

Vietnam Agro-Diplomacy: Building a National Brand for Agricultural Products to Advance Economic Diplomacy and Global Influence

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Abstract: *In political discourse, access to food and sustainable supply chains are primary concerns, and to some extent, agriculture has become a strategic tool for political influence. With a globally competitive position as a rice, coffee, and tropical fruit exporter, and a diversified agricultural economy, Vietnam is in a convenient position to develop agriculture as a core pillar of its economic diplomacy. Yet, for a competitive and economically advanced agricultural economy, Vietnam's agricultural economy continues to compete on a perception of low value. This paper describes and delineates Vietnam's Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED) as an integration of trade, culture, and sustainability within a soft power diplomacy framework. This is within a context of a developed nation and economic diplomacy and political soft power discourse, as well as a branding theory context, and soft power while considering agricultural products as 'strategic ambassadors' of a well-placed country focusing on its perception of credibility, modernity, and culture. With the aid of policy documents from FAO, OECD, and WTO, as well as the theory discourse from south-east countries, Peru, and South Korea, this paper creates a policy framework involving spatial identity rights, digital tracking, climate adaptation, and public diplomacy. For conclusion that transforming Vietnam's agricultural exports into branded diplomatic assets will enhance the country's ability to negotiate, expand its range of markets, and resituate Vietnam as a reliable supplier and a sustainable player within the global food order.*

Keywords: *Agricultural diplomacy, Soft power, Sation branding, Economic policy, Sustainability, Trade strategy.*

1. Introduction

In this century, diplomacy incorporates agriculture, which used to be an economically domestic sector. Disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change, and geopolitical conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine War, highlighted the need to recognize food security as an aspect of global stability, not just a domestic issue (FAO, 2023; OECD, 2021). As noted by the World Trade Organization (2022) and the G7 Hiroshima Summit (2023), resilience in food and agricultural trade juxtaposed an active approach to foreign policy and soft power. Nations that promote their agricultural systems as sustainable, traceable, and culturally unique, gain diplomatic leverage as well as market dominance. In this context, food is used as a tool of diplomacy and the branding of agriculture constitutes a subtle yet powerful form of economic clout (Rockower, 2012; Okano-Heijmans, 2011).

Vietnam's situation with regard to the new global reconfigurations is paradoxical but still positive. By the end of 2023, the country's agricultural product exports achieved an impressive value of USD 53 billion, making Vietnam one of the world's top 5 exporters of rice, coffee, pepper, cashew nuts, and tropical fruits (GSO, 2024; ITC, 2024). Vietnam's diverse agro-ecological zones stretch across 3,200 km. Farming practices and diverse agro-ecological zones allow for variation in agro products. From the north across the Mekong Delta, which is home to the award-winning ST25 rice. ST25 rice is a world famous variety of rice, awarded for its quality. The Mekong Delta is home to award-winning ST25 rice. Rice harvest is a rich cultural heritage. These exports are economically significant, but are also important for the biodiversity, heritage, and identity of the regions and the country as a whole. When it comes to exports, Vietnam's agriculture runs on volume and prices which signals weak brand equity, symbolic capital and reputation on the global trading arena (Nguyen & Jolly, 2019; Tran, 2021). Vietnam's relative history on agricultural exports and potential is determined within the scope of insufficient geopolitical positioning that comes from weak GIs legislation, fragmentation of the production and value chain, and inadequate exterior communication.

Emerging economies still lack institutional frameworks to strategically use agricultural branding for diplomacy. With its focus on cultural diplomacy, Thailand's Kitchen of the World campaign intertwined tourism, cuisine, and agro-exports under a unified narrative (Nuttavuthisit, 2019). Positioned as a "green economy," Peru linked biodiversity to the global health and sustainability discourse through its Superfoods Peru initiative (PromPerú, 2022). Similar to these, South Korea projected a unique national image through Kimchi Diplomacy, which combined global culinary and UNESCO-acclaimed cuisine (Lee, 2020). They demonstrate how agricultural goods can "strategic ambassadors" and facilitate the intertwining of trade, culture, and diplomacy to broaden the reach of a nation. The mismatch is in Vietnam, where agricultural promotion is largely sectoral, and diplomacy is driven by a coherent narrative that emphasizes productivity, export growth, and quality standards without integrating agriculture to the overarching vision of foreign policy and national branding.

