi Minh city, economizing the transportation cost and fostering the competitiveness on rice and shrimps of the Mekong Delta.

For that reason, the project has been ratified and capitalized from the Government bonds with a total of over than VND 5 trillion. The project is scheduled to come into operation by end 2011 with a cargo throughput of nearly 22 million tons/years, serving the cargo export/import of the Mekong Delta.



Kicking off the improvement project of navigational channel to the Bassac river

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As revealed by Mr. Nguyen Dinh Van, General Director of Maritime Safety Company No II, there are, currently, 08 estuaries only of the Mekong river instead of 09 estuaries as it should be due to the fact that the Bassac estuary has been deposited since 1995 and nearly covered with deposits at present. As thus, the opening of a new channel plays a significantly important role in re-smoothing the estuary, back-naming the Mekong river. As a result, the local people in Tra Vinh province, in which the project is implemented, feel very pleased with the relocation as well as clearance though as to smooth one more estuary and hope that the project will help sharpen the Mekong Delta's socio-economy.

According to Mr. Tran Hoan Kim, Chairman of Tra Vinh Province People's Committee, the site clearance has been completed with an area of over 1.200 hectares since September 2009 and the construction has been assigned to the Contractor. On behalf of the people in Tra Vinh, the Provincial Chairman has expressed his genuine thanks to the Party, the Government, and relevant Agencies for their attempt in preparing the project, promoting the Mekong Delta's socio-economic growth.

Also, the project is one of the pivotal chains in the traffic system at the Mekong Delta with a population of 20% and a GDP contribution of 20% of the whole country. This is a significant motive in integrating the Mekong Delta with the country and the world and fostering the export/import and tourism, says Mr. Ho Nghia Dung, the Minister of Ministry of Transport.

Speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony, the Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung has paid a compliment to the Ministry of Transport, Vietnam Maritime Administration, the Association between Portcoast (Vietnam) – Nippon Koei (Japan) and DHI (Denmark) as a sub-contractor, Vinawaco and Tra Vinh province for their efforts in the project preparation and implementation.

As highlighted by the Prime Minister, the export/import cargo volume of the Mekong Delta is, in coming years, to be expected to be transited at the ports in Ho Chi Minh city and Dong Nai province with approximately 30 million tons/year, increasing by 7USD/ton as compared to the export/import at the ports on the Bassac river. Meanwhile, the project investment capital wins about USD 300 million. As thus, the project, subsequent to coming the operation, shall help economize about USD 2.1 billion/year. Due to being a highly efficient economical project, the project Owner, the Consultant, Tra Vinh province have been assigned to implement the project in compliance with the construction progress and quality assurance.

On behalf of the Joint-Venture, Mr Luu Dinh Tien, General Director of Waterway Construction Company, promises to complete the project upon the schedule and construction quality.

The improvement project of navigational channel to the Bassac river consists of: One-way channel of 40 km long, breakwater, bank protection dike, ferry, 500T barge berth, jetty via Bypass canal, embankment, navigation AIDS and maritime information equipment. The whole channel is of about 40 km long. The total dredging volume for shaping a new channel and improving the existing channel sections reaches 28 million m³ with a bottom level of -6.5 CD.

In order to ensure the stability during the operation, the bank protection dike of 36 km in length should be constructed as proposed by the Consultant. Also, 02 breakwaters with a length of 2.500 each are to be constructed at the estuary, where Bypass canal is to be shaped.

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(Translated by Portcoast)