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| **HCMC-Moc Bai Expressway a driving force in southeast Vietnam**  **The HCMC-Moc Bai Expressway, which connects the southern city and neighboring Tay Ninh Province, will not only boost socio-economic development in the two localities, but also strengthen connectivity in the entire southeastern region.**  It is expected to give a ‘big boost’ to the development of the key economic region in southern Vietnam, chairman of the Tay Ninh People’s Committee, told *Tuoi Tre* newspaper during an interview.  **How will the expressway play an essential role in the region if it only links two localities?**  Initial research showed that the HCMC-Moc Bai Expressway will intersect Ring Road No.3 and No.4 in HCMC, which shortens the time for transporting goods in the region and facilitates import-export trade between Vietnam and Combodia via Moc Bai International Border Gate.  To maximize the project’s efficiency, the Tay Ninh administration is making a proposal to the prime minister, suggesting that the expressway be extended to Xa Mat International Border Gate in the province.  Provincial authorities are also expediting the construction and expansion of other routes connecting Tay Ninh with other southern provinces such as Binh Duong, Long An.  As the HCMC-Moc Bai Expressway will act as a ‘backbone’ axis, other roads connecting to the expressway will help boost the effectiveness of the project.  **Which measures will be taken to expedite the implementation of the project given the difficulties in terms of investment procedures and capital?**  The prime minister previously agreed to let the HCMC People’s Committee become the representative of state authorities in the implementation of the expressway.  The administrations in HCMC and Tay Ninh Province have also signed a memorandum of understanding to coordinate in the implementation of the project.  **Competent** agencies in Tay Ninh are completing a pre-feasibility report, which will be submitted to the Tay Ninh People’s Committee.  The Tay Ninh administration will then transfer the report to its HCMC counterpart for final approval.  The coordination between the two localities will help shorten administrative procedures, and complete legal procedures for the project in an early manner.  **How will we promote the efficiency of a project with such large-scale investment?**  If we assess the roles of the HCMC-Moc Bao Expressway in the key southern economic region and the country’s external economy, we will understand how necessary it is to carry out the project and take suitable measures to expedite the construction and maximize its efficiency.  Vietnam’s southern provinces currently have more than 1,000 kilometers of border lines. Among them, Tay Ninh has three main border gates and 11 secondary **border gates**.  Moc Bai is one of the most important border gates in the southern region, as it is essential for export-import activities of the whole region, especially HCMC - an **economic locomotive**.  The Moc Bai border-gate economic zone was previously launched but did not reach its full potential as expected.  After more than 20 years, we are coordinating with experts to re-evaluate, and make appropriate adjustments to the border economic zone.  The HCMC-Moc Bai Expressway will largely contribute to the development of the economic zone, as it will attract more investors and major projects.  **Do you have any suggestion on how authorities should coordinate to promote projects in the key southern economic region?**  Many MoUs have been signed between provinces in key southern economic regions, but they are only bilateral.  It is necessary to establish a locomotive to identify and classify potential in each locality and the region in general.  After that, priorities will be determined and resources will be mobolized to rapidly promote the potentialites of the whole region and the country. | **Competent:** having suitable knowledge, experience for some purpose; properly qualified.  **border gates:** cửa khẩu.  **economic locomotive:** đầu tàu kinh tế. |