



Gender-Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT)

INVESTMENT DESIGN DOCUMENT

FINAL, 26 AUGUST 2016

Abstract

Despite recent progress in Vietnam's overall development, economic empowerment has proved elusive for many women, especially those from diverse ethnicities. Australia and Vietnam have therefore agreed that '*promoting women's economic empowerment, including among ethnic minorities*' will be one of the three pillars of their Aid Investment Plan for 2016-2020. Australia's major investment to achieve this pillar is the *Gender-Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT)* program. GREAT builds on Australia's past engagement with rural communities in Vietnam to help the women of Sơn La and Lào Cai to beneficially engage in profitable markets. GREAT will commence in 2017 for an initial five-year period.

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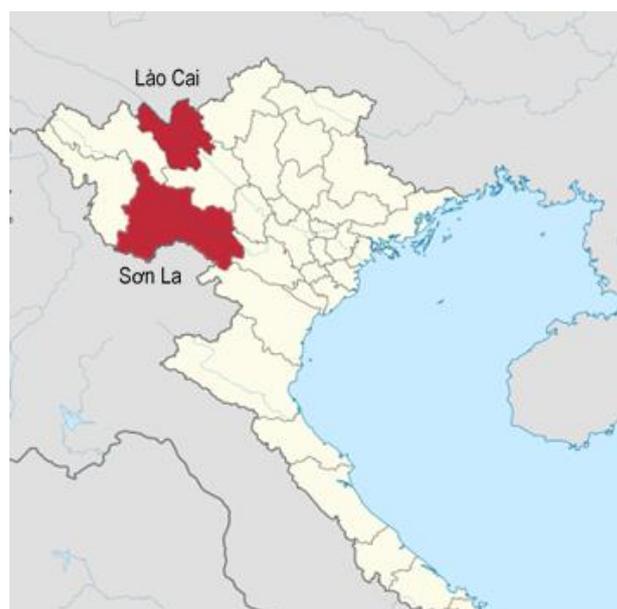
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Map

Figure 2: Tây Bắc (north-west) Region of Vietnam



Figure 1: GREAT Target provinces



Acronyms

Acronym	Meaning
AANZFTA	ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand Free Trade Area
ACIAR	Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research
AS/FAS	DFAT's Assistant Secretary and First Assistant Secretary
GREAT	Australia Vietnam Partnership for Women's Economic Empowerment
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CEMA	Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs
CIRUM	Culture Identity and Resources Use Management (NGO)
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (Provincial)
DCED	Donor Committee on Enterprise Development
DCST	Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism (Provincial)
DFAT	Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
DoA	Australia's federal Department of Agriculture
DOLISA	Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (Provincial)
DPI	Department of Planning and Investment
EU	European Union
FAS	DFAT First Assistant Secretary
FGD	Focus group discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GIS	Geographic Information System
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German Government owned development business)
GoV	Government of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam
HH	Household
HOM	Australian Head of Mission (Australian Embassy in Hanoi)
ICRW	International Centre for Research on Women
IEC	Information, Education and Communication
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture
ILO	International Labour Organisation
KAP	Knowledge, attitudes and practices
MERL	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (National)
MCST	Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (National)
MDF	Market Development Facility – supported by Australia's aid program (DFAT)
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (National)
MPI	Ministry of Planning and Investment (National)
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NRD	NTP for New Rural Development
NTP	National Target Program
ODI	Overseas Development Institute
PMU	Project Management Unit
PPC	Provincial People's Committee
SEDP	Socio-Economic Development Program
SID	DFAT Sustainable and Inclusive Development team in Vietnam
SPARK	Centre for Social Entrepreneurship Development
SRD	DFAT's South-East Asia Mainland & Regional Division
TAG	Technical Advisory Group
TPP	Trans-Pacific Partnership
UN	United Nations
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WB	World Bank
WEE	Women's economic empowerment

Gender-Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (*GREAT*)

INVESTMENT DESIGN DOCUMENT – FINAL, 26 AUGUST 2016

Executive Summary

During their high level consultations in July 2015, the governments of Australia and Vietnam agreed on three pillars for Australia's bilateral *Aid Investment Plan (2016 to 2020)*. The third of these pillars is to *Promote women's economic empowerment, including ethnic minorities* especially in the ethnically diverse, high-poverty region of north-west Vietnam. This pillar aligns with Australia's new development policy which has elevated gender equality and women's empowerment to the status of a stand-alone sector for investment, and promoted private sector development as the driver of growth in emerging economies.

This design outlines the *Gender-Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT)* program which is the *Aid Investment Plan's* flagship initiative for the socio-economic development of women in north-west Vietnam.

Why is *GREAT* important?

As a flagship initiative, *GREAT* is essential to the success of the *Aid Investment Plan*. It also contributes to three core strategies of Australia's aid program:

1. the *Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Strategy* which prioritises three key areas:
 - enhancing women's voices in decision-making and leadership;
 - promoting women's economic empowerment; and
 - ending violence against women; and
2. *Creating Shared Value Through Partnership: Ministerial Statement on Engaging the Private Sector in Aid and Development* which has as its vision:
 - Creating commercially sustainable solutions to poverty will continue to be an essential component of a country's successful transition from relationships based on aid to ones based on economic partnerships, and to the creation of lasting prosperity; and
3. 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.¹

GREAT will also contribute to two clusters of the Government of Vietnam's priorities: those supporting socio-economic development and poverty reduction; and those relating to inclusive growth and a more productive domestic private sector. At the national level, the Government of Vietnam, and its development partners, are committed to the Government's 'unfinished agenda' regarding: inclusive growth, productivity, and redressing the poverty currently experienced by ethnic minorities, particularly ethnic minority women. The on-the-ground delivery vehicles for this agenda are the Socio-Economic Development Plans for 2016-2020, as well as the two National Target Programs (NTPs) [NTP-Sustainable Poverty Reduction and NTP-New Rural Development], both of which *GREAT* will complement in the communes and Provinces in which it works. Lastly, *GREAT* is also aligned to the Government of Vietnam's reform agenda to nurture competitive and productive enterprises, particularly in the domestic private sector.

GREAT's focus on economic livelihoods and the role of the domestic private sector is timely: the proposed program complements the emphasis of the Government of Vietnam's Vietnam 2035 vision, as well as the activities of the next generation of National Targeted Programs – the NTP-SPR and the NTP-NRD. It is also supported by the recent review of DFAT programs between 2010 and 2015 which recommended that 'stronger and more visible private-sector engagement' be mainstreamed across the program.

Inequalities are more evident in the north-west region than elsewhere in Vietnam, and yet the region also offers significant opportunity to improve women's engagement and economic benefits. Australia is well placed, and indeed welcomed by both Government and industry, to commence *GREAT* in the strategically located Provinces of Sơn La and Lào Cai, where it

¹ Please note that this design was also informed by the DFAT Operational Guidance Note on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agriculture (DFAT, 2015).

would complement and build upon previous Australian engagements in: gender equality, sustainable and resilient livelihoods, poverty reduction in ethnic minority areas, and agricultural research.

GREAT will focus on amplifying the following strengths and opportunities:

- Women's already significant productive role in agriculture, and nascent involvement in production groups;
- The engagement of ethnic minorities in niche smallholder production and community-based services, such as catering;
- The burgeoning tourism market and infrastructure, particularly in Lao Cai, which provides women with opportunities to transition to village-based or off-farm employment and income;

Tourism and agriculture offer the greatest potential for women to progress economically in Vietnam's north-west. Within the tourism sector, it is mostly women who manage homestays, undertake hospitality and catering roles, or are employed within tourist establishments. A variety of women-dominated micro-enterprises are also associated with the tourist trade - usually sole proprietors, or common interest groups, involved in the production and sale of handicrafts, traditional textiles, and herbal/medicinal/spa products, or who act as self-employed guides and translators. Within the agriculture sector, women play a predominant role in many of the region's markets, and yet their economic returns are typically low. There is an acute need to reduce women's labour burdens, increase the returns on their labour, improve the quality of their economic engagement, and increase their decision-making influence and their leadership within the sector as a whole.

What is *GREAT*?

The Goal of *GREAT* is that:

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

To achieve this longer term aim, *GREAT* will work in partnership with other initiatives so that:

Women living in Sơn La and Lào Cai beneficially engage in the agriculture and tourism sectors at all levels.

To deliver this goal *GREAT* has three linked objectives.

- Objective 1: **Empowering local women:** Women living in local communities have increased capacity, space and choices to beneficially engage with agriculture and tourism businesses.
[Representing an estimated 50% of *GREAT* resources and effort.]
- Objective 2: **Inclusive business partnerships:** Selected private sector actors within the agriculture and tourism sectors innovate to profitably and sustainably trade with more women entrepreneurs and operate in gender sensitive ways.
[Representing an estimated 30% of *GREAT* resources and effort.]
- Objective 3: **Improving sector governance and policy:** Government agencies reinforce policies, and enact plans, regulations and services that enable more inclusive socio-economic development.
[Representing an estimated 20% of resources and effort]

As can be seen the primary beneficiaries of *GREAT* are women living in the provinces of Sơn La and Lào Cai with a particular emphasis on women from ethnic minorities.

GREAT will commence before June 2017, and will run for five years (2017 to 2022) with an option for an additional five years based on performance, resource availability, and ongoing alignment with Australian Government priorities. Its budget will be approximately \$A35 million.

How will *GREAT* be managed?

The Sơn La and Lào Cai Provincial People's Committees (PPC) will be the program 'owners'. Each PPC has indicated that it will lead the formation of a joint ***GREAT* Steering Committee** that will approve the annual *GREAT* Work Plan and budget, and meet formally every six months to discuss *GREAT* progress.

A **Managing Contractor** will be engaged to coordinate and support national and subnational activities for all three *GREAT* Objectives. The Managing Contractor will establish a small national office in Hanoi, as well as Provincial offices in Lào Cai and Sơn La. The Hanoi office will provide central administration, finance and human resource support to the *GREAT* teams based in the two Provincial offices. It is hoped that the *GREAT* Provincial offices can be co-located with the offices of the two Provincial Governments.

The Contractor's main roles will be:

1. Adaptive management;
2. Quality analysis and strategy development (based on a sensitive appreciation of ethnic and gender differences);
3. Monitoring, evaluation, research, learning and risk management;
4. Program planning and preparation of the Annual Work Plan;
5. Links and integration with other Australian, Government of Vietnam, international and local development partner activities;
6. Technical assistance;
7. Communications; and
8. 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.

Within each Province a **Project Management Unit (PMU)** will work collaboratively with the DFAT-appointed Managing Contractor. The PMUs will provide an essential coordination, liaison, and advisory role, while the Managing Contractor will manage funds and be responsible for day-to-day implementation. The Managing Contractor, PMUs, and selected long-term partners will form the *GREAT* Management Consortium - a small, core group who will guide *GREAT*'s planning, implementation and adaptive learning.

The Departments and agencies that will be particularly relevant to *GREAT* include:

- Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) which is the key department at provincial level for project implementation and SED Planning.
- the *Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)*: which has responsibility for the agriculture sector, as well as for the implementation of the NTP-NRD in the Provinces;
- the *Department of Culture and Tourism (DCST)*: which has responsibility for tourism sector development under the direction of the *Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT)*;
- the *Department of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISA)*: which is responsible for the implementation of the NTP-SPR, and for labour issues;
- The *Provincial Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEM)*: which support the needs of ethnic women; and
- The *Women's Union*: which has solid support networks for women both Provincially and at the grass-roots level.
- Department of Education and Training (DOET) supporting EM girls education, vocational training and continuing education at village, commune, district and provincial levels.

What will *GREAT* do?

Objective 1: Empowering local women

Under Objective 1, *GREAT* will engage with women in selected communes in Lào Cai and Sơn La to beneficially increase their engagement with the agriculture and tourism markets. Over five years *GREAT* will directly assist at least 10 per cent of the adult female population to ensure that:

- Women (and men) have new skills in agriculture, processing, tourism and business;
- Women have better access to productive resources and inputs;
- Women have more support and stronger networks both locally and in the wider labour and produce markets;
- Women have greater access, and provide increased goods and services to tourist and agricultural markets;
- More women - particularly younger and ethnic minority women - have greater access to training and formal employment;
- Women have increased decision-making power over how additional income is spent;
- Women-led or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives, especially in remoter areas, have greater income; and
- Women have more recognised roles in decision-making and leadership in the family, the community, and the agriculture and tourism sectors as a whole.

GREAT will partner with NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and mass organisations to work with, support and build the capacity of the target communities and beneficiaries. *GREAT* will also partner with commune based businesses be they individual, family group, cooperatives or more traditional SMEs to expand their skills, value adding, market access and market responsiveness (both quality and quantity).

GREAT will employ solid participatory and inclusive approaches to women's engagement and development, to build the understanding, ownership, confidence, decision-making and sustainability of its women beneficiaries and their households

and groups. Gender roles, norms and values will be assessed, and aspects of gender equality promoted in the target communities. *GREAT* will partner with NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and mass organisations (especially the Women's Union) to work with, support, and build the capacity of the target communities and beneficiaries. *GREAT* will also partner with commune-based businesses - be these individuals, family groups, cooperatives or more traditional SMEs - to expand their skills, value adding, market access and market responsiveness (both quality and quantity). Over its five years, *GREAT* expects to fund over 35 partnerships totalling approximately \$8.75m.

Indicative outcomes, partners and activities to deliver Objective 1 are summarised in Table 7 on page 38.

Objective 2: Inclusive business partnerships

Under Objective 2, *GREAT* will engage with diverse business partners working in the agriculture and tourism sectors, who are interested in improving their inclusivity, gender sensitivity, profitability, and sustainability. This will ensure that, over five years:

- Agriculture and tourism businesses engage more profitably with women, particularly ethnic minority women;
- The number of women-led and co-managed businesses increase;
- Agriculture and tourism businesses find it easier to obtain certifications and ensure their regulatory obligations;
- More women assume more responsible roles in business and business forums;
- Agriculture and tourism businesses engage more women in formal employment; and
- Agriculture and tourism businesses appreciate the business case for greater inclusion of women in their businesses.

GREAT will partner with diverse private sector and market sector players who are working to improve inclusivity, gender sensitivity, profitability, and sustainability of value chains, inputs and services. This can include agribusiness, tourism businesses, SOEs, cooperatives, social enterprises and the broader private sector (e.g. banks, business services etc).

GREAT will assess the inclusive market development opportunities within the target Provinces, and then form partnerships with locally relevant businesses that can develop these opportunities. Markets for the Poor (M4P) approaches will be used for both the assessment and the subsequent implementation – these approaches underpin Australia's current market engagements seven countries². *GREAT* will partner with diverse private sector and market sector players: agribusinesses and tourism businesses, SOEs, cooperatives, social enterprises and the broader private sector (e.g. banks, business services etc.). Over five years *GREAT* expects to fund up to 25 partnerships totalling approximately \$5.25m.

Indicative outcomes, partners and activities to deliver Objective 1 are summarised in Table 9 on page 42.

Objective 3: Improved sector governance and policy

GREAT will work with the Government of Vietnam, industry, and other stakeholders concerned with the productivity and competitiveness of the agriculture and tourism markets, to assist them to implement the socio-economic and private sector plans, regulations, and services that are necessary to build an inclusive business environment. Over five years this will contribute to:

- The identification of the policies, models and resources that are needed to better support inclusive growth at commune and provincial levels;
- an increase in the sharing and adoption of policy and implementation guidelines by communes, districts and the two provinces;
- the refinement of core NTPs and their implementation based on real-world experience and evidence of improved implementation;
- increasing evidence and examples of the increased role that business and communities can play in helping formulate economic policy and plans; and
- improved evidence for the economic and social benefits of interventions that increase women's equitable participation in the tourism and agriculture sectors.

GREAT will form partnerships with businesses, business councils, communities, and national and subnational policy agencies to inform and enhance the policy enabling environment.

² Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Indonesia, Cambodia, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea and Fiji

Objective 3 activities will refine over time. *GREAT*'s role will be to engage the Government of Vietnam and the private sector in dialogue to identify policy opportunities and constraints to achieving inclusive and productive business models that beneficially engage women. Successful interventions will then be shared more widely with the Government of Vietnam and the private sector. *GREAT* will partner with businesses, business councils, communities, and national and subnational policy agencies to inform and enhance the policy-enabling environment; and with research groups to inform and support the adaptive learning and communication agendas. Over five years *GREAT* expects to fund up to 20 partnerships totalling approximately \$3.5m.

Indicative outcomes, partners and activities to deliver Objective 1 are summarised in Table 10 on page 43.

The issues that *GREAT* will be dealing with are complex. There is no clear blueprint for success. The resources are adequate but finite, and thus Partnership Agreements will need to be carefully developed and innovative to ensure that resources are used as effectively and strategically as possible.

How will we measure success?

There are a number of frameworks already available to assist with monitoring and evaluation of Women's Economic Empowerment programs. As a basis for *GREAT*'s M&E framework, the design team has drawn on the DFAT guidelines on gender equality and women's economic empowerment, as well as on the considerable experience of other Australian market-based programs.

Over five years, *GREAT* aims to impact the lives of 10 per cent of the total adult female populations in Sơn La and Lào Cai. More specifically it will:

- Improve the incomes of 40,000 self-employed women farmers and small entrepreneurs across Sơn La and Lào Cai;
- Contribute to the creation of 4,000 full time equivalent positions for women in fulfilling and safe formal waged employment;
- Leverage over \$US6.0M in private sector investment for business opportunities that are profitable, sustainable and inclusive;
- Increase the self-reported confidence, enthusiasm and self-esteem of 80 per cent of women beneficiaries;
- Increase the number of women leading or co-managing formal businesses by 15 per cent;
- Increase women's profile and roles in: policy, management, strategic decision-making, and resource allocation in the agriculture and tourism market sectors.
- Achieve measurable improvements in gender equity, roles and norms within the families of *GREAT* beneficiaries;
- Ensure 80 per cent of Agriculture and Tourism stakeholders confirm that sector plans and strategies adequately address issues that are critical for inclusive sector growth.
- Contribute to significant progress in five or more Provincial policies or guidelines in the agriculture and tourism sectors.

But what are the risks?

Several risks have been identified that will need close monitoring, most of which relate to the core assumptions that underpin each Objective. Some of these may need further analysis during the early stages of *GREAT*.

For Objective 1 we are assuming that:

- Women will have the time, the interest, and the family support needed to engage with the new approaches;
- Women's increased economic productivity will increase their social status, but *not* their time poverty;
- Ethnic minority women's general lack of a basic education will not be a fundamental barrier to their engagement in markets; and
- Men are willing to take on new roles, or a greater share of joint responsibilities in the home, to support women's economic participation.

For Objective 2 we are assuming that:

- There will be women and communities with skills and products that closely match private sector businesses' needs;
- A sufficient number of businesses will be interested in becoming more inclusive (while maintaining, but not necessarily increasing, their profitability).

For Objective 3 we are assuming that:

- Local governments will be actively committed to facilitating more inclusive and sustainable business practices in the private sector;
- There will be clear and workable linkages between *GREAT*'s work and the SEDPs and NTPs.

Already *GREAT* has developed a preliminary Risk Management Plan to monitor these risks, along with interventions that will, if necessary, reduce their negative impacts. However, it is clear that while *GREAT* has potential to delivery significant outcomes for all, the major risk relates to the attitudes and practices of the key players. Their willingness to change will only become clearer with time.

Gender-Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (*GREAT*)

INVESTMENT DESIGN DOCUMENT – FINAL, 26 AUGUST 2016

Chapter 1. Introduction

During their high level consultations in July 2015, the governments of Australia and Vietnam agreed on three pillars for Australia's bilateral *Aid Investment Plan (2016 to 2020)*. The third of these pillars is to: *Promote women's economic empowerment, including ethnic minorities*. This pillar aligns with Australia's new development policy, which has elevated gender equality and women's empowerment to the status of a stand-alone sector for investment, and promoted private sector development as the driver of growth in emerging economies.

Immediately following the joint approval of the bilateral *Aid Investment Plan*, Australia commenced the design of a new flagship initiative, the *Gender-Responsive Equitable Agriculture and Tourism (GREAT)* program. The design of *GREAT* has been managed by the DFAT *Sustainable and Inclusive Development (SID)* team at Post, in close collaboration with senior officials at the Australian Embassy in Hanoi, and with DFAT in Canberra. At the outset DFAT ensured that the process would be as comprehensive and consultative as possible by forming a multi-stakeholder, eleven-person, *Design Reference Group*³, so that as many perspectives as possible could be considered during the design process.

The SID team initially developed an *Investment Concept* (DFAT, 2015) that outlined the design's broad intent. This generated considerable interest and feedback from the Government of Vietnam, development partners, technical agencies, DFAT thematic groups and the Design Reference Group - feedback that significantly strengthened the Concept before it underwent a formal Peer Review process in December 2015. DFAT's Deputy Head of Mission then gave approval for the main design to proceed.

The design has involved significant engagement with Vietnam stakeholders between December 2015 and June 2016, including:

- December 2016: A *Scoping Mission* that reviewed four Provinces in the north-west, and developed a baseline assessment of the current on-the-ground situation, Provincial Government capacity, and the activities of other donor partners;
- January 13 – 20, 2016: A *Pre-Design Mission* which met with all key stakeholders in Hanoi, reviewed the outcomes of the scoping study, and commenced planning for the main design process. After the mission, a summary of the current thinking was placed on the DFAT website, with an invitation for all interested parties to provide comment;
- March 7 – 25, 2016: *The Design Mission* then visited stakeholders in Sơn La, Lào Cai and Hanoi. The outcomes of this mission were presented to over twenty-five stakeholders in Hanoi on 25 March 2016, and a brief report on initial design thinking was once again posted on the DFAT website.
- Mid July 2016: A *final draft* of the design was circulated for official peer review and to the Design Reference Group and within DFAT.
- July, 2016: A short *Design Familiarisation Mission* was undertaken by the Post to ensure that all Vietnamese Provincial and National stakeholders were given a briefing on the proposed initiative and the opportunity to comment.
- 16 August 2016: The *Formal Design Peer Review* took all comments arising from formal reviews and consultation into consideration, and provided conditional approval pending recommended changes to the design document;
- 16 August 2016: A *final design document* was prepared based on the peer review recommendations; and
- In early September 2016, the final design was approved for implementation by DFAT's Head of Mission in Hanoi;
- Late September 2016, the Government of Vietnam approves the *GREAT* concept through its internal processes. Only after this is in place, will the *GREAT* tender process begin.

GREAT will be Australia's major program of active support to the socio-economic development of Vietnamese women in the ethnically diverse north-west Provinces of Lào Cai and Sơn La. DFAT and Provincial Government management of the program will be assisted by a Managing Contractor and a Consortium of implementation partners.

³ Refer to Page ii (Front Matter) for a listing of members of the *Design Reference Group*.

Chapter 2. Background and Context

2.1 Country, Regional and Sector Issues

The *Aid Investment Plan* identified the Tây Bắc Region (north-west) of Vietnam as the focus for Australia's investments under *GREAT*. This Region includes six Provinces⁴, two of which are the focus for the initial phase of *GREAT*. DFAT's decision to focus *GREAT* on women's economic empowerment within the ethnically diverse north-west, and the choice of the provinces Lào Cai and Sơn La, in particular, takes into account the region's unique context and opportunities for change, including.

1. The Region is one of the remaining poor areas of Vietnam and a focus of the Government's poverty agenda,
2. Poverty in the Tây Bắc Region is especially high amongst ethnic minority households;
3. A focus on Sơn La and Lào Cai offers the best foundation for impact and scale across the north-west;
4. Women face inequality and this must be addressed;
5. Women's economic empowerment offers scope to deliver significant and widespread results;
6. Tailored responses are needed to deal with ethnic diversity;
7. The agriculture and tourism sectors in the region offer strong potential to beneficially engage women and contribute to inclusive growth; and
8. Market-based approaches to WEE enhance innovation and productivity in the domestic private sector.

2.1.1 The Tây Bắc Region is one of the remaining poor areas of Vietnam

Vietnam is a major development success story, with a record on economic growth and poverty reduction since the *Đổi Mới* reforms of 1986 that has been remarkable. Overall growth has been consistent and reasonably inclusive, with the general poverty rate falling from 58 per cent in the early 1990s to 10 per cent in 2010, thereby enabling the country to graduate to lower middle-income status⁵. The *Vietnam 2035* assessment credits this success to visionary leaders, a sense of shared societal purpose, a focus on the future, and an openness to markets and the global economy (GoV, 2016).

However, amidst such solid achievements, some significant pockets of poverty remain. DFAT's primary reason for re-engaging in north-west Vietnam has been prompted by the Government of Vietnam's solid commitment to this '*unfinished poverty agenda*'⁶ – its program aimed at resolving the country's remaining pockets of entrenched poverty, much of which is experienced by the country's ethnic minorities and particularly women in the north-west. This agenda is soundly supported by the World Bank, ADB and UN Group as well as most bilateral donors. The Government of Vietnam and its development partners have also agreed that the poverty agenda will provide an important transition phase for the country's official graduation from International Development Assistance.

There will however be challenges for Vietnam in raising incomes for poor people in the north-west. Government revenues have been increasingly constrained over recent years and there is now a growing budget deficit. In response The Government has decided to consolidate what in the past were sixteen National Target Programs (NTPs) into two core NTPs for the next five years⁷ (see Section 2.2). Even so there remains a budget gap and some risk in the Government's aims to deliver the next five-year Socio-Economic Development Plan.

2.1.2 Within the Tây Bắc Region poverty is highest amongst ethnic minority households

Vietnam's 53 ethnic minority groups make up only 15 per cent of its total population. Yet ethnic minority groups account for almost 42 per cent of its total poor, and 68 per cent of its extreme poor (World Bank, 2012). Furthermore, the gap between the Kinh majority and the ethnic minorities is not just significant but widening – while less than 10 per cent of the Kinh population are considered poor, more than two thirds of the ethnic minority population are considered poor. Progress in ethnic minority poverty reduction, child mortality, and nutrition has stalled in recent years. (World Bank, 2012).

Key causes of poverty among ethnic minority groups in Vietnam are the usual suspects: lower economic assets (capital, credit), fewer social assets (education, health, access to social services etc.), and a much lower return on endowments (e.g.

⁴ Điện Biên, Hòa Bình, Lai Châu, Sơn La, Lào Cai and Yên Bái.

⁵ National per capita income reached about US\$2,100 by the end of 2015.

⁶ Vice-Minister Nguyễn Chí Dũng, Ministry of Planning and Investment at the high level consultations 2015.

⁷ The rationalisation of NTPs has also been driven by budget constraints.

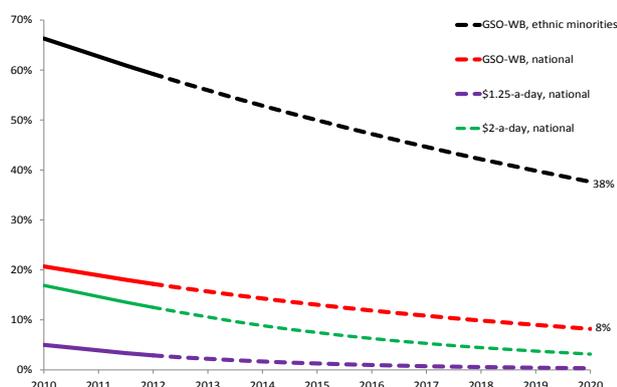
land) (World Bank, 2009) - in fact, in one study, more than half the poverty gap between the Kinh majority and the ethnic minorities could be explained by differences in returns on endowments (Baulch, 2012).

As can be seen in Figure 3, rough projections prepared by the World Bank in early 2015 indicate that, national poverty will continue to fall over the next five years, provided Vietnam's current level of growth is maintained⁸. Nevertheless, by 2020 poverty among ethnic minorities will still remain high at 38 per cent, despite significant improvements.

As elsewhere in Vietnam, economic growth rates across all north-west provinces have been impressive, despite which the northern uplands remain the poorest of Vietnam's regions.

Poverty incidence shows that income-based poverty is consistently between 20 and 40 per cent in these areas (Figure 4), whereas the poverty incidence in the remainder of the country ranges between 0 and 20 per cent (MOLISA, 2013). Furthermore, once the new multi-dimensional poverty assessment is rolled out during 2016⁹, the percentage of those classified as poor in the north-west is expected to increase significantly due to the fact that poverty amongst ethnic minority households is disproportionately underestimated when based on consumption alone. For example, the 2013 consumption-based poverty level in Lào Cai was 22 per cent. Yet this may be re-calculated to over 47 per cent under the new multi-dimensional measure (UNDP, 2016).

Figure 3: Poverty headcount projections for Vietnam (WorldBank, 2015)



2.1.3 A focus on Sơn La and Lào Cai offers a strong foundation for impact and scale across the north-west.

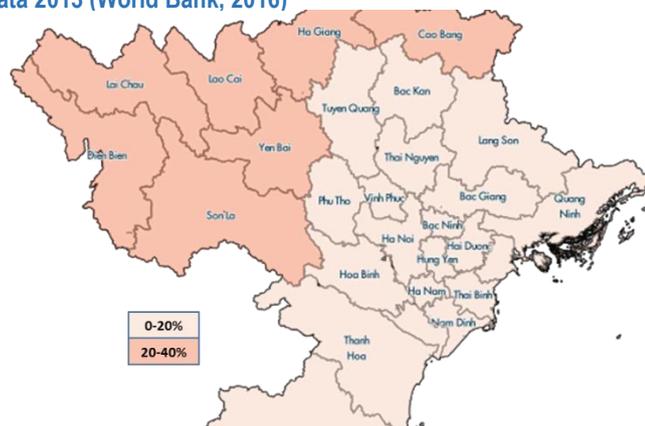
The Tây Bắc Region, encompasses two major growth corridors¹⁰ through which significant cross-border trade occurs¹¹. Thus while there are six provinces overall, the most strategic of the Provinces in these growth corridors are Sơn La and Lào Cai. These are the Provinces where GREAT will focus.

Proximity to the regional growth corridors is, however, not the only reason Sơn La and Lào Cai have been selected. Other criteria include:

- The aspirations and opportunity for women to economically engage;
- The total population of poor people in the Provinces;
- Their high levels of ethnic diversity and inequality;
- Their economic growth rates and significant growth potential; and
- Their significance to Australia's ongoing bilateral partnerships.

Sơn La Province is the largest Province of the

Figure 4: Income based poverty rates in north Vietnam, MOLISA data 2013 (World Bank, 2016)



⁸ These projections assume that GDP per capita continues to grow at the same rate observed in 2010-12 and that the growth elasticity of poverty remains constant.

⁹ Vietnam will move from one-dimensional poverty measurement to a multidimensional approach for the P135 program approved by the Prime Minister for 2016-2020. The country will adopt a national measure of multidimensional poverty based on the Alkire-Foster method – this shows the disadvantages that poor people face in five different areas: living conditions; income levels; access to education and healthcare; access to information; and access to insurance and social assistance. Households that cannot meet over a third of their basic needs in these areas will be identified as multi-dimensionally poor, while those lacking more than half will be considered critically poor.

¹⁰ As identified by the Vietnam North Regional Master Plan. These corridors are: (1) Hanoi, Hòa Bình, Sơn La, Điện Biên, Lai Châu and (2) Kunming, Lào Cai, Yên Bái, Hanoi

¹¹ Primarily with China, but also with Laos.

north-west region (with a land area of just over 14,000km²) and is the major agricultural hub of the Hanoi-Laos Corridor. Sơn La also:

- is home to twelve ethnic groups;
- has the largest population of all the north-west Provinces (1.15m);
- has by far the largest absolute numbers of poor people (528,000)¹² of any Province in the Tây Bắc Region;
- has a Kinh population of just 18%;
- has an ethnic population that includes: Thai (53%); H'mong (15%) and Muong (8%);
- shares an international trading border with Laos; and
- is 49% female (according to the most recent *Population and Housing Census* (2009)).

Lào Cai Province, on the other hand, is half the size of Sơn La, but hosts the largest land border crossing into China (Yunnan province) and is thus the gateway for the Hanoi/Yunnan corridor. Lào Cai also:

- is an historic highland tourist destination that has seen significant growth in its tourism and related sectors in recent years;
- has a population of 615,000 people comprised of 26 ethnic groups - which is almost two thirds of the population, but more than double the number of ethnic groups living in Sơn La, and is perhaps reflective of its border with multi-ethnic Yunnan Province in China;
- has a Kinh population of 35%;
- has an ethnic composition that includes: H'mong (24%); Tày (15%); Dao (14%); and Nùng (4%);
- is also 49% female; and
- has almost 300,000 (largely indigenous) poor, yet the highest GDP and growth figures, and thus the highest levels of inter-ethnic inequality in the Tây Bắc Region.

Lào Cai has more registered enterprises than Sơn La (both total number, and SMEs). Ownership by women is also slightly higher in Lào Cai (22% compared with 17% in Sơn La). While information on sectoral segmentation, and the prevalence of 'informal' enterprises, is not yet known, the existing data demonstrates that, at the very least, women form an important segment of business entrepreneurs across both provinces.

Finally, Australia already has ongoing partnerships in both Provinces through the agricultural research for development efforts of ACIAR, and DFAT's partnerships with a number of NGOs. The mutual trust and respect that these partnerships have established over time further corroborates the choice of focal Provinces.

In summary, both these provinces:

- 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;
- Have a history of collaboration with Australia; and
- Are each aligned with a major growth corridor in north-west Vietnam. If the program is successful, and a future phase of *GREAT* is actualised, these corridors will offer significant scope for scaling up into neighbouring provinces.

2.1.4 Women face inequality and this must be addressed.

Vietnam is deservedly recognised for its achievements in closing the gender gap in education, and in promoting women's participation in the formal sector labour force (see Annex 5). However - as elsewhere - a number of gender equality challenges persist, many of which are based in deep rooted gender biases. These include:

- disparities in women's access to, and ownership of, property and economic assets;
- significant disparities in pay (with women's wages in the informal sector estimated to be as low as 50 per cent of men's wages); and

¹² Based on the new multi-dimensional poverty rate of 52.4 per cent (UNDP, 2016).

Table 1: Vietnam's Gender Employment Statistics

Labour Force Participation Rate (% of population ages 15+)	Women	73%
	Men	83%
Employment in agriculture (% of total employment)	Women	49%
	Men	45%
Employment in industry (% of total employment)	Women	17%
	Men	25%
Vulnerable employment (% of own account or unpaid family worker)	Women	69%
	Men	51%

Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator> (LFPR data from 2014; remaining data is from 2013).

- gender segregation in terms of employment (Table 2) which is particularly linked to disparities in access to education and training. 20.5 per cent of the male labour force has received training, compared to 15.9 per cent of the female labour force; while women are more likely than men to be engaged in informal and insecure jobs¹³. Women find it difficult to gain vocational skills, which limits women's ability to benefit from economic development (World Bank, 2011).

While women in Vietnam are the ones mainly responsible for household tasks and for ensuring the well-being of their families, they have less mobility than men, less access to technical and financial support, and less influence over the key decisions made in both the home and the community. The unequal burden of unpaid work which falls to women also limits their involvement in the workplace and decision-making forums. Women in Vietnam, as elsewhere, also experience gender-based violence, which closely correlates with lower involvement in household decision-making¹⁴ and is further exacerbated by lack of mobility, particularly in rural areas¹⁵. Also of concern is the widening gap in sex-ratio at birth, which favours sons¹⁶.

Cultural norms and economic barriers place ethnic minority women, in particular, in a subordinate position – this has many consequences. When compared with their Kinh peers, ethnic minority women:

- Have lower access to productive resources;
- Have lower access to health, education and agricultural extension services – and thus poorer outcomes;
- Have a smaller array of alternatives to home-based activities (both productive and reproductive) especially in the more remote villages;
- Are the ones mainly responsible for household tasks and wellbeing, and yet are subordinate to men when it comes to the 'big decisions' (such as whether to buy or sell land);
- Are unable to leave bad/harmful marriages due to the high social stigma and financial and personal hardships associated with divorce;
- Are less likely to engage in community leadership, and therefore have lower levels of influence in community planning and decision-making; and
- Are more likely to be married early, as the result of both cultural norms and the need for economic security.

Vietnam has a strong policy framework for pursuing greater gender equality. Nevertheless, the implementation of the existing laws tends to be unsatisfactory. Budgets for the implementation of policies and plans are often lacking, while government officials have limited capacity to translate gender laws and policies into practical on-the-ground programs. This is further limited by the low presence of women in public decision-making forums. Women's representation in leadership and management positions also decreases upward to the central level, and remains notably below the targets set out in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011 – 2020.

Hence there is clear benefit to be gained from *GREAT* working to:

- Understand and directly address gender inequality;
- improve the quantity, quality and diversity of women's employment and income generating opportunities; and
- help improve the implementation of the laws and policies that promote gender equality in the ethnically diverse Provinces of Sơn La and Lào Cai.

2.1.5 Women's economic empowerment offers scope to deliver significant and widespread results.

There is significant development evidence that investing in women - particularly women within households that are transitioning into the formal economy - will have greater economic impact and inclusivity outcomes, and clearer social and economic flow-on benefits to both households and communities, than either gender blind or male-centric models. The 2012 *World Development Report* argued that improving women's equality is both a 'right', and smart economics, as it enhances productivity, improves development outcomes for the next generation, and makes institutions more representative (World Bank, 2012). In addition, the International Finance Corporation and the International Labour Organisation have both implemented numerous projects, project evaluations, and research studies that show how the economic benefits arising

¹³ The share of workers without labour contracts was higher for women (49.3%) than men (35.5%)

¹⁴ Women facing violence earn 35% less than other women, on average (UNFPA, 2012) (National University of Ireland/IFGS, 2013)

¹⁵ The rate of women ever experiencing physical violence from their husbands was 31.5% in 2010 over one half of all wives experiencing emotional violence at some point in their marriage

¹⁶ Vietnam has the third highest foetal sex-selection rate after China and India. This preference for sons is more marked in wealthier provinces which have readier access to reproductive technologies.

from investments in women's economic empowerment go well beyond the immediate beneficiaries themselves (IFC, 2013), (ILO, 2012).

Women's economic empowerment means that women have both the ability to succeed and advance economically, as well as the power to make and act on economic decisions (ICRW, 2011). The major growth opportunities for women's engagement in Sơn La and Lào Cai are in the agriculture and tourism sectors, both of which offer more significant opportunity for women than for men (see also Section 1). In recent decades, there has been a significant feminisation of agriculture in Vietnam, especially in the north, and thus women already undertake the majority of labour roles in many of the agriculture value chains. Clearly then, improvements to their work conditions, their capacity to make informed decisions, and the returns on their labour will be important. Similarly, many of the opportunities for supplying goods and services to the tourism sector already involve women. Furthermore, there is more opportunity for the inclusion of ethnic women in both the tourism and agriculture sectors than there is in other sectors of the local economies.

Annex 5 categorises the current situation for women, particularly in the north-west, while opportunities for women's economic empowerment through GREAT are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Opportunities for women's engagement in GREAT

Domain	Opportunities for women's engagement in GREAT
Economic status	Increase women's access to waged employment.
	Increase income diversification for households.
	Provide business training and numeracy support for women.
Social status	Build women's self-confidence and self-esteem.
	Support ethnic minority women's leadership of groups and communities.
	Promote women's awareness of the value and rights conferred by land use certificates, and the importance of birth and marriage registration.
Services	Support agricultural extension and market services appropriate to upland women's asset base and social mobility.
	Expand women's access to productive resources and labour-saving technologies.
	Promote access to market information.
	Simplify procedures for ethnic minority women and households to access savings accounts, rural insurance and commercial loans (in addition to those from the Vietnam Social Policy Bank).
Program operating principles	Promote multi-lingual culture programs (verbal, written), and staff competency.
	Offer an array of non-literacy based options for the engagement of all women, including women with disability.
	Foster opportunities for ethnic women's representation.
	Support local organisations and cooperatives to be inclusive of ethnic minority women.
Research and data collection	Undertake deep consultation with diverse groups of women in the north-west to understand their preferences and priorities.
	Consider co-research undertaken with ethnic minority women.
	Monitor the impact of women's social and economic empowerment on the retention of girls (daughters) in school.
Enabling environment	Build the evidence base for sound policy advocacy and influence.
	Document and share good public and policy practices.
	Increase women's participation in planning and policy making processes.

The focus of GREAT is strongly in line with the recommendations of the UN Women study released in June 2016 'Towards gender equality in Vietnam: Making inclusive growth work for women'. This study recommended that the government and development community focus on:

1. Improving the productivity and earning capacity of women who rely on agriculture as the main source of livelihood.
2. Paying particular attention to the plight of ethnic minority women and girls, who continue to lag behind both ethnic minority men, and Kinh women in accessing economic opportunities; and
3. Facilitating women's access to employment in jobs and sectors outside of agriculture that are not traditionally 'female' (UN Women, 2016).

GREAT clearly aligns with these recommendations given its intent to focus women's economic empowerment on:

- opportunities in agriculture,
- the inclusive engagement of ethnic minorities, and

- the opportunities that tourism provides for women to transition to village-based or off-farm employment and income.

By engaging in such ways, women will not only experience appreciable direct economic benefits, but benefits will flow on to their partners and dependents, to other groups, and to their communities¹⁷. In addition, over time, *GREAT* should facilitate a gradual change in attitudes and practices related to gender roles and norms within these women’s households, groups and communities.

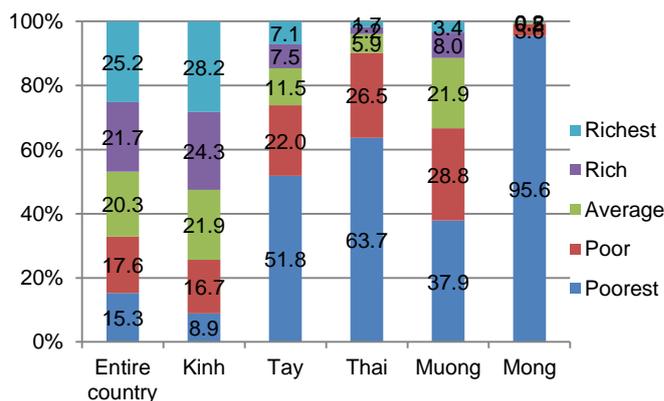
2.1.6 Tailored responses are needed to deal with ethnic diversity.

