



National Update

The recent resurgence of COVID-19 cases in Da Nang has highlighted the ongoing health and economic impacts of COVID-19. This is despite the Vietnam Government's relative success at managing the pandemic within its borders. Unlike most economies,



still managed to **grow 1.8%** over the first **6 months** of the year, this compares to **6.8% growth** for the same period in 2019.

However, for the first half of this year, Foreign Direct Investment was **down 15.1%**.¹

The global recession and travel restrictions will likely have a long-term impact on GREAT's target sectors of tourism and agricultural – growing international trade tensions are likely to also constrain growth. The import-export turnover of vegetables to Vietnam reduced by **41.0%** over the first six months of 2020 compared to the same period in the previous year and tea dropped by **7.5%**. Despite the restrictions on exports, rice volume grew by **17.9%** over the first six months of the year. Disruptions to trade with China when COVID-19 first emerged severely impacted Vietnam's agriculture sector, with the country accounting around a quarter of the total turnover of agricultural products.²

In a survey by the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Institute of Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development (IPSARD) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB), **53.3%** of farming households reported a decrease in income due to COVID-19. Many households in rural areas also depend on income from migrant workers, with **66.3%** of households reporting a family member having been forced to either resign or temporarily leave their job.³ In response to COVID-19, rural households' key coping strategies included cutting spending, using savings, seeking help from relatives and friends, and applying for government support.⁴

There is a range of government policies and programs in response to COVID-19 including:

- Resolution No. 42 / NQ-CP (April 9, 2020) of the Prime Minister on measures to support people facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Decision No. 15/2020 / QD-TTg (April 24, 2020) of the Prime Minister on supporting policies; Directive No. 11 / CT-TTg (4/3/2020) on removing difficulties from COVID-19.
- Directive No.11/CT-TTg (March 4, 2020) by the Prime Minister on directing ministries and sectors to promptly implement solutions such as reducing interest rates, restructuring debts, exempting, and reducing service fees and implementing credit programs approximating USD 22 billion.
- The Son La Provincial People's Committee Plan No. 105 / KH-UBND (April 28, 2020) to implement the Government's Resolution No. 42/NQ-CP to support people facing difficulties due to the COVID-19 epidemic in Son La Province.

¹ General Statistics Office of Vietnam, July 2020.

² "Impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic on Agriculture and Rural Development in Vietnam", IPSARD Presentation, 10 July 2020.

³ IFAD, IPSARD and ADB survey, 2020.

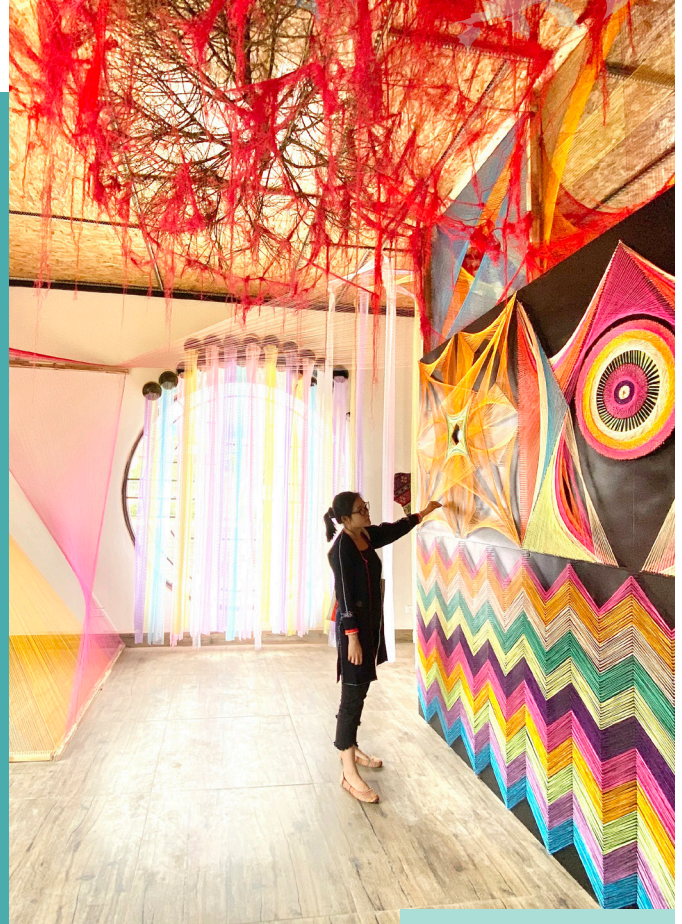
⁴ Ibid.



