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| Danish organisation | Mejerifolk uden Grænser/Dairy without Borders |
| Title of the intervention | Khovsgol Dairy Project II |
| Partner name(s) | Uurchlultiig Uuruusuu |
| Amount applied for | 499.340 |
| Country(ies) | Mongolia |
| Period (# of months) | 18 months |
| If re-submission or in continuation of a previous intervention, please insert journal number | 22-3949-CSP-MI |

1. Objective and relevance (the world around us)

The purpose of the intervention is to create a precedent of successful cooperative dairy plant supported by eco-tourism business in Khatgal National Protected Zone in the northern part of Mongolia fostering active citizenship and empowerment in women and herders. This intervention is based on the previous intervention named Khovsgol Dairy Project (KDP). The main purpose of the KDP was first of all, to strengthen the organization and cooperation among nomadic herders and then to improve the quality of milk production and dairy products among nomadic herders in Khatgal. With the significant results achieved in the first phase, the partners wish to extend the project to ensure a sustainable business beyond the project live time supporting disadvantaged herders’ active citizenship with these immediate objectives:

1. The cooperative members empowered in leadership and cooperative governance to promote their participation in the community.
2. The cooperative members and milk suppliers increased market share by improving the product competitiveness contemplating sustainability in the whole supply chain.
3. The nomads diversify their income through community-based tourism.

This extension will focus on the same target group but extending with new members, and the milk suppliers. The OI’s reinforce previous objectives and add new objectives for sustainable results.

DwB launched the KDP in 2016 with private donations and expertise from Danish dairy experts. DwB along with the partners aimed to help local nomads produce high quality dairy products that can be sold at local markets to camps and residents improving their livelihood. During 2016-2019, the KDP resulted in the formation of the dairy cooperative Sarlain Saikhan Khishig (SSKh) (Blessed by Yak) with trainings in cooperative organization and active citizenship. In 2020, the project provided basic dairy equipment, completed the construction of the dairy plant and was able to launch the operation of the dairy plant amid of COVID-19 pandemic. The project activities in 2020-2021 resulted in gaining business knowledge and skills in running a business - production of dairy products, packaging, and marketing, acquiring customers - and collaboration of the coop members among each other and with other stakeholders.

The major external challenge faced by the project was the COVID-19 outbreak and spread that restricted movements, caused cancellation of plans and made the working environment uniquely unpredictable. Herders and disadvantaged citizens are the ones most affected by the COVID-19 impact: rising prices of commodity, lack of medical help and treatment, reduced consumption, and else. The second internal challenge was that the nomads operated the dairy plant for less than two months in 2020. The nomads had a limited time to operate the plant due to a short milking season in the high mountained and permafrost area and had no opportunity to gain business knowledge and practices producing quality products and seeking access to the local market. Therefore, the proposed extension aims to improve the livelihood of small dairy herders in Khatgal by strengthening their business knowledge and practices of dairy operation supported by eco-tourism and increasing their active advocacy engagement.

Including eco-tourism as a component in the next intervention will enable the herders to diversify their income opportunities and benefit from the tourism development, in addition to making more effective interpersonal behaviors through strengthening cooperative organization, improving access to the local market and building resilience of the community.

Another major challenge has been to attract new members of the cooperative. Traditionally, Mongolian nomads are very skeptical of cooperatives as an organizational form based on their history with the ex-Soviet Union, as well as the nature of their nomadic way of living. It has taken some effort to establish the benefits of working together as a cooperative. This work is ongoing but still needs to be reinforced, and the successful operation of the dairy cooperative will be exposed further, as a successful case is the best way of attracting new members. An add-on challenge has been the actual payment of membership for new members. Even when DwB managed to raise private funds to pay for half of the membership fee, and the cooperative created a membership model, where new members get half paid by DwB, and the other half could be provided in milk supply. Even with this scenario it has been difficult to get new members. Furthermore, with COVID some members had to retire due to illness. This intervention will have a strong focus on attracting new members inviting them for trainings and slowly tying bonds with the cooperative.

