

“Дуслыг хураавал далай болно. Дуулсныг хураавал эрдэм болно”

If you collect a drop, it becomes an ocean. If you collect a song, it becomes knowledge.

- Mongolian proverb

Business Proposal

Altai Blue Horizon is a volunteer-led Swiss-Mongolian non-profit organization working to improve educational access in Bayan-Ulgii in Western Mongolia. Financial limitations in the remote area of the Altai Mountains pressure public schools to compete with private institutions often inaccessible to local families. This leaves many children without access to learning resources, especially during the 3-month summer break. To bridge this gap, Altai Blue Horizon provides a **free educational summer programme** for up to 240 children in four public schools, with the goal of ensuring access to meaningful learning for all, focusing on English and Mongolian language development.

To finance the free educational material and the running of the programme, the cash budget in sum of CHF 28,431 is necessary, combining administrative costs, teaching materials, teaching stipends and coverage of meals. The total value of the Summer Programme amounts to CHF 56,772 with the additional amount constituted by volunteering work and contributions by local stakeholders and partner schools.

As a newly established organization (2024), achieving financial sustainability is a key challenge. The overarching goal thus is to build a locally grounded social enterprise that functions as a sustainable source of income by using revenue from the sale of crafted products from the Altai region in the Swiss market to fund the local education efforts. The revenue generated from the social business will be dedicated solely to supporting the NGO's activities in Mongolia.



This report presents a business model blueprint establishing a sustainable funding source while strengthening both the NGO's long-term activities and local economic participation. The document maps the potential modus operandi, existing frameworks, and opportunities for partnership with artisans in **Mongolia** and with selected resellers and business partners in **Switzerland**.

A comprehensive section on **logistics** lists important considerations and practicalities for the transfer of products from the local source in Mongolia to the Swiss market. Building on the current feasible scope of the business, the report outlines further potential for future amplification.

Business Model

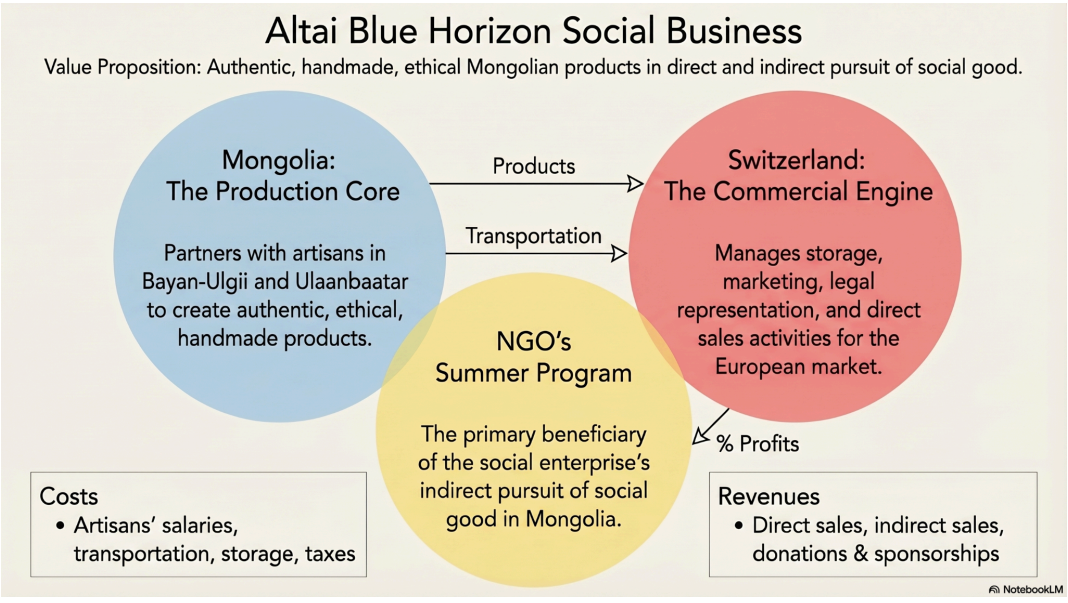


Figure 1: Illustration of the Business Model. Created with the NotebookLM.



