

Analysis of Vietnam's Four Newly "Pillar" Resolutions and Perspective on Development Experience from Korea

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Abstract: This paper analyzes Vietnam's four groundbreaking resolutions adopted between December 2024 and May 2025, which collectively represent a paradigm shift in the country's development strategy. These resolutions target science and technology innovation (Resolution 57-NQ/TW), international integration (Resolution 59-NQ/TW), legal system innovation (Resolution 66-NQ/TW), and private sector development (Resolution 68-NQ/TW). Drawing parallels with South Korea's remarkable economic transformation from the 1960s to the present, this study examines how Vietnam's new policy framework mirrors successful Korean development strategies while adapting to contemporary global challenges. The analysis reveals significant opportunities for Vietnam-Korea cooperation in technology transfer, private sector development, and institutional capacity building. Our findings suggest that Vietnam's comprehensive reform approach, combined with comprehensive strategic partnerships with Korea, could accelerate its transition to a knowledge-based economy and strengthen its position in global value chains.

Keywords: Vietnam economic reform, Korean development model, science and technology policy, private sector development, international integration, legal innovation

1. Introduction

Vietnam stands at a critical juncture in its development trajectory. Between December 2024 and May 2025, the Vietnamese Communist Party Central Committee adopted four transformative resolutions that fundamentally reshape the country's approach to economic development and governance. These resolutions collectively represent what Vietnamese leadership describes as a shift from "management" to "service," from "protection" to "creative competition," and from "fragmented reform" to "comprehensive, coordinated breakthroughs" (Communist Party of Vietnam, 2025).

The timing and scope of these reforms invite comparison with South Korea's historical development experience, particularly the strategic policies that transformed Korea from an aid recipient in the 1960s to a global technology leader today. Korea's GDP per capita grew from \$158 in 1960 to over \$32,000 in 2023, while its R&D spending reached 4.93% of GDP, among the highest globally (World Bank, 2024; OECD, 2024).

This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of Vietnam's four pillar resolutions, examines relevant lessons from Korea's development experience, and identifies strategic opportunities for Vietnam-Korea cooperation in implementing these ambitious reforms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Vietnam's Reform Journey

Vietnam's economic renovation (Đổi Mới) initiated in 1986 has been extensively documented (Fforde & de Vylder, 1996; Riedel & Turley, 1999). Recent scholarship has focused on Vietnam's middle-income trap challenges and the need for institutional reforms (Ohno, 2009; Tran, 2013). Vuong et al. (2022) emphasize the critical role of innovation ecosystems in Vietnam's next development phase.

2.2 Korean Development Model

The Korean development experience has been analyzed through various lenses: the developmental state model (Amsden, 1989; Wade, 1990), export-oriented industrialization (Krueger, 1997), and innovation-driven growth (Kim, 1997; Lee, 2013). Recent studies highlight Korea's transition from imitation to innovation (Lee & Kim, 2009) and the role of chaebols in technological upgrading (Chang, 2003).

2.3 Comparative Development Studies

Comparative analyses of East Asian development models have identified common patterns and divergent paths (World Bank, 1993; Stiglitz, 1996). Studies comparing Vietnam and Korea specifically have focused on industrial policy (Perkins & Vu, 2010), FDI strategies (Nguyen & Nguyen, 2007), and innovation systems (Intarakumnerd & Chaminade, 2007).

3. Methodology

This study employs a comparative institutional analysis framework, combining document analysis of official resolutions, policy reports, and statistical data with comparative case study methodology. Primary sources include:

- Official texts of the four Vietnamese resolutions
- Korean government policy documents and development plans
- Statistical databases from World Bank, OECD, and national statistics offices
- Academic literature on development economics and policy

The analysis follows a structured approach: (1) detailed examination of each resolution's content and targets, (2) identification of comparable Korean policies and outcomes, (3) assessment of contextual differences and adaptation requirements, and (4) synthesis of cooperation opportunities.