Results to be highlighted from the recently concluded intervention include:

* Dairy plant inaugurated in July 2020 with participation of the major of Khatgal.
* Better customer knowledge with application of Business Canvas Model (BCM) tool.
* Dairy plant operated by dairy technologist graduated from theuniversity[[1]](#footnote-1).
* Participation in annual trade fairs twice selling all products.
* Products wear recognisable labels with logo, and brand is well-known locally.
* 8 manuals to improve the quality of milk production and dairy products developed.
* Coop strengthened their cooperative organization and gained confidence in own room for maneuver.
* Coop accountant managed to file annual financial statement with taxation office on her own.
* Coop members learnt felt crafting and production of organic soaps.

The results of the present project will support the SDG-1 No poverty, SDG-5 Gender equality, SDG-8 Decent work and Economic growth and SDG-10 Reduced inequalities.

Context and local conditions

**Mongolia** is the most sparsely populated independent country in the world, covering an area of 1.564.116 km², around 36 times the size of Denmark, with a population of around 3,4 million people. The poverty level of the **Khovsgol province** is one of the highest in the country and herding households account for 30.2% (285 of 943 households)[[2]](#footnote-2) in **Khatgal**, which is the main village of Khovsgol province in the northern part of Mongolia and belongs to the Khovsgol Lake Protected Area. This area is a very attractive tourist destination receiving among 80.000 tourists per year (of whom 80% are national tourists). As Mongolia has a 1000-years old tradition for dairy production, many national tourists from urban areas, have a rather romantic/nostalgic connection to traditional dairy products, and hence the request for locally produced dairy products is in high demand by tourists, as well as nomadic live is viewed with increasing interest/romantism. Despite this favourable factor, herders rarely benefit from the tourism[[3]](#footnote-3), and they have very limited access to income generating activities apart from livestock which is their primary livelihood.

According to the Khovsgol aimag livestock census 2020, Khovsgol has counted 5,500,553 heads of which 271,528 horses, 501,080 cows, 2,284 camel, 2,622,814 sheeps and 2,102,847 goats[[4]](#footnote-4). It leads the nationwide list of aimags by the number of animals and Khovsgul is on 2nd place by the number of cows (incl. yaks). Khovsgol households have the highest number of livestock per household with up to 200 heads.

According to the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mongolia has a small but growing tourism sector, which provides important opportunities for income generation among poverty-stricken rural communities, particularly within protected areas. Communities in protected areas in Mongolia are generally poor, rely on herding and extraction of natural resources, and have limited financial or technical capacity to develop alternative income.[[5]](#footnote-5) Therefore, the ADB approved a second phase of the *Sustainable Tourism Development Project* with the aim to improve and diversify a sustainable tourism development in Mongolia. Part of this project is to improve infrastructure of roads with the aim of creating access to local markets. Meaning more tourists flow will head to Khatgal.

The nomads’ unique way of life, moving from pasture to pasture, living mostly in isolated environment in small communities (from late autumn to early spring), do not support the ability to channel individual entrepreneurial skills into collective entrepreneurship. Reason why more emphasis is given to boost the collective and cooperative mindset. Another challenge with the traditional herding live, is that the nomads do not have skills or knowledge about feed production for the yaks. It is, however, imperative for the herders to learn about feed production in order to become more resilient against climate changes.

Though Mongolia ranked as a country with high gender development, the country’s gender inequality index is below the regional and global average according to UNDP’s 2020 Human Development Report[[6]](#footnote-6). Dairy production, wool and felt production and sewing – micro-activities – are considered traditionally women’s activities[[7]](#footnote-7). Women’s workload resulted to be higher than men’s for all the months of the year, except for March and December. The average daily workload of women during the year is 11.1 hrs. while the workload of men is 9.2 hrs. Despite this, women’s contribution and roles appear to not be adequately recognized in aspects as decision-making on major family spending and purchases, participation in community activities, and leadership. In relation to the control of household assets, properties are mostly registered under the husband’s name. This imbalance influences women’s bargaining power and vulnerability in their homes and communities[[8]](#footnote-8). The KDP works very targeted with gender empowerment. 90% of the cooperative members of this intervention are women. Through their economic empowerment they have a stronger voice – at home and outside, and they gain greater self-esteem and confidence in raising their voice. Furthermore, it is vital to have stronger women serving as role models for others.

The proposed intervention takes place in a stable context as two elections – national and presidential – took place in June 2021. In addition, the Mongolian Government got booster vaccines for the citizens. More than 66% of the population is vaccinated[[9]](#footnote-9).