This paper attempts to fill the aforementioned gap by proposing the Vietnam's Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED) Model, where I redefine the primary pillar of economic diplomacy and soft-power construction to be the Inter-national Relations and Office Diplomacy of Agriculture. This model is driven by Anholt's (2007) Competitive Identity theory, Nye's (2004) soft power, and economic diplomacy described by Okano-Heijmans (2011). Thus, VAED is based on multidimensionality, where Vietnam's diplomatic agricultural offerings with various levels of recognition and value are viewed as economic diplomacy. For this purpose, agricultural exports are income earning exports. However, they also serve to communicate policies, values, and cultural authenticity while became indicative of sustainable relations, conscious and intentional agricultural export relations, relational exports, and cultural policies of the exporter country. VAED is built on four cardinal foundational facets, which are designed as enhancements to the country's current diplomatic practices centred on the pillars of nation branding, digital traceability, sustainability diplomacy, and institutional coordination as pivoted frameworks designed to reposition Vietnam from a high-volume agricultural exporter to an anchored country brand of value.

In this regard, the paper adds value in theory and practice. In theory, it builds on the nation branding and economic diplomacy literature by studying the intersection of agricultural value chains and international image construction. In practice, it delivers a policy blueprint for Vietnam and similar emerging economies intending to incorporate agriculture into the geopolitics of their foreign relations. In elevating agriculture from a commodity sector to a comprehensive sector for negotiation and collaboration, Vietnam will be able to change its farmlands into instruments of power and diplomacy. Ultimately, every cup of coffee and grain of rice will be a testament to the economic and socio-political narrative of the country.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

Nation Branding and Place Branding

Nation branding conceptualizations origin from Anholt (2007) as he describes it as orchestrating perception on a country with intention through policies, symbols, and narratives. Notably, the field has advanced to recognize the complexity of the components comprising national identity, including culture, governance, investment, and tourism, as well as exports (Dinnie, 2015; Aronczyk, 2013). Within this scope, agriculture is exceptional, as it is an amalgam of solid economic components and intangible attributes, including genuineness, lineage, and ecological concern. Fan (2010) mentions that the branding of developing nations focuses on culture and the heritage aspect, whereas competitiveness in the contemporary sense depends on the integration of modern tools and other marketing elements.

Branding places - an extension of nation branding - has become a powerful tool for rural economies to promote their unique marketplace product offerings (Hanna & Rowley, 2011). Examples like French Champagne, Italian Parma ham, and Colombian coffee are case studies of how geographical indications (GIs) build and sustain reputational places, and reflecting the interdependence of product genuineness and the reputation of the territory (Belletti et al., 2017). For emerging economies, GI position international branding will most likely uplift the prestige of domestic products from mere commodities to cultural staples, all the while demonstrating alignment with global quality standards (Török & Jámor, 2022). These two interdependent roles - symbolic and economic - make agricultural branding a highly strategic domain for soft power projection and nation branding.

Economic Diplomacy and Agricultural Trade

As part of their strategic goals, countries can align their diplomatic goals with their trade relations, investments, and access to markets Economic diplomacy encompasses this wide scope (Okano-Heijmans, 2011). This also includes navigating Market Access negotiations in the Agricultural Sector within the framework of the WTO: SPS standards, GI protection and sustainable (WTO, 2022). Economic diplomacy, as described by Okano-Heijmans, exists in the nexus between international relations and political economy, thus providing unique instruments of statecraft and market.

Diplomatic relations are further enhanced by the international competitiveness of a country's Agricultural exports. The FAO (2018) articulates this idea by noting that agricultural trade advances a country's international negotiating position and prominence, in addition to generating income, providing employment, and expanding agricultural employment. This position is further advocated by Belletti and Marescotti (2017) who details how GIs function as diplomatic instruments of trade, with embedded socio-territorial values. Hence, in the hierarchy of confidence, agricultural diplomacy is the highest form of trade promotion, as it entails a robust positioning of the country internationally, and an increase in the volume of exports.

