

ASSOCIATION GOVIIN KHULAN

MONGOLIA CONSERVATION PROGRAM



CONSERVATION STRATEGY

2025-2030





Table of Contents

<u>Executive Summary.</u>	2
<u>Overview</u>	3
<u>Context</u>	4
<u>Theory of Change</u>	6
<u>Our Positioning</u>	10
<u>Our project's areas</u>	13
<u>Situational Analysis</u>	14
<u>Strategic Framework</u>	17
<u>Organizational Priorities</u>	26
<u>The Khulan Conservation Fund</u>	27





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Association GOVIIN KHULAN, is the first and only non-profit conservation organization solely dedicated to conserving the threatened Mongolian Wild Ass/Khulan (subspecies of the Asiatic Wild Ass) as an umbrella species and keystone species of Mongolia's Gobi Desert rangelands. Mongolia hosts about 80% of the global population of the Asiatic Wild Ass, represented by the Khulan. It is therefore extremely important to protect the Khulan to ensure protection of the entire species.

By protecting the Khulan, we aim to enhance protection of other Gobi key species and the unique and fragile Gobi Desert ecosystem, to don't only benefit wildlife but also local communities that coexist with this species. **We envision a future where wildlife and people thrive and coexist in harmony in preserved landscapes.**

In order to achieve our mission, we take a knowledge and community-centered approach which contributes to local, national and global agendas.



Overview



Association GOVIIN KHULAN is a non-profit conservation organization registered in France since 2007, and active in Mongolia since 2008.

Our work focuses on protecting the threatened Khulan as an umbrella species and a keystone species of the Gobi Desert ecosystem, therefore also enhancing protection of other Gobi key species and their habitat.

Our activities are centered on working together with local protected areas' administrations and the local communities of our project's area(s) to protect the Gobi rangelands and its biodiversity, as well as to reach and maintain a harmonious and sustainable Human-wildlife coexistence and lead to people and wildlife to thrive and coexist in shared and preserved landscapes.

We have worked in the south and southeast regions of Mongolia's Gobi Desert since 2008.

The southeast region of Mongolia's Gobi Desert hosts the largest population of the Khulan in Mongolia.



**ASSOCIATION
GOVIIN KHULAN**



Context

The Mongolian Khulan (*Equus hemionus hemionus*), is a Wild Equid and is one of the 5 recognized subspecies of the Asiatic Wild Ass. It currently represents the largest population of the Asiatic Wild Ass in the world.

Mongolia represents a very important place for conservation of the Asiatic Wild Ass, hosting about 80% of its global population represented by the Khulan.

In Mongolia, the southeast region of the Gobi Desert hosts the largest population of the Khulan. This is where our conservation program operates since 2008.

The Khulan is threatened by:

- Development of linear infrastructures and the current lack of wildlife crossing structures
- Climate change
- Illegal activities (illegal mining and poaching/illegal hunting)
- Competition with livestock to access to natural resources
- Habitat fragmentation and damage.





Why is it essential to protect the Khulan?

- The Khulan (*Equus hemionus hemionus*) represents the largest population of the Asiatic Wild Ass in the world.
- Mongolia hosts about 80% of the global population of the Asiatic Wild Ass.
- The South and Southeast regions of Mongolia's Gobi Desert - where we operate since 2008 - support the largest population of the Khulan in Mongolia.
- The Khulan plays a very important function in nature as a Gobi engineer species, digging water holes at dry water sources to access water located underneath the Gobi floor. These precious water holes benefit other Gobi species: wild and domestic.
- Every year, Khulans migrate over 70,000 square kilometers, making them the land animals with the greatest migration distance on the planet!
- Protecting the Khulan - which is a migratory species with one of the greatest migration distances on the planet - it also helps protect a large range of lands and therefore a large amount of other Gobi species.
- Khulans' movements, which follow a nomadic pattern, contribute to maintain plant diversity and could help pastures to regenerate through undigested plants' seeds found in their dung.
- Khulans also help other species access vegetation by removing with their hooves dry and senescent vegetation.
- The species also helps maintain food webs' balance.

