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## List of Acronyms

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<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade</td>
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<tr>
<td>GESI</td>
<td>Gender Equality and Social Inclusion</td>
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<td>GREAT</td>
<td>Aus4Equality Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INGO</td>
<td>International Non-Goverment Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Goverment Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PMU</td>
<td>Project Management Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEE</td>
<td>Women’s Economic Empowerment</td>
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</table>
Removing the barriers that keep women and girls on the margins of economic, social, cultural, and political life must be a top priority for us all – businesses, governments, the United Nations, and civil society.

*Ban Ki-Moon, Secretary-General of the United Nations*

Investing in women’s employment is not only the right thing to do—it’s also essential for business. Companies that learn to effectively develop and retain women employees will gain a huge competitive advantage.

*Jim Yong Kim, World Bank Group President*

All people are equal before law. No one is subject to discriminatory treatment in political, civil, economic, cultural or social life.

*Constitution of the Socialist Republic of Viet Nam, 2013, Article No.16*

Promoting gender equality is the principle of smart economics and the right thing to do.

*Women Empowermen and Gender Equality Strategy, DFAT, February, 2016*

The gender equality goals are to eliminate gender discrimination, to create equal opportunities for man and woman in socio-economic development and human resources development in order to reach substantial equality between man and woman, and to establish and enhance cooperation and mutual assistance between man and woman in all fields of social and family life.

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1. The GREAT Program

The Aus4Equality | Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism Program (GREAT) is funded by the Australian Government’s Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT). GREAT aims to enhance the social and economic status of women in local communities in Lao Cai and Son La provinces by improving their access to markets and their engagement in the agriculture and tourism sectors.

The three outcomes of the GREAT are:

- **EMPOWERING LOCAL WOMEN:** Women living in local communities have increased capacity, space and choices to beneficially engage with agriculture and tourism business.
- **INCLUSIVE BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS:** Selected private sector actors within the agriculture and tourism sectors innovate to profitably and sustainably trade with more women entrepreneurs and operate in gender sensitive ways.
- **IMPROVING SECTOR GOVERNANCE AND POLICY:** Government agencies reinforce policies, and enact plans, regulations and services that enable more inclusive socio-economic development.

To date, GREAT has partnered with 46 governmental organizations, enterprises, research institutes and national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs/ INGOs) to help the Program reach its objectives.

GREAT is taking a twin track approach to addressing gender equality and social inclusion (GESI):

- **GESI Mainstreaming**
  Consider the different needs of women and men and people of different socio-economic and ethnic backgrounds and people with disabilities in the design of the project and systematically integrate GESI into all project activities (planning, implementation, monitoring, reporting) to enable beneficiaries to participate and benefit equally.

- **GESI Targeting**
  Address gender inequalities where they are particularly challenging or where progress is slow, to promote gender equality and women’s empowerment as an investment priority; create opportunities for social inclusion of disadvantaged groups including the poor and people with disabilities and prevent gender-based violence.

1.2. Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Strategy (GESI)

Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) is core to the achievement of GREAT’s outcomes.
To ensure that all Program interventions contribute to Program outcomes, a Program GESI strategy has been developed. The GESI strategy is one of GREAT’s key implementation methods and is based on three pillars:

1. Women’s Economic Empowerment (WEE);
2. Gender Equality; and
3. Social Inclusion (creating opportunities for marginalised groups, such as the poor and persons with disabilities).

The strategy acknowledges that WEE is a driving force for economic growth and prosperity for all. The six dimensions of WEE are: influences on social norms; economic advancement; decision-making; functions and workloads; access to opportunities; and access to assets and services as demonstrated in the diagram, to the right.

The GESI principles which guide all of GREAT’s interventions are as follows:

- Integrate gender equality in all projects’ activities and situations
- Respect diversity and cultural differences
- Quota of beneficiary women in all project activities of at least 50%
- Encourage the participation of men
- Create favourable opportunities for disadvantaged groups (e.g. people with disabilities, the poor)
- Apply participatory approaches for capacity building activities

### 1.3. Mainstreaming GESI into Projects

These guidelines were developed by the GREAT team, with input from all partners during the inception training. These guidelines are intended for use by GREAT partners in the planning and implementation of their projects. GREAT encourages all partners to conduct flexible and innovative GESI mainstreaming in their value chain activities, taking into consideration the existing context and available resources to achieve the most effective and transformative results. Furthermore, the GREAT team and PMU members should refer to the guidelines to effectively support and monitor partners’ projects to ensure GESI mainstreaming is efficiently and properly integrated into all project activities.

