

Australia Vietnam Partnership for Women's Economic Empowerment

Aide Memoire Design Mission 5-23 March 2016

A design mission for the Australian Vietnam Partnership for Women's Economic Empowerment (AVPWEE) was undertaken in Vietnam from 5 to 23 March 2016. The mission was organised and managed by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in Hanoi. The mission included three key elements, as follows:

1. Meetings in Hanoi with representatives of the Governments of Australia and Vietnam, as well as with other development partners;
2. Field missions to Son La and Lao Cai Provinces; and
3. A stakeholder briefing convened by DFAT to present the design's preliminary thinking, and to solicit comments and suggestions.

The detailed schedule (including topics discussed in the meetings) is attached as Annex 1. Participants who attended the briefing are listed in Annex 2, along with written comments received. It was particularly encouraging to see the significant provincial delegations from Lao Cai and Son La, as well as the participation of MPI, CEMA, MOLISA, and MARD¹.

The design team wishes to thank DFAT's Sustainable and Inclusive Development (SID) team in Hanoi, the Provincial Governments, NGOs and other development partners for their support over the three weeks of the mission. The design team's interaction with the DFAT SID team was a particular highlight. An exceptional level of ownership, leadership and collaboration between the SID team and DFAT management was also evident. It is important that this be maintained and the design will therefore identify mechanisms that can ensure the continuity of DFAT's active oversight and engagement during implementation.

Relevance of the planned intervention

At high level consultations in July 2015, the governments of Australia and Vietnam agreed on three pillars for their bilateral Aid Investment Plan 2016-2020, one of which was: *Promoting women's economic empowerment, including among ethnic minorities*. This pillar aligns with Australia's new development policy and performance framework, which elevates gender equality and women's empowerment to be a stand-alone sector for investment, and promotes private sector development as the driver of growth in emerging economies. The AIP pillar also directly aligns with two new DFAT Strategies:

1. the *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* which prioritises three key areas: enhancing women's voice in decision making and leadership; promoting women's economic empowerment; and ending violence against women; and

¹ Ministry of Planning and Investment; Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs; Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs; and Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development

2. the *Strategy for Australia's aid investments in agriculture, fisheries and water* which emphasises support to markets, and investment in productivity and sustainable resource management.

DFAT's decision to significantly re-engage in ethnic minority regions was prompted by a number of factors, the most important of which was Vietnam's '*vast unfinished agenda*'² related to the entrenched poverty of ethnic minorities in its north-west mountainous regions. In the past decade, Vietnam has taken great strides in economic development and household prosperity in aggregate terms. However, the north-west region - and ethnic minority populations in particular - have benefitted less than most.

AVPWEE will not be Australia's first investment in the region. The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) has maintained an ongoing suite of agricultural research projects in the north. In addition, over the past few years DFAT has maintained a passive level of engagement in the region through the *Ethnic Minority Working Group*, through its membership of the *Vietnam Development Partners Forum*, and through its long term support to the Government of Vietnam's *National Targeted Program on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation* (NTP3 RWSS)³. DFAT has also recently agreed to supported a number of value chain-oriented civil society partnerships in Lao Cai and Bac Kan⁴ that will complement the major AVPWEE.

Thus, it is a region where DFAT has some experience, and in which it sees great potential for domestic and regional market development, and for growth that benefits local communities, particularly women. AVPWEE will be DFAT's major program of active support to the socio-economic development of Vietnam's ethnic minority regions. DFAT anticipates that AVPWEE will provide an opportunity for Australian expertise to contribute to the region's emerging but still latent potential. By supporting the industriousness of women, not only will their own lives be socially and economically enhanced, but so will the lives of their families, and the communities in which they live.

AVPWEE Scope and Scale

AVPWEE will be a five-year program, with scope for a five-year extension, depending on performance and results. The program will focus on two key provinces of the North-West Region: Son La and Lao Cai.

² Vice-Minister Nguyen Chi Dung, Ministry of Planning and Investment at the high level consultations.

³ NTP3 RWSS prioritised those provinces with the highest number of poor districts, as well as those which report against gender indicators - one of which is Son La

⁴ This is under the *Women's Economic Empowerment through Agricultural Value Chains in Rural Vietnam* (WEAVE). See Table 1.



Figure 1: AVPWEE target Provinces in the North-West Region

Both of these provinces:

1. Have experienced healthy economic growth rates over the past few years, but suffer from clear inequalities that a program focusing on inclusion should be in a position to help rectify; and
2. Are each aligned with the major growth corridors in north-west Vietnam⁵, through which significant cross-border trade occurs⁶, and in which there are a number of opportunities in the agriculture and tourism sectors that are unavailable anywhere else in Vietnam. If the program is successful, and a future phase is actualised, these corridors will also offer significant scope for scaling up into neighbouring provinces.