The Khulan represents a good indicator of the health of Mongolia's Gobi Desert rangelands.

The Khulan is a symbol of adaptation, resilience and regeneration.

It also represents a local symbol of the cultural and biodiversity heritage of Mongolia.



Our Theory of Change (short form)



Ultimate impacts

Growing and healthy populations of khulans and other Gobi key species coexist in harmony with thriving local communities across shared and healthy Gobi rangelands.



OUR SCOPE

Mongolia's Gobi Desert ecosystem (with a focus on the south and southeast regions of the Gobi Desert), the Mongolian Khulan and other key and threatened Gobi species.

OUR VISION

We envision populations of Khulans/Mongolian Wild Asses, key Gobi species and local people thriving and coexisting in harmony in shared and restored or preserved landscapes of Mongolia.

Protecting ecological integrity helps maintain healthy ecosystems and support a high biodiversity where species can interact in a sustainable way, thus also enhancing resilience to climate change and to other threats, benefiting both wildlife and people.

OUR MISSION

Association GOVIIN KHULAN's mission is to conserve the Khulan (Mongolian Wild Ass) as an umbrella and keystone species of the Gobi Desert ecosystem, thus also enhancing protection of other Gobi key species and the Gobi Desert ecosystem, and to improve Human-wildlife coexistence and local communities' livelihood, by working closely together with local communities and protected areas.

Association GOVIIN KHULAN's conservation efforts do not only focus on protecting threatened and endangered species but also to protect their habitat, to benefit both species and local communities in the long-term.



OUTCOMES

- Healthy and growing populations of Khulan and Gobi key species.
- Healthy rangelands benefiting people and wildlife of Mongolia and the Gobi Desert.
- Sustainable and harmonious Human-Wildlife coexistence.

OUR GOALS

We work alongside local communities for the conservation of the Khulan (subspecies of the Asiatic wild ass (Khulan) and other Gobi key and emblematic species of Mongolia's Gobi Desert, by focusing on both their survival and the health of the ecosystems they depend on.

- In addition to conducting research through our own team and learning from the work of other research groups, we also actively promote and support community-based research to better understand these species and the ecosystem services they provide.
- We recognize the Khulan's ecological and cultural importance as a symbol of Mongolia's biodiversity and as a contributor to ecosystem resilience, and we work to raise awareness of its value.
- We support local efforts to protect Mongolia's rangelands and water sources that sustain people, livestock, and wildlife across the Gobi.
- We contribute to the reduction and mitigation of some of the direct threats: including illegal hunting, resource competition, and habitat pressure - through education, local monitoring, and collaboration with local communities.

Our approach is grounded in respect for traditional knowledge and community leadership, ensuring that conservation benefits both people and wildlife.



OUR VALUES



- **Passion:** We have a strong passion for the Khulan, wildlife, Mongolia, and our work.
- **Creativity:** We always bring new ideas to make our conservation efforts efficient and adapt to changes and challenges.
- **Adaptability:** We are resilient and adapt to changes and failures.
- **Integrity:** We do what is right to do.
- **Results-oriented:** We focus on meaningful and sustainable impacts.
- **Collaboration:** We believe that together we can have greater impacts.
- **Diversity:** We care about our team members and the communities we work with.
- **Holistic Mindset:** For us everything is connected: healthy ecosystems and preserved biodiversity benefit the species we work to protect, local communities, government agencies and corporations.



Our positioning

Association GOVIIN KHULAN has been committed to Khulan conservation in Mongolia since 2008 and has built strong relationships with local communities and protected areas. Our organization also obtained a very strong understanding of the Khulan behavior and ecology, and of all the challenges affecting this species survival as well as other species and the Gobi Desert ecosystem.

www.goviinkhulan.org





Our commitment to Ethical Conservation

Since the launching of our conservation program, local communities of our project areas have been always at the center of our conservation activities.

