

# Aus4Equality|GREAT Partnering for Change



## Production of Rice Seeds with High Land Women Lao Cai Agricultural Seedling Centre

### Opportunity

Seng Cu is a local specialty rice that has the potential to create higher income for farmers. The project will enable the Lao Cai Agricultural Seedling Centre to expand its market outreach to other provinces and address a market constraint of limited access to quality seeds. Engaging more women farmers in growing rice seeds has the potential to increase farmer income by 50%, compared to traditional rice.

**There is high domestic demand for Seng Cu rice, creating opportunities for ethnic minority women to increase income through producing rice seeds.**

### Challenges

While the demand for Seng Cu rice is strong, many farmers have to buy Seng Cu seeds with questionable quality from local traders. In general, the seedling market has high potential but is also competitive. The key to success relies on strong distribution channels, product quality and competitive pricing. The Seedling Centre has the intellectual property for several seedling varieties which helps maintain its market position and reduces the competitive risk.

For farming households, they do not have the technical skills, access to training or quality seeds and fertiliser to produce Seng Cu rice seeds. Farmers also need to be convinced to switch from the production of traditional rice to Seng Cu seeds.

### Solutions for Change

- » Expand the production area from 100 ha to 250 ha
- » Organise female-led seedling production groups
- » Establish Seng Cu seedling pilot plots to demonstrate techniques to improve yield, reduce input costs and improve seedling quality
- » Training to ensure seed production aligns with technical standards
- » Provide seedlings and fertiliser to households with the cost deducted from sales
- » Improve processing line within the Seedling Centre to ensure product quality
- » Rice seed marketing and branding

### Expected Results

- » **Increased income** for 270 women, including 180 ethnic minority women
- » 30 women, including 20 ethnic minority women **appointed in leadership positions** or have improved leadership skills
- » Minimum 80% of women report **increased confidence**