GREAT Partner Impact

COVID-19 social distancing restrictions had a significant impact on project implementation by GREAT partners, particularly in the January-March 2020 quarter. Pleasingly, partner performance has improved in the April-June quarter with 20 partners assessed as on-track, compared to seven in the previous quarter. Additionally, 30 partners are now rated as being on track to achieve intermediate and final project results, up from 14 in the January-March quarter. COVID-19 is still impacting partners with 64 specific mentions of COVID-19 as a challenge in partners' latest quarterly reports. Partners working in the tourism sector faced more difficulties with 29% of all activities delayed compared to 15% for agriculture. The negative impact of COVID-19 on the tourism market and the larger-group training approach in community-based tourism helps explain this result.

At a business level, the changing market conditions have severely impacted GREAT partners' profitability, particularly in the tourism and vegetable sectors.



- A Lao Cai-based medicinal herb cooperative only generated a profit of VND 20,760,000 during the first six months of 2020, merely 3% the target, despite achieving 153% of the target in the preceding six months.
- A Lao Cai-based manufacturer of traditional handicrafts recorded a loss of VND 162,000,000, against a forecasted profit of VND 1,000,000,000.
- A Lao Cai-based tourism attraction and nursery, generated a revenue of VND 2,225,009,483, achieving only 53% of what was planned.
- A Lao Cai-based vegetable cooperative was severely affected by COVID-19 as well as inclement weather, resulting in revenue only reaching VND 2,078,856,000, or 27% of what was targeted.
- A Son La-based vegetable business was also particularly impacted with disrupted supply chains given the reduced demand from supermarkets, schools and restaurants. Revenue was only VND 4,125,000,000, 31% of what was planned in addition to a significant drop during the previous six months.

There have also been positive examples of GREAT-supported partners meeting or exceeding their expectations over the past six months. A Lao Cai-based tea company increased revenue through purchasing tea from additional households that could not sell to traders due to COVID-19 restrictions and also through developing new markets. The company's revenue increased by 12% to VND 5,880,000,000, which was largely in line with the forecast. A cinnamon exporter was able to exceed its target by 15% with a revenue of VND 10,320,000,000, although this was lower than the previous six-month period. Women-led nurseries supported by GREAT partner Fresh Studio that are in the start-up phase, had a combined revenue of VND 64,917,190, largely in line with what was planned.

In July 2020, GREAT conducted a second survey of partners on the impact of COVID-19 following an earlier survey in April 2020. The results show that partners still expect to face significant challenges, although there was an improvement in some measures. A summary of the latest results is below with a comparison with April's results indicated in parentheses.



57% ▼

of partners believe their revenue will decline (down from 58%)



51% ▲

believe their profit will decline due to COVID-19 (up from 38%)



8% ▼

believe their debt burden will increase (down from 15%)



14% ▼

of partners believe they will have to reduce staff (down from 31%)



12% ▼

of partners forecast they will have to reduce or stop exports (down from 23%)



51% ▲

of partners intend to maintain the same or increased level of purchases from farmers demonstrating a strong commitment to the project (up from 46%)



8% ▼

believe they will have to stop providing advances to producers (down from 11%)

Partners are seeking a range of support from GREAT, including assistance to pivot to new markets, interest-free loans, support to apply digital technologies, connections with other partners for cross-pollination and collaboration and improving access to quality inputs.



GREAT Beneficiary Impact

The impact of COVID-19 on GREAT's target beneficiaries was also significant. In Vat Village, where GREAT has been supporting community-based tourism, the expected revenue for the first six months of 2020 was only VND 470,050,000, 31% of what was planned. Furthermore, the number of overnight domestic guests dropped to 1,003, against a target of 2,494.

The total number of households that a Lao Cai-based cooperative was able to purchase bathing herbs from was only 25, compared to a target of 200. This generated revenue for the households of VND 45,300,000, or 23% of the target for January-June 2020.

Some projects managed to maintain or even increase income for households over the past six months. A Lao Cai-based tea and medicinal herb project saw income for

households increase to VND 950,000,000, a 91% increase compared to the previous year. While revenue for households that supply tea to a Son La-based tea processor was 91% of the target with VND 5,770,000,00, an increase compared to the previous six months.

Topline results from in-depth interviews with beneficiaries through GREAT's longitudinal survey indicate that while ethnic minority families have faced economic difficulties, they are often able to adapt by either reducing spending or finding other sources of income. Specific types of support that partners would like to see at the beneficiary level is a delay in having to repay revolving funds and strengthening of production groups including identifying and nurturing "change agents" to support and work with ethnic minority groups.