AVPWEE will initially engage with the agriculture⁷ and tourism sectors across the two provinces, as these sectors provide the strongest scope and depth for women's engagement through direct production, value-adding, entrepreneurship or off-farm employment. These sectors are also identified as the focus for potential development by the local government.

There has been a rapid feminisation of agriculture in Vietnam over the past decade, particularly in the northern provinces, with the result that it is typically women who now do much of the labour. Yet women's economic returns are also typically low, while their opportunities for more rewarding engagements are very limited. Hence there is an acute need to reduce women's labour burden, improve the quality of their engagement, enhance their returns, and increase their decision-making and leadership within the sector as a whole.

Tourism is burgeoning in Lao Cai and on the increase in Son La, with a workforce that is often significantly weighted towards women. It is mostly women who manage homestays, undertake hospitality and catering roles, or are employed within tourist establishments. Furthermore, it is mostly women who supply herbal/medicinal/spa products, many of the saleable crafts, or act as self-employed guides. Nevertheless, there remains a significant potential to improve both the access and agency of women within the tourist market, particularly for women of ethnic minorities.

⁵ As identified by the Vietnam North Regional Master Plan. These corridors are: (1) Hanoi, Hoa Binh, Son La, Dien Bien, Lai Chau and (2) Kunming, Lao Cai, Hai Phong, Hanoi

⁶ Primarily with China but also with Laos.

⁷ For AVPWEE, agricultural markets may include: crops, livestock, aquaculture, agroforestry and non-timber forest products.

Alignment with Government of Vietnam's agenda

AVPWEE will complement the key programs of the Government of Vietnam focusing on the socio-economic development of Son La and Lao Cai, these primarily being: the Provincial *Socio-Economic Development Plans* (SEDPs), the *National Target Programs* (NTPs), and the *National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020*.

Socio-economic Development Plans (SEDP)

Both Son La and Lao Cai provinces have completed their SEDPs for the period 2016 to 2020. These SEDPs integrate both national and local policies within the provincial contexts, and thus will need to be a central focus of AVPWEE's design.

National Target Programs (NTP)

Vietnam is in the process of finalising the implementation arrangements for its two core NTPs for the next five years. The two consolidated NTPs are the:

- NTP on New Rural Development (NRD); and
- NTP on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (SPR).

The Government of Vietnam's NTP-SPR 2016-2020 includes five sub-programs, of which Program 135⁸ is of particular relevance to AVPWEE, targeting as it does many of the communes in Son La and Lao Cai that are currently experiencing difficulties. P135 has three focal components:

1. Infrastructure investment;
2. Production support; and
3. Capacity building of communities and commune staff.

AVPWEE aims to particularly support the second component - production support. AVPWEE will assess the market opportunities for all communes, and identify those options that present real economic choices for women. The program will then work with women at the community level, with wider private sector players, and with the policy and enabling environment to empower women to participate more beneficially in their local economies.

AVPWEE will also complement the NTP on New Rural Development. NRD identifies nineteen criteria necessary for graduation as a '*new rural commune*', two of which are of particular relevance for AVPWEE. One aim of criterion 13 (*having active co-op groups or cooperatives*) is to help women engage equally with men in profitable businesses and those defined under the NTP as common interest groups, cooperative groups or cooperatives. AVPWEE will also complement criterion 10 (*annual income per capita equivalent to 1.2 times higher than that of the province*) through its promotion of increased incomes.

⁸ P135 refers to the *Program for Socio-economic Development of the Most Vulnerable Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas in Vietnam*. It is also referred to as Project 2 under the umbrella of NTP-SPR.

National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020

AVPWEE will support and strengthen the Government's agenda on gender equality and women's empowerment. AVPWEE activities will bring about positive changes in line with the *Law on Gender Equality's* Article 7, promoting as it does gender equality in remote, mountainous, ethnic minority and extremely difficult areas. AVPWEE will also complement the implementation of Objective 2 of the *National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020*, which is to 'narrow the gender gap in the economic, labour and employment domains; and to increase access of rural poor women and ethnic minority women to economic resources and labour market'.

Finally, the Government of Vietnam also has a substantial number of policies designed to promote social and economic well-being of ethnic minority people; AVPWEE is consistent with the objectives and principles in these Government policies.

Outcomes and Results

Goal

The Goal of AVPWEE is reflected in the following two statements. The longer term aim is:

Women living in north west Vietnam have improved social and economic status.

To achieve this longer term aim, AVPWEE will, over the next five years, work in partnership with other initiatives to ensure that:

Women living in Son La and Lao Cai equitably engage in agriculture and tourism sectors at all levels.

These medium and longer term Goals direct AVPWEE towards:

- A focus on women in selected provinces of north-west Vietnam;
- The parallel achievements by women of economic improvements and improved social status (attitudes, norms, values and joint decision making);
- Women's engagement that is equitable. Equity must not only be reflective of provincial diversity (ethnic mix, gender and remoteness) but also reflective of women's available opportunities, and their socio-economic aspirations;
- Overcoming barriers to women's fair and fulfilling economic engagements, and including an appreciation of access to economic opportunity for women with disabilities.
- Ensuring that women engage and progress within sectors at all levels - as producers, owners, entrepreneurs, employees, managers and consumers.