The document provides concepts, principles, and implementation and monitoring methods to support partners in mainstreaming GESI in all project activities. The guidelines will be updated regularly to reflect lessons learned throughout implementation.

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1 GREAT’s methods include partnership cooperation, adaptive management, market system development (MSD), Markets for the Poor (M4P), WEE, GESI, and Innovation
2. **BASIC CONCEPTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sex</strong></td>
<td>Indicates the biological characteristics of men and women.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Gender</strong></td>
<td>Indicates the socially ascribed characteristics, positions and roles of men and women.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Role</strong></td>
<td>Indicates the different roles that men and women undertake within families and society due to socially constructed perceptions of gender. Gender roles change over time and vary between contexts. Gender roles are determined by economic, cultural and social factors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Prejudice</strong></td>
<td>Indicates negative and positive perceptions, attitudes and assessments based of an individual based on their gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Discrimination</strong></td>
<td>Gender discrimination is the unequal or disadvantageous treatment of an individual or group of individuals based on their gender.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Equality</strong></td>
<td>Gender equality is when men and women enjoy the same opportunities, rights and access to and control over resources.</td>
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2 Concept of Gender, Sex, Gender Role, Gender Prejudice is extracted from Article 5 of Gender Equality Law, No. 73/2006/ QH11, National Assembly of Socialist Republic of Vietnam, November 29, 2006
3. GUIDELINES ON GESI MAINSTREAMING

3.1. Managing GESI Mainstreaming

Purpose: To ensure GESI is mainstreamed effectively into all project activities and identify where there are gaps and additional support is necessary.

3.1.1. APPOINT GESI SPECIALIST/FOCAL POINT

Each GREAT partner should nominate a GESI Specialist or Focal Point to lead GESI mainstreaming across all the whole project cycle.

- The Focal Point should participate in training on the GESI Mainstreaming Plan and other relevant training courses and reflection workshops conducted by GREAT and keep contact with GREAT during the GESI mainstreaming process to ensure they receive on-going support and assistance.

- Responsible for leading project team in the development of a GESI Mainstreaming Activity Plan for their project, according to the template provided and submit to GREAT.

- Lead discussions with their team using GREAT’s GESI Checklist to assess the degree of gender equality and social inclusiveness of their organizations and make recommendations for improvements. This is to be conducted every 6 months in preparation for the reflection/refocus workshops organized by GREAT, which will involve all partners.

3.1.2. ADDRESSING RESISTANCE TO MAINSTREAMING GESI

When encountering resistance from people regarding gender equality or women’s empowerment, strategies for addressing such obstacles may include:

- Providing staff with key messages about the benefits of gender equality and WEE on individuals, households, businesses, partners and whole communities.
Where women are given priority for participation in activities, events, training etc. be transparent about why this is: because women have not previously had equal opportunities or access as men have had.

Provide anti-sexual harassment skills training to staff and trainers to emphasis the challenges women can face in workplaces and that they have equal rights as men to be safe and not discriminated against in a workplace.

Regularly consult communities on their perceptions of GESI to identify opportunities to enhance GESI and manage negative perceptions.

Actively engage with the GREAT team and experienced partners for additional support.
3.2. Mainstreaming GESI in project activities

Purpose: To focus on the equal and effective participation and benefits of ethnic minority women and disadvantaged groups in all project events so that they can benefit from enhanced awareness, skills, and confidence to participate in these activities.

3.2.1. GESI IN IDENTIFYING ACTIVITY’S PURPOSE

- Identify purpose of the event by answering the questions: what does the event aim to achieve? What information is required by beneficiaries (women and men)? What are the expected results for women and for men?

3.2.2. GESI IN IDENTIFYING TARGET PARTICIPANTS

- **Women should make up at least 50% of participants** but men are also encouraged to participate. Participation of ethnic minority women, young women and vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities and the very poor, should also be facilitated.

- Mobilise support from relevant stakeholders (District/Commune People Committee, Women’s Unions, Farmer/Agriculture Promotion Association, relevant agencies, etc.).
3.2.3. GESI IN IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE METHODS

- For some ethnic minority groups such as Hmong and Ha Nhi, most women over 35 years old are illiterate and/or have limited ability to communicate in common language. So, consideration for the language and format of capacity building should take this into account.

- Identify the different learning needs among beneficiary women, men and disadvantaged groups in order to develop a capacity building plan and participatory training tools and methods e.g. visual tools, illustrative examples, stories, role play, models, specimens, games, art, and group activities.

