

May 2016

Implemented by:



Mongolian Farmers' Association for
Rural Development NGO

Swiss Agency for Development
and Cooperation SDC

INCLUSIVE AND SUSTAINABLE VEGETABLE PRODUCTION AND MARKETING PROJECT

FACTS

Project name:

Inclusive and Sustainable Vegetable
Production and Marketing Project
(VEGI)

Duration:

2016 - 2019

Budget:

CHF 5.0 million

Target group:

- Small-scale vegetable farmers and vegetable seed producers
- Households in the ger districts of Ulaanbaatar, Darkhan and Erdenet

Implementing Partners:

- Mongolian Women Farmers' Association NGO
- Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)



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Harvest. Mandal soum, Selenge aimag.

BACKGROUND

In the years following Mongolia's transition to a market economy, the crop sector slumped - a regression from which it took years to recover. Recent years have seen a resurgence in the sector and steadily growing levels of production and consumption. However, despite the gains that have been made, the vegetable sector is still not self-sufficient and Mongolia imports about 40 percent of its vegetables mainly from China. The development of agriculture as an economic alternative to mining is a priority for the government. It has the potential to provide better livelihoods for farmers and bolster the domestic supply of locally grown

vegetables, but a number of challenges must first be addressed, including those related to production, storage, processing, marketing and the prevailing legal framework. Building on SDC's successful support for Mongolia's potato sector, the VEGI Project will contribute to poverty alleviation through the growth of the vegetable sector and will result in increased and diversified production, improved vegetable storage, processing, marketing and consumption, and a conducive legal framework that will translate to better livelihoods for rural households and a more diversified economy.

SDC's Strategic Goal:

To contribute to equitable and sustainable social and economic development in Mongolia

GOAL

The project will contribute to the improved livelihoods of vegetable growers (particularly small-scale farmers in rural areas and poor households in urban and peri-urban areas) through the inclusive, gender-balanced and sustainable growth of the vegetable sector.

THE VEGI PROJECT HAS FOUR INTERCONNECTED OUTCOMES:

• **Outcome 1:** Increased domestic vegetable production through better varieties, seeds, improved technology and know-how. The challenges facing most small-scale farmers are addressed by making available affordable seeds of adapted varieties, providing technical assistance for vegetable production and protection, access to trainings, support to acquire the requisite equipment, and strengthening organisational capacities. A comprehensive support programme will not only increase production, it will also improve overall quality and better fulfil market requirements.

• **Outcome 2:** The incomes of small-scale vegetable farmers and female-headed households are increased through improved and more inclusive vegetable markets. The project facilitates contact between organised farmers and the private sector in order to create viable and sustained links, and ensures better market pull to achieve higher and more stable prices for farmers. The project will provide support by strengthening farmer organisations' capacities in marketing, training leaders in business skills, providing market information, facilitating negotiations with the private sector, encouraging collective action for storage, processing and marketing, advocating for a higher level of vegetable consumption, and providing trainings on vegetable consumption for consumers.

• **Outcome 3:** Vegetable production and consumption by poor households in urban and peri-urban areas are increased through vegetable gardening. A growing number of people from rural areas are migrating to cities, where they live in poor conditions in peri-urban ger districts. The production, consumption

and marketing of vegetables are among the strategies aimed at improving their livelihoods. Support for the promotion of vegetable production and information campaigns, and provisions for tools and irrigation systems are planned in selected neighbourhoods via a community-based approach.



Farmers' market in Darkhan-Uul aimag.

• **Outcome 4:** The policy/legal and institutional frameworks of the vegetable sector are improved. Legal provisions covering vegetable varieties, seeds and pesticides are either non-existent or outdated. There is a pressing need to ensure those frameworks conform to international standards. This will be done by facilitating the export of Mongolian products and by increasing the food safety of local production. Support for, and expansion of, the initiatives and pilot projects aimed at promoting integrated pest management and organic agriculture by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture will also be provided.

Results of the vegetable variety testing within the Mongol Potato Project (2012-2015):

- A total of 144 new varieties of 34 vegetable species were introduced for variety testing
- In 2014, the State Variety Testing Commission approved 13 promising open-pollinated varieties of seven main vegetables and 10 hybrids for cultivation in Mongolia. For the first time, hybrid varieties (high productivity and early maturity) were included in official variety registration
- Vegetable seed shops were established in eight soums of five aimags to supply seeds of the main vegetables to farmers at wholesale prices. However, to ensure sustainability and profitability, it will be necessary in the future to increase sales prices

Partner organisations:

- Ministry of Food and Agriculture
- Ulaanbaatar city authorities
- Local governments
- Institute of Plant and Agricultural Sciences
- Institute of Plant Protection
- State Professional Inspection Agency
- Russian research institute
- International NGOs
- Urban Governance Project (SDC)
- Vocational Education Training Project Phase II (SDC)
- Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) and selected schools in ger districts (SDC)
- EU/FAO Support Employment in Mongolia

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