This goal will be achieved through three linked objectives.

Objective 1: Women living in local communities have increased capacity, space and choices to beneficially engage with the agriculture and tourism sectors.

This first objective appreciates that:

- The program's primary beneficiaries are all local women as who currently engage (or aspire to engage) with markets.
- This does not include children per se. Nevertheless, it is vitally important to work with adolescent girls in the transition phases of their life. These girls will need the capacity, vision, space and options to make important livelihood choices over the next five years;
- Women will participate as individuals, or as members of households, or as groups⁹. The program will therefore engage with economic opportunities that involve all genders. Thus while the primary focus is on the improved access and agency of women, men will - and should - also benefit;
- The program will aim to improve:
 - Capacity - which might include: livelihood assets, business skills, knowledge, financial literacy, language, negotiation skills, realisation of entitlement, leadership/authority, understanding, confidence and self-belief;
 - Space - which might include mobility, latitude, laws/values, gender equality, time and burden sharing, dependent care, power relationships, safety & security, role models, champions, encouragement and support groups; and
 - Choices - which might include networks, contacts, techniques, jobs or income-generating opportunity, incentives and income-generating models; and
- Women will beneficially engage - which means they will have fair, decent, safe, balanced, rewarding and responsible income earning opportunities and working conditions.

Objective 2: Diverse private sector actors within the agriculture and tourism sectors innovate to become increasingly inclusive, gender sensitive, profitable and sustainable.

The second objective appreciates that:

- AVPWEE will need to work with a diversity of business models - as 'defined' within Vietnam - that offer potential for private sector engagement. Such models might involve: enterprises, social enterprises, common interest groups, cooperative groups, cooperatives, and
- These 'businesses' must be committed to improving their gender and ethnic inclusiveness at the same time as they improve their profitability and sustainability.

Objective 3: Government stakeholders reinforce policies, and enact plans, regulations and services that enable gender and ethnically equitable and inclusive socio-economic development.

The third objective appreciates that:

- AVPWEE will work to influence Government through evidence based advocacy: e.g. models, experiential learning (e.g. showcasing areas where government and businesses work together), training; and grounded research;

⁹ Including women only and mixed gender groups.

- AVPWEE will aim to not only address policies, but ensure that these are translated into action through planning, regulation and services; and
- AVPWEE will work on policy at both the local and national levels.

Figure 1: AVPWEE Design Logic



Modalities and Partnerships

AVPWEE will work with Son La and Lao Cai Provincial People's Committees under a joint Subsidiary Arrangement. In addition, the Program will over time have increasing engagement with relevant national agencies to highlight policy and enhancing enabling environment constraints and support initiatives to overcome these.

DFAT will engage a managing contractor to assist with the implementation of AVPWEE. The contractor's main roles will be:

1. Adaptive Management;
2. Monitoring, evaluation research, learning and risk management;
3. Program Planning;
4. Links and integration with other Australian, Government of Vietnam and development partner activities;
5. Technical assistance;
6. Communications; and
7. Maintenance of a close liaison with DFAT, and support for DFAT briefing and reporting needs, including the provision to DFAT of responsive briefs on sector issues, policy, status and concerns.

In addition, the contractor will act as a facilitator to manage a consortium of partnerships necessary for the on-the-ground delivery of AVPWEE activities. This

‘consortium’ approach has been used to great advantage elsewhere - e.g. in the AIPEG¹⁰ program in Indonesia - where it has been shown to improve a program’s sustainability and relevance, by ensuring it works through locally relevant partners with a track record in the target communities, markets and the enabling environment. These consortium relationships are therefore much more than just delivery contracts. The contractor will need to ensure that a smaller, core group of key long term partners are integrated as co-facilitators of AVPWEE’s planning, implementation and adaptive learning.

The contractor/consortium would be expected to oversee partnerships related to:

1. Community-based engagement: Partnerships with the Province, Districts and Communes (including People’s Committees and Departments), mass organisations (especially the Women’s Union), NGOs, CSOs and CBOs to work with, support and build the capacity of the target communities and beneficiaries;
2. Private Sector Engagement: Partnerships that engage private sector and market sector players working to improve inclusivity, gender sensitivity, profitability and sustainability of value chains, inputs and services;
3. Policy and Enabling Environment: Partnerships with national and subnational policy agencies to inform and enhance the policy enabling environment; and
4. Research, Studies and Learning: Partnerships with research groups to support the adaptive learning and communication agenda.

