

Evaluation Report of the Project

Inclusive and sustainable vegetable production and marketing project (MONVEGI), Mongolia

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Table of Content

LIST OF USED ABBREVIATIONS	IV
LIST OF FIGURES	V
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	V
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	1
1 BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY	3
1.1 INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT	3
1.2 OBJECTIVE & SCOPE OF THIS EVALUATION.....	4
1.3 EVALUATION METHODOLOGY	4
2 THE MONVEGI PROJECT IN A NUTSHELL	6
2.1 STARTING SITUATION AND CHALLENGES FOR THE EXIT PHASE AFTER PHASE 1	6
2.2 PROGRAM OBJECTIVE AND INDICATORS OF MONVEGI.....	6
2.3 PROJECT STRATEGY	7
2.4 PROJECT IMPLEMENTING TEAM OF MONVEGI AND MAIN STAKEHOLDERS OF THE VEGETABLE SECTOR	8
3 ASSESSMENTS	9
3.1 RESULTS OF THE ONLINE SURVEY	9
3.2 ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPONENTS AND ACHIEVEMENTS	9
3.2.1 <i>Component 1: Production</i>	9
3.2.2 <i>Component 2: Marketing</i>	12
3.2.3 <i>Component 3: Farmer`s organization</i>	14
3.2.4 <i>Component 4: Policy</i>	16
3.2.5 <i>Achievements on the main objective level</i>	18
3.2.6 <i>Transversial themes</i>	18
3.3 ASSESSMENTS ACCORDING TO DAC/OECD CRITERIA	19
3.3.1 <i>Relevance</i>	19
3.3.2 <i>Coherence</i>	21
3.3.3 <i>Effectiveness</i>	22
3.3.4 <i>Efficiency</i>	23
3.3.5 <i>Impact</i>	25
3.3.6 <i>Sustainability</i>	27
3.4 ASSESSMENT OF FURTHER EVALUATION QUESTIONS.....	28
4 EVALUATORS` CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED	32
4.1 OVERALL CONCLUSIONS	32
4.2 CRITICAL CONCLUSIONS WITH REGARD TO THE PROJECT`S PHASE 2.....	32
4.3 LESSONS WITH REGARD TO INSTITUTIONAL SUSTAINABILITY	33
4.4 LESSONS WITH REGARD TO WHAT SHOULD BE STOPPED	33
4.5 LESSONS WITH REGARD TO ORGANIC AGRICULTURE.....	34
5 RECOMMENDATIONS	35
5.1 TO THE SWISS AGENCY FOR DEVELOPMENT AND COOPERATION, SDC	35
5.2 TO MFARD AND ITS SYSTEM	36
5.3 TO THE VEGETABLE SECTOR.....	37
5.4 TO THE MOFALI AND THE GOVERNMENT OF MONGOLIA	38
5.5 TO THE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION COMMUNITY IN MONGOLIA	39
6 APPENDICES	41

6.1	SDC DAC EVALUATION GRID	41
6.2	PROJECT FUNCTIONS AT RISK THAT NEED TO BE COVERED IN THE FUTURE.....	47
6.3	TABLE OF INDICATORS.....	47
6.4	LITERATURE.....	51
6.4.1	<i>Project documents</i>	51
6.4.2	<i>Other literature</i>	52
6.5	MAIN FINDINGS FROM THE ONLINE SURVEY AND STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP	52
6.6	LIST OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE EVALUATION	59
6.7	TERMS OF REFERENCES (TOR)	62

List of used abbreviations

AFS	Agriculture and Food Security
Aimag	An administrative/decentralized subdivision (equivalent to a “province”)
BDS	Business Development Services
CS	Country Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DAC	Development Assistance Committee working under the auspices of OECD
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development project
ET	Evaluation Team
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
FDFA	[Swiss] Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
FiBL	Research Institute for Organic Agriculture
GAP	Good Agriculture Practice
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Service
GoM	Government of Mongolia
GT	Grant Thornton
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IFOAM Organics International	Global Umbrella Organisation for the Organic Movement
IPAS	Institute of Plants and Agriculture Sciences
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
MFARD	Mongolian Farmers Association for Rural Development
MNT	Mongolian Tugrug (CHF 1 = MNT 2.861 as of March 2023)
MoFALI	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry
MONVEGI	Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing Project
MSD	Market System Development
MTR	Mid-term Review
MWFA	Mongolian Women’s Farmers Association
NSO	National Statistics Office
OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PGS	Participatory Guarantee System
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PRA	Partner Risk Assessment
RIPP	Research Institute of Plant Protection
SCO	Swiss Cooperation Office
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
ToR	Terms of Reference
UB	Ulaanbaatar
UN	United Nations
VSSU	Vegetable Seed Service Unit
WB	World Bank
WHO	World Health Organisation

List of Figures

- Figure 1:** Overview of the different steps involved in the evaluation process
- Figure 2:** The DAC OECD Evaluation criteria and the main questions
- Figure 3:** The functions that MONVEGI fulfils
- Figure 4:** MONVEGI functions
- Figure 5:** Organisational structure of MFARD
- Figure 6:** The SDC food system global strategy
- Figure 7:** Vegetable consumption in Mongolia from 1960 – 2020 in comparison with other country groups
- Figure 8:** Vegetable seed sales of VSSU 2016-2021,
- Figure 9:** Mongolian vegetable production and imports

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Executive Summary

The "Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing Project (MONVEGI)" in Mongolia is implemented by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) in collaboration with the Mongolian government and its Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry (MOFALI). The project aims to improve vegetable production, marketing, and consumption in Mongolia and enhance the livelihoods of smallholder farmers, especially women-headed households. The project operated in two phases from 2016 to 2023.

The objective of the external evaluation is to assess the project's performance against the six DAC/OECD evaluation criteria and further questions specified in TORs provided by SDC (see appendix 6.8) and in the SDC-approved inception report developed by FiBL. The evaluation also aimed to analyse the achievements and challenges, strengths and weaknesses of the project design and implementation processes. The scope of the evaluation primarily focused on the exit phase (2020-2023) but also considered the previous phase (2016-2019).

The evaluation methodology involved data collection from various sources, including project documents, stakeholder interviews, online surveys, and field visits. The evaluation team analysed the project's implementation, outcomes, and indicators across different levels, such as seed producers, farmer cooperatives, research institutions, and policy frameworks.

The MONVEGI project strategy comprised four intervention lines: 1. production, 2. marketing, 3. organizational development, and 4. policy. The project's implementing team consisted of four partners, with the main partners being the Mongolian Farmers Association of Rural Development (MFARD) and the Mongolian Women's Farmers Association (MWFA), supported by the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Service (GFRAS) and Grant Thornton (GT). The Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations handled the policy component. The evaluation team found evidence for overall proper project implementation and described numerous effects generated by partners and their activities (Chapter 3.2).

The assessments of the project according to DAC/OECD criteria are as follows:

Relevance: The overall relevance of the MONVEGI project is very high and unchallenged by stakeholders. The objectives and design of the intervention align with the needs and priorities of the government of Mongolia, the target group (smallholder farmers), and indirectly affected stakeholders (e.g., civil society, and market actors). The project addresses the priorities of SDC, the Government of Mongolia, and stakeholders, making it a poverty alleviation-oriented, gender-sensitive intervention.

Coherence: The project is coherent with many other SDC interventions around the world and aligns with SDC priorities. It is also coherent with the country's strategy, finding its place in the agriculture and food security domain. However, there is less coherence in collaboration with other development actors in Mongolia due to challenges in donor coordination.

Effectiveness: The project has generally achieved its objectives satisfactorily, although some indicators have not reached the desired levels. The approaches and strategies during implementation were considered adequate, and the transversal issues and project principles were well cared for.

Efficiency: The project has been efficient in terms of resource use and timely delivery of results. The burn rates for different components of the project varied, but overall, efficiency was considered satisfactory.

Impact: The project has made a positive impact, accelerating positive trends in the vegetable market in Mongolia. Vegetable consumption has increased, and the domestic supply has managed to keep up with the developments. The project has also led to unintended positive impacts, such as social innovations and collaborations among farmers.

Sustainability: The sustainability of the project is overall very good and the evaluators trust that MFARD and other stakeholders continue to drive the development based on earnings and new support. There are a few elements of concern at this stage. The government's commitment and capability to continue certain project activities are uncertain, and there are risks associated with discontinuing certain project functions. While the vegetable market shows potential for growth and sustainability, there are challenges in sustaining public services and transversal issues after the project ends.

Overall, the MONVEGI project has been relevant, coherent, effective, efficient, and impactful and sustainable to a very good extent. The evaluators trust that MFARD will be successful in meeting the challenge and in furthering the Mongolian vegetable sector.

Overall Conclusions:

- The project responds to an expressed need in Mongolia, and there is a strong commitment to the project with high ownership.
- Phase 2 was designed based on the experiences and achievements of previous projects, and important lessons were integrated into its design.
- We expect that the main impacts sustain. This includes the vegetable production, the vegetable consumption and the market share of the domestic production. Certain activities didn't achieve financial sustainability during the exit phase. This includes particularly new development topics (e.g. GAP or organic agriculture), transversal issues (e.g. gender), Government services (e.g. research), and social activities (e.g. Ger model streets).
- The performance of MFARD as a project implementer is excellent, but its role as a membership-based and stakeholder organization has room for improvement.

Recommendations:

To the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC):

- Promote further support for the vegetable sector and share the project's success with other donors as long as SDC is still in Mongolia and internationally.
- Highlight the success of the project in internal and external messaging.
- Observe the long-term impacts of the project and conduct tracer studies.
- Link to former vegetable projects of SDC (or others if more suited).
- Provide a voucher for BDS to implementation partners.

To MFARD and its system:

- Develop membership and enforce member dues and rights.
- Implement and monitor their strategic and business plans.
- Brand their products to attract consumers and promote vegetable consumption.
- Maintain unity within the organization.
- Apply the subsidiary principle in organizing.
- Develop Cooperatives.
- Embrace digitalization for efficiency and effectiveness.
- Collaborate with the entire vegetable sector (including producers, traders, service providers, which are not necessarily organised in MFARD) to address common issues.

To the Vegetable Sector i.e.all stakeholders that participate in the vegetable market:

- Collaborate under MFARD's leadership to address common interests.
- Work on market transparency and promoting the benefits of Mongolian vegetables.
- Attract young people to the sector and create awareness of vegetable benefits.
- Push for true cost accounting to address externalities of low-quality imports.
- Source domestically, close production circles, and act climate-friendly.

To MoFALI/ Government of Mongolia:

- Consider support for discontinued MONVEGI project functions (see appendix 6.2) to accelerate SDG achievements.
- Take further steps to lead the vegetable sector.
- Further improve proper governance and transparency.
- Practise stakeholder dialogue and participation.
- Initiate and observe special projects for sector development.
- Adapt curricula and invest in education for the sector.
- Make appropriate legal developments to support the sector, including for organic agriculture.

To the International Cooperation Community in Mongolia:

- Focus on the vegetable sector for observation and engagement, considering Market System Development (MSD) approaches.
- Integrate in their portfolios the essential MONVEGI functions (see appendix 6.2) that could not be finished.
- Coach/support MoFALI in sector governance.
- Scale-up successful social investments for poverty reduction and nutrition.
- Initiate boosting of sustainable organic production and consumption based on agroecology.

1 Background and Methodology

1.1 Introduction, context

Increasing domestic production and stabilizing local prices of vegetables have become important goals of the Mongolian government during recent years (ADB, 2020; Kuhn & Bobojonov, 2020).

Vegetable production in Mongolia covers about 60 - 65% of vegetables produced and imported¹. Overall vegetable consumption and domestic demand have a growing trend and overall doubled since 2015. The share of domestic production remained more or less stable. The doubling of vegetable production in Mongolia became possible through the production of professional farms and private households, both contributing significantly to the national production volume.

Climate change affects Mongolian agriculture and vegetable production. The main regions of vegetable cultivation see much higher precipitation per annum, which has visibly improved vegetable production within the last few years. Besides, the investments in and use of greenhouses are growing in Mongolia, which allows a longer supply season and a broader offer of vegetables.

In 2016, the “Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing Project (MONVEGI)” of SDC responded to the opportunity of a dynamic vegetable sector and - based on the positive experience of the earlier potato project - invested broadly into the vegetable sector system with similar approaches and similar partners as the earlier “Mongolian potato program” of SDC.

After 7 years of operations in 2 phases (phase 1: 04.2016-07.2020 / phase 2: 08.2020-10.2023) the MONVEGI project comes to an end in October 2023 and therefore an external evaluation was mandated with the purpose to assess all components along the 6 OECD evaluation criteria to inform SDC, MFARD and the Mongolian government on the results achieved and further actions necessary to take to ensure sustainability.

¹ MONVEGI Annual Report 2022, based on data from the NATIONAL STATISTICS OFFICE OF MONGOLIA

1.2 Objective & scope of this evaluation

The objective of this external evaluation is to provide SDC with objective assessment of the project, particularly on the exit phase, and contribute prospectively to the learning-accountability-steering triangle.

The detailed objectives of the evaluation are to

1. **assess** the MONVEGI program **against the six DAC criteria: relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and (likely) sustainability;**
2. **analyse the achievements and challenges** of the MONVEGI program **against its stated targets;**
3. **identify and analyse strengths and weaknesses of the MONVEGI program design** both at the level of the overall program as well as the interventions;
4. **identify and analyse strengths and weaknesses of implementation processes** both at the level of the overall program as well as the interventions.

As the MONVEGI program is phasing out, the results of the evaluation also should allow to derive conclusions and recommendations, which

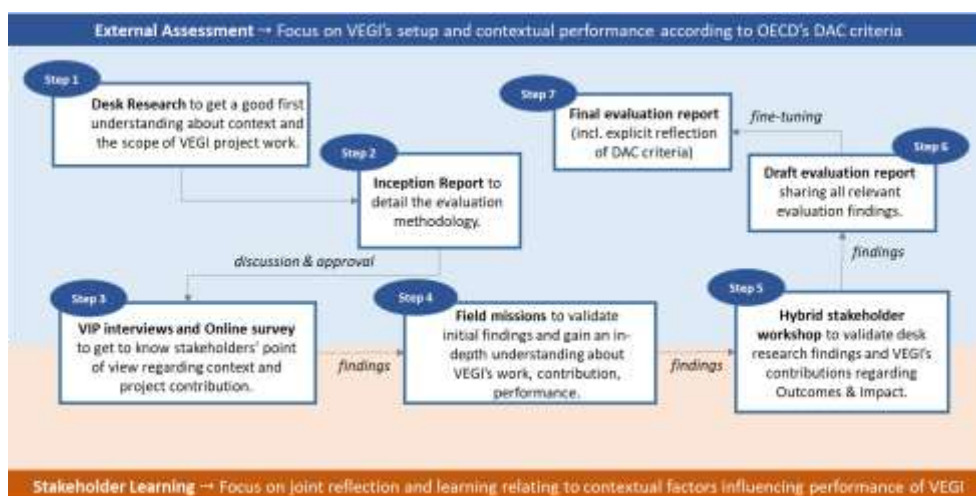
- **are already sustainable** and do not need further external support; or
- **are not yet sustainable and could/should be taken up by another development actor** in Mongolia (e.g. Government, donor, NGOs, other international/regional projects, domestic and/or foreign companies); or
- **should be stopped at all.**

The scope of the evaluation is focused but not limited to the exit phase (2020 – 2023), which is trying to consolidate the MONVEGI project, being implemented by MAFRD and FAO. Yet, findings, learnings, and recommendations reflect to some extent also the previous phase of the MONVEGI project (2016 – 2019).

1.3 Evaluation methodology

The evaluation process is visualized in Figure 1 and includes 7 steps of inception, data collection, verification, and synthesis. The steps were conceptualized to ensure a good independent evaluation (i.e. external assessment) while involving stakeholders to participation and reflection (i.e. stakeholder learning).

Figure 1: Overview of the different steps involved in the evaluation process



The information sources of the evaluation include, but are not limited to:

- Various SDC discussions online and face-to-face in UB;
- Online Survey with 51 participants (79 invitees), representing project partners and main beneficiaries; most of the participants work for more than 3 years in the vegetable sector.
- Review of 41 project documents;
- 26 semi-structured online and face-to-face interviews with a range of YEPP/VET stakeholders, including 12 youth, Focus Group Discussions, and 6 days of field visits in UB and the Uvs and Darkhan regions.
- Travelling with MFARD key staff
- Stakeholder workshop, including the project partners, SDC, MoFALI, FAO, UB Municipality, and Mongolian Women's Farmers Association with 12 participants

As a means to obtain a broad project understanding, also experiences and opinions of the various project-related players, including partners from other donors and other persons involved in the MONVEGI project were considered. Nevertheless, the core of the evaluation relates to the revision of existing documents, and interviews as well as the feedback from SDC, MFARD, and stakeholders, who participated in the validation workshop on 17 May 2023.

The team focused on analysing and assessing the project on

- the implementation of outcomes 1-4
- the specific evaluation questions described in the TOR
- the DAC criteria

It thereby considered the following various levels of the project and MFARD system in the context of the vegetable production and consumption sector in Mongolia:

- Seed Producers/Vegetable farmers/Subsistence farmers
- Primary/secondary cooperatives, branches (e.g. seed associations), and extension offices. Ger street groups
- Research and inputs. Market opportunities.
- Project and sector facilitation management (MFARD/MWFA/FAO)
- MoFALI and policy and framework conditions. International cooperation
- Project actors' support level (SDC, GFRAS, GT)



Figure 2: The DAC OECD Evaluation criteria and the main questions

2 The MONVEGI project in a nutshell

2.1 Starting situation and challenges for the exit phase after Phase 1

Overall, the MONVEGI project performed well during the first phase, including A) at the level of vegetable production (in the main vegetable growing areas of Mongolia), B) in value chain development and improved marketing, and C) also in the Ger districts where vegetable production was successfully introduced within communities and schools in Ulan Bator as well as in other cities. The project has D) also contributed substantially to policy and legislative issues regarding the vegetable sector in Mongolia.²

However, at the start of the exit phase, there was a need for increased sustainability and institutionalisation linked with specific outcomes and results of the initial project phase. The key challenges at the start of the phase were the followings:

- **Extension centres** had been established with the support of the project in four locations within the main vegetable-producing area. These centres were operational, but they were not in a position to cover their costs. Therefore, one objective during the exit phase was to set up mechanisms (possibly including public subsidies, involving local authorities) to make these centres sustainable.
- The **Vegetable Seed Service Unit (VSSU)** is an important tool for a sustainable vegetable sector in Mongolia. The business with seeds needs to be fuelled with cash (buying seeds from producers at harvest time, financing seed imports, and selling the seeds at sowing time to farmers throughout the country, partly through the extension centres). The VSSU needed improved management and a clear strategy to be fully operational towards its objectives.
- Having the right **vegetable varieties** for Mongolian production conditions but also matching the taste of Mongolian consumers. A sustainable balance between imported – mostly hybrid varieties – and locally multiplied seeds of open-pollinated varieties had to be found.
- The **Mongolian farmers' association (MFARD)** itself had big challenges ahead to secure its own sustainability, i.e. securing the funding and activities beyond project end.
- For the **Mongolian women's farmers' association (MWFA)**, it was also a challenge to continue its support to marginalized urban communities in the Ger districts without external funding.
- Regarding the **vegetable value chain**: The establishment of a wholesale market in UB that is in the hands of trustworthy persons, the emergence of additional primary and secondary cooperatives, and also support of commercial agreements with major retailers.
- The vegetable sector in Mongolia needed a regulatory framework that is conducive for vegetable producers and consumers.

2.2 Program objective and indicators of MONVEGI

The overall objective of MONVEGI has been to improve the livelihood in Mongolia through inclusive, gender responsive and sustainable growth of the vegetable sector.

The main impact indicators are

1. Household economic situation through income from vegetables,
2. Aggregated consumption of vegetables, and
3. Market share and market value of domestic vegetables in Mongolia.

² Mid Term Review and ProDoc of Exit phase

Outcome indicators and respective target groups of MONVEGI (Phase II)

- (A) **Livelihood** of rural and peri-urban small holder farmers and women headed households is **improved** through increased vegetable production to fulfil domestic consumption demand, measured by the following outcome indicators:

(A1) Coverage of vegetable domestic demand (cabbage, onion, garlic, greenhouse vegetables);

A2) Out of this coverage, % of which come from rural vs. peri-urban, and from women-headed vs. men-headed households.

Target groups Outcome 1: Smallholder farmers and their cooperatives in rural and peri-urban areas (Ger districts of UB and other cities)

- (B) The **marketing of domestic vegetables** (including those from small-scale farmers and women headed households) is **well organized**, in-line with market trends and consumers' preferences, and profitable, with primary and secondary cooperatives playing a key role, measured by the following outcome indicators:

B1) Producer and consumer prices variation for vegetables on the domestic market;

B2) Income of smallholder farmers is increased;

B3) Number of reached consumers through media channels about vegetable consumption.

Target groups Outcome 2: Smallholder farmers and their cooperatives

- (C) The **organizational development, governance structure and financial management of farmer organizations** (including Vegetable Seed Service units) is **strengthened**, measured by the following outcome indicators:

C1) MFARD has a long-term vision and is managed according to good governance principles;

C2) MFARD is recognized by all stakeholders as the national organization representing vegetable farmers;

C3) The vegetable seed service unit is operating at all levels of the seed supply chain and is sustainable.

Target groups Outcome 3: Farmer organizations (MFARD, extension centres) and mechanism: Vegetable Seed Reserve Unit (VSRU, formerly: Seed Reserve Fund SRF)

- (D) **Sustainable and inclusive growth of the vegetable sector** is fostered by improved policy/legal and institutional framework.

D1) Farmers' opinion about the legal framework and its evolution;

D2) Vegetable GAP certified in the market is available.

Target groups Outcome 4: MoFALI and national parliament.

2.3 Project strategy

The MONVEGI project tries to fulfil its objective through the four following intervention lines and their objectives, which are all interconnected (see figure 3 and 4)

1. **Production:** Livelihood of rural and peri-urban small holder farmers and women headed households is improved through increased vegetable production to fulfil domestic consumption demand.
2. **Marketing:** The marketing of domestic vegetables (including those from small-scale farmers and women headed households) is well organised, profitable, in line with market trends and consumers' preferences, with primary and secondary cooperatives in lead.

3. **Organisational development:** The organisational development, governance structure and financial management of farmer organisations (including Vegetable Seed Service units) is strengthened.
4. **Policy:** Sustainable and inclusive growth of the vegetable sector is fostered by improved policy/legal and institutional framework.



Figure 3: Outcomes of the VEG project and interactions between the outcomes, as discussed during the stakeholder meeting of June 11th, 2016



Figure 4: Level of intervention of the project

Figures 3 and 4: The functions that MONVEGI fulfils

2.4 Project implementing team of MONVEGI and main stakeholders of the vegetable sector

The 2nd and last phase of MONVEGI was being implemented by 4 partners under respective direct contracts with SDG:

- The **Mongolian Farmers Association of Rural Development (MFARD)**, as the main partner, implemented both phases of the MONVEGI project and the previous Mongolian Potato programme since 2004. MFARD subcontracted the **Mongolian Women Farmer Association** mainly for the Support for the Ger district model streets (in Outcome 1)
- MFARD is supported by the **Global Forum for Rural Advisory Service (GFRAS** for institutional development) and **Grant Thornton (GT** for financial and administrative management).
- The **FAO** of the United Nations has been contracted to implement the policy component of the MONVEGI project since 2016.

The following stakeholders were the main (non-contracted) partners of the MONVEGI program. They benefited and/or contributed to the success of the program:

- Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry (MoFALI)
- Municipality Office of Ulaanbaatar
- General Authority of Special Inspection
- Local governments
- School of Agro-Ecology, Mongolian University of Life Science
- IPAS (institute of plant and agriculture science)
- ADRA (Adventist Development and Relief Agency)
- Diverse private actors along the vegetable supply chain
- Others, such as schools (nutrition tuition), other donor organisations, esp. JICA and IFAD as well as the overall coordination sub-group of development partners, the FADP (Food and Agriculture Development Partner Group)

3 Assessments

The TOR provided the 6 DAC/OECD evaluation criteria and on top 5 evaluation questions. We also looked at the implementation of the four components, the most important interfaces (see figure 3) the achievements of the indicators (3 impact and 10 outcome indicators) and the financial implementation.

