Call for Tenders for Final External Project Evaluation “SWITCH Asia - Promoting Sustainable Consumption and Consumption”

SUMMARY

Type of assignment
Final external evaluation of a development project “Sustainable Textile Production and Eco-Labelling in Mongolia (STeP EcoLab)” (contract ACA/2017/391-184) implemented by AVSF in Mongolia between 2018 and 2022.

Expected duration of assignment
One month (preparatory work, 10 days field data collection in Mongolia (in Ulaanbaatar, Bayankhongor, Arkhangai and Gobi-Altai provinces), report drafting).

Purpose of the evaluation
Midterm and final project evaluation are requested by the main donor of the project (EU).
Moreover, the final evaluation findings are expected to:

- Provide recommendation whether the current project design is relevant to the context or if it would need to be re-designed in a replication/upscaling project;
- Provide recommendation with regards to the methods and tools applied to achieve the stated results and objectives;
Review gaps and risks/local constraints for implementing the project, in ensuring its sustainability and monitoring its progress

Provide recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the partnership strategy in achieving the outcomes in a replication/upscaling project;

PROJECT INFORMATION

Project title
“Sustainable Textile Production and Eco-Labeling in Mongolia” (hereafter: STeP EcoLab)

Lead Implementing Organization
Agronomes et Vétérinaires Sans Frontières (hereafter: AVSF)

Implementing partners
- Collaborating Center on Sustainable Consumption and Production and (CSCP)
- National Federation of Pasture Users Groups (NFPUG)
- Mongolian Wool and Cashmere Association (MWCA)
- Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association (TOC)
- Environment and Security Center of Mongolia (ESCM)

Donor
European Union – SWITCH Asia Programme

Project budget
2 334 162.2 EUR

Project Period
March 1st 2018 – October 31st 2022 (48 months+8 months no cost extension).

Background and objectives:

AVSF in Mongolia
30 years after the independence and collapse of centralized economy, Mongolian herders are still in transition towards free market and face difficulties to adjust their productive systems to create value, preserve their natural resources and altogether secure their livelihoods and resilience. Loss of traditional know-how on collective rangeland management, collapsing extension services, lack of market opportunities and dysfunctional value chains have contributed to under-performing livestock sector. To copy with economic uncertainties herders have adopted a quantitative strategy,
increasing their herds size as a safety net for food and livelihoods. As of 2019 herd size is estimated at 75+ million animals while carrying capacity is at about 40 million. At the same time, due to its unique geography Mongolia has warmed three times faster than the rest of the world and 80 percent of the country is defined as highly vulnerable to climate change.

These factors have set off a destructive cycle that is intensifying. Oversized herds are damaging pastoral resources. In turn, quality of livestock product is decreasing, resulting in lower incomes for herders who are compensating by increasing their herds. Due to overgrazing, around 75% of country’s rangeland is degraded (25% severely degraded). Decline in rangeland condition is the central challenge to sustainable livestock and textile production in Mongolia. It also has serious regional implications such as the increasing frequency and severity of huge dust storms across East Asia.

To break this destructive cycle AVSF is engaging herders’ communities into a more virtuous cycle by encouraging them to adopt sustainable practices that are made visible on Mongolian and international markets by certification schemes. Cashmere industry is contributing to 70% of herders’ income in average, and as such providing efficient leverage to support the development of sustainable livestock value chains. From 2013 to 2019, AVSF has implemented a successful ‘Sustainable Cashmere integrated production’ pilot project in Bayankhongor province, with funding from EU & FFEM.

Going a step further under with the Sustainable Textile Production and Eco-Labelling in Mongolia (STeP EcoLab) (EuropeAid funded, Switch-Asia program) project, AVSF addressed the following pre-identified issues: (i) existing initiatives on sustainable raw materials lack strong coordination and credibility, (ii) labelling schemes were not including the environmental and social (E&S) impacts of the processing stage and (iii) these new sustainable value chains needed better promotion to create additional added value in Mongolia.

**Description of the project:**
STeP EcoLab aimed at establishing the conditions for sustainable textile production and consumption in Mongolia to emerge, with a focus on the wool and cashmere subsector, and by leveraging the key drivers of Sustainable Production and Consumption (SCP): availability of sustainable raw material sourcing options, processors’ awareness and management capacity, access to finance, improved regulatory framework, clients and customers’ awareness, marketing through ecolabels for better valuation and sales of sustainable products.
The overall objective of the action was to contribute to sustainable economic development and poverty reduction in Mongolia.

The specific objective of the action was to contribute to establish sustainable textile production and consumption in Mongolia by leveraging the key drivers of sustainable consumption and production: consolidating sustainable and certified raw material sourcing options meeting markets expectations; developing a conducive environment for textile processing MSMEs to switch to sustainable production practices and raising customers and consumers awareness of Mongolian sustainable textile related initiatives.