Since the beginning, we are committed to conduct conservation activities that are ethical, equitable, fair, and sustainable, ensuring a future where human rights, animal welfare and ecological health are connected and balanced.



**ASSOCIATION
GOVIIN KHULAN**

www.goviinkhulan.org



Timeline & Milestones

2007: Creation of Association GOVIIN KHULAN

2008: Conservation program launched in the south and southeastern regions of Mongolia's Gobi Desert

2012: We started the KHULAN DAY initiative supported by a local community of the southeast Gobi.

2016: Published a bilingual story book about Khulan Conservation "The Lost Khulan in the Gobi"

2019: Association GOVIIN KHULAN's conservation director received the "Best worker of the year" distinction from the Ministry of Environment of Mongolia

2025: Renamed its Khulan Day initiative into "Khulan Day: Conserving Biodiversity, Empowering Communities"



We successfully empowered one community and rangers since 2009

The community of a Buddhist monastery and Small Gobi PA's rangers have been successfully empowered as Guardians of nature and Ambassadors of Khulan conservation.

Local Guardians of Nature taking pride of the Khulan

The Guardians of Nature we work with, regularly expressed their pride of the Khulan through visuals or art works they created, and by taking part in local Khulan conservation awareness. The Date of the Khulan Conservation Day (September 18) has been chosen by the Buddhist monks we work with.

We contributed to improve the cultural and biodiversity value of the Khulan in Mongolia, and to the increase of its population through community-driven conservation initiatives and local conservation awareness.

Our NGO inspired locals to commit to Khulan conservation in the long term.



Timeline & Milestones

2007: Creation of Association GOVIIN KHULAN

2008: Conservation program launched in the south and southeastern regions of Mongolia's Gobi Desert

2012: We started the KHULAN DAY initiative supported by a local community of the southeast Gobi.

2016: Published a bilingual story book about Khulan Conservation "The Lost Khulan in the Gobi"

2019: Association GOVIIN KHULAN's conservation director received the "Best worker of the year" distinction from the Ministry of Environment of Mongolia

2025: Renamed its Khulan Day initiative into "Khulan Day: Conserving Biodiversity, Empowering Communities"



We successfully empowered one community and rangers since 2009

The community of a Buddhist monastery and Small Gobi PA's rangers have been successfully empowered as Guardians of nature and Ambassadors of Khulan conservation.

Local Guardians of Nature taking pride of the Khulan

The Guardians of Nature we work with, regularly expressed their pride of the Khulan through visuals or art works they created, and by taking part in local Khulan conservation awareness. The Date of the Khulan Conservation Day (September 18) has been chosen by the Buddhist monks we work with.

We contributed to improve the cultural and biodiversity value of the Khulan in Mongolia, and to the increase of its population through community-driven conservation initiatives and local conservation awareness.

Our NGO inspired locals to commit to Khulan conservation in the long term.



Our Areas of Conservation efforts

South and Southeast Regions of Mongolia's Gobi Desert



We selected the south and southeast regions of Mongolia's Gobi Desert, because this is where the largest population of the Khulan live in Mongolia.



We specifically work in the south of the Dornogobi province as well as in the south and east of the Umnugobi province.



Situational Analysis:



Understanding the context of our conservation program

What are the current environmental challenges affecting the Khulan and the Gobi ecosystem?

Climate change

In Mongolia's Gobi Desert, Climate change contributes to:

- land degradation
- desertification
- and water sources to shrink as a result of reduced rainfall.

This resulted in an increased competition between Khulans and livestock to access water sources and pastures.

Habitat fragmentation

The development of linear infrastructures related to mining activities in the Gobi, associated with the lack of wildlife crossing structures, fragments the habitat of the Khulan (which is a migratory species) and other wildlife and limits its access to vital resources (water and pastures).

