



Project: Informed to Influence: Increasing ethnic minority women's access to information for improved governance and development

PROJECT FINAL EVALUATION REPORT



Communication activity in Dao language in Bac Kan province

HANOI – JULY 2020

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Contents

Acknowledgement	2
List of abbreviations.....	4
Executive Summary.....	5
1. Project background.....	13
2. Evaluation purpose and questions	14
3. Evaluation methodology.....	14
4. Findings.....	15
4.1. Relevance	15
4.2. Effectiveness	21
4.3. Efficiency	30
4.4. Impact	31
4.5 Sustainability.....	33
5. Recommendations.....	35
Annexes.....	36
Annex 1: Key questions of the evaluation	36
Annex 2: Project Achievement against target indicators	38

List of abbreviations

ADC	Agriculture and Forestry Research & Development Center for Mountainous Region
CCD	Dien Bien Centre For Community Development
CCM	Community Communication Model
CARE DL	CARE Deutschland e.V.
CARE VN	CARE International in Viet Nam
CEMA	Centre for Ethnic Minority Affairs
CEPEW	Center for Education Promotion and Empowerment of Women
CISC	Commune Information and Communication Solution Committee
DECEN	Cao Bang Community Development Centre
EM	Ethnic minority
EMWG	Ethnic Minority Working Group
MARD	Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development
MOLISA	Ministry of Labour, Invalid and Social Affair
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
LARC	Livelihood and Rights Club
NORTHNET	A Network of Northern Province based Civil Society Organizations
PPWG	People's Participation Working Group
SAA	Social Analysis and Action
VNWU	Vietnam Women Union
VSLA	Village Saving and Loan Association

Executive Summary

The project “*Informed to Influence: Increasing ethnic minority women’s access to information for improved governance and development*” has been designed and implemented by CARE International in Vietnam and its local partners in the period from March 2017 to January 2020.

The overall objective of the project was civil society organisations legitimately represent ethnic minority (EM) communities to enhance government transparency and accountability for promoting EM rights.

The project targeted the most marginalised groups, EM women and men in northern Vietnam. The project articulated a rights-based approach by empowering EM minority populations, as holders of the right to information, to engage with government bodies, as duty bearers in this regard, mediated and facilitated by capable and legitimate civil society organisations.

CARE has conducted a final project evaluation to inform to what extent and how the project has achieved its expected results and progress. The final evaluation has been conducted from January to March 2020 by an external consultant.

Criteria were used for the evaluation included relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impacts and sustainability. A mixed-evaluation method was applied including desk-review, quantitative survey, a qualitative approach with in-depth semi-structured interviews. Total 407 people actively participated in the evaluation of which, 386 were women of Thai, Dao, H'Mong, Tay, Nung and Kinh ethnic groups. Self-scoring to assess the capacity of NorthNet (Network of Northern Province based Civil Society Organisations) was employed.

Below are the main results of the evaluation.

Relevance

The project was assessed as truly relevant, including:

Accordance with Vietnam's international commitments: The project has been successfully implemented and entirely relevant with Vietnam's international commitments including the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, Article 14: Participation of Ethnic Minority Women in Economic Development)*, *The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030*. For example *Goal 5- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls:* The project monitoring and end-line survey data showed that 1,597 LARC/VSLA members and 81 % surveyed EM men and women had confidently and meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces. 60 % surveyed EM women reported that they used to raise questions/feedbacks to local authorities. *Goal 10- Reduce inequality within and among countries:* The project targeted the poorest provinces in Vietnam (Dien Bien, Cao Bang and Bac Kan) and the most vulnerable groups that were EM people and EM women, to reduce inequalities.

Relevant to the needs of local CSOs, the NorthNet: The project had supported to build the capacity of the NorthNet based on their needs and capacity gaps in different areas such as action research, networking, and advocacy. For example, the capacity of NorthNet in the area of action research for advocacy by the time of evaluation was scored at 3.9 in comparison to 2.7 in the baseline survey in 2017. NorthNet members were capable to develop and implement a Community Communication Model (CCM) in the project areas. Under the Model, two-way communication, sharing information and dialogue between local authorities and EM communities had been promoted and implemented. Similar results gained for other aspects of network/organisational capacity such as communication and advocacy, internal and external relations development.

At the time of the evaluation, representatives of the NorthNet member organisations confirmed that the project had helped to improve their organisations' and staff capacity needs. Specifically to provide better services for EMs, especially information services for EM women, better representing the voice of EM people to influence the implementation of the Law of Access to information, as well as for long term development of their organisations and network.

Relevant to the needs of local government agency: In Vietnam, the Law on Access to Information was passed by the National Assembly in April 2016 and came into effect from 1st July 2018. At the beginning of the project, there was a limited understanding among government stakeholders, especially at local levels, on how to implement the law to reach ethnic minorities in remote areas effectively. The project had supported the local government agencies to fulfil this responsibility by application of the developed CCMs. Communication activities had been carried out in both Kinh and EM languages. More than 100 staff of the local government agencies at all level in the project provinces had actively participated in the project activities. They highly appreciated the CCM's approach and shared that the project had not only helped them with a new method for information communication, but also supported them to understand the consequences of the Law on Access to Information and their responsibilities in implementing it. Besides, the CCMs had also created an opportunity for them to interact with EM in the community, whom they usually had truly little direct interaction with and this had improved their images to the communities.

Relevant to the needs of the target groups: The project targeted the most marginalised groups, EM women and men in northern Vietnam to be more aware of their rights to information and to have information about relevant government laws, policies and programmes provided in ways that are accessible to them. By building capacity and participation in the implementation of the CCMs, EM people, especially women had gained a significant improvement of their access to information needed for their social and economic activities. At the end of the project, more than 84 % of LARC's members had increased access to information on government programmes. More than 90per cent of LARC's members reported that better information provided by authorities on different aspects needed for their production and lives. Results of the qualitative interviews showed that 100 % of the women confirmed that the project's approaches had improved their access to information consistent with their needs and demands, contributed to their capacity for social and production activities and they were confidence to raise their voice to local government agencies.

The project approaches and methods including *empowerment and participation in decision-making, equality and non-discrimination and gender transformative process* **were assessed as all relevant.** They had helped to build the capacity of target groups including NorthNet, members of LARCs/VSLA and changed the way to support EM people of the local authorities such as better information sharing, positive responses to information requests by EM women. The Social Analysis and Action (SAA) approach was tested and gained valuable lessons learned. However, it was not yet fully implemented to see its relevance and maximise impacts on social norms, beliefs and practices about gender and cultural stereotypes in the local context.

The overall assessment is the project design had a high level of relevance to the context at the beginning of the project as well as the time of the evaluation.

Effectiveness

The overall assessment is the project achieved a high level of effectiveness. 15/28 project results were assessed as the extremely high level of achievements (more than target indicators set up). 9/28 project results were evaluated as the same as planned, and only 4 results at **output level** was achieved less than planned, that is the LARCs and number of LARC members (results

of 68 LARCs and 1,597 members in comparison to the targets of 73 of 1,625 members in respectively). The main reason for this is in 2019, the government has the policy to merge commune and village administrative units, as well as related government officials and this had negative impacts on the formulation and operation of LARCs.

Below is the effectiveness of each Strategic Objective (SO)

SO1: Civil society organisations' have strengthened capacity to represent ethnic minority women's interests: Under the SO1, two of the three target indicators of 1) Number and per cent of EM men and women who have meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces; 2) Increase in scores in capacity assessments of NorthNet and 3) Number of joint advocacy initiatives involving NorthNet and at least one other CSO network, achieved more than targeted. Significant achievements included: 1,597 LARC/VSLA members and 81 % had participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces vs 197 members (55 %) in the baseline survey, respectively; 60 % EM's interviewees reported that they used to raise questions/feedbacks and 54.5 % of them had known how to claim their rights to local authorities.

The NorthNet members were strengthened in their capacity to support LARCs/VSLAs to set up and operate the CCMs. The capacity of NorthNet members had improved, and they were capable of having a better representation of EM and women's rights. Scoring from the self-assessment showed that area of knowledge on government policy increased from 2.7 (baseline assessment) to 3.9 (end project assessment); capacity in action research for advocacy increased from 2.8 to 3.8; capacity to represent EM increased from 3.1 to 3.5; capacity on advocacy increased from 2.6 to 3.5; Network members had improved their capacity and knowledge of laws and policies through many information-sharing workshops and training organised by the project. Member organisations were capable of developing action plans on improvement of access to information for EM people and women, evidence collection, research, and advocacy. Five initiatives of research and advocacy were successfully implemented. NorthNet members played an essential role in representing EM's voice on the needs to change communication and information sharing methods to be better meet their demands.

The overall assessment is the SO1 achieved a high level of effectiveness with no significant issue.

SO2: Ethnic minority women have increased access to information on ethnic minority-related policies and programmes: Under SO2, there are three target indicators: 1) per cent of LARC members reporting that they have increased access to information on government programmes, policies and/or legislation; 2) Number of women members of LARC groups have a platform to access and share information; 3) per cent of LARC members who report feeling confident to raise issues with authorities and 4) Number of issues raised by women in meetings with the authorities.

Among the indicators, only indicator 2 the number of LARC members was lower than the target as reported above. The other indicators exceeded the targets as described below.

Under SO2 by the provision of capacity building/training, setting up and operation of the CCMs with two-way information sharing and dialogue with local authorities EM women had gained better knowledge and information for their social and economic development, respect and social capital through LARC/VSLA membership, and became more confident to take action to influence decisions that affect their lives. 89 % surveyed EM women increased their access to information provided by local government (vs the target of 70 %). In average 89.5 % surveyed women have been aware of government policies and programmes (in comparison to 64.4 % in the baseline survey). 60 % of women were confident and raised questions towards the local authority in the local meetings. Around 54.5 % women highlighted that they know how to report back to local

authorities when receiving wrong information. 32 % of them used to visit government officers/local authorities to raise issues and comments. A total of 62 issues have been raised by EM women based on their demands to local government agencies on various areas such as information quality, further information needs, resource support for local cooperative, improvement of the village loudspeaker system, need to have better infrastructure, asking for transparency of budget allocation for villages.

The overall assessment is the SO2 achieved at a high level of effectiveness with no significant issue.

SO3: Lawmakers and authorities are more supportive of ethnic minorities' right to access information: Under SO3, five indicators for measuring achievements including 1) Number of new or amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs; 2) Number of policy briefs/position papers developed with input from EM women demands of EM women and men; 3) per cent of LARC members who feel that the authorities are genuinely listening to the issues raised; 4) per cent of positive government responses to information requests by EM women and 5) per cent LARC members who report increased information sharing by authorities. Under the SO3, all indicators were achieved at much higher levels than the targets.

The project had provided different capacity building for local government agencies, including good governance, policy/law training events and other communication skills for setting up and implementation of the CCMs. The local authorities highly appreciated the project support that had helped them with a new method for information communication to effectively implement the country's strategic orientations on the Law of Information. They also had a better understanding of the Law on Access to Information. They had improved their image to the communities by creating a good opportunity for them to interact with EM in the local communities.

Through the operation of the CCMs and with capacity-building support on different areas such as communication, action research, networking, and advocacy, the interaction among NorthNet, LARC/VSLA leaders, commune, district and provincial agencies, information sharing and dialogues were promoted and implemented. These resulted in a more supportive of EMs' right to access information from lawmakers/local authorities. With better information access, women in LARC/VSLAs raised their voice to ask local authorities to provide them with better public services.

By the end of the project, five new/amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responded to the rights, needs, and demands of EM women and men. Department of Justice in both Dien Bien and Bac Kan had used the local budget for replication of the project model and approaches.

At the community level, several initiatives on replication of improving access to information had been developed and implemented such as quarterly and annual competitions on different laws and policies in Bac Kan province with participation of hundreds of local EM men and women. The initiatives were organized by Commune People Committees in a form of public competition called Law and Sport event and the contents included various laws and policies such as Land Law, Marriage Law, Gender Law. Each LARC group under the facilitation of LARC leader read the documents of Law and Policy and then drafted the questions and answers (Q&A) regarding Law and policy. The members of CICs reviewed the submitted questions and responses and composed a bank of Q&A for the Law and Sport competition at communes.

