



27 NOVEMBER 2024

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)



SUSTAINABLE FIBRE ALLIANCE

Introduction

Background

About the SFA

The Sustainable Fibre Alliance (SFA) is a non-profit standard holding and membership organisation. We represent a global alliance of supply chain actors, stakeholders and industry experts with a mission to ensure the long-term viability of the cashmere sector. Through our work, the SFA aims to minimise the environmental impact of cashmere, safeguard livelihoods and ensure high animal welfare standards. We work with the end-to-end supply chain, connecting livestock herders to brands and retailers in the global fashion industry (for more detail, please visit [our website](#)).

Project Context

Ensuring resilient herding communities forms one of the four major impact areas for the SFA (see our [Theory of Change](#)). The SFA works with herders to certify cashmere in China and Mongolia and has a capacity-building project with herders in Afghanistan. The current impact assessment is designed to better understand the impact the SFA program has had on the herder livelihoods in Mongolia.

The SFA has been working with Mongolian herders since 2015 through established herding organisations that consist of multiple herding families in a communal grazing area. We support herder organisations through a number of activities, from capacity building in governance and participatory planning, to forging better market linkages between producers and processors.

To do so, we provide training through our partner NARTC (link?) in rangeland management, wildlife conservation and animal health. Following these training efforts, herder organisations can gain certification against the SFA Cashmere Standard and sell their cashmere fibre on the market as 'SFA certified'. Furthermore, since 2019 the SFA has partnered with Mongolia's largest financial organization, Khan Bank, to provide preferential bank loans for herders that participate in our program. With the support of our brand members, we also recognise exemplary herders with annual sustainability awards and facilitate educational programmes for young herders and school-leavers that encourage youth to remain in the livestock sector. This comprehensive strategy aims to improve the resilience of Mongolian herding communities by creating opportunities for decent work and improved human well-being, while also establishing financial security for herders.

Objectives

Objectives & Scope of the Impact Assessment

The objective of the Impact Assessment is to understand how the SFA's activities have affected the ability of herders to access markets and receive price premiums for their SFA-certified fibre. It is anticipated that the outcomes of the assessment will not only lead to an improved understanding of how the SFA's program has impacted herders' market access and income, but also provide practical recommendations for improving future interventions and insights into whether the impacts are sustainable over time.

Impact Evaluation Design

Evaluation Questions

Market Access: To what extent have the SFA's activities improved herders' access to cashmere markets?

- What was herders' market access before and after the intervention?
- Have new buyers or markets been introduced as a result of the SFA's activities?

Price Received: Has there been a significant change in the price herders receive for cashmere due to SFA certification? This will entail examining whether herders receive more per unit for SFA-certified cashmere compared to non-certified cashmere?

- How have the prices offered by buyers changed?
- What factors (e.g., quality improvement, market access, etc.) have contributed to these changes?

SFA Intervention Impact: How have the specific interventions by the SFA (e.g., training, improved collection systems, market linkage, etc.) directly influenced the herders' outcomes related to price and market access?

- What key components of the SFA's activities are most responsible for changes?
- Sustainability: Are the impacts sustainable in the medium and long term?
- Are the herders continuing to benefit from the intervention beyond the support provided by the SFA?

Methodology

The evaluation will outline an approach that uses both qualitative and quantitative components to triangulate findings and strengthen the evidence base.

Sampling:

- **Target Population:** Herders who have participated in the SFA's program since 2020 and those who have not (control group).
- **Sample Size:** Approximately 100 herders, split between an intervention group (50 herders from an SFA-certified herder organisation) and a control group (50 herders not part of an SFA-certified organisation).
- **Sampling Technique:** Random sampling of herders to account for regional variation.
- **Stratification:** Stratify by region, herd size and other relevant factors to ensure diverse representation.

Data Collection Methods:

Surveys:

- Conduct surveys with the herders and primary processors to gather quantitative data on market access, prices received for cashmere fibre, and key socio-economic factors.
- Questions will assess the herder's sales volume, prices, access to buyers, and participation in SFA activities (e.g., training, collective bargaining, or new market linkages).

