

SECTOR BRIEF

DIGITAL INCLUSION AND TRANSFORMATION

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.



Empowering Women and Closing the Digital Divide in Vietnam

Vietnam has made significant strides in digital inclusion. The Digital Inclusion Index, which assesses accessibility, affordability, ability and attitude, has ranked Vietnam 34th out of 82 emerging and developing economies in 2021, up from 44th the previous year. While behind neighbouring Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, Vietnam has seen substantial improvements in digital infrastructure. Over 70% of adults now own smartphones, and 84% of households have high-speed bandwidth internet access. The government has launched the National Digital Transformation Program with a vision for 2030 to foster digital government, economy and society. This has been accompanied by a surge in e-commerce, with 1.2 million active accounts on platforms like Postmart and Voso. In Lao Cai and Son La provinces, digital inclusion and transformation is gathering pace, led by public sector and e-commerce services. This is providing many women, including ethnic

minority women, in business with opportunities to enhance their capacity to capitalise on business opportunities and to increase their income.

Digital inclusion and transformation still face many challenges, including embracing a digital mindset and acquiring the necessary digital business skills and capabilities among micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) to maximise business opportunities. Weak market linkages between ecosystem stakeholders compound challenges, preventing the collaboration needed for sustained growth and innovation in these provinces. Disadvantaged groups, including ethnic minority women and persons with disabilities, experience limited access to information, services and social networks. Digital transformation and inclusion is critical to enabling these groups to build community and connection both economically and socially.

GREAT AND DIGITAL INCLUSION AND TRANSFORMATION

Work to date

In its first phase, the GREAT program piloted digital solutions to improve the business operations of ethnic minority households and small enterprises in the agriculture and tourism sectors. Partnering with organisations including Helvetas, VietED, KisStartup and Huong Dat, GREAT introduced various digital tools and provided training to enhance e-commerce capabilities, supply chain management and overall business performance.

Key initiatives included:



Key lessons learned included:



Moving forward

With a growing understanding of the barriers to digital inclusion and transformation, on both the demand and supply sides, GREAT is integrating digital initiatives across its work in agriculture and tourism in Lao Cai and Son La provinces. The following intervention areas are designed to support digital inclusion and transformation across the sectors:



Capacity building for key market actors in digital transformation with a business-centred approach

Digital and e-commercial skills services are being nurtured to support interested individuals and businesses with a particular focus on ethnic minority women entrepreneurs. GREAT is testing fee-based service model where learners will share the cost of previously wholly subsidised training and coaching, and be supported to embed these costs within their investment plans.



Facilitating connections between MSMEs and digital service providers

MSMEs are connected with digital solutions and business development service providers at provincial and national levels so that service providers have better understanding of the needs and can adapt their offerings while local businesses can access to relevant service providers.



Supporting professional service providers in delivering gender responsive digital solutions

Professional service providers are facilitated to develop and provide more gender responsive and inclusive new demand-based services on digital transformation including digital business innovations for MSMEs.



Enhancing digital training and mentoring capabilities

Strengthening digital training and mentoring skills for locally based universities to provide relevant skilled human resources; digital business mentoring for local MSMEs; support lead businesses in digitalising their business processes and utilise online platforms to deliver production skills training for their farmer supply chains.



Developing a network of “group mentors” to support and coach ethnic minority women entrepreneurs

A pool of mentors has been mobilised and trained in digital skills for on-training to ethnic minority women entrepreneurs. Support includes service quality monitoring and impact measurement to ensure the quality, relevance and accessibility of skills training and mentorship



Promoting digitalised training by public and private actors providing knowledge and skills training in agriculture and tourism

To extend outreach and improve the efficiency and management of smallholder and ethnic minority supply chains, GREAT is supporting lead firms that source from ethnic minority women to adopt digital technologies. Support include both private and public service providers in increasing their awareness of, and capacity for, digitalisation.

PARTNERS

GREAT is working with KisStartup, IViet-STG, universities (including Tay Bac and Thai Nguyen Universities) and the private sector to build and strengthen digital transformation and inclusion in the agriculture and tourism sectors.

GREAT’s project partner leadership tasks include:

1 ✓ Coordinate, manage, and report on the results of implementing digital transformation and inclusion activities

3 ✓ Coordinate with involved partners to ensure investment efficiency

2 ✓ Provide technical services (Digital Business Acceleration Program, mentoring)

4 ✓ Develop an ecosystem of local and national partners to reduce service costs, expand markets and add value to customers

GREAT partners will:



Work with lead enterprises to digitalise technical training materials and build digitalisation capacity and performance



Build capacity mentorship groups and public training service providers



Support provision of digital literacy training to farmer groups



Develop ecosystem for digital business transformation



Build fee-based e-commerce training services for interested individuals and businesses



KEY EXPECTED RESULTS



Digital transformation content integrated into training activities of local universities and colleges

Better linkages between local business support organisations and other stakeholders in the ecosystem

Better opportunities for women's lifelong learning to access new knowledge and skills

Improved digital transformation capacity of individuals and MSMEs, especially those owned by ethnic minority women

Increased number and quality of technical service providers with skills in digital transformation

Digitalised training services of public and private providers established

Improved digital inclusion capacity of local people, including ethnic minority women



Cross-cutting element of digital inclusion and transformation

GREAT has identified digital inclusion and transformation as a priority constraint facing people with disabilities working in both the agricultural and tourism sectors. More inclusive, accessible digital initiatives offer significant opportunities in promoting women's entrepreneurship and leadership in communities and businesses, and can unlock both economic and social opportunities for traditionally marginalised and/or isolated groups within communities such as people with disabilities.



Contact information

For further information on our work on digital inclusion and transformation, please contact:

Vu Quynh Anh (Ms.)
Deputy Team Leader
The GREAT Program

📍 7th floor, Vinapaco Building, 142 Doi Can, Ba Dinh, Ha Noi
✉ anh.vu@aus4equalityvn.org
☎ 024 3211 5225 | 0904 295 866