By the end of the project, 90 % of interviewed women reported that the authorities were genuinely listening to the issues raised by EM people compared to 51 % in the baseline survey. 88.8 % surveyed women reported positive government responses to the information requests by EM women (vs 6 % in baseline survey¹).

Better governance was recognised by the evaluation in the project areas especially at the village and commune levels, regarding better mechanism and space for interaction between people and local authorities to understand, support and respond to ethnic minorities' needs and rights.

The overall assessment is that SO3 achieved at a high level of effectiveness with no significant issue.

Efficiency

The relationship between the input of financial resources and results are achieved as appropriate: With the approved budget, the project created more than the desired outcomes and outputs: 15/28 results archived more than designed targets, 9/28 project results were assessed as the same as planned, and only 4 results at output level was less than designed indicators (the number of LARCs and LARC members). The inputs had been converted into outputs, results, and outcomes logically.

The project applied several useful *measures and structures that had contributed to maximising efficiency*. These included activities that were *built on previous experiences* (LARCs/VSLAs, Score Cards); *Use of local resources*: all project activities were implemented in partnerships with local based CSOs (NorthNet members) that ensured the project efficiency and sustainability.

The project had strengthened local institutions (NorthNet, LARCs/VSLAs), addressed local capacity gaps (for both CSOs and local government agencies), and worked for policy changes for long terms sustainability. The application of these measures maximised the project efficiency.

However, *in terms of time and resources, several challenges occurred which reduced the efficiency of the project*: These included the delay of project approval in Cao Bang, and delay of support for the small grant for CARTEN, a NorthNet member. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, some advocacies and replication activities at both national and provincial level, were postponed. A three-month no-cost extension was approved.

The overall assessment is that the project had an average level of efficiency.

Impact

The project was assessed as a high level of impact in areas of technical impact, social impact, policy impact and economic impact.

The technical impact regards to improved advocacy skills of NorthNet members and LARC/VSLA members and leaders. As reported in the effectiveness section, it is noticeably clear that the project had significant technical impacts.

Social impact: The project had mainstreamed gender equality and women's empowerment across all activities. Poor EM women gained capacity, including increased knowledge, skills, and confidence to voice out. The improvement of women and men's relations had been promoted through creating space and opportunities through the mechanism of the CCMs for women to direct interact with men in the communities. Evidence of changes in structures that reinforced

¹ "Several other topics related to social welfares and laws also are in attention of EM women in visits to communal officers including education, vocational training, inheritance, marriage and family law, ect. Importantly, only 6% of those proactively looking for information from communal officers highlighted that receiving full package of information that they need and were satisfied with information provided" – the Project baseline survey, page 18.

gender stereotypes and prevented women from accessing knowledge and information was obtained.

The SAA approach was tested in 2019 with LARCs/VSLA members and remained particularly challenging. A review of SAA conducted by CARE and its partners in 2019 identified following main challenges: 1) SAA requires 12 sections in each LARC/VSLA meeting, but sufficient time could not be allocated during regular meetings 2) SAA required very strong facilitation skills that have been beyond the capacity of LARC members at the time of the project; 3) Limited men involved in the meetings because most men in the village worked as hired labour outside the village; 4) Men considered LARCs/VSLAs as organisations for women and they were not interested to join. The project planned to revise SAA Handbook and approach; however, the revision has not yet completed by the end of the project for further implementation.

Policy impact: The project had meaningful policy impact as reported in the effectiveness section. This included support/influence on the implementation of the Law on Access to Information; NorthNet had a better engagement in the policy formulation process at district, province, and national levels. Changes in policies were obtained, including the replication of new methods for information communication with two-way dialogue between EM people and local government agencies. Five new/amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and budgets responded to the rights, needs, and demands of EM women and men were developed as results of the project. Department of Justice in both Dien Bien and Bac Kan had used the local budget for replication of the CCMs model including the Commune Information and Communication Solution Committees (CICS) in Dien Bien and both CICS and LARC/VSLA in Bac Kan.

Economic impact: It is proposed to be indirectly and directly achieved. As in the project design, the indirect economic effects can be achieved when the target groups' increased access to information about government programmes, services, and provisions as this can lead to improving their livelihood opportunities. As presented in the sections of effectiveness, in the project implementation phase, more than 89 % surveyed EM women reported increased access to more information from local government in various areas including land rights, agriculture production and requested government services provision based on their needs. For example, in the end-line survey, 96.4 % of EM people had information on a loan from the local government programme, and 78.60 % benefited (in comparison to 77.8 % and 47.5 % in the baseline survey, respectively). 92.1 % of EM people received information on crop cultivation input supports from local government, and 62.8 % benefited (in comparison 71.6 % and 47.8 % in the baseline survey, respectively).

Direct economic impacts were achieved through the LARCs, where women participated in savings and loans activities. This helped members invest in diversifying or upscaling their livelihood activities (1,597 women had taken part in savings and loans activities under LARCs/VSLAs for investing in their livelihood activities).

The evaluation found no negative impact.

Sustainability

The project is characterised by a high level of sustainability in areas of institutional sustainability, policy level sustainability and financial sustainability.

Institutional sustainability: The institutional sustainability was achieved by focusing on strengthening organisational capacity and improving decision-making mechanism and structure.

At the community level, results of interviewed LARC/VSLAs members showed that 100 % of LARC/VSLA members confirmed that they would continue their activities after the project phasing out including the Improved Access to Information model.

Under the CCMs, the project had set up a sustainable structure that enabled the participation of EM in the decision-making process. This structure, including the Commune Information and Communication Solution Committees (CICS), had been officially approved by local authorities. Clear job descriptions of the Committee's members, who were commune Government officials, were developed and approved by local government agencies. Six office spaces were allocated by local government to the CICs for carrying out their activities.

At regional and national levels, the project had built the capacity of NorthNet to participate in advocacy works with better representation of EMs, accountable, and capable of performing their role as development actors at local and national levels. The institutional capacity of NorthNet, including linkages with other CSO and networks, had been strengthened. The capacity development process was more demand-driven for linking NorthNet with LARC/VSLA group's demands. Local Government agencies had changed the way of implementation of the Law of Information and providing better other services for EM.

Policy sustainability: Policy sustainability was ensured by supporting civil society (NorthNet and LARCs/VSLAs) to engage in on-going policy processes and improve legislation and policies. The project had used the methods of implementation that enabled EM women and NorthNet members to participate in policy feedback activities actively. The developed mechanism of CCM was accessible to EM people and women. Five new/amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responded to the rights, needs, and demands of EM women and men were developed. Departments of Justice in Dien Bien and Bac Kan had used the local budget for replication of the project model and approaches.

The project was designed to target women in LARCs/VSLAs. This is an excellent approach to empower EM women. However, this will limit the ability to replicate the project models into other provinces without LARCs/VSLAs using resources from the government system.

Financial sustainability: The project achieved great impact at the community level by the application of the LARC/VSLA method. In total 68 LARC/VSLA groups with 1,597 68 have been set up and are operational. The groups perform self-funded, self-managed savings and credit activities, where member can borrow money for livelihood activities defined in the group's constitution. Improved access to information e.g. local loan programmes (see impact section) also increased financial sustainability.

Related to the NorthNet, experiences of small-grant implementation, co-research, strengthened capacity and linkages between NorthNet and other networks, international agencies and donors will contribute to fundraising activity for NorthNet in the future.

Recommendations

The implemented action is truly relevant to local social, economic, and political context. The project was implemented successfully, achieved most of the target outputs and outcomes, and reached high levels of sustainability and impact. The Model of Improved Access to Information and different capacity building approaches were assessed as effective and had been documented for scaling up. *CARE in Vietnam should continue to support sharing, learning and replication/institutionalisation of these models and approaches into other relevant programmes, projects, and policies of the government, as well as programmes of CARE International in Vietnam, other partners, and development agencies.*

Due to the fact that the action builds on the VSLA /LARC network which is not established in all provinces in Vietnam, *CARE should pilot a model/approach in villages/areas without LARCs/VSLAs to have better evidence for advocacy and scaling up. CARE International in Vietnam*

should continue to provide technical support to local partner and agencies in the project areas for better replication of the project models.

SAA is a good approach that was used to change gender stereotypes, especially in accessing information. However, under the project, the SAA approach was tested but not yet fully implemented to maximise impacts on social norms, beliefs and practises about gender and cultural stereotypes in the local context. *CARE International in Vietnam should review the method and content to be more appropriate, such as reducing a number of SAA sections for one meeting, developing more appropriate SAA's facilitation techniques which correspondent with the capacity of LARC members, identifying better way to involve men into the SAA's meetings, when integrating into a project, especially related to exploring and addressing the social norms, beliefs and practises about gender and cultural stereotypes.*

CARE International in Vietnam should continue to strengthen capacity of the NorthNet, especially related to areas of writing skills for developing policy brief and advocacy messages, capacity to develop relationship with mass media and capacity for policy monitoring and evaluation.

1. Project background

In Vietnam, the Law on Access to Information was passed by the National Assembly in April 2016 and took effect from 1st July 2018. Access to public information is a prerequisite for development, as it enables citizens to obtain information about policies and decisions, which concern them, to question and influence plans and processes, and get access to goods and services that they can use to improve their livelihoods.

Ethnic minority women in remote mountainous areas face multiple challenges to accessing information and public services. The 2015 Justice Index shows that poor people are disadvantaged compared to elites, and that women are disadvantaged compared to men when it comes to accessing information. In line with human rights principles of empowerment and participation, this action will focus on the most marginalised groups, namely EM women who are disadvantaged socially, economically, politically and geographically.

Dien Bien is one of the poorest in Vietnam (an average of 44 % of the population and over 60 % in poor communes are classified as poor) with up to 20 ethnic groups including Thai (40 %) and Hmong (31 %) as well as Kho Mu, Lao, Khang, Dao and Ha Nhi groups accounting for 80 % of the population. Bac Kan and Cao Bang are also amongst the poorest provinces in Vietnam, and home to many EM groups. Ethnic minority women live in remote hilly locations with poor infrastructure degraded protected forest and merged agricultural land. Ethnic minorities including Tay, Thai, Nung, Dzaio and Hmong groups deal with lack of land for production, remoteness and limited livelihood options. All three provinces, in northern mountainous region of Vietnam, are identified as priority locations in major poverty reduction programmes and policies targeting EM people.

Since March 2017, CARE Vietnam, in partnership with ADC, CCD, DECEN have implemented three years-project named “Informed to Influence’: Increasing EM women’s access to information for improved governance and development” funded by European Union in six communes of selected districts of Dien Bien district (Dien Bien province), Cho Moi district (Bac Kan province, and Nguyen Binh district (Cao Bang province) in the North of Vietnam.

The overall objective of the project is civil society organisations legitimately represent EM communities to enhance government transparency and accountability for promoting EM rights. The overall objective will be achieved through three specific objectives and related results, as below:

SO1: Civil society organisations have strengthened capacity to represent ethnic minority women’s interests

SO2: Ethnic minority women have increased access to information on ethnic minority-related policies and programmes

SO3: Lawmakers and authorities are more supportive of ethnic minorities’ right to access information

This project articulates a rights-based approach by empowering EM populations, as holders of the right to information, to engage with government bodies, as duty bearers in this regard, mediated and facilitated by capable and legitimate civil society organisations. The **theory of change** is that:

If civil society organisations effectively represent the interests of ethnic minorities in policy processes; and

If citizens, particularly EM women, can claim their rights to information and to participate in decision-making; and

If the government authorities are capable of meeting the information and accountability needs of citizens,

Then EM women and men in Northern Vietnam will be able to exercise their Human Right to seek and receive information² and so benefit from social and economic development in the country.