In this chapter, we summarise our observations and the assessments of the evaluation team for each of the six DAC criteria. Conclusions and recommendations are not subject of this chapter and are discussed in Chapters 5 and 6.

3.1 Results of the online survey

In an online survey we gathered information about what worked well and what not from a stakeholder perspective. The most comments were related to outcome 1 and 2 as these project outputs and outcomes could be perceived directly by the most stakeholders.

The stakeholders mostly mentioned the following points as **project successes**:

- Project activities created tangible outcomes and impact and a clear development and growth process in the vegetable sector has been recognised (all outcomes);
- New types and varieties of vegetables have been tested and implemented (outcome 1);
- Better seeds and capacity building led to higher yields (outcome 1);
- Sales and Extension Units of MFARD have been established in regions (outcome 1);
- Improved infrastructure to store vegetables (better prices for products) (outcomes 1+2);
- Improved domestic vegetable supply chains and domestic sales (outcome 2);
- Successful cooperation with schools and kindergartens (outcome 2);
- Successful consumer and producer awareness creation (outcome 2).

The stakeholders mentioned the following activities as **not working fully satisfying**:

- Some stakeholders missed a national focus to develop the vegetable sector instead of focussing on a few regions (project design);
- Quality standards such as GAP, Organic are not broadly implemented by farmers (outcome 1);
- The product quality standards are not yet consequently implemented (outcome 1);
- Some services of the extension centres were not yet satisfying (outcome 1);
- There is still a significant lack of local processing units and bigger local storage are needed (outcomes 1 and 2);
- The attempts to find sales solutions, which create a high price for producers were still less effective (outcome 2);
- More marketing efforts are needed in the future, such as products developments or price stabilisations (outcome 2).

3.2 Assessment of implementation of components and achievements

3.2.1 Component 1: Production

The Expected Outcome of Component 1 is that the livelihood of rural and peri-urban smallholder farmers and women headed households is improved through increased vegetable production to fulfil domestic consumption demand. The main target groups are smallholder farmers and their cooperatives in rural and peri-urban areas (Ger districts of UB).

Budget and actual expenses related to Component 1

Budget 2020 - 2023	Actual Expenses by 31.12.2022	%
2'834 Mio MNT / 994'561 CHF	3'864 Mio MNT / 1'335'789 CHF	136

Budget allocation by outputs: 1.1 Variety testing (593 Mio MNT); 1.2 Vegetable production in urban and peri-urban areas (476 Mio MNT); 1.3 New technologies and approaches are adopted by farmers (1'445.5 Mio MNT); 1.4 Standards for vegetables are applied (320 Mio MNT) / *Exchange rate: CHF 1 = MNT 2'850*

The budget was overspent by 36%, mainly due to unplanned salaries, which have been paid to extension workers in the extension centres during the pandemic situation. However, the entire project budget was balanced by savings in other outcomes. Altogether, the use of the budget is comprehensible and appropriate to the tasks that were financed with it.

Outcome 1 - Production / Log frame Indicator

Indicator	Baseline 2020	Value 2022	Target Value 2023
Coverage of vegetable domestic demand (cabbage, onion, garlic, greenhouse). Out of this coverage, % of which from rural vs. peri-urban, and from women-headed vs. men-headed households.	Cabbage: 54.3% Onion, garlic: 32.7% Carrots: 100.0% Turnip: 100.0% Beetroot: 100.0% Cucumbers: 67.0% Tomatoes: 10.5% Others: 5.0%.	Cabbage: 50.3% Onion, garlic: 61.9% Carrots: 100.0% Turnip: 100.0% Beetroot: 100.0% Cucumbers: 78.1% Tomatoes: 5.0% Others: 12.9%.	80% (cabbage, onion, garlic and vegetable of greenhouse)

The project strived to increase the coverage of the domestic demand up to 80%. At the end of 2022 for carrots, turnip and beetroot the self-sufficient rate of 100% from 2020 could be maintained, while the rate for onion and garlic increased up to 62%. For cabbage and tomatoes the opposite trend was reported as the coverage rate decreased for these products.

Four outputs were identified for the exit phase under outcome 1, corresponding to elements that are particularly important and sensitive in terms of sustainability and contribution to the outcome. These are the continuation of seed variety tests, the maintenance and further development of the vegetable production in urban and peri-urban areas (Ger districts), the introduction of new technologies in vegetable production as well as the introduction and certification of production standards such as GAP to increase the trust and preference of consumers in regard to Mongolian vegetables.

In regard to 1.1 (number of tested varieties and vegetable species) the target value has been reached for the number of varieties and failed for the number of tested new species. However, the results as a whole are very positive. Due to access to better seeds and capacity building the yields of vegetables increased as well as the vegetable production area. The high-quality seeds have been made available by VSSU to all vegetable farmers, which was as a side-effect an important instrument to bind and to acquire new members of MFARD too.

The project interventions consequently continued the achievements made in project phase 1 in testing and adopting further vegetable varieties, suitable and resilient to the changing agro-ecological conditions. IPAS with its highly motivated team of researchers had a leading role in the implementation of this task. Since 2016, 80 varieties of 33 types/species have been tested and also completely new types have been introduced such as broccoli. However, the focus of variety tests is on traditional vegetables of the Mongolian cuisine, such as cabbage, carrot, onion, garlic and turnip, which represent 80% of the vegetable market.

Most of the tested varieties could be received through Russian and Korean breeding networks or from professional breeding companies in Germany and the Netherlands.

While the IPAS team made an impressive progress with its outcomes over the last years, the continuation of the tests on the same level as since 2016 is not guaranteed beyond the project phase, as the responsible three ministries (MoFALI, Ministry of Education and Science, Ministry of Finances) didn't agree yet for a related budget in future. Above all, the Ministry of Finances has, according to the IPAS staff, a lack of

understanding that a variety test based on scientific principles lasts 5-6 years with consequent budget lines, before variety testing can be accomplished finally. Also, research infrastructure to facilitate the variety tests would have to be replaced in due time, but a financing of such investment is not planned so far by the competent governmental institutions.

One of the biggest success stories of the MONVEGI project is related to **outcome 1.2**. The initial work to create awareness and enable private households producing vegetables from project phase 1 is covered by outcome 1 in the new project phase. Analogue to the first project phase, this task is **mandated to MFARD**, which continues to sub-contract the urban farming component to the Mongolian Women Farmer Association (MWFA). The MWFA built up a strong network of urban farmers and enhanced it gradually over the last years (participants received seeds, training and one plastic greenhouse from the project). Meanwhile the gardeners propagate their own seedling and cultivate the vegetables not only for their own consumption but also sell it to neighbours and local mini markets. Due to the pilot projects even more people got interested in doing farming activities in their own backyards and communities of gardeners have been established in social media and personal exchange (creation of social capital).

A continuation and further extension will depend on the readiness of the local governments to give the urban gardeners access to irrigation.

In regard to **outcome 1.3** it can be stated that diverse new technologies and agronomic approaches have been introduced and are adopted by more and more farmers. Service to farmers has been offered in project regions such as equipment rental, partly storages, seed selling and seed pre-payments. Above all the pre-payments of 20% for contracted seed production can be considered as a successful model, which supports the cash liquidity of smallholder farmers. Through the improved storage infrastructure on the local level, farmers can receive significantly higher prices in later season and are not forced to sell the whole amounts of products directly after harvest.

The services of the extension centre in project regions could be established and were frequently used during the evaluators mission to Mongolia. The concept to combine the sales of seeds and other inputs with the extension service proved to be effective. However, the financing of the extension staff and whole extension centres beyond the project is not yet ensured. At this moment, the extension centres also cultivate their own lands. And with the sales of products they cover their own expenses in the centres.

Despite the beneficial services of the MFARD extension centres on local level, MFARD as the most important stakeholder organisation for vegetable producers in Mongolia was not able to unify all vegetable farmers in the project regions to become members of the organisation with a common goal.

In future in close collaboration of MFARD and the local governments a solution should be strived to extend the service of such extension centres throughout the whole country, while during the project phase vegetable farmers in Mongolia had such limited access due to the project focus on few regions.

Recently, the online registration of farm related data to an E-platform initiated by MoFALI also on behalf of the project, led to discussions among farmers and service providers. Any payments of subsidies in future shall be directed to the information available on the online platform. However, many farmers struggle with the data entry and with the fact that more transparent farm data also could influence the taxes to be paid by the farmers. The MFARD extension centres could support their members in the entry and maintenance of data, and even become a new service.

The further development and certification of quality standards was subject of **outcome 1.4**. In the framework of the project field inspectors have been successfully trained and 30 farms have been certified according to GAP standards by the end of 2022. A continuation of such certification activities beyond the project is under question as long the government doesn't provide any incentives for the production according to quality standards and as long the market would not oblige it as a precondition for delivery.

3.2.2 Component 2: Marketing

Expected Outcome: Marketing of domestic vegetables (including those from small-scale farmers and women headed households) is well organised, profitable, in line with market trends and consumers' preferences, with primary and secondary cooperatives playing a key role.

Budget 2020 - 2023	Actual Expenses by 31.12.2022	%
1'636 Mio MNT / 574'221 CHF	1'120 Mio MNT / 392'952 CHF	68

Budget allocation by outputs: 2.1 Primary and secondary cooperatives are consolidated and fully operational (275 Mio MNT); 2.2 Local farmer cooperatives have access to wholesale market in UB (278 Mio MNT); 2.3 Consumption and processing of vegetables is further promoted (326 Mio MNT)
Exchange rate: CHF 1 = MNT 2'850

The budget balance on 31.12.2022 is 68%, but additional expenses can be expected for this component by the end of the project.

Outcome 2 - Marketing / Log frame Indicator

Indicator	Baseline 2020	Value 2022	Target Value 2023
Producer and consumer prices variation vegetables on domestic market	30%	40%	10%
Income of smallholder farmers is increased	MNT 16,684,800 (72.2% less than the national average, lower income)	MNT 19,457,448 (74% less than the national average, lower income)	plus 40% (same as national average)
Number of reached consumers through media channels	30'000	34'000	60'000
Number of contents prepared for public information purposes	0	52	15

The main objective of the component is to ensure profitable and sustainable vegetable supply conditions by appropriate marketing measures along the supply chain.

Three issues were identified as especially important in view of sustainability and institutionalisation. These are namely

- Primary and secondary cooperatives are consolidated and fully operational,
- Local farmer cooperatives have access to wholesale market in UB,
- Consumption and processing of vegetables is further promoted

In regard to **outcome 2.1** the number of cooperatives increased over the project period from 11 to 18 primary and one secondary cooperative. The latter is located in UB in close relation to the main customers. The secondary cooperative consists of members of 8 primary cooperatives, 1 NGO and six companies. It has a trading capacity of a total 4'200 t of potatoes and vegetables. At the time of the evaluation mission only 60% of the storage capacities could be used. One of the problems is, that the primary cooperatives in the region are lacking of own storage capacities and therefore are not able to deliver to the secondary cooperative over the whole season, despite better vegetable varieties with a longer shelf life. The main customers at the moment are 3 retail chains with 15 outlets (95% sales share), the canteen of a mining company and schools and kindergartens in UB (together 5% sales share). Especially the product delivery

to the canteens has to be prepared ready to cook. The necessary technical equipment for the vegetable preparations were paid to 60% by the project and to 40% by MFARD.

From the beginning the secondary cooperative faces tough competitions with other vegetable wholesalers but also with relatively cheap imports from China. It operates currently with a cost margin of 30% additional to the purchase price, but getting in the market for potatoes only 10% surplus, which in the consequence didn't allow it to make any savings in 2022. Nevertheless, the cooperative could set the highest price for its vegetables compared to competitors in one visited supermarket, which can be interpreted as a sign of customer preference for the goods from the cooperative.

Especially canteens of kindergartens, schools, army and hospitals are seen as potential bigger markets because of the high demand from these institutions. However, the public procurement limits the sales volume to these institutions in a way that profits could hardly be generated with these customers.

With a further improved infrastructure to store vegetables on Soum and Aimag level and a better coordination of the production volumes among the cooperative members according to the expected demand, the price for the farmers could be increased and stabilised.

In regard to **outcome 2.2**, it can be confirmed that local farmer cooperatives have better access to the wholesale market in UB. This is a big success in the long perspective as his approach can offer several advantages compared to a single marketing strategy: Expanded reach and audience of products, shared resources and cost-efficiency in joint marketing, a better bargain power and strengthened relationships with market actors including consumers.

Nevertheless, the sales via secondary cooperatives didn't lead to higher producer prices on farm gate level compared to the sales via wholesalers. Hence, the loyalty to the own secondary cooperative has to be earned by additional services and will remain a challenge also for the time being.

Last but not least, the product marketing of the secondary cooperative is presently less customer and consumer oriented and needs to be improved. Additional efforts are needed, such as product development, a better branding and declaration of the Mongolian origin on all products will remain important tasks for the upcoming years.

In regard to **outcome 2.3** we can summarise that the awareness creation of consumers and producers was successful, mainly through the model street projects but also via social media and influencer activities to push vegetable consumption by testing new menus and diets.

Particularly noteworthy is that approximately 13,500 children from 9 schools and 9,600 children from 12 eco-kindergartens, a total of 23,100 families or 0.3% of the population could directly benefit from the project. During the mission and personal discussions with teams from schools and kindergartens we got aware of the high level of enthusiasm and passion for the topic of vegetable production and diets with vegetables, a passion that has been passed on to the children.



After the project will finish its operation, a lot of activities under outcome 2 are expected to be continued without any external support due to the intrinsic motivation of the beneficiaries. However, the local governments and / or other donor projects should be encouraged to assist model street farmers, kindergartens and schools with infrastructure, water supply and technical assistance to have an even bigger outreach of such successful models.

3.2.3 Component 3: Farmer`s organization

Expected Outcome: The organisational development, governance structure and financial management of farmer organisations (including MFARD and Vegetable Seed Service units) is strengthened.

Budget 2020 - 2023	Actual Expenses by 31.12.2022	%
1'901 Mio MNT / 667'193 CHF	626 Mio MNT / 220'000 CHF	33

Budget allocation by outputs: 3.1 MFARD has a long-term vision and is managed according to good governance principles (315 Mio MNT); 3.2 MFARD is recognised by all stakeholders as the national organisation representing vegetable farmers (126 Mio MNT); 3.3 The vegetable seed service unit is operating at all levels of the seed supply chain and is sustainable (185 Mio MNT) / Exchange rate: CHF 1 = MNT 2'850

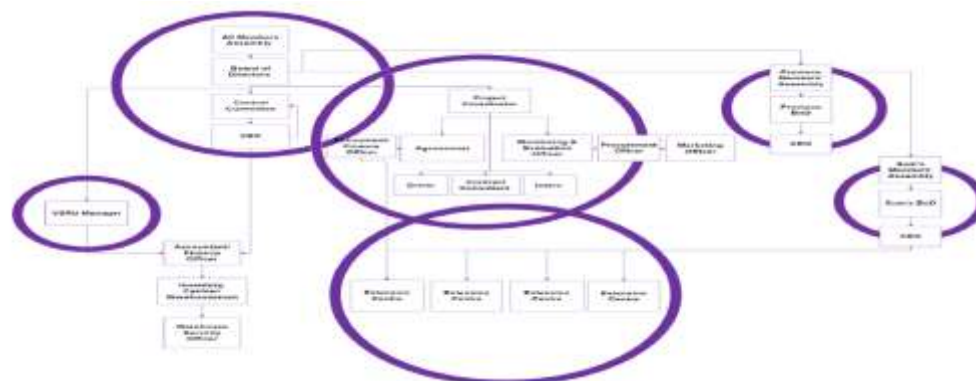
Only 33% of the planned budget has been spent by the end of 2022. Due to the pandemic situation the activities for organisational development only could start with delay. However, despite the short period the interventions were very effective and the spent budget was used quite efficiently.

Outcome 3 - Marketing / Log frame Indicator

Indicator	Baseline 2020	Value 2022	Target Value 2023
MFARD has a long-term vision and is managed according to good governance principles.	no	yes	yes
MFARD is recognised by all stakeholders as the national organisation that is representing vegetable farmers.	no	n.a.	yes
VSSU is operating at all levels of the seed supply chain and is sustainable.	no	yes	yes

Outcome 3 is a key for the sustainability of the further development of the vegetable sector in Mongolia. Sustainability and institutionalisation of results achieved during the MONVEGI project is foremost dependent on the sustainability of the main farmer organisations of the project. MFARD is an umbrella organisation which has 36 branches in 15 Soums and 21 Aimags with altogether 1'500 members.

Figure 5: Organisational structure MFARD (Source: GT Report Jan. 2022)



Coaching of MFARD including VSSU was introduced in the second phase only. GFRAS and Grant Thornton (GT) provided various support activities (organisational development and financial administration). Although the coaching was implemented in a short period only, the outcome is significant and many of the target indicators could be achieved.

GFRAS is providing coaching targeting both organisational bodies. It is strengthening the long-term strategic orientation. The coaching process is user-driven upon requests, iterative and adaptable. MFARD keeps on the driver seat of all proposals and decisions, while GFRAS was facilitating the process. With this approach MFARD could develop a strong process ownership which is a key determining factor of successful and sustainable organisational development.

The second coaching mandate in regard to the financial management of MFARD was implemented by the Mongolian branch of the financial auditing company GT.

In regard to **outcome 3.1 and 3.2** it can be stated that the coaching process led to a sensitization of the MFARD board in regard to a business and member-oriented operation. Due to many parallel project activities the development of the own organisation has been neglected for a longer period. MFARD membership services mainly consist of seed supply provided by VSSU, and the input supply (fertiliser, pesticides and machinery rent) and extension service provided by MFARD. While the seed service from VSSU is already a profitable business, the extension and other services are not self-financed yet. However due to the coaching support MFARD is looking now at various mechanisms to at least make input supply service delivery self-financed. Also, the attractiveness of a membership and to pay membership fees could be incentivised by attractive conditions to receive the numerous services of the local extension centres.

Meanwhile MFARD developed a strategic plan until 2030, which was already approved by the board and they drafted a business plan. The strategic plan will strengthen the internal ownership and MFARD attractive to external partners also as a project implementer.

The core of the new strategic plan lies in the subdivision of various tasks of the association into separate units, which are business, project or membership oriented. VSSU as a commercially successful company will remain part of MFARD but as a separate entity.

The newly-defined MFARD organisational structure is already partly functional. According to GFRAS, all staff positions will be recruited in second half of 2023. Possible positions could be filled with existing staff of the MONVEGI project which will phase out in Oct 2023.

In regard to the financial management GT involved 5 experts to coach MFARD in building up their capacities in financial management, including training over a period of one year based on a capacity assessment. The coaching was co-financed by MFARD itself and the MONVEGI project. As a side effect of the coaching it came out that less than 50% of the members don't pay a membership fee and that only 18 out of 27 MFARD branches operate on a financially stable ground.

Further up to 15 critical observations were made by GT in regard to the financial and organisational management of MFARD. Based on these observations tailor made training was conducted successfully by GT and the needed adjustments in the financial management of MFARD are made gradually.

In regard to VSSU (**outcome 3.3**) the seed selling company has proven to perform very successfully and increased the turnover and profit manifold over the recent years despite low profit margins of 5-10%. In future the net profit margin is planned to increase up to 15-25%, differentiating for MFARD members with 10-15% and non-members 15-25%.

The total sales revenue tends to increase every year. 60% of the total income is from locally produced seeds and 40% from imported seeds. The VSSU's income is increasing steadily year by year. and with the growth of the sector, this income growth can be stable in the coming future.

Today VSSU has branches in Uvs, Hovd, Darkhan, Ehiin gol and Bayankhongor Aimag. The business model focuses on local seed production and trade, import and trade of hybrid seeds. In order to start up the VSSU, MFARD contributed 60 million mnt and SDC with the same amount. Domestic production of carrot,

beetroot, turnip and melon seeds are taking place in the Uvs and Hovd Aimag. Domestic production of pepper, spinach, and leafy vegetable seeds are taking place in the Darkhan-Uul Aimag. In the Ehiin gol cucumber and tomato seed production are taking place.

It is expected that VSSU will continue to operate financially successfully and to hold its position as a financially important pillar for MFARD as a membership organisation.

3.2.4 Component 4: Policy

Expected Outcome 4: Sustainable and inclusive growth of the vegetable sector is fostered by improved policy/legal and institutional framework.

Budget 2020 - 2023	Actual Expenses by 31.12.2022	%
1'107 Mio MNT / 388'583 CHF	657 Mio MNT / 230'000 CHF	59

Budget allocation by outputs: 4.1 Law on Plant seeds and varieties (164 Mio MNT); 4.2 Plant Protection Law revised and submitted for Ministry consideration (192 Mio MNT); 4.3 Enhanced capacity to implement GAP (253 Mio MNT); 4.4 taxation and vegetable import regulation reviewed (141 Mio MNT); 4.5 Strategic support to MFARD in management of Vegetable Seed Reserve Fund and (105 Mio MNT) 4.6 Legal Environment for organic food and agriculture sector strengthened. *Exchange rate: CHF 1 = MNT 2'850*

Only 59% of the planned budget has been spent by end of 2022, though main objectives have been achieved already.

Considering the achievements reached during phase 1, the main issues that were addressed during the exit phase are:

- a. Law on seeds and varieties,
- b. Plant Protection Law,
- c. Enhanced capacity to implement Good Agricultural Practices (GAP),
- d. Taxation and Vegetable Import Regulations,
- e. Strategic support to the Vegetable Seed Service Unit, and
- f. Legal Environment for organic food and agriculture sector strengthened³.

The creation of an appropriate and conducive legal framework is a key for a sustainably growing sector development. Plant legislation falls under two major concepts: a) seed, plant variety, and biotechnology application; and b) plant health protection including plant quarantine and pesticides registration. Along with its ultimate goal to develop national vegetable growing sector, MONVEGI project launched, within the scope of 1st phase, an evaluation to assess performance of, and actions to improve existing legal framework for seed, plant variety and protection of plant health, as prerequisite to ensure relevant national legislation fit for above purpose.

The implementation of Outcome 4 was the responsibility of FAO. FAO participated in working groups, facilitated training and coordinated technical consultancy to draft the laws.

In regard to **Outcome 4.1** the new *Law on seed and plant variety* has been drafted and is already adopted. It protects among other the intellectual property rights of IPAS and private breeders. However, it needed a lot of enthusiasm and lobbying from FAO to start the drafting process finally. It is of utmost importance that the government will provide the financial resources to implement the law.

³ This output hasn't been included in the log frame as it had been added to the project only in 04.2022 on request of a Member of the Mongolian Parliament.

In regard to **Outcome 4.2** the *Law for Plant Protection* has been drafted. It will be important to strengthen consumer health by regulating the application of plant protection agents. This law is under discussion in the parliament at the moment. Upon the adoption, also here the government will be responsible to create sufficient financial resources to implement the law accordingly.

A law which is still missing is the food safety law as well as a revision of the organic law. MoFALI together with technical experts will overtake the responsibility to work with ministerial working groups on the drafts eventually in collaboration with other international projects.

Subject of **Outcome 4.3** is the enhancement of capacities to implement Good Agricultural Practices (GAP). In total 41 farms received the GAP certificate, and 59 persons got the qualification to become GAP auditor to support the national certification body.

However, the future of the GAP certification is not ensured beyond the project support, as still incentives from policy and market are missing to continue with the certification. Apart from GAP standards also other sustainability standards, such as organic or fair-trade standards could become more important when delivering the domestic retail market.

In **Outcome 4.4**, recommendations were made for the tax regulation in the vegetable sector. The current import tax is 5% for processed vegetables, which is not protecting the domestic vegetable producers sufficiently. Consequently, a proposal was submitted to increase the import tax up to 15%. FAO stated that MFARD should use its networks to advocate strongly at MoFALI for this objective as well as to build up a Market Information System and a harmonised classification code for imported vegetables.

In regard to **Outcome 4.5**, MFARD and VSSU received technical support from FAO by providing guidance on improvements of the unit organizational structure. By this, FAO complemented the activities of GFRAS in regard to the organisational development of MFARD, by adding value with expertise from the perspective of an international sector organisation.