Civil society and active citizenship

The proposed intervention aims at reducing inequality, fighting poverty and improving access to resources by strengthening business knowledge and practices, organizational capacities of the target groups and building the resilience of the community. Furthermore, gender empowerment is inherent to this intervention as described above. The project aims at increasing the nomads’ active citizenship through their economic empowerment improving their skills, knowledge, and self-perception via coop. organisation.

The project will contribute to fairer income opportunities of herders in the Khatgal National Protected Area. Especially, the women will benefit from this intervention, as they take more responsibility in cooperative work and up until now show more interest in increasing their skills and opportunities. Moreover, the women’s workload will lessen and their participation in the community will increase.

The Khovsgol Dairy project first phase boosted the self-esteem of the cooperative members. The cooperative became known in the village and gained respect from the local community. Moreover, they have been invited to share their cooperative and entrepreneurial experiences at a municipal event. The next intervention will strengthen the coop members even more and they will engage in public events disseminating their experiences, in fact they have already been encouraged to support the municipality’s efforts advocating for good practices as a cooperative in connection with the nationally declared Year of Cooperative Work. The intervention will strengthen the nomads’ ability to communicate, deal, navigate and interfere with local authorities and policy decision makers. Ultimately, the intervention will help them advocate local officials and authorities for the benefit of local businesses and tourism. The dairy plant operated by the nomads may very well become a successful local business in the area, as an example to follow for other citizens.

The Khovsgol dairy project is well received and supported by other actors. For example, in support of the project the Khatgal local authorities provided a land of 2 hectar for the building of the dairy plant. The private company, *Mongolian Cheese Artisan Union* is looking forward to collaborating with the project to increase the production of dairy products.

Climate- and environmental conditions

Dairy production depends on reliable delivery of good quality milk. The surrounding environment depends on a sound handling of the dairy production to avoid unnecessary environmental impact. As in many other regions that depend on the predictability of rainy seasons, etc. Khovsgol region is also being affected by unpredictable climate and permafrost.

Hence, to ensure a sustainable and reliable dairy production with limited environmental impact it is absolutely necessary for the dairy farmers (nomads) to:

1. gain knowledge of how to act on and handle in the changing environment,
2. learn how to produce competitive and eco-friendly dairy products, and
3. manage dairy production in a sustainable way.

A sustainability strategy will be worked on and rolled out during the implementation, contemplating specifically but now exclusively fodder and sustainable packaging. The sustainability focus will furthermore serve as an added value to the cooperative’s marketing efforts in pro of eco-friendly local produce.

The partnership/collaborators (our starting point)

The project partners are Dairy without Borders (DwB), and Uurchlultiig Uuruusuu (UU), local NGO.

**Dairy without Borders**, NGO is a Danish non-profit organization with expertise in dairy. Interventions cover the whole value chain (milk handling, transport & storing, dairy production, packaging, and marketing). Furthermore, DwB has thorough organizational experience based on the Danish cooperative tradition from the dairy sector translating the organizational experience into organizing small cooperatives or cooperative ways of working in disadvantaged communities. DwB bases its interventions entirely on volunteers who are members of the organization. Members are professionals from the dairy sector in all its varieties (technicians, engineers, etc.). Furthermore, many of the members have experience working abroad in development countries. DwB experts also cover the primary sector (cattle, breed, feed/fodder), as well as sustainable production.

**Uurchlultiig Uuruusuu**, local NGO, is a non-profit organization that contributes to the strengthening of civil society, training citizens, and increasing citizens’ participation in Mongolia. The NGO was formed by people who worked in international organizations, such as Mercy Corps, ShoreBank International, the Global Communities and People in Need. The professionals bring in their expertise in implementing and managing projects and contextual knowledge in specific areas of cooperative governance and business management, legal and financial issues of small businesses, microlending and local financing, and marketing. UU provides trainings and consultations on cooperative governance and organization, management, legal and financial issues and marketing and plays a role of focal point in the implementation of the project*.* Furthermore, UU is specialized in gender equality and project management. UU has successfully implemented the first part of the Khovsgol Dairy Project with excellent results[[10]](#footnote-10).

