Pastoral Nomads take Climate Action in Mongolia

![Girl milking a yak in Arkhangai aimag.](image)

The pioneer project engages Mongolian nomads in the mountains and steppes of a globally important biodiversity heritage. The aim is to enable ecosystem recovery and carbon uptake of rangelands that typically suffer from degradation. Overgrazing, the main cause for degradation will be addressed by improving land and animal herding management practices, protecting key wildlife species and habitats and generating alternative income sources.

3 wells dug

20000 tonnes of CO₂/year sequestered

200 sapling in forest areas planted

The project involves over 100 herder households of four herder groups (Hongor Ovoo heseg, Ikh Am heseg, Dert heseg, Dulaan Khairkhan) in the Mongolian mountains, steppes and desert steppes. Generally, the herders are characterized by low income levels and depend on their livestock and natural resources. The groups cover rangelands of around 70'000ha which are typically experiencing degradation. Degradation is driven by overgrazing and caused by four main factors: Firstly, the groups have adopted more sedentary lifestyles and reduced the seasonal mobility in comparison to their ancestors. Secondly, the families tend to keep larger

**Project type:**
Land Use and Forestry

**Project location:**
Mongolia Arkhangai Aimag (region)

**Project status:**
In operation, credits available

**Annual CO₂ reduction:**
20,000 t

**Situation without project**
Soil erosion, overgrazing and biodiversity loss

**Project standard**

**Impressions**

The nomad herder groups in the Undurshireet soum district depend on Yaks as an income source.

Overgrazing leads to the degradation of biodiverse rangelands that are covered by nomad herder groups in Mongolia.
herds that exceed the carrying capacity of the land. Thirdly, pastures close
to urban facilities and markets are under particularly high pressure
because migrating herders from the whole country gather in these areas.
Finally, the herders compete with an increasing number of mines in the
region, which consume large amounts of natural resources. Due to these
developments - without any intervention - the grasslands are in danger of
further degradation.

The community-led initiative aims to sequester carbon, conserve
biodiversity as well as to improve herders' livelihoods and well-being. This
will be achieved by a set of activities: The herders receive direct payments
for ecosystem services (PES) in exchange for actively contributing to
carbon sequestration and conserving biodiversity. In this way, herders are
incentivized to improve land management and reduce grazing pressure by
having fewer livestock and moving more often. In addition, the project
encourages herders to strengthen the traditional groups called “Hesegs”.
This allows to pool resources and skills and to produce and sell finished
products instead of raw materials while achieving higher prices.
Diversifying livelihoods in that way contributes to improve the herders’
well-being. Furthermore, the herders are incentivized to cooperate to
protect key wildlife species and habitats such as the Mongolian gazelle,
ibex, red deer, marmot and saxaul forests. To support this goal, activities
such as licensed logging, planting seedlings and biodiversity surveys will
be conducted.

The project was set up as a result of a research project by the University of
Leicester (UK) and is implemented in collaboration with the Mongolian
Society for Range Management. MSRM is a nationally recognised NGO with
a substantial track record in implementing community/herder group
projects and programs in Mongolia since 2007. Money from carbon credits
is used to pay participating herder groups for their engagement in
grassland protection as well as for related activities such as trainings in
sustainable rangeland management, tree planting as well as collaborative
production and marketing of finished products.

This project contributes to 5 SDGs:

1. **Reduced Poverty**
   - Improved household income from sale of wild fruits and nuts,
     collaboratively processed milk products and felt production

4. **Quality Education**
   - The nomads are trained in sustainable rangeland
     management, tree planting and collaborative production and
     marketing.

6. **Clean Water and Sanitation**
   - Three wells were dug to enhance water supply in under-used
     pasture areas.
Sequestration of over 20'000t CO₂/year

Planting of 200 saplings in forest areas and establishment of a tree nursery