Links with other Australian Engagements

The Aid Investment Plan aims to integrate DFAT’s policy, knowledge, credibility, expertise and engagement around particular socio-economic development issues. Thus a number of DFAT’s initiatives in Vietnam are specifically planned to integrate with, or complement, AVPWEE. The design will therefore need to be structured in ways that allow it to purposefully and substantively interact with these other programs. Such interaction potentially includes:

- Cross Program joint policy dialogue;
- Collaborative market systems and sectoral analyses, and socio-cultural assessments; and
- Co-convening of partner forums to exchange learning.

The key programs of relevance to AVPWEE within the DFAT Portfolio are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Key programs of relevance to AVPWEE within the DFAT Portfolio

Program	Goal	Synergies
Women’s Economic Empowerment through Agricultural Value Chains in Rural Vietnam (WEAVE)	To enhance women’s economic empowerment and social inclusion in agricultural value chains.	WEAVE builds on existing NGO initiatives in Lao Cai and Bac Kan to promote three key value chains that engage ethnic minority households, with a focus on women. NGO activity and partnerships in Lao Cai have the potential to expand the networks, knowledge, and policy alliances of AVPWEE. It will also mean that Bac Kan could serve as a
A\$2.5 million, 2016-		

¹⁰ Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance (AIPEG) Facility - In this case delivery partners are referred to as co-facilitators.

19, Consortium of Oxfam (lead), CARE and SNV		comparator or treatment site on differences in outcomes from a purely NGO-led approach.
Multi-country Investing in Women Initiative (IWI) \$4 million from Vietnam bilateral budget, 2016-20, Implemented by Abt JTA Pty Ltd	To contribute to women's economic empowerment, to enable inclusive economic growth in South East Asia.	IWI and AVPWEE have a mutual interest in the promotion of gender equitable practices in workplaces (such as decent off-farm opportunities for women); in supporting partners to develop policies and regulatory frameworks that enable women to participate actively in economic growth; and to inspire change in public attitudes that are more supportive of women's economic empowerment. IWI is still to identify and refine its 'beneficiary groups' in Vietnam, but AVPWEE is obviously focused on the two northern provinces.
Phase II of the Australia - World Bank Strategic Partnership A\$20 million, 2016-20.	Jointly agreed socio-economic development priorities, linked to a competitive process of sub-project proposal.	While Phase II is still being negotiated, DFAT-WB have agreed that one of the four pillars will be ' <i>Ethnic Minorities and Women's Economic Empowerment</i> '. There is merit in specifying that subprojects be implemented in Lao Cai and Son La.

Of lesser priority but also relevant are the following aid investments:

1. Bilateral Initiatives:
 - a. *Restructuring for a More Competitive Vietnam* (RCV) which is focused on economic reforms to promote private sector development; and
 - b. the *Human Resource Development Partnership* which supports Australia Awards in AIP focus sectors (such as agriculture and tourism), as well as applicants from disadvantaged districts. From 2018 it may also have funds available to support regional universities (potentially North West Regional University in Son La), as well as tailored short courses and vocational training.
2. Regional Initiatives:
 - a. *Mekong Business Initiative* (MBI) which focuses on private sector development in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar through support to small and medium enterprise including enabling laws and policies, access to finance and networks.
3. Other Australian Government Agency Initiatives:
 - a. Since its inception, the AVPWEE design concept has been developed in close association with ACIAR. ACIAR's market-oriented counter-season horticulture projects in Moc Chau and Van Ho Districts in Son La Province, and Bac Ha and Sapa Districts in Lao Cai Province have significantly informed the design mission's exploration of agricultural market potential, as have consultations with ACIAR staff, with research partners, and with their links among smallholder farmers and cooperatives. The strength of cooperation between ACIAR and DFAT with regards agricultural research and development in Vietnam - now complemented by the Agriculture Counsellor position at Hanoi Post - ensures that the AVPWEE design will be strongly connected to ACIAR's projects. It is hoped that this is an influence that will prove mutually beneficial - AVPWEE will engage with, and learn from, ACIAR's collaborating scientists, and insights provided by AVPWEE will help guide ACIAR's future research priorities.

Innovation

The issues that AVPWEE will be dealing with are complex. There is no clear blueprint for success. And hence the demand for innovation in the program will be significant. The design team has generated a number of ideas, a select few of which will feature in the design and tender document. But then there are other ideas that the implementation team might find useful, or that might inspire them as opportunity arises. Yet even if particular ideas are not taken forward, the program still needs to be imbued with a spirit of innovation.