Previous acquaintance and cooperation

The partnership of DwB and UU, started in November 2019 to implement the Khovsgol Dairy Project. The partners successfully launched the operation of the Dairy plant in Khatgal in July 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

DwB provided the expertise on the building facility, identifying the basic equipment for the dairy plant, advising on dairy production and hygienic standards, as well as providing overall management on the project implementation. UU provided organisational trainings, cooperative businesses including business planning, accounting, self-assessment and active citizenship. As well as connecting all parties, monitoring and assessing the cooperative in day-to-day matters, and ensuring the anchoring of all trainings and learnings with the cooperative members. The two organizations continue the partnership to build and ensure the sustainability of the small dairy in Khatgal and diversify the income opportunities of the nomads.

Contributions, roles, and responsibilities

**DwB** as a lead partner is responsible for the overall management of the project, including reporting to the Danish donor. DwB will provide training in improved dairy production and new product development, as well as guidance in successful management and operation of the dairy plant. In order to do so, DwB will travel to Mongolia at the beginning of the first production year with 2 different dairy profiles. The second summer season, 1 dairy person will travel to follow up on the first trainings. Moreover, initial steps towards sustainable fodder production will be carried out by DwB in close cooperation with the Mongolian University of Life Science (MULS)[[11]](#footnote-11) and/or Eco-Asia environmental and Management University[[12]](#footnote-12). Additionally, DwB will conduct a final evaluation together with UU contemplating a possible extension into other provinces/aimags with more target groups.

**UU** holds the overall implementation responsibility, ensuring a timely and qualitative implementation in close collaboration with DwB. UU has the direct contact with SSKh, providing trainings, monitoring, and follow-ups throughout the intervention. UU reports to DwB and manage and administrate the grant in Mongolia, providing DwB with quarterly financial and narrative reports. The trainings that UU will be in charge of are: self-assessment; cooperative governance training; business plan development; business proposal development; marketing; peer to peer networking, as well as providing administrative help and assistance in running the cooperative organization and the dairy plant. Furthermore, UU serves as advisor on various matters that appear down the road running a business UU will conduct an evaluation together with DwB with the aim of bringing Lessons Learned forward and expand into other provinces/aimags.

Contribution to developing the relationship and collaboration between partners

The proposed intervention will create opportunities to combine skills, expertise, and resources that more effectively deliver the intervention and achieve sustainable results aimed at improving the living of the nomads. The relationship and collaboration between the partners help the local partner to strengthen local organizations’ leadership capacity. DwB benefits from the collaboration and professionalism of UU for inspiration to other DwB projects around the world – namely the ones with similar contextual settings.

Furthermore, the intervention will contribute to developing the collaboration bringing the partnership to a new level, placing the partners in a better position to act jointly in the development sector towards the achievement of the SDGs and addressing global issues such as climate change. Indeed, the continuation of the Khovsgol Dairy Project contributes to build long-term relationship and collaboration between partners in strengthening the professionalism of local organizational development with higher capacities to lead and ensure sustainability beyond project period. In other words, by empowering the local partner and building capacity this will establish a stronger system to enable to support the nomads in a continuous way.

Target groups, objectives, and expected results (our intervention)

The Khatgal area is famous for tourism but despite that favourable factor, herders specifically with below average standards of living do not benefit from the tourism[[13]](#footnote-13). Herding households account for 30.2% (285 of 943 households) in Khatgal. 410 households (43.4%) are classified as poor.

The primary target group are the **members of the cooperative** Sarlain Saikhan Khishig (Blessed by Yak), and **milk suppliers** with contracts and potential of becoming coop members.

The coop members are mostly senior women aged between 40-60 years.

Primary target group from 1st intervention: 20 (17 women; 3 men)

Primary target group 2nd intervention (new members): 10 (7 women; 3 men)

Milk suppliers (35 herding households w. contract): 35 (25 women; 10 men)

Total: **65 (49 women; 16 men)**

Secondary target group:

3 x family per coop member: 90

3 x family per milk suppliers: 105

200 households suppliers without contract (x4 per family): 1.000

Total  **1.195**

The secondary target group is households that supplies milk to the dairy plant on a non-contractual basis, as well as the family members of the primary and secondary target groups.

Furthermore, it is considered that up to 800 households in Khatgal will benefit from the dairy plant operation, as the predictability of safe dairy products for increased nutrition is a much-appreciated added value for the community.