The theory of change reflects the important role of civil society as a development actor. The project strengthens the capacity of civil society at the grassroots/community level through raising awareness, rights education, and building skills to engage with formal civil society organisations and local government. Civil society organisations themselves are supported to become more representative and legitimate as they advocate for state or market actors to be open, transparent and accountable to citizens. At the national level, the project supports alliance building between civil society networks representing EM groups for more effective joint advocacy. It also seeks to strengthen government capacity at local and national levels to respond to requests from communities and civil society for information, transparency and accountability, using a non-confrontational approach.

2. Evaluation purpose and questions

The project final evaluation is to ensure a fresh, unbiased view and assessment. Specifically, the purposes of project final evaluation include:

- To analyse the relevance of project strategies and approaches during the project duration and in the exiting phase.
- To assess effectiveness, efficiency and impact base on project log-frame indicators and targets.
- To evaluate the sustainability of the project results and approaches.
- To draw – out lessons and recommendations for sustaining the project achievements focused on how to scale up the project model.

To meet the objectives, the evaluation has applied five criteria for assessment: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impacts, and sustainability.

Main questions related to the criteria is as in the Annex 1.

3. Evaluation methodology

The project final evaluation promoted a participatory process, incorporating a cross section of all stakeholders. A mixed-evaluation method was applied including desk-review, quantitative survey, qualitative method with deep semi-structure interviews. A total of 407 people actively participated in the evaluation of which, 386 was women of Thai, Dao, H'Mong, Tay, Nung and Kinh ethnic groups.

CARE and NorthNet organisations' staff had participated in the whole process of the evaluation including designing methodologies, supporting discussions in various evaluation meetings and field consultations (see table below).

² Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Table 2: Ethnic minority people participating in the evaluation

Stakeholders participating in the evaluation	Dien Bien		Bac Can		Cao Bang		Total	Total Females
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female		
Villagers/members of LARC/VSLA participated in the quantitative survey		211		74		45	330	330
NorthNet member staff							9	5
Members of LARC/VSLA participated in the qualitative survey		29		15			44	44
Village head, commune, district, and provincial government staff participated in the qualitative survey	12	4	5	3			24	7
TOTAL	12	244	5	92	0	45	407	386

4. Findings

4.1. Relevance

In accordance with Vietnam's international commitments: The project has been successfully implemented and fully relevant with Vietnam's international commitments including the *Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW, Article 14: Participation of Ethnic Minority Women in Economic Development)* and *the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030*:

Goal 5- Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls: Evidences: 1,597 LARC/VSLA members and 81 % surveyed women who have meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces. 60 % used to raise questions/feedbacks; 32 % surveyed EM women used to visit government officers/local authorities to raise issues and comments (such as on agriculture, loans, education, household economic development support, social affairs, marriage and family law, etc); Overall around 54.5 % highlighted that they know how to report back to local authorities when receiving wrong information provided by local government.

Goal 10- Reduce inequality within and among countries: Evidences: The project targets the poorest province in Vietnam (Dien Bien, Cao Bang and Bac Kan are among 10 poorest provinces in Vietnam) and most vulnerable groups that were EM people and EM women, to reduce inequalities (see more details in other sections effectiveness and impacts of the report).

Relevant to the needs of local CSOs, the NorthNet: The project supported capacity development of NorthNet based on their needs and capacity gaps in different areas such as capacity building on action research, networking, and advocacy. According to the organisational self-assessment at the beginning of the project their capacity in areas of action research for advocacy was scored at 2.7 and increased to 3.9 by the time of the final evaluation in 2020. Similar results gained for other aspects of network/organisational capacity such as communication and advocacy, external

and internal relationship development, planning and monitoring (see more detail results in section effectiveness of this report).

At the time of the evaluation, representatives of the NorthNet member organisations confirmed that the project had helped to improve their organisation and staff capacity to provide better services for EM, especially information services for EM women, better representing the voice of EM people to influence the implementation of the Law of Access to information, as well as for long term development of their organisations and network. For example, capacity to help EM communities to develop and implement CCMs, to facilitate two-way of communication, capacity to do research to collect evidences for advocacy.

The NorthNet members still request more capacity building/trainings, especially in areas of writing skills for developing policy brief and advocacy message, capacity to develop relationship with mass media and capacity for policy monitoring and evaluation.

Relevance to the needs of local government agency: In Vietnam, the Law on Access to Information was passed by the National Assembly in April 2016 and took effect from 1st July 2018. At the beginning of the project, there was limited understanding among government stakeholders, especially at local levels, on how to implement the law to effectively reach ethnic minorities in remote areas. According to interviews with provincial/district/communal authorities in the baseline survey, practices of circulating information was conducted only by one-way communication, which had not met demands of community people, especially EM women. Information was conveyed in written forms that draws little attention from the EM women, who have limited education and ability to use Kinh language. Common information channels were village meetings or through village heads but there were few leaders who had capacity of delivering full context of information. Local Government agencies recognized that they need a better approach for implementing the Law of Information.

The project had supported the local government agencies to fulfil this responsibility. CARE and its partners had developed and implemented a Community Communication Model (CCM) with two-way communication and dialogue between local agencies and EM communities. Under the model, diversified channels of information provision and communication were developed and applied in Kinh and EM languages. More than 100 local government agencies at all levels (from village to province) actively participated in the project activities. They had highly appreciated the CCM's approach and reported that the project had not only helped them with a new method for information communication, but also supported them to understand the consequences of the Law on Access to Information and their responsibilities in implementing it. In addition, the CCM had also created an opportunity for them to interact with EM in the community, whom they normally had truly little direct interaction with, and this had improved their image in the communities.

At the time of the evaluation, 100 % officials and leaders of provincial, district and commune agencies in the project locations evaluated that the CCM was a very useful and helped them to effectively implement the country's strategic orientations on the Law of Information, in particular:

- Increased access to information for people, especially for EM women.
- Effective implementation of the country's strategic orientations on law dissemination and education.
- Renewal of the method, content, and form of law dissemination, raised the quality and efficiency of the state management of law dissemination. Especially, to ensure that the communication of information in a two-way interaction between government and

community. People (especially women) who were not fluent in Vietnamese language could still access and understood the information.

- Mobilised the large participation of Government agencies and CSOs to support EM communities in accessing information and laws.

"This is an amazingly effective model, very suitable to the functions and tasks of the commune, absolutely does not generate additional works for commune officials ... the way of two-way communication and information exchange has provided better information needs of the people, strengthen the coordination among the commune departments, reduce overlapping in providing information on policies and laws for people ... "

Leaders of People's Committee of Thanh Van commune, Cho Moi district, Bac Kan province

Relevant to the needs of the target groups: The project targets the most marginalised groups - EM women and men in Dien Bien, Bac Kan and Cao Bang in the Northern mountain of Vietnam - to be more aware of their rights to information and to have information about relevant government laws, policies and programmes provided in ways that are accessible to them. Before the project, information from government agencies was provided via local authorities to villagers in Kinh language without any feedback opportunity for the villagers (one-way communication). For this reason, EM people, especially women, had extremely limited understanding on government policies and programmes. For example, as indicated by the baseline survey, only 6 % women reported to satisfactory receive information according to their needs.

By implementation of the Model of Promoting Access to Information, EM people, especially women had gained a significant improvement of their access to information needed for the social and economic activities. At the end of the project, more than 84 % of LARC's members had increased access to information on government programmes, policies and legislation; 67 % had increased confidence and knowledge to hold authorities to account for addressing their priorities; and more than 90 % reported that the authorities provided information relevant for their lives and livelihood.

Results from the qualitative survey showed that 100 % of interviewed women improved their access to information and received information relevant for their needs and demands. The information increased their capacity for social and production activities and they felt confident to raise their voice and articulate their needs to local government agencies.

"The way of communication is quite different from before. Understand more and had more information"

"Previously attending the meeting, I only got some information through the speaker and now I understand it clearly through discussion. In addition, given the demand for information, women are extremely interested including illiterate women ..."

"Through the discussion about using the Card, I am more confident, express my opinion, even those who are illiterate ... They are extremely excited because they are provided with adequate information and in accordance with their needs ..."

Sharing from the women villagers on the project activities in the evaluation

The relevance of the project approach methods was assessed using following criteria 1) The methods can be implemented in the local context; 2) People identified method as appropriate; 3) Created positive effects/impacts.

In the project design, the main approaches applied by the project included:

Empowerment and participation in decision-making: These had been done at two levels: regional/national and community.

At regional level, the project provided various capacity development approaches to NorthNet, a civil society network to build their capacity for participation in decision making. The capacity development approaches included training, cross-learning, co-research to collect evidence, strengthen internal and external linkages and skills for networking and advocacy.

Good results and impacts of the capacity building process were obtained. NorthNet had improved its organisations and staff capacity for participation in decision-making, better representing the voice of EM peoples, enhancing government accountability and transparency to EM. For example, NorthNet, in cooperation with other CSO networks, had actively organised six joint research, advocacy and consultation interventions. Three policy briefs/recommendation papers were developed representing voice of EM to influence the implementation of the Law on Access to Information; NorthNet had facilitated local EM to set up and operate the CCMs that had enabled EM women to better access governmental information.

At the community level, the project had enabled EM women in remote rural areas to participate in public life and to access information from government authorities. The Livelihood and Rights Clubs (LARC) and the Village Savings and Loans Association (VSLA) served as platforms for awareness raising/information sharing and local advocacy on the women's right to information.

The Livelihood and Rights Clubs (LARC) is a women-lead-club with 15-20 female members from the village. LARCs are a well-tested method for organising women, supporting their empowerment and serve as platforms for women to access information, engage in dialogue with authorities, and channel their interests to policy-makers. External evaluations of the LARC experiences in Vietnam show that women gain confidence, knowledge, respect, and social capital through LARC membership and can use this to influence decisions that affect their lives. The VSLA method is a vital component of LARC and will be introduced as a best-practice model for group managed savings and loans activities. The VSLA component supports LARC sustainability by providing a financial incentive for members to meet regularly and for women's family members to support their participation in women only LARC groups.

Source: I2I project document

Working in partnership with NorthNet, the project had successfully piloted and scaled up the CCMs that promoting two way of information communication, enabled EM women inside and outside LARCs/VSLAs to participate in public life and to access information from governmental authorities and influence local government agencies to be more responsive to the needs of EM women.

81 % surveyed women EM men and women had meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces, 60 % used to raise questions/feedback, 90 % surveyed women reported that the authorities were genuinely listening to the issues raised in compare with three years

ago, 62 issues (such as information quality, further information needs, ask for resource support for local cooperative, improve loudspeaker, infrastructure, asking for transparency of budget allocation for villages) were raised by EM women to local government agencies.

The project approach on empowerment and participation in decision-making was very relevant.

Equality and non-discrimination: In the project design, the equality and non-discrimination referred to targeting groups that are particularly poor and marginalised in a Vietnamese context, namely EM people in remote Northern provinces, with a specific focus on women, who faced multiple forms of gender-based disadvantages and ethnicity-based discrimination.

In the implementation, the project targeted: 1) Ethnic minorities in the remote mountainous provinces of the North, including all ethnic groups in the project area such as Thai, Hmong, Tay, Dao, Nung; 2) Ethnic minority women belong to the above groups; 3) Poor households; 4) Poor people / poor women and illiterate women. In light of the success of the project poor EM women now raise their voice to dialogue with local government agencies (see more elaboration in Effectiveness and Impact sections) The approach on Equality and non-discrimination is evaluated as very relevant.

Gender transformative approach: In the project design, the gender transformative approach refers to fully mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment across all activities. The approach is based on the CARE Gender Equality Framework, which outlines three areas in which transformation needs to happen for gender equality to be achieved: build agency, change relations and transform structures.