Because many ethnic minority people in the north-west of Vietnam have found it difficult to benefit from the region’s ongoing economic success (GoV, 2016), it is clear that the challenge posed by poverty in the region requires more than just an economic solution. To further understand the context of poverty in the north-west, and within Lào Cai and Sơn La in particular, the design conducted a scoping study in December 2015, and two thematic reviews in 2016 which focused on:

- a deeper understanding of gender and ethnicity (Annex 5), and
- understanding the market options for women’s economic opportunity (Annex 6).

These studies revealed the complex, long term nature of ethnic poverty and women’s economic dis-empowerment in the region. Because of history, culture and geography, many ethnic minority communities have been both socially and geographically isolated, and thus insulated from major national growth opportunities. Yet clearly, some ethnic groups are faring better than others. For example, while Figure 5 shows that the Kinh majority closely reflect the national income

Figure 5: Variations in income bands between different ethnic groups in Vietnam (UNFPA, 2009)



averages, it also shows the huge diversity across just four of the ethnic minorities. Yet even the best performing group has lower health, literacy, educational and economic attainments than the majority Kinh, particularly amongst women and girls. Unsurprisingly, not only is the life expectancy of these ethnic minority communities up to eight years less than the national average, but some communities have maternal mortality ratios that are four times the national average (up to 54 per 100,000 live births).¹⁸

The Government of Vietnam and development partners are giving understandable attention to these disparities. However, this attention can become ‘an obsession with differences’.¹⁹ Discussion of ‘disadvantage’, although well meaning, can become defining. It tends to frame

development interactions as support for ethnic minority communities to ‘catch up’ through a reliance on outsiders. It can also obscure recognition of the cultural assets, active livelihood strategies, and changing dynamics within these communities. A number of commentators have also highlighted the ‘internalisation’ of negative and disempowering self-perceptions among ethnic minority groups, including among youth, and how this deters participation and engagement.

Such considerations have four important implications for *GREAT*:

1. *GREAT* must appreciate that ethnic minority groups are diverse, that some have much lower economic and social outcomes than others, and that it must therefore take an ethnically nuanced and disaggregated approach to its development support;
2. In particular, *GREAT* must listen to the aspirations and agendas of different ethnic minority women and girls, and not simply assume a standardised development pathway;
3. *GREAT* must not work with ethnic minority groups in isolation from either each other or from the majority Kinh population, but must work with each as an integrated part of a dynamic and evolving cultural and economic system; and

¹⁷ It will also reset the intergenerational prospects for a household by supporting the retention of both girls and boys in schools.

¹⁸ UN Women. (2016). Women and the Sustainable Development Goals: Viet Nam Towards 2030.

¹⁹ Institute for Studies of Society, Economics and Environment (iSEE), Hanoi.

4. *GREAT* must highlight the strengths, and build on recent examples of positive change within communities, and thus engage constructively, and with an expanding optimism.

2.1.7 The agriculture and tourism sectors offer strong potential to beneficially engage women and contribute to inclusive growth.

Sơn La and Lào Cai currently derive most of their provincial income from the agriculture, tourism, services, industry and mining sectors. Of these, tourism and agriculture offer the greatest potential for women to enter and progress economically, given the unique opportunities in these sectors across north-west Vietnam.

2.1.7.1 TOURISM

From a tourism perspective, the scenery, culture, ethnic diversity and cooler elevated climate in the Tây Bắc Region, combined with its proximity to the huge population bases in Hanoi and southern China, are driving unprecedented growth in both relaxation and adventure tourism. Recent assessments show that tourist numbers in the north-west mountainous region trebled in the five years between 2008 and 2013 (European Union, 2013), and are continuing to grow. Tourism in Lào Cai has contributed 11.5% to the provincial GDP consistently between 2010 and 2015.

Lào Cai is well known for its diverse ethnic groups and terraced rice cultivation. Lào Cai city, nearby Bac Ha, and the hill station of Sapa are the main focuses of tourist activity. Tourism revenue has grown at an average rate of 36% since 2008, and resulted in increases in the average daily expenditure across all markets (ADB, 2013) (Vietnam Travel, 2016). In 2015, the province's tourism revenue reached 4675.3 billion VND, and tourist arrivals exceeded 2 million.

Sơn La province has also become a popular tourist destination in recent years, due to its various ethnicities, festivals, historical relics and scenic spots. According to the local Department of Culture, Sports and Tourism (DCST), the Province has seen continuous increases in its number of tourists, from 288 000 arrivals in 2010, to 1 million in 2015. Once again, domestic arrivals predominate, centred around the Spring holidays when the plum and peach flowers blossom, and the H'mong New Year festival in September. Nevertheless, the Sơn La tourist sector remains much more constrained than the Lào Cai tourist sector in terms of visitor numbers, facilities and development.

The tourism sector in the north-west region as a whole has potential for significant expansion in both seasonal and permanent employment, and a workforce that is increasingly weighted towards women. It is mostly women who manage homestays, undertake hospitality and catering roles, or are employed within tourist establishments. A variety of micro-enterprises are also associated with the tourist trade - usually sole proprietors, or common interest groups, involved in the production and sale of handicrafts, traditional textiles, and herbal/medicinal/spa products, or who act as self-employed guides and translators. Smallholder farmers – also often women – are also needed to supply food products to guest houses and restaurants.

There is significant potential to improve both the access and role of women, particularly ethnic minority women, within the provinces' tourism markets. Both provincial governments are keen to see that the engagement of women expands. For example, Hoàng Thị Vượng, head of the provincial DCST of Lào Cai, indicates there are now twelve tourist community hubs in Lào Cai, including 136 homestays, with each hub household having an income of between 10 million VND and 20 million VND (450 to 900 USD) per year. The DCST estimates that in villages that host tourist community models, poverty is being eradicated three to four times faster than in other villages (Vietnam Plus, 2016).

Because the overall tourism sector in the north-west is obviously growing well, *GREAT*'s focus should be on improving access and inclusion, rather than on growth per se. Market-based engagements within *GREAT* should be able to contribute to the following major changes in the tourism sector in the medium term:

1. More women, and particularly younger women and those from ethnic minority groups, have greater access to skills, permanent jobs, and income.
2. More women in remote villages and outer areas have greater access to income through the provision of goods and services to tourists who are travelling more to remote areas, as well as the provision of goods to wholesalers and retailers through mutually beneficial business relationships. Goods and services could include:
 - a. goods such as: foods, fresh and processed medicinal herbs (for herbal baths, creams, oils, and consumption), traditional handicrafts and fabrics; and
 - b. services such as: tour excursions, tour guides, porters, homestays, and complementary village-based services; and
3. Women take a more pervasive and more recognised role in decision-making and leadership throughout the tourism sector.

2.1.7.2 AGRICULTURE

Over the last ten years, GDP growth in the services and industry sectors has outstripped the agriculture sector, which currently provides only 29 per cent and 16 per cent of the respective GDPs of Sơn La and Lào Cai. Employment opportunities in these Provinces do not, however, reflect the same shift, with agriculture still providing the majority of formal employment in both Provinces - over 76 per cent in Lào Cai and 80 per cent in Sơn La, with women supplying almost 60 per cent of these figures. This indicates a huge gap between the economic and labour structures in both Provinces, and the reality that most families still engage in traditional or transitional livelihoods, with only a few contributing to the dramatic rise in economic growth. Greater recognition is also needed of the importance of agriculture as a source of employment, and a basis for growth in other sectors.

Yet despite these considerations, agricultural GDP has still maintained a very respectable 3 to 4 per cent growth in recent years, with certain agricultural industries having consistently exceeded these figures. The production in Sơn La and Lào Cai of commodities such as tea, coffee, rubber and spices, as well as the grazing of cattle, are made particularly viable options by the availability of land in the Provinces, and their proximity to major export hubs. The production of counter-seasonal, and perishable crops such as vegetables, soft fruits and flowers is also made highly attractive by the cooler climate and the proximity to the major urban markets in Hanoi. The recent rapid increases in pig and poultry production also reflects the region's proximity to major markets, and its increasing ease of access. The industries that have remained static or fallen include rice, and lowland and mid-elevation industries such as: corn, cassava and sugar cane.

Women's engagement in the evolution of the region's agriculture sector must be improved. Women already play an enormous role in the region's markets, and yet their economic returns are typically low. Hence there is an acute need to reduce women's labour burden, increase the returns on their labour, improve the quality of their engagement, and increase their decision-making and leadership within the sector as a whole. It is apparent from the sheer numbers of women involved in agriculture, and the regions where agriculture dominates (the poorest ones), that an economic strategy that proactively supports women farmers is crucial for:

- achieving gender equality,
- reducing spatial and income inequality, and
- promoting a sustained and balanced growth path.

From a broader perspective, agriculture is the sector from which many of the poor households - 90 per cent of whom live in rural areas - have moved up the ladder from subsistence to commercial activity.

Through engagements in the agriculture markets, *GREAT* should be able to contribute to in the following major changes in the medium term:

1. Women-led or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives increase rapidly and make more money as vendors, suppliers, and processors increase their local sourcing, their reach, their value adding, and/or the diversity of their products, once they can see the benefits of working more closely with women suppliers.
2. Women-led or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives have better access to inputs and/or extension service from vendors, suppliers, and processors who wish to ensure the ongoing consistency, quality and quantity of supply.
3. Women have a more pervasive and more recognised role in decision-making and leadership throughout the agriculture sector.

2.1.8 Market-based approaches to WEE enhance innovation and productivity in the domestic private sector.

Australia, through the *GREAT*'s support to women's economic empowerment within the private sector (agriculture and tourism), will be enabling Vietnam's private sector to operate more productively and inclusively, and thus beneficially for all. Australia's support will also enable Provincial development to be more effectively linked with the benefits (and risks) arising from Vietnam's increasing integration with regional and global trade initiatives²⁰. Nevertheless, the market systems of Vietnam remain uniquely embedded within a socialist market economy.

In Vietnam's market economy, the role of the state is both significant and often beneficial, although it can distort markets through the operation of, and preferential treatment offered to, state-owned or other privileged enterprises. There have been successive steps to promote a stronger market economy, from amendments to the Law on Enterprise in 1999, 2005, and 2014, to enshrining the principle of equal treatment of all sectors of the economy in the 2013 Constitution (GoV, 2016). Even so, the firms with connections (which is all SOEs, some large domestic private firms, and most FDI firms) generally

²⁰ ASEAN, Australia and New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) and the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP).

have an unfair advantage over the domestic private sector. A key pillar of the Government of Vietnam's *Vietnam 2035* is, therefore, to achieve greater efficiency and more sustainable growth in markets by levelling the playing field between state-owned and private sector players, particularly in terms of their access to land, capital and government procurement, and tax and dividend policies.

In this drive for greater efficiency and growth, *GREAT* has a role to play. Although there is little experience or data associated with the use of market-based approaches in socialist market economies, such approaches have been used extensively in countries that have far more fundamental enabling environment constraints than exist in Vietnam. The current market systems in Vietnam are not just solid but rapidly growing, while its domestic private sector is not just expanding but increasingly innovative. Market-based interventions - such as 'Markets for the Poor' and 'Challenge Funds' - have worked very effectively in similar situations, as evidenced by the success of DFID's Vietnam Business Challenge Fund implemented by SNV. The fundamental principle behind such approaches is to seek innovative partners - be they from the private sector or SOEs - who are passionate about inclusive economic growth, and are committed to innovation.

2.2 Alignment with Government of Vietnam strategies and programs

GREAT will complement a number of key programs of the Government of Vietnam, including:

1. the *National Target Programs* (NTPs) and the Provincial *Socio-Economic Development Plans* (SEDPs) which in part target the socio-economic development of ethnic groups; and
2. the *National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020*.

A deeper analysis of these policies and their implications can be found in Annex 8. However, the following summarises the main issues.

2.2.1 National Target Programs (NTP)

The Government of Vietnam is aware that the policies and programs it has been pursuing over the past couple of decades in order to lift its remaining poor out of poverty have not reached all of those experiencing poverty. Input on this new direction has been provided by a range of development partners including: the UNDP, the World Bank, Irish Aid, various NGOs and others, as well as by DFAT working through the Ethnic Minority Working Group. The two consolidated NTPs are:

1. The *NTP on Sustainable Poverty Reduction* (SPR) 2010-2020 led by the *Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs* (MOLISA). The NTP-SPR targets the most disadvantaged areas of the country. Poor women and female-headed households are among the vulnerable groups that are to receive prioritised support. However, specific activities, and guidelines on what approaches to use with these groups, is so far lacking. The NTP-SPR includes five sub-programs, of which Program 135²¹ is the *Program for Socio-economic Development of the Most Vulnerable Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas in Vietnam*, and hence is of particular relevance to *GREAT*. P135 has three focal components:
 - a. Infrastructure investment;
 - b. Production support; and
 - c. The capacity building of communities and commune staff.

GREAT aims to particularly complement the last two components - production support and capacity building - both of which have experienced difficulties in the past due to P135's focus on generic models, rather than on support that has been tailored to local strengths and opportunities. *GREAT* will assess the market opportunities in the prioritised communes, and identify those options that present real economic choices for women. The program will then work with DOLISA, 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. This is particularly important because gender has not been adequately mainstreamed and resourced under the NTP-SPR.

2. The NTP on New Rural Development (NRD) led by the *Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development* (MARD) aims to improve the economy and living standards in Vietnam's rural areas. The NTP-NRD identifies nineteen criteria necessary for graduation as a 'new rural commune', two of which are of particularly relevance for *GREAT*:
 - a. *GREAT* will work collaboratively with DARD on criterion 13 (having active co-op groups or cooperatives) in the prioritised communes. *GREAT* will help women engage equally with men in profitable businesses, whether as individuals, or as part of family groups, common interest groups, cooperative groups or cooperatives.

²¹ Program 135 is also referred to as Project 2 under the umbrella of NTP-SPR.

- b. *GREAT* will also complement criterion 10 (annual income per capita equivalent to 1.2 times that of the province) through its promotion of increased incomes.

It is clear that there is considerable scope for a program such as *GREAT* to complement the two NTPs where the focal communes overlap. *GREAT* will tailor its approach to the particular interests and strengths of women, and the opportunities available to them. It will also help with the resourcing of implementation at local levels.

2.2.2 Socio-economic Development Plans (SEDP)

GREAT is fully compatible with the broad statements in the SEDPs of both Sơn La and Lào Cai provinces, recently completed for the period 2016 to 2020. However, scant attention was paid to gender issues in either SEDP, and thus there may be opportunities to assist the Provinces to better consider women's needs, and integrate both nationally and locally relevant policies within the provincial contexts. If this is to happen, however, *GREAT* must work closely during the annual work planning cycles with the PPC, DPI and other line Departments, to ensure that inclusive economic opportunity, enabling environment constraints, and gender implications are adequately discussed, and that innovative mechanisms to include women are included as a matter of course.

Each SEDP acknowledges the Provincial obligations under the NTPs. However, the Provincial responses have tended to focus on the more expeditious mechanisms to 'getting better figures'. Thus NTP-NRD resources have been concentrated on those 'threshold' communes that have required minimal resources to 'graduate', while the more underprivileged communes have received less support, despite their greater need. Contrastingly, NTP-SPR resources have been more focused on the underprivileged communes. Yet these have delivered much of their assistance through 'packaged models' that have been heavily focused on input provision – the NTP-SPR does not have the resources to deliver more tailored programs. *GREAT* could therefore strengthen the evidence base for commune prioritisation, resource complementary, and tailored interventions focused on competitive advantage. It could also strengthen the links between the SEDPs and the NTPs, to the advantage of both.

2.2.3 National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020

MOLISA has now prepared a *National Action Plan 2016-2020* for the further implementation of the *National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020*, which identifies the needs and vulnerabilities of ethnic minority women under Objectives 2 and 3. Objective 2 seeks 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' – an objective that *GREAT* activities obviously support. Objective 3 aims to improve literacy amongst women and men in remote, mountainous areas. *GREAT* activities will also be consistent with the *Law on Gender Equality's* Article 7, which promotes *gender equality in remote, mountainous, ethnic minority and extremely difficult areas*.

A further positive step was MOLISA's publication in 2015 of a *Master Plan for Non-Economic Measurements of Poverty*, which recognises that income should not be the only indicator of poverty, and proposes the multi-dimensional assessment already mentioned (Section 2.1.3).

2.2.4 Key Government Agencies

The challenge of achieving increased women's economic engagement encompasses the plans and programs of many provincial departments and agencies.

At the highest level, the Provincial People's Committees (PPCs) set the development agenda, direction and policies for Sơn La and Lào Cai, with both Provinces having the solid leadership and vision necessary to drive inclusive growth. The PPCs oversee the operations of all line Departments and Government Agencies, and are therefore the logical 'owners' and partners for DFAT in implementing *GREAT*. The PPCs depend strongly on two central departments: the *Department of Planning and Industry* (DPI) and the *Department of Finance* (DOF). It is logical for *GREAT* to form its primary functional relationship with the DPI, as this will ensure coordination across line departments and with the NTP Steering Committees. It will also allow the reporting and outcomes of *GREAT* to directly influence the integrated SEDPs.

However, many line Departments provide services and policy that impacts on women, ethnic minorities and businesses across the agriculture and tourism sector. The Departments and agencies that will be particularly relevant to *GREAT* include:

- the *Department of Agriculture and Rural Development* (DARD): which has responsibility for the agriculture sector, as well as for implementing the NTP-NRD in the Province;
- the *Department of Culture and Tourism* (DCST): which has responsibility for tourism sector development under the direction of the *Vietnam National Administration of Tourism* (VNAT);

- DOLISA: which is responsible for the implementation of the NTP-SPR, and for labour issues;
- The Provincial CEMs: which support the needs of ethnic women; and
- The Women's Union: which has solid support networks for women both Provincially and at the grass-roots level.

GREAT will need to carefully coordinate its activities with these line Departments and agencies, and over-time develop relationships and an evidence base that will enable it to influence their operations and policies where needed. .

Chapter 3. Rationale for engagement by Australia's aid program

3.1 Why is GREAT a good investment for Australia?

Economic development and women's empowerment are at the forefront of Australia's current aid policy, intertwining issues that Australia's bilateral Aid Investment Plan for Vietnam 2015-20 can focus on through a single program: GREAT. GREAT will therefore be directly contributing to two primary strategies of Australia's aid program:

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.
2. *Creating Shared Value Through Partnership: Ministerial Statement on Engaging the Private Sector in Aid and Development* (DFAT, 2015) which has as its vision:
 - Creating commercially sustainable solutions to poverty will continue to be an essential component of a country's successful transition from relationships based on aid to ones based on economic partnerships, and to the creation of lasting prosperity; and
3. 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.²²

The analysis in Chapter 2 outlined the following reasons why Australia is investing in GREAT:

1. The Government of Vietnam and its development partners are solidly committed to the Government's 'unfinished agenda' regarding: inclusive growth, productivity, and addressing the poverty faced by ethnic minorities, especially women;
2. Inequalities are particularly evident in the country's north-west, and yet the region also offers significant opportunity for women's engagement and the potential for solid results. Australia is well placed, and indeed welcomed by both Government and industry, to commence GREAT in the strategically located Provinces of Son La and Lào Cai, where it would be complementing and building off previous Australian engagements in: gender equality, sustainable and resilient livelihoods, poverty reduction in ethnic minority areas, and agricultural research;
3. GREAT's focus on:
 - The significant bettering of women's opportunities in agriculture;
 - The inclusive engagement of ethnic minorities, and the recognition of their diversity of needs, and
 - The opportunities that tourism provides for women to transition to village-based or off-farm employment and income;will be building off strengths and opportunities (as opposed to being a problem-centric intervention). This positive focus has been confirmed by recent detailed studies supported by DFAT (ISDS, 2016), (UN Women, 2016), which (among other findings) suggest that the benefits from such interventions will not accrue to the women alone, but will flow to their families and their wider communities.
4. GREAT's focus on economic livelihoods and the role of the domestic private sector is timely, as this coincides nicely with the Government of Vietnam's *Vietnam 2035* vision, as well as the activities of the next generation of National Targeted Programs – the NTP-SPR and the NTP-NRD. Its focus is also supported by the recommendation of the recent review of DFAT programs between 2010 and 2015 that '*stronger and more visible private-sector engagement*' be mainstreamed across the programs (DFAT, 2015).

Furthermore, GREAT also builds strongly off the lessons learnt by DFAT through its previous investments both locally and more widely across Vietnam. These lessons include:

1. **Expect complexity.** 'Women's economic empowerment' is neither universally defined, nor easily measured. Pathways to empowerment will be multiple, unpredictable, non-linear, and not always well-understood. Relationships between different dimensions of empowerment will not always be clear. GREAT will need to invest time and resources in establishing a shared picture of how change is likely to happen in both communities and the private sector. (DFAT's Market Development Facility and DFAT's guidelines on WEE (MDF, 2015) (DFAT, 2015)

²² Please note that this design was also informed by the DFAT Operational Guidance Note on Gender Equality and Women's Economic Empowerment in Agriculture (DFAT, 2015).

2. **Inclusion focus:** At its core, *GREAT* is not a poverty alleviation program, nor is it about growth per se, but rather about the current lack of inclusion and equity within growing markets, and particularly the lack of inclusion and equity of ethnic minority women. Yet while women are the focal beneficiaries, the program will be working at the household and community levels, and thus the benefits will likely impact on all community members. At the same time, to be effective, the program will need to be sophisticated in its understanding of vulnerability and exclusion in target areas where the de facto majority population is a non-Kinh ethnic group. (Evaluations of the Rural Development Project (RUDEP 2001 - 2007), and the Implementation Support Program in Quảng Ngãi (ISP 2008 - 2012)).
3. Effective Programs support inclusivity and equity in the markets, yet avoid becoming market “players”. Instead, the program will adopt **facilitation, brokering and leverage roles**, using funds/ resources to stimulate market responses from local and national stakeholders, thereby improving its sustainability. Also, in seeking ways in which women can be better included, the program will be bringing different parts of the market system together, which may in itself engender further positive changes (as evidenced by Australia’s other market development initiatives and especially the CAVAC ICR, 2016)
4. **Meaningful participation and leadership from women:** Success criteria and program activities will be heavily informed by the voices of women (particularly ethnic minority women). This will require an in-depth, and thus time-consuming, process of consultation and analysis (and therefore will also require sophisticated gender, ethnographic, and language skill-sets). Also, potential exists for the program to implement different pathways for different ethnic groups. (As evidenced by the WB NMPRP, and the recent review of gender in development in Vietnam by UN Women (UN Women, 2016))
5. **Engagement with men and boys.** Male views on women’s capabilities and roles will significantly impact on their economic empowerment (both to enhance and to hinder it). Furthermore, it is expected that men will be both direct and indirect beneficiaries of some of *GREAT*’s activities. (As recommended in DFAT’s guidelines for WEE (DFAT, 2015).
6. **A commitment to innovation, learning and adaptation:** Mechanisms that enhance iterative and adaptive learning will be needed. This will necessitate a learning process that includes an element of risk-taking, and an acceptance of failure. The program needs to be held accountable for how much learning it generates, its capacity for adaptation and innovation, as well as for communicating why this adaptation/ innovation is important for improved program outcomes at the local and/or national policy levels. Thus a clever and innovative approach to communications needs to underpin this learning (as recommended by DFAT’s Innovation Exchange and Global Innovation Fund).
7. **Progressive, cumulative engagement and impact** is expected – not a ‘big bang’. The program will inevitably start slowly and grow as it learns. Hence the expectation is for accelerated effects as the program matures, and linkages reach a critical mass (Years 3 to 5). This also has implications for budget allocation and utilisation rates. (DFAT, 2015)

3.2 What changes will *GREAT* support?

The stimulation of broad-based women’s economic empowerment in the north-west of Vietnam will not be easy. While the agriculture and tourism sectors are rapidly growing, and offer promising opportunity for women in general, and ethnic minority women in particular, it is clear that significant obstacles remain in the path of inclusive engagement. Nevertheless, the analysis that informs this design shows that in the short to medium term, *GREAT* can significantly contribute to changes in the three areas outlined in Table 3. This Table reflects a ‘*Theory of Change*’ that builds off the contextual analysis by identifying:

- the ways in which inputs and support can be delivered, and
- the changes that *GREAT* might contribute to over time.

Table 3: *GREAT* changes and outcomes

If <i>GREAT</i> and its partners...	Then over time....
Understand, train, motivate and support local women, particularly ethnic minority women within the situations they are currently, encountering; and in accordance with their aspirations: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to improve their production and employment skills; 2. to pursue economic opportunities (production and employment) that 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women-led or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives in outer areas will have greater income through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better access to productive resources and inputs; and • Increased provision of goods and services to tourist and agricultural markets. • More women - particularly younger women and those from ethnic minority groups - will have greater access to

If GREAT and its partners...	Then over time....
<p>have been analysed for their feasibility, viability and sustainability;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. to appreciate gender equality both in households and the wider economy; and 4. to build relationships and access with market players. 	<p>training and formal employment in the agriculture and tourism sectors.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Women will have a more pervasive and a more recognised role in decision-making and leadership in the family, the community, and the agriculture and tourism sectors. • Women (and men) will have new skills in agriculture, processing, tourism and business. • The number of women-led and co-managed businesses will significantly increase. • Women will have more support and stronger networks locally <i>and</i> in the labour and produce markets. • Women will increase their decision-making power over how additional income is spent.
<p>Work with committed businesses (in all their current diverse forms) across the agriculture and tourism markets:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. to analyse and build 'bankable' business cases that lead to greater inclusivity of women (and particularly ethnic minority women), while also building the profitability and sustainability of their businesses; 2. to support businesses to pursue these opportunities (while assuring that this support achieves significant 'additionality' as well as 'competitive neutrality'); 3. to train more women employees at all levels in businesses; 4. to build networks and relationships between these businesses and the women that will underpin their success. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More agriculture and tourism businesses will appreciate the business case, and aspire to drive more inclusive women-centred growth; • More agriculture and tourism businesses will conduct more profitable business with women, particularly ethnic minority women; • More agriculture and tourism businesses will engage more women in formal employment; • More women will aspire to/ assume more responsible roles in business and business forums; • The number of women-led and co-managed businesses will increase significantly; • Agriculture and tourism businesses will have greater enabling environment support.
<p>Assist the Provincial Governments to</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Assess the enabling environment, both in general, and for each specific business case, to understand the constraints affecting the inclusivity of business practise; 2. Build an evidence base of successful and effective engagements (often in spite of enabling environment constraints), and proven or promising economic models for women's engagement; 3. Increase their consultation and networks with business groups. 4. Exert greater influence on the framing and effective implementation of NTPs based on deeper evidenced based analysis and experience of effective models of implementation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government will better appreciate the roles that business and communities can play in helping to formulate sound economic policy and plans; • Government will have clear evidence of the economic and social benefits of interventions that increase women's equitable participation in the tourism and agriculture sectors; • Government will have greater consensus on the areas of policy or service delivery that need to be improved to ensure more inclusive growth at commune and provincial levels; • Government partners will adopt and share improved policy and implementation guidelines across the communes and districts of the two provinces; • Government will identify and enact policies, plans, regulations and services that are both practical and directly relevant to the overcoming of constraints on inclusivity. • Government will influence the formulation of better national policies and regulations based on experience.

Another way of reflecting the Theory of Change logic is reflected in Figure 6.

3.2.1 Donor Harmonisation

The Aid Investment Plan aims to integrate DFAT's policy, knowledge, credibility, expertise and engagement around particular development issues. Thus a number of DFAT's initiatives in Vietnam are meant to integrate with, or complement, *GREAT* and visa versa. Implementation 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, including close alignment of key messages when engaging Government;
- 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 *GREAT* within the DFAT Portfolio are shown in Table 4.

Table 4: Key programs of relevance to *GREAT* within the DFAT Portfolio

Program	Goal	Synergies
<p>Women's Economic Empowerment through Agricultural Value Chains in Rural Vietnam (WEAVE)</p> <p>A\$2.5 million, 2016-19, Consortium of Oxfam (lead), CARE and SNV</p>	<p>To enhance women's economic empowerment and social inclusion in agricultural value chains.</p>	<p>WEAVE builds on existing NGO initiatives in Lào Cai and Bac Kan to promote three key value chains that engage ethnic minority households, with a focus on women.</p> <p>NGO activity and partnerships in Lào Cai have the potential to expand the networks, knowledge, and policy alliances of <i>GREAT</i>. Bac Kan could also serve as a comparator or treatment site on differences in outcomes between <i>GREAT</i>'s approach and a purely NGO-led approach.</p> <p>There is obviously considerable synergy and common purpose between WEAVE and <i>GREAT</i> including their focus on market access, value chain development, WEE and policy. Once <i>GREAT</i> begins, WEAVE will have been underway for 6-12 months. <i>GREAT</i> and WEAVE should develop joint learning mechanisms and a portfolio approach to women's empowerment in the north-west.</p>
<p>The multicountry Investing in Women Initiative (IWI)</p> <p>In Vietnam: \$4 million from the bilateral budget 2016-20, Managing Contractor – Abt JTA Asia Pacific</p>	<p>To contribute to women's economic empowerment; to enable inclusive economic growth in South East Asia.</p>	<p>IWI and <i>GREAT</i> have a mutual interest in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the promotion of gender equitable practices in workplaces (such as decent off-farm opportunities for women); • supporting Government to develop policies and regulatory frameworks that enable women to participate actively in economic growth; and • inspiring change in public attitudes that are more supportive of women's economic empowerment. <p>However, IWI is still to identify and refine its 'beneficiary groups' in Vietnam, (<i>GREAT</i>'s focus being obviously on the two northern provinces).</p>
<p>Phase II of the Australia - World Bank Strategic Partnership</p> <p>A\$20 million, 2016-20.</p>	<p>Jointly agreed socio-economic development priorities, linked to a competitive process of sub-project proposal.</p>	<p>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 highlighting the synergistic value to be added if the subprojects were to be implemented in Lào Cai and Son La.</p>

Of secondary priority for *GREAT*, 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 that promote private sector development; and

- b. *Vietnam-Australia Human Resource Development Partnership (VAHRDP, 2016-2020)* which supports Australia Awards in AIP focus sectors (including agriculture), as well as applicants from disadvantaged Provinces. In addition to its major component on Australia Award Scholarships for Vietnamese men and women to complete Master-level study at an Australian university, the VAHRDP includes a sub-component on strengthening the operations of one of two targeted universities serving the North-West region of Vietnam. The VAHRDP has identified Thai Nguyen University in Thai Nguyen province (which also has a campus in Lao Cai), and Tay Bac University in Son La as the likely university partners under this sub-component. Both universities have Australia Award alumni in senior positions, and students from these two universities have been received Australia Awards (although more numerous at Thai Nguyen). In Financial Year 2016-17, the VAHRDP team agreed that it will undertake a technical and professional needs assessment of the two universities, aligned with the sectoral interests of GREAT, namely training competencies, including agriculture production. The VAHRDP team will also consider to extend this assessment to selected vocational and training colleges in the North-West region if feasible. It is expected that the results of these university and college assessments will be available in the first half of 2017; and that funding for these sub-components will be available from FY 2017-18.
2. Regional Initiatives:
 - a. the *Mekong Business Initiative (MBI)* which focuses on private sector development in Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar through support to small and medium enterprise, and targets enabling laws and policies, access to finance and networks.
 - b. GrowAsia - established by the World Economic Forum in collaboration with the ASEAN Secretariat. In Vietnam it is organised through a Partnership for Sustainable Agriculture in Vietnam (PSAV) which is co-chaired by MARD and Nestlé. Grow Asia brings together companies, governments, NGOs and other stakeholders to help smallholder farmers. Of particular relevance to GREAT are its initiatives in coffee, tea, corn, spices and fruit and vegetables.
3. ACIAR Initiatives:
 - a. Since its inception, the *GREAT* design concept has been developed in close association with ACIAR. ACIAR's market-oriented counter-season horticulture projects in Mộc Châu and Van Ho Districts in Sơn La Province, and Bac Ha and Sapa Districts in Lào 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 strong synergies between the *GREAT* design and ACIAR's projects, a beneficial influence that it is hoped will prove mutual – *GREAT* will engage with, and learn from, ACIAR's collaborating scientists, and insights provided by *GREAT* will help guide ACIAR's future research priorities.

There are also a number of large poverty reduction projects and programs funded by other bilateral and multilateral donors in Vietnam's northern mountainous areas that are supporting ethnic minorities, including:

1. the World Bank loan funding for the Second Northern Mountains Poverty Reduction Project in six northern provinces;
2. Irish Aid and UNDP technical assistance and budget support to Government of Vietnam's Sustainable Poverty Reduction Program; and
3. IFAD's loan funding to long-term value chain and poverty reduction projects in Ha Giang, Tuyen Quang, Cao Bang and Bac Kan.

In each case, these programs are implemented through Government agencies. Links and synergies will be driven by *GREAT* working closely with the PPC and line departments in each province.

Figure 6: GREAT's Theory of Change

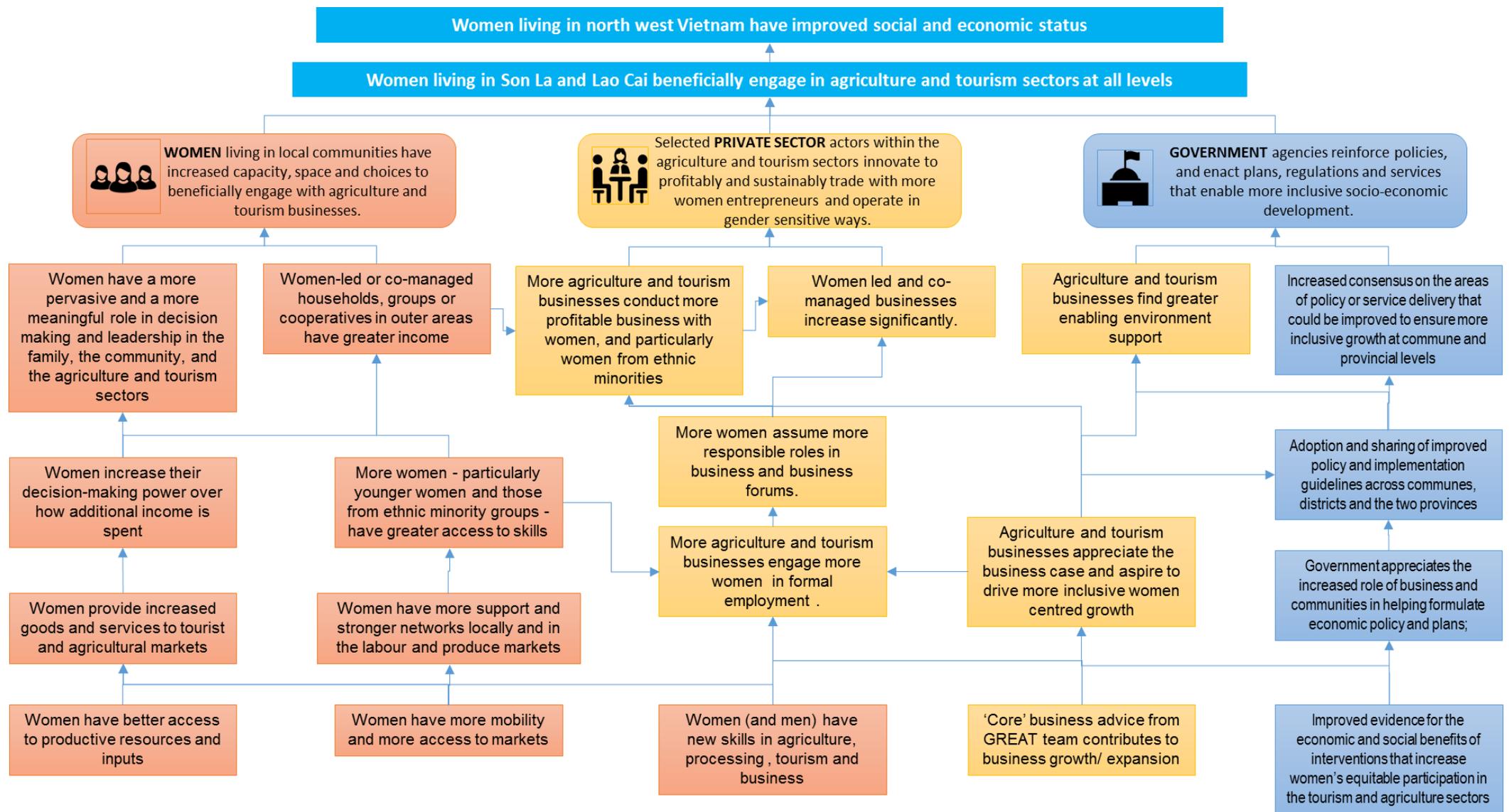


Figure 7: GREAT Theory of Change for Objective 1



WOMEN living in local communities have increased capacity, space and choices to beneficially engage with agriculture and tourism businesses.

Intermediate RESULTS could include:

- Women-led or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives in outer areas will have greater income through:
 - Better access to productive resources and inputs; and
 - Increased provision of goods and services to tourist and agricultural markets.
- More women - particularly younger women and those from ethnic minority groups - will have greater access to training and formal employment in the agriculture and tourism sectors.
- Women will have a more pervasive and a more recognised role in decision-making and leadership in the family, the community, and the agriculture and tourism sectors.
- Women (and men) will have new skills in agriculture, processing, tourism and business.
- The number of women-led and co-managed businesses will significantly increase.
- Women will have more support and stronger networks locally *and* in the labour and produce markets.
- Women will increase their decision-making power over how additional income is spent.

Likely/ possible ACTIVITIES include:

- Community-level problem analyses and ToC conducted; aspirations and goals identified
- Business cases of commune-based, women led (or co managed) economic opportunities analysed to ensure that these are feasible, viable and sustainable.
- Opportunities for increased market access or value chain employment for commune women assessed including the strength of current market relationships, and the attitudes and aspirations of input suppliers, traders, consolidators, processors and buyers, and other market networks;
- Training needs assessment conducted; training providers identified and deployed
- New businesses formed and existing businesses strengthened including, enterprises run by individual women, households, family groups, CIGs, cooperatives or other commune-based SMEs
- Community sensitization/ facilitation of more gender-equal roles in the household and economy; negotiation of more equal division of unpaid work

Causal Assumptions

- Consultations with women of different ethnicities, communities, businesses, and government reveal shared challenges that GREAT resources can help address.
- Women have time, interest, and family support required to engage with new approaches.
- Women's increased economic productivity in turn increases their social status, and does not increase women's time poverty.
- Lack of basic education is not a fundamental barrier for ethnic minority women
- Men are willing to take on new roles

Figure 8: GREAT Theory of Change for Objective 2



Selected **PRIVATE SECTOR** actors within the agriculture and tourism sectors innovate to profitably and sustainably trade with more women entrepreneurs and operate in gender sensitive ways.

Intermediate RESULTS could include:

- More agriculture and tourism businesses will appreciate the business case, and aspire to drive more inclusive women-centred growth;
- More agriculture and tourism businesses will conduct more profitable business with women, particularly ethnic minority women;
- More agriculture and tourism businesses will engage more women in formal employment;
- More women will aspire to/ assume more responsible roles in business and business forums;
- The number of women-led and co-managed businesses will increase significantly;
- Agriculture and tourism businesses will have greater enabling environment support.

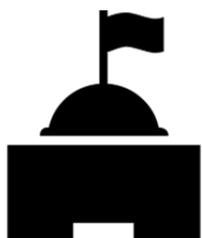
Likely/ possible ACTIVITIES include:

- Sector analysis of the agriculture and tourism markets in SƠN La and Lao Cai
- Consultations with local business - to assess potential for more numerous and more beneficial links with (ethnic minority) women's businesses, produce and labour
- A dynamic and evolving portfolio of partnerships established with businesses and other market actors to drive systemic change
- Assessment of enabling environment for inclusive business practices and livelihoods; consultations and identification of constraints
- Assess capacity of institutions, agencies, NGOs, business councils and other groups to support business development and policy in Lào Cai and SƠN La
- Networking, dialogue and influence enhanced between businesses, communities and Government across the agriculture and tourism sectors

Causal Assumptions

- Women and communities exist with potential skills and products that closely match private sector businesses' needs.
- A sufficient number of business are interested in becoming more inclusive (and presumably but not necessarily more profitable).

Figure 9: GREAT Theory of Change for Objective 3



GOVERNMENT agencies reinforce policies, and enact plans, regulations and services that enable more inclusive socio-economic development.

Intermediate RESULTS could include:

- Government will better appreciate the roles that business and communities can play in helping to formulate sound economic policy and plans;
- Government will have clear evidence of the economic and social benefits of interventions that increase women's equitable participation in the tourism and agriculture sectors;
- Government will have greater consensus on the areas of policy or service delivery that need to be improved to ensure more inclusive growth at commune and provincial levels;
- Government partners will adopt and share improved policy and implementation guidelines across the communes and districts of the two provinces;
- Government will identify and enact policies, plans, regulations and services that are both practical and directly relevant to the overcoming of constraints on inclusivity.
- Government will influence the formulation of better national policies and regulations based on experience.

Likely/ possible ACTIVITIES include:

- Assessment of enabling environment for inclusive business practices and livelihoods; identification of constraints;
- Networking, dialogue and influence enhanced between businesses, communities and Government across the agriculture and tourism sectors
- Assess capacity of institutions, agencies, NGOs, business councils and other groups to support business development and policy in Lào Cai and Sơn La
- Consultation and trust- building with local governments;
- Develop pilot(s) with provincial govt;
- GREAT hosts cross-commune and cross-Provincial learning fora (showcasing 'positive deviance');
- GREAT works with Communist Party to identify and celebrate communes with particularly inclusive results.

Causal Assumptions

- Local governments are actively committed to facilitating more inclusive and sustainable business practices in the private sector.
- The linkages between SEDPs, NTPs, and GREAT's work are clear and agreed.

Chapter 4. Investment Description

This Chapter outlines the logic, delivery modality, budgets and timeframe for *GREAT*.

4.1 Logic and Expected Outcomes

Based on the context (Chapter 2) and rationale (Chapter 3), Figure 10 outlines the overall design logic for *GREAT*, while the subsequent sections unpack and explain this logic.

Figure 10: *GREAT* Design Logic



4.1.1 Goal

The Goal of *GREAT* 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, *GREAT* will work in partnership with other initiatives over the next five years to ensure that:

Women living in Sơn La and Lào Cai beneficially engage in the agriculture and tourism sectors at all levels.