Target groups’ benefits

The members of the cooperative will attend cooperative and organisational trainings and receive tailormade trainings in operation and management of the dairy plant. Furthermore, they will gain experience operating the dairy plant (May-October), and receive trainings in improved dairy production, yoghurt production, improved processing and production ways, as well as increased hygienic standards. Emphasis will be on creating a strong brand highlighting the local and eco-friendly production.

In addition, this intervention will invite milk suppliers with contracts to participate in relevant trainings (milk hygiene, food safety, fodder production, and organisational and cooperative business trainings). This will create a stronger attachment to the dairy and encourage them to become formal members of the cooperative.

Moreover, training will be given in eco-tourism and individual coop members will sign up/be selected to receive tourists in their own gers apart from placing a demonstration ger next to the dairy plant, where the coop will receive tourist and show how traditional dairy products are produced in nomadic life.

All suppliers to the dairy plant will receive training in milk hygiene and food safety. And the secondary target group will benefit from stable income and increased livelihood. Not least: the women will experience less workload when supplying their milk to the dairy plant.

Objectives and expected results

Overall Objective  
Reduce poverty through improved income opportunities for nomadic dairy herders in Khatgal, Khovsgol

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| Objective 1:  The cooperative members empowered in leadership and cooperative governance to promote their participation in the community. | | | |
| Outcomes | Indicators | | Activities |
| 1.1 The cooperative has a stronger public presence and serves as a good example of successful cooperative work attracting new members.  1.2 The cooperative is well functioning with active members and especially women are empowered and advocate for themselves and the coop in the public sphere. | 10 key coop members capacitated in leadership skills and coop governance, and 5 members improved financial and administrative skills.  By end 2023, min. 10 coop members (at least 75% women) participated in at least 4 public events and meetings.  By end 2023, the management of the cooperative brings voices to the local authorities (at least 50% of which are women).  By end 2023, the cooperative has 20 new members and 30 new milk supply agreements.  By end 2023, annual meetings are held, and financial reports presented with participation of min. 80 % members’ participation. | | 1.1.1 To organize tailor made trainings on coop governance, including the rights and duties of Coop Board (to increase citizen participation), coop administration and accounting for existing and new members  1.1.2 To organize and collaborate with local officials in advocating coop model as tool for poverty reduction in connection with National Coop Year (2022).  1.1.3 To bring coop members’ voices and products to public events and trade fairs together with new members  1.2.1 To conduct coop self-assessment and review aspirations for coop future.  1.2.2 To conduct workshop on gender equality with participation of strong female role models for coop members and milk suppliers.  1.2.3 To organize study tour for exchange with peers and share experiences. Showcase 8 manuals developed in first phase. For old and new coop members, as well as aspirants. |
| Objective 2:  The cooperative members increased market share by improving the product competitiveness contemplating sustainability in the whole supply chain. | | | |
| Outcomes | | Indicators | Activities |
| 2.1 The cooperative attains financial stability through predictable sales and increased milk supply with improved practices in the dairy operation.  2.2 The cooperative introduces new products and reusable alternative for packaging, and dairy products are well-known as eco-friendly and local brand. | By end 2023, the cooperative members have knowledge about sustainable packaging and use reusable alternatives for at least 25% of their sales.  By end 2023, 200 households increase their income by supplying milk to the dairy plant, and they manage proper food safety practices.  Coop members and milk suppliers apply/test fodder and feed production.  By end 2023, SSKh show solid business plan and predictable finances with small profits based on well-known eco-friendly and local brand. 5 agreements made with continuous supply and selling point established. | | 2.1.1 To repeat and reinforce BCModel and develop a sustainable Business Plan for the cooperative. All coop members.  2.1.2 Technology training in dairy production (e.g., yoghurt and matured cheese), and increase of processing capacity (more efficient working ways and larger processing capacity).  2.2.1 To scrutinize and implement sustainable packaging.  2.2.2 To organize initial talks about fodder and pasture management /environment trainings for the coop members and milk suppliers, incl. herders (non-suppliers) with interest in the subject.  2.2.3 To deliver training and advice on food safety and waste handling for coop members and milk suppliers  2.2.4 To make agreements and raise marketing profile as eco-friendly and local production with bar code labelling. |
| Objective 3: The nomads diversify their income through community-based tourism. | | | |
| Outcomes | | Indicators | Activities |
| 3.1 Coop members receive eco-tourism at demonstration ger and at home. | By end 2023, the coop members rate satisfactory on tourist surveys on hospitality performance.  By end 2023, 2 agreements for community-based tourism are entered.  By end 2023, at least 3 coop members receive tourists at home. | | 3.1.1 To organize assessment of community opportunities and readiness for tourism.  3.1.2 To educate and prepare the cooperative members for tourism (hospitality, standards, safety) through development of a business plan for community-based tourism events in partnership with tourist camps.  3.1.3 To set up ger next to dairy plant as demonstration ger for traditional production.  3.1.4 To develop and test community-based tourism – including satisfaction survey. |

