

IMPACT SHEET: Switching On the Green Economy (SOGE)

Greener Businesses, Stronger Systems



Building the systems, markets and opportunities for a greener Mongolia.

8 DECENT WORK AND
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9 INDUSTRY, INNOVATION
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



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CONSUMPTION
AND PRODUCTION



13 CLIMATE
ACTION



15 LIFE
ON LAND



16 PEACE, JUSTICE
AND STRONG
INSTITUTIONS



17 PARTNERSHIPS
FOR THE GOALS



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Mongolia is transitioning towards a greener, more resource-efficient and circular economy, with the agri-food and beverage sector playing an important role in this transition. The sector includes a large number of MSMEs whose production and consumption practices have significant implications for resource use, waste and environmental performance. Against this context, the EU funded SWITCH-Asia Switching On the Green Economy (SOGE) project was implemented across Mongolia, focusing on the agri-food and beverage sector and working with businesses, government institutions, standards and certification bodies, retailers and consumers to strengthen the foundations for sustainable production and consumption.

CHALLENGE

Mongolian agri-food and beverage MSMEs had limited knowledge and capacity to adopt sustainable and circular production practices and to measure and improve their environmental performance. Awareness and uptake of eco-labelling and sustainability standards were low, while businesses faced gaps in resource efficiency, waste management, certification and access to appropriate technical and financial support. This limited their ability to improve sustainability performance and demonstrate it to the market.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

SOGE aimed to support Mongolia's agri-food and beverage sector in adopting more sustainable and circular production and consumption practices by strengthening business capacity, certification systems, market incentives and consumer demand.

The specific objectives include:

- To develop eco-labelling and ESG assessment standards, procedures and a supporting policy framework.
- To strengthen MSMEs' and retailers' capacity to adopt sustainable business practices, green strategies and circular economy approaches.
- To establish and test a digital green (ESG) certification platform and credible verification system.
- To connect ESG-certified products and businesses with retailers and green finance opportunities.
- To promote eco-labelling, green certification and more sustainable consumption through behaviour change and awareness-raising campaigns.

TARGET GROUPS

- Micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in Mongolia's agri-food and beverage sector.
- Retailers and business associations supporting the sector.
- Consumers (especially aged 18-35) engaged through awareness and behaviour change activities.
- Government, standards, accreditation and financial-sector stakeholders engaged in developing and implementing green certification and market mechanisms.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Building the foundations for green certification

SOGE worked with government, standards bodies, businesses and technical experts to build the foundations for sustainable production and certification in Mongolia's agri-food and beverage sector. The project supported the adoption of seven ISO environmental standards, developed an ESG assessment and certification system, and established practical guidance for businesses to measure and improve their environmental and sustainability performance. Training, mentoring and tailored consultancy helped MSMEs turn these standards into practical business improvements.

Connecting green businesses with the market

SOGE connected certification with the wider market. An online ESG Certification Platform was developed and tested with 22 MSMEs, resulting in green certification and 127 certified products. The system was integrated with large-scaled retailer networks, allowing certified products and suppliers to be recognised within existing retail systems. Green finance linkages and consumer campaigns complemented this work, while public engagement and the 2026 Green Choice campaign helped make sustainable products more visible to consumers.



LESSONS LEARNED

SOGE was implemented in a changing government and regulatory environment. Repeated changes in government leadership, institutional restructuring and evolving policy priorities delayed the revision and formal adoption of the national eco-labelling framework. The introduction of the new Law on Organic Products also created uncertainty around the respective roles of organic certification, eco-labelling and ESG certification. SOGE responded by maintaining dialogue with successive government counterparts, refining the proposed framework through consultations and continuing technical development while regulatory decisions were pending.

The project also faced delays in developing the certification system and connecting it to the market. Rather than stopping implementation, SOGE adapted its approach by progressing the voluntary ESG certification scheme, strengthening practical support to MSMEs, and sequencing consumer and retailer activities around the availability of certified products. This enabled the project to demonstrate a functioning certification model while laying the groundwork for longer-term institutionalisation.

SOGE demonstrated that a green transition is possible when sustainable business practices are matched with the right market conditions. Enterprises were more able to translate sustainability ambitions into practice when technical support, credible certification, market incentives and consumer demand worked together. The project also showed the importance of strong institutional ownership, early stakeholder engagement and careful sequencing, with practical mentoring and market-facing activities becoming particularly effective once certified products and supporting systems were in place.

PROJECT ACHIEVEMENT

SOGE helped turn sustainable production from an emerging concept into a practical pathway for Mongolia's agri-food and beverage businesses. The project supported the adoption of 7 ISO environmental standards, reached 1,938 MSMEs and retailers, and helped 22 MSMEs complete independent ESG certification, covering 127 products. By connecting certification with green finance, retailers and consumers, SOGE demonstrated how greener business practices can become part of the market rather than remain a standalone environmental initiative.