Soft Power and the Cultural Dimension of Agriculture

Nye (2004) defines Soft Power as the ability of a state to attain its objectives through appeal rather than force. The most noticeable manifestations of cultural diplomacy include a nation's food, language, and culture. Here, food products are considered 'cultural messengers.' Rockower (2012) built on this idea and described gastrodiploacy as the practice of crossing culinary boundaries to foster understanding and expand a country's reach.

Multiple sources have pointed out the importance of incorporating food and agriculture into state diplomacy. For example, Thailand's Kitchen of the World initiative integrated branding with tourism and public diplomacy by connecting local farmers with international restaurant chains (Nuttavuthisit, 2019). Peru's Superfoods Peru campaign, promoted by PromPerú (2022), added agricultural biodiversity to the narrative of sustainable development, and South Korea strategically enhanced international appreciation of its culture through Kimchi Diplomacy (Lee, 2020). These examples confirm that the use of agricultural soft power depends on storytelling, the right institutional framework, and supportive regulations. These frameworks and regulations are still evolving in Vietnam.

Vietnamese Agricultural Branding: Current Gaps

Improving productivity, food safety, and value chain management remain focal points within recent studies about Vietnam agricultural export (Nguyen & Jolly, 2019; Tran, 2021). Vietnam still has gaps to fill when it comes to GI (Geographical Indication) branding. The recognition of Phu Quoc Fish Sauce and Buon Ma Thuot Coffee to GIs is a positive step, however, the branding, still seems product-centric and lacks strategic integration towards diplomatic branding. With agricultural policies being the responsibility of multiple ministries, it seems peculiar that the one-person policy surrounding diplomatic branding persists, to suggest that the export image zone soft power policy is a diplomatic branding priority.

Soft power remains a goal Risk remaining unaddressed within policy gaps. The consolidated soft power is acutely dependent on the administrative gaps and the PD (participation diplomacy) framework. policies that address smallholder fragmentation, certification, and IP (intellectual property) gaps abroad will decide if Vietnam is able to project a cohesive national image (World Bank, 2020; FAO, 2023). The absence of coordinated governance gaps across MARD, MOIT, and MOFA results in the fragmentation of Vietnam's agricultural identity on the global stage. The opening of the PD (participation diplomacy) framework will allow the agricultural sector to be the first focus of diplomacy on sustainability, cultural transformation, and technological innovation.

Conceptual Framework: Vietnam's Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED)

From the above theories, the author develops a new framework called Vietnam's Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED) which is based on three interrelated theories.

- Nation Branding Theory (Anholt, 2007) views agricultural exports as mirrors of a country's identity and competitiveness.
- Soft Power Theory (Nye, 2004) interprets agricultural products as tools of attraction and influence, thereby enhancing one's cultural and diplomatic power.
- Economic Diplomacy (Okano-Heijmans, 2011) puts agriculture as a policy tool within the nexus of trade, image, and negotiation as a diplomatic power.

In the VAED model, agricultural products are multi-dimensional ambassadors, creating a trade value, demonstrating sustainability, and broadcast a country's culture. The model proposes a "soft power value chain" which consists of three elements:

1. Input— regional agricultural identity and heritage.
2. Process—branding, certification, digital traceability, and promotion of diplomacy.
3. Output—soft power results such as trust, market access, and negotiation power.

This conceptual synthesis presents the analytical framework for Vietnam's policy as detailed in the next sections. By formalizing the VAED approach, Vietnam can pivot from simply exporting agricultural goods, to exporting the "responsibility" of economic diplomacy.

3. Research Methodology

This study uses a mixed-methods approach by incorporating a systematic literature review, expert interviews, and a policy-driven survey to build and test the Vietnam's Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED) framework. During the initial stage, a systematic review of literature and policy documents from 2000 to 2025 was conducted along the lines of the PRISMA protocol (Moher et al., 2009) across the disciplines of Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, and ScienceDirect. The search was processed using the terms "nation branding", "economic diplomacy", "agricultural trade", and "soft power". After removing duplicates, 48 studies were identified based on inclusion criteria (i.e., peer-reviewed, related to agriculture, and focused on diplomacy), and then thematic NVivo 14 analysis was performed to explore the connection between agricultural branding and soft power as instruments of foreign policy. To enrich this synthesis, 12 public policy professionals from MARD, MOIT, MOFA, and exporters as well as academic professionals, were interviewed which provided insights on the institutional barriers and the scope for integrating branding, sustainability, and digital traceability within Vietnam's agro-diplomacy framework. Simultaneously, a structured online survey was conducted that included 120 international importers, trade attachés, and consumers from Japan, the EU, and ASEAN, which

evaluated perceptions of Vietnamese agricultural products along the dimensions of quality, authenticity, traceability, and diplomatic trust using a 5-point Likert scale.