Outcome 4.6 on strengthening the legal framework of organic food and agriculture was newly added to the project from April 2022 onwards. A working group, incl. the legal advisors of the member of parliaments, MoFALI, MoFA and scientists was established and steered the process. Subsequently an inception seminar at Parliament House was organized to create awareness about the topic as well as several stakeholder meetings. An analysis was done of the current organic law on organic food (from 2016) and based on that, the new law for organic products was drafted. It was placed on a public [platform](#) to collect stakeholder's comments and feedback.

It has been positively noted, that the experts from Mongolia actively took the opportunity to link up with experts from German and IFOAM Organics International during a study tour to Germany (incl. visiting of Biofach 2022).

Under Outcome 4 of the MONVEGI project, the development of an online platform of farmers has been initiated and accompanied (www.plant.mofa.gov.mn). Under this platform farmers are invited to register their farm data. In future, also the subsidies for farmers shall be administered on behalf of this digital platform. Although many farmers struggle at this moment to enter the data in the new system, on a long run this platform will increase the transparency about the farmers and the vegetable production volume in Mongolia and is the next step to include digitalisation in the agricultural administration in Mongolia.

3.2.5 Achievements on the main objective level

The project strived to improve the livelihood in Mongolia through inclusive, gender responsive and sustainable growth of the vegetable sector. The project definitively contributed to a better livelihood, by increasing and enhancing income opportunities.

The average annual income from agriculture (indicator 1) increased between 2020 and 2022 by 15% (target value: +20%). In the same period the annual per capita consumption (indicator 2) increased by 11% (target value: +20%). A faster growth of domestic consumption over the short period of 2-3 years is very difficult to achieve, as consumption patterns change usually slowly. Nevertheless, it can be stated, that the project contributed to a more healthy and plant based diet in Mongolia.

A third indicator under the main objective level is related to the “market share and market value of domestic vegetables in Mongolia”. The target value for the domestic market share have been set by 60%, starting from 40% in 2019. According to the data received, the domestic production was enhanced significantly during the project period, but also the domestic consumption increased. However, the evaluators couldn't find data about the domestic market share by end of 2022 in the logframe. The same applies for the “market value of domestic vegetables in Mongolia”, where no information have been provided in the logframe.

3.2.6 Transversial themes

Transversial themes in international cooperation projects might be manifold. In the frame of the MONVEGI project, the following topics were mainly assessed by the evaluators: gender equality and digitalization and innovation.

Gender equality: In the context of the vegetable sector in Mongolia, promoting gender equality means ensuring equal opportunities, access, and benefits for both women and men involved in vegetable farming and to empower women in the fields of production, decision-making, and income generation. The project strived to contribute to equal participation by encouraging women's involvement in vegetable farming, including land ownership, access to resources, and decision-making processes. In order to reach this goal, it was essential for the MONVEGI project to tailor interventions to the specific needs and context of women in the vegetable sector in Mongolia and engage them actively in designing and implementing initiatives promoting gender equality.

As the gender study conducted among VEGI target group in 2017 indicated, women tend to work on smaller plots of land than men, have lower incomes and have limited access to credits because of the lack of ownership of land and machinery. According to the gender study in Mongolia, women perform mostly manual work, mostly without using of any technics and technologies. Women are solely responsible for processing and conservation of vegetables in Mongolia. Processing and conservation of vegetables is important as a value-added process for income generation. But the potentials of income generation are not fully tapped.

Through the MONVEGI project, capacity-building programs have been provided to enhance the skills and knowledge of women farmers, enabling them to participate and lead in the sector actively.

Through the Youth Policy Watch NGO a training series for gender equality and cooperative strengthening was organized to provide knowledge and develop skills to vegetable farmer groups, cooperatives, and companies, in 2016, 2018, and 2019. Further, an online program for women's leadership was organized between December 2021 and January 2022 under the theme "Women leaders in society" It included women leaders up to the age of 35. The exercise's main objective was to strengthen women's leadership skills through community engagement. In the course of the online program a Facebook group has

established with more than 100 members. By this activity also the social media competence of women have been strengthened.

Moreover, the program supported to get easier access to loans, land, water, seeds, and other productive resources for women in Mongolian vegetable farming. Besides awareness campaigns have been conducted to challenge gender stereotypes, promote women's rights, and advocate for gender equality in the vegetable sector.

A specific success story of the MONVEGI project is the empowerment of the Mongolian Women's Farmers Association. They established model streets involving women in production of own vegetables in Ger-districts and provided the necessary trainings to women or even established groups of women who financed with parts of the vegetable sales a micro-finance system for women in need. Based on their initiative, water supply points for successful model street operations was built in Ger-districts.

Noting positively the MONVEGI project's efforts to integrate gender dimensions into the project, it should be stated that inclusive, gender balanced and sustainable growth of the vegetable sector foreseen in the project goal is hardly possible to achieve without systematical commitment to women's empowerment and mainstreaming gender in activities and processes, supported by the policy.

As the evaluators also received the task to figure out any potential issues of abusing, sexual exploitation or sexual harassment, project staff was interviewed about these topics. According to the staff members, in the project no guidelines have been drafted by the project management and staff has not been trained about these topics. However, the evaluators didn't get any indication about cases of abuse, sexual exploitation or sexual harassment in the project.

Digitalization and Innovation: The project also should contribute to promote innovations in agriculture and promote the digitalization. Under the support of the MONVEGI project, the plant and plant-derived products tracing and pesticide registration and control system has been developed (www.plant.mofa.gov.mn). An extra module has also been developed to include relevant information to the system about grain, potato, and vegetable. A ToT of the system was organized at MoFALI <https://mofa.gov.mn/exp/article/entry/2767> and a video tutorial have been produced. The new platform allows digitalizing the agriculture sector in line with the Government of Mongolia's "Digital Mongolia" initiative.

3.3 Assessments according to DAC/OECD Criteria

3.3.1 Relevance

Is the intervention doing the right thing? The extent to which the intervention objectives and design respond to beneficiaries' global, country, and partner/institution needs, policies, and priorities, and continue to do so if circumstances change.

Particularly the extent to which the **objectives** of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of

- R1 the national policy,
- R2 the target group, and
- R3 the indirectly affected stakeholders (which are not included in the target group, e.g. civil society, or market actors outside the MAFRD system etc.).
- R4 the extent to which **core design elements** of the intervention (such as the theory of change, structure of the project components, choice of services and intervention partners) adequately reflect the needs and priorities of the target group

The overall Relevance of the project is very high and unchallenged by stakeholders. MONVEGI objectives and design address the needs and policies of the government of Mongolia including for economic development (e.g. income generation including in remote areas) and for social (e.g. poverty and women orientation) and environmental (e.g. sustainable use of natural resources) objectives. It also contributes to more independence (import substitution of food, which has proven to be critical in COVID time, when markets were closed) and helps to get closer to international health recommendations (see impact section below)

Vegetable production is an opportunity for smallholder farmers since production is possible on little land, it requires own labour and it contributes to household needs while contributing to the health of family members. Competitive production (mostly compared to imports from China) is possible given the market and natural (climate, soil, water) circumstances even though the sector is not very attractive to young people that to a large extent desire other professional development.

The project design responded to the needs of stakeholders, which were known from the earlier successful potato program. The indirectly targeted stakeholders feel that the project has been very relevant in its design with the challenge that some stakeholders are fearful that the sector won't work as well without the project. The project design stressed transversal and social issues (e.g. gender, smallholder orientation, participation), which were less prominent without external support and which are not the core interest of MAFRD and its producers.

The evaluation team appreciates the approach of enabling producers through their umbrella organisation, by building a market system and by supporting an enabling policy environment. At the same time the project has components to be sensitive to gender and inclusive to needs of people with low income. The relevance of food security projects increases with the rise of hunger after 2014 and the likely failure of SDG 2 to which SDC has already responded.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **relevance**:

- The vegetable sector, under the civil society representation of MAFRD, has had a strong development since 2009, long ahead of the start of the project. This gave an opportunity to support a local initiative and accelerate initiated processes. That also allowed the planners to consider the stakeholders' needs from the beginning and to base the design on needs. The learnings of the earlier successful potato program also helped.
- The project design is focused on the MAFRD system that is dominant, but covers only about 40 % of the market. Many producers and companies operate outside the MFARD system and are also competing on the market. The project design includes certain investment subsidies to some operators, which can be seen as market distortion that can only be justified with poverty alleviation to people in dire need.
- The design of the project invested in acceleration of developments in order to keep (and ideally further develop) the market share for domestic vegetables. It replaced investment capital of market actors, and it also built market structures (e.g. seed system, input supply or cooperatives that collectively market production) that are required to keep level of subsistence.
- Direct stakeholders in the MFARD system are well served. However other indirect stakeholders (i.e. non MFARD members) are only supported through the government system and the overall vegetable promotion (e.g. increase of demand, good reputation of domestic production allowing higher prices than imports)

1⁴ The overall Relevance of MONVEGI is very high since it addresses priorities of SDC, of the Government of Mongolia and of the stakeholders including producers and consumers. It is a poverty alleviation oriented, gender sensitive intervention with a good impact opportunity. Overall, we rate Relevance of MONVEGI with the score of 1. Criteria R1 and R2 we also rated 1. R3 we rated 2 and R4 we rated 1 again.

3.3.2 Coherence

How well does the intervention fit? The compatibility of the intervention with other interventions in a country, sector or institution. Particularly:

- C1 Internal coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions of Swiss development cooperation in the same country and thematic field (consistency, complementarity and synergies).
- C2 External coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other actors in the country and thematic fields (complementarity and synergies).

MONVEGI is coherent with many other SDC interventions around the world. SDC has supported vegetable production of smallholders e.g. in West Africa, Tanzania, Nepal, Cambodia, Mozambique and Bolivia with focus on improving productivity, setting up marketing systems and promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture. MFARD did not report to have linkages with those initiatives but supporting consultants (e.g. for reviews, planning, gender reports, MFARD support through GFRAS) etc.) have and considered experiences in the design. MONVEGI responds to SDC priorities such as pro poor policies and contributing to nutrition security. MONVEGI is also highly coherent with the country-strategy finding a place in the agriculture and food security domain. It is consistently planned with SDC formal requirements (e.g. Log frame). Apart from the design and implementation support from international consultants, we saw few particular synergies with other SDC vegetable programs worldwide. However, in view of the clear MAFRD system and objectives to serve the local system observing well the principles such as subsidiarity we also don't see a big need or opportunities to collaborate closely other than getting inspirations or exchange of technical information, which are less of the key project challenges (see chapter 2.1).

However, we observe less coherence in view of collaboration with other development actors in Mongolia. While there is a forum for donor coordination in agriculture (Food and Agriculture Partners Group), its effectiveness is questioned. There is little willingness to agree and contribute to overall sector development objectives. Own approaches and interests are prioritised. Nevertheless, there are complementarities as for instance JICA is investing in fruit production and horticulture (e.g. berries, sea buckthorn), which may contribute to make the farms more resilient and to diversify the consumed healthy diet.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **coherence**:

- SDC made big efforts to contribute to overall coherence of the support of the international community to agriculture and food security in Mongolia, however did not fully succeed and, compared to before, invested less in recent times in view of closing the country program soon. SDC did switch its strategy and instead of investing into the donor group, it focused more on bilateral conversation with willing donors with the intention to secure project sustainability.

Beside the country program, SDC has a global thematic section on food systems promoting agroecology, healthy nutrition and inclusive market systems. MONVEGI is partly coherent with this strategy, but except for the newly added output 4.6, it could not yet focus on agroecology and organic

⁴ 1 0 = not assessed, 1 = highly satisfactory, 2 = satisfactory, 3 = unsatisfactory, 4 = highly unsatisfactory

production, which would be logic further steps in the future MONVEGI support. Organic sector development remains an open opportunity.

- We observed that the unsatisfactory donor coordination also translated to little collaboration between farmers in the same locations that benefiting from the various programs. In other words, the lack of collaboration on the national donor level translates to the grassroots level. However, we also observed positive examples, where project design considers other investments and seeks complementarity and synergy (e.g. JICA with horticulture or IPAS research). On top, JICA may invest more into MFARD on the nutrition aspects of schools' children, which is a key successful synergy that was facilitated by SDC and MFARD.
- We see a need for a dialogue with donors on the elements of MONVEGI that need further support to sustain (see conclusions and recommendations in chapters 4 and 5). This includes mostly the social poverty support elements such as the model street, the public dialog to support the Government for conducive legislation or the research for innovation (e.g. new varieties).



Figures 6: The SDC food system global strategy

2 Overall, we rate Coherence as high with a 1 for internal coherence (C1) and 2.5 for external coherence(C2).

3.3.3 Effectiveness

Is the intervention achieving its objectives? The extent to which the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups. Particularly:

- Ee 1 The extent to which approaches/strategies during implementation are adequate to achieve the intended results.
- Ee 2 The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended objectives (outputs and outcomes).
- E3 3 The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended results related to transversal themes.

The project has generally satisfactorily achieved its objectives (exceptions are discussed in this report) measured with the set targets that were realistic anticipating the national developments and the possible MONVEGI attributions even though the 2023 figures are not yet available. The MONVEGI objective refers to improved livelihood through vegetable production for producers that have a marketing system, a serving umbrella organisation and conducive policy environment. The indicator relating to income increase by smallholders has not yet reached the desired level (16.6% so far, instead of 40%), but growth and business prospects look good so that under the condition of stable markets (which is often not the case) the expected income raise might get close by the end of the project. The aggregated consumption has increased even 40% with anticipated 20%. And the market share of Mongolia remains above the targeted 60%.

Approaches during the implementation by MFARD and other implementing partners were adequate particularly in view of the objective that the achievements sustain within an operating and growing market. MoFALI (chair of Steering Committee) and SDC closely supervised the implementation and took

measures when MONVEGI was not on track (e.g. external gender reports in 2017 and 2022, partner risk assessment of MAFRD leading to the added provision of coaching, COVID adaptations, or the negotiation/introduction of an expected result 4.6 with FAO).

The transversal issues (governance, gender, poverty and smallholder orientation, see chapter 3.2.6) and project principles (subsidiarity, supporting existing initiatives, inclusiveness, gender equality, innovation, sustainability) were of big importance for SDC and considered well during the project (e.g. approximately 70% of target group are women) for instance in its supervision function. MAFRD has been loyal to these and stressed their interests e.g. towards members, but naturally its priority is shifting now in view of the need to become self-sustaining. For instance, MAFRD participated actively in the MoFALI 2018 gender decree among others as a trainer for other organisations, it focuses now on services to farmers (to both sexes of course).

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **effectiveness**:

- the challenges observed (see chapter 2.1) in the midterm review and other incidents were well considered in the planning of the exit phase despite the fact that certain conclusions normally require more time (capacity building of MAFRD)
- In view of the short time for capacity building of MAFRD, GFRAS was pushed to support MAFRD more assertively and input oriented using the whole time of the assignment until the end of the phase not stopping with strategy development. GFRAS stressed on its participatory approach to coach and to leave MAFRD in the driving position, initiating itself the deep changes that are required to sustain. In view of the big challenge, time for MAFRD reorganisation has been well used and MAFRD is on its track regarding the concepts, while having the real market response still ahead.
- The targets for the objectives (3 indicators) are achieved or expected to be achieved. Also achieved are the targets for Outcome 3 and 4. Not achieved are the targets for Outcome 2. And the Outcome 1 target is partly achieved. 16 Output indicators are achieved (or expected to be achieved), 6 partly achieved and 5 not achieved (1 without information). Total 28 indicators (see chapter 3.2 and appendix 6.3)
- The ambitions in transversal issues were more challenging and less clear than the main impact chain. The wide range of transversal issues and principles deviated from the focus. Transversal activities are the ones that have the least sustainability since they often need public investment for which the government shows little appetite to take them over.

1.5 Overall, we rate effectiveness as 1.5 with a 1 for the main impact chain) and lines of activities (Adequacy, Ee1 mark 1) that were similar to the potato program. Outcomes and Outputs are mostly achieved (Ee2, mark 1,5), while transversal issues were well cared for but challenged the straightforwardness of project. (Ee3, mark 2)

3.3.4 Efficiency

How well are resources used? The extent to which the intervention delivers, or is likely to deliver, results in an economic and timely way. Particularly

- Ef1 The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcomes) cost-effectively.
- Ef2 The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcome) in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe).
- Ef3 The extent to which management, monitoring and steering mechanisms support efficient implementation.

Overall, efficiency is in balance, even without considering the COVID-19 challenge, which hampered project progress. Comparing input and output, the project efficiency and project performance can be assessed as good. Project results (see chapter 3.2) are within expectations, which were set in a normal way (not overly or under ambitious). We make reservation to this statement only for the own institutional performance and development of MFARD particularly before the start of the exit phase.

MFARD was not overly challenged with regard to the project implementation but with its own institutional development requiring a different skill set than stakeholder facilitation and donor project management. In fact, in MFARD, the most dynamic development happened in units (VSSU or potato), where in the last phase little GFRAS coaching support was sufficient. MFARD itself still needs to implement its own reforms, which are planned.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **efficiency**:

- **Burn rates:** Until end of 2022, MONVEGI used 72% of its overall budget for the exit phase. With reference to the budget until the end of 2022 it is 77%. For long term experts, budget use was 97%, for local support it was 83%. Administered project funds were used 60% ranging from 27% (access of cooperatives to the wholesale market) to 78% (pilot streets). This budget use is less than satisfactory and reflects stronger and weaker implementation of project activities.
- **Return on investment:** SDC invested 9 million CHF during the 2 phases (4 million for exit phase). This is 2.3% of the annual turnover of the vegetable sector of 400 million CHF with expected annual growth of 12% in the coming years. In other words, SDC invested on average in the 7 years of implementation only 0,3% of today's market value and helped to achieve the impacts shown and discussed in this report. It is impossible to quantify the attribution of the project and MFARD, but MoFALI and the stakeholder believe it is big, so we conclude that MONVEGI was both very effective and efficient. This is remarkable since the project did not only focus on the market development but on transversal issues, first of all smallholder poverty and gender orientation, as well as organisational development (cross-cutting governance).
- MONVEGI had to focus in the exit phase on sustainability and on the institutional development of MFARD. Through that, a number of issues that require actions and impulses for future development could not be addressed timely. This includes GAP facilitation (in process, but results not yet satisfactory, including for the MoFALI gap certification database development), continued legal developments facilitation, procurement support for schools and kindergartens, access to wholesale markets and other primary and secondary cooperatives development, urgent processing and trading innovations (e.g. trade mechanisms with retail, packaging) and organic development to differentiate clearer the quality of Mongolian products.
- The steering mechanisms designed in the form of the Steering Committee (PSC) were in place. They were well-attended and chaired by MoFALI. The PSC had an annual meeting to discuss the reports. The nature of discussion in the SC were on an abstract high level with focus on management and structure. The work of the PSC was not reflected in the annual reports to SDC and stakeholders could not remember impacts beyond the SDC and MoFALI individual guidance.
- The risk analyses before the exit phase focus on the institutional risks that MAFRD and VSSU may not survive. It also enumerates the risk to the project including contextual, economic, political and programmatic risks. However, the annual reports and steering committee did not systematically reflect on them except for the MFARD coaching contents.

2 Overall, we rate that efficiency was satisfactory. The project management used management tools accurately. The reports are of good quality and informative.

3.3.5 Impact

What difference is the intervention making? The extent to which the intervention has generated or is expected to generate significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, higher-level effects.

I1: Particularly, the extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate 'higher-level effects' as defined in the design document of the intervention.

I2: Were there unintended (positive or negative) effects for the target groups?

The long-term development of the vegetable market in Mongolia was very dynamic. Particularly in recent years, consumption has increased every year (See figure 7). However, it is still far below the Mongolian target (90kg per year per capita), below the WHO target (146 kg), below Asian average and below many other comparable countries. Further development is expected and desirable. At the same time, the domestic supply managed to stay on the developments and keep the self-sufficiency to 60%. Seed self-sufficiency is at 40%, it reaches nearly 100% in root crops, which can be well cultivated in the Mongolian climate. In many crops, particularly where hybrid varieties are preferred or where natural preconditions are not met, import will be necessary in the future, too. Household income of vegetable producers rose 16%, slightly less than the envisaged 20%, which is likely to be reached by end of the project. Unfortunately, the project did not raise gender segregated data, neither in the baseline, nor in the end line surveys.

We also observed unintended positive impacts, mostly on the social level, where the seed or vegetable production and marketing system building lead to social innovations (see below). Negative unintended impacts can only be seen for informal traders and importers.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **impact**:

- After the potato project with a good impact, the same can be stated for the MONVEGI project that followed similar approaches and relied on the MAFRD system, too.
- The attribution of the MONVEGI project to the positive impacts is of course disputable. We assume that even without a project, a trend to more vegetable production and consumption would be there. However, the trend would be slower, less strong and the imports would have a bigger market share. Through MONVEGI and a higher share of the domestic production, there are more income opportunities for farmers including smallholder farmers and supply is more resilient for consumers. This resilience is important in crisis situations and could be observed during COVID times, when the borders were closed and e.g. domestic root vegetables were still in the market, but imported vegetables (e.g. tomatoes) were unavailable.
- It can be robustly expected that the impact of the MONVEGI project will continue to grow, all in terms of increase of income for producers (and for more producers), increase of consumption and increase of the market share for Mongolian producers. Precondition is a) that MFRAD operates sustainably and effectively and has suitable strategies (e.g. further the primary and secondary cooperatives), and b) that the government maintains framework conditions that are conducive to local producers helping them to be competitive.
- The unintended social innovations include self-organised micro-credit groups to help each other's investments, social media presence and social media groups of consumers, building voluntary and self-administrated MFARD branches. The importance of the unintended positive impacts of social and collaborative developments was stressed by participating farmers. They consider collaboration as the most important factor of success. Without the project, the sector system would look different and less organised and hence more vulnerable to shocks (e.g. price shocks, environmental shocks etc.). Therefore, the impact of enhanced collaboration and the social innovations on grassroots and national levels can't be underestimated.

- Negative unintended impacts could only be identified for former traders that benefited from an in transparent market and from the absence of a quality assurance system (with issues such as untested varieties in seeds or contaminated vegetables). Those traders lost their business. Importers also envisage a different system but they benefit from the vegetable promotion and trend, even though the project prevented that their market share did increase.
- WHO recommends vegetable intake of 146 kg/capita per year, while Mongolian has an objective of 90 kg. Mongolia is very far away (63 kg in 2020, up from 14 kg in 2000⁵) despite impressive developments. Further investments are needed to continue the positive development to reach those objectives (see figure 6 below). There are indications that the present growth is even faster and MFARD reacted by increasing the quantities of production and the seed orders with seed producers (which nearly doubled in 2023 compared to the year before).

1 Overall, we rate the project’s impact as good. The optimistic planning was realistic. MONVEGI could accelerate positive trends and assure that Mongolia including disadvantaged groups could benefit from that trend.