- Allocate more time for practicing new skills, group discussion, and sharing of learning.

- Be aware of the different dynamics between the men and women in the group. For example, if it is only men who speak in meetings, holding separate meetings or discussion groups for women and men members may be appropriate and encourage greater participation of women in discussions.

- Give more attention to those who lack confidence by asking encouraging questions or specifically soliciting their input, without making them feel singled-out. Provide additional support where necessary.

3.2.4. GESI IN COMMUNICATIONS

- Consider the most appropriate language for the target beneficiary group and their level of literacy. Use a local interpreter if participants can’t communicate in a single common language.

- Respect the cultural diversity of different ethnic groups.

- Avoid gender-biased statements or negative orientation that may lead to misunderstandings in communications (e.g. avoid asking negative leading questions in a household questionnaire such as: “women are less able to be leader because they often hesitant when making decisions” or “women sometimes provoke being beaten”).

- Avoid slang, technical jargon or sensitive words and foreign languages.
• Encourage the use of local trainers/consultants where available, rather than relying on outsiders.

3.2.5. GESI IN IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE TIMING

• Always consult participants or their representatives before setting dates and times for meetings. Schedule events based on **convenient times for beneficiary women**, for example: at a time when women do not have household responsibilities are low (e.g. when children are at school and domestic chores are completed) and avoid peak crop harvesting seasons, wedding or funeral events and special ceremonies (e.g. new season/new rice offering).
  
• Consider coordinating or combining with local events organised by commune authorities or women’s unions to take advantage of all participants being in one place and to reduce the time burden on women.

3.2.6. GESI IN IDENTIFYING APPROPRIATE VENUES

• Consider **convenience and safety elements** of the venue to encourage the participation of women and people with disabilities. For example, select a venue that is central for participants, assess the accessibility for people with disabilities (e.g. are there disability toilets and wheelchair ramps); provide transportation, arrange the meeting room with enough space, light, air and seats, and provide additional support in cases where events are far from participants homes, such as accommodation and per diems.
  
• Consider providing childcare during events since this may be a barrier to women’s participation.

3.2.7. GESI IN MONITORING AND REPORTING RESULTS

• Record the number of participants, their **sex** and their **age**, at a minimum.
  
• Report on the **different level of participation, ability to acquire and apply** knowledge of women and men, identifying what worked and did not work and propose solutions for improvement in subsequent activities.
  
• Give priority to women and disadvantaged groups in quotations and images, but also ensure the voice and participation of men, when appropriate.
  
• Use **GREAT template** for participant list to ensure GESI disaggregated data is captured (sex, minority group
and persons with disabilities).

- Meeting minutes should have signatures of both men and women representatives.
3.3. Mainstreaming GESI in group/cooperative formation and operation

Purpose: To enhance the participation, voice and leadership of beneficiary ethnic minority women and disadvantaged groups in common interest groups, improve cohesion and cooperation among group members and between groups and project implementors.

3.3.1. GESI in developing selection criteria for leadership

- **Criteria for selecting group members**: discuss and agree selection criteria with representatives of women and men. **Prioritise women's participation**, particularly in value chains where women's participation is low. Promote both husband and wife joining groups and create favourable conditions for people with disadvantages to participate. For co-investment activities with business partners the project must have support of husband and wife (not just the husband’s) when using family resources (land, assets, capital).

- **Criteria for selecting team leaders**: criteria should **promote women**, particularly ethnic minority women to take leadership positions.

- Ensure **equal representation** of women and men in management boards.

- The selection of the team leader and the management committee should be **democratic, equal and transparent** and the results of the selection recorded in meeting minutes with the signature of participants.

3.3.2. GESI in developing group regulations

- Group regulations should be developed cooperatively, giving **equal opportunity** to women and men to provide input. Consider regulations which encourage women and disadvantaged people’s participation in the target value chain.
3.3.3. GESI IN ORGANISING GROUP MEETINGS

- Create an **equitable, friendly and supportive group atmosphere** in which important topics and content should be prepared in advance by project staff/ team leader/ team members.
- **Mainstream topics on gender equality and WEE in group meetings** with appropriate content, using participatory methods and gender-sensitive timing.

3.3.4. GESI IN DEVELOPING A GROUP PLAN

- **Consider factors related to available resources, competencies and priorities** of target women/ men and disadvantaged groups when developing the group plan and ensure the equal participation of group members in the planning process.
- Decisions within the group or between the group and the business partner/project implementer should be **participatory, equal and transparent**, with the participation of relevant representatives and recorded in a memorandum / contract.
3.4. Mainstreaming GESI in Capacity Building Activities

Purpose: To improve the knowledge and skills of beneficiary women and disadvantaged groups to be more confident, self-reliant and able to participate in the value chain or project more effectively and equally.