Target groups and expected impacts

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target groups</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mongolian wool and cashmere processing MSMEs (~80)</td>
<td>The technical and management skills of Mongolian wool and cashmere processing MSMEs, related to sustainable textile production will improve as a results of capacity building activities, and the creation of supporting environment (skilled employees). They will be able to access suitable volumes of sustainable and quality raw material sourcing.(^1) Thanks to the combined effects of better management, improved regulatory environment and access to green finance(^2), the number of MWCA members using environmentally efficient technologies will increase and their environmental externalities(^3) will decrease. The yearly turnover generated by sustainable textile product sales of MWCA members will increase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolian wool and cashmere sector business intermediaries (3)</td>
<td>MWCA and NAPU will be positioned in a pivotal role to pilot the transformation of the value chain towards sustainability, via a multi-stakeholder platform. They will be strengthened in their mandate to produce, promote and advocate for sustainable wool and cashmere products thanks to capacity building and training activities. The Mongolian Bankers’ Association’s and its Sustainable Finance Initiative will be reinforced through the support to the development of specific E&amp;S screening criteria to be applied in their member institutions as well as training of their relevant staff. Conversely, opportunities for MBA member institutions to fund sustainable and bankable projects in the area will develop.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mongolian herder organizations (cooperatives, Pasture User)</td>
<td>Mongolian herder organizations will integrate best practices on sustainability, quality improvement of raw materials and traceability. As a consequence, new commercial partnerships with processors will be built, and the number of sustainable raw material supply contracts signed by cooperatives benefiting from the action will increase. The resilience of their members will be strengthened thanks to sustainable practices, and their</td>
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\(^1\) Volumes of sustainable certified and quality raw fibers available on the Mongolian market are expected to grow by 20% in 2021 compared with 2018.

\(^2\) Until the end of the project a minimum of 10 projects per year will be funded by MBA members’ institutions.

\(^3\) Specifically, the average annual electricity (Mw) and water consumption (m3).
Groups) (30) income improved. The annual volumes and turnover of sustainably certified fibre sold by cooperatives selected will increase.

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<tr>
<th>Final beneficiaries</th>
<th>Impacts</th>
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<tr>
<td>Mongolian and European consumers (~1,500,000)</td>
<td>Sustainable wool and cashmere products purchasing options originating from Mongolia will be available for European and Mongolian consumers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mongolian herder households (~5000)</td>
<td>The capacity of herder households involved in the project to connect quality, traceability and sustainable management of natural resources to additional income opportunities will be strengthened. As a result, the yearly fiber related income for herder households’ beneficiaries of best practices’ replication will increase.</td>
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ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT

AVSF is a non-governmental organization reaches out to smallholder communities threatened by exclusion and poverty, offering them professional skills in agriculture, livestock farming, and animal health. In this way, AVSF supports these communities as they strive to improve their standard of living, sustainably manage the natural resources upon which they depend, and contribute to the socio-economic development of their local area. AVSF helps them defend their rights and gain better recognition for the role they play in society.

Since 2004, AVSF has been supporting semi-nomadic livestock farmer populations in Mongolia to help make pastoral livestock farming more environmentally sustainable and economically profitable. AVSF has also been striving to increase the resilience of livestock farmers faced with climate variability and risks. AVSF and its local partners (livestock farmer federations and cooperatives) are working mainly on improving animal health systems and livestock farming practices to increase their productivity. Since 2018, AVSF Mongolia has been implementing STeP EcoLab project partnering with below mentioned organizations.

CSCP is an international nonprofit organization emerged from a collaboration between the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and the Wuppertal Institute for Climate, Environment and Energy in 2005 whose focus is the promotion of sustainable patterns of consumption and production (SCP) by identifying, developing, and scaling-up promising sustainable practices in order to help achieve our shared aspiration of a sustainable and resilient future. The CSCP contributes to STeP EcoLab project with its key competences: Sustainable Value Chains, Hand- and Footprint Assessments, Multi-stakeholder Engagement, as
well as Participatory Strategy Development and Design and Communication to tackle both ends of the value chain.

**NFPUG** is a national professional organization working to improve pastureland management and the legal environment through the development of pastureland resilience and herder-participatory organizations established in 2015. The association has 81.6 thousand members, of which 80.0 thousand are herder households, 1445 herder groups (PUGs), 159 soum pasture users 'associations (PPUs), 18 aimag pasture users' associations (PPAs), 87 marketing and savings and credit cooperatives (SCCs) has been operating continuously with membership. The NFPUG support the participation of citizens, the public and the private sector in supporting researchers, introducing innovative research methods, and developing pastureland communication infrastructure. Organizing herders in the traditional way of using shared pastures provides employment for half of the country's population and is a major source of income. Pastoral livestock production plays a major role in economic development and is more in line with the development process. The association provide professional guidance, support, design and implementation of projects and programs, strengthen and improve human resource capacity, and find new partners and markets for herder households in the same area that share common pastures. is an intermediary and consulting service.