4. Analysis of Vietnam's Four Pillar Resolutions

4.1 Resolution 57-NQ/TW: Science, Technology, Innovation and Digital Transformation

Key Targets:

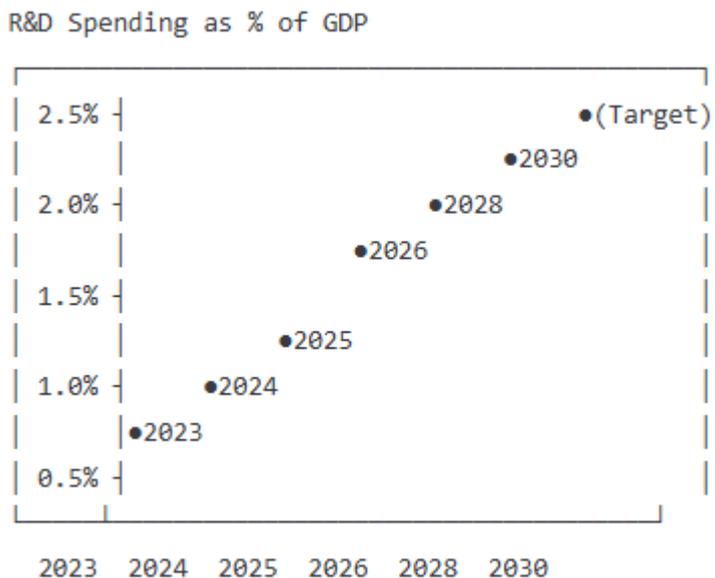
- Digital economy to reach 30% of GDP
- R&D funding to achieve 2% of GDP
- Vietnam to rank among top 40 countries in Global Innovation Index

Policy Measures: Resolution 57 establishes a comprehensive framework for technological advancement, including:

- Creation of national innovation centers
- Tax incentives for R&D activities
- Public-private partnerships in technology development
- Digital infrastructure investment programs
- STEM education reforms

Figure 1: Vietnam's R&D Trajectory and Targets

R&D Spending as % of GDP



Vietnam's R&D roadmap and targets reflect a clear roadmap for increasing GDP %, which is also seen from Korea's technology-based development experiences before, especially the establishment of government research institutes (GRIs) and science parks such as Daedeok Innopolis.

4.2 Resolution 59-NQ/TW: International Integration Strategic Objectives:

- Shift from passive reception to active global contribution
- Maintain strategic autonomy while deepening integration
- Enhance participation in global governance mechanisms
- Strengthen economic diplomacy

Table 1: Vietnam's International Integration Targets

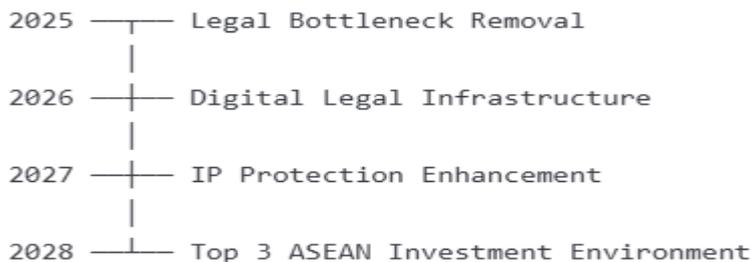
Indicator	2025 Target	2030 Target
FDI Attraction	\$40 billion	\$50 billion
Export Value	\$400 billion	\$600 billion
FTAs Implemented	20	25
Global Value Chain Participation	45%	55%

This resolution echoes Vietnam's strategic approach to globalization, balancing openness with protection of strategic industries and gradual market liberalization.

4.3 Resolution 66-NQ/TW: Legal System Innovation Reform Priorities:

- Remove legal bottlenecks by 2025
- Rank among top 3 ASEAN countries for investment environment by 2028
- Establish predictable, transparent regulatory framework
- Strengthen intellectual property protection

Figure 2: Legal Reform Timeline and Milestones



The emphasis on legal reform mirrors Vietnam's institutional development during its rapid growth phase, particularly the establishment of intellectual property systems.

