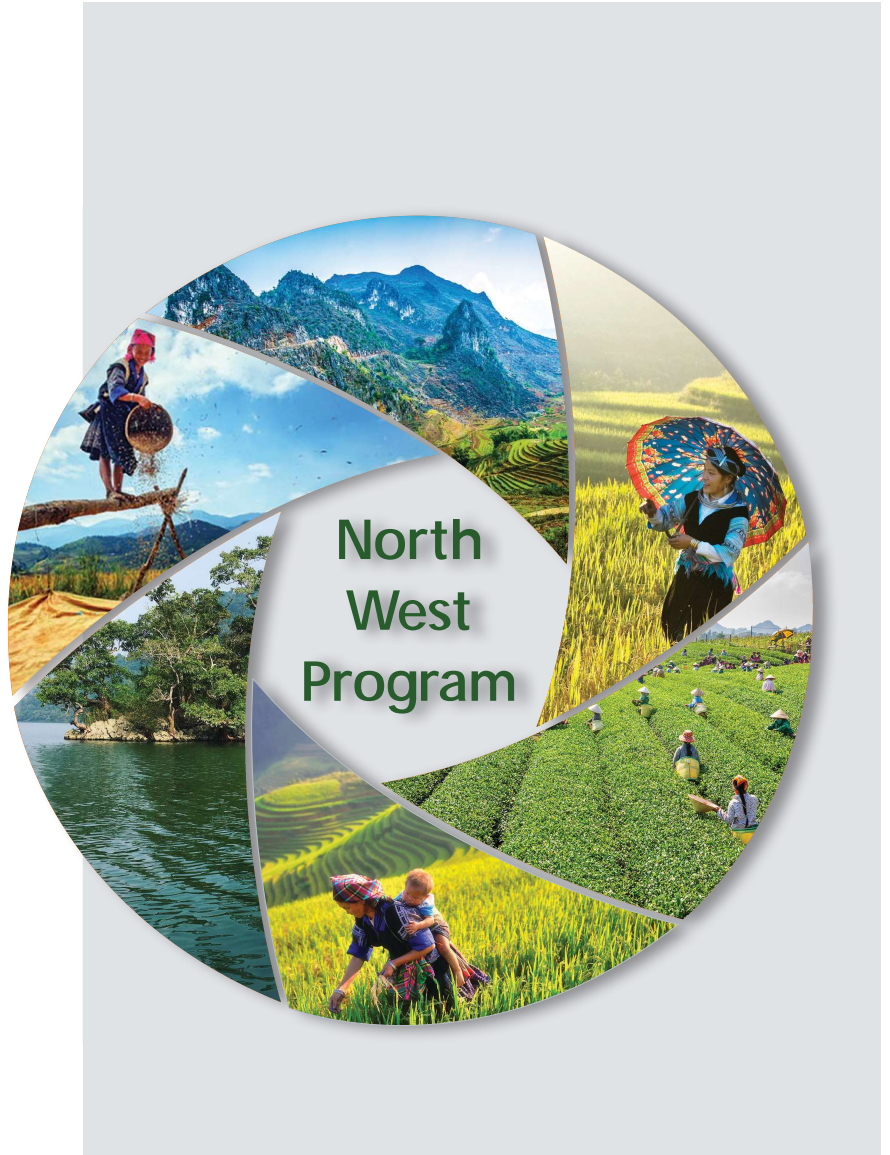


Northern Midlands and Mountains (short form: North West) is under the direction of the Northwest Steering Committee of 12 provinces (Ha Giang, Lao Cai, Yen Bai, Lai Chau, Dien Bien, Son La, Hoa Binh, Cao Bang, Bac Kan, Lang Son, Phu Tho, Tuyen Quang) and 21 districts in the west of Thanh Hoa and Nghe An with a total area of 115,153.4 square kilometers, accounting for 35% of the country's natural area. The Northwest has untapped potential to help develop agriculture, forestry, hydropower, minerals, and tourism and to improve the border economy. This is home to more than 11.6 million people of more than 30 ethnic groups, of which approximately 63% are ethnic minorities. Despite its strategic location, great potential and diversity, North West is still an exceptionally difficult area in many respects: it has the highest rate of poor households in the country, and the transportation system has not developed synchronously and is often affected by natural disasters. The cause of this situation is that the sustainable development resources of the North West, including science and technology have not been stimulated and promoted properly and effectively.

As of 2018, the North West Program has implemented 55 researches and three projects for four target groups towards sustainable development in the North West. Researches and projects have focused on the following objectives:

- (i) Providing scientific justification for the development and adjustment of sustainable development strategies, master plans and plans, ensuring defense and security in the Northwest;
- (ii) Identifying scientific foundations for specific socio-economic development models of sub-regions and inter-regions, contributing to the gradual improvement of the living standards of ethnic minority groups in the North West;



- (iii) Proposing and transferring appropriate scientific and technological solutions for rational use of natural resources, environmental protection, natural disaster prevention and mitigation; transport and information infrastructure development; Promoting and preserving cultural values, contributing to the defense and security in the northwestern region;
- (iv) Identifying training needs for human resources and proposing appropriate training solutions for human resource development to meet the requirements of sustainable development in the North West.