The Business Model is built on the concept of a **social business**, famously pioneered by Nobel Prize Winner Muhammad Yunus, which describes a business design that uses capitalist market dynamics to address deeply rooted social and environmental issues, while comprising social value for multiple stakeholders. The Altai Blue Horizon social enterprise is built on a **market-based model**. Rather than pursuing economic success for personal enrichment, market mechanisms are used to generate reliable income to reinvest in the on-the-ground work of the NGO in Bayan-Ulgii and to fairly support artisans in local communities.

Artisanal products, crafted by local artisans from the Ulgii region, constitute the backbone of the business model. Traditional patterns and locally sourced materials reflect the values and culture of the communities that the NGO aims to support by upholding the educational projects. Combining the support of local artisans through the sale of their products and the investment into local development projects is a business concept also applied by other NGOs operating in the Mongolia-Switzerland nexus. *La Mensa e il Gregge*, as well as *Bayasgalant,* have already implemented local projects in Mongolia, partially funded with the return of small-scale sales in Swiss markets, as well as online.

Altai Blue Horizon wants to build on this idea by bringing locally crafted products from the Altai Mountain Region to Switzerland, where the products are stored and further distributed for sale. The business aims to foster **direct** as well as **indirect sales**, in partnership with a range of Swiss-based enterprises, who are open to cooperating in selling the handmade products. The revenue created will be reinvested into activities in Mongolia, in particular into supporting the summer programme. Another share of revenue will cover costs, including the salary of artisans and logistics fees.



Mongolia

This section describes the main stakeholders in Mongolia and highlights four potential partners and complementary (non-artisan) entrepreneurs for collaboration. These partners produce and distribute traditional handmade goods, offering opportunities for collaboration on sales in international markets. The primary mode of communication with artisan partners in Mongolia is Facebook, which is widely used and provides efficient responses.

Product authenticity is an essential criteria in all our partnerships. Most items are made from raw, locally sourced materials such as wool, felt, and cotton, used alone or combined. Many products feature hand-embroidered designs inspired by traditional Kazakh/Mongolian patterns, which enhance their cultural and artisanal value. **Bayan-Ulgii**, the western province of Mongolia, is predominantly **inhabited by ethnic Kazakhs**, making it a unique cultural region within the country. This strong Kazakh heritage is reflected in the handicrafts and techniques used by local artisans. Product prices typically depend on **size, materials, and embroidery complexity**. For example, rugs (1/20 x 2/2 cm) can cost around 200 euros, slippers (size range 36-46) from 16 to 20 euros, while small souvenirs start at 4 euros. Pricing may also vary by sourcing channel, whether purchased directly from artisans or through intermediary retailers. Product dimensions vary to meet different functions. Laptop bags are available from compact tablet sizes to larger 15-inch formats, while purses range from small accessories to medium-sized handbags.

To ensure **high-quality**, **authentic products**, the potential partners have been carefully selected. Sourcing products directly, with clear standards for materials, craftsmanship, and traditional design, is the priority of the business. Therefore, having a **trusted local representative** is also essential to oversee production, check product quality, and confirm that the goods are genuine at the source.



I. Partner 1

Maizhibek Samiqkyzy is an experienced artisan specializing in handmade rugs, carpets, and decorative seat covers. For more than a decade, she has engaged in artisanal production, primarily within a family-based setting. Maizhibek is originally from Bayan-Ulgii. A mother of six, she actively passes on her knowledge by teaching her two daughters-in-law and her granddaughters the traditional **craft of *syrmak***[1], an important element of Kazakh cultural heritage. Her dedication to preserving this art reflects both her personal passion and her commitment to intergenerational knowledge transfer. Maizhibek attributes her artistic abilities to her upbringing. Although she did not receive formal sewing training, she considers her talent innate, shaped by her cultural environment and family traditions.