Habitat degradation and habitat loss

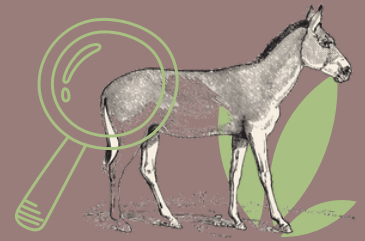
Overgrazing caused by increasing herds of cashmere goats in the Gobi, associated to Climate change and mining activities, are leading to habitat degradation and habitat loss for the Khulan.

Poaching

Poaching still impacts the Khulan, but less than in the past as a result of law enforcement. Khulans are poached for meat, skin and use of some of their organs in the traditional medicine.



Situational Analysis



Threats Rating

Table 1. Threats rating was developed by all stakeholders during the Khulan Management workshop organized by WCS Mongolia in 2022.

Threat	Scope	Severity	Irreversibility	Summary threat
Climate change	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Habitat loss	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium
Habitat fragmentation	High	High	High	High
Habitat degradation	High	High	Medium	High
Poaching	High	Medium	Medium	Medium

Our organization participated to this workshop and helped develop this Threats Rating.

The threats our organization will address

Our conservation decisions are based on this threats rating.

Due to the small size of our organization our activities cannot address all threats, so we decided to focus on the following threats:

- Habitat degradation and loss
- Poaching



Global Agenda

Association GOVIIN KHULAN's conservation strategy aligns with multiple global and national environmental priorities.



Association GOVIIN KHULAN's conservation mission aligns with:

- Mongolia's "Vision 2050" development policy
- the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework's goals
- UN Decade of Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030)
- Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) aimed at preventing and reversing ecosystem degradation.

Local communities inclusion

Association GOVIIN KHULAN integrates traditional environmental knowledge into conservation, thus supporting global agendas on indigenous and local communities' rights and environmental stewardship.

IUCN SSC Equid Specialist Group

Our organization regularly report to the IUCN SSC/Equid Specialist Group on identified targets facilitating conservation planning and follow-up, applied to the conservation of the Mongolian Wild Ass (Khulan).





OUR STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK



Our Vision

We envision populations of Khulans/Mongolian Wild Asses, key Gobi species and local people thriving and coexisting in harmony in shared and restored or preserved landscapes of Mongolia.

Our Mission

Association GOVIIN KHULAN's mission is to conserve the Khulan (Mongolian Wild Ass) as an umbrella and keystone species of the Gobi Desert ecosystem, thus also enhancing protection of other Gobi key species and the Gobi Desert ecosystem, and to improve Human-wildlife coexistence and local communities' livelihood, by working closely together with local communities and protected areas.



EXPECTED OUTCOMES

- Healthy and growing populations of Khulan and other Gobi key species.
- Healthy Gobi rangelands benefiting people and wildlife.
- Sustainable and harmonious Human-Wildlife coexistence.



OUR GOALS



1. Better understanding the Khulan and other Gobi key species, as well as the ecosystem services they provide.

2. Preserving Gobi landscapes to support thriving wildlife and local communities.

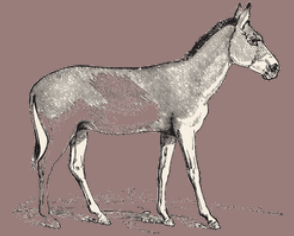
3. Supporting survival of Khulan populations by helping mitigate some of the direct threats.

4. Valuing the Khulan to elevate this species as a symbol of biodiversity and cultural heritage of Mongolia.



Goal 1

Understanding the Khulan and other Gobi key species, as well as the ecosystem services they provide.



Objective 1.1. To ensure that conservation of the Khulan and other Gobi key species are informed by accurate and recent research.

Objective 1.2. To bridge traditional environmental knowledge to scientific knowledge to conserve the Khulan, Gobi key species and the Gobi Desert ecosystem.

