

THE GREAT PROGRAM

NEWSLETTER

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KEY FIGURES (JAN - JUN 2025)



Co-investment
from private sector

VND 9,342,619,629



Number of women having
full-time and part-time jobs
as a result of project support

569



Number of
beneficiary women

4,398



Number of
beneficiary households

8,691



Number of women trained on various
topics

2,615



Number of market actors supported to
expand market access and/or improve
supply chain resilience

377

LATEST NEWS



Why did a university lecturer start a digital training service for her community? For Ms. Dang Thi Van Chi, a lecturer of Tay Bac University in Son La, it was a question that lingered for years: How can academic knowledge go beyond textbooks and truly support local businesses and people?

After joining the IDAP project in 2024, she learned what local businesses truly needed: essential digital skills. Now, through her "Van Chi Digital Training," she's empowering women and youth entrepreneurs with the tools to succeed. Read her full story in this link to learn how she's turning academic knowledge into real-world impact!

[Read more](#)

Meet Leo Thi Hoa, a Thai woman from Na Tau, Ngoc Chien, Son La! She is a trainee from the "Non-alcoholic beverage preparation" course organised by REACH Son La in Ngoc Chien commune.

As a young woman with hearing and speech disabilities, Hoa has shown incredible perseverance. Despite the communication barriers she faces, she attends every class with determination—learning each shaking movement and perfecting every cup of coffee with the support of her teachers and fellow students, who patiently guide and explain through sign language and gestures.

[Read more](#)

LATEST PUBLICATIONS



The quiet evolution of Ms. Vang Thi Thong: Building a new life in Ban Lien

Mornings in Ban Lien Commune, Lao Cai Province, awaken with the distant crow of roosters, a thin mist clinging to the palm-thatched roofs, and the fresh scent of newly sprouted tea leaves. Inside her modest stilt house, Ms. Vang Thi Thong quietly prepares for the day.

Her hands deftly pick tea leaves, her eyes quickly glancing at the corner where the mattress was neatly adjusted the night before. Everything is done silently but meticulously – much like how she’s steadily building a new life for herself.

[Read more](#)

The Sweet Shoots of Change

The lush hills of Van Ban district in Lao Cai province, with their cascading rice terraces and pockets of dense forest, hold a wealth of natural resources. Among these, the bamboo shoot sector plays a crucial role in the livelihoods of the local people, particularly the ethnic minority women who have traditionally been central to its cultivation and harvesting.

[Read more](#)

GREAT SNAPSHOTS



VISIT TO SON LA

Ms. Naomi Cook (right), Development Counsellor at the Australian Embassy in Vietnam meeting ethnic minority women entrepreneurs in Son La who are building their business skills and performance with the support of the GREAT program.



JOINT MONITORING MISSION IN LAO CAI

Ms. Cathy McWilliam (center), First Secretary of Development Cooperation from Australia Embassy in Vietnam visiting women bamboo shoot growers including people with disability in Van Ban, Lao Cai.



WRITING STORIES OF CHANGE TRAINING

Four training sessions on “Writing Stories of Change” held for GREAT partners and beneficiaries in Hanoi, Lao Cai and Son La. With hands-on guidance and practical exercises, participants learned how to collect necessary information for compelling stories of change.

GREAT SNAPSHOTS



SPECIALTY FAIR OF LAO CAI & SON LA

Nearly 400 million VND total revenue generated from the “Hand in Hand – Specialty Fair of Lao Cai & Son La”, held in Sa Pa, attracting 33 participating businesses and 3,000 visitors.



DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

Two digital transformation festivals organised in Son La and Lao Cai successfully showcasing the crucial role of technology in driving local development, especially for ethnic minority women.

VIETED AND ABBANK MOU SIGNING CEREMONY

VietED and ABBank signing an agreement through which ABBank will offer financial services including value chain loans to agricultural producers and businesses in Vietnam, including Lao Cai and Son La. This will provide more financial and livelihood support for rural families, including ethnic minority communities, as ABBank expands its reach.



KEY PAST ACTIVITIES

(JAN - JUN 2025)