Figure 2: Maizhibek during craft workshops in Bayan-Ulgii.

Based in Ulgii, her work emphasizes **manual techniques** and **culturally rooted designs** that reflect Kazakh textile heritage. Instead of mass production, Maizhibek uses a small-scale, demand-driven model, producing items upon request. This allows for extensive customization in design, size, and materials, ensuring each product is unique and

[1] Syrmak, a traditional Kazakh felt rug handcrafted from natural sheep's wool, has been the centerpiece of nomadic life on the steppe.



high-quality. Production timelines remain flexible and depend on the specific requirements of each order and the terms established with clients. Although there is no standardized schedule for item completion, smaller products are generally produced very rapidly.

For example, a rug measuring approximately 40 × 40 cm is typically completed within one day. The overall timeframe is influenced by factors such as **design complexity, item size**, and the specific agreement between the artisan and the buyer. In most cases, clients manage their own shipment and export logistics, which would similarly apply for the Altai Blue Horizon Social Business. The primary and most accessible way to communicate with Maizhibek is through her Facebook account[2].



Figure 3: Maizhibek's handmade rugs and carpets in Bayan-Ulgii.

[2] Facebook contact of Maizhibek Shamiqkyzy.



II. Partner 2

Kaka Art Store[3] is a community-based artisanal initiative involving Kazakh/Mongolian women producing traditional handmade goods. The store is based in Ulgii and specializes in souvenirs, bags, carpets, wall hangings, and traditional clothing. Among this diverse portfolio, particular attention could be given to **handmade slippers** and **small woolen souvenirs**, which show strong potential for introduction and expansion in the Swiss market, based on the experiences of similar businesses and their successful sales.

Production is carried out by 20 local women working collaboratively, creating both economic opportunities and a platform for preserving traditional skills. The initiative operates on a small-scale, demand-driven basis, emphasizing quality and authenticity over mass production.

The team independently manages the shipping process, organizing all logistics themselves from Ulaanbaatar, the central export hub. Deliveries to Europe are typically arranged directly by the group through DHL, ensuring control over handling and timelines. Sales and distribution are flexible and largely demand-driven. This would be highly beneficial for Altai Blue Horizon Business, as shipments do not need to be organized separately; however, independent logistics could still be considered to reduce costs.

[3] Kaka Art store Facebook page.





Figure 4: Handmade products from Kaka Art Store in Bayan-Ulgii.

III. Partner 3

Gulmaira Akim[4] is a locally recognized singer in Bayan-Ulgii and an entrepreneur. She is actively involved in cultural initiatives, including organizing **embroidery design** competitions to engage and empower women in the community.



Figure 5: An embroidery design competition organized by Gulmaira Akim in Bayan-Ulgii.

[4] Facebook contact of Gulmaira Akim.



In addition to her cultural contributions, she manages a sewing production enterprise that employs 7 women on-site and coordinates a network of approximately 60 women who work from home as embroiderers. Her business operates through both **manual** and **machine-based production** processes. The products include bedspreads, pillowcases, hand-embroidered bags, phone cases, and various small souvenirs. Gulmaira openly shared that they use non-natural suede materials, mostly made of polyethylene.

These materials are sourced from Guangzhou, China, and subsequently embroidered by artisans in Mongolia. Her goods are predominantly exported to England, with clients handling logistics and distribution independently. Samples of her work and product offerings are available on her Facebook page, *Asylmura*[5].



Figure 6: Gulmaira Akim's hand-embroided bags, pillows, and machine-based bedspreads in Ulgii and Ulanbataar.

IV. Partner 4

The Tsaagan Alt Felt store[6]**,** based in Ulaanbaatar, specializes in hats, souvenirs, slippers, felt wall hangings, and felt jewelry. The store is managed by the Nooson Zangilaa

[5] Asylmura, an online store offering handmade products by Gulmaira Akim.
[6] Tsaagan Alt Felt Store Facebook page.