The design team's preliminary ideas include:

1. Addressing attitudes:
 - a. Linking with the University of Queensland alumnus at the museum of ethnology to develop an exhibition: "Young, Gifted, Female and Ethnic".
 - b. Harnessing the power of art to change ideas (music, participatory video, sculpture).
2. Communications and learning:
 - a. The gainful engagement of ethnic minority women as co-researchers.
 - b. A longitudinal study e.g. an ethnic woman's version of "seven up".
 - c. Link with Australian scholars and *Australian Volunteers for International Development* (AVIDs) for placement within AVPWEE and its consortium partners.
 - d. Facebook and social networking – micro blogging and marketing through Facebook.
 - e. Competitions: For example, a 'Bridging the Gap' Initiative of the year, or Entrepreneur of the Year.
3. Inclusive growth and equity:
 - a. Viettel/Telstra – smart phones for husband and wives in participating households including applications written in ethnic script.
 - b. Applying a nutritional lens to any new value chain to ensure nutritional outcomes are maximised.
 - c. Taking a 'positive deviance' approach: celebrating individual/community success (role modelling; tracking individuals; and communities that defy expectations).
 - d. Business incubators or Vocational training through the HRD program.
 - e. Sponsor ethnic women trainees at the KOTO school (Know One Teach One).
 - f. Sponsor a new Luke Nguyen Cook Book on ethnic recipes.

Monitoring, Learning, Research and Evaluation

Progressing gender equality and social inclusion is complex because of:

- Incomplete or contradictory knowledge;
- The sheer number of people and opinions involved; and
- The way these issues are interconnected with, and hampered by, other constraints.

Hence if it is to deliver lasting impacts, AVPWEE will need to be flexible and adaptive. Adaptive programs are, by definition, programs that:

- Invest in the continuous generation of evidence and analysis;

- Actively reflect on the implications of the emerging evidence; and
- Adapt the program to incorporate an ever-deepening understanding of its complex environment, and its on-the-ground experience of what works (and what doesn't work) within its context.

As such, a robust monitoring, learning and research (MLR) approach will be critical to AVPWEE's success. The program will need to incorporate continuous learning on multiple themes across multiple sites, including:

- Acknowledging **cultural diversity, and listening to women's voices**: Before the program sets its program indicators for agency, access, and economic empowerment, it must carefully explore the differing values and aspirations of women in the different communities. For example, ethnic minority communities may differ in their understandings of what is meant by a '*more equitable division of labour*'. Furthermore, current understandings are likely to change over time (particularly if norms and attitudes change). If AVPWEE is to understand these differences, however, it will take skill, trust, time and resources. Yet without such an understanding, not only will AVPWEE's key indicators of change be insufficiently grounded in women's views and experience, but the effectiveness of the program as a whole is likely to be compromised.
- Assessment of **economic changes at multiple levels**: AVPWEE will need to track the economic changes occurring: in women's lives, in households, in businesses, in value chains, and in sectors. Some of this knowledge will be generated by primary data collection at particular field sites, while some will be gleaned from secondary data.
- Continuous analysis based on **success and failure**. It is to be expected that AVPWEE's experiences of improving market linkages between communities and the private sector will vary greatly. Capturing learning across such diverse interactions – in short feedback loops – will require commitment and sophistication. It is also to be expected that some initiatives will fail. However, in an adaptive program, recognition and understanding of failure is just as important as recognition and understanding of success.

Select indicators that are robust, relevant *and relatively few*

Although the program will learn and adapt throughout its life, a number of the '**bedrock**' **indicators** that underpin AVPWEE's higher-level outcomes and impact will remain unchanged. These measures will provide DFAT and others with a picture of longitudinal change in key themes such as: economic advancement, inclusiveness of livelihoods strategies, and women's agency.

AVPWEE's bedrock indicators will be heavily informed by the WEE M&E frameworks developed by agencies such as DFAT, ICRW, IFPRI, DCED¹¹, the United Nations, and a number of NGOs. These frameworks identify key domains of change and potential indicators. However, none of the frameworks or the indicators can be used 'off the shelf'. Rather, these need to be modified to suit particular contexts.

At the activity and output levels, the program will develop a larger **basket of indicators** that is flexible enough to cope with potential changes in approaches and activities as the program evolves. Furthermore, different issues in different locations may need

¹¹ International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW); International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED).

monitoring with different tools. For instance, in some communities, the main focus of the M&E effort may be on a shift from subsistence agriculture to engagement with cash crops (balancing household food security). In other contexts, the focus may be on the number and quality of employment opportunities available to women. It must also be borne in mind that the reshaping of women's lives is sometimes concomitant to an increased risk of gender-based violence - a fact that will also need close monitoring.

Proportionality and selectivity: AVPWEE's emphasis on learning does not mean the program should gather information on an exhaustive number of issues or data points. The collection and analysis of information has high costs both for the program and for the communities being monitored, while data overload is often the enemy of learning. Each potential indicator therefore needs to pass several tests, including:

- 'How costly is it to collect this information?'
- 'Who will use the data?' and
- 'Why is it important?'

Embedding research

In addition to the program's quantitative measures, it must also develop a deep, qualitative understanding of what changes are taking place, and why and how those changes occur. Embedded research should therefore be commissioned to produce life-of-program case studies across both provinces and sectors. Yet if this is to be achieved, at least one member of the research team will need to be fluent in the local language(s), while participatory field work will need to be undertaken at regular intervals (e.g. quarterly).