4.4 Resolution 68-NQ/TW: Private Sector as "Heart of National Economy" Ambitious Targets:

- 2 million active private businesses by 2030
- Private sector contributing 55-58% of GDP
- SME digitalization rate reaching 70%
- Private sector R&D investment doubling

Table 2: Private Sector Development Indicators

Metric	Current (2024)	2027 Target	2030 Target
Active Businesses	900,000	1.5 million	2 million
GDP Contribution	42%	50%	55-58%
Employment Share	85%	88%	90%
Export Contribution	30%	40%	50%

This resolution represents a fundamental shift in Vietnam's economic philosophy, acknowledging the private sector's central role in innovation and growth.

5. Korean Development Experience: Relevant Lessons

5.1 Science and Technology Development

Korea's transformation into a technology powerhouse offers valuable insights:

Phase 1 (1960s-1970s): Foundation Building

- Establishment of Korea Institute of Science and Technology (KIST) in 1966
- Creation of Ministry of Science and Technology
- Focus on technology absorption and adaptation

Phase 2 (1980s-1990s): Indigenous Innovation

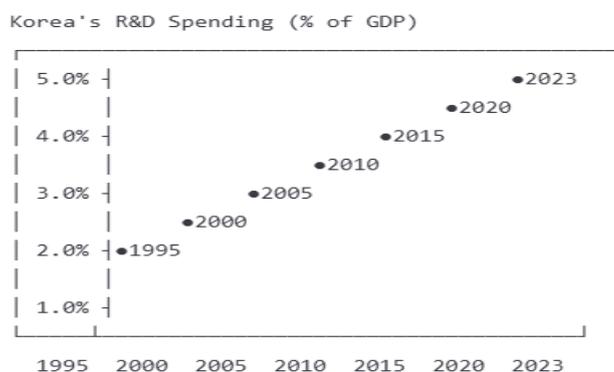
- Private sector R&D promotion
- Strategic focus on semiconductors, electronics
- Development of national innovation system

Phase 3 (2000s-present): Global Innovation Leader

- R&D spending exceeding 4% of GDP
- World-class patents and publications
- Leading position in 5G, semiconductors, batteries

Figure 3: Korea's R&D Evolution

Korea's R&D Spending (% of GDP)



5.2 Private Sector Development

Korea's private sector evolution provides important lessons:

Chaebol Development Model:

- Government-business collaboration
- Export-oriented growth strategy
- Gradual liberalization and reform

SME Ecosystem Building:

- Specialized financial institutions
- Technology transfer programs
- Supplier development initiatives

Innovation Ecosystem:

- Venture capital development
- University-industry linkages
- Startup support infrastructure

5.3 International Integration Strategy

Korea's approach to globalization evolved through distinct phases:

1. **Import Substitution (1960s):** Protection of infant industries
2. **Export Promotion (1970s-1980s):** Aggressive export targeting
3. **Gradual Liberalization (1990s):** OECD membership, market opening
4. **Global Integration (2000s-present):** FTA network, global brands

5.4 Legal and Institutional Development

Korea's institutional evolution supported economic development:

- Specialized economic courts
- Intellectual property protection
- Regulatory transparency
- Anti-corruption measures

6. Comparative Analysis and Adaptation Strategies

6.1 Contextual Differences

While Korea's experience offers valuable lessons, Vietnam faces different circumstances:

Table 3: Comparative Context

Factor	Korea (1960s-1990s)	Vietnam (2020s)
Global Environment	Cold War, limited globalization	Hyper-globalization, digital economy
Technology Landscape	Industrial revolution	Fourth Industrial Revolution
Development Model	State-led industrialization	Market socialism
Regional Integration	Limited	ASEAN, CPTPP, EVFTA
Demographics	Young population	The challenge of an aging society

6.2 Adaptation Requirements

Vietnam's resolutions reflect awareness of these differences:

1. **Digital-First Approach:** Unlike Korea's manufacturing focus, Vietnam emphasizes digital transformation
2. **Inclusive Growth:** Greater emphasis on SMEs versus Korea's chaebol-centric model
3. **Sustainability Integration:** Environmental considerations embedded from the start
4. **Regional Integration:** ASEAN centrality as core principle