Sector	Activities
Bamboo shoot	Training for collective ethnic minority women-led groups on group management
	Feasibility assessment to expand Bat Do production areas to Phu Yen district with Yen Thanh Company
Cinnamon	Training for farmers on sustainable production
	Developing action plan for the Lao Cai Association of Cinnamon and Star Anise
Tourism	Improved destination model implementation
	Piloting ethnic minority women-targeted training product promotion and implementation
Financial Inclusion	Assessing savings products and support/recommendations for refinement to greater ethnic minority women inclusion
	Development of value chain products for households with LP Bank
	Development of sustainable financial literacy service support from Women's Union for ethnic minority women
Women's entrepreneurship and leadership	On-going training and coaching on business and leadership for women entrepreneurs
	On-going training and coaching for local business mentors
	On-going training and coaching for Provincial Women's Union and the Innovation Centre of Son La
Digital transformation	Training and coaching for MSMEs on applying digital tools in the business process
	Connecting and supporting national/local technical service providers, human resource service providers to provide online consultation and tailor made services for EMW businesses and entrepreneurs
Provincial policy support	DCCI survey and report launch in Lao Cai and Son La
	Developing monitoring mechanism for DCCI provincial task force in Son La
	Capacity building for local DCCI experts
General	Strategy lessons learning and refresh: Reflect on strategic lessons learned to date
	Capacity building in GEDSI for implementing staff and partners
	Organising projects joint monitoring missions
	Training and support for partners in building planning for developing evidence-based stories of changes for communication, learning and facilitating replication and scale up
	Development of 4 new project proposals

KEY UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

(JUL - DEC 2025)

Sector	Activities
Bamboo Shoot	Assessment of Sat bamboo value chain in Van Chan, Lao Cai
	Support for cooperatives in running nurseries and plantation
	Support for the establishment of new collective groups and new Bat Do bamboo cooperatives and strengthen business management
Cinnamon	Training for farmers on sustainable production
	Capacity building for Lao Cai Association of Cinnamon and Star Anise
	Promoting Lao Cai cinnamon brand
Medicinal plants	Training for medicinal plant producers on GACP production skills
	Producing Panax seedlings in joint cooperative and household nursery
	Support for the production of medicinal plants seedlings
Supply chain innovation	Technical support and business mentoring for supply chain partners to enhance inclusion of ethnic minority women producers
Tourism	Identification and facilitation of private sector tour operator and investor partnerships for pilot site opportunities
	Vocational training for ethnic minority women and youth in Son La
	Capacity building for on-site training units
Financial Inclusion	Designing, testing and evaluating specific lending mechanisms for each value chain
	Organising training tailored to ethnic minority women's needs
Women's entrepreneurship and leadership	Training and coaching on related incubation and acceleration curricula for women entrepreneurs
	Training and coaching local mentors on practicing training/counselling/coaching skills, public relations and personal branding, leadership
	Training and coaching PWU/PCA/Centre for Innovation on strategy development, monitoring and networking
Digital business transformation	On-going coach for MSMEs on applying digital tools in the business process
	Supporting pilot service provision by local human resource service providers, college/university, and local technical service providers to SMEs
Digital Inclusion	Developing online visual training modules on production techniques, online measurement in free online platforms
Provincial policy support	Innovative gender-responsive DCCI methodology tools and framework for new version of DCCI 2025
	DCCI assessment and reporting and launching the report (Son La)
General	Building a business case for disability inclusive tourism businesses
	Project baseline assessments
	Value for Money assessments
	Joint monitoring and thematic monitoring missions
	Capacity building for partners on financial management including anti-corruption, fraud training and safeguard in line with DFAT and Cowater policies and procedures
	Development of evidence-based stories of changes for communication, learning and facilitating replication and scale up

KEY QUOTES



"Australia is committed to this crucial collaboration with Son La Province. We are honored to be part of such a productive and collaborative cooperation to promote the vital role that women and ethnic minorities play in building Son La's economy."

Ms. Naomi Cook, Development Counsellor, Australian Embassy in Vietnam.

"The Australia-funded GREAT Program Phase 1 has brought about significant changes in the lives of the people of Son La. Its partners have implemented many innovative and effective solutions to build and develop market systems in the agricultural and tourism sectors, creating income-generating opportunities for thousands of ethnic minority households, especially women. To date, several projects in the agricultural and tourism sectors continue to be maintained, providing a stable source of income for local people, families, and communities."

Ms. Trang Thi Xuan, Vice Chairwoman of Son La Provincial People's Committee.



"Every day, we just need to try and learn a little more. Although it's still slow, we're confident that we'll reach the finish line."

Ms. Vang Thi Can and her husband, Mr. Lam A Nang, owners of Ban Lien Forest Homestay in Bac Ha, Lao Cai and beneficiaries of the digital transformation project.

"I own a small business and would love to take part in the GREAT's training courses. My goal is to expand my business model to help more women, especially since most of the women I've connected with are small business owners just like me who often need a boost in confidence."

Ms. Vu Thi Minh Phuong, Director of Thanh Phuong Company and local mentor of Women's Entrepreneurship and Leadership (WEL) project.



"The organisations have gained a great deal of knowledge, especially in basically developing their strategies and orientations, and identifying their missions and visions for the future."

Ms. Tran Thi Ngan, Women's Union of Lao Cai province at a training on strategic development for the Women's Unions of Lao Cai and Son La and their partners.

Contact information

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