NFPUG has been working as one of the main partners of STeP EcoLab project since 2018 on the capacity building for herders’ organizations in the upstream of the value chain.

**MWCA** is a national professional organization established in 1993. Its mission is to support Mongolian wool and cashmere value chain players fully, protecting their interest, improve competence of domestic companies, enhancing convenient business environment and make wool and cashmere products into well known brands. The association has 15 complex factory, 23 primary processing plant, 59 SMEs, 200 household workshops as its members. The main objectives of the MWCA is to produce high quality products and build high level infrastructure, to improve quality of raw materials, to help create legal environment to support investments in advanced technology and to increase awareness of Mongolian brand in the international markets. As a main professional association, MWCA keeps close cooperation with international initiatives by donor organizations including the European Union through STeP EcoLab project from the beginning of the project. MWCA has a role in ensuring participation of wool and cashmere processing companies to support switching to sustainable production practices.

**TOC** is The Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association was founded by the Mongolian Bankers Association in December 2017 as a member-serving NGO. Today, the TOC collaborates with all 15 banks operating in Mongolia. TOC strives to promote sustainability and green growth by creating a green financing system and assisting
Mongolian finance and business sectors to adopt activities which benefit both the environment and the society. Current aims include directing Members’ activities to issues facing sustainable finance, proposing solutions, and contributing to a balanced equilibrium between environmental, social, and economic growths.

In STeP EcoLab project, TOC is leading the activities focusing on building the capacity of MWCA members to prepare and submit bankable loan applications for projects improving their social and environmental performance and of financial institutions to assess the specific E&S risks of the textile sector, building on the work on the Mongolian Sustainable Finance Initiative. It will reach out to ongoing initiatives on green finance by the TOC and its members, helping develop a pipeline of sustainable projects.

ESCM is a non-government organization which provides environmental impact, social impact, and baseline assessments with a team of scientists and researchers since 2002. Its mission is to promote environmental sustainability through provision of professional services on development, implementation, assessment.

ESCM is collaborating as one of the main partners of STeP EcoLab project to help Mongolian wool and cashmere MSMEs to adopt better E&S practices, create opportunities to decrease energy and water losses by improving the quality of engineering and the skills of engineers and staff can help increase added value while reducing energy and water inputs.

**ASSIGNMENT INFORMATION**

**Description of deliverables**

Selected supplier will conduct external final evaluation of the given project and based on the findings will draft evaluation report in English. The evaluation includes documentation review, use of best practice evaluation methodologies, leading presentation of the draft evaluation findings and recommendations, conducting the debriefing for AVSF and other technical partners and drafting and finalisation of the evaluation report).

The evaluation report shall have between 35 and 50 standard pages (1 800 characters / page). Its structure shall be as follows:

- Summary
- Context
- Methodology applied
- Findings (as per the structure below)
- Conclusion and recommendations
- Annexes (lists of interviewees and informants, questionnaires, photos etc.)

The consultant will propose an oral presentation of the main findings and results of the evaluation to the main stakeholders: project holder, partners of implementation, donors and beneficiaries. It could be organized remotely (visio-conference) or on site.
The evaluation shall focus mainly on the topics and questions below (the list is not exhaustive)

**Project relevance**
- Relevance of the project objectives and expected results to the needs of the country, target groups and beneficiaries
- Relevance of the project objectives and expected results to the expectations of the main stakeholders
- Complementarity of the project to other actions in the field of pastoralism & textile sector in Mongolia, and especially complementarity of the project with the other projects AVSF is implementing in Mongolia on the cashmere value chain
- Ability of the project management to adjust the project to changing context in the given sector

**Progress made towards the achievement of results**
- Fulfilment of the project objectives and results against project timeframe and indicators (as per logical framework – to be delivered)
- Reasons for delay in achieving project objectives and results (if applicable)

**Project impact on target groups and final beneficiaries**
- Impact of the project on target groups, beneficiaries, local partners and other local stakeholders
- Impact of the project on the textile sector in general
- Contribution of the project to achievement of relevant national development strategies
- Changes in policy environment attributable to the project

**Efficiency**
- Efficiency of the financial resources needed to achieve the existing outputs / results
- Efficiency of the human resources needed to achieve the existing outputs / results