7. Vietnam-Korea Cooperation Opportunities

7.1 Science and Technology Collaboration Priority Areas:

- Semiconductor manufacturing and design
- Electric vehicle and battery technology
- Artificial intelligence and big data
- Biotechnology and healthcare
- Green technology and renewable energy

Cooperation Mechanisms:

- Joint research institutes
- Technology transfer programs
- Human resource development
- Innovation park partnerships

7.2 Private Sector Partnership

Strategic Initiatives:

- Korean investment in Vietnamese startups
- Supply chain integration
- SME partnership programs
- Joint venture facilitation

Table 4: Potential Cooperation Projects

Sector	Korean Expertise	Vietnamese Opportunity	Cooperation Model
Semiconductors	Design, manufacturing	Assembly, testing, manufacturing	Technology transfer, JV
EV/Battery	Technology leadership	Manufacturing base	Production partnerships
Digital Services	Platform development	Market access, and leapfrogging in platform development	Joint development
Green Tech	Solar, wind, LNG technology	Deployment market	Technology licensing

7.3 Institutional Capacity Building Knowledge Transfer Programs:

- Policy consultation and advisory services
- Administrative capacity building
- Legal framework development
- Innovation system design

7.4 Human Resource Development Education and Training:

- STEM education partnerships
- Vocational training programs
- Management education
- Research collaboration

8. Implementation Challenges and Risk Mitigation

8.1 Key Challenges

1. **Institutional Capacity:** Building effective implementation mechanisms
2. **Coordination:** Ensuring coherence across four resolutions
3. **Resource Mobilization:** Financing ambitious targets
4. **Change Management:** Overcoming bureaucratic resistance
5. **Global Uncertainties:** Navigating geopolitical tensions

8.2 Risk Mitigation Strategies

- Phased implementation approach
- Pilot programs and experimentation
- Regular monitoring and adjustment
- Stakeholder engagement
- International partnership diversification

9. Policy Recommendations

9.1 For Vietnamese Policymakers

1. **Establish Integrated Implementation Framework:** Central Government create cross-ministerial coordination mechanism for four resolutions
2. **Develop Measurement Systems:** Clear KPIs and monitoring mechanisms
3. **Prioritize Quick Wins:** Focus on achievable early successes
4. **Strengthen Absorptive Capacity:** Invest in human capital and institutional capabilities

5. **Maintain Policy Consistency:** Ensure long-term commitment beyond political cycles

9.2 For Korean Partners

1. **Adopt Partnership Mindset:** Move beyond traditional donor-recipient relationship
2. **Leverage Complementarities:** Identify win-win opportunities
3. **Support Ecosystem Development:** Focus on systemic rather than project-based cooperation
4. **Facilitate Technology Transfer:** Balance IP protection with development objectives
5. **Invest in Long-term Relationships:** Build trust and mutual understanding

9.3 For International Community

1. **Support Reform Implementation:** Provide technical and financial assistance
2. **Facilitate Knowledge Exchange:** Create platforms for experience sharing
3. **Promote Regional Integration:** Support ASEAN connectivity initiatives
4. **Encourage Sustainable Development:** Integrate environmental considerations
5. **Monitor Progress:** Establish transparent evaluation mechanisms

10. Conclusion

Vietnam's four pillar resolutions represent a comprehensive and ambitious reform agenda that addresses the country's key development challenges. The resolutions' emphasis on science and technology, international integration, legal reform, and private sector development mirrors successful elements of Korea's development experience while adapting to contemporary realities.

The analysis reveals significant complementarities between Vietnam's development needs and Korea's capabilities, creating substantial opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation. Success will require sustained political commitment, effective implementation mechanisms, and strategic international partnerships.

As Vietnam embarks on this transformative journey, the Korean experience offers both inspiration and practical lessons. However, Vietnam must chart its own path, adapting successful strategies to its unique context while avoiding the pitfalls of mechanical replication.

The coming decade will be critical in determining whether Vietnam can successfully implement these reforms and achieve its ambitious targets. With appropriate strategies, strong partnerships, and adaptive implementation, Vietnam has the potential to accelerate its development trajectory and emerge as a dynamic, innovative economy in Southeast Asia.

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