The project successfully applied the approach, mainstreamed gender equality and women's empowerment across all activities. In terms of build agency, poor EM women developed their capacity through increased knowledge, skills, and confidence to voice out. The improvement of women and men's relations had been done through creating space and opportunities through mechanism of the CCMs/LARC/VSLA for women to direct interact with the communities and local authorities. The project contributed to change the structures (traditional and local government structure) that reinforced gender stereotypes and prevent women from accessing knowledge and information by adding CCM's structure that enabled women with better social position and voice out through participatory process in both community and local government for interactive meetings, activities, engagement and advocacy with authorities. 88,8 % surveyed women reported that the authorities were genuinely listening to the issues raised in compare to 6 % three years ago. However the opportunity for application of SAA was missed to maximise impacts in areas of *change relations and transform structures* as below under SAA section.

"Before knowing nothing now know a lot of information ... very helpful for production, timely ... the information provided reached more than 70 % of my needs on information"

"During the big holidays, the women who participate are incredibly happy, the husbands are very happy ... The husbands encourage women to participate. Opportunities for women to exchange, learn, share experiences"

Shared by the women from LARCs/VSLAs –
Interview of the evaluation

Social Analysis and Action (SAA): It is CARE's tested approach to facilitate transformation of gender and social norms. SAA is centred on on-going critical reflection and dialogue, enabling participants to explore social norms, beliefs and practises about gender and cultural stereotypes and envision positive alternatives in their own organisations and networks. It involves 5 steps:

transform staff capacity to self-reflect and challenge; critical reflection and dialogue; action planning to address discrimination and challenge social norms; implementation of the action plans; and evaluation of the changes. The implementation of SAA requires participation of both women and men (preferable women and their husbands). The project planned to use SAA at two levels: at community level including LARC members and their husbands, and local authorities and at higher level among civil society organisations (NorthNet) in order to address gender and social norms that prevent women from accessing information and engaging in governance.

A Handbook of SAA was developed, and trainings were provided to NorthNet and LARCs/VSLAs members. In the Handbook, five main steps were elaborated into 12 sections/activities. Some activities required participation of women and some both women and men. The SAA was tested in 2019 with LARCs/VSLA members and remained particularly challenging. A review of SAA was conducted by CARE and its partners in 2019 found the reasons including: 1) SAA required 12 sections in each LARC/VSLA meeting, but sufficient time could not be allocated during regular meetings 2) SAA required very strong facilitation skills that have been beyond the capacity of LARC members at the time of the project; 3) Limited men involved in the meetings because most men in the village worked as hired labour outside the village; 4) Men considered LARCs/VSLAs were organisations for women and they were not interested to join.

The project planned to revise SAA Handbook and approach; however, the revision has not yet completed by the end of the project. As a consequence, by the end of the project, no action plan to address discrimination and challenge social norms and no special activity for targeting LARC members' husbands to promote women's voice, leadership, and to seek more changes in gender inequity and gender-based violence at the household level was conducted.

CARE's Governance Programme Framework is aligned with the human rights based approach and focuses on strengthening both the 'demand' and the 'supply side' of governance by empowering citizens to claim their rights and by building the capacity of duty bearers to respond and fulfil the rights of the citizens. An essential aspect of this approach is the creation of spaces for negotiation and dialogue between citizens/CSOs and the government. CARE's signature approach for improving participatory governance is the Community Score Card (CSC) for bringing together community members and local authorities to assess and improve the quality of government services.

The Governance Programme Framework was adopted successfully and assessed as relevant regarding to three dimensions: 1) Creation of spaces for negotiation and dialogue between citizens/CSOs and the government: LARC/VSLA, mechanism of the CCMs as above discussion; 2) Creation space for bi-lingual dialogues through researches, meetings, discussions and advocacy dialogue at district, provincial and national levels. As results, three policy briefs/positions had been developed, three joint advocacy initiatives involving NorthNet and other CSO network had been conducted, five new or amended policies legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of EM women and men have been approved; and 3) The Community Score Card (CSC) tool was successfully adopted. This was practiced quarterly in all LARCs/VSLAs as a tool for assessment of information quality and needs of EM women. This had resulted to change Government services based on the need and priority issues of EM people and women.

The **Community Score Card (CSC)** method: It involves bringing together community members and local authorities to assess and improve the quality of government services. After initial preparations, the CSC process starts with a community/LARC level assessment of priority issues in the village (answering: what are the barriers to deliver quality services?). Community members develop indicators for assessing priority issues and complete the Score Card by scoring against each indicator and giving reasons for the scores. The group will generate suggestions for improvement. The next step is to assess government services together with local service providers (e.g. of health and agriculture service providers) in an interface meeting and come up with recommendations for improving the services

Source: I2I project document

It can be concluded that in terms of relevance of project approaches and methodologies including Empowerment *and participation in decision-making, Equality and non-discrimination, Gender transformative approach and CARE's Governance Programme Framework* were extremely relevant. SAA approach was tested and gained valuable lessons learned, however, it was not yet fully implemented to see its relevance and maximise impacts on social norms, beliefs and practises about gender and cultural stereotypes in the local context.

4.2. Effectiveness

Effectiveness is the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved or are expected to be achieved.

Overall assessment is the project achieved at high level of the effectiveness. 15/28 project results achieved more than the targeted indicators. 9/28 project results were achieved as planned and only 4 results at **output level** the number of LARCs and LARC members could not be achieved (68 LARCs and 1,597 members compared to targeted 73 LARCs and 1,625 members).

In Cao Bang, DECEN partner could only set up 15 LARCs, instead of 18 as originally planned. Reasons behind had been intensive capacity development of LARC leaders to manage the groups and the huge distance between the selected communes with extensive travel time for the partner. In order to ensure quality, CVN and the partner decided that the action would not set up new LARCs in Cao Bang but focus on strengthening the established 15 ones.

In 2019, the government decided to merge commune and village administrative units, as well as government officials at these levels, reducing the number of established LARCs in Cao Bang and Dien Bien, which was in accordance with the number of merged villages. As such the Action could establish 68 LARCs, instead of 73 as originally targeted. Additionally, Bac Hop commune in Cao Bang planned to merge with another commune at the end of 2019 and the planned activities in this commune were cancelled.

The assessment of effectiveness for each Strategic Objective (SO) are described below. More detailed achievements against designed indicators are presented in Annex 2.

SO1: Civil society organisations' have strengthened capacity to represent ethnic minority women's interests

Under SO1, two out of three target indicators: 2) Increase in scores in capacity assessments of NorthNet and 3) Number of joint advocacy initiatives involving NorthNet and at least one other CSO network exceeded the target. However, the first indicator: Number and per cent of EM men and women who have meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces was not achieved in terms of number of LARC members as planned. But the project still recognized the significant change of this indicator compared with the baseline value.

Table 3: Project achievements against planned indicators under SO1

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Targets Jan 2020	Achieved by Feb 2020	Level of Achievement
SO1: Civil society organisations' have strengthened capacity to represent ethnic minority women's interests	Number and per cent of ethnic minority men and women who have meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces ³	197 (55 per cent) ethnic minority men and women who have meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces	1,625 LARC members, 50 NorthNet members' staff by year 3	1,597 LARC/VSLA members and 81 % surveyed women ethnic minority men and women who have meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces (in which, 60 % used to raise questions/feedbacks; 54.5 % know how to claim their rights to local authorities).	Achieved lower than planned
OC 1.1 Increased capacity of NorthNet members to represent ethnic minority women's rights to access information	Increase in scores in capacity assessments of NorthNet	Scores in all areas under 3 (from 2,3 to 2,8), excepted creditability (score at 3.1) out of 5 max. score.	Scores in all areas above 3 by year 3	Scores in all areas of Northnet capacity increased from 2.8 from baseline to 3.6 in end-line survey.	Achievement according to plan
OC 1.2 Strengthened alliance of civil society organisations to advocate for the rights of ethnic minorities in the Law on Access to Information	Number of joint advocacy initiatives involving NorthNet and at least one other CSO network	0	At least 1 by year 3	Three joint initiatives (one research, and two joint advocacy initiatives) between NN and PPWG, CARE and Oxfam	Achieved more than planned

Regarding to indicator 1, the project established 68 operational LARC/VSLA. The CCMs were designed and implemented with 2 main components: 1) Village Information Platforms (at village level using LARCs/VSLAs), 2) Commune Information and Communication Solution Committees

³ CARE International global indicator. For this project, "spaces" are defined as LARC meetings, and dialogues with authorities at local and national level.

(CICS) at commune level, including all related department/officers in the commune such as Commune People Committee, Commune Cultural, Health, Agriculture officers, Women Union, Youth Union members. Related district agencies and NorthNet members supported the Village Information Platforms in application of Scored Card, developing bulletins, videos and other communication materials, facilitating information assessment, discussion, dialogue and feedback between EM people/LARC/VSLA members and local government agencies.

Six Commune Information and Communication Solution Committee and 68 Village Information Platforms were established in Dien Bien, Cao Bang and Bac Kan provinces. Through such platforms, more than 3,000 EM women (and men) participated in decision-making spaces/process (informal spaces such as LARC/VSLA, formal spaces such as village and commune meetings), engaged in dialogue with authorities and fostered greater openness from both sides in responding and providing information based on EM women's needs and expectations.

At the beginning of the project as indicated by the baseline survey, there were only 197 (55 %) EM men and women who had participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces/process of local government while by the end of the project, these figures were 1,597 LARC/VSLA members and 81 %, respectively. The decision-making spaces/process included LARCs/VSLAs, village meetings, meetings with individual Government officers, meetings with Commune People Committees. 60% EM interviewees reported that they used to raise questions/feedbacks and 54.5 % of them knew how to claim their rights.

Related to indicator 2, CARE in Vietnam had facilitated a whole process of capacity building for NorthNet to improve its organisations and staff capacity for participation in decision-making, better representing the voice of EM peoples, to influence the implementation of the Law of Access to information, and provide better information services for EM, especially EM women. This also enhanced government accountability and transparency to EM people and women.

The NorthNet members strengthened their capacity by cross learning visit to learn how to develop platform/ network for EM women at village level (LARC). CARE identified the capacity gaps by conducting a baseline followed by annual capacity self-assessment and provided capacity development in various areas such as setting up channels of information sharing, accessing, training and coaching skills, facilitation skills, addressing gender issues and supporting EM women in increased access to information, co-research, policy analysis and advocacy.

Further capacity building and action included the development of detailed activity plans to pilot approaches, models to build and collect advocacy-based evidences in the targeted locations in the three selected provinces Dien Bien, Cao Bang and Bac Kan. A Learning-by-doing approach was applied by co-action research for advocacy, small grants provided to promote their initiatives for addressing the issues of local EM men and women, supported LARCs/VSLAs to setting up and operational of the CCMs.

By the end of the project, capacity of NorthNet members had improved and they were capable to better represent EM and women's rights. The organisation self-assessment results showed an increase in the area of knowledge on government policy from 2.7 (baseline assessment) to 3.9 (end project assessment); the capacity in action research for advocacy increased from 2.8 to 3.8; the capacity to represent EM increased from 3.1 to 3.5 and the capacity on advocacy increased from 2.6 to 3.5.

Related to indicator 3, three joined initiatives (1 research; 2 joint advocacy initiatives) between NorthNet and PPWG (People Participation Working Group), CARE and Oxfam (vs target of at least one initiative by year 3), on implementation of the Law on access to information were successfully conducted.

At district and provincial level NorthNet, LARC leaders, other CSOs, and provincial and local authorities created formats to interact, learn and share about the practical implementation of the CCMs for EMs. The dialogue initiated by EM people at local level and NorthNet at regional and national levels. NorthNet, LARC leaders and other CSOs facilitated provincial workshops to introduce and discuss the Law of Information; organised sharing and learning workshops on results of the CCM approach and activities; provided training on SAA and governance for the staff of local government agencies. LARC's representatives participated in these events and presented how to provide better information for EM women based on their needs and demands. During various District Ethnic Cultural Festivals representatives of the LARC groups confidently shared their information demands with local authorities and confirmed the effectiveness of the two-way information and dialogue promoted by the project.