Strategic approach

This extension has a 3-pronged approach which is reflected in the three specific objectives. The objectives have been developed from a sound reflection of continuity and sustainability, and not least with the target groups’ own reflections and wishes, harvested in monitoring and final evaluation assessment.

1. The first approach is centred around the empowerment of the cooperative members’ leadership and cooperative governance reinforcing their organisational, administrative and financial skills towards a sustainable business and increased active citizenship. Focus will also be on gender empowerment.
2. The second approach is an improvement of the core of the business: the dairy products. This involves better quality, more variety of products, sustainable production, sustainable packaging and marketing for a strong local and eco-friendly brand.
3. The third approach is an add on to help coop members diversify their income opportunities. This is the new element in this extension: first steps toward eco-tourism.

The first approach will build on the capabilities already developed in the first phase. Coop members will receive tailor made trainings in cooperative governance including the rights and duties of Coop Board with the aim of increasing their citizen participation in the community. Furthermore, the coop will work with local officials in advocating for the cooperative model as a tool for poverty reduction in connection with the National Coop Year (2022). They will participate in public events and trade fairs together with new members and raise their public appearance giving exposure to their cooperative and brand. Women of the cooperative will serve as role models for other entrepreneurial young women, and workshops on gender equality will be conducted for coop members and milk suppliers. Finally, also part of this approach a study tour is planned to share experiences and get inspiration from other small cooperatives from other provinces. In the first phase the coop members visited Suun dalai orgil cooperative in Bayanchandmani soum of Tuv aimag which was a real eye opener and great knowledge to bring back and use in their own start-up business.

As there has been quite some challenges attracting new members, a strategy for recruitment is to invite milk suppliers with contracts to all relevant trainings, and through this creating stronger bonds with the cooperative, and hopefully convince the suppliers to become formal members.

The second approach is focused on the core of the cooperative business: the dairy products. The nomads already produce good quality products. What they need now, and what they have expressed wishes for is to gain more experience processing bigger amounts of milk and creating more efficient ways of working. Furthermore, they wish to learn to produce yoghurt in a more efficient way and in more varieties. They have also expressed wishes of learning to produce matured cheese, so to have products for sales in the long winter period, where there is no fresh milk available to process. The Danish dairy experts will furthermore support the nomads to ensure a sustainable and eco-friendly production and help explore alternatives for packaging with a greener profile. An extra target of this ‘sustainable dairy production’ approach is to initiate talks about pasture management and production of fodder to the cattle. Traditionally, nomads do not produce fodder. To be more resilient in changing environmental settings, it is imperative that the nomads gain knowledge on how to produce fodder when necessary, and how to have as low-impact environmental footprint as possible. For this, a sustainability strategy will be drafted and rolled out. Also, training in milk hygiene and foods safety will be reinforced. For all these trainings the milk suppliers will be invited both to expand the skills and ensure the quality through the whole value chain, but also to work with the recruitment strategy.

Last but not least, tailored online and onsite business trainings will improve business operation and cooperative organization of the nomads, improve their skills on business management & leadership, as well as administrative & financial trainings. Furthermore, they will work on establishing predictable sales through agreements with tourist camps and/or with local stores. They will work with their marketing profile towards a strong brand known for its local and eco-friendly production and make a sustainable business plan. Part of this is also to reach the qualitative recognition that will allow them to add bar codes to their labels specifying fat content etc. This is a strong wish expressed by the cooperative members which will serve as an added value to the cooperative’s marketing efforts in pro of eco-friendly local produce. Tools to be used for the trainings are among others the Development Ladder Assessment tool and the Business Canvas Model.