Informant Interviews:

- Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders (e.g., SFA staff, local traders, herder cooperative heads).

Focus Group Discussions:

- Conduct discussions with both intervention and control groups to gather qualitative data on herders' experiences, challenges in accessing markets, and perceptions of price changes.
- Focus on gathering insights on the quality of interventions and any barriers to effective market access.

Secondary Data:

- Review the research into market price data collected through the ISEAL project (**Herder Connect: Empowering Animal Fibre Producers through Digital Tools**), including sales volume data via Salesforce.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Analysis:

- Descriptive statistics on market access and price changes
- Inferential statistics to identify significant differences and causal links.

Qualitative Analysis:

- Thematic analysis of focus groups and interviews to identify common themes related to herders' experiences with the intervention, changes in market behaviour, and price fluctuations.

Dissemination of Findings

- **Interim Report:** A summary report will be shared with the SFA and other relevant stakeholders midway through the evaluation.
- **Final Report:** Final report along with the working files and final dataset (in all forms) including the raw data and analysis codes, complete English transcripts of all semi-structured interviews; a clean and complete dataset for the close-ended questions of the survey. The evaluation report will be shared with all stakeholders (including the SFA, members, and local authorities). The findings will also be presented through a final workshop available to herders to ensure the results are shared and discussed.

Deliverables

The consultant is expected to have bi-weekly status report meetings with the SFA UK team on the assignment's progress. All communications with SFA UK, both verbal and written, must be conducted in English.

Deliverable	Components	Due	Fees
1. Impact Evaluation Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Research questions selected with appropriate justification and referencing. - Submission of research tools for the SFA's approval such as questionnaires for individual surveys, focus group discussion and key informant interviews. 	Month 1	20%
2. Methodology	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preparing data collection tools and training enumerators. Baseline data collection (surveys, interviews, and focus group discussions). 	Month 2-3	20%
3. Data Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Data analysis and initial reporting of baseline findings. - Report on enumerator training and field testing of the survey. If necessary, this should inform refining the data collection tools. 	Month 4-5	20%
4. Final Report Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Final reporting. - Dissemination of findings to key stakeholders (SFA, herders, government bodies and donors). - Abstract and PowerPoint presentations of the study results to be used for dissemination to stakeholders. This should be included in the PPT format. 	Month 6	40%

Proposal Requirements

The SFA is requesting the Service Provider to hand in a proposal of a maximum of 20 pages in English (excluding company biographies, CVs, sample work, and references). The proposal must be handed in an MS Word or PowerPoint version next to a PDF submission to facilitate any copy-and-pasting of content that we may need during evaluation. **The proposal should be submitted via email to research@sustainablefibre.org on or before 10th February 2025.**

The proposal must at least include:

- A succinct, well-documented approach addressing the requirements set out under this ToR.
- A maximum of three client references and a sample of previous work relevant to the deliverables in the ToR.
- An overview of the project team, including the CVs of the project team members.
- Budget presented in GBP (excluding VAT or any other relevant taxes) with a breakdown of days/rate per project team members, and proof of payment.

Communications & Confidentiality

The Service Provider must ensure that all communications with the SFA regarding this proposal occur exclusively in writing via email to research@sustainablefibre.org.

All documents provided by or on behalf of the SFA must be treated as confidential. The Service Provider is also required to impose confidentiality obligations on any third parties it engages. Any breach of this confidentiality obligation by the Service Provider or its engaged third parties will result in the exclusion of the Service Provider by the SFA, without prior written or verbal warning. The SFA will handle all information, documents, and other data submitted by the Service Provider with due care and confidentiality.

Disclaimer

SFA reserves the right to update, modify, extend, postpone, withdraw, or suspend the ToR, this procedure, or any decision regarding the selection or contract award. SFA is not obligated to award a contract or conclude an agreement with any participant in this procedure. Participants cannot claim compensation from SFA or any affiliated persons or entities under any circumstances if any of these actions are taken. By submitting a proposal, participants accept all terms, conditions, and reservations outlined in the ToR and any subsequent information and documentation provided during this procedure.