Cooperatives Union[7]. This union was established in 2006 and is currently operating with 12 cooperatives from Ulanbaatar and Darkhan city. They unite around 150 artisans who work from home. The artisans produce about 20 different types, primarily using processed fine and semi-fine wool, angora, cashmere, and camel wool. These products are sold in the domestic market through the Tsaagan Alt shop and also exported internationally, particularly in Norway, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Finland, Switzerland, and the USA.

The products are distinguished by their purity, natural composition, and entirely handmade production, employing traditional and environmentally sustainable Mongolian handicraft techniques. Additionally, items can be customized to accommodate specific customer requirements regarding design, color, and size. Similar to Kaka Art store, the team independently manages the shipping process, organizing all logistics themselves from Ulaanbaatar.



Figure 7: Handmade products from the Tsaagan Alt Felt store in Ulanbataar.

[7] The Nooson Zangilaa Cooperatives Union website.



Complementary Partners (Non-artisan)

Beyond direct artisan collaboration, **Ulzibat Enkhtur**[8], a Mongolian entrepreneur based in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, is an interesting partner. She has been operating in the handcrafted goods sector for the past 18 years, with a strong presence across the French- and German-speaking regions of Switzerland. Her business focuses primarily on **products sourced from Mongolia**, which make up the largest share of its portfolio, while also offering selected handcrafted items from Kyrgyzstan and Nepal. Over the years, Ulzibat has established stable collaborations with Swiss retail partners, particularly with fair-trade shops such as **Magasins du Monde**.

These partnerships typically operate on a commission-based model, with margins ranging from 80/20 to 70/30, with 80%–70% going to the NGO, depending on the store. Ulzibat has expressed openness to collaborating on logistics and market access, offering to export Altai Blue Horizons' products alongside her own if the business encounters major challenges in establishing independent export channels. Ulzibat is strongly business-driven, with a particular focus on modern-style clothing that appeals to contemporary markets. A collection of her handmade cashmere products can be seen on the Mongolian Handcrafts website[9]. At the same time, she maintains deep connections with a wide network of handcrafted artisans across Mongolia. Building on this extensive experience and network, she is well-positioned to support the identification and partnership with fair, ethical, and natural artisan producers. One of the artisan stores she highly recommended is Tsaagan Alt Felt, based in Ulaanbaatar.

[8] Facebook contacts of Ulzibat Enkhtur.

[9] Collection of handmade cashmere Mongolian Handcrafts.



Legal and administrative steps

Exporting handicrafts from Mongolia to Switzerland requires several legal and administrative procedures. Exporting goods is considered a commercial activity and requires being a locally registered business or operating through a local exporting partner. In the case of Altai Blue Horizon, local artisans and stores can serve as local export partners. However, these collaborators should be registered with the **Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry** (MNCCI) to function legally.

Clear contracts with local artisans are essential. These agreements should address ownership, delivery terms, and compliance with fair and ethical sourcing standards. From an administrative perspective, several export documents must be prepared.

I. Certification of products

According to Article 6.2 of the Mongolian Law on the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, within the framework of its authority to certify the origin of export products, all exporting goods must obtain a certificate of origin. This is crucial for securing lower tariffs in Switzerland and for proving ethical sourcing. The certificate of origin is issued by the MNCCI. If the local partners are not registered with the MNCCI, the following documents are required to be submitted to obtain the Certificate of Origin FORM B:

- *Copy of foreign trade contract /buying, selling*
- *Application Form B*
- *Invoice /English sample with Mongolian explanation*
- *Packing list, Invoice & Packing list in English*
- *Copy of the Incorporation Certificate, for individuals - copy of the identity card*
- *Copy of product license*
- *Copy of Quality conformity and hygiene certificates*



II. Customs declaration

The Commercial invoice and packing list must be issued by the registered Mongolian entity, this is why local partners need to be a cooperative or a small registered business/enterprise. The invoice, together with the packing list, is submitted to Mongolian Customs via the system or broker.