Key positive impacts

- Improve knowledge about the Khulan and Gobi key species, how they respond to Climate change and their interspecific interactions.
- Involving local communities in research will empower them with knowledge and ownership of conservation efforts.
- Community involvement ensures that conservation measures align with local values, leading to higher compliance and long-term success.
- Leveraging local environmental knowledge:
 - Indigenous and local communities often possess deep ecological knowledge that can inform effective conservation strategies,
 - Recognizing and integrating TEK into our conservation program validates and respects local communities, fostering collaboration and trust.
- Integrating TEK with scientific knowledge:
 - creates a more comprehensive understanding of the ecosystem and its species,
 - we can develop conservation strategies that are both effective and culturally relevant.



Goal 2

Preserving Gobi landscapes to support Khulans, other Gobi key species and people.



Objective 2.1. To empower local communities in a long-term sustainable use and protection of natural resources.

Objective 2.2. To improve partnerships with other organizations, governmental agencies, communities and donors.

Key positive impacts

- When communities are given ownership and legal rights to manage resources, they often take better care of them.
- Resilience to Climate change: Empowered communities can adopt adaptive practices that protect both wildlife and their own livelihoods in the face of climate change.
- Communities that depend on natural resources can adopt sustainable practices when provided with the knowledge, tools, and incentives to protect habitats.
- Partnerships help conservation actions to be more effective and long lasting.



Goal 3

Supporting survival of Khulan populations by helping mitigate some of the direct threats.



Objective 3.1. To improve access to natural resources to Khulans and Gobi wildlife and sustain a harmonious coexistence with local communities.

Objective 3.2. To empower Gobi local people to protect Gobi wildlife.

Objective 3.3. To contribute to the decrease of illegal activities directly impacting the Khulan and other Gobi key species.

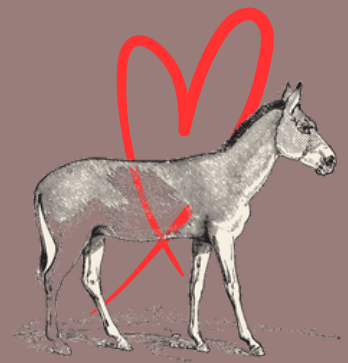
Key positive impacts

- If communities are given ownership and legal rights to manage resources for a more efficient and long-term success,
- Building resilience to Climate Change: Empowered communities can adopt adaptive practices that protect both wildlife and their own livelihoods in the face of climate change.
- Empowering communities transforms them from passive stakeholders into active guardians of biodiversity, creating sustainable solutions to threats affecting wildlife survival while improving local people livelihoods.
- By giving local communities ownership and legal rights to manage resources, they often take better care of them leading to more efficient and long-term success of conservation actions.
- Empowered communities can adopt adaptive practices that protect both wildlife and their own livelihoods in the face of climate change.



Goal 4

Valuing the Khulan to elevate this species as a symbol of biodiversity and cultural heritage of Mongolia.



Objective 4.1. To improve the sense of intrinsic and extrinsic values that local communities (including the youth community) feel for the Khulan and Gobi key species.

Objective 4.2. To create value for the Khulan by diversifying local communities' sources of income thus improving their livelihoods.

Some key positive impacts

- **Improved Habitat Protection**

- Elevating the Khulan as a symbol can encourage the protection of its habitats, benefitting other species and local communities.

- **Increased awareness and conservation action**

- Greater visibility of the Khulan can attract global and local attention to its conservation needs, mobilizing funding and support.
- Education campaigns centered around the Khulan can foster an appreciation for biodiversity among Mongolians and visitors.

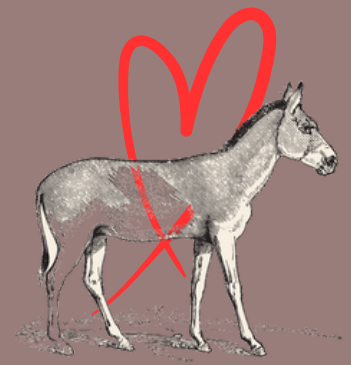
- **Cultural Pride**

- The Khulan, as a symbol of Mongolia's unique natural heritage, can strengthen national pride and identity.