ENKHTSATSRAL
Namkhajantsan
People in Need INGO

“ SOGE has shown that the green transition is possible when we build the systems that allow businesses to participate in it. With the support of the EU and SWITCH-Asia, we brought together standards, certification, ESG practices, finance and market demand to create an enabling environment for Mongolian businesses. I am proud that we have not only supported businesses to take action, but helped build foundations that can continue driving Mongolia’s green transition beyond the project. ”

Long-term project sustainability

SOGE has established a lasting institutional mechanism for continuing ESG certification in Mongolia. The Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association now has a dedicated system and capacity to manage ESG certification, assess businesses and authorise the use of the ESG label, supported by trained assessors, auditors and verifiers. This provides a basis for continuing to certify MSMEs and expanding the system beyond the project.

The certification system is also increasingly connected to the market. Retailer chains (including CU and Carrefour) have incorporated ESG-certified products or suppliers into their systems, creating an incentive for businesses to maintain and improve their sustainability performance. The standards, certification methodology and digital platform developed through SOGE can therefore continue to support businesses and market actors after project completion.

Project contributions to Climate Change Mitigation and SDGs

SOGE contributed to climate change mitigation by helping agri-food and beverage MSMEs measure and improve their environmental performance. Businesses received support to assess greenhouse gas emissions, improve resource and energy efficiency, reduce waste and identify practical opportunities to make production more sustainable. ESG certification provided a structured way for businesses to measure, improve and demonstrate these practices.

The project’s strongest contribution was to [SDG 12](#): Responsible Consumption and Production, by promoting sustainable production practices, resource efficiency, waste reduction and more responsible consumption. By connecting businesses with certification, retailers and consumers, SOGE helped create market conditions where sustainability could be recognised and rewarded.

The project also contributed to SDGs 8, 9, 13, 16 and 17 through green business development, sustainability infrastructure, climate action, institutional cooperation and partnerships. Green business training and finance supported [SDG 8](#), while the ESG certification platform and national standards strengthened [SDG 9](#). GHG assessment and resource efficiency supported [SDG 13](#), while policy and institutional cooperation contributed to [SDG 16](#) and partnerships to [SDG 17](#).

The project also contributed indirectly to SDGs 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14 and 15 through more sustainable agri-food production, resource and waste management, women’s participation, inclusive business support and reduced environmental pressures. These contributions are interconnected: improving how businesses produce and manage resources can reduce environmental impacts while supporting more inclusive economic opportunities and more responsible consumption.

Impacts at a Glance

Economic Impact	• 127 products from 22 MSMEs were ESG-certified under the project. • 16.7% of surveyed MSMEs/retailers reported expanded market access. • ESG certification/criteria integrated into retailer–supplier systems at CU and Carrefour
Environmental Impact	• Reduced resource and energy use. • Reduced waste generation; improved waste management and recycling. • Reduced GHG emissions through improved production and resource efficiency.
Social Impact	• ESG assessments and tailored consultancy addressed occupational health and safety, alongside food safety, internal procedures, risk management and environmental performance. • Participating SMEs received practical recommendations to strengthen workplace and operational safety. • Public engagement activities promoted awareness of sustainable consumption and green products among communities, youth and families. 3,331 people participated in behaviour-change activities, including 11 in-person events. • Gender was integrated across MSME capacity-building and engagement activities. Women represented more than 80% of participants receiving technical support, exceeding the project target of 50%.
Climate Benefits	• SMEs covered in the tailored consultancy completed GHG emissions calculations using the carbon accounting function integrated into the ESG Certification Platform. The results helped enterprises identify opportunities to reduce emissions through improved resource management, energy efficiency, logistics and production processes.
Green Finance	• 14 MSMEs benefitted from better access to finance with total of MNT 2.48 billion (EUR 620,000) leveraged. • ESG-linked loan launched by Khan Bank, linking business sustainability performance with access to finance. Five additional banks and financial institutions committed to developing/offering similar ESG-linked financing, creating a pathway to scale sustainable finance for MSMEs.
Target Group Engagement	• 1,032 MSMEs and retailers engaged through the Accelerator Programme, representing 1,936 individual participants. • 4,962 reactions across social media. PIN and CCR produced 130+ communication pieces, reaching approximately 488,000 people through their digital and media channels. The 2026 consumer campaign generated approximately 5.5 million cumulative impressions across social media, outdoor media, LED screens and influencer/KOL content.
Policy Development	• 7 ISO environmental standards adopted nationally; ESG reporting standards and ESG Assessment Guideline developed; 5 policy recommendations submitted to the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. • 30+ sectoral consultations and 20+ technical working group meetings, plus a high-level policy dialogue during Mongolian Sustainable Finance Week and targeted engagement with the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, the Mongolian Agency for Standard and Metrology, Mongolian National Accreditation Service and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry.
Europe-Asia Cooperation	• Study tour and institutional experience-sharing visits; meetings with government agencies, certification organisations and leading agri-food enterprises; participation in the ISEAL Symposium; peer-learning and mentoring during local experience-sharing visits.



FUNDING

EUR 2,200,000
(EU Contribution: 80%)



DURATION

2022 - June 2026



PARTNERS



People in Need (PIN)



Caritas Czech Republic (CCR)



Development Solutions NGO
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Mongolian Sustainable Finance
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