In analyzing quantitative data, SPSS 29 and SmartPLS 4 was used to examine the mediating roles of authenticity and sustainability on national reputation, and I derived qualitative data using thematic coding as per Braun and Clarke (2021). The integration of the three data sets provided validity and reliability through triangulation (Cohen's $\kappa = 0.84$; composite reliability > 0.80 ; AVE > 0.50). All respondents provided informed consent under the Vietnam Personal Data Protection Decree No. 13/2023/NĐ-CP. Based on systematic synthesis and institutional insight along with empirical perception mapping, the proposed methodology seeks to formulate an articulation on the relationship between the branding of agriculture and the soft power of devising actionable strategies to position agriculture at the center of Vietnam's economic diplomacy.

4. Results and Discussion

Data integrated from expert interviews, international surveys, and the PRISMA-based review confirm the relevance of the concept and policies of Vietnam's Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED). Quantitative findings suggest that Vietnam's agricultural exports, though competitive, are still perceived as less valuable and unauthentic on the world stage. As presented in Table 1, descriptive statistics show that of the 120 international respondents, product quality ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 0.58$) and sustainability (3.92 , $SD = 0.71$) are the highest rated among the survey items; however, authenticity (3.64 , $SD = 0.69$) and trust in diplomacy (3.43 , $SD = 0.82$) fell behind. Results of a PLS-SEM analysis show that authenticity and sustainability, together, are significant mediators of the effect of product quality on trust in diplomacy ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$) and account for 62% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.62$) in the international perception. This effect shows how strengthened product traceability and storytelling techniques make Vietnam's agricultural exports more credible within the framework of soft power diplomacy.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Perceptions toward Vietnamese Agricultural Products ($n = 120$)

Construct	Mean	SD	Cronbach's α	Composite Reliability	AVE
Product Quality	4.31	0.58	0.83	0.88	0.61
Sustainability	3.92	0.71	0.86	0.90	0.64
Authenticity	3.64	0.69	0.82	0.87	0.59
Diplomatic Trust	3.43	0.82	0.85	0.89	0.67

Source: Author's survey (2025); analyzed with SPSS 29 and SmartPLS 4.

In addition to the quantitative data, qualitative data provided by 12 expert interviews identify four key themes defining the capacity of Vietnam's agricultural diplomacy. Firstly, experts regarded the problem of institutional fragmentation as the most serious. The overlapping jurisdictions of the MARD, the MOIT and the MOFA create inconsistencies in promotion and conflicting narratives in branding. Secondly, limited digital traceability undermines credibility in the eyes of foreign buyers who increasingly expect imports to comply with blockchain verification and carbon footprint labeling. Third, the integration of culture in the diplomacy of the agriculture industry is lacking. Although agricultural products resonant and reflect the regional identities, the products' symbolic and cultural significance embedded in Vietnam's foreign policy is largely neglected. Finally, the new diplomacy of sustainability is both an opportunity and necessity, given Vietnam's commitments to the EU–Vietnam Free Trade Agreement (EVFTA) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) which carry greater branding environmental and social standards.

Table 2. Exemplifying the integration of branding, diplomacy, digitalization, and sustainability. The table also depicts the VAED conceptual pillars.