The focus would be on capturing the information that will enable AVPWEE to record and understand any important changes, particularly so it can adapt its approach if this is needed. Outputs of embedded research will:

- Identify a range of culturally appropriate measures of change;
- Provide an early social/ gender analysis of the different roles undertaken in the communities by women and men, as well as a more general understanding of the context-specific social norms that might influence WEE;
- Interpret *how* change happens (or doesn't happen);
- Serve as a monitoring/safeguarding function against unintended consequences such as violence against women and girls (VAWG).
- Serve as a validation/ QA function for the delivery teams.

A list of bedrock (high-level) indicators, and a list of potential indicators at the output and activity levels of the program will be included in the design document.

Risks

Risks associated with implementation of the AVPWEE program are, on balance, judged to be manageable. Several potential risks are listed below to provide some insight into the design team's current thinking.

Several risks relate to the potential any program has for unintended consequences, including:

- AVPWEE's potential to aggravate rather than alleviate inequality;
- the failure of new crops or of livelihood strategies;

- an increase in gender-based violence;
- an increase in women's time burden;
- negative experiences of assimilation and/or inclusion; and
- increased indebtedness.

There are also other risks, that will also require monitoring and active management, including:

- Meaningful opportunities for remote or ethnic women are so limited they are only able to drive WEE for a very limited number of women.
- Fundamental gender perceptions are so entrenched in an ethnic minority that even in ten years the program cannot progress the social status of the women.
- The program catalyses change for its target population during the lifetime of the program, but fails to grab the attention of key stakeholders in civil society or in government, and therefore fails to spark widespread change.
- The excessive control of provincial or local government slows the process to the point of ineffectiveness.
- Heavy donor funding swamps the few opportunities identified by the program for effective private sector development.
- The management consortium rather than focus on dynamic partnerships that can drive learning and planning, instead focuses on contractual and output-based relationships.
- Border conflict with China affects cross-border access and trade, and creates a sensitivity to donor programs working with ethnic groups in the border region. Enterprises are unable to benefit from the lack of competition with Chinese producers because of the significant collapse of local economies.
- Difficulties in cross sectors coordination (especially within government agencies) to enhance policy enabling environment.

A more complete risk matrix, with associated mitigation measures, will be included in the design document. It must be noted, however, that the identification and assessment of emerging risks – and strategies for managing those risks – will be an ongoing task during implementation.

Next Steps

Discussions with local and national stakeholders in Vietnam were as comprehensive as they could be at the time of the mission. All discussions were focused, however, on understanding the context, the roles of each stakeholder, and the successes and challenges faced by each stakeholder. Thus while most stakeholders have been made aware of AVPWEE's broad intention, no stakeholder has had the chance to discuss the delivery detail in any way beyond the most cursory. Furthermore, the design process has identified new stakeholders (for example the Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism) where further engagement would be useful.

Once this Aide Memoire has been approved, it will be circulated to stakeholders visited during the pre-design and design missions; the design reference group; and Australian Government partners; and be placed online.

In addition, the team has identified a suite of preliminary studies that could be done in the months prior to mobilisation of AVPWEE in early 2017. There is a consensus that

these studies would not only help maintain momentum within the provinces, but also provide a head start for the Management Consortium during implementation¹².

Four preliminary studies are proposed¹³:

1. A political economy analysis of the two provinces;
2. An institutional assessment in the two provinces (Government, civil society and private sector entities, either resident in, or with a strong profile in the provinces);
3. Documentation and mapping of ethnographic, demographic and poverty data for the target provinces (this can draw on Vietnam's upcoming ethnic minority census); and
4. A review of the experience of other programs with a focus on ethnic engagement both in Vietnam and the wider region.

Table 2 proposes key dates for the activities and deliverables related to the design.

Table 2: Key dates in design preparation

Date	Activity
13-20 January 2016	Pre Design Mission
29 January 2016	Finalisation of Scoping Study Report
February 2016	Finalisation of Concept Document for broader circulation.
7 to 25 March 2016	Main design mission
25 March 2016	Design Mission Aide Memoire
6-10 June 2016	Design Familiarisation Mission to Provinces
30 June 2016	DFAT Peer Review of Final Draft of Design Document
15 July 2016	Approval Minute and final amendments to design
Late July/early August 2016	Canberra Workshop with Contract Services Branch to develop the draft Statement of Requirements
July to December 2016	Preparatory Studies Procurement process
February/March 2017	Mobilisation

¹² The design process has only been able to undertake limited consultation at the community level. These preliminary studies, along with activities during inception will address the importance of community-level consultations.

¹³ Bac Kan may also be included in the preliminary studies, as another way of creating common ground between WEAVE and AVPWEE.