These medium and longer term Goals direct *GREAT* towards:

- The parallel improvements of women's economic status and their social status (attitudes, norms, values and joint decision-making). Increases in income or material assets alone do not constitute 'empowerment'. To be empowered, women must also experience personal, relational, and social gains;
- A focus on women's economic empowerment in selected provinces of north-west Vietnam as the primary tool to benefit women as individuals, while also delivering wider benefits to their families, households, groups and communities;
- A focus on the poorer women in Sơn La and Lào Cai, in consequence of which most project activities will be focussed on ethnic minority communities;
- A focus on women who are already, or aspire to be, economically active, being those the project can most readily equip to access greater benefits from relevant markets;
- Women's engagement that is equitable. Such equitable engagement must, however, not only be reflective of provincial diversity (ethnic mix, gender and remoteness), but must also take into account women's available opportunities, and their socio-economic aspirations;
- Overcoming barriers to women's fair and fulfilling economic engagement, with particular attention given to overcoming the barriers that confront women with disabilities; and

- Ensuring that women engage and progress within the chosen sectors at all levels - as producers, owners, entrepreneurs, employees, managers and consumers.

This goal will be achieved through three linked objectives.

4.1.2 Objective 1 - Empowering local women: Women living in local communities have increased capacity, space and choices to beneficially engage with agriculture and tourism businesses.

This first objective appreciates that:

- The program's primary beneficiaries are all local women who currently engage (or aspire to engage) with markets;
- This does not include children/teenagers per se. However, it is vitally important that the project engage with, and inspire, adolescent girls during this transition phase of their life. These girls will need the capacity, vision, space and options to make livelihood choices over the next five years that may be radically different from the limited set of choices faced by their mothers;
- Women will participate as individuals, or as members of households, or as groups²³. The program will therefore engage with economic opportunities involving *all* genders. Thus while the program's primary focus will be 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 other income-generating opportunities), incentives and income-generating models.
- Women will beneficially engage – which means that women will have fair, decent, safe, balanced, rewarding and responsible income-earning opportunities and working conditions.

Figure 7 details the assumptions, indicative activities and outcomes that underpin Objective 1. The approach and activities to achieve this are then described in the delivery approach (Section 6.2.1).

4.1.3 Objective 2 – Inclusive businesses partnerships: Selected private sector actors within the agriculture and tourism sectors innovate to profitably and sustainably trade with more women entrepreneurs and operate in gender sensitive ways.

The second objective appreciates that:

- *GREAT* will need to work with a diversity of business models (yet to be specifically 'defined' within the Vietnamese context) that offer potential for private sector engagement. Such models might involve: enterprises, social enterprises, common interest groups, cooperative groups, cooperatives, or state-owned enterprises;
- 'Businesses' will often be locally based. However, *GREAT* will also work with regional, national or international businesses with a commitment to building value chains that involve communities in Lào Cai and Sơn La.
- 'Businesses' must also, however, be committed to improving their gender and ethnic inclusiveness, at the same time as they improve their profitability and sustainability.

Figure 8 details the assumptions, indicative activities and outcomes that underpin Objective 1. The approach and activities to achieve this are then described in the delivery approach (Section 6.2.2).

4.1.4 Objective 3: Improving sector governance and policy: Government agencies reinforce policies, and enact plans, regulations and services that enable more inclusive socio-economic development.

The third objective appreciates that:

²³ Including women only and mixed gender groups.

- *GREAT* will work on policy at both the local and national levels by understanding the issues constraining effective policy outcomes based on on-the-ground experience AND then over time, influencing national agencies through its experience and models.;
- *GREAT* will influence Government through evidence-based advocacy: e.g. models, experiential learning (by showcasing instances where government and businesses work together, for example), training, and grounded research; and
- *GREAT* will aim not only at strengthening policies, but ensuring that these are translated into action through planning, regulation and services.
- Women must play an increasing role in the decision-making and leadership of the sectors on which their livelihoods depend, and on the plans that affect themselves, their families and communities.

Figure 9 details the assumptions, indicative activities and outcomes that underpin Objective 1. The approach and activities to achieve this are then described in the delivery approach (Section 0).

4.2 What Success will look like

Table 5 reflects a preliminary estimate of the overall results that could be delivered by *GREAT*²⁴ during its initial five-year phase. Many of these results will be gradual – evidence shows that in many market programs the coverage and quality of results increases and enriches over time. While engagement in Vietnam’s socialist market economy is intrinsically different from the engagements of similar market programs in other countries, evidence from private sector interventions in Vietnam shows that comparable trends are not just possible but probable²⁵. All the same, there will still be a need for these preliminary estimates to be openly discussed during inception, and thereafter closely monitored.

Table 5: Baseline estimate of *GREAT* results

Outcome	Result
Women-led or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives in outer areas have greater income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The incomes of 40,000 self-employed women farmers and small entrepreneurs are significantly improved across Sơn La and Lào Cai. (Appreciable and additional flow-on or parallel benefits are expected to be accrued by other members of the households, groups and communities to which these women belong).
More agriculture and tourism businesses conduct more profitable business with women, and particularly women from ethnic minorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4,000 full time equivalent positions for women are created in fulfilling and safe off-farm formal waged employment.
Women led and co-managed businesses increase significantly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over \$US6.0M in private sector investment is leveraged for business opportunities that are profitable, sustainable and inclusive. • 80 per cent of women beneficiaries self-report increased confidence, enthusiasm and self-esteem AND these changes are plausibly attributed to their engagement with <i>GREAT</i>. • The number of women leading or co-managing formal businesses increases by 15% compared with 2016 figures.
Women have a more pervasive and a more recognised role in decision making and leadership in the family, the community, and the agriculture and tourism sectors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measurable changes in gender roles and norms occur within the families of <i>GREAT</i> beneficiaries. (Broader community and societal changes in roles and norms will tend to take much longer).
Agriculture and tourism businesses find greater enabling environment support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 80% of agriculture and tourism businesses report improved communication and access with Government regulators and administrators.

²⁴ These figures are conservatively derived from the projected and actual achievements made by other Australian market systems engagements including: the Cambodia Agricultural Value Chains (CAVAC) program; the Market Development Facility (MDF) in Fiji, PNG, Timor Leste, Sri Lanka and Pakistan; and the Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Promoting Rural Income through Support for Markets in Agriculture (AIP-PRISMA). These targets are, of course, estimates based on the relatively patchy information available about the private sector and markets in north-west Vietnam. The targets will need to be scrutinised and refined as part of the inception period.

²⁵ E.g. the UK Aid’s Vietnam Business Challenge Fund

Outcome	Result
Increased consensus on the areas of policy or service delivery that could be improved to ensure more inclusive growth at commune and provincial levels	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A majority of Agriculture and Tourism stakeholders confirm that sector plans and strategies adequately address issues that are critical for inclusive sector growth. • Significant progress is made in five or more areas relating to policy or policy implementation for the agriculture and tourism sector in the Provinces. • Provincial partners (Government and the Private Sector) influence national policy through evidence based understanding of impact.

The target beneficiaries, basically 44,000 women, are approximately 10 per cent of the total adult female populations in Son La and Lào Cai. However, as mentioned, there is an expectation of both:

1. An appreciable direct and flow-on economic benefit to these women's households, groups and communities, with a particular influence on the lives of partners and dependents (children, the aged and the disabled); and
2. A gradual change in attitudes and practices related to gender roles and norms within these women's households, groups and communities.

4.3 Management and Delivery Mechanisms

The design team assessed options for delivery of *GREAT* (Annex 3), the resulting consensus being that *GREAT* follow a programmatic (rather than a project) model, and that it be overseen by a Managing Contractor. A programmatic approach enables each objective to be flexibly and responsively supported, based on the most appropriate partnerships and modalities. At the same time, a programmatic approach ensures real-time feedback and rigorous learning mechanisms that allow the program managers (DFAT and the Contracted Technical Advisors) to adaptively manage the program, based on traction and outcomes. The Managing Contractor will be responsible for the management of all *GREAT* funds, with the program's specific activities being delivered either directly, or through Partnership Agreements. DFAT Program and Senior Management will also play a very active role in deriving from the program the content of, and directions for, policy dialogue.

The advantages of this model include:

1. Limited management burden for Post: Australia is responsible for only one overall contract, and can therefore focus on strategic engagement
2. Coherent program structure: Planning, reporting and communications led by one central unit, with partners receiving a cohesive package of support
3. Vertical linkages (from local to central level) and horizontal linkages (between program components) will be strong
4. Access to high quality technical specialists to lead on implementation of each component
5. Flexibility to commence programming slowly and develop new partnerships and activities as opportunities arise

The primary risk is that DFAT may lose some opportunities for decision-making, technical input, and strategic relationship building. These risks will be mitigated by the early drafting of a strategic influence and diplomacy plan by the Managing Contractor that clarifies and confirms the role for the Australian Embassy.

Alternative consideration was given to the direct delivery of *GREAT* through a National Ministry or the Provincial Governments. However, this approach would require *GREAT* to be managed by just one of the several line departments that are essential for effective delivery of the program. No single department had the mandate, structure, leadership resources, or accountability mechanisms currently in place to allow for direct delivery. The line departments will, however, be key local partners, that will benefit from engaging with *GREAT*, and assume greater responsibility over time in keeping with resource allocation.

A Managing Contractor model brings the core program management skills, while the stipulation that implementation builds a Consortium of relevant parties (see 5.2) ensures that *GREAT* will partner with local and international NGOs to deliver core program support within the Provinces.

4.4 Budget and Timeframe

Currently, the Australian Government expects *GREAT* to be a five-year initiative (2017 to 2022) valued at approximately \$A35.25 million (**Error! Reference source not found.**). It is proposed, however, that *GREAT*'s initial five-year engagement will be optioned with an additional five years based on performance, resource availability, and ongoing alignment with Australian Government priorities.

Based on preliminary budgets the proportional spend across *GREAT*'s three objectives is:

Objectives	Five Year Budget	Proportion
<i>Objective 1</i>	17.1m	52%
<i>Objective 2</i>	9.9m	30%
<i>Objective 3</i>	6.0m	18%

GREAT will directly invest approximately \$8.75m in each Province through local partnerships - this direct funding of approximately A\$1.75m/Province/year should ensure that the program delivers significant outcomes in the target Provinces. The decision on the focal areas for spending will be reviewed annually, based on the Annual Work Plan approved by the *GREAT* Steering Committee (Section 5.1). It is anticipated that the Managing Contractor will propose budgets for Steering Committee endorsement based on the opportunity, need, performance and impact of the program across its objectives, sectors and Provinces.

Chapter 5. Implementation Arrangements

This chapter outlines the governance, management and staff resources needed to deliver *GREAT*.

5.1 Governance Arrangements and Structure

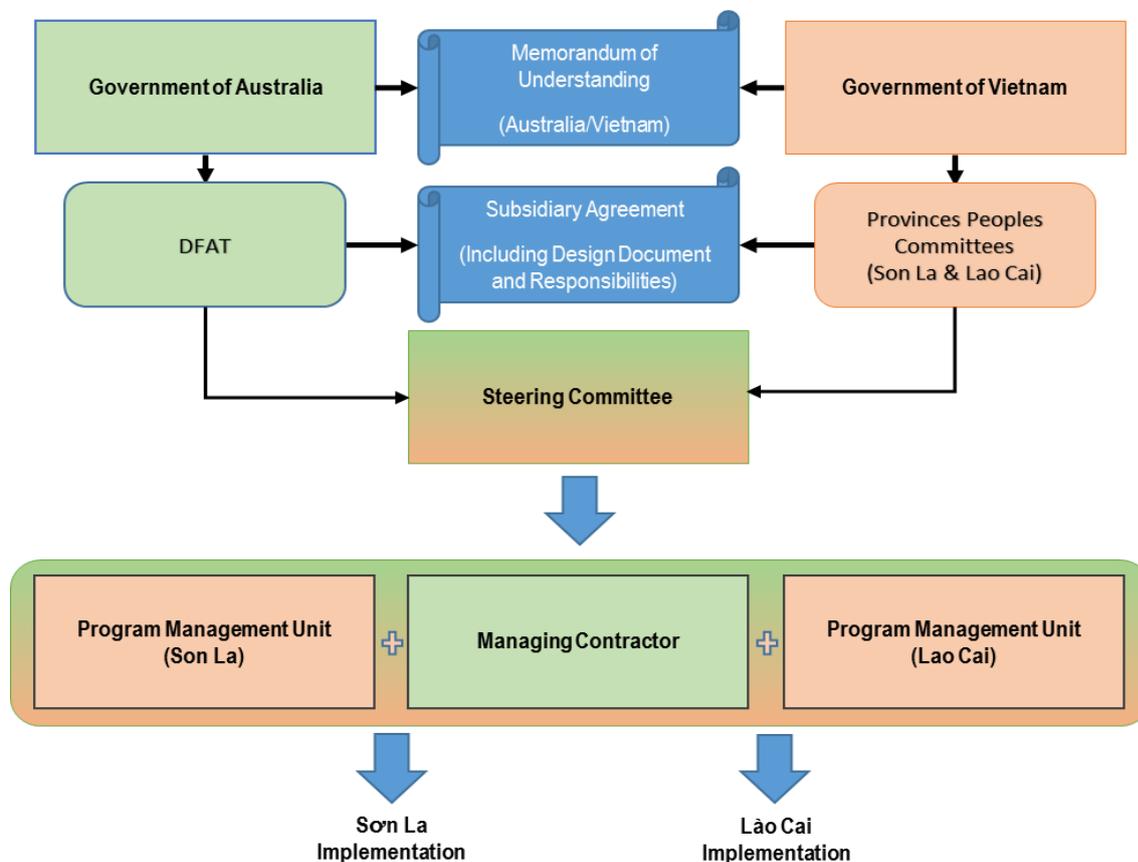
GREAT will be implemented in accordance with the Australia/Vietnam bilateral Memorandum of Understanding. Within Sơn La and Lào Cai the PPCs will be the program 'owners', and as such, each will co-sign a mutually agreed Subsidiary Arrangement with DFAT. Alignment with the PPCs will ensure *GREAT*'s direct relevance to the local socio-economic development plans; its close engagement with, and capacity building of, the local line departments; and its leverage of, and links to, the National Target Programs, as well as to the activities of other development partners.

Arrangements for the Governance of *GREAT* need to be finalised by DFAT and the two PPCs. However, it is suggested that a single cross-provincial *GREAT* Steering Committee be formed. This should be an inclusive group of stakeholders, that gives due consideration to its gender and ethnic balance, while being made up of representatives of:

- The Provincial People Committees of Sơn La and Lào Cai (Co-chair at alternate meetings);
- Australia's aid program at the Hanoi Post (Co-chair);
- Provincial Departments, including DPI, DOF, DARD, DCST, DOLISA, PCEM and WU;
- Management Consortium representatives (see Section 5.3); and
- The *GREAT* Managing Contractor and the Project Management Units (to act as advisers and Secretariat to the Steering Committee).

The *GREAT* Steering Committee will be responsible for program oversight and governance, and will meet formally every six months (often in association with other planned *GREAT* events) to discuss *GREAT* progress, opportunities for linkages and leverage with other engagements, and other issues. However, its main role will be to approve the annual *GREAT* Work Plan and budget. While most issues that are brought to attention of the Steering Committee should be handled through consensus, if agreement is not possible then the issue will be referred to DFAT for a decision. All Steering Committee members will receive regular, relevant information as part of *GREAT*'s Communication Plan.

Figure 11: *GREAT* Governance and Management relationships



In addition, the *GREAT* Steering Committee will, over time, increasingly engage with the relevant national agencies to:

- enhance existing policy;
- highlight enabling environment constraints; and
- support initiatives that address these constraints.

DFAT's limited resources at Post to manage *GREAT* may limit its capacity for governance and oversight. It is therefore proposed that:

1. DFAT appoint a Technical Advisory Group (TAG) to assist the Post in its management of *GREAT*. Each TAG Mission will be accompanied by representatives from DFAT and the two PPCs.
2. The TAG will help provide technical guidance, review progress and performance, appraise key program deliverables, study key emerging risks, and advise the Post on contractual compliance, collaboration, management and outcomes. TAG missions will be scheduled for at least twice a year; and will contribute primarily to learning and adaptation of the program.

5.2 Appointment of a Managing Contractor and a Project Management Unit

A **Managing Contractor** will be engaged to coordinate and support national and subnational activities, and partnerships with locally relevant partners and communities for all three Objectives. The Managing Contractor will establish a small national office in Hanoi to engage, liaise and coordinate with DFAT, as well as the national counterparts and coordinating bodies (e.g. MCST, MARD, MOLISA, CEMA, MPI, NGOs, and research and policy think tanks). The Hanoi office will be complemented by the two Provincial offices in Lào Cai and Sơn La dedicated to the consultation, planning, procurement, contracting and delivery of *GREAT* activities in each Province. The Hanoi office will provide central administration, finance and human resource support to the *GREAT* teams based in the two Provincial offices.

The Contractor's main roles will be:

1. Adaptive management;
2. Quality analysis and strategy development (based on a sensitive appreciation of ethnic and gender differences);
3. Monitoring, evaluation, research, learning and risk management;
4. Program Planning;
5. Links and integration with other Australian, Government of Vietnam and development partner activities;
6. Technical assistance;
7. Communications; and
8. 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.

The engagement of a Managing Contractor will ensure a tailored approach to links and partnerships in the target Provinces, strong accountability practices, and the capacity to engage Vietnamese and international staff in a manner that is both responsive to emerging issues and concerns, and cost-effective.

In line with usual practice, each Province will have a **Project Management Unit** (PMU), which will work collaboratively with the DFAT-appointed Managing Contractor as part of the Management Consortium (see Section 5.3). The role and structure of the two PMUs is still to be negotiated by DFAT and the PPCs. However, it is suggested that:

1. It is logical for the PMU to be formed with the Department of Planning and Investment (DPI) as this will ensure coordination across line departments. It will also allow the reporting and outcomes of *GREAT* to directly influence the integrated SEDPs. In addition, many line Departments provide services and policy that impacts on women, ethnic minorities and businesses across the agriculture and tourism sector. The Departments and agencies that will be particularly relevant to *GREAT* include:
 - a. the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD): which has responsibility for the agriculture sector, as well as for implementing the NTP-NRD in the Province;
 - b. the Department of Culture and Tourism (DCST): which has responsibility for tourism sector development under the direction of the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism (VNAT);
 - c. DOLISA: which is responsible for the implementation of the NTP-SPR, and for labour issues;
 - d. The Provincial CEMs: which support the needs of ethnic women; and
 - e. The Women's Union: which has solid support networks for women both Provincially and at the grass-roots level.
2. The *GREAT* PMU in each Province, will need to carefully coordinate its activities with these line Departments and agencies, and over-time develop relationships and an evidence base that will enable it to influence their operations and policies where needed. While *GREAT* must ensure that all sectors of Government are informed

and appropriately engaged with its agenda it should focus its efforts on Departments and agencies where there is the momentum and leadership to drive opportunities and tackle challenges. These changes can take time and the five plus five-year timeframe for GREAT acknowledges that institutional and policy changes must be paced. For example, Australia's engagement through GIZ in support of climate-resilient development in the Mekong Delta has taken a phased approach over nine years, with early relationships and activities built in one province 2009-2011, pilot activities expanded to a total of five provinces in 2011-2014, before evolving into a phase of scale-up and institutionalisation with stronger policy influence 2014-2018+

3. The PMUs provide an essential coordination and joint reporting role. They should not be expected, however, to manage funds, or be responsible for the implementation of *GREAT*. The specific roles of the PMUs could include:
 - a. Advise and assist the Managing Contractor with links, liaison, and necessary approvals;
 - b. Advise the Managing Contractor on coordination with broader Government programs, and the activities of other agencies in the Province;
 - c. Advise and comment on the Managing Contractor's Annual Work Plan;
 - d. Liaise, collaborate with, and leverage support from the Provincial Departments;
 - e. In collaboration with the Managing Contractor
 - i. monitor *GREAT* on-the-ground progress;
 - ii. report on *GREAT* progress to the PPC, and the *GREAT* Steering Committee; and
 - iii. provide advice and secretarial support to the *GREAT* Steering Committee.
4. The initial staffing of the PMUs be kept small. As *GREAT* finds its feet, the PMUs can then expand, as needed. Over time, the PMUs could include representatives of all relevant government Departments and agencies (e.g. DARD, DCST, DOLISA, CEM or the WU).
5. DFAT and the PPC consider some form of cost sharing for the PMUs. One possibility is that the PPC or DPI cover the staff time for the PMUs, with *GREAT* providing all other necessary travel, allowances and operating costs.

It is hoped that the *GREAT* Provincial offices (including work spaces for both the Managing Contractor and the PMU) be co-located within a Provincial Government building. This will ensure that *GREAT* can consult closely with government, and align with other development activities, whether led by Government and by other donors. DFAT and the PPC should consider some form of cost sharing for this – possibly with the PPC providing office space and utilities.

5.3 Management Consortium and Partnership Agreements with locally relevant groups

5.3.1 Management Consortium

One of the Managing Contractor's key roles will be to ensure the on-the-ground suitability and sustainability of *GREAT* activities through the formation of a Management Consortium - a small, core group of key long-term partners who can guide *GREAT*'s planning, implementation and adaptive learning. Such a 'Management Consortium' approach has been used to great advantage elsewhere - e.g. in the AIPEG²⁶ program in Indonesia - where it has been shown to improve a program's sustainability and relevance, by ensuring it works with, and 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 Partnerships (see 5.3.2 below), the intent being to elevate particular relationships to the level of co-management and strategic decision-making.

To do this effectively, the Managing Contractor is expected, over time, to identify long term partners with the skills necessary to deliver significant components of *GREAT*. The Managing Contractor will then - in consultation with DFAT and the PMU - invite these partners to join the Management Consortium. Each candidate will be expected, however, to make a meaningful co-contribution of their own, possibly through the secondment of one (or more) full time staff to be based with the Managing Contractor, either in the Hanoi Office or the Provincial Offices, as appropriate, to manage the implementation of their responsibilities.

Each member of the Management Consortium must be a long term Vietnam-based organisation with a mandate and core commitment to the sustainable, long-term delivery of the services needed under *GREAT*. These may include:

1. Government groups operating through the facilitation of the PMUs;
2. Local / International NGOs with demonstrated skills in women's engagement, community mobilisation or business development (noting that DFAT already has fully functioning links with Oxfam, Care and SNV in the implementation of WEAVE - see Table 4 - a sister program to *GREAT* that is currently operating in Lào Cai and Bắc Kạn Provinces).

²⁶ Australia Indonesia Partnership for Economic Governance (AIPEG) Facility - In this case delivery partners are referred to as co-facilitators.

- Also, there are exceptional think-tank groups and research institutes in Vietnam's north capable of undertaking significant monitoring, evaluation, learning and research activities.

5.3.2 Delivery Partnerships

The Managing Contractor (and Management Consortium members) will oversee delivery partnerships related to four areas:

- Objective 1 - Empowering local women:** *GREAT* will partner with NGOs, CSOs, CBOs and mass organisations (especially the Women's Union) to work with, support and build the capacity of the target communities and beneficiaries. *GREAT* will also partner with commune based businesses be they individual, family group, cooperatives or more traditional SMEs to expand their skills, value adding, market access and market responsiveness (both quality and quantity);
- Objective 2 - Inclusive business partnerships:** *GREAT* will partner with diverse private sector and market sector players who are working to improve inclusivity, gender sensitivity, profitability, and sustainability of value chains, inputs and services²⁷. This can include agribusiness, tourism businesses, SOEs, cooperatives, social enterprises and the broader private sector (e.g. banks, business services etc.);
- Objective 3 - Improved sector governance and policy:** *GREAT* will form partnerships with businesses, business councils, communities, and national and subnational policy agencies to inform and enhance the policy enabling environment; and
- Overall - Research, Studies and Learning:** *GREAT* will partner with research groups to inform and support the adaptive learning and communication agendas.

The Managing Contractor will engage with locally relevant partners through mechanisms such as: collaborative dialogue, MOAs, grants, or specific delivery contracts that have been tailored to meet the needs of each province. Table 6 presents a summary of possible delivery partnerships. While local government units may have limited capacity and resources, in some cases they will be the logical long term partner where support is needed for emerging businesses.

Table 6: GREAT coordination and delivery partnerships.

Objective	Coordination with:	Delivery Partnerships through:
1. Empowering local women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC DOLISA DARD DEMA Civil Society Organisations Other development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International NGOs Groups with long-term, broad-based local community linkages Provincial extension staff and local NGOs commune based businesses (individual, family group, Common Interest Groups, Cooperatives) Women's organisations, Women's Union and other mass organisations ACIAR and DARD for development of key value chains
2. Inclusive business partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC DCST DARD Other development partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> business, tourism businesses, SOEs, cooperatives and the broader private sector Social enterprises and community based enterprises NGOs with skills in business development service delivery DARD extension staff
3. Improved sector governance and policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PPC DCST DARD MCST MARD MOLISA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual businesses Business, industry or sector councils National policy NGOs, PPC DOLISA, DCST, DARD MCST, MARD, MOLISA and CEMA

²⁷ Through instruments similar to the competitive grants used by IFAD.

The lack of local delivery partners with strong technical skills in agriculture, tourism, business, gender and inclusion is a risk for the program. Testing the feasibility, functionality, sustainability and likely cost of these delivery partnerships will therefore be a key focus during the Inception Period. It must be stressed, however, that the choice of 'locally relevant' partners does not necessarily mean that partners need to be provincially based. Many solid business partnerships may be achievable with national, or even international, firms with a direct interest in undertaking inclusive, profitable business in north-west Vietnam. Similarly, many NGOs who have head offices elsewhere in the country, may maintain – or be willing to develop - a technical, research or delivery capability in the north-west.

The partnership agreements are not purely contractual relationships. Each agreement reflects a partnership between *GREAT* and groups that are already committed to engaging with, and serving, local communities. The partnership agreements therefore contribute directly to the sustainability of the program's outcomes by building the capacity and relevance of locally relevant long term partners. Each Partnership Agreement will therefore set out the relative contribution of both partners to the relationship, with *GREAT*'s contribution usually supplementing what has already been committed by a partner. Thus in many cases, partnership with *GREAT* will allow partners to expand/ enhance their existing engagements:

- In the case of Government, this may be through the development of improved processes and capacity;
- For the private sector, it may be through co-funding that reduces the investment risk in situations where the business case would be compromised by inexperienced suppliers, or by other market failures;
- For civil society and NGOs, it may be through improvements to their reach and engagement within the target communities.

Furthermore, *GREAT* will only engage with partners who are committed to building strong local communities, groups, institutions and businesses. The approach must avoid the use of handouts or grants that create perverse incentives and dependency amongst target groups. Instead *GREAT* will fund partnerships where the community, institution, agency or business demonstrates an equal commitment to the resourcing of the initiative.

Just as the partnership agreements are not meant to be purely contractual relationships, *GREAT*'s relationship with its delivery partners is not meant to be purely functional. These partners will be the ones to ensure the continuity and sustainability of *GREAT* initiatives, and hence *GREAT* must actively work with its delivery partners by:

- assessing their capacity;
- improving their capacity through training and resourcing;
- understanding any remaining gaps; and
- assessing the sustainability of a partner's relationship with the community in which it is working.

It is critical for *GREAT*'s success that:

- local Government partners are better able to plan, resource, deliver and assess their services to local communities;
- local civil society and NGO organisations are strengthened so their roles can be maintained in the long term;
- private sector develops solid business cases that enable them to continue to function sustainably.

5.4 A Quality Team for Management and Technical Assistance

The Managing Contractor will provide high calibre program direction and leadership, and also establish a pool of national and international technical expertise. It is the Managing Contractor's responsibility to propose a team with an appropriate skills mix. The team structure will reflect the allocation of staff between the central and provincial offices. The actual location of staff will be finalised by the Managing Contractor - with DFAT's approval - during the Inception Period.

For *GREAT* to be a credible force in women's empowerment, the *GREAT* Team must itself mirror gender equality and integration. *GREAT* must therefore include a balanced gender profile amongst its staff, particularly amongst its advisers. *GREAT* must also implement workplace safety guidelines for all its staff, but especially for women working in provincial offices and remote locations.

Terms of Reference for each role will be finalised by the Managing Contractor during Inception. The composition of the administrative support team of *GREAT* will also be proposed and finalised by the Managing Contractor.

The *GREAT* "Team Leader" will likely be based at the national office in Hanoi. It is expected that Hanoi-based team members will travel frequently to Lào Cai and Sơn La.

The two provincial offices will inevitably have differing workloads and responsibilities, a situation that will need to be dynamically managed by the Managing Contractor. The logistics of the situation suggest that there are likely to be more tourism activities in Lào Cai than in Sơn La. Similarly Sơn La will likely have more of an agriculture focus.

It is expected that the Managing Contractor will ensure that employment conditions for international staff are in line with their obligations under the Australian Remuneration Framework. In the case of national staff, it is expected that the Managing Contractor will liaise with the Post, as well as with the Team Leaders of other donor funded programs in Vietnam, to ensure that their employment conditions adhere to Government of Vietnam employment legislation, and are commensurate with the norms currently in place for development partners.

Chapter 6. Delivery Approach

GREAT brings together a number of important elements of development practice, and it is important for the Managing Contractor to not compartmentalise, but identify and enhance the strategic overlap and synergies of these approaches. The core approaches to be integrated into *GREAT* include the following:

1. Under Objective 1 (Empowering local women): *GREAT* will engage with selected communities and groups through traditional and established social structures to build the confidence, capacity and market access of local women. For Objective 1, *GREAT* will employ solid participatory and inclusive approaches to women's engagement and development, to build the understanding, ownership, confidence, decision-making and sustainability of its women beneficiaries and their households and groups. Gender roles, norms and values will be assessed, and gender equity promoted in the target communities.
2. Under Objective 2 (Inclusive Businesses): *GREAT* will assess the market development opportunities of households within the target Province, and then form partnerships with locally relevant businesses that can develop these identified opportunities. Markets for the Poor (M4P) principles will be used for both the assessment and the subsequent implementation. Given the thin formal private sector, the often inaccessible communities, and the abundance of women aspiring to commercial engagement in the north-west region, the M4P approach will be supplemented by more mainstream business partnerships, with local implementation supported by agreements with civil society, emergent community enterprises, and cooperatives (similar M4P approaches are used in Samarth in Nepal (Samarth, 2015), the Chars Livelihood Programme in Bangladesh (Chars Livelihood Programme, 2015), and DFAT's AIP-PRISMA program in Indonesia²⁸).
3. Under Objective 3 (Improving sector governance and policy) the program will build networks, communication and dialogue between Government, the business sector and communities to share issues, experience and successes. This will be complemented by studies that expand the evidence base that is needed to underpin crucial assessments. Such studies should include:
 - a. the effectiveness of current plans, regulations and services;
 - b. the feasibility of enabling policy implementation, including the identification and promotion of best-practice examples; and
 - c. creative ways to overcome enabling environment constraints in the agriculture and tourism sectors.All interventions will build local leadership by women (particularly ethnic women), represent local interests, and build the program's credibility and profile with the established governance structures.

Partnerships form the foundation of *GREAT*'s implementation of each of these objectives. However it is essential that each partnership must be tailored to deliver part of the picture of systemic change outlined in the objective. *GREAT* is NOT a grant facility that responds to partner proposals. Instead the Consortium will identify the strategic direction required and then the Managing Contractor (in consultation with Consortium members and other stakeholders) will identify partners who may be best placed to deliver the elements of this strategy. This process will occur through negotiation, mentoring and agreement.

Finally, on a very practical level, wherever necessary and possible, ethnic languages should be used for communication. In addition, while ethnicity must always be carefully considered, interventions will not usually segregate mixed groups.

This section will describe the preparatory and implementation approaches for all *GREAT* Objectives, outline the options for partnerships, and present the expected outputs.

6.1 Mobilisation and Inception (Apr to Sept 2017)

The appointment of the *GREAT* Managing Contractor and the establishment of the Project Management Office should occur in the fourth quarter of FY 2016/17. For the purposes of this design, it is assumed that *GREAT* will commence on 1 April 2017.

GREAT will commence with a six-month mobilisation and inception period, during which a number of key deliverables are expected.

6.1.1 Establishment, MOAs and *GREAT* Recruitment

Once appointed, the Managing Contractor will consult with DFAT and the PPCs of Sơn La and Lào Cai with regard to:

²⁸ Australia-Indonesia Partnership for Promoting Rural Income through Support for Markets in Agriculture

1. Identification, discussion, agreement and documentation of the roles and responsibilities of the key national and local stakeholders involved with *GREAT* oversight, consultation and planning, including the formation of the *GREAT* Steering Committee see Section 5.1);
2. Office accommodation in Sơn La and Lào Cai. Agreement between DFAT, each PPC, and the Managing Contractor is needed as to cost sharing arrangements. It is suggested that the PPCs contribute office space and utilities for the *GREAT* teams, and that *GREAT* meets all operating costs for the Program;
3. Agreement on the roles, composition and function of each PMU, and its subsequent establishment (see Section and 5.2);
4. Based on these discussions, finalisation of an *GREAT* Stakeholder Communication Plan. This will identify all stakeholders, along with the methods and tools needed to ensure *GREAT*'s ongoing engagement, consultation, communication and information exchange with its stakeholders. It will be very important for such a large program involving many partners that the Australian brand is consistent throughout all its activities. The Managing Contractor must ensure that Australia's profile is appropriately reflected in all Program activities, partnerships and communication material.; and

In parallel with these consultations, the Managing Contractor will mobilise the program including office identification and establishment in Hanoi, banking, procurement, and recruitment. The Hanoi Post requires the Managing Contractor to keep them fully informed of progress, and to consult with them on key decisions that may impact on the Post's broader programing (e.g. the location of offices). The Managing Contractor will provide the Post with copies of key documentation, including:

- an Operations Manual (including procurement, transparency and fraud management practices),
- Security Plans, and
- a Human Resource Manual (outlining TOR for all staff, employment conditions and employment practices).

To summarise, the key deliverables during the establishment phase include:

- Establishment of offices and appointment of staff;
- Establishment of the *GREAT* Steering Committee and PMUs;
- Establishment of Managing Contractor Administrative Procedures (Operations Manual, Security Plans, and Human Resource Manual); and
- Approval of the *GREAT* Stakeholder Communications Plan.

6.1.2 Provincial Engagement – Engagement Strategy and Annual Work Plan

Once mobilisation activities have been completed, *GREAT* will begin its process of engagement within the Provinces by:

- liaising closely with local Provincial authorities to align its planning, delivery and monitoring with Provincial processes (an ongoing dialogue that should be used dynamically to enhance, consolidate and empower Provincial planning);
- developing Provincial Engagement Strategies that summarise the context, rationale and expected results, and an associated Annual Work Plan for Year 1 that focus on roles, responsibilities, schedules and resourcing.

The Provincial Engagement Strategies and the Annual Work Plan will be prepared by the Team Leader in close consultation with the team, the PPCs, DFAT, PMU, line Departments, development partners, private sector actors, and community leaders. The activities proposed will be integrated (where appropriate) with local planning processes and schedules. Once completed, both documents will be submitted to the *GREAT* Steering Committee for approval.

Preparation of the Provincial Engagement Strategies and the Annual Work Plans will require *GREAT* to:

1. Assess current development plans within the Provinces, including the plans of Government of Vietnam, other development partners, NGOs and the private sector;
2. Identify a suite of up to four 'index' Communes in each Province, for *GREAT* to engage with during its first year. This selection should be careful to identify a range of Communes with different market options, ethnic mixes, and capacities to engage in the local economies. *GREAT* should not begin with Communes that are, in one way or another, particularly 'difficult', but instead select those that provide:
 - a. the strongest potential for early economic progress, particularly for women;
 - b. capacity to be used as cross-learning sites; and
 - c. the richest learning environment available at the time of selection.
3. Complementary background studies may be needed to provide a basic understanding of the demographics, and the constraints and opportunities associated with the different communities (see Section 6.1.2). A plan for subsequently scaling up of Commune engagement based on need, opportunity and available budget will be

developed as part of the Engagement Strategy. However, this will be indicative and will be revised based on progress and learning during the first year.

4. Undertake initial community assessments, including the identification of promising economic opportunities (see Objective 1 Section 6.1.3.1);
5. Undertake an initial mapping of policies that influence economic opportunity for women, including their implementation arrangements and associated stakeholders;
6. Prepare both the Engagement Strategies and the Annual Work Plan in combination with its:
 - a. A review the *GREAT* 'Theory of Change' based on Commune aspirations and goals (see Section 3.2) and development of the Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Framework, prepared in the format outlined in Section 6.3; and
 - b. Risk Management Plan (see Section 6.7)
7. Identify potential implementation partners based on the characterisation of locally relevant partners (see 5.3.2). While the Managing Contractor will consult widely, the choice of partners, and the negotiation of agreements, will be made by the Managing Contractor under the authority delegated to it by DFAT. These partnerships and negotiations will be confidential, and will include resources to assess and build the capacity of partners over time.
8. Understand the potential of an activity to reduce/change the gender asymmetries within households. Potentially negative consequences must be identified, and strategies developed that avoid these.
9. Identify critical bottlenecks requiring inputs that would best be supplied through other donor engagements. *GREAT* will need the capacity to work with local Provincial and Community leaders to co-ordinate with/influence the intervention plans of a range of other locally relevant development partners.

To summarise: the key deliverables as *GREAT* begins its engagement with the Provinces include the development and approval of:

- the *GREAT* Provincial Engagement Strategies for Sơn La and Lào Cai, including selection of the initial communities within the Provinces;
- the *GREAT* Annual Work Plans for Sơn La and Lào Cai; and
- the *GREAT* Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Framework, and Risk Management Plan.

6.1.3 Background Studies (July to December 2017)

A number of background studies can potentially be implemented by *GREAT* in the second half of 2017. These studies will not only help maintain momentum and engagement within the Provinces in the lead-up to implementation, but will also provide the Management Consortium with a head start during implementation. The managing Contractor will review the need for these studies and propose a plan for their implementation with DFAT. The studies should be contracted and it is suggested that the successful provider:

- must have a local profile in order for the implementation team to subsequently interact with them, and possibly engage them as partners;
- can handle the portfolio either in-house, or through engaged technical assistance.

Currently five studies could be considered:

1. A more detailed assessment of the **market systems** operating in Sơn La and Lào Cai;
2. A more detailed assessment of gender issues, cultural norms and beliefs – including a look at other Australian experience in challenging dominant cultures.
3. A gendered **political economy analysis** of the two Provinces. This will help *GREAT* to understand what/how changes are happening in the two provinces; to identify the key players within the agriculture and tourism sectors; and to better understand who might be champions or blockers of change (with a particular focus on women's empowerment and equality).
4. An **institutional/stakeholder assessment** in the two Provinces. This will help *GREAT* to appreciate the diversity and capacity of stakeholders and institutions within the Provinces, including: major Government, academic, non-government, civil society, women's organisations and private sector entities, either resident in the Provinces or with a strong profile in the Provinces.
5. Documentation and **mapping of ethnographic, demographic and poverty data** for the target Provinces: The current data available in the Provinces is diverse and dissipated. Yet solid data sets relevant to ethnic and gendered development in the Provinces are vital if *GREAT* and its Provincial stakeholders are to make insightful decisions, and plan accordingly. This study may be in a position to draw on the upcoming ethnic minority census, if the timings coincide; and

6. A **review of past program experience with ethnic engagement**, both in Vietnam and regionally. There appear to be many reports of successful interventions with ethnic groups in the region, a review of the methods and lessons of which would be advantageous.

6.2 Engagement/Implementation

Full implementation will commence in mid to late 2017 in accordance with the Engagement Strategies and the Annual Work Plan established during the Inception Phase. During implementation, engagement must continue and deepen the functional relationships established with the key planning and decision-making stakeholders, especially with the private sector, the Provincial Administrations, line Ministries and Departments, and community leaders.

Implementation across the three objectives will commence in parallel however the depth of engagement will evolve and outcomes against the three objectives will vary over time. It is important to realise that integrated outcomes that can be coherently documented across all three objectives should not be expected until after Year 3. In the first two years, preliminary outcomes related to Objective 1 will emerge first, relationships with the private sector (Objective 2) will take a bit longer but a solid portfolio of private sector partnerships should start to deliver a deeper understanding of opportunity by Year 2. Lastly, while initial work on policy can occur at inception (Objective 3), it is expected that the trust and confidence of key Government, private sector and community partners to work with GREAT to model and advocate for change will start to emerge in Year 3.

6.2.1 Delivery Approach – Objective 1: Empowering Local Women

Once the two initial suites of up to four Communes have been identified, *GREAT* will undertake **socio-economic analyses** of the target Communes to determine its interventions. These analyses will focus on gender roles, power, conflict and economic livelihood opportunities, by considering:

1. Opportunities for increased market access or value chain employment for commune women;
2. The strength of current market relationships, and the attitudes and aspirations of input suppliers, traders, consolidators, processors and buyers, and other market networks;
3. Each socio-cultural group within each commune;
4. The specific roles of women, men, girls, boys and the aged within each socio-cultural group;
5. The current situation of women, including their status, their ethnicity, their assets and their aspirations;
6. The current diversity of both formal and informal “income” streams (including social protection payments);
7. The gender roles related to income generation and family food production;
8. The nature and frequency of disability;
9. Methods of formal and informal engagement in markets; and
10. Access to, and use of, land and water resources.

In order to maximise efficiency, and the usefulness of the data, the socio-economic analyses need to align with, build on, and complement the work already carried out by the Government of Vietnam and development partners. The data generated will not only be used to form a baseline for M&E, but will also inform the choice, design, implementation and integration of the specific activities that will be supported in the communities.

GREAT's interventions in the selected Communes will thus be tailored to the needs identified and the outcomes possible. Table 7 outlines the indicative activities and partners that may be engaged to deliver *GREAT* outcomes under Objective 1. Obviously, work will be progressive and needs-based – some items will be commonly required, but most will need to be tailored for each commune.

Table 7: Indicative outcomes, partners and activities to deliver Objective 1.