Partner Response Initiatives

The table below details how GREAT partners are adapting to the changing market conditions due to COVID-19.

Adaptation Method	%
Created a new product or service	49
Developed or pivoted to new target markets	54
Applied technology to reduce costs	53
Increased collaboration to reduce logistics costs	62
Applied technology to expand markets and sales	63

Source: GREAT Partner COVID-19 Impact Survey, July 2020

CÁCH TÌM KIẾM TRỢ GIÚP KHI BỊ BẠO LỰC VÀ HỖ TRỢ NGƯỜI GẶP BẠO LỰC

Yêu thương là không bạo lực

Khi bạn hoặc ai đó có dấu hiệu sau đây:

- Luôn tỏ ra sợ hãi hoặc dễ hoảng sợ vì một người nào đó.
- Thường xuyên bị ốm yếu hoặc mệt mỏi.
- Luôn cố che dấu vết thương hoặc vết bầm tím.
- Cố tránh mắt mọi người, kể cả người thân.
- Lấy cớ để không gặp người đã từng hỗ trợ hoặc biết mình bị bạo lực.
- Luôn tỏ ra buồn bã, cô đơn.
- Dùng rượu hoặc chất kích thích.



Hãy gọi tới các số điện thoại sau để được hỗ trợ miễn phí:

0943 11 19 67
(Hagar)

1900 96 96 80
(TT PN&PT)

...và hãy nhớ:

- Lắng nghe và không đánh giá về những gì bạn được chia sẻ.
- Giữ bí mật về những gì bạn biết.
- Cho họ biết các số điện thoại hỗ trợ nếu họ muốn.

Các hỗ trợ miễn phí do Hagar và Trung tâm Phụ nữ và Phát triển cung cấp bao gồm:

Nơi ở an toàn
Chăm sóc y tế
Hỗ trợ pháp lý
Tham vấn và trị liệu tâm lý
Hỗ trợ học nghề, kết nối việc làm



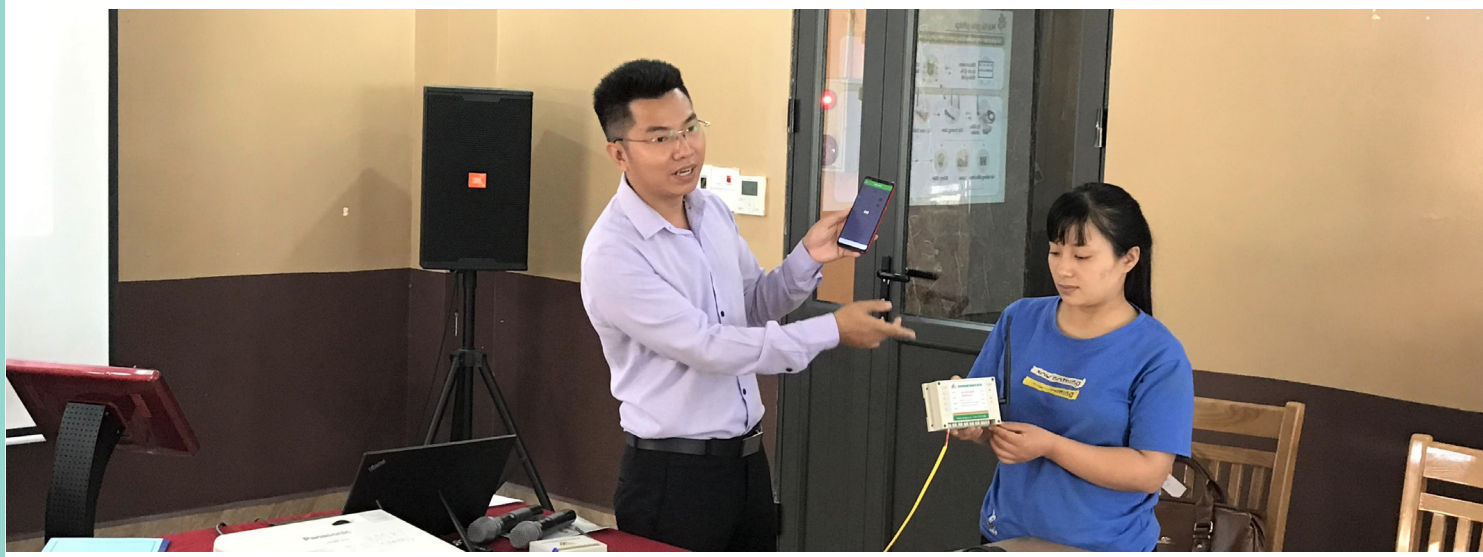


THẺ NÀY ĐƯỢC XÂY DỰNG BỞI TỔ CHỨC CARE QUỐC TẾ TẠI VIỆT NAM

GREAT partners have undertaken a range of activities to respond to the health, safety and economic impacts of COVID-19 including:

- The Sa Pa Department of Culture and Information produced a video in Mong, Dao and Kinh languages aimed at local tourism operators on how to prevent COVID-19.
- CARE developed postcards to raise awareness on the support available for victims of gender-based violence which has been on the rise worldwide during the lockdown.
- Helvetas Vietnam has combined important COVID-19 awareness communication with gender equality awareness in a radio communications campaign targeting ethnic minority groups in Bac Ha and Bat Xat districts of Lao Cai using five languages - Mong, Dao, Tay, Ha Nhi and Kinh.
- During the slowdown due to COVID-19, the Red Dao Cooperative members focused on production activities. With upgraded processing facilities, the Cooperative has been able to launch new products including artichoke jelly - a remedy used to improve liver function, which will open up new market opportunities.
- The slowdown in tourism also provided an opportunity for homestay owners working with Action on Poverty's project in Vat and Doi Villages, Moc Chau to improve their tourism services, receive training in cooking, guest services and hygiene measures and improve their homestays' appearance.

- The on-site team of Fresh Studio conducted training on VietGAP vegetable growing techniques in small groups, complying with Government advice to have no more than 20 people meet at once.
- During social distancing, GREAT partner Sapanapro maintained frequent contact to support their partners and agents. They were willing to share risks with agents to overcome market difficulties. Currently, Sapanapro's sales have returned to 70% of their previous volumes and the number of visitors taking herbal baths has reached 40% compared to last year. This is an encouraging result given the challenging situation.
- To help build the domestic tourism market and create Bac Ha Flower Valley - GREAT partner Viet Tu provided 200 flower seedlings free-of-charge to each homestay in the Bac Ha Tourism Association. This initiative was highly appreciated by the tourism operators in the area.
- GREAT's partner FAVRI has taken the opportunity to apply IoT (Internet of Things) technology, which reduces labour costs and helps farmer groups to better manage and monitor the production process. To complement this, FAVRI has provided training and hands-on guidance to help farmers access this new technology.
- With its business focusing on brocade products, more than 50% of GREAT partner Lan Rung's clientele are normally international tourists who are interested in the traditional cultures of Vietnam's ethnic minorities. With its turnover significantly reduced, Lan Rung has recently refocused to target domestic customers. With support from GREAT, Lan Rung is establishing an exhibition house, where local women can demonstrate the traditional processes of weaving brocade and creating handicraft products including more contemporary 3D designs. The exhibition house is expected to be open to the public in September 2020.
- Lan Rung integrated measures to prevent COVID-19 transmission into the training with Sa Pa Department of Culture Sport and Information's Dao language video utilised as a resource.
- In June 2020, GREAT partners working in the tourism sector in Sa Pa joined a workshop held by Sa Pa's People's Committee to discuss solutions to help the tourism sector recover from COVID-19. The tourism sector has been showing signs of recovery, however, with the sector's dependence on international visitors, Sa Pa is still facing serious challenges due to current restrictions. The discussion focused on building the domestic market, promoting eco-tourism attractions, as well as the potential for well-being tourism and creating more distinctive tourism products.



COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan

In May 2020, GREAT finalised a COVID-19 Response and Recovery Plan to help partners and beneficiaries respond to and rebound from the economic impacts of COVID-19.

Initiatives that have been implemented to date include:



- Partnering with VietED and the Vietnam Bank for Social Policies (VBSP) to pilot value chain lending in Lao Cai targeting ethnic minority women including financial literacy training and capacity building for VBSP in gender-lens lending.



- Providing training to tourism partners on responding to COVID-19 including creating a COVID-19 safe business, COVID-19 scenario planning and marketing response.



- Partnering with the Center for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender, Family, Women and Adolescents (CSAGA) and provincial and district Women's Unions to increase the awareness of gender-based violence and available support services. Experience from Wuhan and around the world demonstrated that the risk and incidences of gender-based violence are likely to increase, and the ability for women to access support services is more difficult during social isolation.⁵



- Supporting partners to adapt to the impact of COVID-19, sustain business operations and build resilience. This includes diversifying markets, preparing for the safe resumption of trade for tourism enterprises, upskilling business owners and implementing new business models.

⁵ <https://time.com/5803887/coronavirus-domestic-violence-victims/>