Theme	Representative Insight (Interview Summary)	Policy Dimension
Institutional fragmentation	"Different ministries pursue export goals independently; no unified national agro-brand exists."	Governance and coordination
Limited traceability and certification	"Buyers want verified origin and sustainability data, not just low prices."	Digitalization and transparency
Cultural diplomacy gap	"Agricultural products reflect Vietnam's identity, but this is rarely showcased in diplomatic events."	Cultural and public diplomacy
Sustainability opportunity	"Carbon labeling and green supply chains can reposition Vietnam as a responsible exporter."	Sustainability diplomacy

The integration of both qualitative and quantitative outcomes strengthens the theoretical articulation of how agriculture can serve as a strategic ambassador of a country's identity. However, high-quality products are not enough; credibility narrative and

narrative coherence are needed for effective diplomacy. In Vietnam's situation, brand perception remains skewed by dominant economic efficiency and not by symbolic value. International consumers see Vietnam as a source of "affordable yet anonymous" products, suggesting poorly structured national storytelling. This result resonates with the global literature describing how place-based authenticity and narrative coherence are the foundational elements for the success of agri-diplomacy (Anholt, 2007; Rockower, 2012; Nuttavuthisit, 2019).

These outcomes, as illustrated, confirm the VAED framework that this study sought to propose. This framework is comprised of four pillars, as shown in Figure 2, that are mutually reinforcing; (1) Nation Branding—marketing agricultural products as symbols of the Vietnamese identity; (2) Economic Diplomacy—anchoring the brand in trade agreements and collaboration on bilateral diplomacy; (3) Digitalization—developing traceability and certification systems; and (4) Sustainability—ensuring that exports meet global green standards and net-zero commitments. Collectively, these elements compose a "soft power value chain" that repositions Vietnam's agricultural exports from economically disposable items to instruments of cultural trust and diplomatic rapport.

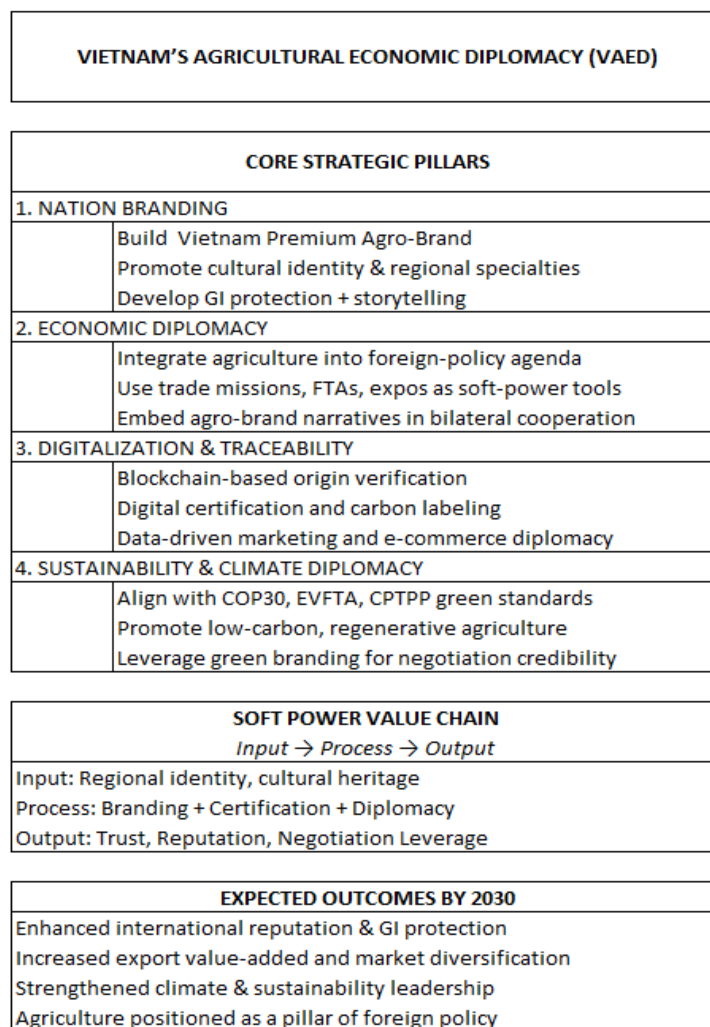


Figure 2. The Vietnam Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED) Framework
(Conceptual model illustrating four strategic pillars and their interlinkages.)

