

YAK LEATHER FOOTBALL

MADE IN MONGOLIA THROUGH A SWISS DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION PROJECT

This yak leather football was produced by a small business in Mongolia. Mongolia is home to around 600,000 yaks, with herds concentrated in the rugged mountainous region. Yaks are mainly used as a means of transport and as pack animals. Yak leather has no real commercial value.

Mongolian start-up ZEV, based in Ulaanbaatar, employs 15 staff who produce hand-sewn footballs from yak leather. ZEV also involves people with disabilities in its production process and provides access to training. ZEV's yak leather footballs are produced as part of the major 'Green Gold and Animal Health' project undertaken by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) within the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA).

The project, which ran for 17 years, was successfully completed in 2021. The project helped to improve the livelihoods of more than 90,000 nomadic herder families in Mongolia and rehabilitate more than 20 million hectares of overgrazed rangeland. Better animal health has also contributed to better quality products, including wool, leather and meat, and the development of professional marketing. The 'Responsible Nomads' traceability system allows all products to be traced back to their place of provenance.

The SDC's support, which included funding and advice, helped the start-up build a business from an untapped resource in the interests of sustainability.

The result is a high-quality handmade local product.

Consumers can scan the QR code to obtain background information, such as rangeland conditions, animal welfare and food hygiene and safety.



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