III. Special permits

Depending on the type of goods, additional licenses or permits may be necessary. Some handicrafts may be subject to additional rules, particularly those involving animal products (e.g., fur or wool from protected species), which require permits. Most ordinary crafts (textiles, felt, handmade goods) are not affected

IV. Tax obligations

Exports are usually tax-free on the Mongolian side. Taxes may be levied on exports, but they apply only to a limited number of products, mainly raw natural resources, such as raw cashmere (unprocessed), and some other animal raw materials.



Switzerland

Partner businesses

To establish sales of artisan products, Altai Blue Horizon has chosen to partner with organizations and shops who are well established in the Swiss markets and specialize in fair trade. This focus allows the business to benefit from their position and **reach a wide customer base quickly**.

Due to the unclear amount of products the business might be able to bring to the Swiss market in the early stages of its establishment, the focus of partnerships mainly lies on **fair trade shops** within Switzerland, leaving aside wholesalers at this stage. The shops listed below were selected based on their mission, styles and the origin of their products corresponding with the project.

Each of the potential partners has been **contacted** via email with an explanation of Altai Blue Horizon mission and the social business model, accompanied by a document detailing the artisan partners in Mongolia and their produced crafts. Their response, once received, will determine **their interests for collaboration**, and give insights into which products would like to be handled. This will in turn allow the orientation of the partnerships in Mongolia to focus on the **most successful products**.

Altai Blue Horizon Social Business

12th May 2026



Name	Presentation	Location
Magasins du Monde	Founded 50 years ago to build more sustainable relationships between producers from the Global South and consumers in Switzerland, in a spirit of solidarity	35 shops across French-speaking Switzerland (in Cantons Vaud, Geneva, Neuchâtel, Valais, Jura, Jura Bernois, Fribourg)
Cap Indigo Contact Info: capindigo@bluewin.ch +41 79 541 89 47	Dedicated to fair trade, it sells handicrafts, food and artisanal objects from all around the world	Geneva
La Calebasse Françoise Krahenbuhl krahenbuhlf@yahoo.fr +41 78 879 45 76	Dedicated to fair trade, it sells handicrafts, food and artisanal objects from all around the world. The shop is quite small, therefore it focuses on small sized items	Geneva
MT Style info@mtstyle.ch +41 79 614 88 88/ 022 732 00 02	Small shop specialized in selling objects from Tibet and Mongolia	Geneva
Trésor d'Himalaya contact info: info@tresordhimalaya.ch 021 921 35 80	Sells all kinds of products from Nepal and Tibet mainly. Because they focus on fair trade and sustainability, ancestral craftsmanship, authenticity and colorful objects, we believe they could be convinced to offer Mongolian products in their shops as well	Sion, Vevey, Fribourg, Yverdon

Altai Blue Horizon Social Business

12th May 2026



Boutique Arthénia contact info: artheniashop@gmail.com 021 311 80 92	Small shop specialized in fair trade, sells many different kinds of products, notably clothes made out of natural fibers (wool)	Lausanne
Fairfoot Basel contact info: info@fairfoot.ch	Fair trade shop dedicated to improving the living and working conditions of people in poor regions of the world, as well as supporting disadvantaged people by promoting integration, offering prospects and ensuring greater justice. Requires products that are fair to wildlife and the environment: natural, plastic-free, zero-waste and usually vegan products. They may be convinced to accept our products, as they do not harm animals and fit the other criteria	Basel
Mercifair GmBH contact info: 061 517 27 37	Fair trade shop and e-shop. Sells products from small artisans from all around the world	Basel
Nubuc contact info: +41 43 243 74 23	Independent fashion shop that sells clothes, accessories and bags. Accent on sustainability, quality and handicrafts	Zurich (2 shops) + online store