3.4.1. GESI IN PROVIDING TRAINING & AWARENESS RAISING ON GENDER EQUALITY AND WEE

The GESI Focal Point and group leaders should be trained in gender equality and WEE in order to carry out awareness raising activities for group members. Topics can include:

- Concepts of gender equality and WEE.
- Barriers and benefits of women and disadvantaged groups participating in value chains.
- Solutions to increase equality (e.g. sharing household and production workloads; equal participation in investment and expenditure decision-making processes within families and production groups).
- Prevention of social risks and issues (e.g. harmful social norms, domestic violence, sexual abuse protection, women/children trafficking) and self-protection skills for young people against harmful traditional practices (e.g. robbing of the child bride or child married of the Hmong ethnic people) organised.

3.4.2. GESI IN PROVIDING TRAINING ON LEADERSHIP SKILLS

- Make sure all women in leadership positions participate in leadership training. Focus on providing knowledge and practicing participatory skills (e.g. participatory decision-making, communications, conflict resolution, negotiation, group planning, operation and monitoring).

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3 It was a customary practice in Hmong ethnic minorities for a young man to come to a young girl’s house to steal her as a wife without her consent. Many couples are still married when they are underage. This is a harmful cultural practice which perpetuates gender inequality because the purpose of the marriage is often to obtain labour to serve the family, in addition to reproductive duties.
3.4.3. GESI IN PROVIDING TECHNICAL TRAINING

- Provide **standard procedures and processes** (e.g. planting, harvesting, processing, marketing, service provision; standard principles for using electricity / machines / chemicals / waste treatment) with detailed guidelines and **easy to understand and remember content so that it is accessible to all**, particularly ethnic minority women that do not speak Vietnamese and illiterate people. This may require use of visual aids, such as pictures, symbols and diagrams.

- Observe and **record different opinions and experiences of men and women** and provide suggestions for how pilots can be adjusted to make them more inclusive or responsive to women's needs. Select trainers/consultants with relevant professional qualifications and prioritise those with **knowledge on gender equality and experience working in the specific localities**.

3.4.4. GESI IN ORGANISING STUDY TOURS

- Selection criteria should be **transparent and mutually agreed** amongst the group (e.g. good contribution for project/ value chain, dynamic and enthusiastic leadership, priority given to women).

- Consider the **accessibility requirements and safety** of participants, particularly for women and people with disabilities. Traveling long distances may not be feasible or appropriate for women due to cultural barriers/duties/responsibilities, so consider locations that are more accessible and additional support that needs to be provided to ensure women members can participate (e.g. provide an invitation with the name of the invitee, purpose of the tour, organiser, schedule, transportation, food, accommodation and incidentals allowance).

- The tours should **highlight successful experiences of WEE**, gender equality aspects of projects visited and invite successful women/married couples to share experiences with participants.
3.5. Mainstreaming GESI into the provision of input/outputs and supplying products

Purpose: To enhance the equality of access of beneficiary women and disadvantaged groups to project inputs, infrastructure and investment services, to increase their production and income.

3.5.1. GESI IN PROVIDING INPUTS, OUTPUTS, SERVICES

- Procurement of supply contracts for inputs, outputs, services should be transparent, and information publicly disseminated to members about price mechanism, specifications and standards.
- Consult women, men and persons with disabilities as service providers, suppliers or service users and professionals in the design and implementation of infrastructure to ensure the function, effectiveness and accessibility of the construction are suitable for all users, including women and people with disabilities (e.g. having secure and sex-segregated toilets, ramps for wheelchairs on sidewalk, and special toilets for people with disabilities).
- Consider the demand for financial services of beneficiary women, including the very poor, and the barriers to access that they experience and facilitate access to providers who can offer them preferential loan policies (e.g. Women’s Union, Social Policy Bank).

3.5.2. GESI IN PRODUCTION / SERVICE PROVISION

- Managers and technical staff should include both women and men representatives.
- Spend time guiding and mentoring women and men to apply new skills and techniques to target value chains, especially for people who require additional learning support.
- Consider the opinions of both men and women on the application of standard practice codes.
- Consult both female and male worker/users to understand effectiveness of technological processes, any negative impacts (e.g. waste and chemicals) and possible solutions.
3.6. Mainstreaming GESI in marketing and product/service branding

Purpose: To improve awareness of public and consumers about the project’s prominent role of women in ensuring the quality and safety of products and highlight the goals of gender equality and WEE in business/product branding.