Annex 1: Design Mission Schedule – 5 to 23 March 2016

DATE	Time	Activity	Discussion Points	Venue
Saturday 5 March 2016		DSK travel to Hanoi SG travel Bristol to Hanoi		Daewoo Hotel, Hanoi
Sunday 6 March 2016		DSK and SG arrive Hanoi. Initial discussions and planning		Daewoo Hotel, Hanoi
Monday 7 March 2016	08.30-10.30	Launching the report of the research study “Social Factors Determining Gender Inequality in Viet Nam” by ISDS		Daewoo Hotel Hanoi
	10.30-15.30	Hanoi Design Team ‘Learn and Share’ Workshop (Design Team and SID team) - 15-20 min presentation, then discussion for 40 mins.	Ethnicity/gender thematic paper (60 mins led by Hong and Mia) Market systems approaches and ‘markets in the NW’ thematic paper (60 mins led by David) Int’l frameworks for women’s econ empowerment (60 mins led by Sam) Literature highlights – a summary from each team member of highlights of selected papers (60 min facilitated by Mia) Lessons from the Trenches (90 mins workshop session with Nga/ Nyguen/ Nam/ Phuong on key features of successful and sustainable engagements – facilitated by Sam) Blue Sky Innovation in the Program e.g. social media, mobile apps, business incubators, Australia scholars, competitions, ‘Bridging the Gap’ Initiative of the year, Entrepreneur of the Year, study tours, a ‘Dragon’s Den’ featuring ethnic minority women, etc (30-60 mins facilitated by Hong)	Australian Embassy Hanoi
	16:00–17.00	Meet with AusTRADE	Discuss initial ideas and findings Exchange lessons	Australian Embassy Hanoi
Tuesday 8 March 2016	09:00 – 11:00 AM	Reference Group Meeting (including World Bank – Roxanne Hakim)	Discuss initial ideas and findings Seek input on engagement and governance	Australian Embassy Hanoi

DATE	Time	Activity	Discussion Points	Venue
			Build ownership and understanding	(confirmed)
	13.30 – 15.00	NTP3 RWSS (National Target Program on Rural Water Supply and Sanitation)	Discuss likely links and collaboration Discuss data on northern Provinces	
	15.30 – 17.00	Meet with HRD team and Managing Contractor (Coffey) team	Discuss initial ideas and findings Seek input on engagement and governance Build ownership and understanding	Australian Embassy Hanoi
Wednesday 9 March 2016	am	Travel to Son La Official meetings and greetings		
Thursday 10 March 2016				
Friday 11 March 2016		See separate table below		
Saturday 12 March 2016				
Sunday 13 March 2016		Free Time		
Monday 14 March	09.00 – 11.00	Workshop with WEAVE NGOs	Potential partnerships and areas of thematic and geographic strength – actual format and attendance will need more discussion.	
	11.00 – 12.00	Meet with Amy Guihot, Agriculture Counsellor	Discuss likely links and collaboration	Australian Embassy
	pm	Travel to Lao Cai		See separate schedule
Tuesday 15 March 2016				
Wednesday 16 March 2016				
Thursday 17 March 2016		See separate table below		
Friday 18 March 2016				
Saturday 19 March 2016		DSK and SG meet to discuss ToC		
Sunday		Design Team Workshop – Theory of Change		

DATE	Time	Activity	Discussion Points	Venue
20 March 2016		and design logic		
Monday 21 March 2016	AM	Design Team Workshop – Program components and partnerships		Australian Embassy, Hanoi
	PM	Design Team Workshop – Governance, oversight and management models		Australian Embassy, Hanoi
TUESDAY 22 March 2016	AM	Design Team Workshop – Risks and mitigation strategies		Australian Embassy, Hanoi
	PM	Design Team Workshop - Aide Memoire highlights including discussion/clarification with Post Finalise Aide Memoire in evening/morning		Australian Embassy, Hanoi
WEDNESDAY 23 March 2016	09:00 – 11:00 AM	Debriefing and Aide Memoire Presentation SID team, ministries (MPI, MOLISA, CEMA, MARD/IPSARD), Women's Union, provinces involved, NGOs		Australian Embassy, Hanoi
	11:00-12:00	Wrap up/Debriefing Post/Canberra		
	14.00 – 17:00	Team planning for Design Preparation and next step		
THURSDAY		Team leave Vietnam		

Table 3: So'n La Field Mission Itinerary

Date and time	Activities
9 March am	Travel to Son La provinces
pm	Meet with PPC Provincial Women's Union
10 March AM	Meet with DPI Meet with PCEM
PM	Meet with DARD/section in charge of New Rural Program/ Extension Sections
11 March	

Date and time	Activities
AM	Team 1 Visit WB funded Poverty Reduction Program for Norther mountainous provinces in Phien Ban, Bac Yen district
Late PM	Travel to Moc Chau Team 2 Travel to Moc Chau and working with EM group/district PC/Women's Union
AM and PM	
12 March	
AM	Working with community in Moc Chau
PM	Travel back to Hanoi