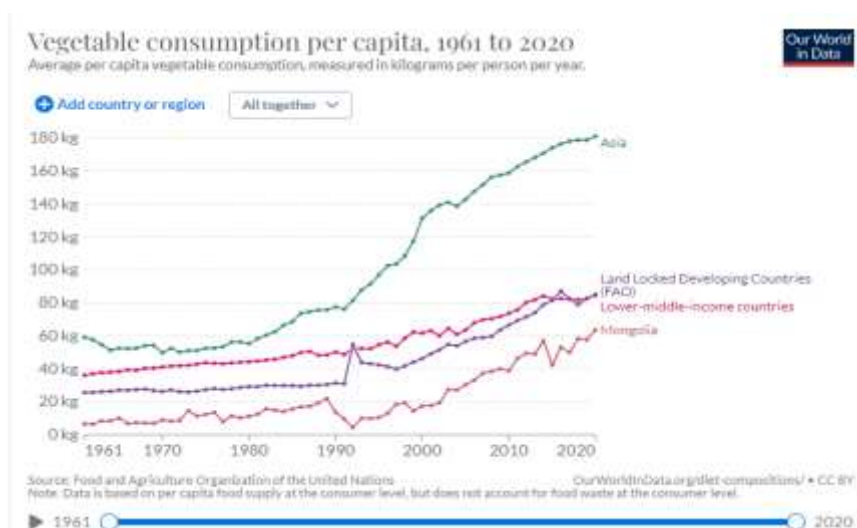


Figure 7: Vegetable consumption in Mongolia from 1960 – 2020 in comparison with other country groups

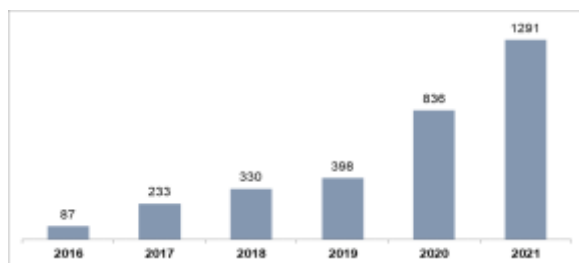


Figure 8: Vegetable seed sales of VSSU 2016-2021, in million MNT

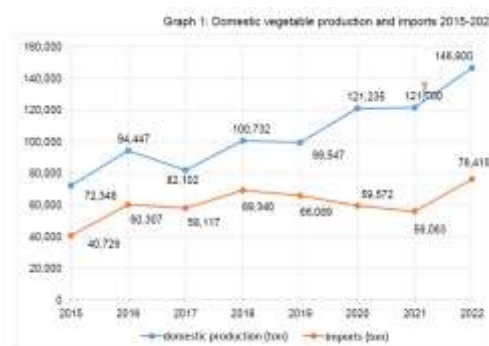


Figure 9: Mongolian vegetable production and imports

⁵ <https://ourworldindata.org/>

3.3.6 Sustainability

Will the benefits last? The extent to which the net benefits of the intervention continue, or are likely to continue. Particularly:

S1: The extent to which partners are capable and motivated (technical capacity, ownership) to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.

S2: The extent to which partners have the financial resources to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.

S3: The extent to which contextual factors (e.g. legislation, politics, economic situation, social demands) are conducive to continuing activities leading to outcomes.

Sustainability is the biggest concern of stakeholders at this stage. Of course, at the end of the project a transition is necessary particularly for well supported sector functions and for the institutions that manage project funds and have staff on the project payroll. MFARD is well prepared and has its reform planned in its new strategic plan and in its business plan (the development of which was strongly GFRAS supported). While the MFARD leadership is prepared and committed to this transition, it is not clear how all staff members will react, when operational conditions (e.g. decreased salaries or absence of SDC project leverage) will change. In the appendix 6.2, we listed 12 important project functions that are desirable to be carried on, but which are at risk of discontinuation. MFARD will only continue those functions that have an income opportunity behind in order to pay costs and staff.

We assess that MFARD is capable a) to reform, b) to operate on the market without the SDC funds and c) to implement new projects and gain the trust of institutional donors and philanthropists. The new structure including the leaders of the units are capable and motivated to run MFARD as a business. The business plan may be very (probably too) optimistic, but it shows good business prospects. The MFARD leadership is strategic, pragmatic and carefully relying on real assets and opportunities. It avoids risks. It is however challenged to grow into new structures and hierarchic relations. Escalating conflicts need to be avoided, which should be possible due to the fact that the new strategy leaves sufficient spaces for all to have autonomy and to become successful (units that are profit centres).

The MONVEGI project did not allow saving surpluses for investments. However, the profitable seed business of VSSU and other operations e.g. with production inputs does. MFARD as such (without the project) is lean and it is planned to build up with new experts parallel to its financial capacity to pay highly qualified people with a competitive market salary.

The contextual factors are generally positive in Mongolia. The NGO law is debated for a while in the parliament and it is unclear when and with which content it will pass. At the moment, it seems that the planned way of the MFARD operations is possible with the new law as well. If not, MFARD will need to build subsidiary companies that pay a dividend to MFARD. All in all, the NGO status of MFRAD guarantees (as long as there is legal behaviour) that operational surpluses are used to invest into the MFARD system rather than to shareholders.

We observed the following that is relevant for our overall assessment of the project's **sustainability**:

- The vegetable market has created a big pull for producers and importers. It is innovative (e.g. regularly new products in retail) and competitive for operators. The general consumer believes that Mongolian vegetables are superior to imported ones and the belief in claims on packages is a big opportunity that the project impact is sustainable and even growing.
- MFARD is not the only actor in the vegetable market in Mongolia. It is estimated that the MFRAD system (MFARD members and structures) covers all in all about 40% of the vegetable market. MFARD is strong in the input supply (particularly seeds), but not (yet) strong in the supply of the retail level. It has a good support system, but its cooperatives need development and professionalisation. MFARD is

the strongest sector representation organisation and is therefore powerful for MFARD members and non-members. Its (unexpected) failure would negatively impact the sector. Hence, a vulnerability of MFARD is a sustainability risk.

- The fact that there are many sector operators, their competition and the fact that they report thin margins indicates that the market works. The fact that there are operators that give up and that there are start-ups in the sector indicates self-regulating developments and a functional market.
- The outcome of the NGO law matters to sector sustainability. MFARD is ready to mitigate potential (not so likely) negative impacts of framework changes so that even in that unfavourable scenario, MONVEGI impacts will sustain.
- MAFRD and MONVEGI provide many public services (e.g. seed variety testing, model street support, extension services), which are difficult to sustain after the project. MONVEGI has been well designed to the needs of stakeholders, but only in the exit phase was oriented to sustainability and the MFARD system heavily depended on the project support. MONVEGI was careful to minimise project dependencies of other beneficiaries, but unless other external donors' step in, there is no clear view on who is covering the public needs after the project other than combining them with the commercial interest (e.g. finance public services from profits of sales of seeds and inputs). The government does not seem to step in apart from exceptions (e.g. local government support to Ger street projects or local governments providing new land to seed production). (see list of project functions that aren't sure to sustain in Appendix 6.2)
- MONVEGI provides financial support for GAP certification with covering its costs for the farmers. It is not known yet how many farmers will continue GAP certification after MONVEGI and after the subsidies and the project facilitations. We expect that the drop will be substantial if the retail does not react timely and integrates GAP fully into its system (e.g. higher price for GAP produces, retailer subsidies for certifications, mandatory GAP requirement for supply, etc:)

2 We assess sustainability overall with mark 2. While MFARD and the vegetable sectors will provide good results (growth, income opportunities, vegetable consumption and self-sufficiency), there are incertitude and risks with regard to discontinued project functions (social and public services and transversal issues)
We assess mark 1 for S1 partner capability/motivation. We think that resources are available for the core functions (mark 1 for S2), however that some functions are without resources (mark 3 also for S2) and depend on project/philanthropic support. So far, stakeholders could not find replacements of SDC funds for these. Due to limited priority and capacity the government context is not fully satisfactory. (mark 3 for S3)

3.4 Assessment of further evaluation questions

- a. *To assess if the MONVEGI project scope and design provides comprehensive recommendations for the national agricultural policy in view of increased sustainability and further development with public and other donors' funds.***

With regard to the project scope and design: MONVEGI concentrated on the support of the MFARD system that covers about 40% of the market. It has strengths on the seed management, on other inputs supply, on knowledge support and on social mobilisation of producers. It has however weaknesses in marketing and accessing the wholesale markets, where other actors are stronger. Since MFARD is in a leading position, it has the trust of MoFALI, and it is oriented to smallholders and women, the sector is not only growing and providing economic opportunities but also facilitates access of more disadvantaged remote groups of the society to the market opportunities. This approach enabled also a strong role of a civil society organisation and producer organisations that can influence the regulatory framework with high legitimacy. This is the best way to bring in the smallholder and women's interest and other value

based comprehensive recommendations in the public sector debates. MFARD is however challenged to keep paid membership, when fees are not project subsidised any more.

The NGO sector development approach opens opportunities for further donor support, however it seems unlikely that the government will be ready to invest public funds for MFARD. It is rather the opposite. MoFALI tends to outsource government duties (e.g. extension services or collection of data).

MFARD is an NGO but in fact a hybrid between NGO and value chain operator. That is a smart idea with the reservation that the project did not support many actors in the supply chain (non-members with contracts with other processors/retailers).

- b. To assess the current status of the established Vegetable Seed Service Unit (VSSU). To provide recommendations on how this VSSU should be improved in order to be sustainably operated with specific actors, which should be in charge of it. To provide a special assessment of the VSSU regulation and provide comments and recommendations.**

VSSU is running very well and almost without support (field inspections are supported and VSSU had access to GFRAS coaching). There is a sharp increase of turnover (10 fold in 7 years) with cost recovering and surplus generation for investment. It is not a problem to cover the additional costs after the project and VSSU is committed to do the field inspections since they are part of their quality system. VSSU focuses on its core business (national seed supply) and wants to carefully diversify on upcoming opportunities. (e.g. new species and varieties, organic seeds, exploring new markets e.g. seed sachets for (urban) gardens). The strategy of a high-quality standard seed production not only creates trust in the market, but also opens doors to deliver seed for government or donor seed distribution programs. More recommendations in chapter 5.

- c. To provide a special analysis on the sustainability of hybrid seed imports and distribution especially for small scale farmers.**

Producers can use hybrids for one season only and can't self-propagate them. Mongolia does not have the means to produce hybrid seeds. They need to be imported from the international market.

Hybrids have the advantage of high performance including preferred quality traits, increased yield and other characteristics (e.g. the Cabbage Hurricane F1). They are suitable for professional use, but also gardeners (model street), and small-scale farmers like them. There is a high share of hybrid seeds, which is 60% of the VSSU turnover. Varieties, where Mongolia is self-sufficient (e.g. turnip, beetroot, carrots), there is very little to no hybrid seeds.

Hybrid seeds are distributed like any other seeds. Their high price provides a challenge to farmers to invest with the risk of crop failure. Self-propagation of seeds is not popular in Mongolia. If Hybrid or not, farmers generally renew their seeds commercially (or get it donated) every year anew for convenience and quality reasons.

- d. To assess progress in Outcome 2 (Marketing Support) and especially the collaboration with private companies in storage and marketing.**

More details to Outcome 2, see chapter 3.1.2

Farmers have improved sales conditions through the primary and secondary cooperatives including access to special programs such as kindergartens and retailers' agreements. MFARD has 21 primary cooperatives and 1 secondary cooperative, which are however covering only a small part of the members. MFARD has no other systematic offer. Cooperatives and their infrastructure are an open opportunity e.g. with storage facilities, local processing facilities and labelling/traceability systems. Through that retailer marketing could be improved beyond cooperatives.

Model streets (33 streets) are a big success for neighbourhood marketing and social capital creation. It enhances incomes of Ger Districts inhabitants without Agriculture fields. There are 33 schools/ kindergartens that produce/consume and popularise healthy nutrition with vegetables. There are potentials to scale the approach with new project support (including from private donors and foundations). Through the kindergarten project, women were empowered.

e. To provide recommendations on how the cooperatives and farmer organisations could improve effectiveness, efficiency and outreach, especially in order to support income generation for small scale farmers (less than 1 ha).

See also recommendations in chapter 5

The cooperative system has more potential to grow and it needs to do so for being more efficient and competitive. So far, they have little advantages to commercial non-farmer owned operations. There should be more primary cooperatives to supply the secondary cooperative, which has 40% free capacity (storage, clients). To use the potential particularly to extend the short season and to use the big seasonal price fluctuations it requires local storage facilities. A better coordination of supply (of raw vegetable and (semi) processed products) could avoid the pressure to sell, when there is oversupply and low prices. That would open offering high demand/low supply products, which usually also need processing steps.

Another big step is the marketing of MFARD products with a unified brand and mark that positions itself to consumers as a trusted quality brand from Mongolia. We see an opportunity for a 3 steps logo a) MFARD, Quality checked, from Mongolia b) MFARD, PGS organic c) MFRAD, organic third party certified. For this, communication and labelling needs to improve and MFARD needs a traceability system. The MFARD standard that is behind can steer communication and access to the system (e.g. for members only, preference conditions for small scale farmers etc.)



f. Can the management of MFARD become an independent and professional farmer organization?

The management and board are committed to stay an independent farmer organisation. Pressure to deviate from that could come various sides

- If members quit the organisation, since it does not manage to create sufficient exclusive services worth the membership fee. MFARD does not yet have a clear strategy on how to retain members and to get them in. Discounts on seeds and inputs, access to advisory service and access to markets would be such opportunities to motivate farmers to participate. (middle risk)
- If internal conflicts between units undermine solidarity between the units. For instance, VSSU surpluses will be needed to build up the other MFARD units for project acquisitions or input trade. (middle risk)
- If commercial interests prevail and the board does not have the leverage to keep the nature of a farmer organisation that defends the interest of its members. (high risk)
- If the NGO law is getting very strict and does not allow NGOs to make business operations to cover the budget. (low risk)
- If the management does not manage to run the organisation effectively, efficiently and successfully. (low risk)

g. To assess the progress of outcome 3 with a view of assessing if the coaching and trainings provided to the MFARD and its branches by the GT Audit and GFRAS are meaningful, if and to which extent the building of MFARD capacities and its sustainability are reaching.

See also chapter on outcome 3 and on recommendations

The capacity and performance of the MFARD management had been a big concern at the end of the first phase and support had been mobilised in the exit phase. The coaching and training provided had not been without difficulties and disappointments from all sides. GT and GFRAS had clearly distinct functions and did a good and engaged job including how they faced resistance and strategic disagreements (e.g. if the MFARD branches need to be registered or if they can operate informally). Both institutions feel that their inputs could have been more efficient and effective if MFARD had better seen the need for change, the potentials of coaching and if it had a more open mindset. Eventually, MFARD assessed the inputs as very beneficial and concluded that it learned a lot. Management issues raised in the institutional assessment improved to MFARD's own satisfaction. However, from an external view, MFARD has a lean management system (which is good), but still bears managerial risks that could lead to problems in the future.

Both GT and GFRAS made recommendations on how to develop. MFARD now has a strategic plan in two phases, which GFRAS considers being suitable and as such can be seen as a set of recommendations to change. The written strategic plan is good, but needs to deepen in many ways, which to some extent has happened in the minds of the management persons.

One issue is that even though MFARD has to earn income, readiness to pay affiliation fees is very limited (many don't pay). Potential partners would like to participate in the system, but avoid fees. For MFARD, it is important to grow membership (part of strategy) to keep its legitimacy and leverage to lead the sector development.

Good governance (farmer board) is important to control strategy and representation of the interests of small-scale farmers. It is important that governance is not shareholder but stakeholder driven, so that small farmers interest and not income maximisation guides the operations. The leadership also needs to bring in the values and principles of the NGO, that must not be lost.

h. To assess international management standards for MFARD to become an independent and professional farmer organisation.

The level of management in MFARD has improved but is still not satisfactory. If MFARD wants to operate successfully according to their strategy/business plan, it needs to find the right balance between lean management and management functions requirements. That could be compliance with the Mongolian law, a system that satisfies people involved (e.g. board, members, partners, staff), that provides credibility and assurance to living of values (e.g. corruption free, transparent decisions and finances, confidence in management etc.) and a system that manages the risks (e.g. liquidity planning, internal (personal or strategic) conflicts, business development deviating from planning, legal risks, leadership changes etc.).

i. To assess coaching and training provision by both GT audit and GFRAS and to provide recommendations for the sustainability of MFARD.

See more in chapter for component 3 above and in recommendations below.

GT/GFRAS came in very late and for a short assignment. An earlier organisational start of an organisational development and transition to post MONVEGI times would have lowered the risks.

GT worked for instance on: awareness for benefits of BDS, training and support for balance consolidation, budget planning and finance controlling, membership administration etc. It was a relatively short, intensive collaborative work that is now MFARD appreciated.

GFRAS chose an excellent methodological approach keeping MFARD in the driver seat and in the responsibility. With success as the self-developed final strategic plan and business plan with good ownership show.

j. To assess FAO interventions on policy development with specific laws revised and implemented, as well as the extent of ownership of the Government of Mongolia on these issues.

Various laws were drafted in due time (law on seed and varieties of plants, law on plant health and plant protection, law on organic products) and the first of them passed in the parliament in a short period. FAO provided an excellent facilitation and opened doors in the various competent government authorities to bring in content and technical expertise. MoFALI has full ownership of these legislations.

Through FAO facilitation, GAP gave important impulses for quality-oriented vegetable production. FAO facilitated the GAP certification, however did not train/hand over the promotion of GAP to the Certification Bodies, which are now used to get their clients through project facilitation. Sustainability of the GAP certification services are uncertain and depends a lot if retail will rely their quality management system on GAP.

4 Evaluators' conclusions and lessons learned

4.1 Overall conclusions

We conclude that the project responds to an expressed need of Mongolia. A strong commitment goes hand in hand with high project ownership.

While we highly appreciate the project and conclude overall that it was more than worthwhile, we highlight critical points to consider for the sector development by the Government of Mongolia, MFARD/the producers, the Women Association, and the agencies of international cooperation:

4.2 Critical conclusions with regard to the project's phase 2

Phase 2 of the project was designed based on the experiences and achievements of the former SDC financed potato project and the first phase of the vegetable project. Important lessons learnt were integrated in the project design of phase 2, which was considered as the exit phase of the Swiss program. Hence, a focus was laid on the financial sustainability and retention of project achievements.

Nevertheless, new activities have also been started, e.g. in outcome 2 (marketing and consumer awareness activities) and outcome 4 (new laws on seed production and plant protection and the introduction of the GAP standard certification).

Within the short period of the exit phase the above-mentioned areas of activities didn't end in a status of financial sustainability. Besides, the importance of the institutional development for MFARD as a self-running membership organisation has been recognized late. Due to the pandemic situation the coaching in organisational development and the financial coaching could start only in 2022. Though the coaching outputs are remarkable in a very short period, the final results will be visible and evident only after the end of the 2nd project phase.

Altogether, the performance of MFARD as project implementer can be assessed as excellent, whereas its role as membership and stakeholder organisation has potentials to grow. For instance, MFARD was not able to enforce the payment of membership fees among all of their members. Also, the business concept of the extension centres is lacking for the time being. The same applies to the lack of advocacy to improve the business environment to become more conducive despite good working relations to MoFALI. This could be interpreted as a result of lacking leadership.

Services such as the rental of agricultural equipment at the extension centres with different fees for members and non-members wasn't implemented consequently to attract more farmers in a soum to become paying member of MFARD. The stakeholder organisation also failed in recruiting younger staff to step gradually into the operations. With younger staff, MFARD also could easier reach and attract younger farmers to become members of MFARD.

The varieties tests of IPAS as one of the core activities is not ensured to be continued in the same extent as during the project phase.

4.3 Lessons with regard to institutional sustainability

One of the core lessons of MONVEGI is that the issue of sustainability came in late; only after the first phase. Ideally projects are planned from the vision of an improved sustainable situation and project measures and decisions are taken against that background. VEGI has emphasised these considerations for the exit phase only. Through that the MFARD management support came in late, even though much has been achieved eventually.

Institutional change takes time and it needs a good rationale for stakeholders to implement reforms. In that sense it is even important that SDC support comes to an end now, which forces MFARD to move and to let go privileges and project dependencies. The strategic plan/business plans show that it is possible.

Business Development Services (BDS) are important in any industry. However, they should not only be applied for sector participating operators but also for sector organisations such as MFARD including in the future without MONVEGI. Unfortunately, we could not find an awareness for the benefit of institutional advisory services in MFARD. An openness to inspiration from outside from time to time would be important and helpful in the MFARD development. This may include strategic advice (e.g. on innovations of what MFARD offers), operational support (membership administration digitalisation, or proper accounting and consolidation), digital communication or strengthening the farmer participation and governance.

Supporting permanent functions financially (e.g. advisory services of the extension centres or variety testing or certification subsidies or quality control services such as lab residues testing) by a project have a big risk of creating dependencies and discontinuation after the end of the project. They need a sustainability concept (e.g. government taking over or company includes in commercial products, or efficiency increase so that services can be performed affordable on the market) from the beginning. This was done in MONVEGI with the field controls of seed crops during vegetation, where VSSU knew that it will take them over. However, in other functions, it has not happened (variety testing or GAP subsidising).

For specific assessments, see also the list of future coverage of project functions in the appendix.

4.4 Lessons with regard to what should be stopped

The project evaluators appreciate the directions of all implemented activities in the course of the project. All activities and achieved outputs and outcomes are suitable to strengthen the main functions, the robustness and resilience of the Mongolian vegetable sector and lead to market growth. All output areas are relevant and should be continued in an appropriate manner.

However, it always has to be considered carefully, that the support and funding of single stakeholders in the market may lead to a market distortion after a phase of initial development. This also applies for the model streets, which indicated the prove to perform self-sufficiently after local communities give access to irrigation sources.

Besides for structures, which had to be built up and financed in the frame of the project, which have to be proven as not financially self-sufficient, such as consultants who work in each of the regional extension centres should be stopped and the whole concept of offering extension service should be revised and re-directed to be more business driven. Ideally the advisors are lead farmers in a region, who might share their experiences in peer learning formats in close consultation and coordination with MFARD.

4.5 Lessons with regard to Organic Agriculture

Mongolia has developed organic agriculture gradually over the last years. State and private bodies can foster the growth of organic agriculture and support domestic market development with different measures. According to SDC, fostering organic agriculture would have been a logic new step if a phase had been added.

The government can play a crucial role in promoting organic agriculture and domestic market development by revising the organic law and developing by-laws (taken up in an additional expected result 4.6 in spring 2022) with preliminary results only), by providing financial incentives for farmers (subsidies) and consumers (tax free sales prices), as well as by technical assistance to farmers engaged in organic farming. This support also can include funding for organic certification, training programs on organic farming practices, and infrastructure development.

MoFALI could place organic agriculture as an important pillar in their strategic documents to develop the agricultural sector and derive together with stakeholders supporting measures within a National Organic Action Plan.

We believe that organic products have a market potential at least in big cities such as UB and Dakhan. Supermarkets with organic shelves with products from all over the world that are sold demonstrate, that there is at least a considerable potential, which can be expected among urban consumers.



Big organic shelf in a supermarket in UB

Conducting awareness campaigns and educational programs about the benefits of organic agriculture can help to create demand and increase consumer awareness (using similar approaches as in creating awareness for more vegetable consumption, highlighting the health benefits of organic diets). Vegetables as a product group is often the door opener in many emerging organic markets to develop a domestic consumption due to pesticide residues in conventional products. The awareness creation can be done through workshops, seminars, and public outreach campaigns to educate consumers about the advantages of organic products and the harmful effects of chemical-intensive farming.

Encouraging the formation of farmer cooperatives and facilitating networking among organic farmers can enhance their access to resources, and market opportunities. Cooperatives can collectively market their products, share knowledge and experiences, leading to a stronger domestic market for organic produce. To establish a local organic market and production based on the so-called Participatory Guarantee System (PGS) is foreseen in the Mongolian organic regulation and could reduce the barrier and allows to enter the market without expensive third-party certification systems. In building up PGS communities and in training of young and motivated farmers, MFARD together with the organic movement in Mongolia could have a leading role, when employing a young academic with international expertise for this purpose.

5 Recommendations

Out of the analyses and conclusions we make 5 - 8 recommendations each to 1) SDC, to 2) MFARD and its system, to 3) the vegetable sector, to 4) MoFALI and the Government of Mongolia, and to 5) potential future donors for the Mongolian vegetable sector.

5.1 To the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, SDC

S1: Promote further support

We recommend that SDC makes a substantial recommendation note with a letter/presentation to other donors in Mongolia that are interested in the areas of Agriculture and Livestock, Food system, Poverty Alleviation, Economic Opportunity Building, Nutrition and Gender. That brief shall highlight the actions and achievements of the Potato and Vegetables programs and explain the MFARD system and its opportunities to contribute to the SDGs for Mongolia. That brief describes, what - in the view of SDC - is sufficiently sustainable and works best on its own without market distortion, and what needs further support to accelerate developments. The note shall contain the recommendations to other donors described further below.

S2: Highlight success story in internal and external messaging

Given the good evaluation remarks particularly in impact and sustainability, MONVEGI is suitable to publish as a learning case. There are sufficient materials and there are sufficient persons with experience to contribute to a case for internal learning and external profiling in a time when food systems development and health through prevention from non-communicable disease are high on the international agenda. The experience could be promoted through the SDC thematic area of the food system highlighting the approach to accelerate developments through a committed and active sector organisation and how to further growth among poorer populations and women.