Outcomes (preliminary)	Partner	Indicative Partnership Activities
Women (and men) have new skills in agriculture, processing, tourism and business	NGOs ACIAR DARD Provincial/Commune Extension DCST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • on-farm technology demonstrations; • local value adding; • advisory and training services • cross visits; • business skills training; • numeracy skills training; • information provision; • tourism product awareness and training;

Outcomes (preliminary)	Partner	Indicative Partnership Activities
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> farmer field schools; hospitality training.
Women have better access to productive resources and inputs	Agribusiness suppliers NGOs Commune PC Community groups/CIGs Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> resource assessments; LURC review and training; improved quality, regularity and affordability of inputs; improved family and business budgeting; group/cooperative purchasing; group/cooperative land consolidation.
Women have more support and stronger networks both locally and in the wider labour and produce markets	NGOs Women's organisations Women's Union Community groups/CIGs and Cooperatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> community mobilisation; gender awareness training; new associations and networks; market network and relationship building.
Women have greater access, and provide increased goods and services to tourist and agricultural markets	NGOs Community groups/CIGs and Cooperatives DCST DARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilitation of product; consolidation, handling and storage; e-commerce (e.g. phone apps, market information and tourism e-booking); market awareness training and associated product scheduling, and quality management; savings and loan schemes.
More women - particularly younger and ethnic minority women - have greater access to skills training	Local TVET suppliers Colleges Agriculture and tourism businesses HRD Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> demand driven job services; skills training; internships; scholarships; vouchers, and/or subsidies.
Women have increased decision-making power over how additional income is spent	NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business Management Training; Gender Awareness Training.
Women-led or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives, especially in remoter areas, have greater income	Commune based enterprises (individual, group or family) NGOs Financial agencies Business services providers DOLISA NTP-SPR DARD NTP- NRD Commune PC	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> enterprise development; local agribusiness/tourism collaboration and co-investment; establishment of market agreements and maintenance of market relationships; consulting services for entrepreneurs; improved economic infrastructure; improved integrated services; savings and credit schemes.
Women have a more pervasive and a more recognised role in decision making and leadership in the family, the community, and the agriculture and tourism sectors as a whole	NGOs Women's organisations Women's Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender Awareness Training; Women's Leadership Training.

These indicative activities build on the lessons learnt from many other projects e.g. those outlined in *The Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment* (2014). However, because context is extremely important, such international findings will need to be continually tested against the experience in Vietnam.

Table 8: Proven and promising interventions for women's economic empowerment (UN Foundation, 2014)

Proven or being proven	For
<i>Evidence for effectiveness or cost effectiveness is robust or, in the absence of cost-effective data, simple or replicable in different settings, or the weight of evidence is more than promising.</i>	
Savings	All
Credit	Non-poor
Business Management Training	Non-poor
Demand driven job services; skills training, internships, vouchers, and/or subsidies	Young women
Promising	
<i>Credible evidence is positive, but not yet convincing in terms of breadth</i>	
Mobile phones (for financial transactions and market information)	All
Consulting services for entrepreneurs	All
In-kind capital tailored for women's micro-enterprises	Poor
Land rights – informed use of Land Use Certificated and joint inclusion of names	All
Farmers associations and networks	All
Improved supply of modern agricultural inputs	Non-Poor
Improved integrated services for farmers	Poor
Livelihood programs (reproductive health, asset building, nutrition, safe spaces)	Young women
Unconditional cash transfers	Young women

GREAT will concentrate its efforts around promising agriculture or tourism value chains within each community, targeting those individuals, households, or groups who are enthusiastic and striving to engage. Value chains could include specific products (e.g. coffee, vegetables, handicrafts) or services (e.g. home stays, guides, tours). Over time, modelling of positive change and opportunity will encourage other groups to 'crowd in'. As can be seen in Table 7, *GREAT* will focus on interventions within the target value chains that have been elsewhere successful. Complementing its value chain activities, *GREAT* will also work with locally relevant partners:

1. To sensitise communities to the benefits associated with more gender-equal roles in both households and the wider economy, and thereby to build a sense of gender justice; and
2. To build women's involvement in community and market sector leadership, and increase their decision-making power over how additional income is spent.

Throughout this process the role of *GREAT* staff will be to:

1. Logically and sequentially plan, review and revise engagements;
2. Professionally analyse the business cases of all likely opportunities to ensure that these are feasible, viable and sustainable;
3. Act as a facilitator for service provision by relevant local partners. *GREAT* will thus build the longer term sustainable links between the commune and the providers of services, inputs, information, training, and markets, without becoming a provider itself; and
4. Ensure the quality and appropriateness of activities delivered by the delivery partners.

Over its five years, *GREAT* expects to fund over 35 Partnership Agreements totalling \$8.75m. Each Partnership Agreement will be associated with a Results Chain and expected outcomes. Thus the deliverables under Objective 1 will include the expected outcomes of each Partnership Agreement. Not all partnerships will be successful, but *GREAT* will learn and adapt based on regular monitoring. Overall deliverables include:

- More effective, and more inclusive common interest groups, cooperatives, and social enterprises.
- A stronger understanding of gender roles and equality in the home, and increased decision-making and leadership by women;
- Participatory assessments of the local socio-economic factors that are limiting women's empowerment;
- Identification of the products and markets with comparative advantage on which *GREAT* can work;
- Establishment of links with local service providers;
- Improvements to agricultural and craft-based value chains (inputs, production, harvesting, quality, scheduling, and storage) through the enhancement of women's skills; and
- Increased incomes for women.

6.2.2 Delivery Approach - Objective 2: Inclusive Business Partnerships

While Objective 1 will work at the grass-roots level to build women's capacity and confidence to engage with markets, Objective 2 will work in parallel to build the capacity of private sector actors working in the agriculture and tourism sectors, by improving their inclusivity, economic returns and sustainability. This is an essential role for *GREAT* as it directly supports the efforts of the national and Provincial Governments to enable and strengthen the domestic private sector.

At its most basic level (and in line with standard M4P approaches), the activity cycle of *GREAT* for its capacity building efforts will include four simple steps:

1. **Analysis:** the first step is rigorous analysis that enables an understanding of:
 - a. the relevant socioeconomic factors;
 - b. how the markets are currently working; including
 - c. who does what and why within the agriculture and tourism sectors.

GREAT staff will therefore need to talk to farmers, resort managers, suppliers and other market actors to understand the constraints they are facing, and what opportunities for inclusive growth currently exist (again stressing that *GREAT*'s interest is in opportunities for inclusive growth, rather than in growth per se). It may be necessary for *GREAT* to produce value-chain assessments. However, the aim of these should not be to produce large, polished documents, but rather to garner essential information for informing the choice of markets, and for developing strategies to work in these markets.
2. **Developing strategies:** Based on initial market analysis and mapping, *GREAT* will then draft its strategies for the Agriculture and Tourism Sectors. Each Sector Strategy will provide a direction for how and with whom the program will facilitate change. It may also specify where the program will *not* invest its resources. Strategies will be regularly updated to reflect changes and improved understandings.
3. **Implementing partnerships:** Once developed, *GREAT* will use the Sector Strategies to begin partnering with market actors, by looking for opportunities to improve their inclusivity, while at the same time building the profitability and sustainability of their businesses. This will include mentoring businesses to ensure that their business plans are accurate and bankable, and that they fully own the initiatives as proposed. In other countries, partners with the right incentives have usually been companies. In a socialist economy such as Vietnam, however, it is expected that the relevant market actors may also include: State Owned Enterprises, social enterprises, cooperatives and even Common Interest Groups. *GREAT* will seek to identify creative ideas that improve business performance by effectively linking businesses to women, particularly ethnic minority women, who - in one way or another - can contribute to their success. At times this will involve linking them to women and communities who have already mobilised as producers, suppliers, workers, or managers. At other times to women or new clusters of women who are economic novices. The functioning of these partnerships will be just as diverse. For instance, they might involve: risk sharing, the bringing together of market actors, the provision of information or technical assistance, or financial assistance.
4. **Monitoring, adjusting and scaling up impacts:** The achievement of sustainable results at scale requires much more than just the signing of a partnership agreement, and the resourcing of implementation. It also requires: follow-up, mentoring, monitoring, adjustment, and building on early successes. *GREAT* staff will typically need to follow up closely with partners and contractors to ensure that the agreed actions are being followed, to monitor results, and to agree any necessary adjustments to plans. Once specific partnership agreements have concluded, the team will also need to decide whether or not an extension of that activity is warranted, or whether the partnership was effective enough that other interactions are justified. Teams will also need to weigh the importance of having other market actors adopt an innovation – a concept known as 'crowding in'. It must also be borne in mind that different kinds of activities with different kinds of partners may be needed to help improve market function, if particular activities are proving less than effective. An engagement such as *GREAT* usually begins with shorter term, less complex agreements, only moving towards longer term, more complex agreements once it has sufficient experience and proven effectiveness.

It is critical to note that the linear description of a market development program is simplistic, and that the real world is a far more complex place, in which socioeconomic systems are governed by a multitude of human decisions and economic incentives that have arisen out of inadequate, and sometimes erroneous, information. Markets are therefore chaotic, making an iterative approach to market development both practical and realistic.

An iterative approach for *GREAT* will mean that, even at the initial, analysis stage, the implementation team - who should already have some idea of its strategy - will be testing its preliminary ideas through a few simple partnerships. Thus from the very beginning their on-the-ground experience will be driving learning. Also, in speaking to market actors about constraints and opportunities, the team at the same time could discuss possible interventions/activities (in effect turning informants into partners). Such an iterative approach would ensure that:

- Staff get early on-the -ground experience with the market systems;

- Staff begin discussions on viable activities with potential partners as soon as possible; and
- The credibility risks associated with a prolonged time gap between the research and intervention stages are reduced.

The M4P approach (SDC, 2013) therefore provides a clear process for designing effective economic interventions that are owned by local stakeholders, and sustainable in the long term. The entry points identified in the Engagement Strategy will focus on issues that are catalytic to getting the production and market systems both functioning and effectively linked (locally, regionally and nationally).

The interventions that *GREAT* will undertake with the private sector in each Province will be tailored to the needs identified and the outcomes possible. Table 9 outlines the indicative activities and partners that may be engaged to deliver *GREAT* outcomes under Objective 2. This work will obviously be progressive and needs-based.

Table 9: Indicative outcomes, partners and activities to deliver Objective 2.

Outcomes (preliminary)	Partner	Indicative Partnership Activities
More agriculture and tourism businesses conduct more profitable business with women, particularly ethnic minority women	Private sector enterprises SOE Social Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved backward linkages for product supply; • Improved processing and value adding of local produce; • Broader tourism services with greater outreach; • Increased backpacker and adventure tourism; • Increased relationships with local communes to provide tourists with goods and services; • Improved branding, and product development of single source and niche products focusing on local culture.
A significant increase in the number of women-led and co-managed businesses	Business councils Private sector enterprises NGOs SOEs Social Enterprises Women's organisations Women's Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership training • Mentoring of women leaders • Women's business networks
Agriculture and tourism businesses have greater enabling environment support	Business Research agencies Business councils PPCs DARD DOLISA DCST Private sector enterprises SOEs Social Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advocacy on common issues and concerns; • Analysis of business-enabling environment constraints.
Women assume more responsible roles in business and business forums.	Business councils Private sector enterprises SOEs Social Enterprises Women's organisations Women's Union NGOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership training; • Mentoring of women leaders; • Women's business networks; • Provincial 'businesswoman of the year' awards; • Promoting and modelling positive change.
Agriculture and tourism businesses engage more women in formal employment.	Local TVET suppliers Colleges Agriculture and tourism businesses HRD Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business internships; • Sponsored training vouchers, and/or subsidies; • Incentives for women's employment; • Awards for achieving greater

Outcomes (preliminary)	Partner	Indicative Partnership Activities
		women's employment; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased vocational skills positions and opportunities.
Agriculture and tourism businesses appreciate the business case and aspire to drive more inclusive women-centred growth	Private sector enterprises SOEs Social Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cross visits and 'positive case studies'; Business plan and economic analysis; Experience and modelling of success.

Over its five years, *GREAT* expects to fund over 25 partnerships totalling approximately \$5.25m. Annual reviews and reflection on progress will feed into the Annual Work Plans.

In summary: the deliverables expected for Objective 2 include:

1. Partnering with NGOs in the provision of Business Development Services, and with producer groups in the formation of regional/national market linkages;
2. Galvanizing of market partnerships between women and local, regional and national businesses (including activities across the full value chain spectrum: inputs, services, transport, processing, storage, handling, wholesaling, and retailing);
3. Increased incomes and employment of women.

6.2.3 Delivery Approach - Objective 3: Improving Sector Governance and Policy

GREAT must also work with the Government of Vietnam, industry, and other stakeholders concerned with the governance of the agriculture and tourism markets, to:

- raise the profile of women in decision-making,
- reinforce appropriate policy, and
- assist them enact the plans, regulations, and services that are necessary to build an effective enabling environment.

Based on experience from market-based programs elsewhere, the interventions *GREAT* undertakes in partnership with Government and market actors, will be significantly more effective if these are tailored to the needs identified, and the outcomes possible. Table 10 outlines the indicative activities and partners that may be engaged to deliver *GREAT* outcomes under Objective 3. Again, work will be progressive and needs-based but will commence with a mapping of local, regional and national policies that influence inclusive economic opportunity for women in Lào Cai and Sơn La.

Table 10: Indicative outcomes, partners and activities to deliver Objective 3.

Outcomes (preliminary)	Partner	Indicative Partnership Activities
Government has a better appreciation of the role that business and communities can play in helping formulate economic policy and plans	Business Research agencies CSOs Business councils PPCs DARD DOLISA DCST Private sector enterprises SOEs Social Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-based research on the constraints on inclusive business practice; Provincial and regional agriculture, tourism, PSD, and gender forums, events and round-tables²⁹; Policy training;
There is clear evidence for the economic and social benefits of interventions that increase women's equitable participation in the tourism and agriculture sectors	Business councils Private sector enterprises CSOs SOEs Social Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evidence-based research on the constraints on inclusive business practice Provincial and regional agriculture, tourism, PSD, and

²⁹ For example, in 2017 Lào Cai (and other north-west provinces) will host the National Tourism Forum. While the EU (through its *Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Program*) will be a key player, Australia may also have a relevant role.

Outcomes (preliminary)	Partner	Indicative Partnership Activities
	Women's organisations Women's Union NGOs	gender forums, events and round-tables.
There is increased consensus on the areas of policy or service delivery that could be improved to ensure more inclusive growth at the commune, district and provincial levels	PPC DOLISA DPI DOF Business councils Private sector enterprises CSOs SOEs Social Enterprises ESRTCDP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provincial and regional agriculture, tourism, PSD, and gender forums, events and round-tables³⁰; Increased opportunity taken for dialogue, networking and sector review; Advocacy and policy training; Specific policy/guideline/compliance support³⁰; Joint review of plans, policies and implementation guidelines; Evidence-based fact sheets regarding the constraining/enhancing influence of policy on inclusive growth.
There is increased adoption of improved policy, implementation guidelines plans and services at the commune, district and provincial levels	PPC DOLISA DPI DOF Business councils Private sector enterprises SOEs Social Enterprises Social Enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication of successful approaches both locally and more widely, including support for cross-visits between Provinces and regions, where advantageous; Improved information sharing and networks; Case studies of positive policy or implementation guidelines; Establishing and tracking the indicators of improved performance (e.g. similar to PCI).
Key stakeholders will influence the formulation of better national policies and regulations based on experience.	PPC, DPI, DARD and DOLISA Private Sector CSOs MPI MARD MOLISA CEMA DFAT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assistance to Provincial Government Agencies, the Private Sector and Community Organisations to advocate for improved national policies Evidence based research and analysis in support of the above

Objective 3 activities are expected to become more substantive over time. Evidence from policy initiatives shows that policy change is more robust, sustainable and relevant where it emerges from ongoing trust, relationship and dialogue between key actors. *GREAT*'s role will be to support these networks and improve the evidence base that feeds into their discussions. Support will include improved capacity for oversight, analysis, policy formulation, advocacy and creating demand to ensure accountability. *GREAT*'s approach will be to assist grass-roots agencies and stakeholders to understand the opportunities and constraints of local, regional and national policies, share experiences and understanding, and, in consultation with DFAT, assist stakeholders to advocate for changes at all levels based on evidence of what works. *GREAT*'s activities (particularly those with national implications) needs to inform, and be influenced by, DFAT's other activities that operate at national level (e.g. WB partnership, IIW) as well as ongoing policy dialogue. Over its five years, *GREAT* expects to fund over 20 partnerships totalling approximately \$3.5m.

³⁰ For example, DFAT's Market Development Facility in Fiji funded seed importers to work in partnership with Government Quarantine to develop new policies on the import of seed; MDF also funded manufacturers to work with the tax department on concessions for re-exported goods.

In summary, the deliverables expected for Objective 3 include:

1. A clear understanding of the business cases likely to drive gender equitable and inclusive growth;
2. Evidence-based fact sheets outlining the policy and governance opportunities that can support inclusive growth;
3. Improved local capacity, both overall and particularly for women, in sector governance, planning and decision-making;
4. Increased representation of women in governance and decision-making;
5. More gender sensitive and more timely service delivery by Government; and
6. Improved policy based on a clear evidence base.

6.3 Innovation

The issues that *GREAT* 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, many of which already feature in the design and tender document. There are, however, other ideas that the implementation team might find useful, or that might inspire them as opportunity arises (Annex 10), the point being not that any particular idea is taken forward, but that the program is imbued with a spirit of innovation that allows the team to test sensible, sensitive ideas, even when associated with an element of risk.

The design team's preliminary ideas can be categorised according to issue:

1. **Attitudes to gender:**

A foreseeable dimension of *GREAT*'s work will be its contribution to an affirming and up-to-date representation of the capacity for change in rural and ethnic minority communities. The need to promote positive examples, and inspire a revision of prejudicial attitudes, will be implicit to *GREAT*'s work. Some vibrant, experiential ways of doing this might include:

 - a. Harnessing the power of art to change ideas and mindsets;
 - b. Highlighting of positive and modern portrayals on popular television channels of young ethnic minority women and men (as professionals, students, workers and public figures);
 - c. Linking with the Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi in the provision of modern, gender equitable representations of ethnic minority women and men.
2. **Novel linkages:**
 - a. Consider incentives needed for a telecommunications firm to provide smart phones to rural households, thereby allowing them to have instant access to current market information and market networks.
 - b. The hosting of placements of New Colombo Plan scholars and *Australian Volunteers for International Development* (AVIDs).
 - c. The application of a nutritional lens to any new value chain to ensure that nutritional outcomes are maximised.
 - d. An exploration of market links (for both agriculture and tourism) between women-led cooperatives in the north-west region and restaurants, hotel chains, gift shops and other relevant outlets for goods and services in Hanoi and other major cities.
 - e. The sponsoring/ nurturing of ethnic women to enter hospitality, catering and tourism training schools. *GREAT* could also take advantage of Australia Awards linkages, such as the alumnus who currently lectures at a tourism training college in Lào Cai, and has regular contact with prospective employers in the sector.
3. **Communications, including public diplomacy:**
 - a. *GREAT* could exploit the potential of Facebook and other social media as low-cost alternatives to more traditional ways of establishing market linkages.
 - b. *GREAT* could inaugurate an Australian Government award - with the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Ambassador as patron - for businesses that significantly further the economic engagement of women in the north-west. It could likewise introduce similar recognition of Australia-based companies operating in Vietnam who have channelled their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets to women in the north-west.
4. **Knowledge creation and learning:**
 - a. Ethnic minority women should be engaged as co-researchers into issues such as the community-based tourism potential of a given commune, or the ways in which 'farm gate' suppliers could more satisfyingly interact with traders. Such engagement would result in manifold benefits in terms of *GREAT*'s depth of understanding, and the appropriateness of its subsequent recommendations.
 - b. Given the possibility of a ten (five + five) year timeframe, the program could record the gradual changes occurring in the lives of a cohort of women. Depending on resources, this could be akin to the

- longitudinal ‘Seven Up’ UK television series; or it could make use of PhotoVoice³¹ or Participatory Video techniques in which the women provide their own narrations of the changes they are experiencing.
- c. The creation of pithy, short ‘infographic’ videos as a complement to the written annual reports.

6.4 Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Progressing gender equality and social inclusion is a complex undertaking due factors such as:

- Incomplete or contradictory knowledge;
- The sheer number of people and opinions involved – in a real sense everybody is involved, and everybody has an opinion, not all of them positive; and
- The way these issues are interconnected with, and hampered by other constraints.

Hence if it is to deliver lasting impacts, the *GREAT* program will need to be flexible, innovative and adaptive. Adaptive programs are, by definition, programs that:

- Consider innovative and improved approaches to data collection (e.g. ICT and other distributed models) and assessment;
- Invest in the continuous generation of evidence and analysis;
- Actively reflect on the implications of the emerging evidence;
- Adapt the program to incorporate an ever-deepening understanding of its complex environment, and the on-the-ground experience of what works (and what doesn’t work) within its context; and
- Contribute both evidence and learning to the development community in Vietnam and elsewhere, so that the reputation and profile of *GREAT* and Australia’s aid program is enhanced.

Because of *GREAT*’s need to incorporate continuous learning on multiple themes across multiple sites, a robust monitoring, evaluation, learning and research (MERL) approach will be critical to its success.

There are a number of frameworks already available to assist with monitoring and evaluation of Women’s Economic Empowerment programs. As a basis for *GREAT*’s Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning Framework, the design team has drawn on the DFAT guidelines on gender equality and women’s economic empowerment (DFAT, 2015), as well as on the considerable experience of the Australian Market Development Facility, particularly their Result Management approach (MDF, 2015) and their WEE Framework (MDF, 2015). This section summarises the major features of the MERL Framework while Annex 4 provides a more detailed description. Furthermore, the M&E system should aim to build capacity and align with Vietnam Government’s own systems (which use different terminology than DFAT), to ensure buy-in and sustainability and avoid confusion. The Managing Contractor must develop a final MERL Framework during the inception period of *GREAT*, to ensure that it is sufficiently holistic and practical. This MERL Framework must be regularly reviewed and updated throughout *GREAT*.

6.4.1 Select indicators that are robust, relevant and relatively few

Although the program will learn and adapt throughout its life, there are a number of ‘**bedrock**’ indicators underpinning *GREAT*’s higher-level outcomes and impact, that 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 power to make and act on economic decisions.

GREAT’s bedrock indicators will be heavily informed by the WEE M&E frameworks developed by agencies such as DFAT, ICRW, IFPRI, DCED³², the United Nations, and a number of NGOs. These frameworks identify both key domains of change, and potential indicators. However, none of these frameworks or 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. It is also probable that different issues in different locations will need 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 (in a balance with household food security). In other contexts, the focus may be on the number and quality of employment opportunities available to women. It must also

³¹ <https://photovoice.org/>

³² International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW); International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI); Donor Committee for Enterprise Development (DCED).

be borne in mind that the reshaping of women's lives is sometimes concomitant with an increased risk of gender-based violence - a fact that will also need close monitoring.

Proportionality and selectivity: *GREAT's* emphasis on learning does not mean that 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 data?'
- 'Who will use this data?' and
- 'Why is this data important?'

Lastly, *GREAT*, in coordination with commune officials, will collect poverty and impact monitoring data that can be disaggregated by both gender and ethnic group.

6.4.2 Embedding research

In addition to the program's quantitative measures, the MERL Framework must also ensure a deep, qualitative understanding of exactly what, why and how changes are taking place. Embedded research should therefore be commissioned to produce life-of-program case studies across both provinces, and both sectors. The partners engaged for this research must be locally relevant, stable and committed entities whose experiences in the *GREAT* program will enhance and improve their ongoing services to the region and the nation. These groups must have the capacity to undertake participatory field work at regular intervals (e.g. quarterly), and should (where possible) include and train enumerators from the ethnic group being studied. This will significantly improve the quality and interpretation of the data received. In addition, the research team will need at least one member who is fluent in the local language(s).

The focus will be on capturing the information that will enable *GREAT* to record and understand important changes, particularly so that 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 likely bedrock (high-level) indicators, and a list of potential output and activity level indicators, are included as Annex 4.

6.4.3 Performance Oversight

The six-monthly TAG missions will coincide with (and benefit from) the generation of key M&E outputs, such as annual household case studies, and annual private sector development surveys. The TAG will draw on these M&E products to offer advice on improving the effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions. The TAG may also be called upon by DFAT to appraise the quality of the key program deliverables, and to study the likely consequences of emerging risks.

An independent mid-term review (MTR) will be commissioned to test the ongoing relevance of the *GREAT* design. This will be especially important given the program's dynamic and evolving context. The MTR team will be led by an evaluation specialist, and supported by relevant technical and context specialists. The focus will be strategic, will complement rather than duplicate the work of the TAG, and will particularly target high-level cross-cutting issues such as the likelihood of sustainability; the extent of gender empowerment; the extent of private sector development; medium-term economic prospects; ecological impacts etc.

GREAT's context necessitates that its Results Framework and its M&E Plan are not just flexible, but inform the refinement and evolution of the program as implementation progresses. In practice, this means that the M&E system must be internally reviewed and refined each year to ensure its ongoing relevance, and to verify the rigor and efficiency of the methods employed.

6.4.4 M&E Resourcing

In line with DFAT's M&E standards, *GREAT*'s investment in M&E will be in the order of five to seven per cent of program budget, and will cover:

- The M&E staff;
- The TAG;
- **Contracted enumerators/researchers:** trained individuals and/or local organisations engaged to carry out planned and ad hoc studies and surveys; and
- **Independent evaluators:** specialists engaged to conduct the key reviews commissioned by DFAT (such as mid-term and completion reviews), with a focus on relevance, sustainability and key cross-cutting themes.

The Managing Contractor must ensure that adequate resources and budget are allocated to the MERL process to ensure it drives a dynamic culture of learning across the *GREAT* program. Budget will also be allocated to support the appropriate communication and dissemination of M&E findings to a broader audience in Vietnam, including for policy advocacy and public diplomacy.

A deliverable during the Inception Phase will be a Results Framework and an M&E Plan that elaborate the methods proposed in this design, and refine the timing and focus of the key M&E products.

6.5 Sustainability

The sustainability of investments aimed at improving the economic empowerment of women, is a challenging area not just for Australia's aid program, but for governments and development partners more generally. In its pursuit of activities that are both effective and sustainable, *GREAT* will use DCED criteria to guide private sector development, and WEE principles to guide women's interventions.

Table 11 considers the sustainability of *GREAT* investments from the perspective shown in Figure 12, including the ways *GREAT* will address the issues involved. The achievement of sustainability is, however, a dynamic and evolutionary process. It is therefore inevitable that other risks and challenges to sustainability will arise over time.

Figure 12: Perspectives of *GREAT* sustainability



Table 11: *GREAT* mechanisms to address the different dimensions of sustainability

Sustainability Dimension	Key basis for sustainability	How <i>GREAT</i> will address this
Political economy and Policy	Vietnam's political economy, and the associated policy architecture for rural private sector development, must be supportive, comprehensive and responsive to its society, development	<i>GREAT</i> will be Australia's 'flagship program' for women's economic empowerment in Vietnam. It must proactively work with and through DFAT to inform dialogues that encompasses economic/trade diplomacy, public diplomacy and foreign policy. These interactions must complement

Sustainability Dimension	Key basis for sustainability	How GREAT will address this
	aspirations, and sovereign rights.	<p>other Australian initiatives and inform and substantiate Australia's policy positions, public profile, and diplomatic engagement with the Government of Vietnam.</p> <p>Evidence and learning from GREAT must build Australia's credibility as a partner who can engage with confidence and influence in development discussions.</p> <p>GREAT will, through its broad communications and its fostering of politically relevant representation, seek to bring about positive changes in the political economy. In particular, it will build an awareness of the importance of women's economic livelihoods, and gender equality.</p> <p>GREAT will support policy studies and advice that prioritises best practice, as exemplified by Markets for the Poor (M4P) principles.</p> <p>GREAT will transparently assess all policy implications, and build the evidence base for solid policy interventions.</p>
Technical	<p>Women must be sufficiently empowered to make informed choices from an expanded suite of appropriate options regarding their economic future.</p> <p>Locally relevant private sector actors must have the capacity to develop sound business cases.</p>	<p>GREAT's interventions for women will be based on the solid analysis of current gaps, and of appropriate responses to these.</p> <p>Integrated assessments of economic opportunity in the Provinces will ensure that options:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are technically feasible; • are culturally acceptable; • provide safe working conditions; and • are based on safe agricultural practice standards.
Economic	Ethnic populations in Vietnam must have sufficient income to escape poverty, and to reduce their current dependence on subsistence livelihoods.	<p>GREAT will increase the access of women who aspire to engage commercially to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • agricultural value chains that are viably linked to local, regional and national markets; and • opportunities to engage with the tourism sector through safe, rewarding and quality employment; and/or the supply of goods and services. <p>GREAT will build the business case within selected markets to stimulate crowding-in by the private sector, and to phase out the leading roles currently being played by the Government of Vietnam and NGOs.</p>
Institutional	Local level Government and sector leaders must take a more active role in sector governance and policy.	<p>GREAT's offices will be provincially-based, partly in order to strengthen the emerging Provincial structures responsible for planning, oversight and implementation of relevant policy.</p> <p>As constraints to the enabling environment are identified, GREAT will work with industry leaders to build the evidence base for sound policy changes, and then support their advocacy for change.</p>
Skills	There must be sufficient skills and commitment within Government, the Private Sector and Communities to sustainably deliver economic opportunity.	<p>GREAT activities will specifically focus on embedding the skills necessary for the actions of locally relevant partners, commercial farmer groups, and market relationships to be sustainable.</p> <p>'Locally relevant partners' will include local Government</p>

Sustainability Dimension	Key basis for sustainability	How GREAT will address this
		agencies such as: DARD, DOTSA, DOLISA and CEM. GREAT will provide training and mentoring to assist these agencies' planning, implementation, oversight, knowledge and skills in areas that are relevant to GREAT's focuses.
Environmental	Exploitation of local resources/ environments by women entrepreneurs or other actors in either the private or the public sectors must not occur.	In keeping with Government of Vietnam decrees and laws, GREAT will undertake initial environmental examination (IEEs) of all activities, as well as impact assessments of those activities deemed to be either moderate or high risk. The need for climate change adaptability will be integrated into all GREAT activities, the aim being to reduce the impact of climate variability on food production and economic return.
Social	The necessary mechanisms must be in place to help communities capture maximum benefits, while at the same time safeguarding them from any negative social impacts.	It is fundamental to GREAT's aim to ensure that women and youth have stronger advocacy, equity and opportunity in economic roles. GREAT will participate with local authorities and communities to ensure that all actions are culturally and socially sensitive/ appropriate. GREAT's monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL) system, specifically monitors for unintended consequences, especially those related to child labour, human trafficking, and gender based-violence.

In particular, GREAT must ensure that it does not create a dependence on Australian-funded time-bound technical capacity and skills. Active steps must therefore be undertaken to ensure that local institutions and businesses have the necessary capacity and skills for their work to be sustainable. Hence in its first year, GREAT will develop a Capacity Building Plan that outlines:

- principles and approaches to the sustainable capacity development of government, private sector and civil society partners;
- methods for assessing the existing capacity of partners;
- methods of capacity building appropriate to each partner - for instance, GREAT's strengthening the skills of Provincial officers will be different to the support it will give to emerging private sector actors;
- appropriate strategies for transitioning the responsibility for activities to the partners themselves;
- a detailed sequence of the program's use of international and national specialist personnel; and
- the mentoring strategies that will ensure the sustainable transfer of skills within the program team itself.

As always, some areas of sustainability will be impacted by circumstances outside of the program's control. Yet the intersection between political aspirations for growth, community desire for caution, and the establishment of a stable investment environment can only be safely traversed through accommodation within the political economy. GREAT must therefore remain sensitive to diverse influences, while at the same time integrating these influences into its risk mitigation and M&E Plans, and responding accordingly.

Central to GREAT's sustainability will be its phased withdrawal of assistance as communities and partners demonstrate emerging skills and competencies. There is a need then for GREAT to develop assessments of partner competency in critical areas, and to build these into both its M&E Plan, and its exit strategy for each community. These assessments therefore need to be part of the upfront development of the Results Chains expected for each intervention. This is also called for by the DCED guidelines for intervention Results Chains, which specifically state that targets not only apply to deliverables, but to partner competencies.

6.6 Gender Equality

In order to be efficient and effective in its core mission, *GREAT* must:

- be sensitive to the current roles of women, men, girls and boys, and their statuses within the chosen sectors,
- find ways to improve current imbalances in gender equity within the chosen sectors,
- find ways to inspire and empower women and older girls, both socially and economically.

Significant analysis has already been undertaken of the opportunities available to *GREAT* to promote women's economic empowerment (Annex 5), including their:

- economic advancement through increased incomes;
- access to opportunities and life chances, such as skills development and job openings;
- access to assets, services, and the support needed to advance economically;
- increased decision-making authority in different spheres, including in household finances; and
- attainment of workloads that manageably balance their reproductive, productive and community roles.

GREAT's approach addresses gender equality and women's economic empowerment in six areas. These are:

1. **Selection Criteria:** Criteria for Province, Value Chains and Community selection all integrate solid gender assessments;
2. **Gender Analysis:** A detailed field-based gender analysis will help *GREAT* define and refine its interventions through a deeper understanding of the perspectives and roles of women, men, boys and girls. This analysis will:
 - a. consider each socio-cultural group and Province;
 - b. consider the specific roles of senior women and young women;
 - c. be disaggregated to a household group level;
 - d. be used in the identification, design and implementation of all *GREAT*'s community-specific activities.
3. **Engagement:** All activities will integrate gender principles and approaches (be gender accommodating), while some activities across key value chains will be truly transformative for women (gender transformative). All activity planning must also identify if/in what ways an activity may reduce or change gender asymmetries within the household. Potentially negative consequences must be identified, along with strategies to prevent these occurring.
4. **Delivery:** Delivery will incorporate gender issues in the following ways:
 - a. The *GREAT* team will include staff with skills in Gender and Inclusive Development, to lead the delivery of Objective 1. These staff will also work across the program to assist and coach the team to integrate gender into all activities. Within each Province a gender specialist should work as part of the team to help plan and manage the local and business partnerships under Objective 1 and 2, and assist Government officers to improve the gender sensitivity of local policy and service delivery (Objective 3).
 - b. *GREAT* must ensure that qualified women are appointed to each Provincial office, and that women comprise at least half of the national team, with particular attention given to the selection of the national Provincial-based staff. It is expected that a proportion of *GREAT* staff will themselves come from ethnic minority groups.
 - c. In order that the *GREAT* Team and partners adequately understand and model gender equality in their work, the team will:
 - i. develop a Gender Framework to guide gender mainstreaming;
 - ii. undertake Team training and otherwise coach the teams on how to better integrate a gender perspective into all program activities³³;
 - iii. undertake collaborative reviews of the community selection process, the Engagement Strategy, the Annual Work Plans, and the community engagement activities.
 - d. Finally, *GREAT* will integrate with the Hanoi Post's gender activities, and actively participate in the established formal mechanisms that share gender learning between DFAT-funded programs.
5. **Outcomes and Evaluation:** The Results Chain and M&E Guidelines for each activity as well as for *GREAT* overall will not only specify the changes needed to achieve each Objective, but provide real time, gender sensitive, and gender and ethnicity disaggregated data³⁴ to drive learning.
6. Specific gender targets are also included in *GREAT*'s expected development outcomes, in appreciation of the essential and equal control that women should be given over household economic outcomes.

³³ Coaching is about facilitating teams to do the work themselves rather than leaving gender activities to gender specific staff.

³⁴ Understanding gender equality requires an understanding of both the sex and ethnicity dimensions

6.7 Inclusiveness

Clearly, if rural communities are to function equitably and peacefully, increased economic opportunity needs to be provided to all those who are marginalised. Target groups for specific economic outcomes therefore include not just women, but children, the aged, and people with disabilities - this last being an important, if largely unseen, segment of Vietnam's rural population. There is little indication given, however, of the type, nature and frequency of disability within rural communities in Vietnam in any previous work of Australia's aid program, Government of Vietnam or other development partners. *GREAT's* baseline assessments will therefore seek to ascertain the nature and frequency of disability within its target rural households, as an important first step to including people with disability into *GREAT's* activities. In the absence of reliable provincial-level data on disability, *GREAT* could operate under the assumption of 15% of the population living with a disability.³⁵

Heteronormativity is another dimension of inadvertent exclusion. Not everyone in *GREAT's* partner communities will be straight, nor will relationships necessarily conform to a specific conventional type. There is therefore a need for *GREAT* to be sensitive to LGBTQI people, and if necessary to make adjustments to the way it works to be more inclusive.

6.8 Risk Management

Risk management is essential for *GREAT's* implementation, and integral to its Results Framework and M&E Plan. The Managing Contractor will develop a Risk Management Plan during inception, and include the tracking of key risks to support learning, and to enable more meaningful interpretation of program performance data.

A preliminary risk matrix, with associated mitigation measures, is outlined in Annex 1, the more outstanding of the risks being listed below in an effort to provide some insight into the design team's current thinking.

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

- *GREAT'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.

Other risks that will require monitoring and active management, include:

- The possibility that meaningful opportunities for remote or ethnic women are so limited, these can only drive WEE for very few 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/ ongoing change.
- Administrative and bureaucratic requirements slow the program's momentum to the point of ineffectiveness.
- Heavy donor funding swamps the few opportunities for effective private sector development identified by the program.
- The management consortium fails to focus on dynamic partnerships that can drive learning and planning, but 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 due to the significant collapse of the local economies.
- Failures in cross-sector coordination (especially within government agencies) weaken the policy enabling environment.

A range of basic assumptions underpinning *GREAT's* approach would also constitute risks if these were found to be mistaken (see Figure 6). It is therefore important for *GREAT's* Results Framework and M&E Plan to specifically target such assumptions.

³⁵ WHO/ World Bank. World Report on Disability. 2011

Of course, no risk assessment can ever be complete, and thus the identification and assessment of emerging risks – and strategies for managing emerging risks – needs to be an ongoing task during implementation. The design therefore includes specific activities that assess, monitor and review program risks in an ongoing manner, including:

- its detailed risk assessment matrix (with appropriate mitigation strategies);
- the allocation of appropriate resources to the monitoring and reporting of identified and emerging risks; and
- a requirement for both *GREAT* and the Hanoi Post staff to regularly review/update the risk profile.

6.9 Safeguards

The safeguard assessments already completed (Annex 2) indicate a low risk of adverse impacts on child protection and displacement, and a low to moderate risk for the environment (depending on which specific value chains are chosen). Procedures are in place to monitor these safeguards, both for the program as a whole, and specifically for each intervention.

Because *GREAT*'s specific activities in the chosen Provinces are not yet defined, certain potential environmental impacts are listed in Annex 2 as 'not sure'. Once these activities and geographical areas have been specified during the inception period, however, an initial environmental examination (IEE) will be undertaken, which in some cases may highlight the need for a more formal Environmental Impact Assessment.