Table 4: Lao Cai Field Mission Itinerary

Date and Time	Activities
14 March	
14.00	Hà Nội to Lào Cai
15 March	
08:00-09.30	Lao Cai PPC
10.00-12.00	Women's Union
13.30-15.00	Working with DPI Meeting with Hoa Loi Cooperative (For rice and chilli)
15.00-17.00	Working with Provincial Ethnic Minorities Department
16 March	
08.00-09.30	DARD/Extension/Department looking after the New Rural Development Program Working with DOLISA
10.00-12.00	Meeting with Chairwomen of Cardamom Association
13.30-15.00	Travel to community in Sa Pa (team 1) Travel to Bac Ha (team 2)
17/3	<u>Team 1. Working in Sa Pa</u>
08.00	Meeting with Sapa district People's Committee/Women Union
10.00	Meeting with Tea Company <u>Team 2. Working in Bac Ha</u> Visit ACIAR project site in Ta Chai and Na Hoi district

Date and Time	Activities
PM	<u>Team 1</u> Visit and discuss with Hoa Dao Corporative (vegi) Discuss and visit world bank funded project in Poverty Reduction in Ta Phin commune. (Optional) Meeting with TRAPHACO (traditional medicines company) <u>Team 2</u> Meeting with Bac Ha district People Committee/Women's Union Two team travel back to Lao Cai city
18 March am 13.00-14.30 14.30 16.00	(Optional) Visit livelihood activity (pig raising) in Nam Chac commune, Bat Xat district Travel Lao Cai to Yen Bai Meeting with North West Steering Committee in Yen Bai Return to Hanoi

Annex 2: List of participants, Design Mission Debrief, 23 March 2016

No	Name	Position	Organisation
1	David Swete Kelly	Design team leader	AVPWEE Design team
2	Sam Gibson	Social development specialist	AVPWEE Design team
3	Khuat Thu Hong	Director of ISDS, Gender specialist	Institute of Social Development Studies, and AVPWEE Design team
4	Mia Urbano	Regional Gender Specialist	Australian Embassy, and AVPWEE Design team
5	Claire Ireland	Counsellor	DFAT, Australian Embassy
6	Amy Guihot	Counsellor	Agriculture, Australian Embassy
7	Nguyen An	Country Manager	ACIAR, Australian Embassy
8	Wendy Conway Lamb	First Secretary	DFAT, Australian Embassy
9	Doan Thu Nga	Senior Program Manager	DFAT, Australian Embassy
10	Nguyen Hoai Nam	Senior Program Manager	DFAT, Australian Embassy
12	Le Truong Son	Official, Foreign Economic Relations Department	Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI)
13	Ms Hoang Thi Thu Huyen	Deputy Director, Gender Equality Department	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA)
14	Ms Nguyen Thi Tu	Director, Department of Ethnic Minorities	Central Committee for Ethnic Minorities Affairs (CEMA)
15	Ms Huyen Hoang	Officer	CEMA
16	To Manh Thang	Institute for Policy and Strategy for Agriculture and Rural Development	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD)
17	Lo Thi Thu Thuy	Deputy Director	Ethnic and Religions Department Vietnam Women Union
18	Nghiem Van Tuan	Officer	DPI Son La province
19	Dinh Trung Dung	Deputy Director	DPI Son La province
20	To Manh Tien	Director	DARD Lao Cai province
21	Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan	Deputy Director	DPI Lao Cai province
22	Dinh Thi Hung	Director	DOLISA Lao Cai
23	Nguyen Thi Ngoc Ha	Officer	DOLISA Lao Cai
24	Nguyen Thi Kim Oanh	Officer	Women Union Lao Cai
25	Ha Nguyen	Gender Advisor/M&E specialist	USAID
26	Nuala O'Brien	Deputy Head of Mission/Head of Development	IrishAid, Embassy of Ireland
27	Fiona Quinn	Deputy Head of Development	IrishAid, Embassy of Ireland
28	Nguyen Tien Phong	Assistant to Country Director	UNDP
29	Shoko Ishikawa	Country Director Vietnam	UN Women
30	Roxanne Hakim	Senior Anthropologist, Social Development Coordinator	World Bank
31	Elizabeth Cowan	Country Programs Gender Advisor	CARE International in Vietnam
32	Babeth Lefur	Country Director	Oxfam
33	Nguyen Lam Giang	Country Director Vietnam	HELVETAS Vietnam
34	Manoli Strecker	Business Development Manager	SNV Netherlands Development Org
31	Nguyen Thi Hoa	Deputy Director	SRD
32	Colman Ross	Senior Technical Specialist	UNDP Program
33	Tran Thi Quynh Chi	Landscape Manager	IDH Sustainable Trade