

SECTOR BRIEF

TOURISM DESTINATION MANAGEMENT

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.



Ethnic minority women's leadership in tourism development

Tourism is a significant and fast-growing sector in Northwest Vietnam, and one which offers many social and economic opportunities for ethnic minority women. The region is renowned for its natural beauty and cultural diversity with iconic destinations such as Sa Pa and Moc Chau. The richness of ethnic community heritage and traditions across Northwest Vietnam are a key attraction for domestic and international tourists alike. Women in those communities assume a fair share of responsibilities maintaining, protecting and representing ethnic culture and tradition, while also actively participating in tourism as employees or entrepreneurs and providers of homestays, food services, and traditional handicrafts and more.

For many ethnic minority women, tourism is an important source of income second only to agriculture. By diversifying livelihoods, tourism helps mitigate the risks associated with unpredictable agricultural production in mountainous regions. Women's increasing involvement in the tourism sector is empowering them economically and socially; it provides both a viable livelihood and the opportunity to be seen as decision makers and leaders in business and community.

Vietnam's ethnic minorities, and women in particular, are key drivers of tourism sector growth and, importantly, of the long-term sustainability, viability and resilience of the industry. Culturally and environmentally responsible tourism lies at the heart of Vietnam's tourism strategy – an ambition that can only succeed with the partnership and leadership of ethnic minority women and their communities.

GREAT AND INCLUSIVE TOURISM PLANNING AND INVESTMENT

Work to date

GREAT has worked to bring together communities, government stakeholders and private sector in developing and investing in community-based tourism initiatives in high potential destinations across Son La and Lao Cai. During Phase 1, GREAT supported tourism startups including homestays, cultural and tour guide services in key destinations such as Ban Lien, Y Ty, Ta Phin, Vat, and Ta So. GREAT helped strengthen tourism policies in Son La and Lao Cai provinces through active consultation with ethnic minority women and their communities, including through technical support to:



Moving forward

GREAT Phase 2 is working with public, private and community partners to pilot and strengthen more cohesive and effective approaches to destination management in Northwest Vietnam. This initiative seeks to enhance sector stewardship in selected, high priority destinations; promote strategic investment by both public and private stakeholders; and stimulate the development of more inclusive and responsible tourism that empowers ethnic minority women and communities in the region.

The Program is piloting innovative models for more inclusive and collaborative destination planning and management in the districts of Moc Chau and Muong La in Son La; and Bat Xat and Bac Ha in Lao Cai. These initiatives will integrate provincial, district, and commune-level tourism activities to support public-private-community partnerships for strategic governance, product development, and investment planning.



Improved destination stewardship

This ambitious and innovative agenda begins with strengthening destination management at the provincial level. This will involve establishing strong leadership, including through empowered community-led tourism, aligning efforts with national tourism policies, and creating a robust governance framework. Provincial leadership will underpin complementary support to district and commune authorities in the form of tailored planning and community engagement.



Product development

The identification and development of appropriate and responsible tourism products is central to the strategy, fostering public-private-community partnerships to co-create innovative tourism offerings. These products will leverage and safeguard local cultural and natural assets, focusing on empowering ethnic minority women as entrepreneurs and contributors to the tourism experience.



Investment planning

Coordinated investment and investment planning will be critical in order to attract responsible and long-term investments into these key destinations. These investments will be vital in creating long-term sustainability for continuous growth and ensuring that tourism becomes a driver of economic empowerment for ethnic minority women across the targeted districts and beyond whilst also safeguarding ethnic minority people, cultures and traditions.



PARTNERS

GREAT is working with Clickable Impact and the Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism (DOCST) of Son La province, and Department of Tourism (DOT) Lao Cai province to test, develop and operationalise more effective multi-stakeholder partnerships in destination management in these provinces.

As the lead technical co-facilitator, Clickable Impact will:

1 ✓

Lead overall project design, management and reporting

2 ✓

Facilitate and provide technical assistance to strengthen the role of public-private partnerships to:

co-design destination management strategies; support public sector partners on data collection and analysis to measure destination performance, including sustainability indicators

facilitate cross-sector dialogue to strengthen the role of tourism authorities in destination investment and planning preparation

conduct needs assessment of tourism investments for sustainable, inclusive tourism development

support the private sector and ethnic communities to design and market responsible tourism products and experiences



EXPECTED RESULTS



Better access to quality training, employment, resources, income generation and improving the capacity and confidence of ethnic minority women.

Active participation and contribution of ethnic minority women and their communities in destination management planning, product development and tourism-related investment planning and evaluation.



Sustainable provision of unique tourism cultural experiences and products while ensuring cultural and environmental safeguarding measures for ethnic minority women and ethnic minority communities.



Safeguarding priorities

The tourism sector poses critical safeguarding risks to ethnic minority women and their communities. This includes ensuring a safe working environment for women and girls, and protecting both cultural and natural environments impacted by tourism. The project will prioritise safeguarding measures by integrating them into planning and operating models at all levels (provincial, district, commune). A full-time safeguarding lead will be embedded within the project to guide and support the effective implementation of these measures.



Contact information

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