Through five small grants, NorthNet members influenced local authorities to provide better supports for EM people: The members organised sub-consultation events at province and community level to collect information and evidences for the national sharing, learning and advocacy events (as the below). CSC Viet Bac, a member of NorthNet had organised a local conference to introduce the law on access to information to 40 local government officials of communes and districts as well as village leaders. CSC also organised a training course on communication skills for 30 commune people. All the outcomes of the small grant initiative were also shared by CSC at different provincial meetings and the local authorities highly appreciated the results and approaches of the project, especially on building capacity and confidence for LARC members.

At national level, different sharing, learning and advocacy interventions were conducted that involved all NorthNet members, other NGOs and development actors such as OXFAM, PPWG local and national government agencies (Ministry and Departments of Justice, Women Union, and other agencies of seven provinces), universities, experts, other social groups/CSO networks and mass media in Vietnam. These networks, organisations jointly organised five advocacy and communication events, including two media campaigns to raise public awareness on the Law on Access to Information and its implementation, one joint research and to national dialogue events to share and provide recommendations on the Law on Access to Information. During the joined advocacy and communication process, the action engaged EM men to participate in local and national events for consultation and feedback.

In these events, NorthNet members played important roles of representing EM's voice on the needs to change communication and information sharing methods to be better meet their demands. Recommendations on the implementation of Law on access to information were sent to related Central Government agencies. Contents of the recommendations included the need of reorganisation of communication formats for the people's rights to access to information, need to have new methods/initiatives for effectively implementation of the Law on access to Information, need to improve internet infrastructure for better provision of information through internet for EM, as well as other services such as agriculture and loan services.

Overall assessment is that SO1 was achieved with a medium level of effectiveness.

SO2: Ethnic minority women have increased access to information on ethnic minority-related policies and programmes

Under the SO2, there are four target indicators: 1) per cent of LARC members reporting that they have increased access to information on government programmes, policies and/or legislation; 2) Number of women members of LARC groups have a platform to access and share information;

3) per cent of LARC members who report feeling confident to raise issues with authorities and 4) Number of issues raised by women in meetings with authorities.

Table 4: Project achievements against planned indicators under SO2

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Targets Jan 2020	Achieved by Feb 2020	Level of Achievement
SO2: Ethnic minority women have increased access to information on ethnic minority-related policies and programmes	% of LARC members reporting that they have increased access to information on government programmes, policies and/or legislation	51 % to 77.8 % of LARC members reported knowing government policies and programmes.	70 % of LARC members by year 3.	83 % to 96 % of EM women reported to be aware of government and local policies and programmes (In Dien Bien: 100 % LARC/VSLA group members accessed information related to Pork African disease, corona virus, agricultural advisories; In Bac Can: up to 80 % LARC/VSLA members accessed gender equality law, Law of Information access, information about Pork African disease, rice and livelihood diseases; In Cao Bang: 70 % LARC/VSLA members accessed information on the new rural development programme, 30A).	Achieved more than planned
OC 2.1. Ethnic minority women have a platform to access and share information	Number of women members of LARC groups	318 Bac Can 690 (Cao Bang) 930 (Dien Bien) (potential members)	1,625 members by year 3	1,597 LARC/VSLA members of which: Bac Can: 437 members (95 % are female). Dien Bien: 650 female LARC/VSLA members. Cao Bang: 162 female LARC/VSLA members.	Achieved less than planned
OC 2.2. Ethnic minority women have increased confidence and knowledge to hold authorities to account for addressing their priorities	% of LARC members who report feeling confident to raise issues with authorities	52 % surveyed women reported used to participate in village meetings. In which, 13 %-14 % used to raise questions/ feedback 15 % surveyed EM women used to visit government	40 % by year 3	81 % surveyed women reported to participate sometimes or regularly in village meetings. In which, 60 % used to raise questions/feedback 32 % surveyed EM women used to visit government officers/local authorities to raise issues and comments (such as on agriculture, loans, education, household economic development support, social affair, marriage and family law, etc).	Achieved more than planned

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Targets Jan 2020	Achieved by Feb 2020	Level of Achievement
		<p>officers/local authorities to raise issues and comments.</p> <p>Overall, around 9 % highlighted that they know how to complain to local authorities when received wrong information, not timely and serious consequences caused by wrong information provided.</p>		<p>Overall, around 54.5 % highlighted that they know how to complain to local authorities when receiving wrong information or serious consequences caused by wrong information provided.</p> <p>LARC/VSLA group members also have chance to raise their feedbacks through CSC quarterly.</p> <p>As a result of LARC performance and CSC, in Bac Can, 7 women were consulted by district government authorities on the ideas for Community legal awareness contest of the district.</p>	
	Number of issues raised by women in meetings with authorities	12		62 issues raised by women who are LARC members through CSC quarterly and village meetings (Examples: information quality, further information needs, ask for resource support for Thanh Van cooperative, improve loudspeaker, infrastructure, asking for transparency of budget allocation for village hall meeting building)	Achieved more than planned

Among the three indicators, only indicator 2 could not be achieved as targeted due to a lower number of LARC members (see SO1).

Related to indicator 2, EM women had gained knowledge and better information on social and economic/production, became more respected and gained social capital through LARC/VSLA membership, became more confident and took action to influence decisions that affect their lives. By the end of the project: 89 % surveyed EM women reported increased access to information from local government (vs the targeted of 70 %); on average, 89.5 % surveyed women reported to be aware of government and local policies and programmes (in comparison to 64.4 % in baseline survey); 60 % of women were confident and used to raise questions/feedbacks with the local authority in the local meetings; around 54.5 % women highlighted that they know how to claim to local authorities when receiving wrong information

or serious consequences caused by wrong information provided; 32 % used to visit government officers/local authorities to raise issues and comments.

Under the indicator 3, 62 issues on various areas such as information quality, further information needs, resource support for local cooperative, improvement of village loudspeaker system, infrastructure, transparency of budget allocation for villages, have been raised by EM women towards local government agencies.

The main reasons for these achievements were successful application of capacity development to increase EM's women knowledge and confidence and the implementation of the CCMs, as described in SO1 in the Relevance section. Before the project, information from government agencies from local authorities to villagers, mainly in Kinh's language and without feedback and discussion opportunity. For this reason, EM people, especially women, had extremely limited understanding on government policies and programmes. As indicated in the baseline survey, *"Education and health information is deemed to be well informed and available in the community; Information on law, policies and social affairs may be available but inadequate, not updated and irregular; There was information on extension programmes but remains insufficient to make an impacts on lives of people; Extension programmes sometime provided technical trainings and materials on crops planting, breeding, livestock raising but the way information was presented is complicated and not understandable..."*.

By implementing the CCM with two way communication, dialogue and diversified channels of information provision and communication (such as directly providing information, face-to-face dialogue and discussion, bulletins, videos, radio broadcasts, role-plays, media) and the communication events in Kinh and ethnic minority languages, EM people, especially women had gained a significant knowledge needed for their social and economic activities. Through these channels, more than 125 broadcasts/news were developed and provided by local government district and commune authorities to EM women as they requested. Information was provided on different topics such as gender equality, women rights, land rights, health, education, agriculture production, transportation, and law on access to information.

"Through this model, people are overly excited because they are provided with accurate and complete information on time. This is an easier and more effective way to change communication, and you have a better understanding of legal policies..."

Shared by the women from LARCs/VSLAs – Interview's results of the evaluation

Overall SO2 was achieved in comparison to the designed target indicators.

SO3: Lawmakers and authorities are more supportive of ethnic minorities' right to access information

Under the SO3, five indicators for measuring achievements including 1) Number of new or amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs; 2) Number of policy briefs/position papers developed with input from EM women demands of EM women and men; 3) per cent of LARC members who feel that the authorities are genuinely listening to the issues raised; 4) per cent of positive government responses to information requests by EM women and 5) per cent LARC members who report increased information sharing by authorities.

Table 5: Project achievements against planned indicators under SO3

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Targets Jan 2020	Achieved by Feb 2020	Level of Achievement
SO3: Lawmakers and authorities are more supportive of ethnic minorities' right to access information OC 3.1. An evidence base is established on the importance of ethnic minority women's and men's access to information	Number of new or amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of ethnic minority women and men ⁴	0	At least one by year 3	Five new or amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of ethnic minority women and men	Achieved more than planned
OC 3.2. Lawmakers and authorities understand, support and respond to ethnic minorities' right to access information	Number of policy briefs/position papers developed with input from ethnic minority women	0	Three	Three papers/briefs	Achieved as the planned
	% of LARC members who feel that the authorities are genuinely listening to the issues raised	6%	80 %	90 % surveyed women reported that the authorities were genuinely listening to the issues raised in compare with 3 years ago. (Dien Bien: 87.7 per cent; Bac Can: 95.9 per cent; Cao Bang: 91 per cent)	Achieved more than planned
	% of positive government responses to information requests by EM women	6 %	40 %	88.8 % surveyed women reported on positive government responses to information requests by EM women (Dien Bien:	Achieved more than planned

⁴ CARE International global indicator. The indicator refers to policies, legislation, programmes and or budgets which have been targeted as part of the advocacy by the supported CSOs as part of this Action.

Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Targets Jan 2020	Achieved by Feb 2020	Level of Achievement
				86.7 %; Bac Can: 94.6 %; Cao Bang: 88.9 %)	
	% LARC members who report increased information sharing by authorities	10 %	60 %	89 % surveyed EM women reported increased accessing to more information from local government. 70 % surveyed EM women assessed that the information provided more timely and easier to understand. 87.6 % surveyed EM women reported that the information provided by local authorities were more transparent and accountable in compare with three years ago.	Achieved more than planned

Under the SO3, the project had provided different capacity development measures for local government agencies including good governance, policy/law and different communication skills for setting up and implementation of the CCMs. Local authorities highly appreciated the project support that had helped them with a new methods for information communication to effectively implement the country's strategic orientations on the Law of Information, gained better understanding of the Law on Access to Information, improved their image in the communities by creating opportunities to interact with ethnic minority in the communities.

With the operation of the CCMs and capacity building support on different areas such as communication, action research, networking, and advocacy, the interaction among NorthNet, LARC/VSLA leaders, commune, district and provincial agencies, information and dialogues were promoted and implemented as described under SO1. After improved access to information, women in LARC/VSLAs requested local authorities to provide better quality information and public services such as loan and agriculture services (details in the Impact section).

At community levels, several initiatives on replication of improving access to information had been developed and implemented by local agencies such as quarterly and annual competitions on different laws and policies in Bac Kan province with hundreds local EM men and women participated. By the end of the project, interviewed women reported that the authorities were genuinely listening to the issues raised in compare with three years ago (vs 51 % in baseline survey); 88.8 % surveyed women reported on positive government responses to information requests by EM women (vs 6 % in baseline survey).

The final evaluation showed significant change in the behaviour of local authorities towards ethnic minority women: 90 % of interviewed women reported that the authorities were genuinely listening to the issues raised in compare with three years ago (vs 51 % in baseline survey); 88.8 % surveyed women reported on positive government responses to information requests by EM women (vs 6 % in baseline survey). Of which, 70 % EM women assessed that the information provided more timely and easier to understand and 87.6 % surveyed EM women reported that the information provided by local authorities were more transparent and accountable in compare with three years ago.

Five new/amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of ethnic minority women and men have been launched: In Bac Can Mai Lap People's committee allocated a part of budget supporting for implementation of sport and law initiative to strengthen the access of information for women and men in community, as a result of learning from model of Thanh Van commune that was implemented last year. They also had supported a loan for women lead cooperative to improve their production. Thanh Van commune was flexible in harmonising local budget for their communication programme. In Dien Bien Ngoi Cay commune developed and broadcasted news in Thai ethnic language twice a week to improve the information access of community people. Three policy briefs/position papers were developed, shared, and discussed in different consultation meeting and advocacy events with input from NorthNet, LARC/VSLA members.

Department of Justice in both Dien Bien and Bac Kan developed and implemented plans for replication of the CCMs using the local budgets.

