

## SECTOR BRIEF

# WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

### About GREAT

The Gender Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT) program is building the social and economic resilience of ethnic minority women in Northwest Vietnam. GREAT partners with the private sector, government agencies and civil society to unlock opportunities for women's economic empowerment in the agriculture and tourism sectors. 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.



### Women entrepreneurs are catalysts for change

Women are powerful agents of change. Women as leaders and decision-makers at all levels are crucial for economic and social progress as well as for the advancement of gender equality. Empowering women entrepreneurs can significantly boost a country's economy by creating jobs, increasing GDP, and reducing poverty. In Vietnam, the increasing number of successful women-owned and women-led businesses is contributing to a positive shift in social perceptions of women in business and in their communities. These businesses are creating jobs and making significant contributions to the economy. Most women-owned businesses are small and operate in the service sector. According to a survey by International Finance Corporation (IFC) in 2017, the average age of women entrepreneurs is 40 compared to 54 for men and 94% of women entrepreneurs are running a business for the first time.

Despite positive national trends, ethnic minority women in Northwest Vietnam, including Lao Cai and Son La provinces, still face significant structural and social barriers to starting and growing their businesses. Access to capital, inputs, support services and new markets, physical distance to main markets, language barriers as well as lack of business and technical skills, self-confidence and resistance from their families and communities are common challenges for ethnic minority women entrepreneurs.

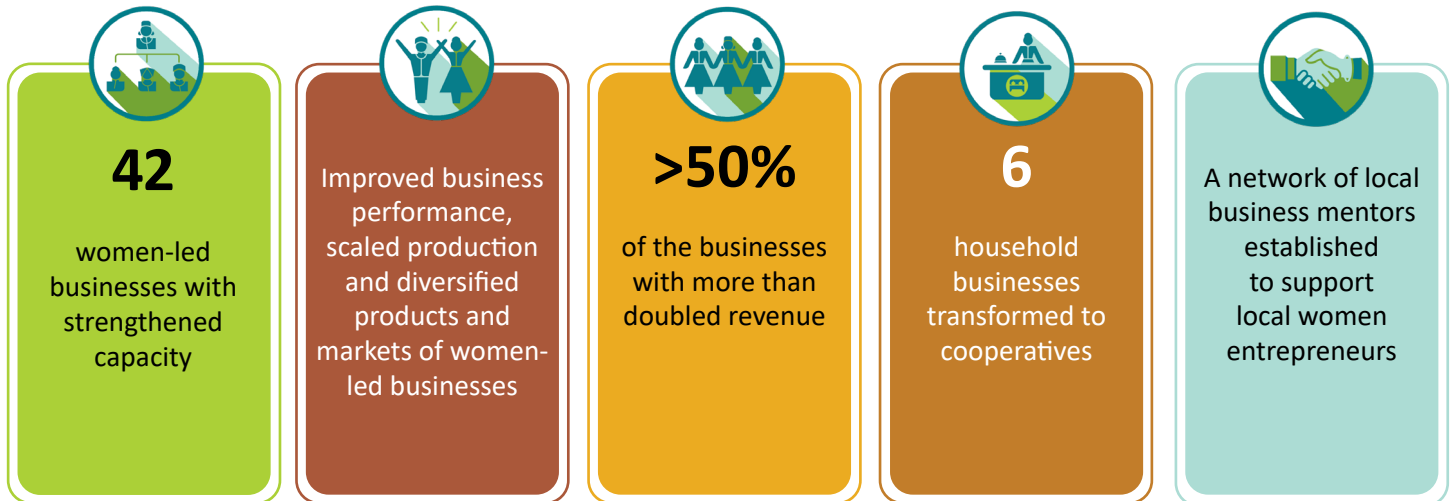
GREAT acknowledges the importance of bolstering women's entrepreneurship and leadership in Lao Cai and Son La, particularly among ethnic minority women. This potential is reinforced by the government's efforts to strengthen gender equality policies and institutions, prioritise women's economic development, especially for ethnic minority women in remote areas, and promote the growth of women entrepreneurs.

# GREAT AND WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND LEADERSHIP

## Work to date

GREAT supported two women entrepreneurship initiatives during phase one of the program through partnerships with Lao Cai Provincial Women's Union and WISE in Son La Province.

### These initiatives resulted in:



### GREAT's digital business program resulted in:





## Moving forward

GREAT is integrating women's entrepreneurship and leadership capacity across its work in agriculture and tourism in Lao Cai and Son La Provinces addressing barriers that ethnic minority women in business face on both demand and supply sides. The following intervention areas are contributing to work in these sectors:



### **Building capacity of the Provincial Women's Union and Provincial Cooperative Alliance in implementing effective business incubation, acceleration and leadership skills programs by:**

- Improving the selection of promising businesses owned by ethnic minority women for incubation and/or acceleration support
- Strengthening program design, planning and monitoring capabilities for local partners
- Strengthening networks amongst national and local business support service providers and mentors
- Facilitating more demand-oriented and sustainable government investment strategies in support of business incubation and acceleration
- Integrating leadership skills in incubation and acceleration programs



### **Building capacity of local mentors to provide mentorship in business and leadership for ethnic minority women entrepreneurs including:**

- Business and leadership skills
- Mentorship and coaching skills and best practices
- Networking skills to connect ethnic minority women entrepreneurs with service providers
- Establishing and managing sustainable and viable mentorship services for ethnic minority women entrepreneurs



### **Piloting incubation, acceleration and leadership skills training for ethnic minority women entrepreneurs including:**

- Core business and leadership skills for businesses operation and resilience
- Coaching and mentoring sessions to resolve business operation challenges
- Broadening business vision and networks through the learning tours, seed funding and trade fairs
- Building women's agency to enhance their negotiation and leadership skills

## PARTNERS

GREAT is working with the Provincial Women's Union in Lao Cai and Son La, GreenU and IChange Center to build and strengthen women's entrepreneurship and leadership in the agriculture and tourism sectors.



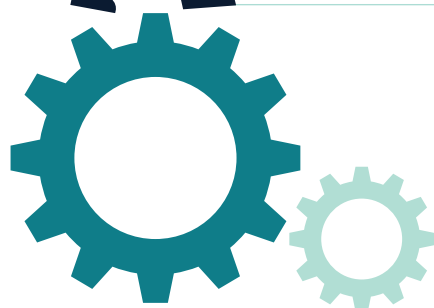
## KEY EXPECTED RESULTS



Business incubation and acceleration programs are gender-responsive and inclusive. Ethnic minority women entrepreneurs have leadership skills through professional local coordinating services - such as the Provincial Women's Union, Provincial Cooperative Alliances - who can better respond to their needs



Ethnic minority women entrepreneurs see value in using and paying for business and leadership skills capacity building services because it will advance their ability to successfully manage their business



Trained local mentors increase opportunity to improve their services to ethnic minority women entrepreneurs through their engagement with Provincial Women's Union in the government-funded incubation, acceleration and leadership programs



### Cross-cutting element of women's entrepreneurship and leadership

GREAT has identified women's entrepreneurship and leadership as a priority across both the agricultural and tourism sectors. To further promote women's entrepreneurship in Lao Cai and Son La Provinces, it is also essential to integrate cross-cutting elements including climate change action and environmental protection, Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), child labor and child safety, and gender-based violence considerations into our efforts.



### Contact information

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