**Sustainability and replication prospects:**
- What is the likelihood that the project results will be sustainable, in terms of project partners and beneficiaries’ capacity building and in terms of anticipated sustainable development of Mongolian textile sector?
- Is sufficient capacity being built so that local actors including private sector, CSOs and local authorities will be able to manage the process at the end of the project without continued dependence on project team’s expertise?
- Are the necessary steps owned and driven by the local people and entities?
- What evidence is there to suggest the project’s interventions, results and institutions will be sustained after the project ends?
• What were, if any, the innovative and successful approaches from this project that are of relevance and useful for other actors / stakeholders?
• What future role will project partners be able to play after the completion of the project?
• Has project implementation and results achievement gone according to plan, or are there any obstacles/bottlenecks/outstanding issues on the partner or local government side that are limiting the successful implementation and results achievement of the project?
• Is the proposed pathway towards sustainable certification for the Mongolian cashmere in this project pertinent in regards with the sector evolutions (legislative framework, development of private certifications, positions taken by the main player)?
• Did the project managed to better link Mongolian stakeholders from the upstream (herders, cooperatives) and the downstream (processors, retailers) of the animal fibers value chain with the objective to strengthen their position against international players?

Project management and organization:
• Appropriateness of the division of roles between AVSF and other project partners (CSCP, NFPU, TOC, MWCA, and ESCM)
• Effectivity of the communication between AVSF, project partners and other stakeholders
• Level of local stakeholders’ (including beneficiaries, government and the local partners) participation in project implementation
• Visibility of the project and its funding (does it meet respective donors’ requirements, is it sufficient or not)
• Arrangement and transparency of project documents (documents proving implementation of activities, achievement of results and objectives, financial documents) keeping
• Effectiveness of AVSF internal project monitoring mechanisms (monitoring of partners’ performance, project events, measurement of impact of the trainings etc.)
• Is the project concept/logic and design optimal to achieve the desired project objectives/outputs?

Recommendations – in case this project was either replicated or continued
• Project design modifications needed to make the project more relevant to the context and needs (if applicable)
• Measures needed to increase sustainability and replication prospects
• Measures needed to increase project benefit for the target groups, especially herders and their communities, and other stakeholders
Organizational and management changes needed to improve the project management and administration (if applicable)

**Expertise and experience required:**

**Necessary:**
- At least 5 years of experience in evaluating development projects (verifiable list of evaluations conducted in the past required), notably funded by the EU
- Demonstrated understanding of development sector in the field of environment, pastoralism, and textile sector (verifiable information on relevant experience required)
- Fluency in written and spoken English and the ability to edit texts in English
- Demonstrated excellent analytical skills (evidence required)
- Excellent interpersonal and communication skills, and comfortable working across cultures and with various stakeholders (herders’ groups, industrial organizations, local authorities)

**Recommended:**
- Expertise in pastoralism, sectoral & agri-value chain development, textile industries
- Experience in working in Mongolia

**NB:** it is possible, and advisable, to propose a pair consisting of an international expert on textile value chain and a local, Mongolian national, expert on rural development and/or animal fibers value chain

**Selection of supplier and selection criteria:**

The evaluator will be selected on the basis of offers containing:
- Evaluation plan
- Description of experience and expertise

The plan must contain:
- Description of relevant expertise and experience of the organization and of the specific experts who will be in charge of this study (copies of documents proving the expertise and experience shall be attached)
- Description of the methodology to be applied
- Timeframe
- Budget of the evaluation and total price of the offer (the price cannot exceed the price stated below)
- Proposed structure of the evaluation report

The evaluation plan will become an annex to the contract that will be concluded between AVSF and the evaluator selected.
The description of experience and expertise has to include:

- contacts to persons / institutions that can provide reference, and / or
- copies of official documents proving the experience and expertise stated

The selection criteria will be as follows:

- Offered price (30%)
- Proven expertise and experience (35%): qualification and skills of the proposed experts, references of the bidding organization
- Quality of the proposed methodology (35%): adequacy of the proposed methodology and work plan proposed to the Terms of Reference, including: understanding and level of clarity of response to the to the ToR, realism of the work program, number and involvement of experts balanced and sufficient

Terms of assignment:
Selected evaluator will be subcontracted by AVSF to produce the deliverables specified above. The contract to be concluded between AVSF and the selected evaluator will be proposed later on during the selection process.
A framing meeting will be organized before the launch of the evaluation mission to ensure that AVSF expectations and specificities of the project approach are well understood.
Regular meetings with the project team will take place during the evaluation.
The evaluation report has to be submitted by 15th of February 2023.
Maximum price to be paid for the delivery is 19 990 EUR.
The price agreed on will cover evaluator’s remuneration, all costs incurred by the evaluator related to the assignment and all taxes and fees required by law. The price will be final and cannot be increased under any circumstances.
AVSF and the selected evaluator will negotiate on the logistics.
AVSF will provide the evaluator with all information and documents it has at its disposal needed to conduct the evaluation.

How to apply:
Interested candidates should send their offers in English to the following addresses s.bolorchimeg@avsf.org, m.lelarge@avsf.org and s.paticot@avsf.org by 09/11/2022 (9th of November 2022).
Incomplete offers and offers received after the deadline will not be considered.