The final evaluation showed improved governance structures at village and commune level through the CCMs which allow community and local government to interact and to develop a joint understanding on the ethnic minorities' information needs.

4.3. Efficiency

The efficiency is a measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time) are converted to results.

The relationship between input of financial resources and results was assessed as appropriate: With the approved budget the project created more than the desired Outcomes and outputs: 15/28 results more than designed indicators, 9/28 project results were assessed as the same as planned and only 4 result at output level was less than designed indicators. The inputs had been converted into outputs, results, and outcomes in a logical manner.

The project applied several good *measures and structure that had contributed to maximising efficiency*. This included activities that were *built on previous experiences* (LARCs/VSLAs, Score Cards) and the *use local resources* - all project activities were implemented by a local based CSOs (NorthNet members) - that ensured the project efficiency and sustainability.

The project strengthened local institutions (NorthNet, LARCs/VSLAs), addressed local capacity gaps (for both CSOs and local government agencies), and worked for policy changes for long terms sustainability, which for maximised the project efficiency.

However, *In terms of time and resources, several factors were not well managed and reduced the efficiency of the project:* It took time to get approval from the provincial authority in Dien Bien for the Action implementation in one of the two selected communes due to a local security issue. CARE and CCD proposed another commune, which was approved to start in year 2.

CARTEN, a NorthNet member, who received a grant from CARE in year 2, could not get approval to implement their initiative in Phu Tho province. After six months without approval they revised the proposal and got approval to implement the project in Yen Bai province.

For the last months of year 3 of the Action, due to COVID-19 pandemic, some advocacy and replication activities at national and provincial levels needed to be postponed. The Action received approval from EU for three month no-cost extension. However, some planned advocacy and capacity building activities for replication and strengthening evidences in Cao Bang and Dien Bien provinces were cancelled due to the government restriction regulation to prevent COVID-19 outbreak, particularly in a targeted commune in Cao Bang where people have been quarantined after having contact with COVID-19 positive patients.

In total the level of efficiency was assessed as average.

4.4. Impact

There are four aspects of impact in the project design including:

- Technical impact
- Social impact
- Policy impact
- Economic impact

Technical impact

The technical impact refers to improved advocacy skills of NorthNet members and LARC/VSLA members and leaders. Advocacy skills included evidence collection, policy analysis, communication, and presentation skills. Results of the project indicated that the project had created good technical impacts.

As presented before in Relevant and Effectiveness sections, the result of self-scoring from NorthNet members demonstrated that the project had greatly improved the technical capacity through different capacity building approaches such as training events, workshops, learning-by-doing, co-research. As results, the project achieved technical impacts for NorthNet in different areas such as capacity to represent ethnic minority and women's rights, capacity and skills in networking, internal and external relation and action research for advocacy.

At district and provincial level, various dialogues were conducted with local authorities to interact, learn and share on the practical implementation of CCMs and EM benefits. Dien Bien and Bac Kan provinces have used government resources to replicate the CCM into other EM communities in Dien Bien and Bac Kan provinces. At national level, three initiatives on implementation of the Law on access to information and five new/amended policies were developed responding to the rights, needs and demands of EM women and men.

At the community level, EM women had gained more capacity, skills, and confidence to assessment quality of public services from local government agencies and taken action to influence decisions for their needs and demands. EM women reported increased access to more information from local government and awareness of local policies and programmes, increased confidence and participation with the local authority in the local meetings and knowledge on requesting information from local authorities.

Social impact

Through membership of EM women in LARC/VSLA groups they could build relations with other women and with the local authorities, which increased their social capital.

The project had mainstreamed gender equality and women's empowerment across all activities. Poor EM women's capacity have been developed resulting increased knowledge, skills and confidence to voice out. The improvement of women and men's relations had been promoted through creating space and opportunities through mechanism of the CCMs and LARC/VSLA for women to directly interact with the communities and local authorities, including EM men who participated in various community meetings such as village meetings and competitions. Some evidences of changes in structures (CCM structure, including LARC/VSLA and CISC) that reinforced gender stereotypes and prevent women from accessing knowledge and information were obtained.

However, the SAA approach was tested but not yet fully implemented due to capacity constraints to maximise impacts on social norms, beliefs and practises about gender and cultural stereotypes in the local context.

Policy impact

The action supported the implementation of the Law on Access to Information by introducing CCM, capacity building support and interaction among NorthNet, LARC/VSLA leaders, commune, district and provincial agencies, CSOs at regional level (NorthNet) and CSOs at community level (LARC/VSLA). The action used unique opportunity to influence the implementation of the Law and other Government policies/programmes in a way that benefits ethnic minorities, and particularly women, in remote areas.

CSOs (NorthNet) actively participated in the policy formulation process at district, province, and national levels. Good evidences were collected and represented by the NorthNet members by action research as presented in above sections. Women in LARC/VSLAs had raised their voice to ask local authorities to provide them with better information and public services such as loan and agriculture and land services.

Local Government Agency had changed the way of implementing the Law of Information as well as providing better services based on EM's needs. Changes included the replication of new methods as the two-way information communication and dialogue between EM people and local government agencies. These resulted in governmental budget allocation for communication activities in various communities as explained in the previous section.

Economic impact

Indirect economic impact can be achieved through target groups' increased access to information about government programmes, services and provisions as this can lead to improve their livelihood opportunities. As presented in the effectiveness section, more than 89 % surveyed EM women reported increased access to information from local government in various areas including land rights and agriculture production and requested government services provision based on their needs. For example in the end-line survey (see Table 6), 96.4 % of EM people had information on loan from a local government programme and 78.60 % benefited, such as received loans and agriculture training from local government programs (in comparison to 77.8 % and 47.5 % baseline survey, respectively); 92.1

"Thanks to the information model, women now know how to handle rice seeds, which are less expensive, and know the procedures for birth registration and making red books. More confident"

"Before knowing nothing now know a lot of information ... very helpful for production, timely ... the amount of information to meet the needs of over 70 per cent"

Shared by the women from LARCs/VSLAs

% of EM people had information crop cultivation input supports from local government and 62.8 % benefited (in comparison 71.6 % and 47.8 % in the baseline survey, respectively).

Direct economic impact can be achieved through the LARCs, where women participate in savings and loans activities. This helps members to invest in diversifying or upscaling their livelihood activities. In this project 1,597 women participated in savings and loans activities under LARCs/VSLAs.

Table 6: Overview of women benefited from local government programme and policy as impacts of the project

Local poverty reduction programme and policies		Baseline	Evaluation
		(Sample: 330 people)	(Sample: 330 people)
Loan from local government programme	Had information	354 77.8 %	318 96.4 %
	Benefited	163 47.5 %	250 78.6 %
Crop cultivation input supports from local Government	Had information	327 71.6 %	304 92.1 %
	Benefited	173 47.8 %	191 62.8 %
Animal husbandry support/inputs from local Government	Had information	232 51.7 %	274 83.0 %
	Benefited	81 24.0 %	115 42.0 %
Land Certificate support by local Government	Had information	224 51.7 %	280 84.8 %
	Benefited	125 36.2 %	157 56.1 %
Agriculture trainings by local Government	Had information	317 68.8 %	295 89.4 %
	Benefited	153 43.2 %	220 74.6 %

Negative impacts

No negative impact was found by the evaluation.

4.5 Sustainability

There are three aspects of sustainability in the project design including:

- Institutional sustainability
- Policy level sustainability
- Financial sustainability

Institutional sustainability

Institutional sustainability: The Institutional sustainability was achieved by focusing on strengthening organizational capacity and improving decision making mechanism and structure.

At the community level, results of interviewed LARC/VSLAs members showed that 100 % of LARC/VSLA groups confirmed that they will continue their activities after the project phasing out.

These included the Improved Access to Information model using LARC/VALA groups as platforms for information sharing and feedback to local authorities.

Under the CCMs, the project had set up sustainable structures that enabled participation of EM in decision making process. This structure, including the Commune Information and Communication Solution Committees that involved all related department/officers in the communes, had been officially approved by local authorities. Clear job descriptions of the Committee's members, who were commune governmental officials, were developed and approved by local government agencies. Office working spaces for the committees had been provided by local authority for carrying out their activities.

At regional and national levels, the project developed capacity of NorthNet members to participate in advocacy works being more representative, accountable, and capable of performing their role as development actors at local and national levels. The institutional capacity of NorthNet, including linkages with others CSO and Network, had been strengthened, and the capacity development process was more demand-driven, requested by EM people from CCMs and for linking NorthNet with LARC/VSLA group's demands. Local Government agencies had changed the way of implementing the Law of Information, providing better other services such as loan, agriculture and land services/supports for EM and these changes will continue by using their government budget as observed in Dien Bien province and in Cho Moi district, Bac Kan province.

Policy sustainability

Policy sustainability was ensured by supporting civil society (NorthNet and LARCs/VSLAs) to engage in on-going policy processes and improve legislation and policies. The project had used methods of implementation to make sure that they enable EM women and NorthNet members to participate and include feedback mechanisms, and that information was shared in a way that it is accessible to EM people and women in particular. Five new/amended policies, legislation, public programmes, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of EM women and men have been approved. The Department of Justice in Dien Bien and Bac Kan had used the local funding for replication of the project model and approaches.

The project was designed to target women in LARCs/VSLAs. This is an exceptionally good approach to empower EM women. However, this will limit the ability to replicate the project models into other provinces where LARCs/VSLAs are not established yet.

Financial sustainability

Under the project design, Financial sustainability "is a built-in strategy in the LARC method, as the groups will set up self-funded, self-managed savings and credit activities. Group members pool their savings into a common fund from where they can take loans or simply save cash in a safe way that generates interest on savings. The savings and credit schemes give women an opportunity to invest in livelihood diversification or specialisation, they provide a buffer in difficult times, and they give group member an incentive to keep coming together for collective action". The project reached a well sustainable achievement at community level by application of the LARC/VSLA method. A total of 1,597 LARC/VSLA members in 68 groups was set up and is operating including self-funded, self-managed savings and credit activities which members took loans for their livelihood and other needed activities, as well as to serve the operation of the groups. In addition, the financial sustainability was also ensured by better access to information and benefit of EM people to local credit/loan programme as presented in the impact section.

Related to the NorthNet, experiences of small-grant implementation, co-research, strengthened capacity and linkages between NorthNet and other network/international agencies and donors will contribute to fund raising capacity for NorthNet in the future.

5. Recommendations

The implemented action is truly relevant to local social, economic, and political context. The project was implemented successfully, achieved most of the target outputs and outcomes, and reached high levels of sustainability and impact. The Model of Improved Access to Information and different capacity building approaches were assessed as effective and had been documented for scaling up. *CARE in Vietnam should continue to support sharing, learning and replication/institutionalisation of these models and approaches into other relevant programmes, projects and policies of the government, as well as programmes of CARE International in Vietnam, other partners, and development agencies.*

Due to the fact that the action builds on the VSLA /LARC network which is not established in all provinces in Vietnam, *CARE should pilot a model/approach in villages/areas without LARCs/VSLAs to have better evidence for advocacy and scaling up. CARE International in Vietnam should continue to provide technical support to local partner and agencies in the project areas for better replication of the project models.*

SAA is a good approach to change gender stereotypes, especially in accessing information. However, under the project, the SAA approach was tested but not fully implemented yet to maximise impacts on social norms, beliefs and practises about gender and cultural stereotypes in the local context. *CARE International in Vietnam should review the method and content to be more appropriate, such as reducing of number of SAA sections for one meeting, developing simplified SAA's facilitation corresponding to the capacity of LARC members, identifying better way to involve men into LARC's meetings, when integrating into a project, especially related to exploring and addressing the social norms, beliefs and practises about gender and cultural stereotypes.*

CARE International in Vietnam should continue to strengthen capacity of the NorthNet, especially related to areas of writing skills for developing policy brief and advocacy messages, capacity to develop relationship with mass media and capacity for policy monitoring and evaluation.