The third approach is centred around the aim of creating more diversified income opportunities for the nomads. The Khatgal area receives a significant amount of tourists (approx. 80% nationals, and 20% internationals). This fact coupled with the fact that many urban Mongolians have a romantic view of the nomadic life and dairy production as an ancient Mongolian tradition, exhibit a sound investment in eco-tourism. We will work on two approaches to this; 1 is to set up a ger close to the dairy plant and invite tourists to experience how the nomads produce their traditional dairy products in a traditional way – just like they do ‘back-home’. They will be able to charge a minor fee for this, and at a time hopefully encourage people to buy products from the dairy plant. The second approach is to make a selection of the coop members who would be interested in receiving tourist at their home, receive and host them and invite them to live nomadic life for xx amount of days.

To reach this, the nomads will need training in hospitality, standards and safety. Furthermore, they will need to develop a business plan and make agreements with tourist camps and/or the local tourist office. Initially it will be necessary to conduct an assessment of community opportunities and readiness for tourism, and then develop and test the community-based tourism. We envision this third objective to be the very beginning of a new economic adventure that will empower the nomads further and boost their active citizenship.

Cross-cutting the strategy is the work with gender. Women are more prone to work longer hours than men, and at the same time be the ones to always find new opportunities to improve the livelihood of themselves and their families. This project will continue empowering women herders by improving their economic and social positions and support their individual business skills and leadership. Investing in women will lead to benefits for not only their families and business but also for their communities as generally, women herders are hugely underrepresented within decision-making roles in their communities.

An introductory workshop on gender equality for coop members and milk suppliers will be organized with the aim of developing awareness and understanding of gender equality and women’s empowerment, as well as integrating a gender perspective into everyday work.

The project partners have expectations of being able to extend the experiences from the Khovsgol Dairy Project into other provinces in benefit of the livelihoods of nomadic dairy herders. However, experiences from the present proposal are crucial to extending the strategy.

Systematisation and evaluations

The three approaches all though distinct have great synergies and will be going on parallelly. Throughout the full implementation period ongoing monitoring and follow-ups will be conducted, and a final evaluation in the summer of 2023, will harvest lessons learned and evaluate if further intervention to secure sustainability beyond the project time is needed, and whether the results are so significant, that it would be fruitful to expand experiences into other disadvantaged dairy areas of Mongolia.

The local partner is in constant contact with the board of the coop, and she submits quarterly narrative reports with photos and documentation, as well as quarterly financial reports.

For further dissemination of results and lessons learned a dossier with nice pictures and testimonies will be produced. The Dossier will be made available both in Mongolian and English.

Project-related information work in Denmark

n/a

1. Supported by DwB scholarship and stipendium. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/48216-001-sprss.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/19575/1/10694456.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <https://khuvsgul.nso.mn/> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. [ADB sector road map](https://www.adb.org/sites/default/files/linked-documents/48216-001-ssa.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. [UNDP on gender in Mongolia](https://www.undp.org/mongolia/press-releases/mongolia-receive-boost-increasing-gender-equality-decision-making-levels) l [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. [Green Climate Fund – gender assessment](https://www.greenclimate.fund/sites/default/files/document/fp154-gender-assessment.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. [Gender Analysis in Pastoral Livestock Herding](https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/mongolia/en/AFS_Gender_Pastoral_2015_Mongolia.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. [COVID-vaccines Mongolia](https://www.google.com/search?sxsrf=APq-WBs-EwGhpqHuZqhgshhYxGw6-5Dxwg:1647939557662&q=COVID-19+vaccine&si=ANhW_NoJ2qnokM-_T1OcSbqtuEZwAV8ODco_30MwEyRWOUwAryuR8iiqfPHf7pkdua0IqkOTsIEC2B7LAuX0EJxk9C_H3TTRL8TbcGVjnnIBlsFmooZiIC8%3D&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjy_8efrdn2) [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. See Final Report 19-2465-MI-sep [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. https://en.muls.edu.mn/index.php [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. http://ecoasia.edu.mn/eng/ [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/19575/1/10694456.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-13)