The achievements of agricultural diplomacy in different countries demonstrates the advances strategic efforts made possible through consistent branding and cohesive frameworks promoted within and through the country. Thailand's Kitchen of the World campaign, which Thailand's Ministry of Commerce claimed increased the agri-food export premium by 27% and the country's registered geographical indications from 10 to 180 from 2003 to 2023, is one such example. Another is PromPerú's Superfoods Peru program, which helped pivot Peru's quinoa, avocado, and maca as pillars of biodiversity diplomacy and increased the average export prices of certified products by around 20% (PromPerú, 2022). On the downside, Vietnam has 120 items in their current GI portfolio (WIPO, 2024), with only 15 recognized abroad. The potential Vietnam has for aggressive diplomatic branding is undeniable. These

examples demonstrate the strategic gap that VAED is trying to close: cohesive promotional disarray integrated to a singular national narrative that globalization shifts from negotiation for origin credibility to negotiation for global leverage.

Given the information, it is time to shift from segmented to cohesive branded diplomacy on the Vietnam agricultural economic diplomacy front. With integrated governance, digital adoption, and sustainable development, Vietnam will not only capture the value and the symbolic power but also the influence the country has to offer as a player in global food governance. The next portion will focus on the strategic policy roadmap on the vision for Vietnam's Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED) to be achieved in the year 2030.

5. Policy Framework and Strategic Roadmap (VAED 2030)

With the VAED Strategy 2030 in mind, for the values of Vietnamese exports to be enhanced to signal commendable quality, culture, and climate consciousness, the transformation of Vietnamese agriculture must focus more on the 'voice' dimensions of the sector to include storytelling on each export, and not just the 'volume' dimensions of the sector. Authenticity ($\beta = 0.47$, $p < 0.001$) and sustainability were, to research findings, the strongest mediating factors to drive trust in diplomacy. Authenticity and sustainability, however, are the lowest perceived attributes of Vietnamese agriculture, with 3.6/5 and 3.4/5 scores compared to the quality score of 4.3/5. As a response, the VAED action plan emphasized the building of the four synergistic pillars in reputation 'capital' conversion to reputation 'assets' VAED action plan focuses on building the four synergistic pillars. As part of Nation Branding, storytelling in trade for the Vietnamese Premium Agro-Brand will include 20 new geographical indications and entwining the narratives of these GIs (and more) will be an integral part of trade missions to cultivate a culture of export. 2030 will see exports to embassies and culinary showcases will be a shift of mere commodity exports will be a shift to cultural ambassadors. Economic Diplomacy will include agriculture in the bilateral agenda and ensure every trade mission covers agriculture narratives, facilitating trade for five mutual GI-recognition agreements with the EU, Japan, and ASEAN partner countries to strengthen cultural initiatives, culinary showcases, and Vietnam's Food Heritage Week.

By 2030, Vietnam aims for at least 50% of export volumes to be digitalized, certified through blockchain technology, and carbon-footprint verified, tracing carbon emissions through carbon-labeling, blockchain-anchored QR codes, and VDOP's digitalized integration with QR codes for carbon emissions and blockchain digitalized tracing of commodity origins. Sustainability and Climate Diplomacy is the final sector-aligned pillar for COP30 and EVFTA under the Green Export Plan. It aims to reduce carbon intensity of 20% per ton of export and increase green certified farms 25%, expanding the Agro-Carbon Credit Fund. All five pillars are strategically coordinated by the National Agro-Diplomacy Council, NADC, under the digitalized VAED system's virtual dashboard. It provides real-time feedback as NADC collaborates across ministries involving the Deputy Prime Minister. To ensure the public variable-adjusted external debt of the proceeds is used for strategic outcome customization, debt is blended with climate smart public lending policy, blended climate loans, and expected returns from the carbon market. The value of exports is expected to increase by 30%, aiming for the highest goal: for Vietnam to attain, and be recognized for, the top three positions in agricultural diplomacy within Asia.

When every second exported product is verified through data and the other through stories, Vietnam is exporting trust and completing the transition in the global food system. Vietnam is no longer classified as a supplier of food crops, but as a dependable producer.

Critical Discussion – Institutional Constraints and Comparative Lessons

The VAED framework is built upon a coherent policy vision. However, it still faces some institutional and structural challenges which need to be acknowledged to ensure credibility. Perhaps, the first and most enduring challenge is governance fragmentation. In Vietnam, the governance of agriculture and trade policy is split across different ministries, all of which have overlapping responsibilities. MARD focuses on production, MOIT handles trade, and MOFA deals with diplomacy, while all of them pursue each of their disparate success metrics. This policy "verticality" creates inertia, diffuses responsibility, and undermines the unified story that nation branding entails. Even attempts to coordinate policy through ad hoc inter-ministerial committees tend to underperform due to their limited legal and fiscal appropriations. In addition, the lack of a unified system that combines GI data, export data, and cultural promotion data has led to the absence of an integrated agricultural identity. In VAED, this governance misalignment will transform what should be a practical framework into a rhetorical one.