Annexes

Annex 1: Key questions of the evaluation

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions
<p>Relevance The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirement, country needs global priorities and partners' and donors' policies".</p>	<p>How much is it aligned with relevant country policies and strategies? How much is the project aligned with donor's program strategies? How project is relevance to the partners and target group needs and expectations? Does the project fulfil the needs of the target group/population? How relevant the project methods applied to archive the project results? The key project intervention methods are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender transformative approach • Livelihood and Rights Clubs (LARC) • CARE's Governance Programme Framework • Empowerment and participation in decision-making • Capacity development and strengthening of local and national civil society
<p>Effectiveness "The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance".</p>	<p>Has the project achieved its objective and expected results? More specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extend the NorthNet/CSOs capacity increased in representing and working in alliances to represent the ethnic minority women's rights to access information and work in alliances? • The level of availability of and accessibility to information including available information topics, existing information sources and channels as well as communication mechanism from higher levels to community level and vice versa. What the changes in EMW's accessibility to information and local authorities' sharing of information compared with baseline survey results • To what extend the EM women participation and EM women's voice are risen? The change in local authorities' willingness and attitude towards EMW in the sense that they listen, interact, recognize and consult EMW inputs more in to their dialogues, policy development and planning process and ways of working compared with baseline survey result • Was there new or amended governmental policies, legislation, public programs, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of ethnic minority women and men? If yes, what are they? • How and why the project and tools influenced the achievement of results?
<p>Efficiency "A measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds,</p>	<p>How efficiency of project investment in terms of time, financial and human resource in archiving the project outcomes? Sub questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How well the project managed the investment to archive the outcome, output results?

Evaluation Criteria	Key Questions
expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How often and in which ways has the project reviewed its methods to achieve expected outcome results given the existing context? • Were relevant resources from the project available according to project design and plan to ensure the efficiency?
<p>Impact Positive and negative, primary and secondary long-term effects produced by development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the social and economic impacts generated from project intervention. • What are positive and negative impacts/changes of the project? What are most significant changes the project brought? • The assessment should also seek to identify the processes of change that have led to positive and/ or negative effects for women and men.
<p>Sustainability The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed; the probability of continued long-term benefits</p>	<p>How sustainable and enduring are the outcomes of the project likely to be? Sub questions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what extent the project results are maintained by the legal instrument that enabling the provision of information from government in ways that meet needs of EM • What external factors and project related factors will determine the project sustainability and achievements? How would these factors have addressed? • Which are the essential factors that should be sustained by local authorities and EM women and men, using their own resources?

Annex 2: Project Achievement against target indicators

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Overall objective: Impact	OO: Civil society organisations (CSOs) legitimately represent ethnic minority (EM) communities to enhance government transparency and accountability for promoting ethnic minority rights.	OO1: CSOs representing ethnic minorities have influenced the implementation of the Law of Access to Information to the benefit of ethnic minority women and men	N/A the law is new and not yet implemented	N/A the law is new and not yet implemented	2 provincial workshops to introduce the Law of Accessing to information: 1 in Bac Can and 1 in Cao Bang province, 01 provincial workshop on sharing and influencing the law implementation in Bac Kan, and one national workshop on monitoring the LAI implementation	<p>The Dien Bien People Committee has officially approved a proposal plan by Provincial Department of Justice to implement the LoA in the province since 2020, in which a number of lessons learnt, successful evidences, publications from I2I project was reflected and replicated</p> <p>The piloted information sharing channels (e.g. commune information and communication solution committee) has been formally established/ institutionalized in the government system in the 5 targeted project communes and 9 replicated communes.</p>	At least one successful example of influence (by year 3)	Examples of decrees or decisions clearly reflecting input from NorthNet and other civil society allies.	Civil society organisations are willing to collaborate. Authorities are open to input from civil society/ the government does not significantly limit the space for civil society participation in policy dialogue Male members of the CSOs and networks are supportive of and willing to let female members represent the organization
		OO2: CSOs representing ethnic minorities undertake joint evidence based advocacy for greater transparency and information sharing	Low degree ⁵ of collaboration between NorthNet and other CSOs (July 2016)	progressive degree ¹ of collaboration between NorthNet and other CSOs	High degree of collaboration (Implementation of research/joint advocacy plan of NorthNet members)	High degree ⁷ of collaboration between NorthNet and PPWG, CARE and Oxfarm in joined research and advocacy/initiatives	High degree ¹ of collaboration between NorthNet and other CSOs (by year 3)	Examples of joint advocacy initiatives comparing the number and degree of collaboration at the baseline and	

⁵ Measured based on a set of sub-indicators including: degree of information sharing, joint planning, joint implementation, coordination and common positions. *For instance*, There were 04 consultation events were well-coordinated and co-hosted by NorthNet with PPWG, government participation on the process of formulating the decree draft for the implementation of the law to access information end of 2017 and 2018

⁷ Some examples: Annual joined advocacy and communication plan developed between NN, PPWG, CARE and Oxfam, a joined research on the law implementation monitoring and a number of national joined advocacy events conducted during the action

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
		OO3: CSOs and networks are more representative of and legitimate in the eyes of ethnic minority people, and especially women	Low degree of representation ⁶	Low degree of representatives (15%), 4 women (30%) out of 13 NorthNet members	2 EM representatives (15%), 4 women (30%) out of 13 NorthNet Average credibility score: NorthNet members 3.4)	Northnet and CSOs strengthened capacity to represent ethnic minority women's interests- high degree of representative and legitimacy in the eyes of local authority, in particularly EM women	High degree ² of representation and legitimacy (by year 3)	at the end-line Capacity assessments (credibility scores). Number of EM and women representatives of networks	

⁶ Measured based on 1) credibility score in network capacity assessment, and 2) number of EM and women representatives in network meetings and advocacy events: 0-30% EM/women representation = low. 30-50% = medium. 50-100% = high.

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Specific objective(s): Outcome(s)	SO1: Civil society organisations' have strengthened capacity to represent ethnic minority women's interests	# and % of ethnic minority men and women who have meaningfully participated in formal and informal decision-making spaces ⁸	55% surveyed women (197) in baseline reported that they did participate in socio-economic development programs in their community at different participation levels	To be established during the baseline	77% (1244/1597 LARCs member participated in CSC to raise their information needs in which Bac Can: 400/410; Dien Bien: 697/890; Cao Bang: 147/297)	81% endline surveyed women reported to participate sometimes or regularly in village meetings. In which, 60% used to raise questions/feedbacks; 54.5% know how to complain to local authorities Total: 1249 LARC/VSLA members across 3 provinces were consulted by CSC for their information needs.	1,625 LARC members, 50 NorthNet members' staff by year 3	Data to be compiled annually. MOC1.1. Survey among LARC and NorthNet members	Willingness of CSOs to take ownership of their own capacity development. Willingness of men and people in power to give space for ethnic minority and women members to represent the organisations and increasingly take up leadership positions.
	OC 1.1 Increased capacity of NorthNet members to represent ethnic minority women's rights to access information	Increase in scores in capacity assessments of NorthNet	Score average: 2.9		Score average: 3.4	Score average: 3.6	Scores in all areas above 3 by year 3	Capacity assessment of NorthNet	
	OC 1.2 Strengthened alliance of civil society organisations to advocate for the rights of ethnic minorities in the Law on Access to Information	# of joint advocacy initiatives involving NorthNet and at least one other CSO network	0	1 initiative between NorthNet, PPWG, CARE and Oxfam	3 joined initiatives (1 joined research and 02 joined advocacy events with PPWG, Oxfam)	3 joined initiatives (1 joined research and 02 joined advocacy events with PPWG, Oxfam)	At least 1 by year 3	Event reports	
	SO2: Ethnic minority women have increased	% of LARC members reporting that they have	Limited information channels/sources	N/A	80% (Bac Can: 97% Dien Bien: 73%)	End-line survey shows that the percentage of EM women reported they aware of government and local policies	70% of LARC members by year 3	Survey among LARC members	Willingness of EM women to join LARC groups and to

⁸ CARE International global indicator. For this project, "spaces" are defined as LARC meetings, and dialogues with authorities at local and national level.

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
	access to information on ethnic minority-related policies and programs	increased access to information on government programmes, policies and/or legislation	communicating information on government policies and socio-economic programs in community. Low engagement of fundamental channels in community, mostly village meetings Percentage of surveyed women reported knowing of the government policies and programs range from 51 to 77.8%		Cao Bang: 70%)	and program range from 83% to 96% of total surveyed women. The most current CSC analysis results show that: In Dien Bien: all 32 LARC/VSLA group members have access to information related to Pork African disease, corona virus, agricultural advisories... In Bac Can: up to 80% LARC/VSLA members have access to gender equality law, Law of Information access, Pork African disease, rice and livelihood diseases... In Cao Bang: 70% LARC/VSLA members have access to The National Targeted program for poverty reduction- P 30A.			invest time in rights and policy discussions. Willingness to take opportunities to increase own agency.
	OC 2.1. Ethnic minority women have a platform to access and share information	# of women members of LARC groups	318 Bac Can 690 (Cao Bang) 930 (Dien Bien) (potential members)	930 To be assessed during baseline	1597	1597 members	1625 members by year 3	LARC member lists	
	OC 2.2. Ethnic minority women have increased confidence and knowledge to hold authorities to account for addressing their priorities	% of LARC members who report feeling confident to raise issues with authorities	52% surveyed women reported used to participate in village meetings. In which, in the village meeting <i>only 14% used to raise questions, 13% used to provide feedback and 11% used to make decision. 15% surveyed EM women used to visit government officers/local</i>	N/A	24% (Bac Can: 25% Dien Bien 37% Cao Bang 10%)	81% end line surveyed women reported to participate sometimes or regularly in village meetings. In which, 60% used to confidently raise questions/feedbacks	40% by year 3	Survey among LARC members	

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
		# of issues raised by women in meetings with authorities	<p>authorities to raise issues and comments.</p> <p>Overall, around 9% highlighted that they know how to complain to local authorities when received wrong information, not timely and serious consequences caused by wrong information provided.</p> <p>15% surveyed EM women reported visiting local authorities to raise/ask about numerous of issues including agricultural knowledge, loans, education, land for production, household economic development support, vocational training, social affair, marriage and family law.</p>		12 issues raised by women (Examples: electricity coverage, limited media coverage, Unemployment, Livelihood, trademark building, marketing for	<p>Overall, around 54.5% endline surveyed women highlighted that they know how to complain to local authorities when receiving wrong information or serious consequences caused by wrong information provided.</p> <p>32% endline surveyed EM women reported actively visiting local authorities to raise/ask about numerous of issues including agricultural knowledge, loans, education, household economic development support, social affair, marriage and family law.</p> <p>LARC/VSLA group members also have chance to raise their feedbacks through CSC quarterly.</p> <p>As a result of LARC performance and CSC, in Bac Can, 7 women were consulted by district government authorities on the ideas for Community legal awareness contest of the district.</p>	24	Event report and minutes from meetings	

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
					local products, providing on Association Law, information on plant diseases...	support for Thanh Van cooperative, improve loudspeaker infrastructure, asking for transparency of budget allocation for village hall meeting building....)			
	<p>SO3: Lawmakers and authorities are more supportive of ethnic minorities' right to access information</p> <p>OC 3.1. An evidence base is established on the importance of ethnic minority women's and men's access to information</p>	<p># of new or amended policies, legislation, public programs, and/or budgets responsive to the rights, needs and demands of ethnic minority women and men⁹</p> <p># of policy briefs/position papers developed with input from ethnic minority women</p>	0	0	<p>1</p> <p>Thanh Van commune (Bac Can province) contributed a part of fund for implementation of sport and law initiative to strengthen the access of information for women and men in community.</p> <p>2 policy briefs (a documentation after the completion of research on indigenous agricultural products and one joined with Oxfam and PPWG)</p>	<p>5</p> <p>In Bac Can: Mai Lap People's committee allocated a part of budget supporting for implementation of sport and law initiative to strengthen the access of information for women and men in community, as a result of learning from model of Thanh Van commune that implemented last year. They also had supported a loan for women lead cooperative to improve their production. Thanh Van commune was flexible in harmonizing local budget for their communication program.</p> <p>In Dien Bien: Ngoi Cay commune had initiative of developing and broadcasting news in Thai ethnic language twice a week to improve the information access of community people. Department of Justice promoted districts' Justice unit to utilize the local budget in communication function.</p> <p>1 policy brief and recommendations paper basing on the findings from a study on the law implementation conducted</p>	<p>at least 1 by year 3</p> <p>3 by year 3</p>	<p>Analysis of Law on Access to Information related decrees, policies and implementation plans</p> <p>Policy briefs/position papers</p> <p>Survey among LARC members and community scorecard results</p> <p>Event reports, meeting minutes</p> <p>Survey of LARC members & community scorecard results</p>	<p>Support from local and national authorities to the project. Openness to listen to CSOs and take suggestions as part of a constructive dialogue. CSOs can carry out advocacy in a constructive and non-confrontational way</p>

⁹ CARE International global indicator. The indicator refers to policies, legislation, programmes and or budgets which have been targeted as part of the advocacy by the supported CSOs as part of this Action.

