The Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT) Program promotes gender equality and women’s economic empowerment, with a focus on the ethnically diverse provinces of Son La and Lao Cai in Vietnam’s north-west.

Funded by the Australian Government and delivered in partnership with the Government of Vietnam, GREAT is a four-year program (2017-2021) that works with the private sector, government agencies and NGOs to create opportunities for women within the agriculture and tourism sectors. These sectors have demonstrated strong economic growth and the potential to increase the economic participation of ethnic minority women.

GREAT seeks to influence change by:

- Improving the income of 40,000 women in Son La and Lao Cai.
- Contributing to the creation of 4,000 jobs for women.
- Leverage over $US 6 million in private sector investment.
- Increasing the self-reported confidence, enthusiasm and self-esteem of 80% of women beneficiaries.
- Increasing the number of women leading and managing businesses or cooperatives by 15%.

Expected Results:

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Son La Province
Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism Program

Son La Province and GREAT

Son La is the largest province in north-west Vietnam and is home to 12 ethnic groups [Tay, Thai, Muong, Mong, Dao, Kho Mu, Xinh Mun and La Ha] representing over 84 percent of the population. Poverty rates in Son La are four times higher than the national average, with ethnic minorities more likely to be excluded from the significant economic growth that Vietnam has enjoyed in recent years.

In Son La, GREAT has focused activities in Moc Chau and Van Ho districts. Both districts have significant agricultural sectors and a growing tourism industry. The Son La Provincial Government’s policies also support growth of these sectors.

Agriculture and Tourism: Sectors for growth

Around 80 percent of the Son La population is engaged in agriculture and in 2019 the sector represented just over 24 percent of provincial GDP. While tourism represented a much smaller contribution to GDP (1 percent), visitor rates increased between 4-16 percent in recent years.

Both sectors present opportunities for increased participation of ethnic minority groups, including women and align with Son La Provincial Government strategies for long-term, inclusive economic development.

Within agriculture, GREAT and the Son La Provincial Government are working with the private sector, NGOs and government agencies to improve productivity in the passionfruit, tea, vegetable, bamboo shoots, ramie, rice and medicinal plant sectors. In tourism, GREAT is supporting the development of community-based tourism and the broader destination to ensure benefits flow through to women and ethnic minorities. Cross-cutting initiatives including a business accelerator program for women-led start-ups and existing businesses, will support growth.
GREAT has adopted a multi-pronged approach to stimulating change in partnership with the private sector, government and civil society organisations in the tourism and agriculture markets.

Our Approach

We are working to enable women to access economic opportunities, determine their own involvement, be recognised for the value of their contributions and receive equitable economic returns. Our approach to women’s economic empowerment focuses on:

Reach: Engaging women in all project activities and addressing barriers to participator.

Benefit: Improve women’s access to assets, financial services and support services.

Empower: Strengthen the ability of women to make strategic life choices and put these into action.

We work with partners to identify and implement solutions that improve the way markets function and elevate the ability of women to participate more actively and equally.

Importantly, GREAT works to facilitate change in market systems without becoming embedded in it. This approach promotes sustainability by helping long-term system actors affect changes they have a stake in - providing an incentive to maintain any new practice.

We aim to tackle the underlying causes of market failure and poverty, rather than just addressing the superficial symptoms.

Inherent to our approach is a cycle of constant learning. If something is not working, we adapt and seek alternative solutions.

This approach fosters innovation as we encourage the pursuit of solutions to specific market problems and/ or women’s participation. It also provides us with a body of practical knowledge and evidence, which we share with relevant agencies and policy-makers to advocate for sector governance and policy change.
Son La Province Partnership Portfolio

Number of Partnerships

**Agriculture**

1 Medicinal Plants
3 Tea
4 Vegetables
2 Fruit
1 Rice
1 Bamboo Shoots
1 Ramie

**Tourism**

1 Community-Based Tourism
1 Inclusive Destination Management

**Cross-cutting**

2 Innovation
1 Access to Finance
1 Business Skills Development
1 Policy

**Expected Results**

**Increased economic security for women**

- 1,132 new jobs for women, including 958 for ethnic minority women.

- 12,262 women, including 10,544 ethnic minority women, join a cooperative or business network.

- 24,242 women, including 17,393 ethnic minority women, gain knowledge and skills in agriculture, processing, tourism and business.

- 12,915 women, including 3,792 ethnic minority women, provided with productive resources and inputs.

- 13,568 women, including 10,454 ethnic minority women have increased income.

- 12,262 women, including 10,544 ethnic minority women, provided with productive resources and inputs.

**Increased influence of women**

- 528 women, including 445 ethnic minority women appointed to leadership positions within collective groups.

- A minimum 80% of women have increased confidence.

**Private sector investment leveraged**

AUD 5,605,280
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