S3: Observe long term impacts

SDC shall observe the long-term impacts of the Potato and MONVEGI projects and reflect the long-term impacts in an assessment and a brief tracer study in 5 and in 10 years. The positive expectations need to be confirmed and new developments considered. The study could track individual stories, the MAFRD reports and observe the further developments of key indicators such as vegetable per capita consumption, income development of MFARD farmers and share of Mongolian vegetables in the overall market.

S4: Link to former vegetable projects of SDC (or other if more suited)

So far, there were little linkages with vegetable projects in other countries that were in similar sustainability challenges in relation to institutional development. We recommend that SDC links the MFARD management and MoFALI to successful former (SDC or not) projects (that ideally were in the MONVEGI situation a few years ago) from which MFARD/MoFALI can learn, get critical points and stay in contact for periodic informal (e.g. virtual) exchanges on its own initiative. If possible, these linkages would entail a physical visit before the project ends. GFRAS may facilitate the initial contact before the project closes.

S5: Provide a voucher for BDS

As a farewell gift, we recommend handing over to MAFRD and to the Mongolian Women Farmer Association a voucher for a Mongolian BDS provider that has a broad offer. MAFRD/MWFA may use the voucher as appropriate to their development without any reporting obligation.

5.2 To MFARD and its system

M1: Develop membership

MFRAD should give a strong priority to membership development and enforce their duties (e.g. fees) and their rights (e.g. voting right, right for information and right for exclusive privileges such as access to markets, discounted input/seed prices, access to programs like school meals etc.). With a strong membership base (presently at 1400 members), it has a strong voice in the public for the advocacy work (e.g. influence legislation or pressure on curricula in education/university) and for attracting the society (e.g. to attract young people to the profession of farmers).

M2: Implement own strategic and business plans well

MFRAD has an own and approved strategic and business plan, in which a lot of external recommendations are entailed. That plan shall be implemented, (if possible a bit faster than planned since it has a very long transition period e.g. for its structures, which can be accelerated), monitored, evaluated and adapted to reach objectives best. To implement this plan, good governance and management is included and it entails all aspects of leadership such as strong team building, finding the optimum between focus and diversification, orientation to own market, smart financial management or strong business and government networking. A special issue is also succession planning in view of a leadership close to retirement age and it is gender inclusion. Particular attention requires the value orientation of the organisation and the membership development through which there is legitimacy and power.

#M3: Brand your vegetables in the market

We recommend the introduction of a branding for products of members (scope for vegetables, seedling and seeds) via secondary cooperative that is attractive to consumers and will make farmers proud to be a member. The brand shall position itself to consumers as a trusted quality brand from Mongolia. We recommend a 3 steps logo a) MFARD/quality checked/from Mongolia b) MFARD/PGS organic c) MFARD/organic third party certified. The introduction of such a mark is a big investment in the first years, but it has the potential to be a sustainable business model, to be a powerful instrument to retailers and to develop negotiation power for the producers. For MFARD it is also an opportunity to attract members.

#M4: Keep unity

The strategic plan does not foresee any more to privatise profitable units as done earlier with the potatoes. That is good. Nevertheless, there will be pressure from the more profitable units, which cross subsidy other parts such as administration or investments in new units. The MFARD management shall work on team building and identification with the whole MFARD system instead of separating e.g. VSSU too much. The idea is already part of the strategic plan and we mention this point here again because of its strategic importance.

#M5: Apply subsidiary principle, when you organise yourself

The principle of subsidiarity is a MONVEGI principle and MFARD is organised like that with its own self organising branches, with independent cooperatives, with model streets and extension centres. This keeps the organisation lean and gives autonomy and initiative to the remote structure without a big administrative burden. This attitude should be maintained in the organisational development in order to foster ownership and self-reliance rather than centralization.

#M6: Develop Cooperatives

The primary and secondary cooperatives are the backbone of the economic impact through which MFARD can be present in the market. MFARD should make efforts to have more primary cooperatives and to encourage them to join the secondary cooperative that has the capacity and needs to scale to become profitable. The cooperatives shall seek funds e.g. from local government and development projects for storage, greenhouse and processing material investments of farmers. This shall be complemented with an own investment of the producers. Investments in soil fertility e.g. with livestock manure and legume planting is also very important. Bushes, hedges and if possible, trees help to avoid wind soil erosion.

#M7: Digitalise

We recommend an MFARD organisational development process for using the opportunities of digitalization. This investment will economise working time and improve transparency and effectiveness of use of information. This will not only provide an advantage to MFARD administration but also give a comparative advantage to market the vegetables of members in cooperation with the secondary cooperative. We see the highest opportunities and low hanging fruits in IT applications for financial management, in membership administration, in market price observations, and in communication. The latter including to producers (e.g. new varieties, plant protection threats, innovations etc.), to sector professionals/MoFALI (e.g. lead of sector issues, e.g. residues, price development or extension messages) and to consumers (e.g. regarding your brands or the health benefits of vegetable consumption).

#M8 Collaborate with the whole vegetable sector

Show leadership and invite the whole sector in a sector platform (eventually half yearly round tables) to discuss present issues with the government and with the public. Promote together the consumption of vegetables (see also under recommendation to the sector).

5.3 To the vegetable sector

#Se1: Collaborate under MFARD

Even if the MFARD system is a competitor, it provides an opportunity to collaborate to reach common objectives, which lie in advocacy of common interests (e.g. enforcement of import rules or government investments for sector infrastructure, e.g. labs or market places). MFARD could use its leverage and trust with MoFALI and also represent the sector if it provides its legitimacy.

#Se2: Work on market transparency and vegetables benefits

Work on market transparency, promotion and consumer protection of the Mongolian vegetable. Provide accurate information on standards (e.g. GAP or organic) and highlight the difference between Chinese imported and Mongolian domestic products. Mandate and publish studies to show differences between origins and label programs and communicate them very actively. Also push for statistics of the government that differentiate between the qualities (e.g. GAP, imported, organic PGS/certified etc) so that you can track the developments and react with strategic decisions.

#Se3: Attract young people

Vegetables consumption is modern and may break with some habits and beliefs. Young people see more of the opportunity and they credibly represent the sector in communication for instance with social media. Be innovative and provide a modern and trendy image to vegetables and highlight health and taste benefits. Show that it is affordable to everyone. Growing and cooking with vegetables of people enhances appreciation for vegetables and should be promoted e.g. with providing knowledge of how to do it (e.g. attractive recipes in the internet)

#Se4: Push for true cost accounting

Importing low quality vegetables with residues has high health risk and economising on price may lead to negative externality costs that have to be borne by individuals or the society. Studies in other countries estimate that for every Dollar spent on low quality food another Dollar of societal costs arises⁶. Those cost may arise in the health system or as environmental costs. External costs of Mongolia are unknown. We recommend that the sector tries to find ways to study the difference between vegetables from Mongolian and of external origin.

⁶ E.g. this study <https://sustainablefoodtrust.org/our-work/true-cost-accounting/#:~:text=The%20Hidden%20Cost%20of%20UK,a%20further%20C2%A3116%20billion.>

#Se5: Source domestically, close circles and act climate friendly

The sector asks consumers for preference of quality and domestic production. In order to be credible, this needs to be followed also in sourcing e.g. of seeds, inputs and other investment goods as far as possible. Labour needs good conditions (including qualification support, abolishment of gender discrimination and decent remuneration) so that the reputation of the Mongolian vegetable sector can further improve. Try to operate as sustainable as possible e.g. with closing material cycles, avoiding inputs with adverse environmental and health effects or with reducing CO₂ emissions. Communicate efforts and get the picture of a modern sector that holds up quality, that is sensitive to the environment, and that serves the Mongolian society.

5.4 To the MoFALI and the government of Mongolia

#G1: Consider support to discontinued functions of MONVEGI project

MONVEGI had and will further have a big impact with comparatively low investment in view of the economic benefits (annual investment of 0,3% of sector turnover of 400 Emillion US\$ over 7 years) and non-economic benefits(e.g. health through improved diverse nutrition). While much of these investments are done and are sustainable with their own business plans, further investments would accelerate the achievements of SDGs and other Mongolian development goals. We recommend a closer consideration of further investment into unsustainable project functions as per the list in appendix 6.2.

#G2: Take up unfinished and further steps to lead the vegetable sector

The evaluation shows that the vegetable sector and consumption have developed well and that further developments are expected. To sustain that trend, further steps are needed. From a government perspective the quality system is key e.g. with furthering the private standards and conformity assessment of GAP and organic as well as legal enforcements in collaboration with private label holders and certification bodies. This also includes the knowledge system with research/innovations (e.g. new variety testing, system research on how to cultivate vegetable more sustainably while enhancing soil fertility and efficient water us, or adaptation to climate change), with advisory services/extension, with sector transparency (e.g. statistics, sector reports), with communication (e.g. nutrition facts and consumption recommendations promoting healthy diets) and with sector protection (support Mongolian operators over imports).

#G3: Further improve proper governance

Good sector governance and transparent management are very effective for creating trust and credibility into the government and for the effectiveness of implementation. This includes furthering the transparency of the sector, proper legal base development and accurate law implementation, transparent and fair procurements (expertise, project implementation services, investment and operational goods such as food and seeds) and recruitments based on qualification. Government food procurements (schools, hospitals, canteens etc.) shall be guided by health considerations rather than price only. The vegetable sector can benefit a lot from good governance.

#G4: Promote the stakeholder dialog and participation

MFARD and the recommended sector platforms provide an opportunity to have efficient stakeholder dialogues with sector representatives. We recommend using the opportunity for getting first hand sector information learning about urgent needs that a government can address in order to achieve the objectives (increase vegetable intake per capita and increase market share of Mongolian producers).

#G5: Initiate and observe special projects mandated to implementers

We see urgent needs with high impact potentials in a) applied research, b) model demonstration farms, c) investment support through subsidised greenhouses, irrigation, storage and processing facilities d) small credits schemes particularly for smallholders for seasonal working capital, and e) crop failure risk mitigation programs e.g. with insurances.

#G6: Adapt curricula and invest in education including basic, vocational and university education

Education is key for all involved in the sector. Consumers need awareness of the health benefits of vegetables and the quality characteristics. They need help to introduce vegetable consumption into daily habits and make it into their appreciated life routines. Service providers and producers need specialised professional knowledge that they have to acquire in vocational and university education. We recommend a review and update of curricula, teaching materials and teacher training on the latest scientific and practical knowledge developments to get a broad impact for the upcoming generation.

#G7: Legal framework development

The started processes on legislation development need to be continued even if FAO facilitation is not there anymore. Instead, the sector representatives and specialists shall be consulted from the government administration on detailed issues. Other donors might be ready to support international knowledge transfer and quality assurance of legal drafts that go into the usual political process in the ministries and in the parliament. Special interests are issues of plant protection, the NGO law, the organic law and consumer protection laws.

As far as the organic law is concerned, we recommend not only to regulate the production requirements, but to establish mechanisms to support organic production, e.g. with research, with subsidies for certification and production, with training (e.g. of extension agents or PGS groups) and with supporting a stakeholder driven establishment of an umbrella organisation. We refer to IFOAM Organics International and their SDC supported policy toolkit⁷.

5.5 To the international cooperation community in Mongolia

#D1: Take the vegetable sector in focus

The vegetable sector has achieved a lot and MONVEGI is not needed any more. However, the sector needs facilitation and investments in the MFARD system and in the rest of the sector. One or several international partners shall take the vegetable sector in focus of its observation and engagement (may be in combination with the horticulture and field crops sectors) because of its excellent opportunities to generate development in terms of income generation, social development, health benefits and environmental and food system resilience. There are sustainability opportunities including for poorer population segments and for women. We recommend a “Market System Development” (MSD) approach with broad analyses and sector development observations. Conclusions out of that may lead to targeted small or medium size interventions, to steer the sector development, to bridge short term challenges or to invest into an improved self-operating situation. Partnership for this approach shall be sought with MoFALI and with MFARD and ideally with the sector forum we suggest (recommendation M8). This approach avoids donor dependencies and flexibilities of investments in various sizes.

#D2: Integrate essential MONVEGI functions in your portfolio

While most of the MONVEGI functions run on their own or are not needed any more, some depend on more support or will be discontinued otherwise. This includes functions that are started and functions that are logical new steps. We recommend the following functions to support from donor sides

- Support new investment and maintenance of older infrastructure of producers of seed, seedlings and vegetables, e.g. greenhouses, wells, irrigation, pulling machines and devices, rooms including heating.
- support new investment and maintenance for processing and trading (e.g. storage, packaging, labelling)
- New investments and maintenance for service providers (e.g. IPAS, research, certification)
- Coaching extension centres, MFARD branches and primary cooperatives

⁷ <https://www.ifoam.bio/our-work/how/regulation-policy/global-policy-toolkit>

- Variety testing and research
- GAP facilitation
- Support the building up and promotion of a labelling and certification system for Mongolian organic/non-organic vegetables with a tracing system.
- Procurements for schools and kindergartens
- Model streets investment and maintenance
- Organisational development (e.g. MFARD and new national platform)

#D3: Support MoFALI in Sector Governance

MoFALI will get less services with FAO stopping its legal and GAP facilitation services. We recommend a dialog with MoFALI to enable it to resume the functions of Good Sector Governance as described in our recommendations to them. This leads to investment needs for temporary MoFALI projects that may be worth supporting.

#D4: Scale successful social investments into poverty reduction and nutrition

MONVEGI had various successful approaches together with local governments that are worth scaling up in the future:

- Model streets implemented through the Mongolian Women's Farmers Association, the demand for such community mobilisation and gardening projects in Ger districts around the country is not yet satisfied. There are many more opportunities to support new streets for the scaling of the same approach that has shown an excellent impact.
- School gardening and supplying vegetables to their canteens. The cases show excellent results and they can scale with external support to transition (investment, knowledge and advocacy for cost recovering children meal budget is needed).

#D5: Initiate boosting of sustainable organic production and consumption based on agroecology

MONVEGI planned to integrate organic production and considered it a logical next step. However, time did not allow for MONVEGI to become active apart from an initiation of the revision of the organic law. Organic production and consumption are at an infant stage comparable to the potato and vegetable sectors' situations before the SDC projects. It is therefore an opportunity to start a comprehensive new intervention with impact and success potentials similar to the SDC projects if smart approaches are designed.

We recommend the analyses of the organic sector and its opportunities for SDG development from production to consumption. These analyses can then result into a stakeholder driven national action plan that could be initiated and rooted in the vegetable sector rather than based on imported products, which is happening without interventions. An international cooperation can work in partnership with a sector lead NGO that is in close collaboration with and synergetic to MFARD so as to learn and benefit from the success of MONVEGI.

6 Appendices

6.1 SDC DAC evaluation grid

Inclusive and sustainable vegetable production and marketing project (MONVEGI), Mongolia

SDC funded Phase 2

Project Number: 7F-09387.02.04

Mandate agreement: 8107590

Tool 7: Assessment Grid for the DAC Criteria

Assessment Grid for project/programme evaluations of the SDC interventions

Version: 30.06.2020

Note: this assessment grid is used for evaluations of SDC financed projects and programmes (hereinafter jointly referred to as an 'intervention'). It is based on the OECD Development Assistance Committee evaluation criteria.⁸ In mid-term evaluations, the assessment requires analysing the likelihood of achieving impact and sustainability. All applicable sub-criteria should be scored and a short explanation should be provided.

Please add the corresponding number (0-4) representing your rating of the sub-criteria in the column 'score':

0 = not assessed

1 = highly satisfactory

2 = satisfactory

3 = unsatisfactory

4 = highly unsatisfactory

⁸ For information on the 2019 revisions of the evaluation framework see: Better Criteria for Better Evaluations. Revised Evaluation Criteria. Definitions and Principles for Use, OECD/DAC Network on Development Evaluation, 2019.

Key aspects based on DAC Criteria	(put only integers: 0, 1, 2, 3 or 4)	Justification (please provide a short explanation for your score or why a criterion was not assessed)
<p>Relevance</p> <p>Note: the assessment here captures the relevance of objectives and design <i>at the time of evaluation</i>. In the evaluation report, both relevance at the design stage, as well as relevance at the time of evaluation, should be discussed.</p>		
<p>Relevance overall</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The overall Relevance of MONVEGI is very high since it addresses the priorities of SDC, the Government of Mongolia, and the stakeholders including producers and consumers. It is a poverty alleviation-oriented, gender-sensitive intervention with a good impact opportunity. Overall, we rate the Relevance of MONVEGI with a score of 1.</p> <p>With regards to national policy and target group, the score is 1. With regards to indirectly affected stakeholders, the score is 2, and regarding core design again 1.</p>
<p>1. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of the target group.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>MONVEGI objectives and design address the needs and policies of the government of Mongolia including for economic development (e.g. income generation including in remote areas) and for social (e.g. poverty and women orientation) and environmental (e.g. sustainable use of natural resources) objectives. It also contributes to more independence (import substitution of food, which has proven to be critical in COVID time, when markets were closed) and helps to get closer to international health recommendations.</p> <p>The project design responded to the needs of stakeholders, which were known from the earlier successful potato program.</p>
<p>2. The extent to which the objectives of the intervention respond to the needs and priorities of indirectly affected stakeholders (not included in target group, e.g. government, civil society, etc.) in the country of the intervention.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>The indirectly targeted stakeholders feel that the project has been very relevant in its design with the challenge that some stakeholders are fearful that the sector won't work as well without the project. The project design stressed transversal and social issues (e.g. gender, smallholder orientation, participation), which were less prominent without external support and which are not the core interest of MAFRD and its producers. However, support is less strong than to directly targeted stakeholders which many feel competed through supported stakeholders.</p>

<p>3. The extent to which core design elements of the intervention (such as the theory of change, structure of the project components, choice of services and intervention partners) adequately reflect the needs and priorities of the target group.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The evaluation team appreciates the approach of enabling producers through their umbrella organization, by building a market system and by supporting an enabling policy environment. At the same time, the project has components to be sensitive to gender and inclusive of the needs of people with low income. The relevance of food security projects increases with the rise of hunger after 2014 and the likely failure of SDG 2 to which SDC has already responded</p>
<p>Coherence</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Overall, we rate Coherence as high with a 1 for internal coherence and 2.5 for external coherence.</p>
<p>4. Internal coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with other interventions of Swiss development cooperation in the same country and thematic field (consistency, complementarity and synergies).</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>MONVEGI is coherent with many other SDC interventions around the world. SDC has supported vegetable production of smallholders e.g. in West Africa, Tanzania, Nepal, Cambodia, Mozambique, and Bolivia with a focus on improving productivity, setting up marketing systems, and promoting nutrition-sensitive agriculture. MFARD did not report having linkages with those initiatives but supporting consultants (e.g. for reviews, planning, gender reports, MFARD support through GFRAS), etc.) have and considered experiences in the design. MONVEGI responds to SDC priorities such as pro-poor policies and contributing to nutrition security. MONVEGI is also highly coherent with the country's strategy of finding a place in the agriculture and food security domain. It is consistently planned with SDC formal requirements (e.g. Log frame). Apart from the design and implementation support from international consultants, we did not see particular synergies with other SDC vegetable programs. However, in view of the clear MAFRD system and objectives to serve the local system observing well the principles such as subsidiarity, we also don't see a big need or opportunities to collaborate closely other than getting inspirations or exchange of technical information, which are less of the key project challenges (see chapter 2.1).</p>
<p>5. External coherence: the extent to which the intervention is compatible with interventions of other actors in the country and thematic field (complementarity and synergies).</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>However, we observe less coherence in view of collaboration with other development actors in Mongolia. While there is a forum for donor coordination in agriculture (Food and Agriculture Partners Group), its effectiveness is questioned. There is little willingness to agree and contribute to overall sector development objectives. Own approaches and interests are prioritized. Nevertheless, there are complementarities for instance, JICA is investing in fruit production and horticulture (e.g. berries, sea buckthorn), which may contribute to making the farms more resilient and diversifying the consumed healthy diet</p>
<p>Effectiveness</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Overall, we rate effectiveness as 1.5 with a 1 for the main impact chain) and lines of activities (Adequacy, Ee1 mark 1) that were similar to the potato program. Outcomes and Outputs are mostly achieved (Ee2, mark 1,5), while transversal issues were well cared for but challenged the straightforwardness of project. (Ee3, mark 2)</p>

<p>6. The extent to which approaches/strategies during implementation are adequate to achieve the intended results.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Approaches during the implementation by MFARD and other implementing partners were adequate particularly in view of the objective that the achievements sustain within an operating and growing market. MoFALI (chair of Steering Committee) and SDC closely supervised the implementation and took measures when MONVEGI was not on track (e.g. external gender reports in 2017 and 2022, partner risk assessment of MAFRD leading to the added provision of coaching, COVID adaptations, or the negotiation/introduction of an expected result 4.6 with FAO).</p>
<p>7. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended objectives (outputs and outcomes).</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The project has generally satisfactorily achieved its objectives (exceptions are discussed in this report) measured with the set targets that were realistic anticipating the national developments and the possible MONVEGI attributions even though the 2023 figures are not yet available. The indicator relating to income increase by smallholders has not yet reached the desired level (16.6% so far, instead of 40%), but growth and business prospects look good so that under the condition of stable markets (which is often not the case) the expected income raise might get close by the end of the project. The aggregated consumption has increased even 40% with an anticipated 20%. And the market share of Mongolia remains above the targeted 60%.</p>
<p>8. The extent to which the intervention achieved or is expected to achieve its intended results related to transversal themes.</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>The MONVEGI objective refers to improved livelihood through vegetable production for producers that have a marketing system, a serving umbrella organization, and a conducive policy environment.</p>
<p>Efficiency</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Overall, efficiency is in balance, even without considering the COVID-19 challenge, which hampered project progress. Comparing input and output, the project efficiency and project performance can be assessed as good. Project results are within expectations, which were set in a normal way (not overly or under-ambitious). We make reservations to this statement only for the own institutional performance and development of MFARD particularly before the start of the exit phase.</p>
<p>9. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcomes) cost-effectively.</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>Until the end of 2022, MONVEGI used 72% of its overall budget for the exit phase. With reference to the budget until the end of 2022, it is 77%. For long-term experts, budget use was 97%, and for local support, it was 83%. Administered project funds were used 60% ranging from 27% (access of cooperatives to the wholesale market) to 78% (pilot streets). This budget use is less than satisfactory and reflects stronger and weaker implementation of project activities.</p>

<p>10. The extent to which the intervention delivers the results (outputs, outcome) in a timely manner (within the intended timeframe or reasonably adjusted timeframe).</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>MONVEGI had to focus in the exit phase on sustainability and on the institutional development of MFARD. Through that, a number of issues that require action and impulses for future development could not be addressed timely. This includes GAP facilitation (in process, but results not yet satisfactory, including for the MoFALI gap certification database development), continued legal developments facilitation (law on ..), procurement support for schools and kindergartens, access to wholesale markets and other primary and secondary cooperatives development, urgent processing and trading innovations (e.g. trade mechanisms with retail, packaging) and organic development to differentiate clearer the quality of Mongolian products.</p>
<p>11. The extent to which management, monitoring and steering mechanisms support efficient implementation.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>The steering mechanisms designed in the form of the Steering Committee (PSC) were in place. They were well-attended and chaired by MoFALI. The PSC had an annual meeting to discuss the reports. The nature of discussion in the SC were on an abstract high level with focus on management and structure. The work of the PSC was not reflected in the annual reports to SDC and stakeholders could not remember impacts beyond the SDC and MoFALI individual guidance.</p>
<p>Impact</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>Overall, we rate the project's impact as good. The optimistic planning was realistic. MONVEGI could accelerate positive trends and assure that Mongolia including disadvantaged groups could benefit from that trend.</p>
<p>12. The extent to which the intervention generated or is expected to generate 'higher-level effects' as defined in the design document of the intervention.</p> <p>Note: when assessing this criterion, the primary focus is the intended 'higher-level effects'. In the event that <i>significant</i> unintended negative or positive effects can be discerned, they must be specified in the justification column, especially if they influence the score.</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>After the potato project with a good impact, the same can be stated for the MONVEGI project which followed similar approaches and relied on the MAFRD system, too. The long-term development of the vegetable market in Mongolia was very dynamic. Particularly in recent years, consumption has increased every year (See figure 7). However, it is still far below the Mongolian target (90kg per year per capita), below the WHO target (146 kg), below Asian average and below many other comparable countries. Further development is expected and desirable. At the same time, the domestic supply managed to stay on the developments and keep self-sufficiency to 60%. Seed self-sufficiency is at 40%, it reaches nearly 100% in root crops, which can be well cultivated in the Mongolian climate.</p>
<p>Sustainability</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>Sustainability is the biggest concern of stakeholders at this stage. Of course, at the end of the project a transition is necessary particularly for well-supported sector functions and for the institutions that manage project funds and have staff on the project payroll. MFARD is well prepared and has its reform planned in its new strategic plan and in its business plan (the development of which was strongly GFRAS supported). While the MFARD leadership is</p>

		prepared and committed to this transition, it is not clear how all staff members will react, when operational conditions (e.g. decreased salaries or absence of SDC project leverage) will change. In appendix 6.2 we listed 12 important project functions that are desirable to be carried on, but which are at risk of discontinuation. MFARD will only continue those functions that have an income opportunity behind in order to pay costs and staff.
13. The extent to which partners are capable and motivated (technical capacity, ownership) to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	1	We assess that MFARD is capable a) to reform, b) to operate on the market without the SDC funds and c) to implement new projects and gaining the trust of institutional donors and philanthropists. The new structure including the leaders of the units is capable and motivated to run MFARD as a business. The business plan may be very (probably too) optimistic, but it shows good business prospects. The MFARD leadership is strategic, pragmatic, and carefully relying on real assets and opportunities. It avoids risks. It is however challenged to grow into new structures and hierarchic relations. Escalating conflicts needs to be avoided, which should be possible due to the fact that the new strategy leaves sufficient space for all to have autonomy and to become successful (units that are profit centers).
14. The extent to which partners have the financial resources to continue activities contributing to achieving the outcomes.	1 for most 3 for some functions	The MONVEGI project did not allow saving surpluses for investments. However, the profitable seed business of VSSU and other operations e.g. with production inputs does. MFARD as such (without the project) is lean and it is planned to build up with new experts parallel to its financial capacity to pay highly qualified people with a competitive market salary.
15. The extent to which contextual factors (e.g. legislation, politics, economic situation, social demands) is conducive to continuing activities leading to outcomes.	3	The contextual factors are generally positive in Mongolia. The NGO law is debated for a while in the parliament and it is unclear when and with which content it will pass. At the moment, it seems that the planned way of the MFARD operations is possible with the new law as well. If not, MFARD will need to build subsidiary companies that pay a dividend to MFARD. All in all, the NGO status of MFRAD guarantees (as long as there is legal behavior) that operational surpluses are used to invest in the MFARD system rather than to shareholders.