The capacity of the markets and institutions presents a second constraint. Over 70% of Vietnam's agricultural exports still come from smallholders who operate below economies of scale and are outside the certification networks (GSO, 2024). The cost of complying with GI, carbon labeling, and the other traceability technologies like blockchain is still prohibitive for many cooperatives. In contrast, the vertically integrated clusters and the strong state investment in standardization allowed countries like Thailand and Peru to break through with their branding. Thailand's Kitchen of the World program, for example, which started in 2004, uncommitted to the program more than USD 80 million of state budget and integrated branding through commerce, tourism, and

diplomacy (Nuttavuthisit, 2019). In Peru, the Superfoods Peru initiative worked because PromPerú was a single-window agency that bridged trade, innovation, and marketing—an institutional clarity that the Vietnam of today still lacks. Moreover, Vietnam's export-driven growth continues to be sensitive to asymmetric value chains, where foreign intermediaries capture the branding premium that domestic producers lose. The soft-power benefits of VAED will only translate into equitable economic returns once local businesses have the digital infrastructure and legal assistance needed to negotiate the sophisticated integration of intellectual property, and the other elements of ESG compliance.

Vietnam's Agricultural Diplomacy Initiatives The political economy of broader reforms constitutes the last factor shaping the pace of agricultural diplomacy. VAED's vision suggests migration from reactive trade promotion to proactive agenda setting. This transition challenges the existing frontiers of Vietnam's policy bureaucracies. The change will involve not situational adjustments of the regulatory frameworks, but also a culture change in the bureaucracies and the re-envisioning of diplomacy in a developmental state. The politicians' ability to view agriculture both as a symbolic and economic asset, needing cross-sector collaboration and empathy, will ultimately determine the success or failure of the transformation. From this perspective, VAED's primary challenge is institutional, not technical. The question is: Is Vietnam able to govern with narrative coherence synchronizing diverse elements of the global food system around a single articulation, a single vision, or a single identity?

6. Conclusion

Vietnam's agricultural diplomacy must evolve beyond exporting tonnage to earning respect by 2030. The evidence in this study suggests that although Vietnam produces high-quality agricultural goods (mean = 4.3/5), the variables of perceived authenticity (3.6/5) and trust (3.4/5) fall dramatically short. This is the gap that closes the delta between economic performance and soft power. The Vietnam Agricultural Economic Diplomacy (VAED) framework is designed to close this gap by integrating nation branding with economic diplomacy, digital traceability, and sustainable agriculture. VAED is expected to increase value-added export growth by 30% and net at least 50% of total exporting volumes through blockchain by 2030, while simultaneously reducing carbon intensity by 20% and embedding Vietnam agriculture within the carbon narrative of global climate-affirming agriculture. The climate-affirming agriculture Vietnam will assume a leadership role. However, the evidence in this study does suggest higher value agriculture will dramatically shift Vietnam's optics and position it in the global negotiating arena. The narrative must shift from fragmented authenticity to cohesive logistic identity- in a shared narrative.

Once every cup of coffee and every grain of rice contain a certification code along with a national history, the farmlands of Vietnam will no longer be on the outskirts of diplomacy, they will be at the front.

On a deeper scale, Vietnam's agricultural diplomacy involves neither markets nor metrics. It is the continuation of the nation's civilizational identity. For centuries, the rice fields of Vietnam have symbolized peace, resilience, and the harmonious coexistence of human beings and nature. In modern-day global diplomacy, that same ethos can be a cultural resource, a form of "quiet power", or a reliable and humble construct resource and cultural form economy that Vietnam can use. With technological dominance and military power, others influence the world, Vietnam's influence is the moral economy of its soil and strengthens the idea that "trust and prosperity can grow together". Vietnam's Agricultural Economic Diplomacy is not merely an export strategy. It is a narrative of Vietnam the nation that feeds, connects, and negotiates.

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