

## FOCUS

# SUSTAINABLE CASHMERE PROJECT: A "STEPPE" IN THE RIGHT DIRECTION

*Led by Kering along with the Wildlife Conservation Society, Rio Tinto and with collaboration from Stanford University and NASA, the South Gobi Cashmere Project is redefining high quality cashmere production in the Mongolian steppe. An initiative that pays back today.*



## THE GOAL: SAVING MONGOLIAN GOAT HERDING FROM AN ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL DISASTER

The increased world demand for cashmere, combined with dramatic changes in the agricultural sector in the 90s has resulted in a surge in goat numbers in Mongolia. Exacerbated by climate change, the increased grazing pressure has led to the degradation of the native grasslands across the country and, in some parts, desertification. Over the last few years, million livestock have perished, threatening cashmere supplies and herders' revenues. Still, high quality cashmere from Mongolia is an iconic fiber for Luxury. In 2014 solutions were urgently needed to convert the herders to a more sustainable approach and solve what the media called the "Cashmere Crisis".

## THE SOLUTION: INVENTING A SUSTAINABLE AND QUALITY-ENHANCED CASHMERE SUPPLY CHAIN MODEL

In 2014, through the Sustainable Cashmere Project (now known as the South Gobi Cashmere Project), Kering partnered with the [Wildlife Conservation Society](https://www.wcs.org/) (<https://www.wcs.org/>) to help herders reducing the impact of upstream cashmere production and switching to new sustainable models in the South Gobi Region of Mongolia. Over the last five years, the Group has been working with herder communities and NGOs to improve fiber quality, pasture management and biodiversity conservation.

One of the first actions Kering took was to help improving goat-combing, in order to make the process cleaner and more efficient. Local herders have learned how to sort cashmere by quality, packing the different grades into cotton, rather than plastic bags. Cashmere fiber quality is also now being augmented through improving goat husbandry and breeding. The project also supports veterinary services to improve the health and condition of goats. Better herd management that includes selling off older animals for and supporting herders to access markets for goat meat, cheese and milk in conjunction with a better price for cashmere means that it is now possible to plan for less goats without compromising revenues for herders.

At the same time, the project is also helping herders to plan where and for how long to graze their different pastures during the year. Satellite images gathered by Stanford University and NASA, who joined the project in 2017, are being used to monitor pasture quality and provide new information on which areas can support pasturing. That phase of the project is still in its early days, but the potential for better-managed grazing is huge.

The Group is also supporting the development of a certification system that will verify environmental, social and animal welfare outcomes. Importantly, herders are being rewarded for their commitment to better quality cashmere and improved sustainability through financial incentives and improved pricing of cashmere.



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## THE LEARNINGS: A PROFITABLE CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

Early results from the project, which involves 170 herder families, show improved yields and quality herders are already achieving better livelihoods. Meanwhile, the partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society has raised awareness among herders about their role in stewarding pastures and protecting wildlife such as wild asses, antelopes and snow leopards. “*We are halfway on a ten-year journey to achieve sustainability, with a key milestone being the improvement in rangeland over the next two years*”, says Helen Crowley, Head of Sustainable Sourcing Innovation, who monitors the project for Kering.

Perhaps the most fundamental result already achieved is the culture of collaboration that it has created. Gone are the days when companies told themselves that they could tackle sustainability alone. Co-operation is taking off with other pasture-based projects in the rest of Mongolia. There has been a “step change”, evidenced by the national roundtable on sustainable cashmere organised by the United Nations Development Program in June. This event, which brought together buyers, the government and the scientific community, is one of the tangible results of Kering’s pioneering initiative.

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([HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/SUSTAINABLE-CASHMERE-PROJECT/](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/sustainable-cashmere-project/))

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**Read more** (<https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/sustainable-cashmere-project/>).



([HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/MIL-A-LABORATORY-FOR-MORE-SUSTAINABLE-MATERIAL/](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/mil-a-laboratory-for-more-sustainable-material/))

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### MIL: A LABORATORY FOR MORE SUSTAINABLE MATERIAL

([HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/MIL-A-LABORATORY-FOR-MORE-SUSTAINABLE-MATERIAL/](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/mil-a-laboratory-for-more-sustainable-material/))

Turning the idea of sustainable fashion into reality involves a range of different factors, including the right kind of materials. But where do you find them? Kering created the Material Innovation Lab to answer that very question. MIL's Director, Cecilia Takayama explains the practicalities of sustainable luxury fashion.

**Read more** (<https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/mil-a-laboratory-for-more-sustainable-material/>).



[\(HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/CLEAN-BY-DESIGN/\)](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/clean-by-design/)

## **FOCUS**

### WITH CLEAN BY DESIGN, FASHION LAUNCHES A BACKSTAGE GREEN REVOLUTION

[\(HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/CLEAN-BY-DESIGN/\)](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/clean-by-design/)

Created to reduce the environmental impact of the textile industry, Clean by Design offers an effective method to reduce energy intensity and water usage on production sites. Thanks to its very rapid return on investment, Kering would like to extend the project to all of its suppliers.

**Read more (<https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/clean-by-design/>).**



[\(HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/MARIE-CLAIRE-DAVEU-KERING-CAN-BE-A-DRIVER-OF-CHANGE/\)](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/marie-claire-daveu-kering-can-be-a-driver-of-change/)

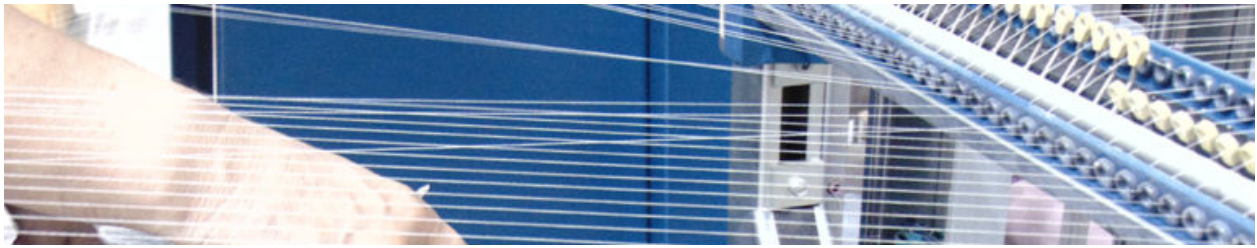
## **STRATEGY**

### "KERING CAN BE A DRIVER OF CHANGE"

[\(HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/MARIE-CLAIRE-DAVEU-KERING-CAN-BE-A-DRIVER-OF-CHANGE/\)](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/marie-claire-daveu-kering-can-be-a-driver-of-change/)

Whether it's product traceability, sustainable supply chains or next-generation materials, Marie-Claire Daveu, Chief Sustainability Officer and Head of international institutional affairs, explains how Kering goes right to the source to reduce its environmental footprint, starting with how raw materials are produced.

**Read more (<https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/marie-claire-daveu-kering-can-be-a-driver-of-change/>).**



([HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/SUSTAINABILITY-LORMA/](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/sustainability-lorma/))

#### **POINT OF VIEW**

“SUSTAINABILITY IS BOTH AN ECONOMIC AND A TECHNICAL CHALLENGE”

([HTTPS://WWW.LUXURY-HIGHLIGHTS.COM/ARTICLE/SUSTAINABILITY-LORMA/](https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/sustainability-lorma/))

Riccardo Binaghi and his brother Filippo are the fifth generation of their family to work in the textile industry around Lake Como, in North Italy's Lombardy region. As directors of Lorma, a company founded by their father, they are supplying organic and conventional silk to Kering Houses.

**Read more (<https://www.luxury-highlights.com/article/sustainability-lorma/>).**

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