Annex 1 Investment Risks

	Event/Impact	Mitigation / Treatment	Responsibility	Rating after mitigation		
				Likelihood	Consequence	Rating
Operating environment	Private sector in a transitioning market economy is too constrained or unwilling to engage to address women's empowerment.	<i>GREAT</i> will carefully analyse the economy at start-up. Indications from other players are that the Private Sector is active and willing to engage. Approach discussions from a business rather than a rights perspective to build the business incentives.	<i>GREAT</i> management and team	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate
	Access to productive land is a binding constraint for households or for businesses. Only those women with clear access to land are able to engage in the program.	Analyse land distribution and LURCs during inception phase; understand the relationship between access to land and economic opportunity; choose value chains and partnerships accordingly including those that engage women through labour, rather than production. If a key issue, consider partnering with a group with skills in land mobilisation.	<i>GREAT</i> management	Possible	Minor	Moderate
	Border with China closed to cross-border trade; conflict with China disrupts normal life in Son La and Lào Cai.	Monitor the situation; avoid a portfolio entirely comprised of value chains which are highly sensitive to events in China.	<i>GREAT</i> management. DFAT Post	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate
	<i>GREAT</i> supports success in business and households – but its work does not change power relations or capture the interest of policy makers or influential businesses.	Political economy analysis (PEA) to be conducted; refreshed regularly. Action points resulting from the PEA to include pro-active engagement with influential figures in market developments. Regular communications and promotion of economic options for women. Link <i>GREAT</i> to National Targeted Programs (NTPs) and National Action Plan on Gender Equality (2016-2020) as implementation of GES is mandate of politicians/ government.	Team Leader, with DFAT support	Unlikely	Minor	Low
	<i>GREAT</i> contributes to or is associated with unintended negative consequences such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> trafficking and/or child protection issues more inequality between ethnic groups 	Draft an <i>GREAT</i> child protection policy during the inception period; train any staff who may have contact with under-18s. Monitor trafficking trends and possible links to <i>GREAT</i> activities (through contacts in the Women's Union, local government, NGOs and community researchers). Disaggregate all monitoring data by ethnicity.	<i>GREAT</i> management	Unlikely	Negligible	Low
	Wages in China are consistently higher than those in the project sites, so large numbers of women (and men) choose to cross the border to earn more cash	Include short-term migration strategies when consulting in communities, and when analysing and identifying <i>GREAT</i> strategies.	<i>GREAT</i> management	Possible	Negligible	Low
	Products from China exported to Vietnam are more competitive than from producers in <i>GREAT</i> areas	Monitor relative prices; take this factor into consideration when selecting value chains and sectors	<i>GREAT</i> management	Unlikely	Negligible	Low

	Event/Impact	Mitigation / Treatment	Responsibility	L	C	R
Management	DFAT appetite for 'quick wins' eclipses their ability to accommodate the challenging reality that some aspects of the program will realise slower progress; and ongoing learning-by-doing will mean that some elements of the program will need to be abandoned or adjusted.	Current DFAT team understand the long-term nature of commitment required to see impact. Ensure regular communication stresses challenges and openly discusses DFAT expectations. Carefully brief new DFAT officials early in their appointments; ensure the Managing Contractor is kept in touch with DFAT's evolving policy. Good-quality MERL and sufficient policy linkages provide DFAT with evidence base required to agree a second phase (and, presumably, more higher-level outcomes) Include some particularly promising partnerships in portfolio early on, to demonstrate potential and deliver public diplomacy. Ensure communications are well funded in the program.	DFAT GREAT management	Possible	Negligible	Low
	Party/Government intervention and control over the program prevents a competitive private sector from emerging and supports vested interests.	Clearly outline the role of the Steering Committee and the principles of the program. Undertake a careful assessment of the political economy around each investment and the scope for elite capture and anti-competitive impacts. Rely on the Managing Contractor to independently assess proposed partnerships. Establish a review/complaints mechanisms involving the PPC, private sector and DFAT in each Province to assess any evidence of elite capture or anti-competitive behaviour. Withdraw from partnerships where inappropriate activity is proven.	GREAT Management; DFAT; Steering Committee.	Possible	Moderate	High
	Delays in developing new partnerships in the target provinces with companies if any necessary local authority approvals are not forthcoming	Work closely with the PMU to ensure broad awareness and departments who are central to approvals are involved and consulted at an early stage.	GREAT Management PMU	Possible	Minor	Low
	GREAT becomes too fragmented pursuing too many ideas concurrently or being insufficiently strategic in its selection of partners.	Understand all the options available and clearly recommend a phased and strategic approach. Include the proposed approaches in the annual work plan and discuss widely with DFAT and the GREAT steering committee. Establish partnerships with those groups best placed to deliver the strategic outcomes. Monitor the program carefully and ensure sufficient resources (time, funding and partnerships) are in place to meaningfully address work plan activities.	GREAT Management DFAT GREAT Steering Committee	Possible	Moderate	High
	Sound programming in this space will take a lot of consultation; progress is unlikely to be fast. As a result, burn rate for funds may be lower than DFAT would like.	Relatively easily addressed but needs close monitoring, good communication with DFAT, and ability to spend relatively quickly on a few high-value activities if burn rate too slow. (Example could be research or exchange visits.) DFAT and GREAT maintain a clear focus on learning and long-term results rather than dogged short-term delivery.	DFAT GREAT Management	Possible	Negligible	Low
	The management consortium fails to achieve a dynamic partnership that drives learning and planning. Instead it focuses on contractual and output based relationships.	Careful identification of consortium partners; Significant resources for 'partnership facilitation' with key partners; Capacity to engage a third party facilitator if needed; Active DFAT stewardship designed into the program which helps confer a clear vision; significant investment in team building; regular shared learning events and active engagement across the consortium in decision-making	GREAT management Consortium partners DFAT	Possible	Moderate	High

Risk Area	Event/Impact	Mitigation / Treatment	Responsibility	Rating after mitigation		
				Likelihood	Consequence Rating	
Results	Meaningful opportunities for remote, ethnic minority women are extremely limited; ethnic women are slow to engage because of high levels of risk aversion; the program is only able to drive WEE for a small number of women.	Clearly communicate that the program will be able to do little for those at the extreme margins. Opportunities for more inaccessible or disengaged communities will take longer – particularly for those groups whose priority may be better access to basic education, health care, and social assistance. Undertake quality research during inception – focus on the parts of the market economy which offer the most promise for ethnic minority women. Start by focusing on quality engagement and models, rather than seeking quantity at the outset. Demonstrate models of successful engagement; Identify, understand and communicate instances of positive deviance. Work with partners to communicate success.	GREAT management	Possible	Minor	Moderate
	GREAT exacerbates or fails to shift the inequality status quo by choosing people who have the near-to-market potential to engage with the economic focus of the program, while the more remote or ethnically excluded still have few options.	Inception research and scenario planning Clear communication of progressive nature of engagement; Ensure expectations for significant normative change are framed within a four year plus horizon.	GREAT management	Possible	Minor	Moderate
	Fundamental gender norms are so entrenched that GREAT cannot make purposeful change to social and psychological perceptions. Instead we move economic empowerment without changing norms	At regular junctures, ask ‘How are women benefiting beyond access?’ Dimension of women’s agency must be included – or at least considered - in each partnership. Agency and other psycho-social dimensions of empowerment may be slower to emerge than economic dimensions – but it will be monitored. Monitoring tools will need to be designed to discern incremental changes in social norms and agency; and to assess significance, trends, and attribution.	GREAT management	Likely	Moderate	High
	Time poverty, exhaustion, or loss of social capital result from women’s economic gains and increased integration into markets	Close monitoring for unintended consequences by embedded researchers	MERL team; commissioned research	Rare	Minor	Minor
Safeguards	Domestic violence can be an unintended consequence of WEE programs (not common, but possible).	Researchers and community workers will receive training about what questions are appropriate and what are not. Perceptions of personal safety could be included in community research. Protocols and training will be developed on how to handle suspected or known cases of abuse.	GREAT leadership	Rare	Moderate	Moderate
	Tourism activities may be associated with sexual exploitation, paedophilia or increased AIDS risks.	Tourism activities must proactively mitigate the likelihood of seedier or illegal activities increasing and train staff to prevent these issues from arising	Managing Contractor and Consortium members	Unlikely	Minor	Minor

Risk Area	Event/Impact	Mitigation / Treatment	Responsibility	Rating after mitigation		
				Likelihood	Consequence	Rating
	Child protection/ Child labour – some under-18 girls and boys will be involved in appropriate activities, and GREAT staff or consultants may stay in communities.	Project staff, researchers and key delivery partners will receive child protection training. The project will have a child protection policy. (Images, contact, etc.) Close monitoring of expectations for children.	GREAT leadership	Rare	Moderate	Moderate
	Environmental risks – further degradation of marginal lands results from intensified economic activity by communities or businesses proposed practices.	(As relevant) Each potential investment or partnership will include environmental screening – e.g. if the maize value chain were under consideration then intensification within the Son La hydroelectric catchment should raise alarms given the major soil erosion and degradation already associated with this.	GREAT leadership	Unlikely	Minor	Low
	Farmers take on new crops or technologies; these crops fail.	GREAT must carefully analyse risks and inform all partners (business and producers). Choice must be free, informed and involve all parties. Businesses will be encouraged to consider some form of purchase guarantee and/or input loan/support for any new or non-traditional enterprise. GREAT to consider adopting its own underwriting or compensation policy, possibly similar to ACIAR's.	GREAT leadership	Unlikely	Moderate	Moderate
Fraud/Fiduciary	Partners engaged in the program, or GREAT staff act fraudulently.	Ensure all employment and partnership agreements clearly specify Australia's zero tolerance of fraud and the immediate consequences of termination and legal action. Ensure accounting, procurement and audit procedures comply or exceed the standards. Ensure all partnerships involve cost sharing by the partner agency.	GREAT finance team; TL	Rare	Moderate	Moderate
Reputation	GREAT does not focus on what has been identified as the root causes of ethnic development e.g. education, nutrition and WASH.	Need to be seen that GREAT: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> complements a core Government role, provides opportunities for graduation - a vision for development; and provides grant aid vs loan, and should not be duplicating Government roles. 	GREAT leadership and DFAT	Low	Minor	Low
	Australia's contribution and 'brand' are not appropriately reflected given the large number of partners involved.	The Managing Contractor must stipulate in their Communication Plan and each Partnership agreement an appropriate reflection of the Australian contribution and brand. This must be actively monitored and assessed.	Managing Contractor	Low	Minor	Low
Partner relations	The availability of quality partners and staff for the program constrains its ability to dynamically engage – particularly in Son La, where there are few NGOs	Early evidence shows strong potential candidates in business, social enterprises and NGOs; Undertake a partner/institutional survey prior to mobilisation; Monitor partner performance; Provide training and support in areas of weakness.	GREAT leadership	Low	Minor	Low

Risk Area	Event/Impact	Mitigation / Treatment	Responsibility	Rating after mitigation		
				Likelihood	Consequence	Rating
	An inexperienced Managing Contractor causes implementation delays and alienates partners.	Careful tendering identifies a MC who is committed to close partnerships, building Australia's profile and timely implementation.	DFAT Tender Process	Low	Moderate	Moderate
	Excessive control from provincial and local government, and heavy donor funding, makes the entire process slow and ineffective and swamps with bureaucracy the few opportunities that are identified by the program for effective PS development.	A conscious balance to be struck between careful safeguarding donor funds, and providing innovative, responsive support to the private sector. Keep sector engagement broad so that the program can easily disengage from segments should other investments become too distorting.	GREAT leadership, in close consultation with DFAT	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
	GREAT inadvertently distorts the market, by providing support to certain parts of value chains, by advising some businesses but not others.	Ensure GREAT investment is balanced, catalytic and strongly leveraged with business co-contribution. Ensure investments stimulate new opportunities or new ways of doing things. Ensure all potential players have the opportunity to discuss their plans.	GREAT management	Low	Low	Low
Other	Materialist and economic incentives may not be drivers for some ethnic minorities.	First principle is to consult and analyse what people want to achieve. Some women may not aspire to economic empowerment. Issues such as nutrition or child health can (hopefully) be referred to other more relevant programs, including those led by Government.	GREAT leadership and M&E specialists and community development specialists	Low	Low	Low
Overall Risk Rating						Moderate

Annex 2 Investment Safeguards Checklist

	Yes	No	Not Sure
Child protection			
Is the investment likely to involve contact with or access to children (0-18 years old) due to the nature of the activity or the working environment?	Yes		
Will the investment involve personnel working with children?		No	
Displacement and resettlement			
Does the investment involve construction on: exclusion from: or repurposing of land that is occupied, accessed to generate livelihoods or of cultural or traditional importance?		No	
Does the investment's success depend on other development activities that may involve construction on; exclusion from; or repurposing of land that is occupied, accessed to generate livelihoods; or of cultural or traditional importance?		No	
Does the investment involve planning for, advising on or designing the economic or physical displacement of people to make way for infrastructure development, disaster risk reduction or exclusion of the local population from land accessed to generate livelihoods?		No	
Environment			
Will the investment support any of the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • medium to large-scale infrastructure such as roads, bridges, railways, ports, infrastructure for energy generation; or • development of irrigation and drainage, diversion of water; or • land clearing, intensification of land use; or • hazardous materials and wastes; or • activity in mining, energy, forestry, fisheries, water supply, urban development, transport, tourism or manufacturing sectors? 		No	
Will the investment support any of the following? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • small to medium scale infrastructure such as localised water supply and/or sanitation infrastructure; irrigation and drainage; rural electrification, rural roads; or • construction/renovation/refurbishment/demolition of any building for example: schools, hospitals or public buildings; or • localised use of natural resources, including small-scale water diversion, agriculture, or other types of land-use change? 	Yes		
Will the investment contribute to, directly or indirectly, or facilitate, activities such as those listed above, including through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • trust funds, procurement facilities; or 	Yes		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • co-financing contributions; or • support for planning, change to regulatory frameworks, technical advice, training or; • applied research? 			
Has an environmental review of the proposed investment already been, or will be completed by an implementing partner or donor?	Yes – will be in inception		
Does this investment need to meet any national environmental standards or requirements?	Yes		

Annex 3 NOT PROVIDED

Annex 4 Monitoring, Evaluation Research and Learning

Introduction

This annex provides *GREAT* guidance on monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL). This annex also includes an initial 'light touch' theory of change, which is intended to provide a starting point for the program implementation team. During the inception period, the team will in turn generate their own, much more detailed, theory of change and results framework.

The guidance in this annex is informed by DFAT's own M&E guidance documents (DFAT, 2014)³⁶, and WEE M&E technical papers from the International Centre for Research on Women, the Donor Committee for Enterprise Development, the UN Foundation, the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative, and the Overseas Development Institute. A selection of references is listed at the end of this annex.

Context and 'first principles'

A robust M&E system plays an important role in any development intervention. If working well, an M&E system will provide information on whether a program is on track, and the extent to which anticipated changes in people's lives are actually happening (or are likely to happen). *GREAT*'s MERL system will need to deliver this information – and much more. It is important to note up front that *GREAT*'s MERL obligations will be considerably more challenging than in a relatively straightforward project, such as building a bridge or training a cadre of nurses.

A list of first principles, below, is a reflection of the ambitious nature of the project, and the contexts in which it will be implemented.

An effective MERL system for *GREAT* will:

- **Expect complexity.** 'Women's economic empowerment' is neither universally defined nor easily measured. Pathways to empowerment will be multiple, unpredictable, non-linear, and not always well-understood. Relationships between different dimensions of empowerment will not always be clear. The Managing Contractor will need to invest team time in establishing a common vision of 'women's economic empowerment' for the NW of Vietnam, and building a shared picture of how change is likely to happen in communities and in the private sector.
- **Listen to and heed women's voices:** Before setting project indicators for agency, access, and economic empowerment, *GREAT* must explore carefully the values and aspirations of the likely (diverse) women whom *GREAT* directly engages with. These aspirations are likely to be quite different in different cultural contexts, and will take skill, trust and time to understand. Through this understanding, the program's key indicators of change will be grounded on women's views and experience. (What does 'more equitable division of labour' or 'a more reliable market' mean in one ethnic group in a particular agro-economic zone? Or to younger or older women? And what do the same concepts mean in a different cultural and livelihood context?) Principles from participatory M&E will be particularly relevant for *GREAT*.
- **... and don't forget to listen to men and boys.** Their views on women's capabilities and roles are an essential element of economic empowerment, and their support is critical to the creation of an environment that encourages women. And it is expected that men will be both direct and indirect beneficiaries of some *GREAT*'s activities. The MERL system will need to capture some aspects of men and boys' views and experiences.
- **Embrace - and seek to understand - diversity:** The program will be working across a wide range of communities and markets, with women and men, with younger and older women, and with distinct cultures - across which 'empowerment' is likely to have different meanings. For many of the *GREAT*'s indicators, the data will need to be disaggregated not only by sex and age, but **also by ethnic group**. Applying this 'double diversity lens' will require more MERL resources than would a program delivered to a homogeneous ethnic group.
- **Assess economic changes at multiple levels:** *GREAT* will need to track changes occurring in women's lives, in households, in individual businesses, in value chains, and in sectors. In addition, data collected from men will be important in forming a picture of the extent to which gaps between men and women are closing.
- Use monitoring, research and learning to **identify approaches that are not working early – then learn and adapt.** Adaptive programs are, by definition, programs that: invest in the continuous generation of evidence and analysis; actively reflect on implications of the emerging evidence; and adapt the program to incorporate an ever-

³⁶DFAT's M&E Standards (June 2014); Gender equality and women's empowerment in DFAT's Aid Program Good Practice Note (March 2015); Gender Equality and WEE in Agriculture (February 2015); detailed informal reflections from senior DFAT Hanoi results advisor (January 2016).

deepening understanding of complex environments based on experience of what works and what does not work in that context. The MERL system must produce information in formats and frequencies that enable decision makers to adapt quickly.

What will GREAT measure? Examples of likely outcomes and indicators

The program logic statements drafted for this design document will be refined by the implementation team during the inception period. (See draft theory of change Figure 6 on page18) Revisions to the draft program logic will be informed by research on value chains and market systems, and on close consultation with ethnic minority women and the communities in which they live. The precise words in the program logic and the targets and indicators selected will be adjusted as the program evolves - but the essence of GREAT's objectives will remain the same: women's economic empowerment. In contrast to WEE projects with a narrow economic focus, GREAT will take a holistic approach to measuring empowerment.³⁷ Measurement of 'economic empowerment' in GREAT sites will require both economic indicators (access to productive resources) and psychosocial indicators (agency). Both qualitative and quantitative data will be necessary.

WEE Defined
"A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance *economically* and the *power* to make and act on economic decisions." (ICRW, 2011)

Some of the most significant, higher-level 'empowerment' impacts may take ten or more years to realise. This is particularly the case for changes in attitudes (individuals as well as households) and social norms. Establishing attribution for what causes those changes in attitudes, behaviours and norms is also a challenge. Difficult as it may be, measuring and understanding higher-level qualitative changes will be an important element of the MERL strategy. A key challenge for the GREAT will be to understanding the interaction between purely material changes (such as increases in income) and less tangible changes (such as confidence, intra-household power dynamics, autonomy and choice).

There are, however, some changes which do not take decades, and can be monitored with relatively straightforward quantitative indicators. The three tables below provide an indication of the types of measures and methods the GREAT implementation team should consider including in their MERL strategy. The list is indicative not prescriptive. Nor is it an exhaustive list. Further guidance on outcomes and indicators can be found in the resources listed at the end of this annex.

Particularly for a program of this nature, many of GREAT's success measures *should be identified and defined by women from a range of ethnic minority groups*. This participatory approach to M&E would also suggest that women are engaged in the periodic collection and (particularly) the analysis of GREAT's M&E data.³⁸ Rather than impose a universal – and potentially incorrect – definition of what 'economically empowered' means for ethnic minority women in Vietnam, GREAT should ensure that its results framework is as representative as possible of women's voices. Women (from different ethnic groups and livelihood systems) should be the judge of what it means to be 'empowered' in different domains, in their own context. They could be asked to define in locally-specific terms what it means to be empowered across a range of domains: production, resources, income, leadership, and time.³⁹

Indicators should contribute to a coherent story

GREAT will be implemented through a range of evolving 'partnerships' – these ensure sustainability as GREAT will act as a facilitator and not a primary actor in the market. These partnerships could include business/enterprise partnerships, social empowerment partnerships, advocacy partnerships, network partnerships or a combination of these. During inception, GREAT will develop a detailed ToC for its engagement; this ToC will be updated regularly during the life of the program. For each partnership a results chain will be developed (as per DCED standards) that is a part of the overall ToC, and a monitoring plan will be developed for each results chain. Ongoing assessments will be made regarding the achievement of each partnership, its contribution to anticipated change, and the potential to reach scale by catalysing systemic change.

Each results chain will have associated **sets of indicators that are logically linked**. Example:

³⁷ A recent systematic review covering 382 WEE evaluations showed that only 30% included non-economic measures. (Taylor and Perezniato, 2014.)

³⁸ The 'Ladder of Life' and 'Ladder of Power' research tools are examples of a participatory methods that have worked well in communities in northwest Vietnam. For a case study, see 'Gennovate: Enabling Gender Equality in Agricultural and Environmental Innovation; Institute for Social Development Studies and Biodiversity International', 2015. (Variations on the 'ladders of change' methodology used in a variety of settings, from the UK Forestry Commission to Ethiopia's Civil Society Support Programme)

³⁹ These five domains are taken from the Women's Empowerment in Agriculture framework. Each of the five domains is in turn comprised of a sub-index. The descriptors for whether someone is across the 'empowerment threshold' in each domain is set by local people at the beginning of a project.

1. Training in a new method of vegetable production and processing (input) provides a land-owning woman with new skills and an introduction to new networks (direct outcomes);
2. The woman entrepreneur is then able to sell to higher-value markets (intermediate outcome);
3. Higher sales volume and production efficiencies lead to bigger profits (intermediate outcome);
4. Which in turn contributes to the ability to invest in more productive technologies (another intermediate outcome);
5. Over time, she is able to have more influence over major household decisions, her household's livelihood is more secure and diverse, and she has higher expectations of her daughter's potential (all impact-level outcomes).

A different results chain would be developed for women in formal employment or in the tourism sector, for businesses and/or cooperatives.⁴⁰

Impact-level / final outcomes and indicators (indicative)			
These outcomes are <i>why</i> DFAT has committed to funding GREAT, the ultimate reason for the project. These high-level outcomes tend to be realised in the longer-term – some of them may take place beyond the lifetime of the project. These changes would be measured infrequently – perhaps only two or three times in ten years. GREAT would be one of many factors causing these changes. It is therefore appropriate to assess contribution rather than attribution at this level.			
Outcome	Sample indicator	Unit of analysis	Qualitative / Quantitative
Increases in asset ownership	Women's ownership and control of land, water, animals, machinery (rural), property Income or savings (urban women or wage earners).	Individual (off-farm/on=farm); household (off-farm; on farm); possibly small business	Quantitative and qualitative
More women with more options for high quality work	Off-farm employment rates. Rates of out=migration for work. remittances; Regularity / security of employment.	Women and men	Quantitative
Increases in business inclusiveness	Sex-disaggregated employment rates by sector Increase in Kinh and non-Kinh women represented as owners of small, medium and larger businesses (including as traders), and in business leadership	Businesses; individuals	Quantitative
More equitable gender roles and social norms	Men's / women's / girls' perceptions of 'appropriate' jobs for males and females. Change in share of (unpaid) domestic work performed by women and men. Change in gender and ethnic proportion in management or leadership positions. Gender segregation of male and female work. Gender segregation of ability to enter profitable jobs. Changes in aspirations for daughters over life of program	Household, community, businesses, authority/ elected bodies	Qualitative, with some quantitative
Increased self-confidence/ self-esteem (women)	Women's involvement in major household decisions i.e. large purchases (house, land, appliances), agricultural decisions. Social and business networks expanded and deepened. Increased representation and active participation of women in community meetings, including evidence of their interests being voiced and met Increased mobility of women within communities, including to markets	Women, men	Mostly qualitative, some quantitative
Market systems that are more inclusive	Change in gender equality within multiple segments of the market system (finance, planning, networks, informal rules, regulations, land, etc.).	Women, Men	Mostly quantitative

⁴⁰ The Cambodian Agricultural Value Chain Program (CAVAC), uses a market systems approach. CAVAC is an adaptive, learning-focused program that has used results chains and indicators in this way. See also 'Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: A Companion to A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment'. UN Foundation and Exxon Mobil, June 2015

Intermediate outcomes and indicators (indicative)			
The practice or behaviour change that results from the direct outcome (e.g. a change in business practices or a shift in the household division of labour). What is considered an intermediate outcome in one context might be considered an impact/ final outcome in another context.			
Outcome	Sample indicator	Unit of analysis	Qualitative / Quantitative
Safe and flexible working conditions in target businesses	Incidence of sexual harassment and unfair dismissal. Fair recruitment criteria (non-discriminatory on the basis of gender, ethnicity, etc.) Fair working conditions (wages, hours, entitlements) No. of businesses engaging with <i>GREAT</i> to promote women's waged employment	Businesses	Quantitative / qualitative
More effective, and more inclusive, common interest groups, cooperatives, and social enterprises.	Group representativeness. Extent to which women in groups influence decisions. Change in group productivity. group stability.	Producer groups	Qualitative and quantitative
More ethnic minority women employed in more responsible positions (could also be a final outcome)	Number of ethnic minority women employed. Pay grades and levels of seniority.	Women and men, businesses	Quantitative
Direct outcomes and indicators (indicative)			
These outcomes and indicators are most closely linked with the program's activities. These pick up the most immediate effects of specific interventions. Indicators at this level are particularly important for monitoring whether project activities are relevant and high quality.			
Outcome	Sample indicator	Unit of analysis	Qualitative / Quantitative
New knowledge, skills and productive assets acquired	Number of women aware of the importance of having a written contract Number of women with improved contract negotiation skills. Number of cooperatives with increased physical assets (storage facilities and/or reliable transport). Number of young women from specific ethnic groups who have completed hospitality or hotel management courses.	Women (disaggregated by ethnic group or location), some men Cooperatives or producer groups	Quantitative
New technologies effectively used (could also be an intermediate outcome)	Number of women and men farmers whose produce consistently meets VietGAP standards. Number of large businesses using human resource software that provides sex-disaggregated information.	Women (disaggregated by ethnic group or location). Some men Businesses	Qualitative and quantitative
New linkages established to potential producers/ suppliers/ employees (who are mostly ethnic minority women)	Number and quality of trade fairs, exchange visits, demonstrations. Number of farmers with real-time price information. Number of home-stay providers linked to Hanoi travel agents. New market linkages between provincial suppliers (within province/beyond)	Businesses Women and men	Qualitative and quantitative

Select indicators that are robust, relevant – and relatively few

Although the program will learn and adapt its activities and approaches throughout the life of the program, a number of **bedrock indicators will be unchanged throughout the life of the program**. These measures will provide DFAT and others with a picture of longitudinal change across key themes such as economic advancement, inclusiveness of livelihoods strategies, and women's agency. These 'bedrock' indicators will appear at impact and intermediate outcome levels – the higher-level objectives.

Bedrock indicators will be heavily informed by WEE M&E frameworks developed by organisations such as ICRW, IFPRI, DCED, CARE and the UN foundation. These frameworks are useful in that they identify key domains of change, and offer potential indicators. However, none of the frameworks or indicators can be used 'off the shelf'. They will need to be modified to suit the particular context(s) in which the program works.

For the direct outcome level, the program will develop a larger **basket of indicators**, which may change over the course of the program, as our approaches and activities change. Or *GREAT* may monitor different issues in different locations, with different tools – all based around the nature of the specific partnership. For instance, if the risk of indebtedness is thought to be high in particular communities, close monitoring of that issue would be a priority in some locations but not in all. In some communities, the main focus of our M&E effort may be the shift from pure subsistence to engagement with cash crops. In other contexts, what we measure may be the appropriateness of life skills and vocational training available to young women.

Proportionality and selectivity: An emphasis on learning does not mean the project should gather information on an exhaustive number of issues or data points. The collection and analysis of information has high costs for communities and for the project, and data overload can be the enemy of learning. Each potential indicator would need to pass several tests, including: 'how costly is it to collect this information?' 'who will use the data?' and 'why is it important?'

The Donor Committee for Enterprise Development 'Standard'

Since it was established in 2008, over 100 private sector development programs have used the DCED Standard for Results Measurement. The Standard is a framework, tools and incentives to monitor results. It has been developed particularly for market systems and private sector programs. The Standard emphasizes the importance of a clearly articulated results chain, selecting good measures and tracking them closely, capturing wider changes in the market, and tracking program costs.

Some projects opt for an external audit of the DCED Standard. *GREAT* should consider signing up for an audit – but only after working through a detailed theory of change and reflecting on the extent to which the DCED standard is good fit for *GREAT*'s MERL requirements. It may be that the DCED standard is more enterprise-focussed than is appropriate for the context in which *GREAT* will work.

www.Enterprise-Development.org/page/measuring-andreporting-results

Embedding research

In addition to quantitative measures, the program must capture deep, qualitative understanding of what changes are taking place, and how those changes happen. Research could be commissioned to produce three or four life-of-project case studies in each province. The focal point of the studies would initially be at the community-level with a strong gender focus, but over time would include interactions with the private sector and government as the project evolves. At least one member of the research team would need to be fluent in the local language(s), and participatory field work would take place at least every three months. It is hoped that recruitment and training of local researchers will be an element of the program's approach to research and M&E.

The focus would be on capturing information to ensure the project records and understands important changes, and can adapt its approach if needed. Outputs of embedded research could include:

- Identification of a diverse range of culturally appropriate aspirations and measures of change;
- Provision of early social/ gender analysis of the roles and tasks of women/men in communities, and an understanding of context-specific social norms that influence WEE;
- New perspectives on *how* change happens (or doesn't); and
- Provision of a monitoring/safeguarding function against unintended consequences such as intensification of workload, conflict, violence or indebtedness.⁴¹

⁴¹ See, for instance, Ruth Pearson's reflection that "...earning money may extend women's options, but may also intensify their workload and responsibilities without necessarily increasing their autonomy." ("Reassessing paid work and women's empowerment: lessons from the global economy." in *Feminisms in development. Contradictions, contestations and challenges*, edited by A Cornwall, E Harrison and A Whitehead. London/New York: Zed Books. 2007, p. 207)

Much of the information that *GREAT* will be collecting is sensitive: income and profit, perceptions of fairness, power balances in personal relationships, etc. To ensure this information is gathered in a thoughtful way, and to ensure the data is as accurate as possible, there needs to be a **high level of trust** between the enumerator/ researcher and the informant(s). This level of trust and veracity is much more likely to be present when the researcher speaks the same language as the informant(s), and if at least one member of the research team is from the same ethnic group and sex.

Review and Evaluation

Active learning

In an adaptive program with learning at its heart, a culture of review and reflection should be embedded through regular team-wide reflection and learning events. **Quarterly team-wide events** could include topics such as:

- Assess changes in the wider context which may affect the project: political economy, economic trends, weather events, legislation, elections, border issues, regional trade;
- Refining results chains, problem statements, and the theory of change - in light of real-world experience and new evidence;
- Updating the risk analysis, including revising mitigation strategies if needed;
- Identifying knowledge gaps and agreeing studies or research commissioned;
- Evaluating the effectiveness of monitoring tools;
- Flagging up unintended consequences (positive or negative);
- Reflecting on feedback from private sector partners about the quality of advice;
- A focus on the experience of women in a particular ethnic group or age; a focus on a particular value chain; or
- Agree if any changes need to be made to the work plan, or if resources should be re-allocated.

Few projects make sufficient time and space to stand back and reflect on important questions during implementation. Too often, a dogged commitment to delivering pre-planned targets means that it is only at the annual or mid-term review that important issues are raised.

Adults learn best in small groups, face to face, in settings characterised by high levels of trust and respect. A setting needs to be established in which aspects of the program which are not working – even failing miserably - can be framed as opportunities to improve or to try something new. Increasingly, successful programs ring fence time for thinking and learning. **Two team-wide ‘retreat days’ each quarter is a good rule of thumb.** If possible, a DFAT staff member would be an active participant in these quarterly retreats.⁴²

In addition to the ‘internal’ learning *GREAT* must also become an effective partner within the development community-of-practice. *GREAT* will be Australia’s ‘flagship program’ for women’s economic empowerment in Vietnam. As such it must proactively work with and through DFAT to inform dialogues that encompasses economic/trade diplomacy, public diplomacy and foreign policy. These interactions must complement other Australian initiatives and inform and substantiate Australia’s policy positions, public profile, and diplomatic engagement with the Government of Vietnam. Evidence and learning from *GREAT* must build Australia’s credibility as a partner who can engage with confidence and influence in development discussions.

Adaptation logs are a particularly useful tool for use in adaptive programs. In this log, all changes to the theory of change or program approaches are noted, including the rationale for any changes. This record is an essential piece of evidence that can demonstrate to the donor and to reviewers that program managers are actively learning and adjusting. The log is also useful to help new staff to make sense of where the program started, and what is has learned along the way.

An influential program articulates the true costs of ‘what works’

A well-designed M&E system generates information about whether a program is working, which elements are working better than others, and what combination of inputs are most effective. Most programs, however, fall short when asked to articulate how much success actually costs. If the lessons learned in *GREAT* are to be relevant to government or donors in the future, the MERL system must develop systems to generate information on the true costs of the *GREAT* program and its most successful elements. Only with detailed information about costs would governments and businesses be able to replicate any of *GREAT*’s initiatives.

⁴² From an April 2016 quality check of a DFAT market systems program in Cambodia: “The and the application of program’s internal learning (so-called ‘lessons learned’). One of the key adaptive management - understand what works and what does not and adjusting activities, application of its adaptive management system.” And “Internal management systems need to be succeeding. This means that program must build flexibility to enable it to change sectors, in experienced managers, contractor and donor (DFAT) representatives.”

Annual reviews would be an ideal time to bring together key DFAT staff and TAG members to assess whether the program is on track, whether the team is working well, and to check in with key actors such as provincial government and private sector stakeholders.

Mid-term reviews (MTRs) should be resourced with independent expertise that brings knowledge of market systems approaches, women's economic empowerment, and knowledge of the context of north-west Vietnam. The MTR will take place late in Year 3 or early in Year 4. MTR questions are likely to include:

- Is the program likely to reach its targets by Year 5?
- Are GREAT's community sites and partner private sector organisations the right ones?
- Should the portfolio look different?
- Is GREAT's advice to the private sector and support appropriate? Is it well-received?
- Are GREAT's community-level interventions tailored to different cultural contexts?
- To what extent is GREAT succeeding with older women (e.g. 35-55 years) vs younger women (e.g. 18-35 years), with agricultural livelihoods vs off-farm employment?
- How is GREAT perceived at different levels of government?
- Has GREAT established a locally-relevant, conceptually robust definition of women's empowerment?
- What gains are likely to be sustained beyond the lifetime of the program? What success are fragile and potentially at risk?
- What are the costs of the program, in relation to benefits achieved? Value for money?
- What aspects of the program are likely to be replicable? What learning should be more actively shared outside GREAT?
- To what extent does GREAT's experience help us understand how variables of ethnic identity and location influence 'what works' for economic empowerment?
- What changes should GREAT undertake after the MTR? (Recommendations.)
- Should DFAT release funds for a second five-year phase?

An end of project review in Year 5 should assess:

- the extent to which the program succeeded in its objectives;
- GREAT's contribution vs attribution to observed changes;
- recommend measures that support consolidation of any progress made;
- recommendations for GREAT Phase 2;
- lessons relevant to future DFAT WEE programs.

Evaluation

During the inception period, the GREAT team, in discussion with DFAT, should weigh up the case for a program evaluation. On balance, the design team advises against a traditional-style impact evaluation for GREAT after only five years. The emphasis on learning should, rather, be embedded throughout the implementation period, and ownership of that learning should sit within the team, not with an outside evaluator.

Further, the most important evaluation questions are not clear at this early stage, nor do we know whether there is an audience for an GREAT evaluation. The activities of the program and the sites it will be working in will be so diverse that there will be no single 'treatment' or 'package' that can be assessed as successful or unsuccessful. There will be no directly comparable control group which could be studied as a counterfactual. Additionally, high-quality evaluations are very expensive – those resources could arguably be put to better use elsewhere in the program.

An evaluation towards the end of a second phase of GREAT could, however, be an excellent investment. Eight or more years into the program, the evidence base for some of the more intangible results of program are likely to be evident, and the relationship between different dimensions of empowerment will be clearer.

Ideally an **GREAT evaluation would take a more developmental than traditional approach**. Participatory methods will be particularly relevant to GREAT; including but not limited to methods appropriate such participatory video and PhotoVoice, which can be employed by non-literate people. Developmental and traditional approaches are compared in the table below.⁴³

⁴³ See http://betterevaluation.org/plan/approach/developmental_evaluation; Patton, M.Q. (2006) Evaluation for the Way We Work. The Non-profit Quarterly. Vol. 13 (1): 28-33.

Traditional evaluation	Developmental evaluation
Purpose: supports improvement, summative tests and accountability.	Purpose: supports development of innovation and adaptation in dynamic environments.
Roles and relationships: Positioned as an outsider to assure independence and objectivity.	Roles and relationships: positioned as an internal team function integrated into the process of gathering and interpreting data, training issues, surfacing and testing model developments.
Accountability: focused on external authorities and funders based on explicit and pre-ordained criteria.	Accountability: centred on the innovators' values and commitment to make a difference.
Measurement: measure performance and success against pre-determined goals and SMART objectives.	Measurement: develops measures and tracking mechanisms quickly as outcomes emerge; measures can change during the evaluation as the process unfolds; local people influence which measures are valued.
Evaluation results: detailed formal reports; validated best practices; generalizable across time and space; can engender fear of failure.	Evaluation results: rapid, real-time feedback; diverse, user-friendly forms of feedback: evaluation aims to nurture learning.
Complexity and uncertainty: evaluator tries to control design implementation and the evaluation process.	Complexity and uncertainty: learning to respond to lack of control; staying in touch with what's unfolding and responding accordingly.
Standards: methodological competence and commitment to rigour; independence; creditability with external authorities and funders; analytical and critical thinking.	Standards: methodological flexibility, eclecticism, and adaptability; systems thinking; creative and critical thinking balanced; high tolerance for ambiguity; open and agile; teamwork and people skills; able to facilitate rigorous evidence-based perspectives.

MERL Deliverables and Resourcing

A robust approach to monitoring, evaluation, learning, and research (MERL) will play a critical role in the success of the program. If *GREAT* is to be adaptive and agile, its MERL system will need to be at the heart of program, not at the periphery.

The MERL team will need to be well-resourced, in terms of skills, experience and operational budget. The MERL team is expected to work closely with senior management team to ensure early identification of approaches that are not working well - and to facilitate understanding across the team about what is working well and *why* it is working.

A detailed monitoring and evaluation strategy and results framework will be a key deliverable following the inception period in early 2017. That initial strategy will need regular updating, as the theory of change evolves, as the focus and objectives of the program are refined, and as the program team refines the M&E tools that best fit the program's requirements.

GREAT's Monitoring, Evaluation, Research and Learning strategy should include:

- A framework for monitoring and reporting outcomes and outputs (closely linked to a detailed version of the program theory of change and/or program logic);
- a proposed approach to baseline measurement, impact evaluation and/or a final evaluation;
- monitoring of key risks to the program;
- a sub-strategy on how *GREAT* will embed rapid learning cycles and feedback loops within the program team;
- an indication of likely research priorities and resourcing required; and
- read-across to *GREAT*'s strategy to communicate learning to key stakeholders outside the project.

Resourcing

MERL resourcing will be proposed by the Contractor, for Hanoi and each of the two provinces. At a minimum it is intended that a member of the (Hanoi-based) senior management team will have previous experience of adaptive programming and implementation of programs with a learning-centred approach to monitoring and evaluation. It is expected that senior management will take an active interest in *GREAT*'s MERL system, and will work closely with the MERL team to ensure that information generated by the MERL system feeds in to rapid learning cycles across the *GREAT* team.

Short term international technical assistance could be contracted to provide periodic technical support, mentoring and quality assurance at key junctures:

1. during the inception period and drafting of the MERL strategy;
2. facilitating team-wide learning events and updates to the theory of change; and
3. ensuring appropriate use of international best practice (including but not limited to the DCED standard, WEAI, OECD DAC criteria, and DFAT's own M&E requirements).

For future reference: M&E resources of particular relevance to *GREAT*

1. 'Understanding and Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment' Golla, et al. 2011. ICRW
2. 'Review of evaluation approaches and methods used by interventions on women and girls' economic empowerment', ODI, 2014. Georgia Taylor and Paola Pereznioto
3. 'Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment in Private Sector Development Guidelines for Practitioners' 2014. Erin Merkel, DCED.
4. 'Women's Empowerment in Agriculture Index' IFPRI and OPHI. Alkire, et al. Dec 2012.
5. Measuring Women's Economic Empowerment: A Companion to A Roadmap for Promoting Women's Economic Empowerment. UN Foundation and Exxon Mobil, with the Centre for Global Development.
6. 'Putting learning at the centre: Adaptive development programming in practice'. ODI, March 2016. C. Valters, et al.

Purpose

The purpose of this analysis is to highlight key data and issues related to women's empowerment and ethnic minority development in Vietnam, to guide the GREAT design. The paper is divided into three parts: Part 1 provides an overview of data and debates relating to women's empowerment and ethnic minority development in Vietnam; Part 2 uses a women's economic empowerment framework designed for market systems development, to analyse women's social and economic status in rural, north-west of Vietnam (as data allows); and Part 3 highlights the implications of this analysis for the GREAT design.

In its Aid Investment Plan for 2016-2020, DFAT articulated a well-founded economic and social rationale, and bilateral relationship basis for focusing on women's economic empowerment:

Governments in emerging economies are increasingly recognising that if women, including rural and ethnic minority women, face barriers to economic participation, it will undermine a country's inclusive growth and social stability. Vietnam's National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020 commits to narrowing the gender gap in the economy, assuring women quality jobs, and increasing the number of female entrepreneurs. It also aspires to increase the access of poor rural and ethnic minority women to economic resources and the labour market. The National Targeted Program for Sustainable Poverty Reduction 2010-2020, led by the Ministry of Labour, Invalids and Social Affairs, aims to improve living conditions for the poor, including in mountainous and ethnic minority areas.

Empowering women to participate actively in the economy is critical to reducing poverty and building a sustainable economy, and we will work to support women's economic empowerment, including for those most excluded. Consistent with our economic partnership, we will complement the efforts of the Government of Vietnam by identifying, trialling and scaling-up new approaches to closing gender gaps in economic livelihoods in these areas, including by working with the private sector. We will also support programs and policies that better empower women.

Introduction

As frequently repeated by government and business stakeholders met with during the course of this design, women undertake the majority of agricultural tasks within smallholder households in the North-West region, are active in the majority of value chains, and they are engaged in traditional production for markets such as hemp, dye and textile-making. As is the case nationally in Vietnam, women in the North-West are economically active, although it is the quality of that participation, both the material and personal benefits for women, which has scope for improvement. GREAT seeks to recognise and build on the natural industriousness and activities of women in the North-West, by supporting an expansion in their access to knowledge, resources, information and training that is aligned with their characteristics and preferences. In order to achieve this, this Annex is designed to highlight the economic and social status of women (based on the best data available) and to shed light on the links between gender dynamics and ethnicity.

Implementing a women's empowerment program in two ethnically diverse provinces in Vietnam means that it is **important to comprehend both gender norms and ethnic identity** – as distinct, but also interacting influences on women's lives. The social and economic status of women in Son La and Lào Cai in part reflects the destinies that society endorses for women in Vietnam, particularly that of rural women. However, the capacities, preferences and prospects of individual women are also strongly imbued with the expectations and the esteemed roles attached to ethnic identity. For GREAT to offer all women viable pathways for increased economic engagement, wellbeing and social standing, it needs to be perceptive of the **diversity of women's experiences and their endowments**.

Exploration of the opportunities for women's empowerment in these provinces also needs to engage with the broader context of ethnic minority development in Vietnam. Ethnic minority households have accounted for an increased proportion

Women play a major role in farming. Men only help to transport the seedlings or fertilizers to the remote or sloping fields, and transport coffee beans back after the harvest. Broadly speaking, women do everything else. (Thai Women's Group, Son La)

In Hmong areas, only women are seen in the fields. (District People's Committee of Sapa)

The wife gets a higher price per cabbage when she sells it at the market because the husband sells the whole sack at a cheap price so that he can finish the job quickly. (Women's group in Bac Ha)

I call to check the price of cinnamon oil regularly. Thanks to the cell phone...I call the buyer to come here...I can prepare the amount of oil that the buyer will take and I know how much I will earn from selling this amount. (Hmong woman, Yen Bai)

Above quotes from GREAT design scoping mission in December 2015.

of Vietnam's poorest over the past two decades, and certain groups have lower health, educational and economic attainments, particularly women and girls. As a result, there is understandable attention given to these disparities by the Government of Vietnam and development partners. However, as powerfully noted by a local research institute that focuses on ethnic minority communities, this can become 'an obsession with differences'.⁴⁴ **Discussion of 'disadvantage', although well meaning, can become defining.** It can frame development interactions as supporting ethnic minority communities to 'catch up', through reliance on outsiders. It can also obscure recognition of the cultural assets, active livelihood strategies, and changing dynamics within communities. A number of commentators have highlighted the 'internalisation' of negative and disempowering self-perceptions among ethnic minority groups, including among youth. This language can also deter participation.

An empowerment program needs to be attuned to this discussion, and redouble its efforts to appreciate and **highlight strengths and positive change** within communities, and to engage constructively and with optimism.

A last note remains for data issues. In recent years, a number of studies have contributed to better understanding of the situation and perspectives of ethnic minority women and girls (UN Women, 2015) (Pham Q. N., 2015) (Pham Q. P., 2012) (Jones, 2015). However, available **data only affords a 'coarse grained' resolution** at this time. This analysis draws on data from national statistics, local level qualitative studies, and secondary analyses. It also includes observations and quotes from the field visits undertaken for the GREAT design. It is a composite picture, piecing together data where it exists by sex, ethnicity, age, geographic location, or urban/rural classifications. It is true that this presents as a medley of information and data 'glimpses' on particular issues, rather than a deep understanding. However, it serves to highlight research priorities for the GREAT so that it can be well informed, culturally fluent, and poised to support women's empowerment in the north-west of Vietnam.