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
	OC 3.2. Law-makers and authorities understand, support and respond to ethnic minorities' right to access information	<p>% of LARC members who feel that the authorities are genuinely listening to the issues raised</p> <p>% of positive government responses to information requests by EM women</p> <p>% LARC members who report increased information sharing by authorities</p>	51%	To be assessed during baseline and later during community scorecard	60% (perceptions by the partner reported)	<p>90% end line surveyed women reported that the authorities were genuinely listening to the issues raised compared to 3 years ago. (Dien Bien: 87.7% Bac Can: 95.9 % Cao Bang: 91%)</p> <p>88.8% endline surveyed women reported on positive government responses to information requests by EM women (Dien Bien: 86.7% Bac Can: 94.6 % Cao Bang: 88.9%)</p> <p>89% endline surveyed EM women reported increased access to information from local government.</p> <p>70% endline surveyed EM women reported that the information provided is more timely and easier to understand. 87.6% endline surveyed EM women reported that the information provided by local authorities were more transparent and accountable compared to 3 years ago.</p>	80%		
Outputs	OC 1.1. Outputs: Op 1.1.1: 40 NorthNet members trained	# of NorthNet male and female members trained	0	30 (NorthNet members) were trained on advocacy and SAA methodology	30 (NorthNet members built capacity while implementing small grants and participating in research)	30 (NorthNet members and other CSOs built capacity while implementing small grants and participated in joint research and advocacy).	40	Training report	Availability of members' time, and willingness to learn and implement new ideas
	Op 1.1.2: 1 updated advocacy plan	# advocacy plans updated		1	1	1	1	Advocacy plan	
	Op. 1.1.3: 1 annual capacity	# of capacity assessment and		N/A	1	1	1		

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
	assessment and action plan Op 1.1.4: 5 grants disbursed to NorthNet members OC 1.2. Outputs: Op 1.2.1: At least 2 events hosted or co-hosted by NorthNet with broad civil society and government participation on the access to information	action plans completed # of grants disbursed Events carried out and results documented		0 1	5	5 2	5 2	Assessment and action plan Proposals and disbursement records Event reports	Willingness of other CSOs and alliances to cooperate with NorthNet
	OC 2.1. Outputs: Op 2.1.1: 73 LARC groups established and/or strengthened OC 2.2. Outputs: Op 2.2.1: 146 female leaders trained Op 2.2.2: 6 small-grants disbursed	# of LARCs established and/or strengthened # of women trained # of grants disbursed	31 0 0	31 0 0	70 Bac Can: 20 Cao Bang: 13 Dien Bien 38 343 (Bac Can:58 Cao Bang: 60 Dien Bien: 225) 2	68 Bac Can: 21 Cao Bang: 15 Dien Bien 32 451 (116 in BK, 257 in DB and 78 in CB) 6	73 146 6	Visit to LARCs Training report Proposals and disbursement records	Support from local authorities; willingness of women to join groups. Willingness of women to invest time and courage to use skills. High enough financial capacity of groups to manage grants.
	OC 3.1. Outputs: Op 3.1.1: At least 2 channels for information sharing tested Op 3.1.2: At least 3 policy	# of channels tested # of policy briefs/positions	0 0	0 3	2 (Community information and communication solution committees and village information sharing channel/ LARC networks) 5	2 Community information and communication solution committees and village information sharing channel/ LARC networks 6	2 3	Documentation of pilots	Cooperation from media/radio stations and local authorities. Availability of printing materials at expected cost.

	Intervention logic	Indicators	Baseline 2017	Values by March 2018	Values by March 2019	Values by May 2020	Targets Jan 2020	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
	<p>briefs/position papers/recommendations produced</p> <p>OC 3.2. Outputs: Op 3.2.1: 90 commune authorities and village leaders trained</p> <p>Op 3.2.2. New/revised good governance training module developed</p> <p>Op 3.2.3: 3 national level and 3 provincial level policy dialogues held</p>	<p># of authorities trained</p> <p># training module developed</p> <p># of dialogues held</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>0</p>	<p>0</p> <p>0</p> <p>4 (2 in DB and BK, 02 in HN and HCM)</p>	<p>36 (Dien Bien: 13 Cao Bang: 15 Bac Kan: 8)</p> <p>5 (1 in Cao Bang and 1 in Dien Bien), 2 at national level – joined events</p>	<p>88 (Dien Bien: 26 Cao Bang: 30 Bac Kan: 32)</p> <p>3 (Community Score Card, Inclusive Governance and Communication training, community facilitation skills)</p> <p>11 (3 national and 8 provincial level)</p>	<p>90</p> <p>1</p> <p>3 national, 3 provincial level</p>	<p>Copy of papers/briefs</p> <p>Training reports</p> <p>Copy of training manual</p> <p>Event reports</p>	<p>Availability of qualified trainers, Willingness of authorities to participate in training and dialogues.</p>
	<p>Cross-cutting outputs: Government approvals; Visibility guideline and plan; M&E plan; Baseline and final evaluation reports.</p>	<p>Cross-cutting outputs: # of approvals # of visibility plan # of M&E plans # of Baseline report # of final evaluation reports</p>	<p>03 approvals 0 Visibility plan 0 M&E plans 0 Baseline reports 0 Final evaluation reports</p>	<p>1 Visibility plan 1 M&E plans 1 Baseline reports 0 Final evaluation reports</p>	<p>all approvals 1 Visibility plan 1 MEL plan 1 Baseline report 0 Final evaluation</p>	<p>All approvals 1 visibility plan 1 M&E plan 1 baseline report 1 final evaluation report</p>	<p>All approvals 1 visibility plan 1 M&E plan 1 baseline report 1 final evaluation report</p>	<p>Copy of approvals 1 visibility plan Workshop reports Copy of M&E plan Copy of baseline report Copy of final evaluation report</p>	<p>Cross-cutting outputs: Approval obtained from government; Willingness of stakeholders to participate in surveys and reviews</p>

OC 1.1. activities:

A 1.1.1. *Advanced training on evidence-based advocacy (related to Op 1.1.1)*

A 1.1.2. *Increase internal network capacity, representation and legitimacy (related to Op 1.1.2, Op 1.1.3)*

Activity 1.1.3 *Small grants for NorthNet members to implement their own Right to Information activities (related to Op. 1.1.4)*

OC 1.2. activities:

A.1.2.1. *Strengthen links with other networks, alliances and media (related to Op 1.2.1, 1.2.2)*

OC 2.1. activities:

Activity 2.1.1 *Establish LARC clubs for ethnic minority women (related to Op 2.1.1.)*

Activity 2.1.2. *Information and experience sharing*

OC 2.2. activities:

Activity 2.2.1. *Leadership and communication training for LARC leaders (related to 2.2.1.)*

Means:

A1.1.1: *Venue and materials for three-day workshop in Hanoi, Budget for field trips, In-field coaching visits from CARE advocacy staff during evidence-collection (1 p/year for first 2 years). Guest speaker costs. Time from CARE's Advocacy Advisor and Specialist, CARE's Communications Specialist.*

A.1.1.2: *Costs for venue and materials for 4-day TOT + annual refresher. Time from CARE's Gender Advisors and Specialists.*

A.1.1.3 *Costs for 5 grants for NorthNet members*

A.1.2.1: *Costs for venue and materials for 5 Ha Noi meetings p/year, 5 NorthNet attendees/meeting including travel, per diem, accommodation.*

A.2.1.1: *Travel for study visit, cost of venue and materials for introduction workshop (40 participants, including facilitators), cost for venue and materials for 2-day trainings (one in each province) for interested NorthNet members (total 20 people including facilitators). Budget for ongoing mentoring visits to target members (4 p/year, combined with LARC coaching visits). Travel for CCD and CARE to provide ongoing monitoring support for implementation. LARC set-up costs (incl. savings box and passbooks).*

A2.1.2: *Costs of hosting 2Xsharing events including venue and travel costs.*

A2.2.1: *Costs for venue and resource persons for initial 2 x 2-day training x 3 provinces (year 1), 35 participants p/training (including facilitators). Refresher 2-day training (day 2). Cost of monitoring visits, continuous coaching and support by ADC, CCD, DECEN.*

OC 1.1 activities: Availability of members' time, venue, guest speakers.

OC: 1.2 activities. Available of CSO representatives time, venues.

OC 2.1 activities: Availability of time and support from women LARC members and authorities

C 2.2 activities: Willingness of women' time. Capacity of groups to manage grants.

<p>Activity 2.2.2. LARC members attend influencing events</p> <p>Activity 2.2.3. Small grants for women-led initiatives to promote transparency and accountability (related to Op 2.2.2)</p> <p>OC 3.1. activities:</p> <p>Activity 3.1.1. Develop and test new channels of information sharing between authorities and ethnic minority women (related to Op. 3.1.1.)</p> <p>Activity 3.1.2. Develop documentation on access to information gaps and strategies (related to Op 3.1.2.)</p> <p>OC 3.2. activities:</p> <p>Activity 3.2.1. Good governance training for commune level authorities and village leaders incl. development of training curriculum (related to Op 3.2.1.)</p> <p>Activity 3.2.2. Policy dialogues at national level (Op 3.2.2.)</p> <p>Cross-cutting activities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct initial orientations with Government agencies • Obtain local authorities approval at national and provincial level • Develop visibility guideline and plan • Launch workshop with stakeholders at different level • Finalise M&E plan • Conduct baseline • Review and reflection workshops • Final evaluation 	<p>A2.2.2: Travel, accommodation for meeting attendance</p> <p>A2.2.3: Grants of USD2,000 x 6 communes = USD12,000</p> <p>A3.1.1: Lump sum for information-sharing model testing. Each partner will test the channel in 1 commune.</p> <p>A3.1.2: Time of CARE advocacy and communication specialists, cost of printing, consultancy costs</p> <p>A3.2.1: Costs of venue, materials, professional trainer fee, printing training manual</p> <p>A3.2.2: Costs of venue and materials for 2 x national-level policy dialogue, 150 participants p/dialogue, 3 x provincial-level dialogues, 70 participants p/dialogue. Time from CARE Communications Specialist.</p> <p><i>Means for cross-cutting activities:</i></p> <p>Cost of venues, transportation, consultant for baseline and final evaluation, staff time for developing M&E plan, visibility plan, and reviews.</p>	<p>OC 3.1 activities: Cooperation from media/radio stations and local authorities. Availability of printing materials at expected cost.</p> <p>OC 3.2 activities: Availability of qualified trainers, willingness of authorities to participate in training and dialogues. Availability of training venues and approval of authorities for events.</p> <p><i>Cross-cutting activities:</i></p> <p>Willingness of government agencies to participate and to grant approval, availability of qualified consultants at planned cost. Willingness of all stakeholders to participate in surveys and reviews</p>
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