3.6.1. GESI in Marketing and Branding

- **Focus on improving skills equally for beneficiary women and men** on market networking, product promotion, business negotiation, accounting, business start-up, and customer care.

- Use **gender-sensitive marketing strategies**, such as identifying the differences between women’s and men’s purchasing power, consumer psychology and demands and design marketing to address these differences.

- Language used in media should be neutral, **avoid words which suggest gender bias** e.g. when referring to buying vegetable products, use the word "consumer" instead of "grandmother or wife"; or when referring to homestay ownership, the word “owner” should be used instead of the word "boss" or "land lord".

- Consult women and men experts, professional staff, leaders, officials, employees about the content and motifs used in designs on packaging, product logos, and communications material.

- **Emphasise GESI mainstreaming in Terms of Reference** for media campaigns and ensure that media do not exploit traditional gender roles, harmful social norms or gender or ethnological stereotypes.

- **Ensure that marketing and communication materials do not exploit traditional gender roles, harmful social norms or gender stereotypes.**
3.7. Mainstreaming GESI in policy dialogue and consultation

Purpose: To improve awareness of beneficiary ethnic minority women and disadvantaged groups on related policies and plans of the government / enterprise and enhance the voices of target beneficiaries in policy making.

3.7.1. GESI IN DIALOGUE WITH PRIVATE SECTOR

- Create equal opportunities for women and men to engage in dialogue with the private sector and connect to the market network.

- When facilitating consultations or dialogue, dividing participants into specific groups, according to gender, interest, age, ethnic minority group, or disadvantage or marginalisation, will ensure that all participants have equal opportunity to meaningfully participate. This means giving equal space and voice to diverse perspectives.

3.7.2. GESI IN MEETINGS WITH POLICY MAKERS

- Promote the importance of inclusive policy consultations. Contributions from participants, especially from marginalised groups, such as ethnic minority women should be respected, listened to and incorporated in the development of policies/plans.
3.8. Mainstreaming GESI into Human Resource Policies

Purpose: To create favourable, secure and equal opportunities for female workers and marginalised people to work more enthusiastically, effectively, and permanently with project partners.

3.8.1. GESI IN RECRUITMENT

- **Prioritise local ethnic minority women** in recruitment processes and create opportunities for disadvantaged people (poor, disabilities).
- Raise the awareness of the public to eliminate stereotypes of the types of work women can or should do (especially in tourism and services sectors).

3.8.2. GESI IN LABOUR POLICIES

- Foster an enabling environment to designate qualified women as leaders in decision-making positions. Have a salary and bonus policy that equally benefits male and female workers in the same position and in accordance with the requirements of labour use under Vietnamese law.
- Create an enabling environment for women, men and people with disabilities to work effectively, equitably and safely, free from discrimination (e.g. ensure space, light, ventilation, temperature, waste management, workplace safety and policies which recognise the rights of all employees regardless of sex, ethnicity or disability status).
- Implement policies on sexual harassment and anti-discrimination and prevent other social issues (e.g. human trafficking, prostitution, drug use in the workplace).
- **GREAT prohibits child labour, exploitation or abuse in any form.**
- Consider the potential impact on the health of women, men and vulnerable workers/users (e.g. waste and chemicals, hazardous waste management). Provide training to both male and female workers on safe use of equipment, guidelines for first aid, safe use of chemicals, workplace safety and hygiene.
- Provide safe, clean and sex-segregated toilets at the workplace.
3.8.3. POLICY FOR WOMEN WORKERS THAT ARE PREGNANT OR WITH SMALL CHILDREN

- Give due consideration to the different requirements of women who are pregnant or have small children (e.g. suitable type of work and working time, avoiding jobs that affect the health of mothers and children).

- **Consult pregnant female workers on their role and duties** and where possible provide reasonable accommodation for them, giving them different tasks and responsibilities, which are less labour-intensive during pregnancy.

- **Pregnant women have equal rights** to employment and safe work that all other women and men do, should be reasonably accommodated and not discriminated against on any basis.

- **Social insurance for pregnant** female workers (for antenatal care and maternity regimes) should comply with the Labour Insurance Law 2014. Employers must not dismiss or unilaterally terminate labour contracts for female workers because of pregnancy (according to Article No.155 Labour Law, 2012).