Part 1 - Background

1. Context on ethnic minority development in Vietnam

For its 53 ethnic minority communities, the Government's vision of an **inclusive Vietnam by 2035** is one where extreme poverty, malnutrition, and higher child mortality have all but been eliminated; and where **ethnic minority people are 'fully integrated economically', while maintaining their cultural identity** (GoV, 2016).

To any observer, Vietnam's transformation from one of the world's poorest countries at the advent of its own economic renovation in 1986 (Đổi Mới), to lower middle income status by 2010 is breathtaking. Recalling Vietnam of the early 1990s, two-thirds of ethnic Kinh and 90% of ethnic minorities had consumption levels below the \$1.25 poverty line. Within two decades, consumption poverty was close to zero for Kinh people and approximately 16% for ethnic minority communities. Over that period, consumption increased by 9.4% annually for Kinh and Hoa (Chinese) ethnic people, and by 7.4% annually for ethnic minority communities. As the World Bank suggests, '**few, if any, ethnic minority and indigenous groups around the world have experienced such improvements in welfare over this period**'.

Figure 13: Poverty Rates for US\$1.25 and US\$2 per day, 1990-present (GoV, 2016)



However, there are three grounds for attention to the status of ethnic minority households: *relative economic status, asset base, and returns on endowments*.

RELATIVE ECONOMIC STATUS:

While ethnic minority populations experienced welfare improvements in absolute terms, the poverty headcount fell faster for Kinh and Hoa households. Benefits of reforms have not been evenly distributed. Figure 2 highlights how Kinh households account for a higher per centage of the top quintiles in Vietnam, by comparison with the largest ethnic minority groups (UNFPA, 2009).

⁴⁴ Institute for Studies of Society, Economics and Environment (ISEE), Hanoi.

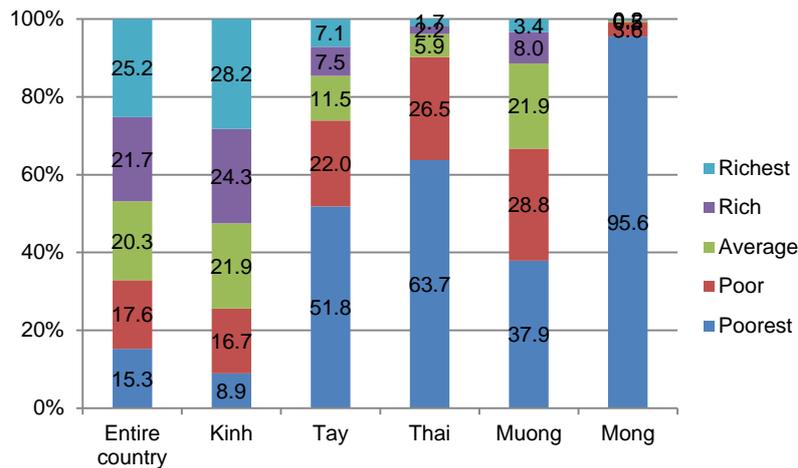


Figure 14: Distribution across wealth quintiles, with decomposition by selected ethnicities

As a result, while ethnic minority populations represent 15% of the total population of Vietnam, they now account for an **increasing share of households living below the poverty line** (41.9%). By 2012, the northern, midland and mountainous areas remained the poorest region in the country. In 2012, the poverty rate of this region was estimated at 23.8% using the GSO national poverty line.

With Vietnam's introduction of the multidimensional poverty index in 2016⁴⁵, which uses a composite of income and non-income measures drawn from the Human Development Index, poverty rates for ethnic minority communities are predicted to disproportionately rise. This is because poverty amongst ethnic minorities is known to be underestimated when based on income alone. For example, it is estimated that the official (income-based) poverty level in Lào Cai recorded as 22 per cent in 2013, will be re-calculated at almost 35 per cent under the new multi-dimensional measure.

Lastly, a nationally representative survey sampling 8424 Vietnamese men and women, 10% of whom were of ethnic minority background, found that ethnic minority men and women were half as likely to be waged workers or to be leaders and managers in professional positions. However, ethnic minority men and women were a third as likely to be engaged in agriculture, forestry and fishery.

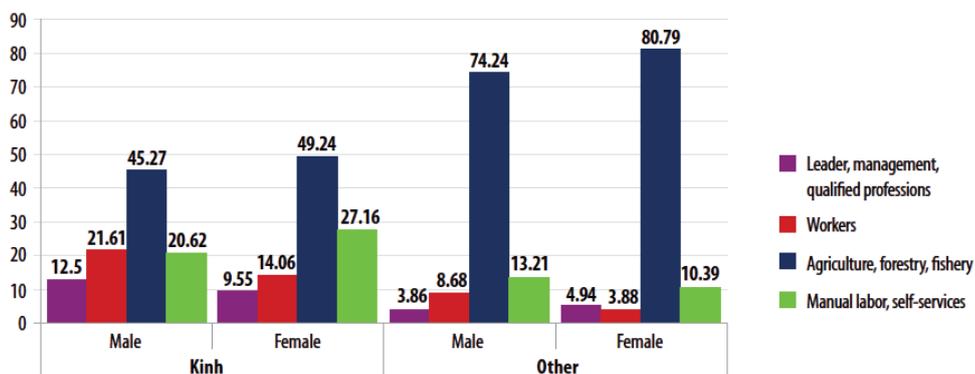


Figure 15: Economic sectors by ethnicity (ISDS, 2016)

ASSET BASE:

Ethnic minority populations in general (and certain groups in particular) **typically have fewer endowments** than Kinh or Hoa households: this includes fewer physical assets, lower educational attainments combined with more limited waged employment opportunities, less mobility, lower access to financial services and markets, and to key infrastructure such as tap water, irrigation, and upgraded sanitation (World Bank, 2009) (Tarp, 2015).

⁴⁵ Vietnam will move from one-dimensional poverty measurement to a multidimensional approach approved by the Prime Minister for 2016-2020. The country will adopt a national measure of multidimensional poverty based on the Alkire-Foster method – this shows deprivation in five different areas: living conditions; income levels; access to education and healthcare; access to information; and access to insurance and social assistance. Households that cannot meet over a third of their basic needs in these areas will be identified as multi-dimensionally poor, while those lacking more than half will be considered critically poor.

These differences are in part explained by geographical remoteness and the challenges for provision of public and private sector services. However, the mountains are not entirely to blame. Data from the World Bank shows that **Kinh households living in the northern mountains have much higher income and consumption levels than their ethnic minority neighbours**. This stems from historical policies to support Kinh migration to remote regions of Vietnam, and Kinh household links to other provinces. Ethnic minority households have fewer social and urban networks, and are possibly not aware of the liberalisation of the household registration system, enabling outmigration. Outmigration rates are lowest in the north-west region, for example, resulting in lower access to waged employment and remittances (Baulch, 2012).

Fluency in Vietnamese is a key economic determinant. (MPI, 2015) (World Bank, 2009) The baseline study for P135 found that rural ethnic minority households with household members that did not speak Vietnamese were twice as likely to be poor than their peers (Baulch, 2012). The vast majority of Hoa, Tày, Thai, Muong and Nùng ethnic groups speak Vietnamese, however fluency in the language is lower for other northern upland groups (Baulch, 2012). Age also correlates strongly with Vietnamese fluency amongst all ethnic minorities, with youth much more fluent than their parents.

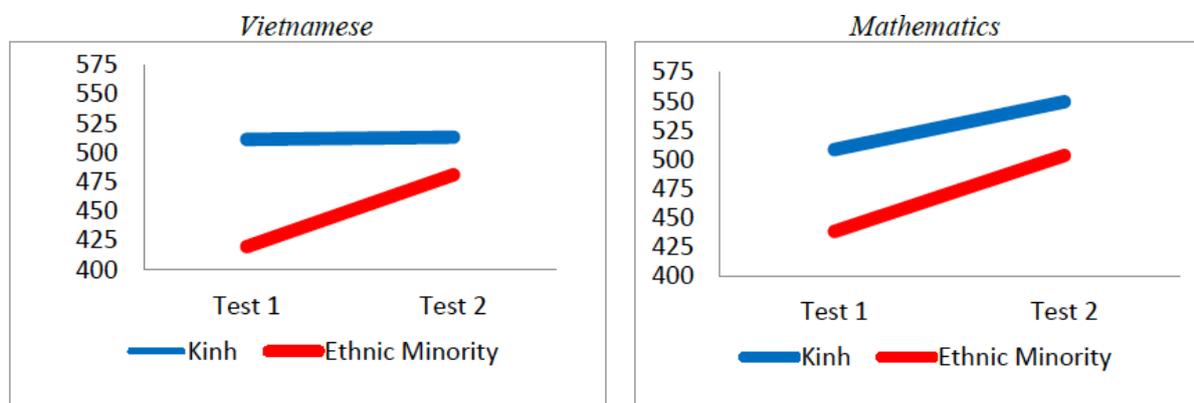
Lastly, in its 2012 Poverty Assessment for Vietnam, the World Bank also identified ‘ethnic stereotyping by Kinh’ as another explanation for the growing poverty divide between Kinh and ethnic minority groups (World Bank, 2012). **Socio-cultural attitudes and approaches to engagement, service delivery and empowerment are also influential**, and pertinent for GREAT.

RETURNS ON ENDOWMENTS:

A final aspect to consider is differences in the returns on endowments between Kinh/Hoa and ethnic minority households. In research on ethnic minority poverty which compared households with equivalent endowments such as educational level, land allotment size, and access to public services, the study found that **‘more than half of the ethnic poverty gap was explained by differences in returns on endowments’** (Baulch, 2012). In other words, there were marked differences in quality and the returns for ethnic minority households. For example, land allotments of equivalent size were less productive, reflecting the poorer upland soils but also ethnic minority households’ lower access to agricultural technology and knowledge of land disposal rights. Agricultural extension services were often based on lowland wet rice cultivation techniques, and so less suited for upland cultivation. Educational outcomes also differed for the same years of schooling, owing to the inconsistencies in quality of upland teaching, and to language barriers. Research from the *Young Lives School Survey* showed that ethnic minority children scored lower on mathematics and reading than ethnic majority peers.

Importantly, the survey found that the **performance gap reduced over time, attesting to the fact that human capital differences can be overcome**.

Figure 16: Mean test scores, from the Young Lives School Survey in Vietnam (GoV, 2016)



2. Overview of gender equality and women’s empowerment in Vietnam

As the second Asian nation to ratify the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1982, Vietnam has been justly commended for its progress towards gender equality. Over the past two decades, without disaggregating for factors such as residence or ethnicity, **Vietnam has markedly reduced the gender gap, particularly in the domains of secondary education, literacy and in labour force participation rates.** Vietnam has also achieved remarkable reductions in maternal mortality from a ratio of 233 deaths per 100,000 live births in 1990 to 54 by 2015, and increases in women's life expectancy. The formal wage gap between men and women narrowed to 106.7%⁴⁶ in 2014. Women's representation in the National Parliament in the current term is 24.3% (MPI, 2015).

In 2014, Vietnam ranked 60 of 187 countries on the UNDP Gender Inequality Index (as compared with 19 for Australia, but 76 for Thailand) largely on account of labour and education trends, as well as moderate proportion of women holding seats in Parliament.

The Vietnamese **Constitution enshrines gender equality and prohibits gender-based discrimination**, and in 2006, the National Assembly passed Vietnam's first Law on Gender Equality. The National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020 committed the Government of Vietnam to narrowing the gender gap in the economy, assuring women quality jobs, and increasing the number of female entrepreneurs. It also aspires to increase the access of poor rural and ethnic minority women to economic resources and the labour market.

National Gender Employment Statistics at A Glance		
Labour Force Participation Rate (% of population ages 15+)	Women	73%
	Men	83%
Employment in agriculture (% of total employment)	Women	49%
	Men	45%
Employment in industry (% of total employment)	Women	17%
	Men	25%
Vulnerable employment (% of own account or unpaid family worker)	Women	69%
	Men	51%

Source: <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator> (LFPR data from 2014; other data is 2013).

However, despite clear achievements, women in Vietnam continue to face challenges on the road to equality. In its *Concluding Observations* in 2015, the CEDAW committee specifically noted its concern about the 'persistence of patriarchal attitudes and deep-rooted gender stereotypes regarding the roles and responsibilities of women and men in the family and in society which over-emphasize subordinate and caring roles of women and are reflected in practices such as 'son preference'.⁴⁷ The Committee also highlighted the **need to accelerate the implementation and accountability mechanisms for gender equality commitments**, in order for Vietnam to achieve substantive equality. Cultural attitudes and the powerful norms surrounding women's 'heavenly' duty to raise a family remain a constraint on equality and women's empowerment (ISDS, 2016).

Of particular relevance to *GREAT*, gender differences in poverty are not technically measured, but **older women are overrepresented among the poor**, especially in rural areas, owing to their longer life expectancies than men (World Bank, 2011). Another key issue is the increasingly skewed **sex ratio at birth**, with Vietnam having the 3rd highest foetal sex-selection rate after China and India. While this phenomenon is more marked in wealthier provinces which have readier access to reproductive technologies, it still reflects a preference and valorisation of sons.

A recent GSO survey found that **one in three ever married women have experienced at least one form of violence in their lifetime** (physical, sexual or emotional). A UN Women/DFAT co-funded study examined the economic and livelihood consequences for women experiencing violence in Vietnam and found that women facing violence earn 35% less than other women, on average (UNFPA, 2012) (National University of Ireland/IFGS, 2013).

Despite formal labour participation rates being on a par with men and signalling encouragement of women to be in the workforce, women remain more likely to engage in informal and vulnerable jobs with inferior working conditions and lower wages than men. Women's representation in leadership and management decreases at higher and central level and remains notably below the targets set out in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011 – 2020.⁴⁸

3. Provincial and ethnic demographic and development data

The following section presents data on the population structure within the Tây Bắc Region, and on select social and economic indicators.

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA:

The Tây Bắc Region of Vietnam, where Sơn La and Lào Cai provinces are located, is characterized by great social, economic, cultural and demographic diversity (GSO, 2009). Table 14 presents population data on the two provinces, alongside that of two neighbouring northern (comparator) provinces: Yên Bái and Tuyên Quang.

⁴⁶ 100 per cent denotes full equality.

⁴⁷ See CEDAW Session No. 61 at: http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/SessionDetails1.aspx?SessionID=944&Lang=en

⁴⁸ *ibid*

With a population of 1,149,300 people, Sơn La province is home to 12 major ethnic groups. Sharing an international border with Laos, the largest ethnic communities are: Thai (53%); Kinh (18%); H'mong (15%) and Mường (8%). The remaining share of the population is accounted for by a number of smaller ethnic communities, including Dao, Kho Mu and Kháng. According to the most recent *Population and Housing Census (2009)*, the female population accounts for 49% of the total.

At less than half Sơn La's territorial size, **Lào Cai province has a population of 614,595 people representing 26 ethnic groups**. This is more than double the number of groups living in Sơn La, and is perhaps reflective of its border with Yunnan province in China. The ethnic composition of Lào Cai comprises: Kinh (35%); H'mong (24%); Tày (15%); Dao (14%); and Nùng (4%). Kinh people represent a larger share of the population here than in Sơn La, and females again account for approximately 49% of registered Lào Cai residents. While this data conveys ethnic diversity, it is also notable that the total population of the two provinces is 1.6 million and not dense for the land area.

For the purposes of beneficiary targeting, based on the information that 49% of the population within each province is female (848,418 women in total), and on the working estimate that half as many again are likely to be adults, this means that *GREAT* is likely to have approximately 414,209 women as potential beneficiaries (direct).

Although definitive statistics are not available, it is understood that the distribution of ethnic communities means that ethnic composition varies between administrative units. It is estimated that **more than half of the districts in the northern mountainous region have more than 10 ethnic groups** living in the same communes or villages (including with Kinh). However, the remainder may be homogenous and host only one ethnic minority community (World Bank, 2009).

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INDICATORS:

Table 12 and Table 13 below list selected, sentinel social and economic indicators, presented by ethnicity and then by province. Data is highlighted in colour in the tables to indicate where it either contrasts strongly with the national average, or is equivalent.

By province

With the immediate interest in this data being the implications for *GREAT*, the following elements from the tables are noteworthy. At the provincial level, Lào Cai and Sơn La are tracking closely to the national fertility rate, which means that household dependency ratios and women's child rearing responsibilities (number and duration) would be aligned with the experience of women elsewhere in Vietnam. However, women in both provinces and in neighbouring Yên Bái have rates of **infant and under 5 mortality rates between 1.5 and 2 times the national average**. Remoteness from health care clinics will contribute to this scenario. However, child health indicators also serve as an insight into women's health status and education levels.

However, a **notable contrast is also the adult literacy rate (75.8% and 78.5% respectively for Sơn La and Lào Cai), as compared with the national level (94.7%)**. The literacy rate for youth (ages 15-24) from the northern midlands and mountainous areas is much higher at 87.3% (noting sex-disaggregated data is not available). This spectrum means that there will be variation in the capacity and the confidence of some local women to engage with the program, particularly in written forms. The proportion of employed workers that are trained is not much below that of the national average (18.2%), however the formally employed population is likely to be small in these rural provinces where subsistence or own-account agriculture dominates.

Interestingly (given *GREAT's* focus on market systems and the role of the private sector), there is simple data available on the number of enterprises registered within each province, including the proportion of SMEs led by women. Being located on a major trading route and formal border point with China, Lào Cai predictably has a higher number of registered enterprises (total number, and SMEs) than Sơn La. **Ownership by women is slightly higher in Lào Cai also (22% as compared with 17% in Sơn La)**. Information on the sectoral segmentation of these enterprises is not known, and the number of non-registered enterprises is not reported for the province, but the data does suggest that women are engaged in trading and business in the *GREAT* locations.

By ethnicity

When considering economic and social measures by ethnicity, Table 12 highlights particular patterns. The data depicts that for a number of measures, Kinh, Tày and Mường are close to or even exceed the national average (e.g. in average years of schooling and household size). For H'mong, Dao, Nùng and occasionally for Thai communities, household and life trajectories do not resemble the national average. This includes a higher household number, child mortality rates, and educational attainment (marginally). The most notable divergences are the **very high poverty headcount rates among H'mong, Dao and Thai; mean per capita expenditure rates that are between one third to one half of the national average; and a life expectancy difference of up to 8 years**. UN Women reports that some ethnic minority communities have maternal mortality ratios four times that of the national average (54 per 100,000 live births) (UN Women, 2016). In absolute terms, this data underscores the government and development partner's investment in health and educational coverage in these provinces.

Alongside these indicators, the Mekong Development Research Institute (MDRI) in their comprehensive study on Vietnam's 54 ethnic groups noted the following **improvements in living conditions** for the majority of ethnic groups when it assessed the period 1999-2011:

1. Substantial **increase in the average living area per capita**, although a smaller increase in the average agricultural allotment;
2. **Improved housing quality** reflected in a notable increase in the percentage of households living in permanent dwellings;
3. Increased **access to the national power grid** (currently 95% for Tày, 85% for Thai, and 46% for H'mong)
4. Improved access to hygienic water sources;
5. A rise in the **possession of motorbikes** (currently 79% for Tày, 60% for H'mong), **telephones** (not smart phones) (66% for H'mong, 80% for Dao), and **televisions** (86% for Muong and Tày, 34% for H'mong); and
6. Progressive increase in average expenditure per capita (MDRI, 2014).

Roads have also been built to many ethnic minority hamlets which until recently would have been quite isolated (Baulch, 2012). As a result, some **communities have been able to engage in commodity exchange, and households have been able to change from production for subsistence to market trade** (whether at farm gate or marketplaces).

It is clear for *GREAT* that there is **great variation in the material resources and human capital available** to households in the two provinces. It also highlights that improvements have taken place, even if from a low base for some ethnic minority communities.

Perspectives on women's participation and influence:

Women do attend the meetings, but they rarely raise any proposals in their interests. They are afraid of being wrong. Women do not dare to fight for their interests. (Thai women's group, Son La)

Men attend community meetings more than women because they are the head of the household. They make decisions for their households. Men are also more educated than women. (Ta Phin, Commune People's Committee)

Few women attend community meetings because in the meetings there is only Vietnamese language, but the women are not fluent in Vietnamese language. (Dao women, Lao Cai)

Above quotes from *GREAT* design scoping mission in December 2015.

Table 12: National level⁴⁹

Ethnic Group	Population size	Population of male	Population of female	Average household size	Educational attainment (Average schooling years of people aged over 15)	Poverty headcount	Mean per capita expenditure	Total Fertility Rate	IMR (per 1,000 live births)	U5MR (per 1,000 live births)	Life expectancy at birth	Life expectancy at birth for male	Life expectancy at birth for female
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)
National	85,846,997	42,413,143	43,433,854	3.8	7.0			2.03	16.0	24.0	72.8	70.2	75.6
Kinh	73,594,427	36,304,095	37,290,332	3.7	7.5	17.0	12,145,000	1.95	13.0	19.0	74.0	71.5	76.7
Tây	1,626,392	808,079	818,313	4.0	7.4	46.5	9,918,800	1.92	23.0	36.0	70.3	67.5	73.3
Thai	1,550,423	772,605	777,818	4.6	6.6	69.1	7,210,600	2.19	27.0	41.0	69.2	66.3	72.2
H'mong	1,068,189	537,423	530,766	5.8	5.8	93.3	4,455,100	4.96	46.0	72.0	64.3	61.3	67.5
Dao	751,067	377,185	373,882	5.0	5.8	75.6	6,456,900	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nung	968,800	485,579	483,221	4.3	6.8	56.0	8,611,600	-	-	-	-	-	-
Muong	1,268,963	630,983	637,980	4.2	7.3	56.3	8,603,800	1.89	22.0	34.0	70.7	68.0	73.7

Table 13: Provincial level – Population, education and health indicators⁵⁰

Province	Population size ('000 persons)	Population of male	Population of female	Sex ratio of population	Total fertility rate (children per woman)	Percentage of literate population at 15 years of age and above	% of trained employed workers at 15 years of age and above (%)	IMR (over 1,000 live births)	U5MR (over 1,000 live births)	Life expectancy	Life expectancy of Male	Life expectancy of Female
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)
Sơn La	1166.4	587.4	579.0	101.5	2.57	75.8	13.0	23.2	35.3	70.4	67.6	73.3
Lào Cai	665.2	336.6	328.6	102.4	2.36	78.5	15.6	29.3	44.8	68.6	65.7	71.6
Yên Bái	783.5	390.8	392.7	99.5	2.77	87.6	13.8	28.3	43.3	68.8	65.9	71.9
Tuyên Quang	753.8	374.5	379.3	98.7	2.73	94.8	18.7	18.2	27.5	72.0	69.4	74.8

⁴⁹ (1) (2) (3): GSO. (2009). The 2009 Population and Housing Census: Completed Results.

(4) (5): MDRI. (2014). *54 ethnic groups: Why different?* Hanoi: Vietnam Culture and Information Publishing House.

(6) (7): Estimates based on poverty mapping methods using 2010 VHLSS and 2009 Housing and Population Census - World Bank (2012).

(8) (9) (10) (11) (12) (13): GSO. (2009). *The 2009 Population and Housing Census: Fertility and Mortality in Vietnam: Patterns, Trends and Differentials.*

⁵⁰ GSO. (2014). 2014 Mid-term Housing and Population Survey.

National	90,728.90	44,758.1	45,970.8	97.4	2.09	94.7	18.2	14.9	22.4	73.2	70.6	76.0
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Table 14 Provincial level – Income and enterprise registration indicators⁵¹

Province	Income per capita ('000 VND/month)	Registered enterprises	Registered SMEs	Female-owned SMEs
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Sơn La	1,178	718	698	124
Lào Cai	1,468	1,022	986	224
Yên Bái	1,385	921	902	156
Tuyên Quang	1,570	728	712	141
National	2,640	324,691	316,941	81,126

Table 15 Population of four provinces by largest ethnic groups⁵²

Province/Largest ethnic group	Population size	Percentage of total province's population	Population of Male	Population of Female
Sơn La	1,076,055	-	540,981	535,074
<i>Thai</i>	572,441	53%		
<i>Kinh</i>	189,460	18%		
<i>H'mong</i>	157,253	15%		
<i>Mường</i>	81,502	8%		
<i>Xinh Mun</i>	21,288	2%		
Lào Cai	614,595	-	309,167	305,428
<i>Kinh</i>	212,528	35%		
<i>H'mong</i>	146,147	24%		
<i>Tày</i>	94,243	15%		
<i>Dao</i>	88,379	14%		
<i>Giay</i>	28,606	5%		
<i>Nung</i>	25,591	4%		
Yên Bái	740,397	-	369,481	370,916
<i>Kinh</i>	342,880	46%		
<i>Tày</i>	135,314	18%		
<i>Dao</i>	83,888	11%		
<i>H'mong</i>	81,921	11%		
<i>Thai</i>	53,104	7%		
Tuyên Quang	724,821	-	363,108	361,713
<i>Kinh</i>	334,989	46%		
<i>Tày</i>	185,464	26%		
<i>Dao</i>	90,618	13%		
<i>San Chay</i>	61,343	8%		
<i>H'mong</i>	16,974	2%		

⁵¹ (1): GSO. (2014). *Statistical Handbook of Vietnam: 2014*. Statistical Publishing House.

(2) (3) (4): GSO. (2011). *Small and Medium Enterprises*. Statistical Publishing House

⁵² GSO. (2009). *The 2009 Population and Housing Census: Completed Results*.

Part 2 – Women’s Economic Empowerment

Defining women’s empowerment

GREAT’s highest aspiration is that women living in the north-west of Vietnam have improved social and economic status. GREAT was conceived as a program aligned with the third objective of Hanoi Post’s Aid Investment Plan 2016-2020: to *promote women’s economic empowerment, including for ethnic minority women*. However, GREAT’s goal statement has deliberately emphasized the social as well as the economic aspects of empowerment. Increases in income or material assets do not constitute ‘empowerment’, if women don’t also experience personal, spousal or relational, and social gains. For GREAT, the concept of empowerment must be holistic.

In 2011, the International Centre for Research on Women (ICRW) proposed the following definition of women’s economic empowerment. It builds on the literature on the interaction between social power and economic advancement for women, but with a simple formulation that distinguishes between access and agency.

A woman is economically empowered when she has both the ability to succeed and advance economically and the power to make and act on economic decisions.

- To **succeed and advance economically**, women need the skills and resources to compete in markets, as well as fair and equal access to economic institutions.
- To **have the power and agency** to benefit from economic activities, women need to have the ability to make and act on decisions and control resources and profits (ICRW, 2011).

Social outcomes and conducive social norms are implicit in this definition, and the enabling environment for women to advance economically. Over the course of the GREAT design and inception period, the scope of this definition may be adapted. In particular, deeper consultation and engagement with women in the north-west region may illuminate aspects of economic empowerment that are prized or prioritised in their eyes.

Conceptual framework for women’s economic empowerment

In keeping with the elevation of women’s economic empowerment as a development issue, a number of conceptual frameworks exist to guide its identification and achievement. Three frameworks were identified as pertinent for GREAT:

- CARE International’s *Women’s Empowerment Framework* (with a focus on economic advancement; power and agency; structures, resources and social norms);
- The IFPRI/OPHI/USAID *Women’s Empowerment in Agriculture Index (WEAI)* (with five domains covering input to production and autonomy; ownership and access to resources; control over income; leadership and confidence; and time use); and
- The Women’s Economic Empowerment Framework adopted in the DFAT Market Development Facility (MDF)⁵³ (with a focus on income and return on labour; decision-making and influence; manageable workloads for women; access to opportunities and life chances; access to assets and supports).⁵⁴

Each framework has unique attributes; however, the MDF/M4P framework was specifically designed to articulate with a market systems approach, particularly for agricultural markets.

It is not intended that a particular framework is adopted by GREAT at this stage, since key concepts and frameworks will also need to be tested as the GREAT approach crystallises during inception and implementation. However, the MDF/M4P framework is used below to provide a crude ‘baseline’ picture of women’s ‘empowerment’ status in the north-west of Vietnam.⁵⁵ In the absence of complete, disaggregated data for women in Sơn La and Lào Cai, the framework includes information with relevant characteristics, i.e. information relating to: Vietnamese women in general, rural women, and ethnic minority women; gender differences; national laws and rights; and provincial conditions.

⁵³ Drawn from Jones, L. (2012). Discussion Paper for an M4P WEE Framework: How can the Making Markets Work for the Poor Framework work for poor women and poor men?

⁵⁴ For further detail also see DFAT. (2015). Gender equality and women’s economic empowerment in agriculture: Operational Guidance Note.

⁵⁵ Also see the suggested questions for this framework in DFAT. (2015). Gender equality and women’s economic empowerment in agriculture: Operational Guidance Note.

Table 16: Baseline snapshot of women's empowerment status in Vietnam⁵⁶

Domain	Data
<p>Increased income and return on labour</p> <p><i>(value chain engagement, value of women's work, remuneration)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ For some ethnic groups, selling is seen as an extension of 'housework' and does not confer extra status or autonomy. ○ Ethnic minority HHs have limited money to invest in agricultural inputs. ○ Kinh household (HH) incomes are more diversified. In WB study (2009) only 2% of ethnic minority HHs with income from trade compared with 27% of Kinh HHs. ○ Ethnic minority HHs have very few off-farm enterprises, or receive remittances. ○ Kinh HHs are more likely to sell higher value industrial crops (coffee, tea, sugar) whereas minority HHs sell lower value corn and cassava. ○ Informality of employment is higher for ethnic HHs generally reflecting their greater role in subsistence agriculture (93% of women, compared with 78% of Kinh women). ○ Participation in the labour market (formal and informal) is 94.2% for H'mong women, 89.8% for Muong women; and 88.5% for Thai ethnic women. ○ Engagement in waged employment is lower for women from ethnic minorities (37.9%, compared with 43%). This is not a significant aggregate difference. ○ 73% of working aged women in northern uplands and Central Highlands are engaged in agricultural self-employment (compared with 40% of women in Mekong Delta). In the Northern Uplands and Central Highlands, the gender gap in vulnerable employment is highest (67% of women, compared with 51% of men).
<p>Decision-making authority and influence in different spheres, including household finances and trade relations</p> <p><i>(decisions, leadership, trade negotiation)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Women from ethnic minorities are less involved in marketing than Kinh peers. In WB study (2009), 26% of ethnic minority men went to the market alone, compared with 6% of Kinh men. Some women are therefore less exposed to new varieties/breeds and processing techniques. ○ Ethnic minority HHs are unlikely to be traders or to use markets, but prefer to sell at the farm gate. Prices are lower as a result. ○ Community reciprocity, kin obligations and norms on non-accumulation prevail in some ethnic communities, deterring trading. ○ Some ethnic minority groups, notably Dao and H'mong, consider sons to be better decision makers and a better long term investment. ○ In the 2011-16 term, 6% of national assembly deputies were from ethnic minority backgrounds (compared with 15% of the overall population); 24% are women overall (Kinh and ethnic minority).
<p>Manageable workloads for women</p> <p><i>(division of labour)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ National time use data is not available for Vietnam, but a number of studies have attested to women spending between 2 – 3 hours more than men each day on housework chores. ○ There is a perception that men do 'strenuous work' and women do 'light work'. ○ Women have less access to waged work because of child, elderly caring roles
<p>Access to opportunities and life chances such as skills development or job openings</p> <p><i>(mobility, literacy, numeracy)</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More than half of Vietnamese women in agricultural self-employment have not completed basic education. ○ Ethnic women working have lower rates of training, 7.2% compared with 17.6% of Kinh women. ○ 41-75% of women who are from ethnic minorities have never completed basic education, as compared with 20% of Kinh women. ○ H'mong girls attending primary school is 20% less than H'mong boys; literacy rate for H'mong youth is 83.2% compared with 99% for Kinh/Hoa youth. ○ Maternal mortality ratios for H'mong, Thai, Tày and Dao are four times that of Kinh women suggesting inadequate reach, cost and cultural appropriateness of an essential service. ○ The adolescent birth rate among ethnic minority young women is four times that of Kinh (115 live births per 1000 adolescents, compared with 30).

⁵⁶ Data sources: UN Women. Towards Gender Equality in Vietnam: Making Inclusive Growth Work for Women (draft April 2016 – Author: Fontana, M.); UN Women (2016). Women and the Sustainable Development Goals: Vietnam Towards 2030; UN Women. (2015). Briefing note on the Situation of Ethnic Minority women and girls in Vietnam; Pham, QN and Phung, TY. (2015). Gender Analysis of New Rural Areas National Targeted Program (World Bank/UN Women); Jones, N. et al. (2015) 'You must be bold enough to tell your own story': Programming to empower Viet Nam's H'mong Girls (ODI); Pham, QP. (2012). Gender relations from the perspective of ethnic minorities in Vietnam (iSEE); Baulch, B. et al. (2010). Ethnic Minority Poverty in Vietnam. Working Paper No. 169; World Bank. (2009) Country Social Analysis: Ethnicity and Development in Vietnam.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 33% of H'mong girls are married before 18 years; 2.5% for Kinh peers ○ Ethnic minority women have lower reported levels of experiencing violence (although it is not well understood) but higher levels of tolerance of violence than Kinh women (48.8% agree husband's violence is acceptable on certain grounds, as compared with 35.8% of Kinh women).
<p>Access to assets, services and needed supports to advance economically</p> <p>(productive assets, land, technology, extension, financial services, policy and institutional settings)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Only 9% of farm owners in Vietnam are women ○ Ethnic minority HHs sell unprocessed goods because they lack storage and processing facilities, or they pay for processing by Kinh farmers. ○ 74.2% of ethnic minority HHs have men as single name on Land Use Right Certificates, compared with 40.6% of Kinh HHs. ○ 27% of HHs in Vietnam are headed by women ○ Some ethnic minority couples do not have wedding certificates ○ Loans for community / coop supply stores are considered culturally acceptable commerce for some ethnic groups. ○ Language and inability to pay is a key barrier for ethnic women to public services. ○ Extension services derive from lowland, capital intensive farming and are not suited to uplands; not tailored to women's literacy levels and first language.

Part 3 - Implications for the GREAT Design

This final section highlights key implications for the GREAT design, based on the analysis in this paper:

Economic status considerations for women:

- Need for attention to women's self confidence and self-esteem.
- Increase women's access to waged employment and income diversification for households.
- Business training and numeracy support for women.

Social status considerations:

- Need for attention to women's self confidence and self-esteem.
- Support ethnic women's group and community leadership.
- Promote women's awareness of their land use rights, birth and marriage certificates.
- Encourage and facilitate women's mobility (e.g. via access to motorbikes) and access to technology, information and networking (e.g. through smart phones).

Sectoral:

- Support agricultural extension and market services appropriate to upland women's asset base and social mobility.
- Expand women's access to productive resources and labour-saving technologies.
- Promote access to market information.
- Simplify procedures for ethnic minority women and HHs to access savings accounts, rural insurance and commercial loans (in addition to Vietnam Social Policy Bank).

Program operating principles:

- Promote multi-lingual program culture (verbal, written) and staff competency.
- Offer array of non-literacy based options for engagement for women.
- Foster opportunities for ethnic women's representation.
- Support local organisations and cooperatives inclusive of ethnic minority women.

Research and data collection:

- Deep consultation with diverse groups of women in north-west to understand their preferences and priorities.
- Co-research undertaken with ethnic minority women into their own lives.
- Monitor impact of women's social and economic empowerment on girls' (daughters) retention in school.

Annex 6 Socio-economic information on the largest ethnic minority groups in the project area (ADB, 2011)(UNDP, 2012)(CIRUM, 2012)

Tày communities

The social unit of the Tày is the village, whereby a male Village Head that has great authority. Tày property regimes are divided into public ownership of the village and private ownership of household property. Public ownership includes all land, forests, rivers and natural resources within the village. Added to these, roads, bridges, temples and shrines are classified as public property. Private ownership in its turn encompasses all productive land that is owned, cultivated or claimed by each family. In addition, assets such as houses, agricultural products, household items, handicrafts and other items produced by household members are the private property of each family. Each village has regulations concerning the protection of forests and water resources, as well as land and production activities. Social relations between relatives and neighbours in the village are demonstrated in all aspects of life, both in production, spiritual life and religious beliefs.

A number of Tày households live in the project areas, working as smallholder farmers cultivating wet rice. They tend to have quite advanced irrigation systems near rivers and in river valleys. They also engage in animal husbandry, fish farming, and market gardening of fruits, herbs and spices such as anise and cinnamon.

Dao communities

Most Dao communities follow Taoism as their religion, and some still retain the Chinese writing system and literary tradition. The Dao tradition of ancestor worship is symbolized by the use of five colours. Ancient practices are maintained for funerals. The Dao social unit is the village with a male village head. Families follow patrilineal inheritance and men have a strong position. Each village has its own regulations concerning the protection of forests and water resources, as well as concerning land and production activities. Houses are built on stilts, or with one part built on the ground combined with another part on stilts.

Most Dao people are small holder farmers with *slash-and-burn farming* on hilly fields; some families also have wet rice fields. Their staple food is rice, maize, vegetables and bamboo shoots. They cultivate and sell maize, beans and other vegetables and also raise buffaloes, cows, pigs and chicken for selling. Many Dao households are skilled in weaving, blacksmithing, silverwork, carpentry and traditional papermaking. Handicraft selling to markets adds to the household income of the Dao.

H'mong communities

H'mong people are clustered in villages with families from the same lineage. Each village has its own territory, its male chief and its rules concerning land, production, animal husbandry, forest protection and social relations. Relations between people from the same lineage are very strong. Solidarity in each village is enhanced by the fact that all people in the village worship the same ancestor god of the village. Market days are central for the H'mong not only economically but also socially. Markets typically are places for news exchange, for meeting relatives, for cultural and social activities and plays. Markets are also important for young H'mong boys and girls to meet outside their home village, for dating and meeting a potential spouse.

The H'mong economy mainly depends on shifting cultivation and terraced fields with rice, maize, wheat and barley. The traditional intercropping also includes potatoes, vegetables, peanuts, sesame seeds and beans. Flax and cotton cultivation for textile production is important in the H'mong economy, as well as growing fruit trees such as apple, pear, peach, and plum. The H'mong also raise livestock: mainly cattle, pigs and chickens. Horses are used for carrying and pulling heavy loads in mountainous areas, and H'mong have a close relationship to their horses.

Nùng communities

The Nùng are closely related to the Tày and have social and village structures that are similar to the Tày. They share the same language and they often live in the same villages with the Tày. The Nùng follow the male line and have a tradition of giving all inheritance to sons only. Nùng houses have clay walls and a tiled roof and are usually built flat on the ground with some sections raised on stilts. Houses are usually divided into two parts. One part is for living quarters and the other part is for working and for ancestor worship. The Nùng are mostly Buddhists with an influence of Confucianism, and they worship their ancestors. They are recognised for their weaving and bamboo handicrafts, for producing curved roof tiles of clay, for making furniture, baskets, silverworks and paper. The Nùng are often considered as the best horticulturists and blacksmiths in Vietnam.

Like the Tày, the Nùng have a long tradition of wet rice cultivation and well-developed irrigation systems. They also grow vegetables, groundnuts, different fruits, spices and bamboo, and they terrace lower hill slopes to provide land for the farming activities.

Tai (Thai) Communities

Thai language belongs to the Tày-Thai group (of the Tai-Kadai language family). The Thai have their own Sanskrit-style writing system. Their language is taught orally. The Thai have many ancient written works on their history, traditions, customary laws, and literature. The Black Thai worship their ancestors on the 7th and 8th month of the Lunar Year. The White Thai also celebrate the New Year according to the lunar calendar. Villagers also worship the gods of land, mountain, water and the soul of the central post of the village.

The Thai live in small patriarchal families. In some areas, there still exist big families which have many generations living together. Thai houses are built on stilts. Each village of the Thai community usually comprises 40 – 50 houses. In celebrating a new house, people carry out spiritual rites on the spot, reading spiritual texts to drive away bad lucks and to bring good lucks, and to worship ancestors.

The Thai have rich experience in building irrigation works for rice fields. Paddy rice, especially sticky rice, is their main staple. The Thai also grow upland rice, vegetables and many other crops. In addition, there are other livelihood activities such as raising livestock or poultry, knitting, weaving, or making pottery. The Thai are very famous for textile products which are characterized by unique patterns, bright colours and good quality.

Annex 7 Market Systems of the Northern Highlands of Vietnam

Purpose

The purpose of this analysis is to provide an understanding of the market systems currently operating in Lào Cai and Sơn La, in order that the *GREAT* design can be appropriately targeted. The Provincial data currently available is, however, limited, and thus the analysis has relied upon national trends and statistics, upon the data provided by provincial planning, and upon the limited number of project and academic reports relating to the market and value chains operating in the two Provinces. This data, while incomplete, is sufficient to inform the design, and confirm the relevance and feasibility of the proposed approaches. However, once the initiative is approved, *GREAT* will need time to establish a more nuanced understanding of the constraints facing the market systems in the two provinces, and therefore the interventions most likely to deliver the best outcomes for women. Once implementation commences, more detailed data (both primary and secondary) can then be collected to focus *GREAT* and measure results. Much of this information should come through on-the-ground experience as the program begins to support market actors who aspire to be more gender inclusive.

The paper is divided into three parts:

- Part 1 provides an overview of the economy, and the role of the private sector and market systems in north-west Vietnam;
- Part 2 focuses on the characteristics of the tourism and agriculture sectors in north-west Vietnam; and
- Part 3 uses a framework designed for market systems development to analyse opportunities for women's economic empowerment in north-west Vietnam; and highlight the implications for the *GREAT* design.

Part 1: Vietnam's inclusive growth and ongoing challenges

Vietnam is a major development success story, with a record on economic growth and poverty reduction over the last two decades that has been remarkable. Growth has been consistent and relatively inclusive, the general poverty rate having fallen from 58 percent in the early 1990s to an estimated 10 percent in 2010. The *Vietnam 2035* assessment credits this success to visionary leaders, a sense of shared societal purpose, a focus on the future, and an openness to markets and the global economy (GoV, 2016).

As elsewhere in Vietnam, economic growth rates across all north-west provinces have been impressive. Nevertheless, the northern uplands remain the poorest of Vietnam's regions. Poverty surveys show that income-based poverty in these areas is consistently between 20 and 40 percent, whereas the poverty incidence in the remainder of the country ranges between 0 and 20 percent (MOLISA, 2013)⁵⁷. If growth is to be inclusive in the north-west region, however, the linked issues of gender and ethnicity need to be effectively addressed.