Additional information (if needed): [Click here to enter text.](#)

Title of the intervention: **Inclusive and sustainable vegetable production and marketing project (MONVEGI), Mongolia**

Assessor(s): FiBL Switzerland, Markus Arbenz, Toralf Richter and Onon Derrilaa

Date: June 2023

6.2 Project functions at risk that need to be covered in the future

1. New investment and maintenance for producers (seed, seedling and vegetables)
2. New investment and maintenance for processing and trading (e.g. storage, packaging, labelling)
3. New investments and maintenance for service providers (e.g. IPAS, research, certification)
4. Extension centres
5. MFARD branches and primary cooperatives
6. Variety testing and research
7. GAP facilitation
8. Organic development (e.g. movement)
9. Procurements for schools and kindergartens
10. Model streets investment and maintenance
11. Policy development facilitation
12. Organisational development (e.g. MFARD)

6.3 Table of indicators

Impact indicators

Impact (Overall goal)	Indicators	Baseline 2020	Value 2021/2022	Target Value 2023
Livelihood in Mongolia is improved, through inclusive, gender responsive and sustainable growth of the vegetable sector.	Household economic situation (income from vegetables) in vegetable production areas and in Ger district - disaggregated by sex and age.	MNT 7,763,862 (2019)	MNT 8,978,202 (2021)	+20%
	Aggregated consumption of vegetables in rural areas (vegetable producers), in urban households (Ger district) and in Mongolia (consumers)	51kg	57kg	+20%
	Market share and market value of domestic vegetables in Mongolia	95,800 tonnes (2019) production volume and 40% market share	125,000 tonnes (2022) production volume (est)	60% market share

Outputs to Outcome 1 - Production / Log frame Indicator

Green achieved indicators. Others in black

Outputs	Indicators	Baseline 2020	Value 2021/2022	Target Value 2023
1.1 Vegetable seeds tested, approved and vegetables produced	Number of tested varieties	80/year	40/18 per year	40/year
	Number of new species for which seeds are locally produced	15	4/13	30
1.2 Vegetable production in urban and peri-urban areas	Number of trainings based on request by local authorities	0	4/2	20
	Number of households producing vegetables in target areas (9 soums)	6'330	6'400/8'237 (8% women headed households)	> 500 (10% women headed households)
1.3 New technologies and approaches are adopted by farmers	Number of new technologies applied	0	5/2	10
	Number of farmers using new technologies and machinery	0	27/36	100
	Start-ups supported and operational in developing new technologies for pesticides and fertilisers.	0	0/2	2
1.4 Standards for vegetables are applied	Number developed standards	1	2/0	20
	Consumer opinion about domestic vegetable supply in diversity, quality and price	increasing	increasing	satisfied
	Number of farmers and entities certified with GAP	2	25/30	50

Outputs to Outcome 2 - Marketing / Log frame Indicator

Outputs	Indicators	Baseline 2020	Value 2021/2022	Target Value 2023
2.1 Supply chain of vegetables from farmer's gate to markets is operational and driven by farmer cooperatives	Number of primary and secondary cooperatives with supply contracts	11	13/19	10
	Total trade of the cooperative	0,338 Billion MNT	2.3 / 3 Billion MNT	1 Billion

Outputs	Indicators	Baseline 2020	Value 2021/2022	Target Value 2023
2.2 Local farmer cooperatives have access to wholesale market in UB	Share vegetables from main production areas sold via wholesale market in UB	10%	1'800 t / 2'000 t	30%
	Numbers of coop. members having access to UB market	4	9/15	12
3.3 Schools and kindergartens have better nutrition and consume more vegetables	Annual vegetable consumption per capita in Mongolia	51 kg	55/57 kg	+20%
	Increased diversified diets (with vegetable) in school/ kindergartens.	15	9/35	30

Outputs to Outcome 3 - Organisational Development / Log frame Indicator

Outputs	Indicators	Baseline 2020	Value 2022	Target Value 2023
3.1 Supply chain of vegetables from farmer's gate to markets is operational and driven by farmer cooperatives	Long-term strategic/business plan developed and functional	0	1	1
	Assemblies and elections of board members have taken place on time	0	yes	yes
	Membership fee is collected, transparent and growing	0	ongoing	20%
	Financial management corresponds to SDC audit standards	0	ongoing	yes
3.2 MFARD is recognized by all stakeholders as the national organisation representing vegetable farmers.	Number of farmers received services	1'300 (60% men)	1'300 (60% women)	1'100
	Business plans of extension centres	0	3 drafts	3 plans
	Diversification of resources: % received from the Government and % from at least 1 other donor than SDC	0	<50%	50%
3.3 VSSU is operating at all levels of the seed supply chain and is sustainable	VSSU has an operating procedures manual which is respected	none	1	1
	VSSU has long-term Business Plan (including a plan of diversification of resources)	none	1	1

Outputs	Indicators	Baseline 2020	Value 2022	Target Value 2023
	The VSSU is managed by an executive body separately from MFARD and with a diverse representation of stakeholders	5 members	9 members	9 members
	VSSU is progressively funded by other sources than SDC	0	self-funding	50 % self-funding

Outputs to Outcome 4 - Policy and Law / Log frame Indicator

Outputs	Indicators	Baseline 2020	Value 2022	Target Value 2023
4.1 Policy support provided to the MoFALI on the Law on Plant Seed and Varieties, to facilitate its approval (or implementation in case the bill becomes law in June 2020)	Law on Plant Seed and Varieties adopted by the Mongolian National Parliament	0	1	1
	Number of elaborated regulations and guidelines for implementation of the law after its adoption	0	13	>8
4.2 Plant Protection and Food security Laws are revised in collaboration with the relevant department of the Ministry	Number of revised draft legislation on pesticide management	0	1	>1
	Number of elaborated regulations	0	Ongoing	>3
	Number of registered and accredited certification body (CB)	0	1	>2
4.3 Enhanced capacity to implement Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)	Number of auditors to support GAP national certification body (certification body with accreditation)	30	59	60
	Farm assurers to National scheme of GAP are established	0	19	>25
	Number of internal auditors			
	Number of farms with GAP certification	3	41	>30

Outputs	Indicators	Baseline 2020	Value 2022	Target Value 2023
4.4 The taxation and vegetable import regulation reviewed to promote domestic vegetable production	Number of recommendations for tax regulation in vegetable sector	0	2	>1
4.5 Organisational development and governance strengthening of vegetable farmer's organisations are supported (MFARD, VSRF and extension centres)	Management and organization development of MFARD, VSRF and Extension centres	0	1	>4
	Training to share international experiences on organizational and management development of farmers organizations	0	1	>4
	Training on knowledge sharing on community seed bank management	0	0	>4
	Implementation of FAO's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP) to support VSRF.	0	1	>4

6.4 Literature

6.4.1 Project documents

1. External Mid-Term Review of the Inclusive and Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing Project (VEGI), 2017
2. Summary results of the Vegi project
3. MONVEGI – ProDoc
4. Baseline Survey of Mongolian Vegetable Project – 2020
5. Gender Assessment in vegetable farmers
6. Gender mainstreaming report 2022
7. Annual Report MONVEGI Project 2020, 2021, 2022
8. Factsheet MONVEGI exit phase
9. Midterm review of the MONVEGI project, 2022
10. Minute of Project Steering Committee meeting, 2020, 2021, 2022
11. MONVEGI Logframe
12. MONVEGI project - List of partners and involved organisations
13. MONVEGI – Financial audit reports 2018-mid 2022
14. MFARD – Financial audit report, 2017
15. MONVEGI - Credit proposal SDC – exit phase
16. Progress Reports GFRAS about Organisational Development of MFARD
17. Progress Reports Grant Thornton about financial coaching of MFARD
18. Law on Crop seed and variety (English translation, final draft)

19. Law on Plant Health (English translation, final draft)
20. Amendment to the Annex of the Resolution on Import Customs Tariff Rate (English translation, draft)
21. Instruction to implement good agricultural practice in fruit, berries and vegetable production by the Minister of Food, agriculture and light industry and Minister of Health (English translation, draft)
22. MFARD – Approved Strategic Plan
23. MFARD – Approved Business Plan
24. SDC - Cooperation Strategy Mongolia 2018–2021

6.4.2 Other literature

1. Executive Council. Decision on Organic Farming (Doc. EX.CL/631 (XVIII)).
2. African Union, 2015. Action Plan 2015- 2020 of Ecological Organic Agriculture (EOA) Initiative. 16 p.
3. National Statistics Office of Mongolia, <https://en.nso.mn>
4. Asian Development Bank. Vegetable Production and Value Chains in Mongolia. 2020
5. Kuhn, L.; I. Bobojonov. 2020. Risk management in Mongolian vegetable production - opportunities and challenges. Bonn

Reference to other deliverables

The evaluation produced the following products that are available:

1. Letter of interest and FiBL-Technical and financial offers in English (technical also in French) in .docx and .pdf versions (financial.xlsx)
2. Inception report (.docx and .pdf)
3. Literature and contacts database (.xlsx)
4. Minutes of the 2 kick off meetings
5. Slides and minutes of first interviews (.pptx, 10 files)
6. Google Forms survey in English and Mongolian
7. Survey raw data (.xlsx) for English and Mongolian responses
8. Final report
9. Presentation to SDC/GPFS (.pptx)

6.5 Main findings from the online survey and stakeholder workshop

Background information

Objective

- to understand stakeholder perceptions regarding context and contributions of the VEGI project

Participants (51)

- Representing project partners and main beneficiaries
- Most work > 3 years in the veg. sector; 41-60 years

Survey period

- May 2023

Project benefits

A share of 91% of the respondents stated to benefit from the project in different ways:

- Free provision of inputs (seeds, plant protection agents, fertilizers, technical equipment)
- Support of vegetable processing equipment, packaging and greenhouses

- Financial support for supply of raw materials
- Support in operational costs
- Using technical manuals and recommendations for production
- Increased yields and better qualities through better varieties

General assessment about the project

Share of respondents who totally agree, that the MONVEGI project:

- 91% responded to the needs of consumers in Mongolia
- 89% responded to the needs of smallholder farmers in Mongolia
- 81% responded to the needs of main vegetable stakeholder organizations in Mongolia
- 68% promoted innovations in vegetable sector
- 67% responded to the needs of women in vegetable sector of Mongolia
- 55% promoted the digitalization in vegetable sector

What outputs have been achieved

Share of respondents who totally agree, that MONVEGI achieved the following outputs:

- 87% Vegetable seeds, suitable to agro-climatic conditions, are tested, approved, and produced
- 78% MFARD is well recognized by all farmers and stakeholders of the vegetable sector
- 78% Policy support successfully provided to the MoFALI on the Law on Plant Seed and Varieties
- 76% Vegetable production in urban and peri-urban areas has been promoted
- 76% The vegetable sector has enhanced capacities to implement GAP
- 71% Vegetable supply chain from farmer's gate to markets is operational and driven by farmer cooperatives
- 68% Standards for vegetables are applied and contribute to the quality of vegetables produced in Mongolia
- 64% VSSU is operating at all levels of the seed supply chain and is sustainable
- 59% Schools and kindergartens have better nutrition and consume more vegetables
- 56% New technologies in vegetable production and pest control are tested and adopted
- 53% Local farmer cooperatives have access to wholesale market in Ulaanbaatar

What worked well in the project

- Project activities created outcomes and impact
- New types and varieties of vegetables have been tested and implemented
- Better seeds and capacity building led to higher yields
- Improved infrastructure to store vegetables (better prices for products)
- Improved domestic vegetable supply chains and domestic sales
- Sales and Extension Units of MFARD have been established in regions
- Successful cooperation with schools and kindergartens
- Successful consumer and producer awareness creation

What worked not well in the project

Around half of all respondents without any complaint

- Quality Standards (e.g. GAP, Organic) not yet implemented fully
- Some activities of the extension center not satisfying
- Local processing units and bigger local storages are missing
- Ineffective and suboptimal attempts to find sales solutions
- More Marketing efforts in future needed, such as product development, price stabilization, consequent implementation of product quality standards

- Limited access to all vegetable growers due to limited regional focus of implementation

What are the main strengths of the vegetable sector in Mongolia

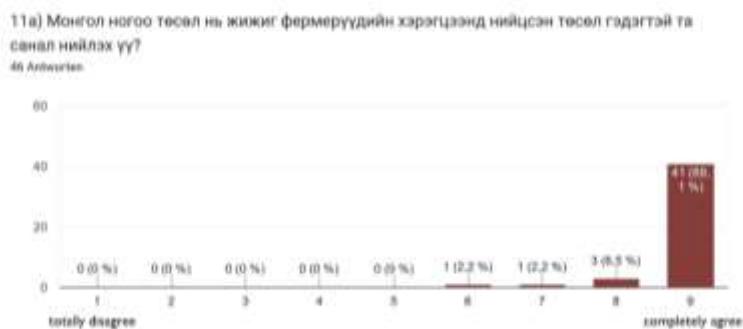
- **Legal environment:** Most important national standards for vegetables are revised or approved
- **Production:** Successful implementation of good agricultural practices at many farms
- **Production:** Healthy soil, professional organization and legal environment
- **Production:** Some vegetables are successfully cultivated now which are resilient to extremely unfavorable climatic conditions.
- **Production:** Sufficient availability of farm inputs
- **Production:** Domestic seed propagation possible
- **Marketing:** An increasing number and variety of vegetables are entering consumption
- **Marketing:** Increased availability of healthy food throughout the year
- **Marketing:** Consumption of vegetables has increased significantly
- **Marketing:** Self-sufficiency for important vegetable types

What are the main weaknesses of the vegetable sector in Mongolia

- **Production:** Due to insufficient mechanization in vegetable cultivation, cultivation cannot increase significantly and production costs are relatively high
- **Production:** variety of crops is still limited, except for root vegetables and cabbage
- **Marketing:** incl. Price not satisfying for farmers, weak sales network
- **Marketing:** Inadequate storage facilities
- **Marketing:** Regional product sales is lacking (only focus on UB)
- **Social capital:** Problems of cooperation and common selling in the market
- **Finance:** Lack of financial capacities among farmers and access to affordable loans
- **Labor forces:** Lack of qualified young farmers who will sustain vegetable production in future
- **Government's support** for small and medium producer cooperatives is weak
- **Government's support** for building winter greenhouses

General statements about the MONVEGI Project

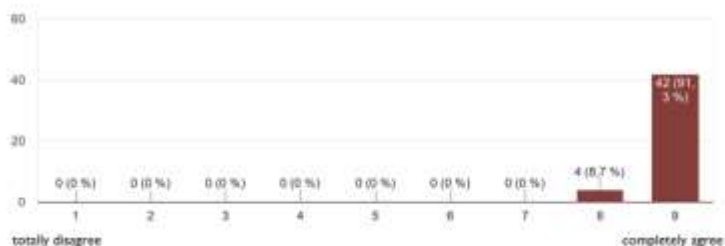
Would you agree, that the VEGI project responded to the needs of smallholder farmers?



Would you agree, that the VEGI project responded to the needs of consumers in Mongolia?

11b) Монгол ногоо төсөл нь Монголын хэрэглэгчдийн эрэлт хэрэгцээнд нийцсэн гэдэгтэй та санал нийлэх үү?

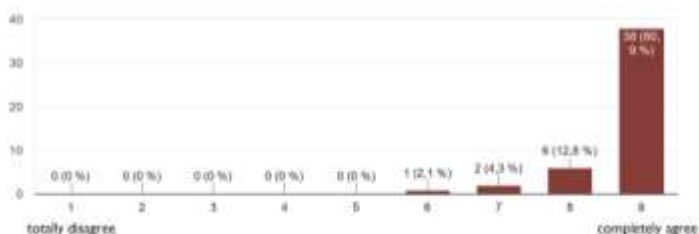
46 Antworten



Would you agree, that the VEGI project responded to the needs of the main stakeholder organisations of the vegetable sector in Mongolia?

11c) Монгол ногоо төсөл нь Монгол Улсын хүнсний ногооны салбарын гол оролцогч талууд/байгууллагуудын хэрэгцээ шаардлагад нийцсэн гэдэгтэй та санал нийлэх үү?

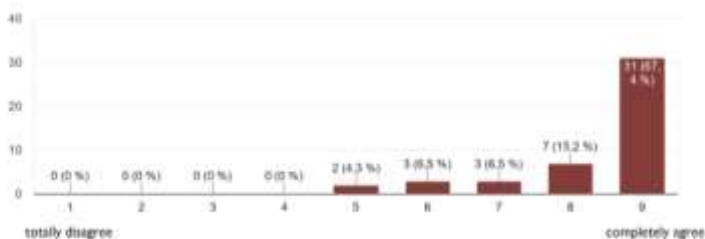
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Would you agree, that the VEGI project responded to the needs of the women in the vegetable sector of Mongolia?

11d) Монгол ногоо төсөл нь Монголын хүнсний ногооны салбарт ажиллаж буй эмэгтэйчүүдийн эрэлт хэрэгцээнд нийцсэн гэдэгтэй та санал нийлэх үү?

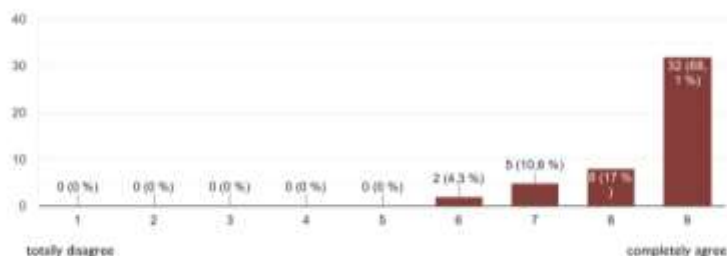
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Would you agree, that the VEGI project also promoted innovations in the vegetable sector?

11e) Монгол ногоо төсөл хүнсний ногооны салбарт инноваци (шинэчлэлийг) авчирч дэмжсэн гэдэгтэй та санал нийлэх үү?

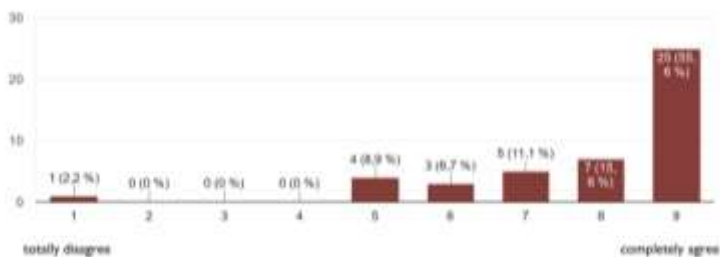
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Would you agree, that the VEGI project also promoted the digitalization in the vegetable sector?

11f) Монгол ногоо төсөл хүнсний ногооны салбарыг дижитал болгоход (салбарын дижиталчлалд) түлээц өгсөн гэдэгтэй та санал нийлэх үү?

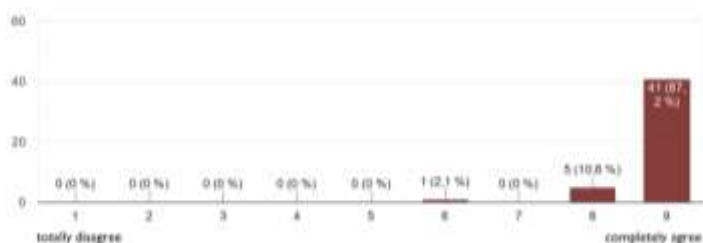
45 Antworten



Vegetable seeds, suitable to agro-climatic conditions in Mongolia, are tested and approved, and vegetables are produced.

14a) Монгол орны агро цаг уурын онцлогт тохирсон хүнсний ногооны үр сортыг туршиж, баталгаажуулж, үйлдвэрлэлд нэвтрүүлж тармалсан.

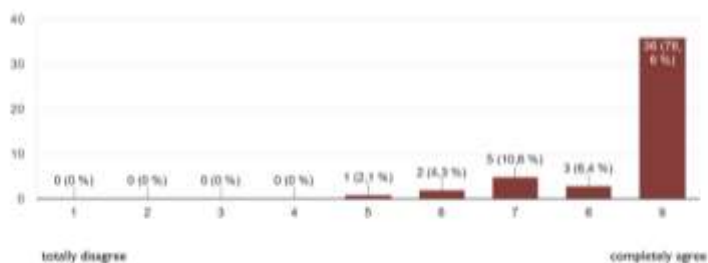
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Vegetable production in urban and peri-urban areas is promoted.

14b) Хот болон хот орчмын бүс нутагт хүнсний ногооны үйлдвэрлэлийг дэмжсэн.

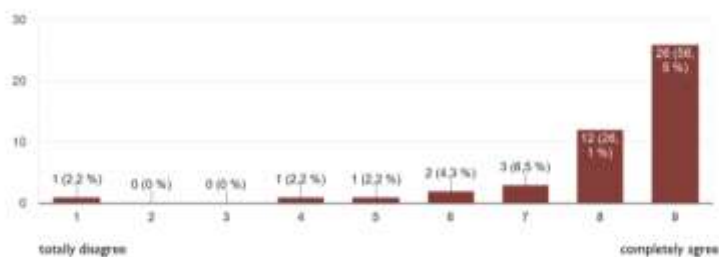
47 Antworten



New technologies in vegetable production and pest control are tested and adopted.

14c) Хүнсний ногооны үйлдвэрлэл, хортон шавьжтай тэмцэх шинэ технологиудыг туршиж, нэвтрүүлсэн.

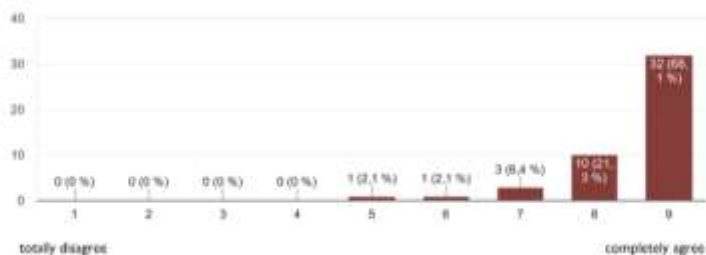
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Standards for vegetables are applied and contribute to the quality of vegetables produced in Mongolia.

