About the GREAT program

The Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT) program is building the resilience of ethnic minority women in northwest Vietnam through improved social and economic outcomes. Funded by the Australian Government, GREAT is delivered in partnership with the Provincial People’s Committees of Son La and Lao Cai provinces. GREAT began in 2017 and is a 10-year program with an investment of AUD 67.4 million.

GREAT partners with the private sector, government agencies, and civil society to create opportunities for women within the agriculture and tourism market sectors. These sectors have demonstrated strong growth and offer the potential to significantly increase the economic participation of ethnic minority women, which, in turn, benefits the resilience, security, and prosperity of all – from households through to the economy at large.

Women’s economic empowerment cannot be achieved without greater gender equality, and GREAT is working to:
- Ensure ethnic minority women can better engage in agriculture and tourism markets.
- Enhance women’s voices in decision-making.
- Promote partnerships with the private sector.
- Support more inclusive and gender-responsive government policies and services.

The next five years of GREAT will build on the results achieved to date

- 15,378 women with increased income
- 1,963 women taking leadership positions
- 3,657 women with new job
- USD 6.1 million private sector fund leveraged
- 86% women with increased confidence
- National Target Programs positively influenced
Creating opportunities in Vietnam’s northwest

Vietnam has become increasingly integrated into global production and value chains, with female-intensive export-oriented manufacturing being a major stimulus of GDP growth. However, the economic growth opportunities this presents have not yet reached everyone, with the ethnic minority groups in the country’s northwest remaining the most disadvantaged with a poverty rate significantly higher than the national average.

As Vietnam strives to reach developed country status by 2045, it is important that its continued economic growth is inclusive of everyone. Gender equality, women’s economic empowerment, involving the private sector and engaging local communities will all be essential to develop strong policies, attitudes and practices that support inclusive development goals. GREAT is supporting the Government of Vietnam, civil society and the private sector to achieve these aims with a growing body of evidence, education and advocacy, and knowledge.

GREAT’s focus areas include:

Tourism
- Destination management
- Vocational skills development
- Inclusive, responsible tourism

Agriculture
- Bamboo shoot
- Cinnamon
- Ramie
- Vegetables
- Fruits

Cross-cutting areas
- Digital inclusion
- Financial inclusion
- Women’s entrepreneurship and leadership
- Gender equality, Disability and Social inclusion
- Policy advocacy

“With the mentoring and business skills development I received, I led the expansion of the Hung Hien Noodle Cooperative into new product lines, increasing revenue from VND 450 million in 2022 to almost VND 1.5 billion in 2022. The number of local households supplying the cooperative has expanded from 15 to 70 and the business now directly employs up to 20 people in the peak season.”

- Hung Hien Noodle Cooperative Director, Mrs Co Thi Hien.
GREAT’s approach

Women’s Economic Empowerment

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 address barriers to participation.

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

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

Market Systems Development

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 system dysfunction and poverty, rather than temporarily addressing the symptoms of it.

**Strategy:** Ambition to transform systems to be more inclusive of ethnic minority women.

**Diagnosis:** Understanding the causes of ethnic minority women’s disadvantage.

**Vision:** Focusing on sustainable outcomes.

**Facilitation:** Intervening to develop, not distort, system actor capacity and incentives.
Expected outcomes for GREAT 2:

1. Women, particularly ethnic minority women living in Son La and Lao Cai, have improved economic benefits.

2. Women, particularly ethnic minority women living in Son La and Lao Cai, have increased confidence and social status, including more balanced workloads and greater decision-making within the home, workplace, and community.

3. Women, particularly ethnic minority women and household members living in Son La and Lao Cai, benefit from more gender-responsive, inclusive, and effective provincial and national policies, plans, strategies, and programs.

“Over the past five years of implementing the GREAT program, we have together seen effective models, the benefits brought from good practices and areas for improvement in the agriculture and tourism sectors. We are now actively working to further increase the participation of women in these sectors as this will benefit women and their families, and contribute to sustainable development. We look forward to applying the lessons from GREAT to the implementation of national target programs.”

- Ms Nguyen Thi Trang Nhung, Director of Son La GREAT Project Management Unit

Please scan below more information about the GREAT program.