From a gender perspective, Vietnam is deservedly recognised for its achievements in gender equality (see Annex 5). A number of challenges persist, however, most of which are the result of deep-rooted gender biases. Particularly in rural and remote areas, women are the ones mainly responsible for household tasks and for ensuring the well-being of their families. They have less mobility than men, less access to technical and financial support, and less influence over the key decisions made in both the home and the wider community. The unequal burden of unpaid agricultural and home-based work which falls to women also limits their involvement in the workplace, and in decision-making forums. As elsewhere, some women also experience gender-based violence, which closely correlates with lack of income⁵⁸, and is further exacerbated by their lack of mobility. Also of concern is the widening gap in sex-ratio at birth, which favours sons⁵⁹.

From an ethnic perspective, ethnic minority men and women now constitute the bulk of the remaining absolute poor both nationally and in the north-west region, with women disproportionately bearing the burden. Rough projections prepared by the World Bank in early 2015 indicate that by 2020 poverty among ethnic minorities will still remain high at 38 percent. Of particular concern is that in recent years, progress in relation to poverty reduction, child mortality, and nutrition has stalled for ethnic minorities. Support must therefore be framed in a way that ensures that public services and resources are not captured, but reach ethnic minority areas, with innovative solutions specifically tailored to the problems and opportunities

⁵⁷ Furthermore, once the new multi-dimensional poverty assessment is rolled out during 2016, the percentage of those classified as poor in the north-west is expected to significantly increase due to the fact that poverty amongst ethnic minority households is known to be disproportionately underestimated when based on consumption alone. For example, the (consumption-based) poverty level in Lào Cai that was estimated to be 22 percent in 2013, could be re-calculated to over 47 percent under the new multi-dimensional measure (UNDP, 2016).

⁵⁸ Women experiencing violence earn, on average, 35% less than other women (UNFPA, 2012) (National University of Ireland/IFGS, 2013).

⁵⁹ Vietnam has the third highest foetal sex-selection rate after China and India. This preference for sons is more marked in wealthier provinces, which have readier access to reproductive technologies.

that women and girls face in these communities (UN Women, 2016). Such initiatives will need a preponderance of women in leadership roles.

DFAT and the GoV have agreed that *GREAT* will focus on the particular role that women (particularly women from ethnic minorities) can play in poverty alleviation in the north-west by empowering their own lives, and in consequence the lives of their families, groups and communities. The focus of *GREAT* is strongly in line with the recommendations of the UN Women study released in June 2016 '*Towards gender equality in Vietnam: Making inclusive growth work for women*'. This study recommended that the government and development community focus on:

1. Improving the productivity and earning capacity of women who rely on agriculture as their main source of livelihood.
2. Paying particular attention to the plight of ethnic minority women and girls, who continue to lag behind both ethnic minority men, and Kinh and Chinese women in accessing economic opportunities; and
3. Outside of agriculture, facilitating women's access to employment in jobs and sectors that are not traditionally 'female' (UN Women, 2016).

GREAT clearly aligns with these recommendations, given its intent to focus women's economic empowerment on the inclusive engagement of ethnic minorities, and on the provision of opportunities in agriculture, and for women to transition to village-based or off-farm employment in the tourism sector.

The economy of Sơn La and Lào Cai

The two focal provinces for Australian assistance are Lào Cai and Sơn La. Each presents its own opportunities.

Sơn La Province is the largest Province of the north-west region (with a land area of just over 14,000km²), has the largest area of natural forest, and is the major agricultural hub of the Hanoi-Laos Corridor. Sơn La also:

- is home to twelve ethnic groups;
- has the largest population of all the north-west Provinces (1.15m). In 2015, 80% were still primarily engaged in agriculture and forestry;
- has by far the largest absolute numbers of poor people (528,000)⁶⁰ of any Province in the Tây Bắc Region;
- has a Kinh population of just 18%;
- has an ethnic population that includes: Thai (53%); H'mong (15%) and Muong (8%);
- shares a 250 kilometre international trading border with Laos; and
- is 49% female (according to the most recent *Population and Housing Census (2009)*).

Lào Cai Province is half the size of Sơn La, but hosts the largest land border crossing into China (Yunnan province) and is thus the gateway for the Hanoi/Yunnan corridor. Lào Cai also:

- is an historic highland tourist destination that has seen significant growth in its tourism, mining and related sectors in recent years;
- has a population of 615,000 people comprised of 33 ethnic groups – this is two thirds of the population living in Sơn La, but more than double the number of ethnic groups, a fact that is perhaps reflective of Lào Cai's border with multi-ethnic Yunnan Province in China;
- has a Kinh population of 35%;
- has an ethnic composition that includes: H'mong (24%); Tày (15%); Dao (14%); and Nùng (4%);
- is also 49% female; and
- has almost 300,000 (largely indigenous) poor, and yet the highest GDP and growth figures, and thus the highest levels of inter-ethnic inequality in the Tây Bắc Region.

Sơn La and Lào Cai currently derive most of their provincial incomes from the agriculture, services (including tourism), and industry (including energy and mining) sectors. The formal economy of both Provinces has changed rapidly over the past decade, with both Provinces experiencing rapid and consistent growth in GDP. Sơn La's GDP grew by 9.79% in 2015, achieving a per capita GDP of VND 23.9m (US\$1,300). Lào Cai's GDP has grown annually by 14%, its most recent per capita GDP being US\$2,300. While growth in all sectors has been rapid, growth in the services and industry sectors has outstripped that of the agriculture sector with a concomitant increase in its share of provincial GDP. The current proportions of GDP across these three sectors in each Province are shown below.

⁶⁰ Based on the new multi-dimensional poverty rate of 52.4 per cent (UNDP, 2016).

Table 17: Cross sectoral GDP in Lào Cai and Sơn La

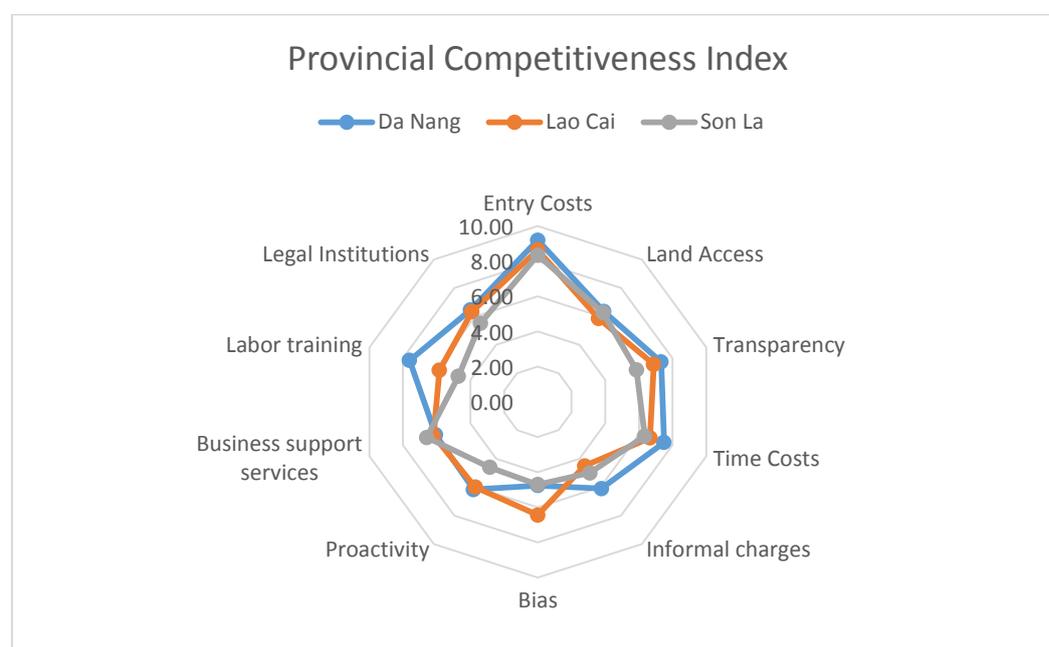
	Sơn La	Lào Cai
Agriculture	29 %	16 %
Services	44 %	43 %
Industry	27 %	41 %

Yet while the rapid growth of services and industry is both significant and in line with national trends, employment opportunities in these Provinces do not reflect the same shift. Agriculture in both Provinces still provides the majority of formal employment - over 76 percent in Lào Cai and 80 percent in Sơn La, with women supplying almost 60 percent of these figures. This data reveals a huge gap between the economic and labour structures in both Provinces, and the fact that most families still engage in traditional or transitional livelihoods, with only a few contributing to the dramatic rise in economic growth. *GREAT* must focus on improving formal labour participation rates and labour productivity in the agriculture sector, if it is to ensure that women effectively engage with the economy, and have a firm base from which they, and their families can enter other sectors.

From a business perspective, Lào Cai is ranked 5th (excellent) on the national Provincial Competitiveness Index Rankings, reflecting the high standard of its enabling and support services. Sơn La is ranked 44th (mid-high), well down the list, although it performs better on some criteria than others (especially business support services). Figure 17 shows the relative scores for both Sơn La and Lào Cai compared with the 1st ranked province, Da Nang. In fact, in 2014, Lào Cai introduced its own District Competitiveness Index to enhance local authority capacity, and encourage creativity in supporting enterprises - an innovation that has attracted the attention of, and significant support from, the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI).

The Provincial attention being given to business competitiveness, and the gradual improvement in enabling environment reforms, needs to be supported. The area where *GREAT* has greatest potential to do so is through the provision of support to the inclusivity, female participation, reach and innovation of private sector players.

Figure 17: Vietnam's Provincial Competitiveness Index for three Provinces (Da Nang 1st; Lào Cai 5th and Sơn La 44th)



From a cross-border perspective, China is a significant market force in all sectors. For example, spices (e.g. cardamom), fruits and vegetables are actively sold across the border, although these exports are significantly outweighed by the imports of the cheaper Chinese produce that dominate the three main urban vegetable markets in Lào Cai Province. In addition, labour rates in China are higher than in Vietnam, and thus China is an illegal but lucrative source of seasonal work for some women and men. With the surge in China's middle class, the number of Chinese tourists is also increasing dramatically, and thus Chinese tourists are the main focus of many tourist-associated northern businesses.

Finally, a common issue that constrains the development of businesses in both Sơn La and Lào Cai (as elsewhere in Vietnam) is the distortions in land and capital markets, which are guided less by efficient market signals, and more by arbitrary administrative decisions associated with government allocations that favour state owned or preferred enterprises. Data indicates, in fact, that provinces with a high density of SOEs provide less credit to private firms, and require more time than other provinces to issue land rights certificates (Nguyen & Freeman, 2009). Sơn La and Lào Cai have both been reducing state control of their enterprises, but change has been slow and needs to be more transparent.

Recent reports on the status of land rights in Vietnam confirm that the allocation and distribution of land by provincial authorities is unduly influenced by political or personal motives that not only distort the land market, but can reinforce gender inequalities. (UDAID, 2016). This activity:

1. limits access to land, capital and the security of business tenure. Hence, one coffee processor who sources coffee largely from Sơn La, has chosen to establish their processing factory in Hanoi, partly because access to title in Hanoi is clearer and more secure. Even so, access to suitable land proved very difficult;
2. hinders the access of farm-based enterprises to sufficient quality land to ensure critical mass and efficiency. The inability to consolidate small landholdings in agriculture is depressing small-landholder profits and sector productivity; and
3. tends to favour men and, conversely, undermine the land use rights of women. Thus women remain significantly underrepresented on land titles, a fact that limits their livelihood security, and their access to both land and capital.

The implementation of radical reforms in the 1990s resulted in profound changes in legislation and public policy around land rights, contributing to Vietnam's rapid economic growth. The 1993 Land Law created a land market, and prompted a sweeping land redistribution program. Within seven years, eleven million Land Use Rights Certificates (LURCS) were issued to rural households. Although this law was supposed to be gender neutral, more men received LURCS than women. The 2003 Land Law corrected some gender inequalities by requiring the LURCs to record the names of both spouses, as opposed to only the household 'head'. However, this supportive legal framework is currently thwarted by a general lack of awareness of Vietnam's property rights laws on the part of both men and women, as well as a lack of resources (and sometimes will) at the provincial level to enforce women's property rights.

GREAT can support innovative improvements in these areas through supporting businesses that:

1. deal preferentially with households where women and men are both listed on the LURC;
2. build community based mechanisms for land consolidation through common interest groups, family cluster contract farming, and cooperative production;
3. introduce improved financial products tailored to the needs of women and small businesses; and
4. jointly collect evidence and lobby the PPC, local departments and national ministries to rectify constraints to business operations in the Provinces.

Market Systems

GREAT aims (in part) to use market-based approaches to influence women's economic empowerment by building more balanced opportunity for women's economic engagement and benefit in the market systems of Lào Cai and Sơn La. A market system is a network of buyers, sellers and other actors that trade in a given product or service, including:

1. Direct market players – the producers, buyers and consumers who directly drive the economic activity in a particular market;
2. Suppliers of the goods and services that support a market - such as banks and other financial services, equipment suppliers, and business consulting;
3. Entities that influence the business environment surrounding a market - such as policy/regulatory agencies, vocational trainers, infrastructure providers and business associations, as well as the key factor markets (land, water, capital, labour and energy).

A market system can be specific to a product or service (e.g. coffee, dairy or tourism) or it can be a cross-cutting sector in itself (finance, labour, business development services). A market system's strength depends on how efficiently the direct market players can obtain financing, secure skills and resources, negotiate regulation, launch businesses and adopt new technologies and best practices.

A market system incorporates, but is broader than, its component value chain(s). A value chain focuses on a particular product or service; the market system includes that value chain, but also encompasses the broader enabling environment, as well as the human dimensions of power, relationship, concessions, sanctions, groups, institutions and skills. Market systems approaches complement and add value to enabling environment initiatives (such as RCV) that aim to guide

economic growth and development by building the capacity of market agencies and institutions, and developing the policies that ensure smooth market operation.

Market Systems in Vietnam

The market systems of Vietnam are embedded within a 'socialist' market economy, and as such are unique. The role of the state is significant and often beneficial, although it can distort markets through the operation of, and preferential treatment offered to, State Owned or other privileged enterprises. There have been successive steps to promote a stronger market economy, from amendments to the Law on Enterprise in 1999, 2005, and 2014, to enshrining the principle of equal treatment of all sectors of the economy in the 2013 Constitution (GoV, 2016).

Market systems work best to increase economic growth where the limited resources are used most efficiently. Hence while state-led development can be a viable alternative to market-led development, the state tends to be less efficient in the allocation and use of resources than is a free market economy. (The state, on the other hand, is potentially much better at protecting the 'public good' than is a free-market economy (e.g. through the promotion of inclusion, labour rights, and environmental awareness)).

While Vietnam's growth has been rapid and relatively inclusive, the Government of Vietnam and its major partners are currently concerned by trends toward productivity stagnation. Based on macro analysis at the national level, the main reason for this has been the steady erosion in the productivity growth of both state owned enterprises and, more importantly, domestic private sector enterprises – the latter being universally viewed as the main engine of future growth (GoV, 2016).

Currently, the firms with connections (which is all SOEs, some large domestic private firms, and most FDI firms) have an unfair advantage over the domestic private sector. A key pillar of the Government of Vietnam's *Vietnam 2035* is, therefore, to achieve greater efficiency and more sustainable growth in markets by levelling the playing field between state owned and private sector players, particularly in terms of their access to land, capital and government procurement, and tax and dividend policies. By doing this, the efficient use of state capital for the approximately three thousand national SOEs will be maximised, preferential treatment for SOEs will be reduced, and competition between SOEs and the private sector will be opened up.

It would be easy, however, for such growth to result in market inequities. Hence while the government is already developing economic policies to ensure an appropriate balance between growth and equity, its efforts need to be accelerated to ensure that:

- the allocation of resources is determined by both the laws of supply and demand AND the public good,
- the prices for goods and services are not determined through arbitrary or unreasonable interventions, and
- subsidies will be transparent and justified as a matter of public policy.

Australia, through the *GREAT* initiative, can contribute to these changes by supporting women's economic empowerment within selected market systems in the north-west region, thereby enabling those market systems to operate more productively, inclusively and beneficially for all. Although there is little experience or data associated with the use of market-based approaches in socialist market economies, these approaches have been used extensively in countries that have far more fundamental enabling environment constraints than exist in Vietnam. The current market systems in Vietnam are not just solid but rapidly growing, while its domestic private sector is not just expanding but increasingly innovative. Market based interventions - such as 'Markets for the Poor' and 'Challenge Funds' – have worked very effectively in similar situations, as evidenced by the success of DFID's Vietnam Business Challenge Fund implemented by SNV. The fundamental principle behind such approaches is to seek innovative partners - whether these from the private sector or are SOEs - who are passionate about inclusive economic growth, and are committed to innovation.

Already, the RCV program of DFAT (and other development partners) is addressing many of the broader constraints that affect market engagement (business regulation reforms, SOE reform, competition policy, liberalisation of factor markets, agriculture sector reforms). Furthermore, there is scope for RCV's next phase to become more provincially focused – in which case, consideration should be given to a focus on Son La and Lào Cai, given its significant complementarity with *GREAT*.

The major market-based opportunities for women in Son La and Lào Cai - be they engaged in SMEs or smallholder production, or seeking off-farm employment - are in the agriculture and tourism sectors, both of which have unique comparative advantages within Vietnam, and offer more opportunity for women than for men. Improvements to women's work conditions, their capacity to make informed decisions, and the returns on their labour, will have significant benefits.

Part 2: Key Market Systems for Inclusive Growth

Tourism

The scenery, culture, ethnic diversity and cooler elevated climate in the Tây Bắc Region, combined with its proximity to the huge population bases in Hanoi and southern China, are driving unprecedented growth in both relaxation and adventure tourism. Recent assessments show that tourist numbers in the north-west mountainous region trebled in the five years between 2008 and 2013 (European Union, 2013) and continue to grow. Tourism in Lào Cai has contributed 11.5% to the provincial GDP consistently between 2010 and 2015. Many of the opportunities for supplying goods and services to the tourism sector are not only expanding rapidly, but already involve women.

The *Strategy for Tourism Development in Viet Nam to 2020, Vision to 2030* (STDV) forecasts 10.5 million international arrivals, and tourism receipts of US\$19 billion by 2020. The 2005 Tourism Law provides the legal basis for the STDV, mandating the *Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism* (MCST) and its specialized technical agency, the VNAT, to guide the development of environmentally and socially sustainable tourism by focusing on the protection, promotion, and development of cultural and historical tourism, with the broad participation of all economic sectors. The STDV's strategic thrusts are to:

- develop tourism into a leading economic sector;
- improve tourism quality, efficiency, brand recognition, and competitiveness;
- promote both international and domestic tourism, but with a focus on attracting high-spending international visitors;
- protect cultural, historic, and natural resources; and
- increase domestic and international tourism investment. (ADB, 2013)

Within the northern mountainous areas, tourism development has been rapid. The Tây Bắc Region will, in fact, play host for the National Tourism Year in 2017.

Lào Cai is well known for its diverse ethnic groups and terraced rice cultivation. Lào Cai city, nearby Bac Ha, and the hill station of Sapa are the main focuses of tourist activity. Tourism revenue has grown at an average rate of 36% since 2008, and resulted in increases in the average daily expenditure across all markets (ADB, 2013) (Vietnam Travel, 2016). In 2015, however, the province's tourism revenue increased by 42.7%, reaching 4675.3 billion VND, associated with an increase in total tourist arrivals of 42.3% over 2014 (1.47 million in 2014 to 2 million in 2015). A number of factors have contributed to this recent dramatic rise, including:

- 68% of recent visitors have been domestic, the domestic tourist sector having in recent years grown significantly faster than the international sector;
- the construction of the highway from Nội Bài to Lào Cai;
- extensive investment in tourism in Lào Cai, including the construction of major hotels (such as the 5-star Aristo hotel and 4-star PetroVietnam Sa Pa hotel), a tourist complex, and a cable car to the summit of Phan Xi Păng peak (which at 3,143 meters is the highest peak in Indochina). Lào Cai province now has over 515 accommodation facilities with nearly 5,000 rooms catering to all tastes and budgets.

Sơn La province has also become a popular tourist destination in recent years, due to its various ethnicities, festivals, historical relics and scenic spots. According to the local DCST, Mộc Châu has seen continuous increases in its number of tourists, from 288 000 arrivals in 2010, to 850 000 in 2014, to 1 million in 2015. Once again, domestic arrivals predominate, centred around the Spring holidays when the plum and peach flowers blossom, and the Mong New Year festival in September. Nevertheless, the Sơn La tourist sector remains much more constrained than the Lào Cai tourist sector in terms of visitor numbers, facilities and development. Thus in an effort to capture more of the burgeoning tourism market, the local People's Committee has devised a number of incentives to attract long-term and comprehensive investment in its tourist sector, the chief of which is the recently approved master plan for the development of the Mộc Châu National Tourism Zone. This Zone covers more than 206,000 hectares in the Mộc Châu and Vân Hồ districts, and features accessible and picturesque plateau landscapes, a diversity of unique products, and ethnic minority villages. The Zone is expected to welcome 1.2 million visitors by 2020, generating revenues of 1.5 trillion VND (71.4 million USD) (Vietnam Plus, 2015).

The tourism sector in the north-west region as a whole has potential for significant expansion in both seasonal and permanent employment, and a workforce that is increasingly weighted towards women. It is mostly women who manage homestays, undertake hospitality and catering roles, or are employed within tourist establishments. A variety of micro-enterprises are also associated with the tourist trade - usually sole proprietors, or common interest groups, involved in the production and sale of handicrafts, traditional textiles, and herbal/medicinal/spa products, or who act as self-employed guides and translators. Smallholder farmers – also often women – are also needed to supply food products to guest houses

and restaurants. Beyond the obvious, though, the numbers and profiles of those involved in the tourist sectors of Lào Cai and Sơn La are hard to ascertain due to the dearth of both current data, and of data collection initiatives.

Despite this lack of data, however, it is clear that there remains significant potential to improve both the access and agency of women, particularly ethnic minority women, within the provinces' tourism markets. Both provincial governments are keen to see the engagement of women expand. For example, Hoàng Thị Vượng, head of the provincial DCST of Lào Cai, indicates there are now twelve tourist community hubs in Lào Cai, including 136 homestays, with each hub household having an income of between 10 million VND and 20 million VND (450 to 900 USD) per year. The DCST estimates that in villages that host tourist community models, poverty is being eradicated three to four times faster than in other villages. (Vietnam Plus, 2016)

Increasing numbers of Vietnamese women (especially younger women) are gaining access to wage jobs that are relatively more secure, despite ongoing gender segregation in the labour market. *GREAT* support could enable women to train in technical fields which are still often closed to them - this would not only expand the range of economic options available to women, but would increase their ability to rise up the occupational hierarchy (Kabeer, Tran Thi, & Vu Manh, 2005). An available and significant first step in Lào Cai and Sơn La, would be expanding women's professional skills and roles within the tourism sector, which is already a major off-farm employment opportunity for many women. Innovative solutions are also needed to tackle gender stereotyping in the workplace, and the perpetuation of prejudices that restrict women's choice of employment. Another advantage offered by the tourism sector is that it does not necessarily require women to relocate, as opportunity exists for village-based women to become significant suppliers of goods and services. (UN Women, 2016).

There are two major donor programs whose activities are at least partly influencing tourism in the Tây Bắc Region:

- the large EU-funded *Environmentally and Socially Responsible Tourism Capacity Development Program* (ESRT) supports both government and industry development, and
- the ADB's *Tourism Infrastructure for Inclusive Growth Program* works across the greater Mekong Region, but has a specific infrastructure development project focused on Vietnam.

Very few projects in the region, however, specifically focus on opportunities for women, and/or for poor and marginalised ethnic groups, one of these few being the IUCN/SNV-supported initiative to develop home-stays in Sapa.

Agriculture

In the mountainous north-west, the production of highly profitable commodities such as tea, coffee, and spices is made viable by the availability of land, and the proximity to major export hubs, while the production of counter-seasonal, and perishable crops such as vegetables, soft fruits and flowers is made highly attractive by the cooler climate and the nearness to the major urban markets in Hanoi. In recent decades, there has been a significant feminisation of agriculture in Vietnam, especially in the north, and thus women already undertake the majority of labour roles in many of the agriculture value chains.

Agriculture (including crops, livestock, fisheries and forestry) remains the major labour activity in Lào Cai and Sơn La, despite it contributing a diminishing proportion to the provincial GDPs. Its performance is therefore having a major impact on the overall labour productivity of the provincial economies. Also, from a broader perspective, agriculture is the sector from which many of the poor households - 90 per cent of whom live in rural areas - have moved up the ladder from subsistence to commercial activity.

Both provinces have plentiful land resources. These include:

1. Lowland irrigated areas that are invariably dedicated to rice, a crop that has historically done very well. Greater market freedom is now needed, however, to determine the best use for the increasingly valuable irrigation water. The debate, which is highly political, must balance a variety of competing interests with the national interest in food security.
2. Midland fertile uplands such as the Nà Sản Plateau (Elevation: 800 m) in Sơn La where industrial crops are grown, such as sugarcane, and fruit trees (e.g. mulberry). Many of these areas struggle to maintain a competitive advantage over similar production areas elsewhere.
3. Elevated and plateau areas (e.g. the Mộc Châu plateau in Sơn La or Sa Pa in Lào Cai) offer a unique competitive advantage, possessing as they do a mild climate not found elsewhere in Vietnam (mean annual temperatures of 18 to 20°C). These areas provide competitive opportunities to grow cool season fruits and vegetables, both seasonally and year round. They are already famous for the production of quality Arabica coffee and green tea, mostly for bulk export. Significant opportunity therefore exists for value adding and brand promotion, given the huge emerging middle class, both in Vietnam and across the wider region. The highland areas also offer opportunities for pasture improvement, particularly for cattle and buffalo (both meat and dairy products).

4. Both provinces still have significant forestry areas, despite pervasive and illegal logging for many years. Thus significant upgrading of government oversight and industry standards is needed if the opportunity that exists for a sustainable forestry industry is to be fully realised. The opportunistic collection and sale of non-timber forest products (e.g. nuts, seeds, berries, mushrooms, oils, foliage) for medicinal, handicraft, and cultural uses is another, if niche, opportunity for those communities with good access to forestry areas. However, once again, such harvesting needs sound government oversight and careful community-based management plans if it is to be sustainable in the longer term.

Growth in agriculture in Lào Cai and Sơn La has been solid at about 3 to 4 percent per year, and although this is well short of the meteoric growth in sectors such as services and manufacturing, several segments of the agriculture sector have grown much more rapidly than others (e.g. high value horticulture, aquaculture and livestock), while it is these that are providing smallholder farmers with most of the currently available opportunities for increased returns.

Over recent years, growth in agriculture has been associated with a gradual change toward a market-driven, commercially-oriented approach. Market actors are no longer content to allow production and consolidation to be subject to the vagaries of smallholder production. They are thus forming stronger backward linkages to ensure that the quality, continuity and quantity of production better meets their clients' needs. Often these improved relationships have been beneficial to farmers. There have, however, been several reported cases of exploitation.

Recent analysis has identified that two major sets of changes will be needed if the recent growths in productivity, and the sector as a whole, are to be maintained. The first set of changes relates to what is generally referred to as agricultural transformation. This will involve:

- land consolidation,
- mechanization,
- flexible and market-determined patterns of land use (with less of an administratively-imposed focus on rice, for instance), and
- the provision of farm services.

The second set of changes relates to the modernization and commercialization of the entire agro-food system, from procurement at the farm gate, to the processing and distribution of commercially valued food products, to the enforcement of safety standards. Such massive changes will, however, have major implications for smallholder farmers, many of whom are aging. Those with support networks already in place, may decide to continue their semi-subsistence lifestyles, while depending on remittances and other broader support to sustain their needs. Those without such support networks will have the following options:

1. *Get big*: this refers to farmers increasing the quantity, quality and continuity of production, thereby increasing their power in market negotiations. Yet many of the smallholders in the north-west region are rendered incapable of 'getting big', because of the limitations they face in accessing land and capital. Furthermore, many of the larger corporate agricultural models (e.g. rubber) have given little (or no) thought to the needs of either smallholders or the environment. Better models of sustainable land consolidation are therefore needed;
2. *Get together*: farmers in the north-west have (as elsewhere) been drawn together into common interest groups/cooperatives to achieve the efficiencies of scale needed to effectively enter markets. Many such groups also provide broader support through benefits that include: input purchasing, training, savings groups and social support. These groups/cooperatives are, for many communities, a highly rated option. Yet there are other viable options for 'getting together'. There are, for instance, commercial supply contracts between buyers/processors and individuals, families or local groups, as have often been preferred by the coffee and tea industries
3. *Get specialised*: For an entrepreneurial few there will be the opportunity to supply niche markets with very specialised products, which by definition are in short supply, or require the input of specialist skills or processes e.g. organics production, single-sourced specialty products (e.g. honey, coffee), or cultural specialties. The tea and coffee industries also offer significant opportunity for quality niche supply to the burgeoning tourist and domestic markets.
4. *Get out*: For other families - possibly in the longer term: the majority of families – the best livelihood opportunities will not be found in agriculture. Mechanisms will therefore be needed that identify such families and the ways they can be supported to transition to off farm employment with dignity.

Greater recognition is needed not just of agriculture's importance as a source of employment, but as a basis for growth in other sectors. Stronger backward and forward linkages between agriculture and other sectors correlates with stronger domestic demand, and hence wage-led economic growth, in all sectors.

As for the particular role that women play in agriculture: as previously mentioned, more of the labour is performed by women than by men. Yet it is the men who are most often in charge, and thus are evolving the sector. 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 their work conditions/ quality of engagement, enhance their returns, and increase their decision-making and leadership within the sector as a whole.

It is apparent from the sheer numbers of women involved in agriculture, and the regions where agriculture dominates (the poorest ones), that an economic strategy that proactively supports women farmers is crucial for:

- achieving gender equality,
- reducing spatial and income inequality, and
- promoting a sustained and balanced growth path.

Part 3: Options for Intervention

This section outlines some of the market-based opportunities available to *GREAT* to improve women's economic empowerment. It uses the DFAT framework for WEE, largely developed by Linda Jones, and demonstrated through the Market Development Facility. This WEE Framework outlines three key elements of WEE:

1. Economic Advancement
2. Agency: The increased capacity and confidence of women to make informed choices, and to transform those choices into desired outcomes, as evidenced by improved decision-making and reduced workloads; and
3. Access: Women's increased and equitable access to the skills, services, opportunities, assets and resources necessary for their economic advancement.

In discussing these elements of WEE, this section outlines:

- The likely systemic changes possible over five years;
- The measurable changes that would contribute to these systemic changes; and
- The resources needed to achieve this.

Tourism

SYSTEMIC CHANGE:

The brief analysis undertaken thus far suggests that there is significant scope for *GREAT* to enable the more beneficial and inclusive engagement of women in the tourist market systems in Sơn La and Lào Cai. The continuing growth of the tourism sector in the north-west suggests that *GREAT's* focus should be on improving women's/ minority women's access and inclusion (rather than on growth per se). There are three systemic changes that *GREAT* should be in a position to contribute to over its first five years, through partnerships with local market actors. These are:

1. More women - particularly younger women and those from ethnic minority groups - will have greater access to skills and jobs (beyond casual and part time work) and greater income.
2. More women in remote villages and outer areas will be in a position to access income through the provision of goods and services to tourists travelling to remote locations, as well as the provision of goods to wholesalers and retailers through mutually beneficial business relationships. Goods and services could include:
 - a. Goods: foods; fresh and processed medicinal herbs (for herbal baths, creams, oils, consumption) traditional handicrafts and fabrics; and
 - b. Services: tour excursions, tour guides, porters, homestays, and complementary village-based services.
3. Women will have a more pervasive and a more recognised role in decision-making and leadership throughout the tourism sector.

MEASUREABLE CHANGES:

Over time, as the number and systemic impacts of activities are realised, there will be measurable changes in the lives of beneficiary women across five dimensions of Women's Economic Engagement:

Economic Advancement
Women receive first time or higher salaries within the full spectrum of tourism-related jobs.
Formal employment brings advantages such as bank accounts and social support (e.g. day care).
Female suppliers sell to the tourism industry and earn more money.
Female employment in tourism establishments (hotels, resorts and restaurants) increases due to increased occupancy.
More female entrepreneurs are acting as activity and service providers.
Female entrepreneurs earning more profits, and ploughing more back into their businesses, are creating more jobs

and income opportunities for more women.
Decision-making
Women have greater influence on decisions regarding household income, and have direct control over their own income streams.
Women are able to build relationships with a range of buyers and service providers, have pricing information, and negotiation power.
Women entrepreneurs build their businesses, and assume greater leadership roles within local decision-making and planning groups.
Female entrepreneurs have greater knowledge and stronger networks, are able to negotiate better prices and services, and can choose whom they wish to sell to/ conduct business with.
Workload
Women's workload is reduced through the increased production efficiencies provided by new processing methods, technologies or tools.
Women's time is saved through improved collection and distribution networks, or direct links to large buyers that enable them to not spend the entire day at the local craft market (for instance).
Access to life opportunities and skills
Young women receive training and skills development that allows them to access safe and secure employment with provincially-based tourist facilities and operators.
Job creation in hotels and resorts, and as activity and service providers (both in the peak/off-peak season) provide women with better choices/ job opportunities.
Women have more opportunities for upward mobility because businesses are investing in their supply chains.
Access to assets and services
Women are better able to provide quality crafts and agro-produce to the tourism market because of their improved access to transport, e-information, market linkages, and storage facilities.
Women have better access to information on consumer/ tourist tastes, and to processing units that can value add to raw materials.
Female entrepreneurs involved in tourism ventures have access to online booking systems and business advisory services.

RESOURCES:

To achieve these changes, *GREAT* will partner with locally relevant and sustainable actors in the tourism sector, including:

1. Vendors, suppliers, and processors: *GREAT* will help to improve and increase their sourcing of local products in order meet the demand from hotels, restaurants and other tourist facilities (food, cosmetics, oils, textiles, handicrafts);
2. Provincially-based manufacturers or suppliers of goods and services: *GREAT* will help improve and/or promote their products to tourists;
3. Tourism-related businesses (operators, activity organisers): *GREAT* will help develop their services, and in the promotion of the more remote attractions of the Provinces.
4. Tourism groups and tourism business councils: *GREAT* will help facilitate the dialogues with Government seeking to improve the policies governing the operation of the tourism market.

Thus *GREAT* could initially support a range of partnerships involved with: product development, improved information and e-presence, capacity building, technology support, backward linkages, market access, private sector extension and support, and compliance. Over time, and as experience reveals common constraints across women-centric businesses, *GREAT* may also partner with:

- factor markets aimed at improving access to land and capital;
- business skills and accounting providers to increase access to business development services; and
- support agencies (government, educational institutions, business councils or civil society groups) aimed at training, advocacy, policy reform and infrastructure provision.

Agriculture

SYSTEMIC CHANGE:

Based on the brief analysis there is significant scope to enhance the agricultural market system in Sơn La and Lào Cai to enable the more beneficial and inclusive engagement of women. Components of the agricultural sector in the north west are growing well so *GREAT*'s focus should be on improving access and inclusion in these sectors (rather than growth per se). Counter seasonal crop production (fruit vegetables and ornamentals); improved local processing and value adding (tea,

coffee, spices and F&V; and improved input and information services are key. There are three systemic changes that GREAT should be able to contribute to over its first five years through partnerships with local market actors. These include:

1. Women lead or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives increase rapidly and make more money as vendors, suppliers, and processors increase their local sourcing, their reach, their value adding, and/or the diversity of product sought, because they can see the benefits of working more closely with women suppliers.
2. Women lead or co-managed households, groups or cooperatives have better access to inputs and/or extension service from vendors, suppliers, and processors who wish to ensure the ongoing consistence, quality and quantity of supply.
3. More women take a more pervasive and more recognised role in decision-making and leadership throughout the agriculture sector.

MEASUREABLE CHANGES:

Over time, as the number and systemic impacts of activities are realised, there will be measurable changes in the lives of beneficiary women. These could include results across five dimensions of Women's Economic Engagement:

Economic Advancement
Women make more income more consistently from selling agricultural products directly or through agents, consolidators, processors, resorts, hotels and restaurants.
Women receive more income from part and full time work opportunities throughout the value chain.
Vendors, processors and suppliers are customizing their efforts to include and target women in their outreach programs.
Decision-making
Women influence decisions made over household income and have direct control over individual income streams
Women are able to build relationships with a range of buyers and service providers, have pricing information and negotiation power.
Women entrepreneurs build their businesses and assume greater leadership roles within local decision-making and planning
Female entrepreneurs have greater knowledge, strong networks and are able to negotiate better prices, services and choose whom they wish to sell to or conduct business with.
Workload
Women's workload is reduced through new processing methods, improved technology and new tools which increase production efficiencies.
Women's time is saved by having improved collection and distribution networks, or direct links to large buyers so women have the option not to spend the whole day at the local market if they don't want to.
Access to life opportunities and skills
Women have the skills to identify market need and supply the quantity and quality of agricultural product required by the market.
Women can access the information needed for them to make production and marketing decisions due to the improved services available both from public and private suppliers.
Women are better trained and have more opportunities for upward mobility because businesses are investing in their supply chain
Access to assets and services
Women have better access to inputs, information, skills, farm employment and markets.

RESOURCES:

To Achieve this GREAT would partner with locally relevant and sustainable actors in the agriculture sector including:

1. Vendors, suppliers, and processors to improve and increase their sourcing of local products to supply the demand from local regional and Chinese markets;
2. Provincially based manufacturers or suppliers of goods and services to improve the quality, backward linkages and product diversity of their businesses;
3. Agriculture and agribusiness councils to improve their dialogue with Government to improve policy governing the operation of the agricultural market.

GREAT could support partnerships that focus on product development, promotion, year-round production, Improved information and e-presence, capacity building, technology support, backward linkages, market access, private sector extension and support, and compliance. Over time, and as experience reveals common constraints across women centric businesses, then GREAT may partner with:

- factor markets aimed at improving access to land and capital;
- business skills and accounting providers to increase access to business development services; and
- support agencies (government, educational institutions, business councils or civil society groups) aimed at training, advocacy, policy reform and infrastructure provision.

Addendum – An assessment of some of the Key Agricultural Value Chains

Tea

The Tea sector in Vietnam is export oriented with about 80 per cent of its annual total output supplying 100 foreign markets countries with an annual export value of US\$200 million. However, the price received on the world market (US\$1,200/ton) is only half of the global average price (US\$2,400 per ton) and well below premium Sri Lankan tea at US\$4,000 per ton. Sixty-five per cent of Vietnam's production originates from the northern mountain provinces.

The industry is characterised by the unequal distribution of power and allocation of costs and margins across the tea value chain. There is a need to foster the integration and participation of the poor in the tea chain in order to better distribute the gains from improvements.

While it involves just three main activities – the production of tea leaves, dry tea processing, and the sale of dry tea, a large number of actors are involved in each process. Hence the value chain for tea is complex and involves the participation and interaction of:

1. tea leaf producers (farmers) including:
 - a. unlinked farmers - those who produce and sell tea on the open market, either to traders or processors. This group is comparatively poorer than others;
 - b. contract farmers – those who have their own land but sign contracts with companies to sell a portion or all output;
 - c. worker farmers – those farmers employed by estates and allocated land for up to 50 years on the condition that they produce tea leaf based on company standards;
 - d. cooperative farmers - members of cooperatives.

The last three groups receive benefits such as stable output; access to good quality land; technical training; credit access; retirement pension and insurance against sickness.

2. dry tea processors. including:
 - a. household processors,
 - b. private processors,
 - c. joint venture companies and
 - d. State-owned companies; It is estimated that there are 600 processors with capacities of 3 to 7 tons of fresh tea per day and over 10,000 traditional processing households
3. dry tea traders,
4. wholesalers,
5. retailers, and
6. exporters.

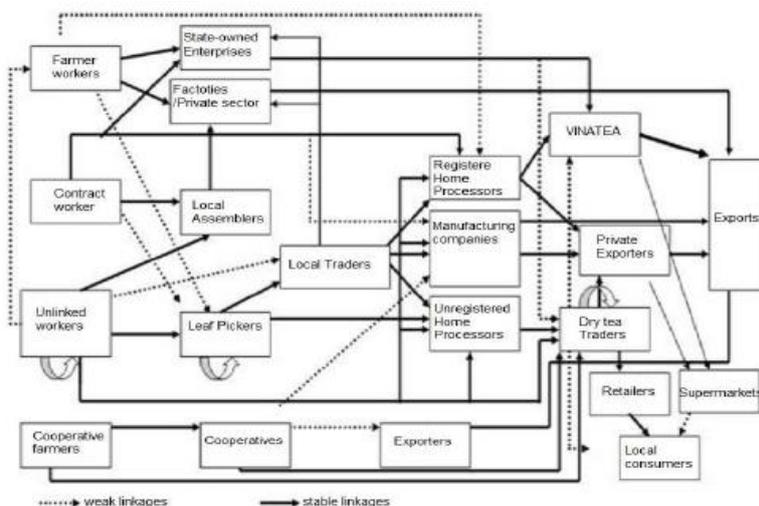


Figure 18: Tea value chain in Vietnam

Vegetables

Increasing at an annual rate of 6 per cent, Vietnam's vegetable sector reflects growing urban demand and is an important source of income for smallholder farmers and particularly women given the significant role they play in production. While demand is increasing supply is constrained by limited production and poor logistics. Increasingly Chinese imports are meeting the increased demand in the north but there are legitimate concerns regarding quality and food safety. With peri-urban areas under increasing pressure to be developed into residential areas in HCMC and Hanoi, there is a need to find suitable alternative locations for vegetable production. Elevated growing regions in the northern highlands have the potential to meet this demand, if developed appropriately. Yet these areas face challenges with rapidly transforming markets, competitiveness with peri-urban producers, poor infrastructure and logistics, and environmental sustainability. ACIAR has been working to improve the skills of women in the safe production, promotion and utilisation of indigenous vegetables⁶¹. The projects estimate that regions in Sơn La and Lào Cai could supply 50 per cent of total consumption during the six-month supply window. Currently approaches are uncoordinated and fail to address the market system as a whole, and hence prior interventions have only had limited success. (Trinh, Ha, Bosch, & Nguyen, 2015) If GREAT is to work in this area it must build off the work of ACIAR by taking a market systems approach. This will also achieve gains in consumer welfare, income generation and poverty alleviation for small-holder farmers in the province. (ACIAR, 2016).