14d) Монгол улсад үйлдвэрлэсэн хүнсний ногооны чанарыг дээшлүүлэхэд хувь нэмрээ оруулж стандартуудыг мөрдүүлсэн.

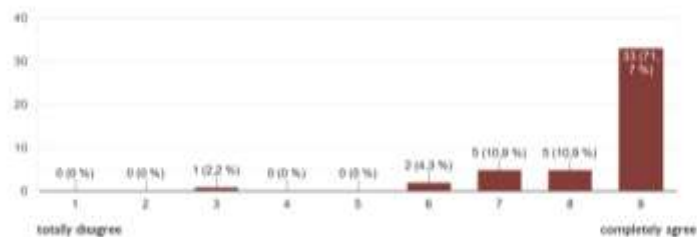
47 Antworten



Supply chain of vegetables from farmer's gate to markets is operational and driven by farmer cooperatives.

14e) Хоршоод нь талбайгаас эцсийн хэрэглэгч хүртэл хүнсний ногооны борлуулалтын сүлжээс үүсгэх үйл ажиллагаа амжилттай явуулж чадсан.

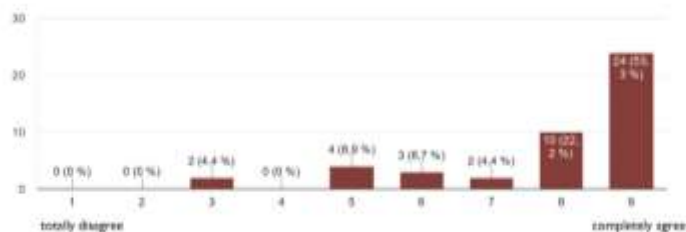
46 Antworten



Local farmer cooperatives have access to wholesale market in Ulaanbaatar.

14f) Орон нутгийн хоршоод нь Улаанбаатар хотын бөөний зах зээлд нэвтэрч амжилттай ажиллаж байна.

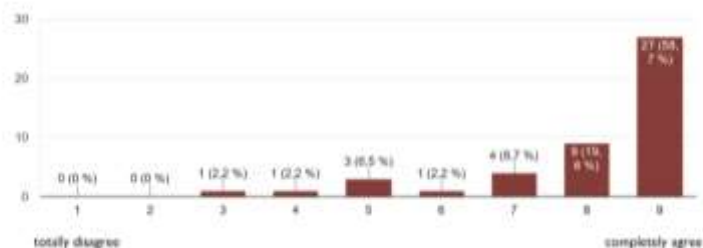
45 Antworten



Schools and kindergartens have better nutrition and consume more vegetables.

14g) Төвөл хэрэгжсэн сургууль, цэцэрлэгүүдийн хүнсний ногооны хэрэглээ нэмэгдэж өмнөхтэй харьцуулахад шим тэжээллэг хоол хүнсээр хангагдсан.

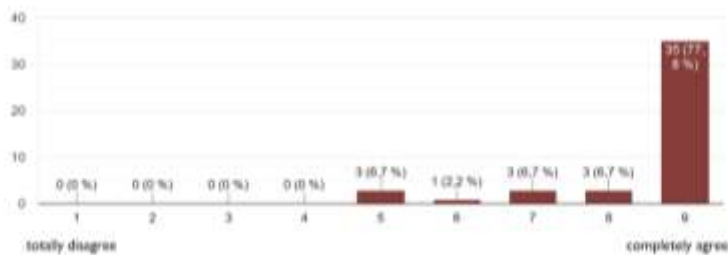
46 Antworten



MFARD as the national organisation representing vegetable farmers is well recognised by all farmers and stakeholders of the vegetable sector.

14h) Монголын Хөдөөг Шинэчлэхийн Төлөөх Фермерүүдийн холбоо /MFARD/ нь хүнсний ногооны салбарт гол тармалачдыг төлөөлдөг үлэгч талууд сайн мэддэг хүлээн зөвшөөрдөг.

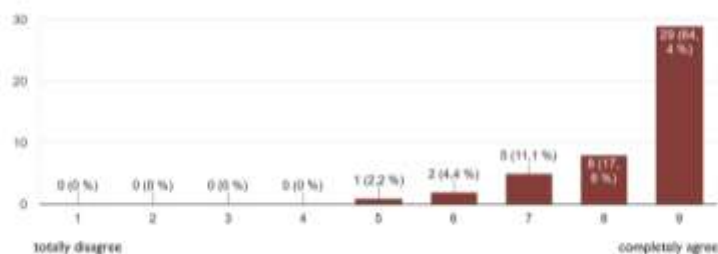
45 Antworten



The Vegetable Seed Service Unit (VSSU) is operating at all levels of the seed supply chain and is sustainable.

14i) Монголын Хөдөөг Шинэчлэхийн Төлөөх Фермерүүдийн холбооны даргэдэх "Хүнсний Ногооны Үрийн Нөөцийн Сан" -Vegetable Seed S...ээний бүх түвшинд тогтвортой ажиллаж байна.

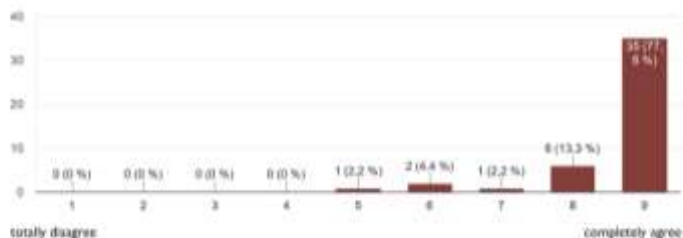
45 Antworten



Policy support was successfully provided to the MoFALI on the Law on Plant Seed and Varieties, to facilitate its approval.

14j) Ургамлын үр, сортын тухай хуулийг боловсруулах үйл явцад ХХААХҮЯ-нд бодлогын дэмжлэг үзүүлж, уг хуулийг батлуулахад амжилттай хамтран ажилласан.

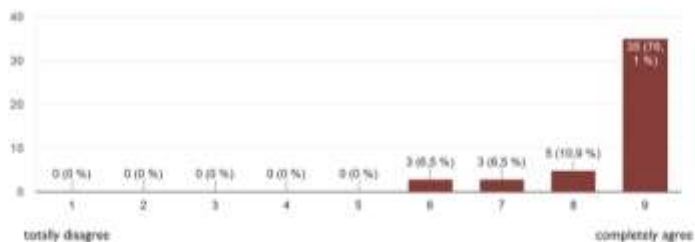
45 Antworten



The vegetable sector has enhanced capacities to implement Good Agricultural Practices (GAP).

14k) Хүнсний ногооны салбарт хөдөө аж ахуйн зохистой дадлыг (GAP) хэрэгжүүлэх чадварыг нэмэгдүүлсэн.

46 Antworten



6.6 List of participants in the evaluation

- **Participants contacted for the online survey:** A total of 68 project beneficiaries and active collaborators were planned to be surveyed, and a total of 51 people actively participated in the survey.

Name	Partners	Stakeholder type	Gender
1 Jargal Byatskhandai	WFA	Implementer	Female
2 Amgalan Ariunbold	FAO	Implementer	Female
3 Tsendoo Tsengel	MFARD branch, Bornuur soum	Beneficiary	Male
4 Tumurbaatar Munkhzaya	Independent consultant	Service provider	Female
5 Adiya Munkhbold	Digital medic LLC	Service provider	Male
6 B.Altanulzii	Manager, Digital medic LLC	Service provider	Male
7 B.Atartungalag	Extension agronomist, Bornuur soum	Beneficiary	Female
8 B.Batbold	Farmer, member of primary coop	Beneficiary	Male
9 B.Oyuntungalag	Food and Agriculture department, Orkhon province	Beneficiary	Female
10 B.Uranchimeg	Senior specialist of policy planning department	MoFALI	Female
11 Radnaabazar Tuya	Food safety, good practice NGO	Beneficiary/service provider	Female
12 Budsuren Dondov	Head of department, PPRI	Beneficiary/service provider	Female
13 Bumerdene Bodikhhand	Head of IPAS branch, IPAS branch in Uvs province	Beneficiary/service provider	Male
14 G.Baljinnyam	Farmer, a head of secondary coop	Beneficiary	Male
15 G.Galbadrakh	MFARD branch, Jargalan soum, Orkhon aimag	Beneficiary	Female
16 Ganbat Tsogtsolmaa	Senior specialist of food production policy department, MoFALI	MoFALI	Female
17 Davaa Tungalag	MFARD branch, Bornuur soum	Beneficiary	Male
18 Damdindorj Tsengel	MFARD, executive director	Beneficiary/service provider	Male
19 Dorj Burenjargal	Amar catering LLC	Beneficiary	Female
20 Delger Amarsaikhan	Researcher, IPAS	Beneficiary/service provider	Female
21 Jugder Baigalmaa	Accountant, Secondary cooperative	Beneficiary	Female
22 L.Zagirsuren	SFCS LLC	Beneficiary/service provider	Female
23 L.Tungalag	Director, IPAS	Beneficiary/service provider	Male
24 N.Bayarsukh	Farmer, member of secondary coop	Beneficiary	Male
25 N.Damdinsuren	Farmer, member of secondary coop	Beneficiary	Female
26 N.Tumurtuya	Farmer, member of secondary coop	Beneficiary	Male
27 N.Erdenetsog	Farmer, member of secondary coop	Beneficiary	Female
28 N.Chantsal	Agronomist, ADRA	Beneficiary	Female
29 N.Oyundari	Director, VEG NGO	Beneficiary/service provider	Female
30 O.Nemekhbat	Agronomist, Darkhan-Uul	Beneficiary	Male
31 S.Erdenechimeg	Principal, Secondary school	Beneficiary	Female
32 S.Gochoosuren	Specialist, Department of Food and Agriculture of the Capital	UB authority	Male
33 S.Nyamjav	Manager, VSSU	Beneficiary	Male
34 Tumurbat Turbat	New crop LLC	Beneficiary	Male
35 Uyanga Nomin	Manager, Secondary coop	Beneficiary	Female

Final Evaluation of the MONVEGI Project by FiBL, Switzerland. Appendices.

36	Khorloo Dorjsuren	Director, Secondary coop	Beneficiary	Male
37	Khurelbaatar Basandorj	Director, Atriin shim LLC	Beneficiary	Male
38	Ts.Zundui	Farmer, member of secondary coop	Beneficiary	Male
39	Ts.Nasanjargal	Officer, Development solution NGO	Partner	Male
40	Ts.Sunjidmaa	Farmer, primary coop	Beneficiary	Female
41	Ts.Batmunkh	Director, Monlog khurd LLC	Beneficiary	Male
42	Ts.Oyungerel	Farmer, primary coop	Beneficiary	Female
43	Ts.Uuganbaatar	Extension agronomist, Orkhon soum	Beneficiary	Male
44	E.Bayarmaa	Farmer, primary coop	Beneficiary	Female
45	E.Ulziidelger	Principal, Secondary school	Beneficiary	Female
46	Ch.Dolgorsuren	Farmer, primary coop	Beneficiary	Female
47	N.Munkhbold	Mongolian logistic Association	Partner	Male
48	Ts.Sunjidmaa	Farmer, primary coop	Beneficiary	Female
49	T.Batchimeg	Farmer, primary coop	Partner	Female
50	N.Tsogtbaatar	Farmer, primary coop	Beneficiary	Male
51	E.Bayarmaa	Farmer, primary coop	Beneficiary	Female

ETeam face to face meeting list during trip Uvs, Darkhan and Tov aimag (11th-17th.May)

Name	Organization	Position	Cell phone
1	Tsolmon	Ag department, Ulaangom soum	99453333
2	L.Altai	MFARD	99458472
3	Baljinyam	IPAS	95399860
4	G.Orlomjav	Farmer	99459887
5	T.Yanjin	Farmer	99452887
6	D.Sambu	Farmer	99458207
7	M.Erdenetsogt	Farmer	99450032
8	Ya.Ulziitogtokh	Farmer	99458027
9	L.Maidar	Farmer	99458181
10	Tsengel	Bornuur	89980241
12	Suvderdene	Bornuur soum, extension center	85220111
13	Erdenekhaan	Zuunkharaa extension center	88056563
14	Dejid	Zuunkharaa MFARD branch	99231469
15	Suvd	Zuunkharaa local government	99474003
16	Uuganbaatar	Orkhon extension center	99746438
17	B.Norjmaa	# 8 kindergarten	94919976
18	S.Bayarchimeg	# 8 kindergarten	99234184
19	Kh.Jargalsaikhan	# 8 kindergarten	99373479
20	G.Enkhtuya	# 8 kindergarten	99158908
21	L.Khukhuu	# 1 school	99409106
22	B.Ulzuubayar	# 1 school	
23	Dr.Bayarsukh	IPAS	99014174
24	Dr.Baigalmaa	IPAS	99233250
25	DR.Narandelger	IPAS	99824155
26	Dr.Azzaya	IPAS	99067853
27	Nemekhbat	Darkhan uul aimag	99376734

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28		Local government		
29	B.Bolorerdene	Model street in Darkhan	Beneficiary	99258870
30	Baljinnyam	Model street in Darkhan	Beneficiary	99395137
31	Oyunsuud	MoFALI	Head of department	99299308
32	Tungalag	MoFALI	Head of department	99193886
33	Gochoosuren	UB Municipality	Officer	99276663
34	Idshinrenchin	Grant Thornton	Director	99993795
35		Grant Thornton	Accountant	
36	Suud	MFARD	Vegetable specialist	99850170
37	Tungalag	MFARD	Finance officer	99120629
38	Turmandakh	MFARD	MONVEGI coordinator	99277280
39	Altantsetseg	FAO	Project manager	99016382
40	Beniot Ahuja	FAO	Representative	
41	Khaliunaa	FAO	Project officer	99085184
42	Nyamjav	VSSU	Manager	99990665
43	Dorjdamba	MWFA	Project officer	99072037
44	Byatskhandai	MWFA	Director	99991552
45	Dorjsuren	Tsever horsnii shim secondary cooperative in UB	CEO	99070813
46	Delgertsetseg	Tsever horsnii shim secondary cooperative in UB	Head of processing factory	99981876

6.7 Terms of References (TOR)



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDFA
Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC
Division Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean
Section Central and Northern Asia
Swiss Cooperation Office and Consular Agency in Mongolia

RESTRICTED INVITATION CALL

Mandate for the

External Final Evaluation of the Inclusive and Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing (VEGI) Project

Mongolia

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Place of Mission: Mongolia
Timeframe: Between March 2023 and June 2023
Number of working days: maximum of 50 days (for the whole team, including preparation and report writing)

Table of Content

- 1. Summary 4
- 2. Context 5
- 3. Projects objectives and hypothesis of change 6
 - 1) Livelihood of rural and peri-urban small holder farmers and women headed households is improved through increased vegetable production to fulfil domestic consumption demand 6
 - 2) Marketing of domestic vegetables (including those from small-scale farmers and women headed households) is well organised, profitable, in line with market trends and consumer preferences, with primary and secondary cooperatives playing a key role 7
 - 3) The organisational development, governance structure and financial management of farmer organisations (including MFARD and Vegetable Seed Service units) is strengthened 7
 - 4) Sustainable and inclusive growth of the vegetable sector is backed by improved policy/legal and institutional framework 7
- 4. Projects intervention strategy 8
- 5. Main project's achievements 9
- 6. Objectives of the evaluation mandate 10
- 7. Methodology 11
- 8. Deliverables 12
- 9. Description of tasks for the consultants and required profiles 12
- 10. Duration and resources 14
- 11. Offers 14
- 12. Documentation available for the selected consultants only 15

- 218 -

Abbreviations list

AFS	Agriculture and Food Security
Almag	An administrative/decentralised subdivision (equivalent to a "province")
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
IPAS	Institute of Plants and Agriculture Sciences
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
RIPP	Research Institute of Plant Protection
CS	Country Strategy
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
COVID-19	Severe acute respiratory syndrome caused by coronavirus 2
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development project
EU	European Union
FDFA	[Swiss] Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
GAP	Good Agriculture Practice
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GFRAS	Global Forum for Rural Advisory Service
GoM	Government of Mongolia
GT	Grant Thornton
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation of UN
MFARD	Mongolian Farmers Association for Rural Development
MoFALI	Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry
MNT	Mongolian Tugrug (CHF 1 = MNT 3'289 as of August 2022)
MTR	Mid-term Review
NSO	National Statistics Office
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PRA	Partner Risk Assessment
SCO	Swiss Cooperation Office
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
ToR	Terms of Reference
VEGI	Sustainable Vegetable Production and Marketing Project
UB	Ulaanbaatar
UN	United Nations
VSSU	Vegetable Seed Service Unit
WB	World Bank

1. Summary

The "Sustainable Vegetable Production and marketing project (VEGI)" started in Mongolia in April 2016 as continuation of the successful Mongolian Potato programme (2014-2016). The Mongolian Potato programme concludes, making Mongolia sustainable in potato production at levels of production, starting from potato seed production to market supply. Now Mongolia is self-reliant in potato production. The VEGI project intends to continue to poverty alleviation through growing vegetable sector in Mongolia, supports for increased and diversified production, storage, processing, marketing, consumption and a conducive legal framework will contribute to improved livelihood of rural households and to a more diversified economy. In order to foster its poverty focus, the VEGI project promotes vegetable gardening and consumption by poor households in peri-urban areas as well, housing schools and kindergartens. The vegetable supply chain to main markets was always an issue. Hence, the marketing and cooperatives development component is an essential part of the VEGI project since the output and supply of vegetables through the farmer cooperatives is now operational, however, only at the project level with few national relatives contacting farmer cooperatives for vegetable supply. The Mongolian Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industries (MoFALI) is the main governmental body involved in all components of the VEGI project, and chairing the project's steering committee.

Now, after 7 years of intervention through 3 phases (phase 1: 04.2016-07.2020 / phase 2: 08.2020-07.2022), the VEGI project Mongolia is producing 100% of all main root vegetable seeds. As well as root vegetables with seed farmers and farmers in the same chain. The 2nd and last phase of VEGI is being implemented by 4 partners under respective direct contracts with SDC:

- 1) The **Mongolian Farmers Association of Rural Development (MFARD)** is the main partner which implemented both phases of the VEGI project and the Mongolian Potato programme since 2004
- 2) The internal governance and financial management of MFARD and its branches having been analysed as very weak and single donor dependent. From the 2nd phase of the project 2 coaching organisations have been engaged to accompany MFARD in securing a professional and recognised national partner, able to receive and manage funds from other sources/donors according to international standards:
 - The **Global Forum for Rural Advisory Service (GFRAS)** – an international NGO based in Switzerland and Denmark - provides on-the-job coaching related to the organisational development and governance of MFARD, based on the Partner Risk Assessment and an audit conducted by SDC in 2019.
 - Grant Thornton (GT) – a Mongolian audit company – provides training and on-the-job coaching to MFARD related among others to its financial management, its legal structure enforcement and its internal Control System.
- 3) The **Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)** of the United Nations is contacted to implement the policy component of the VEGI project since 2016 and is working closely with the Mongolian government on vegetable production policy framework and Good Agriculture Practice (GAP) establishment in Mongolia. Policies to support vegetable production are also now aligning gradually with incentives and subsidies provided to vegetable farmers by the Mongolian government.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, significant emphasis was given by the Mongolian government to secure food supply with several targeted actions to increase domestic vegetable production. Weather in Mongolia stayed relatively humid for last few years favourably affecting general crop sector, however sustainability of the vegetable production is still at the fragile stage.

¹ Seed production, vegetable production, vegetable processing, delivery to market.

The aim of this mandate is to conduct the **final evaluation of all components of the 2 phases of the VEGI project, however with focus on its last phase 2020-2023 - along the 6 usual OECD evaluation criteria** to inform SDC, MFARD and the Mongolian government on the results achieved and further actions necessary to take to ensure sustainability.

2. Context

Mongolia is the least densely populated and the second largest landlocked (1.16 million square kilometres) country in the world. The total population of Mongolia in 2020 was 3.36 million and is projected to reach 4 million by 2030. Agriculture (including livestock) is the second most important economic sector after mining making up 13.2% of the GDP. Climate change is affecting Mongolian vegetable production in a rather favourable way for vegetable production, with warmer seasons getting longer, with average annual temperatures rising by +2°C within the last decade, and seeing milder winters compared to recent past. On the other side, about 40% of glaciers and permafrost have melted within last 30 years, endangering in the mid to long-term water resources needed for irrigation in Western provinces where main seed production is concentrated. Main regions of vegetable cultivation are seeing much higher levels of precipitation per annum, which has visibly improved vegetable production within last few years. Winter greenhouse development is growing in Mongolia, which will allow for continuous supply of various vegetables. Despite a continuous growth during the last few years, the vegetable production in Mongolia does not yet meet the growing demand of its population. Since 2008, the vegetable production area and yield increased constantly reaching 11'600 hectares in 2022 with an output of more than 126'000 tonnes of vegetable (see table 1 here below). Despite steadily growing production and consumption, the vegetable sector is not self-sufficient and Mongolia imports around 30% of its vegetables from China. Developing agriculture as an alternative to mining is a priority for the government. Challenges in production, storage and processing, marketing and legal framework are however affecting the vegetable sector, which has still a growing potential to ensure better livelihood for farmers and the supply of locally grown vegetables for consumers.

Table 1: Vegetable production, import & consumption Mongolia 2017-2022 (MoFALI & NSO)

	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
Area (1000ha)	8.4	8.9	8.4	10.6	11.2	11.3
Production (1000t)	80.6	99.9	98.9	119.8	121.5	Est 126
Productivity (t/ha)	9.6	11.2	11.8	11.3	10.8	11.1
Imports (1000t)	58.1	69.3	59.5	51.6	56	n/a
Consumption (1000t)	140	170	155	165	174	n/a
Annual per capita consumption (kg)	48	55	54	56.4	58.8	58

Most of the vegetable production area is concentrated in the central region (Selenge, Tuv, Darkhan-Uul and Orkhon provinces, as well as the capital city Ulaanbaatar-UB) and makes up around 60% of the area. Seed multiplication is done mainly in Uvs province. The demand for vegetables is more in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. The vegetable production under greenhouses is growing fairly fast during the last few years, but for the moment it makes up less than 7% of the total production.

Home gardening, especially in the urban and semi urban GER district areas² in UB and also in other Almag centres during the summer period is becoming familiar among the households, however it is still not common practice. Home or urban gardening is an opportunity especially for women with no income to reduce costs for food expenditures, increase the income through

² NSO 2021, National Accounts

³ Districts of Ulaanbaatar, where families live in a traditional yurts ("ger") or small wooden houses (land availability but limited access to water and sanitation)

marketing of the surplus and to increase percentage of vegetable in the family diet. A Governmental agricultural programme focuses mainly on the increase of productivity through the increased use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides, especially by commercial farms. The capacities to manage the pesticide sector in Mongolia are very weak. The few research stations and laboratories are underdeveloped and underfurnished with workers capacities not updated as frequently as required advanced technologies. The use of imported products could severely harm the domestic production and threatened the intention of the Government to promote the green development policy. The Government policy in the crop sector is lacking of inclusiveness. Most of the Government support addresses private farms and important investments. There is for the moment an absence of support facilities adapted to small scale farms or enterprises.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put the economy under deep pressures. Despite restrictive action taken by the Government of Mongolia to contain the virus, the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) contracted by 5.3% in 2020, its worst contraction since the early 1990s (ADB, 2021). It is estimated to reach 2.1% in 2022 (World Bank, 2022). A sharp decline in global demand for key commodities and border closures with China were among the key external factors that affected the mining-led economy. The services sector was hit hard by containment measures. While a series of government relief and stimulus packages in the form of tax relief and income support helped mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on households and businesses, it brought a significant pressure on the central budget. Consequently, government debt as a share of GDP has been increasing since 2020, reversing the downward trend of previous years.

3. Project's objectives and hypothesis of change

The project contributes to improved livelihood in Mongolia, through inclusive, gender responsive and sustainable growth of the vegetable sector. In the livelihoods framework, the project contributes mainly to the financial and human capital, through improved production of vegetables for income generation and consumption (health and nutrition). However, this can only be a limited contribution to livelihoods as a whole, as livelihood in Mongolia is a broad concept, and it involves many things than just agriculture, or in particular the vegetable sector.