Goal 4

Valuing the Khulan to elevate this species as a symbol of biodiversity and cultural heritage of Mongolia.



Some key positive impacts (continued)

- **Ecotourism Development**

- Revenue from ecotourism can support local communities, that can be involved as local guides and hosts, and as handicraft makers, as well as through a Community Fund.

- **Marketable Branding**

- The Khulan's image can be used in branding products like eco-friendly handmade goods, supporting local economy.

- **Funding Opportunities**

- A well-locally and internationally recognized species may attract more funding opportunities, especially when related to grassroots conservation initiatives actively involving local communities.

- **Environmental Education**

- Schools and universities can use the Khulan as a case study to teach biodiversity, and conservation.
- Youth participation in conservation activities fosters environmental stewardship and broader conservation impacts.

and more ...



Our Dictionary for Community Conservation



Community

- Place-based community of pastoralists living in the same area with common objectives and sustainability approaches.

Gobi Guardians of the Khulan and biodiversity

- Gobi pastoralists involved - with our guidance and support - in sustainable use of natural resources and lands, and in Khulan and wildlife protection.
- Members of the local communities of our projects' areas, involved in our conservation program as Citizen conservationists and researchers.

Khulan Conservation Champions

Members of the local communities of our projects' areas, who successfully implemented Khulan conservation initiatives. These individuals have strong leadership skills, are dedicated to local environmental issues and are deeply connected to their communities.

Gobi Biodiversity Conservation Champions

Members of the local communities of our projects' areas, who successfully implemented Gobi wildlife and nature conservation initiatives. These individuals have strong leadership skills, are dedicated to local environmental issues and are deeply connected to their communities. Our Gobi Conservation Champions can have the two hats: be a Khulan Conservation Champion and be a Gobi wildlife and nature conservation champion, depending on their interest.

Khulan Conservation Gobi Ambassadors

Members of the local communities of our projects' areas involved with our support and guidance in raising local awareness about conservation of the Khulan.

Biodiversity Gobi Ambassadors

Members of the local communities of our projects' areas involved in raising local awareness about protection of Gobi wildlife and the unique Gobi ecosystem.



THE KHULAN CONSERVATION FUND



As part of our fundraising strategies, on October 26th, we launched the Khulan Conservation Fund which will help perpetuate our own conservation activities, our joint-conservation activities, as well as community-conservation activities and initiatives in Mongolia, therefore significantly improving protection of the Khulan, its habitat and other Gobi key species, and supporting local communities that depend on healthy lands and natural resources, through increased donations and investments.

[More information on our website](#)



ASSOCIATION
GOVIIN KHULAN



Take action here: <https://www.goviinkhulan.org/donate-1/>

Contact us for further inquiries at: goviin_khulan@live.fr



ASSOCIATION
GOVIIN KHULAN

www.goviinkhulan.org

Association GOVIIN KHULAN

Protecting the Khulan as an umbrella species of Mongolia's Gobi Desert rangelands, other Gobi key species and the unique Gobi Desert ecosystem, together with local communities.



Together, let's secure a future where people and wildlife thrive and coexist in harmony in shared and preserved landscapes.



www.goviinkhulan.org
goviin_khulan@live.fr

Take action: <https://www.goviinkhulan.org/donate-1/>

- [Linkedin.com/company/association-goviin-khulan](https://www.linkedin.com/company/association-goviin-khulan)
- [Facebook.com/Association.GOVIIN.KHULAN](https://www.facebook.com/Association.GOVIIN.KHULAN)
- [Instagram.com/goviinkhulan/](https://www.instagram.com/goviinkhulan/)
- [Youtube.com/@GOVIINKHULAN](https://www.youtube.com/@GOVIINKHULAN)