Farmers (especially women) find it is not worthwhile growing higher-value crops unless they can attract a higher price for them. For this, they need a combination of: infrastructure, transport, post-harvest storage, knowledge about prices, confidence to negotiate, branding advice, quality standards that are enforced, policies that enable transfer of land to new uses, legislative framework and social norms that allow women/growers to make own decisions.

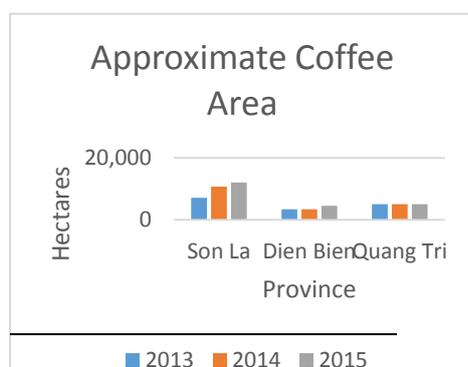
The project has demonstrated clear economic benefits available to farmers in the Mộc Châu region of North Western Vietnam via new value chains supplying high-quality, certified-safe vegetables to urban consumers in northern Vietnam. Farmers from the Tụ Nhiên village in Mộc Châu earned an average net income of 300 million VND (\$18,000) per ha in 2015 by supplying the high-quality vegetables as part of the new value chain developed by the ACIAR project team. This compares with an average net household income of 120 million VND (\$7,560) per ha for non-project vegetable farmers in the village, which is an increase of 150% in net income. Alternative land uses such as growing maize or rice return a net income to the farmer of only about 20 million VND (\$1260) per ha per year, or only 7% of the income they could make from accredited-safe vegetables.

The new value chains have established effective direct trading relationships and two-way communication between the farmers and the supermarkets and specialty safe vegetable stores in Hanoi. This direct marketing to Hanoi represents a completely new market for the local farmers. (ACIAR, 2016)

Coffee

The majority (95%) of Vietnam's coffee is from *Coffea robusta* production occurring in the south and central regions. In the northern highlands *Coffea arabica* is grown with Sơn La and Điện Biên the major production Provinces. Arabica coffee production is growing quite rapidly and largely in the north (USDA FAS, 2016).

Figure 19: Coffee production in the north west region of Vietnam (USDA FAS, 2016)



Vietnam has had a purposeful policy to increase the production of quality Arabica coffee since the turn of the century. Total Arabica production is now approaching 60,000T and 40,000 T of this comes from the north (Wallengren, 2013). There are 3 main regions for Arabica production in Vietnam: Lam Dong, the biggest area with about 16,000 hectares, Quang Tri (North Central Vietnam) at about 5,000 hectares, and Điện Biên and Sơn La in the Northern Mountainous Area with about 14,000 hectares. In the northern mountainous areas, planted area is increasing from 14,035 ha to 16,400 ha in 2015. This increase is mostly newly planted areas.

⁶¹ ACIAR, AGB/2012/059 Towards more profitable and sustainable vegetable production systems in north-western Vietnam. (Due for completion in early 2018) <http://aciar.gov.au/project/agb/2012/059>

ACIAR, AGB/2009/053, Improved market engagement for counter-seasonal vegetable producers in north-western Vietnam. (due for completion in 2016) <http://aciar.gov.au/project/agb/2009/053>

ACIAR, AGB/2012/030 Towards more profitable and sustainable vegetable-based farming systems in north-western Vietnam and Australia. (Concluded 2013)

<http://aciar.gov.au/project/agb/2012/030> ACIAR, AGB/2006/112 Increasing the safe production, promotion and utilisation of indigenous vegetables by women in Vietnam and Australia. (Concluded 2012)

According to traders, the area for Arabica in this region will continue to increase in the near future. However, due to limited arable land in the mountainous area, Arabica planted area in this region will only be able reach up to 30,000 ha in the future, or about double the size of the current Arabica planted area of these two provinces (USDA FAS, 2016). Much of the production in the north west occurs at lower altitudes (700-1000m) which is less than ideal for quality and hence price is reduced on the world market. In 2015 Vietnam Arabica sold at about \$US2000/ton or about two thirds that of higher grade Columbian coffee.

Women play key roles in the Vietnamese coffee value chain with activities ranging from farming and farm ownership to managing export companies and dominating the internal trade/primary collection stage. (World Bank, 2011). (IPSOS, 2012). Nasan Coffee Co estimates that in Son La where Thai people dominate coffee production, that Thai women comprise 70% of value chain activities associated with on farm planting, husbandry, harvesting and local collection activities. Men share roles but predominate in activities such as removing the parchment. In fact, three of the five production units in Son La that provide coffee to their new facility are managed by women. According to Nassan Coffee this is a feature of the Thai ethnic group in Son La, where women play significant roles in group coordination and production and where production units function based on more informal but effective familial and geographic links (cf Quang Tri where men play a larger role and production units are more formalised around a cooperative model).

Whereas the collection, transport, final drying, grading, bagging and containerisation of the green bean is dominated by men (95%) with women playing office-based roles in administration, finances, and marketing.

Significant challenges confront the coffee industry but mainly the Robusta growers. Arabica is more stable and the issues confronting it need deeper attention. The emphasis for Arabica is on increasing production and industry is keen to build its links with household clusters who can coordinate production and initial processing. SNV has been working with one private sector partner to increase access for remote households by building household groups and linking them with the production advice and support available from the private sector.

Most of Vietnam's Arabica (as with Robusta) is sold as green bean on the world market. There is little local processing but there is scope for niche tourist and growing middle class demand.

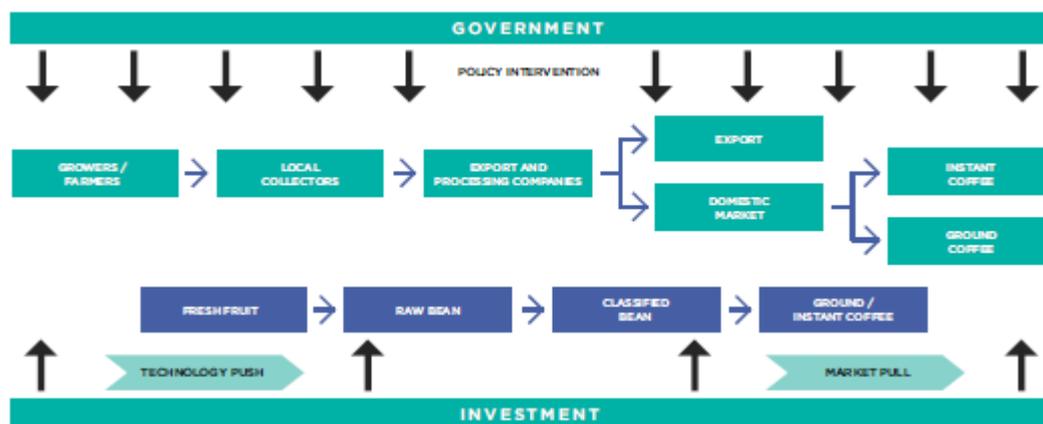


Figure 20: Vietnam Coffee Value Chain

As the market expands, private sector companies need mechanisms to put them in contact with clusters of production households. These clusters of 20 or so households ensure greater production capacity, labour sharing, and volumes which thus increase the efficiency by which the private sector can engage. In addition, the private sector can efficiently support these groups with technological advice.

Credit arrangements in Son La vary, but in the case of one private sector company they provide production credit on the proviso that the farmer will also accept a payment schedule that improves company cash flow.

Cattle

Market demand for beef has increased rapidly in Vietnam (from 7,700 tonnes (live weight basis) in 2001 to 159,400 tonnes in 2006). Demand for beef is increasing rapidly in Vietnam, especially beef in the high quality category, and that domestic

beef production is unable to meet this demand. ACIAR has been working to develop, evaluate and implement new technical and market strategies to improve smallholder incomes from beef cattle in the north-western highlands of Vietnam.⁶²

There is some concern however that the majority of cattle are kept by the Thai and that those with cattle are comparatively well off. However, cattle raising may be an option in some remote areas with access to fodder and communal grazing is possible. The challenge will be to improve market access to such regions. (Huyen, Van, André, Pera, & Valle, 2013).

Rubber

The rubber sector development strategy to 2015 and vision to 2050, was approved by the Prime Minister in 2009 and seeks to increase Vietnam's rubber plantation area to 800,000 ha by 2020, producing a total volume of 1.2 million tons of latex and earning approximately 2 billion USD in export revenue. (To Xuan & Tran Huu, 2014) In Vietnam's Northwest, the expansion of rubber plantations has and continues to encroach on forests which are directly managed by communities. The conversion of community forests to rubber plantations does not only narrow traditional community space but also deprives household rights to forest resources.

In 2007, the total rubber plantation area in the 3 North Western provinces of Sơn La, Điện Biên, and Lai Châu accounted for only 70 ha; by 2012, the rubber plantation area of these 3 provinces increased to 19,118 ha (MARD, 2013). The rubber plantation area in these regions is expected to continue to increase. In the case of Sơn La province for example, a number of community forests were converted to rubber plantations (see Nguyen Cong Thao et al., 2013). Most of this is accounted for by large-scale plantations (97%), developed by state-owned rubber companies of the Vietnam Rubber Corporation. Between 2008 and 2012, rubber plantation area in the North Western provinces increased by approximately 3,000 ha annually on average. According to the integrated master plan of the three provinces, rubber area is expected to increase to 57,000 ha by 2015, more than 7,500 ha more than the target set by the master plan in Decision 750/QĐ-TTg. Sơn La has plans to reach 20,000 ha, Lai Châu 20,000 ha, and Điện Biên 17,500 ha.

⁶² ACIAR LPS/2008/049 Overcoming technical and market constraints to the emergence of profitable beef enterprises in the north-western highlands of Vietnam (Concluded 2015).

Annex 8 Government's policy priorities and programs pertaining to ethnic minority development

The Vietnamese Communist Party and the Government of Vietnam consistently emphasise the importance of ethnic minority affairs and ethnic group solidarity. The priority of the Government and Communist Party is reflected in a substantial number of legal documents, formal statements and socio-economic development planning. The Constitution (2013) includes comprehensive provisions on ethnic minorities in Article 5 and 75. Other Articles also address issue regarding ethnic minorities such as those related to mother tongue language, health care and education (Article 5, 58 and 61).

Provisions on ethnic minorities are also found in specialized laws such as Election Law; Local Government Organization Law; Education Law; Health Insurance Law; Civil Law; Penal and the Criminal Procedure Code; Land Law; Law on Legal Aid; and Law on Child Protection, Care and Education. There is now not any specific law on ethnic minorities, although it is under development. The highest relevant instrument is Decree 05/2011/ND-CP⁶³ on ethnic minority affairs issued by the Government of Vietnam. The scope of the Decree covers activities regarding ethnic minority affairs to ensure equality, solidarity and mutual support among all ethnic groups. It also provides a wide range of 13 ethnic minority policies⁶⁴ concerning various fields from national defence to health care and education as well as particular provisions on state management and responsibilities of different stakeholders.

Ethnic minority development has become an important issue mainstreamed in every national socio-economic development plan. The latest Socio-Economic Development Plan for 2011-2015 provides direction for poverty reduction by prioritising *people living in remote, mountainous areas, islands, extremely difficult and ethnic minority areas* as well as concentrating resources on helping ethnic minorities settling their life and resolving housing and production land for those residing in natural disaster-prone areas.

National programs supporting ethnic minorities

There have been a large number of policies and programs specifically designed to assist ethnic minorities in various issues related to their development. By 2012, a study by UNDP estimates that there have been more than 180 documents which have been promulgated at central level to institutionalise ethnic minority policies. Among them, there are 46 Decisions on socio-economic development policies by region and 97 Decisions on policies by sector. Regarding socio-economic development policies by sectors, the study classifies into five sub-groups: (i) production, transportation, credit, settled agriculture and fixed residence; (ii) capacity building for authority officials/local staff; (iii) training and education; (iv) health care; and (v) culture.⁶⁵ Some notable policies/programs include the National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP-SPR) and on New Rural Development, Socio-economic Development of the Most Vulnerable Communes in Ethnic Minority and Mountainous Areas in Vietnam (Program 135), and Speedy and Sustainable Poverty Reduction Programme for 61 Poor Districts in Vietnam (Program 30a).

National Target Programs

First launched in 2006 as the National Target Program for Poverty Reduction pursuant to Prime Minister's Decision 20/2007/QĐ-TTg⁶⁶, the program aims to halve poverty between 2005 and 2010. During 2011-2015, the program became the National Target Program on Sustainable Poverty Reduction (NTP-SPR) which includes infrastructure development, livelihood promotion, enhanced access to credit and basic services, and capacity building. In 2015, the National Assembly ratified Resolution 100/2015/QH13⁶⁷ on the investment strategy for National Target Programs during 2016-2020. Accordingly, there will be only two National Target Programs that are the NTP-SPR and the National Target Program on New Rural Development. In the coming period, the NTP-SPR aims to reduce the poverty rate by 1.0 to 1.5 per cent/year nationally and by 4.0 per cent/year in poor districts and extremely difficult communes based on national poverty line for 2016-2020. The NTP-SPR will be implemented nationwide and give priorities for 64 districts within Program 30a, poor districts specified in Resolution 30a/2008/NQ-CP⁶⁸, extremely difficult communes, and Program 135 communes.

⁶³ Nghị định Số: 05/2011/NĐ-CP về Công tác dân tộc.

⁶⁴ These policies include: (1) Investment and human resource utilization; (2) Sustainable development investment; (3) Education and training; (4) Ethnic minority personnel; (5) Prestigious people at ethnic minority areas; (6) Cultural preservation and promotion; (7) Sport promotion in ethnic minority areas; (8) Tourism promotion in ethnic minority areas; (9) Health care and Population; (10) Information and Communication; (11) Legal education, dissemination and aid; (12) Environment and ecosystem preservation; and (13) National defence and security.

⁶⁵ UNDP. (2012). Review and analysis of current ethnic minority policies and recommendations for development of ethnic minority policy framework towards 2020.

⁶⁶ Quyết định 20/2007/QĐ-TTg Phê duyệt Chương trình mục tiêu quốc gia giảm nghèo giai đoạn 2006-2010.

⁶⁷ Nghị quyết 100/2015/QH13 phê duyệt chủ trương đầu tư Chương trình mục tiêu quốc gia giai đoạn 2016-2020.

⁶⁸ Nghị quyết số 30a/2008/NQ-CP về chương trình hỗ trợ giảm nghèo nhanh và bền vững đối với 61 huyện nghèo.

Meanwhile, the National Target Program on New Rural Development to be implemented in all communes of Vietnam has set the target that 50 per cent of communes will meet the criteria for 'new rural areas' and that no commune will meet fewer than five criteria. The total budget for the NTP-SPR and the NTP for New Rural Development is 46,161 and 193,155.6 billion VNDs respectively.

Program 135

Program 135 is considered as a flagship ethnic minority poverty reduction program, and it is the Socio-Economic Development Program targeting extremely difficult communes, border communes, communes in war safety zones and extremely disadvantaged hamlets within mountainous and ethnic minority areas. From 1999 to 2011, two phases of Program 135 were managed as an independent program under the Committee for Ethnic Minority Affairs (CEMA). In 2012 and 2013, phase three of Program 135 was shifted as a Component Project 2 of the NTP-SPR. During the past 15 years, Program 135 has transformed the situation of ethnic minority and mountainous areas; enhancing infrastructure and supporting livelihoods of poor in the target extremely disadvantaged areas.

The Government has approved the NTP-SPR during the 2016-2020 period with five sub-programs. Among these, Program 135 is referred to as Project 2 under the umbrella of NTP-SPR. The design of the current phase for 2016-2020 is now being composed and expected to have three components: (i) infrastructure investment; (ii) production support; and (iii) capacity building of communities and commune staff in extremely difficult communes, border communes, communes in war safety zones and extremely disadvantaged hamlets.

Speedy and Sustainable Poverty Reduction Programme for 61 Poor Districts in Vietnam (Program 30a)

To mobilise resources for the poorest districts in the country, the Government, in December 2008, issued Resolution No. 30a/2008/NQ-CP on Speedy and Sustainable Poverty Reduction Programme for the 61 Poor Districts in Vietnam (Program 30a)⁶⁹ to create drastic changes in the material and spiritual lives of the poor and ethnic minority people in poor districts so that by 2020 they will have living conditions equal to other districts in the region. Program 30a focuses on four groups of policies: (i) production support, job creation and income generation; (ii) education, training and capacity building; (iii) human resource for poor districts; and (iv) infrastructure investment. The Ministry of Labour, Invalids, and Social Affairs is the standing and managing agency for this program.

Additionally, there are numerous specialised policies targeting ethnic minorities in poor districts and communes such as emigration policy to support settled agriculture and fixed residence of ethnic minorities according to Prime Minister's Decision 33/2013/QĐ-TTg⁷⁰ dated 04 June 2013 managed by CEMA, and the housing support policy under Prime Minister's Decision 167/2008/QĐ-TTg⁷¹ dated 12 December 2008 managed by the Ministry of Construction. Recently, a Trade Promotion Program for mountainous and remote areas and islands during 2015-2020 has been approved according to Decision 964/QĐ-TTg⁷² issued in June 2015. The program aims to establish and promote trade in 287 districts with difficult and extremely difficult conditions. With a budget of 466 billion VNDs, the program will focus on some major activities such as encouraging new business establishment, promoting special good(s) of a particular area, developing trade services, supporting market system in targeted areas, or implementing communication and marketing programs. The Ministry of Industry and Trade will be the leading and managing agency.

Box 1. North-West Steering Committee

Regulation 96-QĐ/TW⁷³ was issued on 28/5/2012 on the functions, responsibilities, entitlements, organization structure, and working relationship of North-West Steering Committee, Central Highlands Steering Committee, and Southwest Steering Committee.

Accordingly, the North-West Steering Committee is responsible for 13 provinces: Hà Giang, Lào Cai, Yên Bái, Lai Châu, Điện Biên, Sơn La, Hòa Bình, Bắc Kạn, Lạng Sơn, Phú Thọ, Tuyên Quang and eastern districts of Thanh Hóa and Nghệ An.

The Steering Committee is under the Politburo and Secretariat of the Communist Party of Vietnam which assists the

⁶⁹ The number of poor districts under Program 30a has now increased to 64.

⁷⁰ Quyết định 33/2013/QĐ-TTg tiếp tục hỗ trợ di dân thực hiện định canh định cư cho đồng bào dân tộc thiểu số đến năm 2015

⁷¹ Quyết định số 167/2008/QĐ-TTg ngày 12/12/2008 của Thủ tướng Chính phủ về chính sách hỗ trợ hộ nghèo về nhà ở.

⁷² Quyết định 964/QĐ-TTg về việc phê duyệt Chương trình phát triển thương mại miền núi, vùng sâu, vùng xa và hải đảo giai đoạn 2015-2020

⁷³ Quy định 96-QĐ/TW về chức năng, nhiệm vụ, quyền hạn, tổ chức bộ máy, quan hệ công tác của các ban chỉ đạo: Tây Bắc, Tây Nguyên, Tây Nam bộ

Politburo, Secretariat and Prime Minister in: (1) direct, monitor and manage line ministries and agencies in implementing Resolutions, Directives and Decisions of the Politburo, Secretariat and Prime Minister in their localities; (2) study, consult and propose to the Communist Party and Government on necessary mechanisms, policies and recommendations; (3) direct and collaborate with other agencies in preventing conspiracy, sabotage activities of hostile forces; and (4) organize regular reviews and reporting to the Politburo, Secretariat and Prime Minister.

Structure: at current term, Nguyễn Xuân Phúc, Deputy Prime Minister holds the position as the Head of the North-West Steering Committee.

The implementation of the large number policies and programs has contributed to improved living standards for ethnic minorities living in remote and mountainous areas of Vietnam. Nevertheless, there is a widening gap between ethnic minorities and people living in mountainous areas, and the majority Kinh population. Most recent national policies and programs focus on income poverty; other dimensions of well-being such as education, health care, and culture have not received as much attention. Not until 2015, did the Government introduce a multi-dimensional approach to measuring poverty.

Government's policy priorities and programs pertaining to gender equality and women's economic empowerment

The Government of Vietnam has recognized the vital role of gender equality in national socio-economic strategies. Considerable efforts have been devoted to accelerate progress on gender equality and enhance women's empowerment through the incorporation of gender aspects into national Socio-Economic Development Plans since 2006 as well as introduction of multiple relevant laws. These laws include the Law on Gender Equality enacted in 2006 and the Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control in 2007. Gender equality has also been guaranteed in many other specified laws including: the Law on Marriage and Family; the Land Law; and the Law on Anti-Trafficking and Labour Law. In 2010, in Decision 2351/QĐ-TTg⁷⁴ the Prime Minister of Vietnam also adopted the National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2011-2020 period.

Table 18: Gender issues in different laws and national programs

Law	Overview on gender issues
Law on Gender Equality 2006	The Law on Gender Equality guarantees equal rights to women in all fields and calls for strategies to address gender-related issues. It also stipulates the necessity to abolish customs impeding gender equality as well as requiring gender mainstreaming in all areas. To oversee the Law's implementation, the Gender Equality Department in MOLISA was established.
Law on Domestic Violence Prevention and Control 2007	Enforced since 2008, this Law is the main framework for state policies and strategies to address to the issue of domestic violence. The Law provides a broad definition of domestic violence, including all acts causing physical, mental as well as financial damage. The Law also points out the duties of the state, individuals, families, organizations and institutions in regards to preventing and controlling domestic violence and supporting of its victims.
Labour Law 2012	The Labour Law addresses gender issues in almost every labour-related aspect. It contains a separate section on regulations concerning female workers which aims to ensure and protect their equal rights to employment such as with regard to recruitment, compensation, and maternal health rights. There are also provisions on firms' obligations towards female workers.
Law on Marriage and Family 2014	This Law prescribes the marriage and family regime, legal standards for conduct by family members; responsibilities of individuals, organizations, the State and society in the building and consolidation of the marriage and family regime. The Law re-emphasizes equal rights and obligations of husband and wife in all family affairs and in the performance of citizens' rights and obligations. Besides, it also ensures women's rights concerning property relations and recognizes housework and other related work to maintain the cohabitation as income-generating labour during settlement of such relations.
Law on Anti-Human Trafficking 2012	The Law provides the prevention, detection and handling of human trafficking acts and other acts in violation of the law on human trafficking prevention and combat, as well as support services for victims of human trafficking. It highlights the necessity of advocacy and

⁷⁴ Quyết định số 2351/QĐ-TTg ngày 24/12/2010 của Thủ tướng chính phủ v/v phê duyệt chiến lược quốc gia về bình đẳng giới giai đoạn 2011 – 2020

	education (particularly at community level) activities targeted women as well as the important role of the Women's Union in the prevention and elimination of human trafficking.
National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020	In 2010, in Decision 2351/QĐ-TTg, the Prime Minister of Vietnam approved National Strategy on Gender Equality for 2011-2020 period. The general objective is that <i>by 2020, that substantive equality between men and women is achieved with respect to opportunity, participation and benefits in the political, economic, cultural and social domains, contributing to fast and sustainable national development.</i> The Strategy sets out seven specific objectives with various target indicators and a list of activities to address remaining challenges facing gender issues in Vietnam. To support the achievements of the Strategy's objectives, the Government introduced a National Program on Gender Equality 2011-2015 under Decision 1241/QĐ-TTg ⁷⁵ with five projects to be implemented nationwide. For the 2016-2020 period, recent Decision 1696/QĐ-TTg ⁷⁶ has already been signed by the end of 2015 to approve the National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020 aiming to reduce gender inequality and promote women's role.

Vietnam has approved many important laws and policies aimed at promoting gender equality and empowering women since the last decade. Nevertheless, their implementation has been slow and arguably ineffective in some areas, and underfunded. Gender inequality still persists in many forms, and women -- particularly in remote, mountainous, ethnic minority areas, and in economically difficult areas -- are consistently more disadvantaged than men.

National support programs and policies specifically for ethnic minority women and girls

While women of ethnic minority groups have to face triple advantages: being poor, woman and of ethnic minority background, gender aspects are quite neglected in existing ethnic minority development policies. In NTP-SPR, poor women and female-headed households are regarded as vulnerable groups to receive prioritised support. However, specific activities and guidelines on how to approach these groups are lacking. Similarly, Program 135 since its first implementation recognises ethnic minority women as among the poorest in Vietnam, but their gender-based vulnerability is not addressed. Gender inequality issue is even non-existent in Program 30a.⁷⁷

Gender equality in ethnic minority areas and poor women of ethnic minorities are both given more attention in the Law on Gender Equality 2006. Accordingly, the state shall provide support towards activities to promote gender equality in remote, mountainous, ethnic minority and extremely difficult areas (Article 7). Poor ethnic minority women residing at these areas will also receive health care support at childbirth (Article 17). The needs of ethnic minority women and their vulnerability in terms of gender are also included in the National Strategy on Gender Equality 2011-2020 under objective 2 and 3. Specifically, Objective 2 indicates that the Strategy would seek to improve ethnic minority women's access to economic resources and labour market. Objective 3 on improving human resource quality sets out in its first target indicator that literacy rate between both males and females in remote, mountainous and ethnic minority areas reach 90 and 95 per cent respectively in 2015 and 2020. However, corresponding activities provided in the Strategy are unclear. Interventions in the National Programme on Gender Equality 2011-2015 as well as in recent National Action Plan on Gender Equality 2016-2020 are limited to raising awareness on gender equality without addressing the main roots of gender-based inequalities.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Quyết định 1241/QĐ-TTg phê duyệt Chương trình quốc gia bình đẳng giới

⁷⁶ Quyết định 1696/QĐ-TTg phê duyệt Chương trình hành động quốc gia về bình đẳng giới 2016-2020.

⁷⁷ UN Women. (2015). Briefing note on the Situation of Ethnic Minority women and girls in Vietnam.

⁷⁸ *ibid*

Some major activities in developing relevant ethnic minority policies following Decision 2356/QD-TTg on Implementation plan for Ethnic Affair Strategy until 2030

Table 19: Activities in developing relevant ethnic minority policies

No	Name of program, policy, proposal and project	Leading agency	Development and submission time	Implementation time
1	Proposal on developing sustainable socio-economic development models in north-west, Central Highlands and Southwest	CEMA	2014	2014-2020
2	Proposal on forest land allocation to ethnic minority communities for sustainable livelihood and environment	CEMA	2014	2015-2020
3	Program on supporting the development of vocational models and promotion of traditional crafts to increase income of ethnic minority women	Women's Union	2014	2015-2020
4	Proposal on preservation and development of traditional craft and craft village for ethnic minority and mountainous areas	CEMA	2013	2014-2020
5	Policy on trade infrastructure development and trade promotion in ethnic minority areas to accelerate good exchange and export, develop trading and improve ethnic minority's living standards	MOIT	2014	2014-2019

Source: EMWG. (2015). Progress and Result Report: Supporting CEMA in developing policies on socio-economic development for ethnic minority and mountainous areas during 2016-2020.

Annex 9 Activities of other Development Partners

Donor	Area of focus in Vietnam	Strategy specifically on ethnic minority development	Strategy specifically on gender equality and women's empowerment	Reference
World Bank	<p>Investments and policies organised into a strategic framework of three pillars and three cross-cutting themes.</p> <p>Pillars:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Strengthening Vietnam's competitiveness in the regional and global economy; 2. increasing the sustainability of its development 3. broadening access to opportunity <p>03 cross-cutting themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. strengthening governance; 2. supporting gender equity; 3. improving resilience in the face of external economic shocks, natural hazards and the impact of climate change. 	<p>Pillar 3 on opportunity will involve efforts to address rising inequality, especially between ethnic minorities and the rest of Vietnam's population.</p>	<p>Support to gender has four key elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. support Government in improving the implementation of the Law on Gender Equality and the National Strategy on Gender Equality; 2. support the development of a national gender data system; 3. apply a gender lens to identify opportunities to integrate gender more systematically into Bank operations; 4. help close the knowledge gap through research on gender issues 	<p>Country Partnership Strategy for Vietnam FY12 - FY16</p>
United Nations	<p>Three focus areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive, Equitable and Sustainable Growth; 2. Access to Quality Essential Social Services and Social Protection; 3. Governance and Participation <p>Five cross-cutting issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. a rights-based approach; 2. gender equality; 3. environmental sustainability; 4. HIV; 5. a culturally appropriate approach to programming 	<p><i>Access to Quality Essential Social Services and Social Protection:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • support development of policies in the areas of education in ethnic minority human resource development; • supports the government's achievements of MDGs 4, 5 and 6, with a strong focus on ethnic minorities <p><i>Governance and Participation:</i> increase representation of ethnic minority members in the National Assembly, National Assembly Committee, and People's Council</p>	<p>One Plan 2012 -2016 points out gender equality as one of the cross cutting issues.</p>	<p>One Plan 2012 - 2016</p>

ADB	<p>Focus:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inclusive growth 2. Enhancing economic efficiency 3. Environmental sustainability <p>Prioritised sectors: (i) agriculture and natural resources, (ii) education (iii) energy, (iv) finance, (v) transport, and (vi) water supply and other municipal infrastructure and Services</p> <p>Thematic issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Governance and capacity building 2. Gender equity 3. Private sector development operations 	<p>Inclusive growth: Empower the poor, the vulnerable, and women, addressing the issues of income and other gaps in society by providing support to education, including technical and vocational education and training. Support will be targeted to disadvantaged provinces and communities, particularly in the central and northern mountainous regions</p>	<p>Adopt gender mainstreaming across sectors and in relevant projects</p>	<p>Country Partnership Strategy 2012 – 2015 Country Operations Business Plan 2016-2018</p>
European Union	<p>Central objectives of development cooperation are to achieve the Millennium Development Goals as well as poverty eradication, sustainable development and integration into the world economy.</p> <p>Cooperation on:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Peace and Security 2. Trade and investment issues 3. Justice 4. Socio-economic development and other areas 		<p>Cooperation related to Gender Equality: strengthen gender related policies and programmes, as well as institutional and administrative capacity building and supporting the implementation of national strategies on gender equality, including women's rights and empowerment, to ensure the equitable participation of men and women in all sectors of economic, cultural, political and social life.</p>	<p>Framework Agreement</p>
Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade	<p>Three objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Enabling and engaging the private sector for development 2. Assisting the development and employment of a highly skilled workforce 3. Promoting women's economic empowerment, including ethnic minorities 	<p>Objective 2: institutionalise a number of measures that promote participation among women, people with disability and members of ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Objective 3: focus on northern mountainous areas</p>	<p>Objective 2: institutionalise a number of measures that promote participation among women, people with disability and members of ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Objective 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify, trial and scale-up new approaches to closing gender gaps in economic livelihoods; • support programs and policies that better empower women. • The Investing in Women Initiative: promote 	<p>Aid Investment Plan: Vietnam 2015-16 to 2019-20</p>

			increased employment opportunities for women in the formal sector, and the expansion of women-led small to medium enterprises and promote women's leadership and decision-making in workplaces and businesses.	
USAID	<p>Three objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Development Objective 1 (DO1): Governance enhanced to facilitate broader-based, sustainable growth; 2. Development Objective 2 (DO2): Capacity strengthened to protect and improve health and well-being; 3. Special Objective (SO): Legacies addressed to advance the U.S.-Vietnam partnership. 	<p>DO1: special emphasis will be placed on provinces with the highest poverty and social exclusion levels</p> <p>DO2: expand opportunities for vulnerable populations: engage in partnerships with private sector to expand market based, economic opportunities for vulnerable populations, including ethnic minorities, the poor, particularly poor women;</p> <p>SO: Ensure that Increased awareness of unexploded ordnance safety must reach ethnic minority women.</p>	<p>DO1 contributes to closing gender gap through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase women's participation in accountability mechanisms; • policy advocacy by women's organisations that contributes to more equality of opportunity; • promote better gender related data gathering and analysis <p>DO2: focus on women living with HIV/AIDS and women with disabilities. Specifically, expand opportunities for vulnerable populations: engage in partnerships with private sector to expand market based, economic opportunities for vulnerable populations, including the poor, particularly poor women</p> <p>SO: Ensure that Increased awareness of unexploded ordnance safety must reach women.</p>	Country Development Cooperation Strategy for Vietnam 2014 - 2018
Irish Aid	<p>Two themes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. inclusion 2. innovation <p>Three objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To improve local ability to plan and 	<p>Objective 1: help at least 1 million poor households by improving the skills of people at commune level with focus on ethnic minorities</p> <p>Objective 2: include poor groups in key</p>		Country Strategy 2011 - 2015

	<p>adapt public investment resources to the needs of marginalised groups;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To strengthen policy formulation and delivery at central government level in addressing poverty and marginalisation; 3. To strengthen the capacity of central government, research agencies and private sector in economic management. 	policy processes		
GIZ	<p>Three priority areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Vocational training 2. Environmental Policy and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources 3. Energy 			
Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland	<p>Two Development results:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Improved basis for a knowledge-based society 2. Sustainable use and management of natural resources and climate sustainability <p>Cross-cutting objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. gender equality 2. reduction of inequality 3. climate sustainability 	<p>Development cooperation is to be based on the human rights based approach. All activities supported by Finland will be reviewed from the perspective of how the rights and the participation of the poor and marginalised groups are addressed in each project and programme.</p> <p>Support to the forestry sector has a strong link to the poverty reduction and livelihoods of the ethnic minorities.</p>	<p>Gender equality will be addressed in the bilateral programmes for example by producing gender-specific indicators and information or by providing equal opportunities for training. In addition, gender-specific activities can be supported for example through projects implemented by local NGOs.</p>	<p>Country Strategy for Development Cooperation with Vietnam 2013 - 2016</p>
Ethnic Minority Working Group (EMWG)	<p>Overall objective: contribute to the improvement of living conditions of ethnic minorities in Vietnam</p> <p>Specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing and disseminating information • Improving the development practices of member organisations • Policy dialogue • Facilitating the voice of ethnic minority people <p>Structure: managed by a “core” group members. By</p>			<p>EMWG Terms of Reference</p>

	2015, there are 11 core group members who are local and international NGOs working in the field.			
Oxfam Vietnam	Areas of focus in Vietnam, good governance programme aims to ensure that all citizens, in particular those who are marginalised in society, have increased access to information, freedom of association, expression and media; are able to influence decisions that shape their lives and hold the government accountable; women's rights programme poor and marginalised women, particularly women of different social and ethnic groups, gain more power over their lives and are able to contribute actively to and take leadership roles in decision-making; building resilience to disaster, climate risks and emergency response ensures that vulnerable people are better able to adapt to disasters and the effects of climate change, are less impacted by extreme weather events when they happen, and are able to recover more quickly from natural disasters; sustainable food and fair sharing of natural resources is for an increasing number of marginalised smallholder producers to secure access to and control over land, water and other natural resources in order to safeguard their livelihoods; active citizenship through social networks including youth groups' civic , women's groups; migrant and informal workers; LGBTI's; and ethnic minority groups' engagement; (2) strategy specifically on EM: empowerment and voice of EM groups to claim social, cultural and economic rights, building networks among different ethnic groups, and capacity of farmers' groups; (3) strategy on gender equality and women's empowerment: livelihoods project target in particular ethnic minority women, gendered PRA framework and methodology across all programmes, women economics and political leadership, gender stereotypes in the media.	Sustainable livelihood projects target the poor, particularly ethnic minorities and women	Sustainable livelihood projects target the poor, particularly ethnic minorities and women	
Care	Vietnam CARE's long-term programs focus on: 1)			

International	Remote Ethnic Minority Women and 2) Socially Marginalised People. Across both programs CARE's priorities are: 1) increasing women's voice, 2) promoting women's economic empowerment, and 3) ending gender-based violence. CARE's programming mainstreams adaptation and resilience to climate change and civil-society strengthening.			
SNV	Relevant activities in Vietnam include: 1) Value chain strengthening in key agricultural commodities in Vietnam – e.g. rice, coffee, tea, spices, aquaculture 2) Inclusive business partnerships with the private sector to generate triple bottom line benefits (economic profits, poverty reduction and environmental protection 3) Climate Smart Agriculture to reduce emissions from agricultural production and increase resilience to climate risks 4) Mainstreaming gender and enhancing the economic and leadership role of women in agriculture and climate change programming 5) Capacity building of local partners, particularly government, Women's Union and extension centres.			

Annex 10 Innovation

One person might regard a given village as geographically remote from provincial markets; whereas another person perceives the proximity of that village to higher value border trade with Laos or China. One program might highlight the lower level of Vietnamese fluency among a particular group of ethnic minority women, whereas another might hone in on the fact that a number of the largest ethnic minority groups have their own language script which would allow for bilingual digital applications, taking advantage of the prevalence of phones.

The north-west region is captivating for all of the reasons that also make it challenging for implementation – ethnically diverse populations with distinctive traditions and cultural connections; steep topography with increasing but lower levels of connecting infrastructure and public service coverage than urban areas; on the rim of a region that is witnessing rapid change.

GREAT is a program that will continually pose challenges – logistical, social, political, sectoral and attitudinal – and it will require an uncommon level of inventiveness, openness to new ways of working, and daring. It is a program where innovation will be required.

At the same time, the cultural diversity of the two *GREAT* provinces also means that sound development practices need to occur in tandem or be combined with innovation. For example, the development of communication forms that are not reliant on literacy, or the adoption of applied anthropological approaches to ensure that knowledge is co-created with communities and change is led by locals.

The design mission generated a range of ideas to take implementation in new directions or to meet the challenges posed by the context of the north-west. The ideas offered below are not a prescriptive list. They represent ‘seedlings’ rather than elaborated concepts, and they have not been mooted with any partners. More importantly, they are shared here as a spur to deeper, more lateral thinking on the part of the implementing contractor.

1. Addressing attitudes:
 - a. A foreseeable dimension of *GREAT*'s work will be contributing to an affirming and up-to-date representation of the capacity of rural and ethnic minority communities. The need to promote positive examples and inspire a revision of the prejudicial attitudes that some people hold will be implicit to *GREAT*'s work. Some vibrant, experiential ways of doing this follow:
 - b. Harnessing the power of art to change ideas and mindsets. Examples include the exposure of urban populations (and potential tourism markets) to the musical traditions and culture of particular communities.
 - c. Feature positive and modern depictions of young ethnic minority women and men – as professionals, students, workers and public figures – on popular television channels (e.g. the mainstream VTV1 channel, rather than VTV4 for coverage of ethnic minority affairs).
 - d. The Museum of Ethnology in Hanoi is a popular destination for Vietnamese visitors, and so consider including a standing exhibition in the new wing to feature these modern, gender equitable representations of ethnic minority women and men.
2. Novel linkages:
 - a. Mobile phone (non-smart models) coverage rates are very high in Vietnam, irrespective of ethnicity. However, rates of smart phone ownership per household are not known, and it is presumed that phones are more likely to be the property of men. It is highly likely that rates of individual phone ownership will continue to increase during the lifetime of *GREAT*, including of smart phones. With the increasing coverage and competition between telecommunication companies in Vietnam, and the interest of international firms (including Australia) into the market, the right incentives could be created to persuade a supplier to provide smart phone handsets to rural households so that households have better access to current market information and networks. A phone is an especially powerful form of integration and connection for a woman whose physical mobility may be curtailed. The phone company may also be able to create bilingual using ethnic minority script, or pictorial applications to help with agricultural production and market linkages, or access to TripAdvisor© and related sites to promote tourism services. As one example, the CAVAC program implemented by DFAT in Cambodia has supported the development and implementation of the ‘RapiD App’ – a Rice Pest and Disease Diagnostic Tool. It has generated significant interest from pesticide companies, far in excess of earlier predictions of success.
 - b. *GREAT* and its partners could also host New Colombo Plan scholars and *Australian Volunteers for International Development* (AVIDs) for placement.
 - c. With its focus on agriculture and tourism markets, *GREAT* could explore market links between women-led cooperatives in the north-west region and restaurants or hotel chains in Hanoi and other cities.

- d. *GREAT* could also sponsor (or nurture links) between hospitality, catering and tourism training schools and ethnic women trainees from the north-west. It could also undertake feasibility assessment of locating the satellite campus of an existing school within Lào Cai. *GREAT* could also take advantage of Australia Awards linkages, such as the alumnus who currently lectures in a tourism training college in Lào Cai, and has regular contact with prospective employers in the sector.
3. Communications, including public diplomacy:
 - a. Technology, including social media, opens up new avenues and options for communication under *GREAT*.
 - b. In a number of markets, including China and Malaysia, micro-blogging has emerged as a way for small scale traders to develop of market links. *GREAT* could exploit the potential of Facebook and social media to offer low-cost alternatives to establishing market linkages.
 - c. *GREAT* could inaugurate an Australian Government award, with the Minister of Foreign Affairs or the Ambassador as patron, for businesses that furthered the economic engagement of women in the north-west. Competitions could include recognition of companies that were led by local women, or increased their employment of north-west women, or generated a social benefit to local women over and above their financial returns. It could also introduce recognition of Australia-based companies operating in Vietnam who channelled their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets to women in the north-west.
 4. Knowledge creation and learning:
 - a. The cultural diversity of the north-west and the limits of existing data mean that *GREAT* will need to generate evidence and insights throughout implementation. A technocratic, extractive mode of data collection is neither desirable in this context, nor is it likely to yield reliable information. Some options follow:
 - b. In recent research on local perceptions on the meaning of 'gender inequality', the Institute for Studies of Society, Economy and Environment (iSEE) engaged Hmong men and women as co-researchers on their own communities. The gainful engagement of ethnic minority women as co-researchers, on issues such as community-based tourism potential in a given commune or how 'farm gate' suppliers could have more rewarding interactions with collectors, offers manifold benefits in terms of depth of understanding and appropriateness of recommendations.
 - c. With *GREAT*'s outlook to ten years, the program could follow a cohort of women over that time, to see the changes that *GREAT* is able to make. This could be akin to the longitudinal 'Seven Up' television series undertaken in the UK; or it could be based on PhotoVoice or Participatory Video techniques where women lead their own depictions and narration of the change that has occurred.
 - d. Utilisation of pithy, short 'infographic' videos as a complement to annual narrative reporting.

Annex 11 References

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