The project has the following four outcomes:

- 1) Livelihood of rural and peri-urban small holder farmers and women headed households is improved through increased vegetable production to fulfil domestic consumption demand

Interventions continued phase 1's achievements in testing and adopting further vegetables varieties suitable to local specific agro-ecological conditions. The focus is in the exit phase on vegetables such as cabbage, carrot, onion, garlic and turnip which are representing 82% of the vegetable market, shifting from the root vegetables focus of the first phase.

The work done on urban farming in Ulaanbaatar (separate outcome 3 in phase 1) is now merged under this outcome, as it is related to production. Four outputs are targeted for the exit phase, corresponding to elements that are particularly important and sensitive in terms of sustainability and contribution to the outcome.

These are namely: a. Variety testing in in place and Mongolian seed producers are supplying the seed market; b. vegetable production in urban and peri-urban areas, involving vulnerable and resource poor household (especially women headed) in promotion; c. New technologies and approaches are adopted by farmers for diversified vegetable production; d. Standards for vegetables are applied and contribute to the quality of vegetables produced in Mongolia

- 2) Marketing of domestic vegetables (including those from small-scale farmers and women headed households) is well organized, profitable, in line with market trends and consumers' preferences, with primary and secondary cooperatives playing a key role.

Three important issues were identified and found especially important in view of sustainability and institutionalization. These are namely: a. Primary and secondary cooperatives are consolidated and fully operational; b. Local farmer cooperatives have access to wholesale market in Uls; c. Consumption and processing of vegetables is further promoted.

- 3) The organisational development, governance structure and financial management of farmer organisations (including MFARD and vegetable seed service units) is strengthened.

"The organisational development, governance structure and financial management of farmer organisations (including MFARD and Vegetable Seed Service units) is strengthened. This outcome is key for the sustainability of the sub-sector (sustainability and institutionalization of results achieved during the VEGI project is foremost dependent on the sustainability of the main farmer organisations of the project. MFARD as an umbrella organisation which has branches nationwide in form of seed growers, extension centre support, commercial farmers, as well as farmer cooperatives is a main organisation in need for capacity development in financial development, organisational development and governance structure strengthening.

Based on a Partner Risk Assessment and an audit conducted by SDC in 2019 on the whole MFARD organization, the 3 institutions/components (MFARD, extension centres and the Vegetable Seed Service Unit/VSSU) are accompanied by 2 entities specialized in organizational development (GFRAC: Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services) and financial management (GT: Grant Thornton), both mandated by SDC during the last/exit phase only, as these issues had unfortunately not been identified beforehand. These 2 coaches work based on detailed terms of references following previous SDC experience with farmer organisations in other countries (mainly West Africa). GFRAC and GT provide continuous on-the-job coaching to MFARD staff at all levels to review and implement an organisational structure corresponding to the needs and feasibility for MFARD, as well as sound financial management and reporting procedures according to international audit standards. The goal of such a support is that, at the end of the phase, MFARD is able to attract other sources of State/International funding other than SDC's one, by proving its strong organisational and financial management, marking therefore its sustainability.

- 4) Sustainable and inclusive growth of the vegetable sector is fostered by improved policy/legal and institutional framework.

Considering the achievements reached during phase 1, the main issues that are addressed during the exit phase are: a. Law on seeds and varieties, b. Plant Protection Law, c. Good Agricultural Practices (GAP), d. Taxation and vegetable import regulations, and e. Organic support to the Vegetable Seed Service Unit. In 2021, an additional output to support the amendment of the Organic Law was added to provide for potential export of Mongolian organic products.

The creation of an appropriate and conducive legal framework is key towards a fast growing and sustainable industry. Plant legislation falls under two major concepts: a) seed, plant variety, and biotechnology application; and b) plant health protection including plant quarantine and pesticides regulation.

The phase 2 of the VEGI project is based on the results of its phase 1 as well as the related evaluation, which will be made available to the evaluation team.

Plant health protection is one the pillars of the vegetable sector's sustainability. Plant health is globally increasingly under threat. Climate change and human activities have altered ecosystems, reducing biodiversity and creating new niches where pests can thrive. At the same time, international travel and trade has tripled in volume in the last decade and can quickly spread pests and diseases around the world causing great damage to plants and the environment. FAO estimates that up to 40% of food crops are lost due to plant pests and diseases annually. All these are potential threats to the Mongolian ecosystem.

Impact hypothesis: Improved marketing of vegetables, including market information and transparent market mechanisms, will create a "pull" from the market (more attractive prices at the farm gate, reduced seasonal price fluctuations). A well-managed marketing of vegetables by multiple market players will improve the effectiveness of the system, i.e. a better use of already existing storage and marketing facilities especially in UB. Farmers will be encouraged to increase their production, and with a better organization, they will have improved access to the market through collective action (e.g. primary and secondary cooperatives). This will increase their bargaining power. The increased value generated in the vegetable sector (backyard production for home consumption and marketing) will improve livelihood security of resource poor and vulnerable groups in urban and peri-urban areas (in particular women) through additional income generation and better nutrition. Improved policies, legal and institutional framework conditions related to the vegetable sector will create a more favourable context for the vegetable sector in general. Thanks to improved attractiveness through enhanced demand, farmers will invest more in vegetable production (inputs, equipment and investments) and increase their supply of the domestic market, both in quantity and in quality. Finally, through a revitalized vegetable sector also thanks to favourable framework conditions, the enhanced domestic demand will be satisfied by the local production, offering new opportunities also to vulnerable groups, creating jobs (small scale processing, inputs supply, and marketing) income and increased consumption.

4. Project's intervention strategy

Guided by sustainability, institutionalisation and ownership, the following principles will be applied:

- **Inclusiveness:** support approaches that involve smallholders rather than large companies. Moreover, the urban farming component under outcome 1 particularly focuses on resource-poor and marginalised groups, which does not exclude that some non-poor households can also be associated in specific cases (e.g. water management).
- **Gender equality:** women are specifically targeted each time possible, strengthening them in their sphere of responsibility within the farming households, and along the vegetable value chain including processing, striving to work on gender relations with their husbands.
- **Innovation:** through research-action, particularly at seed testing and on marketing level.
- **Subsidiarity:** SDC funding shall decrease as stakeholders are progressively investing more of their own resources.

Outcome 1 follows the value chain approach. Interventions continue phase 1's achievements in testing and adopting further vegetables varieties suitable to changing agro-ecological conditions. The focus is on vegetables such as cabbage, carrot, onion, garlic and turnip which represent 80% of the vegetable market. The work done on urban farming in Ulaanbaatar (former outcome 3 in phase 1) is now merged under this outcome, as it is related to production. Like in phase 1, this outcome is mandated to MFARD, which continues to sub-contract the urban farming component to the Mongolian Women Farmer Association (MWFA).

Outcome 2 follows the market system approach. Interventions aim at ensuring continuous vegetable supply conditions, contractual supply for all transactions, stabilisation of sale prices, taxation, profit and vegetable sale income delivery to farmers, regulated by a relevant concise legal framework. The focus is on 4 main intervention areas: a) Primary and secondary cooperatives capacity development, b) Operational Wholesale market in UB; c) Support to

processing enterprises; and d) Consumption increase through intervention at the kindergarten and school level. Phase 2 has furthermore upgraded the urban model streets concept developed in UB into five province centres, in synergy with the SDC's Education for Sustainable Development project (ESD), by involving schools supported by SDC in vegetable promotional and consumption activities. Like in phase 1, this outcome is mandated to MFARD.

Outcome 3 follows good governance management principles, coupled with market opening principles. The main intervention aims to tackle the issues that resulted from the mentioned CRA of MFARD and the audit of VSSU are: a) Development and implementation of a long-term strategic plant/business model to ensure MFARD (MWFA) and VSSU's good governance, identification of resources and financial sustainability beyond the VEGI project; b) Provision of agriculture services by regional extension centres to farmers; c) National recognition of a self-sustainable vegetable seed service. This outcome has been mandated to the Global Forum for Rural Advisory Services (GFRAC) and Grant Thornton (GT) audit company, who both apply continuous on-the-job coaching/capacity building based on specific terms of reference required by similar successful supports provided by SDC to farmer organizations in West Africa (especially in Benin, AP-ODP and PADDER projects).

Outcome 4 pursues a policy and advocacy approach. Following the achievements of phase 1, 9th outcome will focus on: a) Policy support to the MWFA to facilitate the approval of the Law on seeds and varieties drafted and submitted in phase 1; b) Revision of the Plant Protection and Food Security Law; c) Strengthen capacity to implement Good Agricultural Practices (GAP); d) Review the taxation and vegetable import regulations; e) Organic support to the Vegetable Seed Service unit. This outcome is implemented by FAO (coordination), synergies with the SDC ESD project was promoted for replication and sustainability. Further synergies with ADB's infrastructure development project, IFAD and JICA are envisaged and explored.

5. Main project's achievements

Outcome 1: Variety testing started 11 years ago as part of the exit phase of the former SDC-funded Mongolian potato programme. Annually, around 670 vegetable species are put into the field at the experimental fields of the Institute of Plant and Agricultural Sciences (IPAS). 50 for 15 new species of seeds are produced domestically. Main root vegetables (carrots, turnip, beetroot) are now produced to cover domestic demand by 100% with cabbages, onions and green leafy vegetables steadily increasing to produce 95% of domestic demand. A seed multiplication system is now in place, enabling and promoting farmers with quality seeds. In 2022 the Vegetable Seed Service Unit (VSSU) had a turnover of MNT 1.13 billion where MNT 0.3 billion accounted for domestically produced seeds.

Over 6000 households are now cultivating 33000 m² of farmland at their home yard from over 30 model streets established within the project through home visits by urban households living on one street. The promoted model street concept proved successful and local governments are replicating the concept through their own funds or investments from different sources. New technologies are being tested within the project to improve vegetable production, yield and open field production of otherwise greenhouse vegetables is being tested in various locations of Mongolia. Five new technologies for vegetable production and 27 new machines and methods are used for vegetable production by the end of 2021. Two new standards for vegetable production are now approved and applied for vegetable production as well as new methods are being used for diagnosis and selection of various viral diseases. Farmers are now increasingly being certified in the application of Good agricultural practices (GAP). By the end of 2021, 23 farmers are certified. MFARD is stepping up the GAP certification and auditing practices through collaboration with externally funded projects, programmes and professional associations.

Outcome 2: The Law on Cooperatives issued in 2021 allowed nine primary and six secondary cooperatives established within the VEGI project to actively engage in trading, providing essential connection of farmers to markets. Through establishing trade contracts with major

supermarkets and restaurants, the cooperatives have a turnover of MNT 2.3 billion. Farmers cooperatives also extended their products through primary processing of vegetables for additional value generation. Nine farmer cooperatives setup at the production level now have a direct access to the capital city's market, delivering fresh products to consumers. Consumption of vegetables is promoted through delivery of training and demonstrations for schools with 44 kindergartens and schools now benefiting from better diet for children. The promotion of diets with vitamin rich vegetable varieties is being constantly developed and delivered to public.

Outcome 3: Grant Thornton auditing company started working with MFARD in last quarter of 2021. It mandates currently runs until end of October 2022. The Global Forum of Rural Advisory Services (GFRAS) started in January 2022 for organizational capacity building. Its current mandate goes until the end of the project by 31.07.2023. A capacity building training for staff from MFARD, VSSU, VEGI PLU, and Agricultural extension centers are being held both at the field and in class on a range of topics including strengthening MFARD operation, preparation of consolidated financial and operational reports, improvement of quality and accessibility of services for members, enabling effective and permanent communication between HQ and BOs, and strengthening members' base and engagement. A new Organizational structure and a long-term strategy for ensuring sustainability of the MFARD are being developed and should be operational by the time of this evaluation.

Outcome 4: The law on plant seeds and varieties was approved on 29 October 2021 coming into force from 1 January 2022, allowing local farmers to get centralized information database containing certified, locally adapted and persistent seeds and varieties. Using this, farmers will be able to select an appropriate variety for their local conditions, increase productivity and obtain decent harvest which will also enable them to generate income through agriculture. The law encourages releasing new plant varieties by protecting breeder's varieties as an intellectual property. Furthermore, it provides a positive impact on the food security index of the country. The FAO is now actively engaged in developing 13 regulations and five regulations are approved by now. The plant protection law is in process of being revised and approved by the Parliament. In order to intensify the implementation of the "Plant and plant derived products tracing and pesticide registration and control system" (PTPRCS: www.plant.mofa.gov.mn) - which was developed under the previous phase of the project, trainings are provided to farmers and agriculture enterprises. Currently, a total of 3376 out of 16292 farmers, 490 agricultural enterprises out of 1498 and 576992 hectares of crop fields (which equals around 1/3 of the total fields) have been registered in the system. Also, a total of 18 companies that have imported pesticides are fully registered in the system.

The Output 4.6 on strengthening the legal framework of organic food and agriculture was newly added to the project, starting from April 2022, on demand of the Mongolian parliamentary group on Food and Agriculture, with intention to revise the law on organic food. The related work is being carried out to improve marketing and export options for organic food produced in Mongolia.

8. Objectives of the evaluation mandate

The general objective of the mandate is to evaluate the current exit and previous phase of the VEGI project. The evaluation must apply the usual 6 international OECD-DAC criteria for the evaluation of development projects (relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectivity, impact and sustainability). Since this is the last/exit phase of the projects, the conclusions and recommendations should clearly distinguish which are the elements that:

- are already sustainable and do not need further external support;
- are not yet sustainable and could/should be taken up by another development actor in Mongolia (e.g. Government, donor, NGOs, other international/regional projects, domestic and/or foreign companies);
- should be stopped

10/15

Recommendations of the External Final Evaluation need to take into account the context changes or changes in the rules and the assumptions.

The following elements have to be specifically addressed/embodied into the evaluation:

1. To assess if the VEGI project scope and design provides comprehensive recommendations for the national agriculture policy in view of minimized sustainability and further development aid public and other donors' funds.
2. To assess the current status of the established Vegetable Seed Service Unit (VSSU) and to provide recommendations on how this VSSU should be improved in order to be sustainably operated with specific actors which should be in charge of it. Make a special assessment on the VSSU regulation and provide comments and recommendations. Make additionally also a special analysis on the sustainability of hybrid seed imports and distribution especially for small scale farmers.
3. To assess progress in Outcome 2 (Marketing Support) and especially the collaboration with private companies in storage and marketing. Provide recommendations on how the cooperatives and farmer organizations could improve effectiveness, efficiency and outreach, especially in order to support income generation for small scale farmers (less than 1 ha).
4. To assess the progress of outcome 3 with a view of assessing if the coaching and trainings provided to the MFARD and its branches by the GT Audit and GFRAS are meaningful, if and to which extent the building of MFARD capacities and its sustainability are reaching international management standards for MFARD to become an independent and professional farmer organization. To assess coaching and training provision by both GT audit and GFRAS and to provide recommendations for the sustainability of MFARD.
5. To assess PAC interventions on the policy development with specific laws revised and implemented, as well as the extent of ownership of the Government of Mongolia on these issues.

As Switzerland is completely phasing out of Mongolia in 2024, the recommendations should mainly be targeted to the project's partners and coaches. But SDC remains also interested by recommendations still relevant for its own institutional/on-site learning and networks. Finally, the evaluation is to suggest a list of issues worth to be capitalized in form of capitalization products (videos, posters, booklet, media articles, cartoons, etc.)

7. Methodology

The evaluation is to apply the 6 OECD-DAC criteria for evaluating development projects, including relevance, coherence, effectiveness (wider/understanded, positive/negative results), efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluation is also expected to assess the extent to which gender, governance mainstreaming and digitalization have been reflected in the course of project implementation.

In addition to reviewing the narrative project documents and other relevant background documentations, the evaluation team will collect and analyze primary and secondary data through online and in-person meetings with project partners, relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries, as necessary. A workshop with attendance of key stakeholders to present and obtain feedback on the evaluation findings is to be organized and held. The in-country mission will take place in the capital city of Ulaanbaatar, as well as in the provinces of Uvsa (western Mongolia), Dakhin and Erdenet (northern Mongolia).

In addition, the evaluator needs to assess to which extent the partners have addressed the issue of PSEAH (Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment) in the project (rules, tools, activity, staff training, etc.)

The minimum following mistakes are expected:

<http://www.un.org/development/desa/dest/2015/>

11/15

- Preparation based on the available documentation (see under chapter 11).
- Briefing with SDC in Mongolia and the 4 main partners as well as the MoFALI. Briefing can be held online if needed.
- Meetings in Ulaanbaatar with key stakeholders (among others: MoFALI, FAO, ADB, IFAD, JICA)
- Field mission, including meetings with all key field stakeholders (Almag and Soums Governments, Extension centers' workers, IPAS, seed producers, member farmers of the MFARD)
- Facilitate a workshop of key stakeholders to receive a feedback on and consolidate findings
- Debriefing with SDC in Mongolia, and the 4 main partners as well as the MoFALI at SDC office in Ulaanbaatar
- Report writing

8. Deliverables

The following documents must be exclusively submitted to SDC, in paper and electronic versions:

- 1) Briefing presentation, explaining how the evaluation will be conducted.
- 2) Debriefing presentation
- 3) Provisory evaluation report
- 4) Final evaluation report in English and in Mongolian, with a maximum of 30 pages (without annexes). The report will focus on results (impacts, outcomes, outputs) and has to be organized according to the 6 OECD-DAC evaluation criteria. The focus should mainly be at impact and outcome levels.

9. Description of tasks for the consultants and required profiles

The evaluation will be performed by an external team comprising of 3 members, preferably gender-balanced: two international consultants and a national consultant. A translator can be added when relevant for part of the mission.

An SDC peer reviewer from SDC HQ or another field office might join some parts of the evaluation. The evaluation will be also joined by the Monitoring and evaluation officer of the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Light Industry (MoFALI), who expressed a strong interest in this project. These 2 persons should be integrated in the evaluation team but should not be part of the offer, as her/his costs will be covered directly by SDC, respectively the MoFALI.

Consultants both international or national involved in evaluation, planning and mandated by the both Mongolian Potato programme and VEGI project in past are not eligible for this mandate.

The consultants will have the following roles and profiles:

Consultants:	Roles:	Required qualifications:
Team Leader: International consultant in Agronomy and food security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Responsible for the global mandate's planning and execution; > Briefing and debriefing with SDC and project's stakeholders; > Responsible for the deliverables (see chapter 8). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Master degree in agronomy, agroecology, food security, nutrition or any related topic; > In depth experience and expertise (at least 10 years) in agronomy, vegetable cultivation, seed production, farmer participatory and inclusive farmers' community development issues > International expert with M&E and vegetable/agricultural background, experienced to carry out MTR's and Evaluations. Previous experiences in

12/15

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mongolia and/or Vegetable sector and issues > Extensive working experience and in depth knowledge of facilitation methods (at least 10 years) > Value chain development, market systems development > Experience in knowledge management, documentation and reporting writing > Excellent English skills, speaking and writing > Previous proven successful experience as evaluation team leader (allocations to be provided with the offer)
Team member: International consultant on organizational development, value chain development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Responsible for the organizational development and capacity building of farmer organizations (cooperatives, government, organizational development, market development) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Master in Governance, Law and/or Economics, private sector, enterprise development, marketing, or other relevant similar topics > Extensive experience in organizational development and governance issues > In depth experience (at least 5 years) in rural income generation and rural economic development > Experience in market access, cooperative development and farmers' organisation > Experience in knowledge management, documentation and reporting writing > Excellent English skills, speaking and writing
Team member: National Consultant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Support the Team Leader, esp. for context analysis. > Responsible for logistical support organization. > Responsible for translation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Vegetable/Agricultural local expert with M&E skills and/or agriculture/vegetable background and experience. > Experience in livestock value chain development, cooperative and rural SME development > In depth knowledge of herding and rural livelihood and income generation > Excellent English and Mongolian language skills, speaking and writing
Potentially SDC Peer Reviewer (to be confirmed). To be chosen by SDC Mongolia (therefore not part of the offer)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > Share SDC's similar experience. > Participates only in some key milestones of the mission (to be agreed upon with the team leader and SDC Mongolia) > Provide inputs in the reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> > SDC staff > Experience in Agriculture & Food Security, more specifically on agriculture development, organizational and/or value chain development, financing mechanisms, etc. > Excellent English skills, speaking and writing > Available and authorized to spend some days on the mandate

13/15



10. Duration and resources

The mandate (including preparation and report writing) will last a maximum of 50 days for the whole team, including preparation, in-country mission and report writing. The offer must contain a detailed mission's planning with a clear work and days repartition between the team members, taking the following agenda into consideration. The consultants can suggest another timing option, however with the delivery of the final evaluation report no later than 16.07.2023.

No.	Milestones	Deadline	Responsible
1.	Call for proposals	30.09.2022	SDC
2.	Offer submission	By 31.10.2022	Consultants
3.	Provisory adjudication	By 07.11.2022	SDC
4.	Revised offer	By 17.11.2022	Consultants
5.	Final adjudication, Contract preparation and signature	By 30.11.2022	SDC & Consultants
6.	Briefing with SDC and all 4 partners + MoFALI	By beginning of March 2023	SDC & Consultants
7.	Field mission in: UB, Dakhlan & Erdeneet, as well as Uvs provinces (Uvs to be visited at the end)	Between mid-April and mid-May 2023	Consultants
8.	Debriefing with SDC	Mid-May 2023	SDC & Consultants
9.	Provisory report in English	By 04.06.2023	Consultants
10.	Feedbacks of SDC and partners + MoFALI	By 12.06.2023	SDC
11.	Final report in English	By 18.06.2023	Consultants
12.	Final report in Mongolian	By 23.06.2023	Consultants

11 Offer

Based on these Terms of References, an offer is expected **by 31st October 2022**. Only offers composed of a full team with the required profiles will be considered.

The offer must comprise:

- 1) a **narrative offer** of maximum 10 pages (without annexes) including:
 - > Understanding of the mandate;
 - > Methodological approach;
 - > Detailed schedule (chronogram);
 - > Consultants' profiles (with Curriculum Vitae in annexes) , a table of repartition of tasks between consultants, and their availability during the period;
 - > List of similar missions conducted (highlighted in colour in the CVs), with references in annexes.
- 2) a **financial offer**, comprising of:
 - > a submission letter with date and signature, showing the offers total amount;
 - > the attached fulfilled budget format. In addition to the consultants' fees and per diem, the offer must contain all the necessary costs to conduct the mission under the team leader's responsibility. The costs of the team members and of the potential translator

14/15

have to be sub-contracted by the lead consultant, and shown in the specific "sub-contracts" part of the SDC budget format.

The funding of this mandate as well as the administrative-financial follow-up is of the exclusive responsibility of the Swiss Cooperation Office in Mongolia. The consultants are accountable only to SDC Mongolia.

Offers are to be sent per E-mail to:

Mrs. Baigalma GONGOR

National Programme Officer for Agriculture and Food Security

E-mail: baigalma.gongor@eda.admin.ch

Direct phone: +41 58 48 45071

With copy to:

Mr. Benoit MEYER-BISCH

Deputy Head of Cooperation

E-mail: benoit.meyer-bisch@eda.admin.ch

Direct phone: +41 58 465 04 52

12. Documentation available for the selected consultants only

- > Swiss Cooperation Strategy for Mongolia 2018-2021 and Swiss Phase out programme 2022-2024
- > VEGI project document phase 1 (2016-2019) and phase 2 (2019-2023)
- > VEGI Mid-term Review report 2015
- > SDC Credit Proposal for VEGI phase 2 (2019-2023)
- > SDC Entry Proposal for VEGI 2016
- > Swiss Annual Reports 2017-2021 on Its Cooperation Strategy
- > Relevant Government policy documents (MoFALI) on food security, vegetables, crop production, Green Development
- > Partner Risk Assessment (PRA) report of 2019 on MFARD
- > Audit report of 2019 on MFARD
- > Annual reports VEGI 2016-2021 and SDC management responses
- > GFRAS reports on organizational capacity development coaching and trainings and assessment of the MFARD, as well as SDC related management responses.
- > GT Audit report on financial management coaching and trainings and assessment of the MFARD, as well as SDC related management responses.
- > Any other document deemed relevant during the mission.

15/15