Anara Fairtrade contact info: hello@anarafairtrade.com	Sells fair trade, patterned and colorful cushions and accessories	Herrliberg (near Zurich)
Changemaker contact info: 061 554 23 30	Lifestyle shop with a focus on sustainability	9 shops across Swiss Germany (Baden, Basel, Bern, Luzern, Thun, Winterthur, Zürich Europaallee, Zürich Niederdorf, St.Gallen)
Botteghe del Mondo contact info: info@botteghedelmondo.ch 091 857 72 33	Swiss Italian equivalent of Magasins du Monde	11 shops in Italian-speaking Switzerland (Bellinzona, Biasca, Cavergno, Faido, Giubiasco, Locarno, Lugano, Mendrisio, Riva San Vitale, Poschiavo, Tesserete)

Figure 8: Overview of potential business partners in Switzerland.

Legal and administrative steps

Building a social business, even if it is connected to the NGO's activities, means starting a commercial activity. Any commercial activity in Switzerland is determined by a **set of rules and good practices**. This section presents an overview of the administrative actions Altai Blue Horizon should take to ensure any commercial activity is undertaken correctly and legally.



I. Legal and administrative considerations

Altai Blue Horizon is already registered at the chamber of commerce, which is a necessary condition for starting a commercial activity and it is registered as an association. An association must pursue a non-lucrative goal, however the **law allows them to pursue a commercial activity**, provided that all funds generated by such activity are used exclusively to finance activities which contribute to the nonprofit objectives pursued by the association. Thus this legal form precludes the pursuit of profit. Finally, the pursuit of a commercial activity requires properly established bylaws, which Altai Blue Horizon has already established.

In the case of a small-scale activity, the chamber of commerce does not have to be notified of the start of a commercial activity. However, Altai Blue Horizon should modify its bylaws to include the existence of this side activity that can generate a new income. Such an addition is by no means urgent and could be done during the next general assembly for instance.

An association is an independent legal entity, for that reason members of an association are not personally responsible for a possible debt, unless stated otherwise in its bylaws (Art. 75a, CC).

II. Accounting

As Altai Blue Horizon is registered at the chamber of commerce, the NGO must **maintain complete accounting records** (double-entry). The financial statements must present a true and fair view of the association's financial position, assets, and liabilities, as well as its net income or loss for the fiscal year. As none of the organization's members is trained in accounting, we strongly suggest employing a professional to ensure proper bookkeeping.



Based on Art. 69b, CC, only associations of a certain size are required to appoint an independent auditor. If it does not affect Altai Blue Horizon yet, it is recommended to provide for an audit body in the bylaws. The articles of incorporation should specify who is responsible for the audit and the form it should take (number of auditors, third-party organization, etc.). Generally, the audit body is elected by the general assembly.

III. Taxes

When undertaking a commercial activity in Switzerland, two different categories of takes need to be considered: taxes on revenue (federal, cantonal and municipal) and the tax on added value (TVA). On the former, associations are subject to both cantonal and municipal tax (ICC) and direct federal tax (IFD) on profits and capital, as well as supplementary property tax for those that own real estate located in the canton of Geneva.

An association recognized of public utility or public service **can benefit from a tax exemption** (from both ICC and IFD). The request must be submitted in writing to the Direction des affaires fiscales des l'Administration fiscale cantonale (P.O. Box 3937, 1211 Geneva 3)[10]. For the request to be approved the association of public utility must meet three conditions:

I. The bylaws must mention a no-return clause in the event of the association's dissolution

"In the event of the dissolution of the organization, the available assets shall be transferred in full to an organization that pursues a public interest purpose similar to that of the association and is eligible for tax-exempt status. Under no circumstances may

[10] Link to submit a request: https://www.ge.ch/document/614/telecharger



the assets be returned to the individual founders or members, nor may they be used for their benefit, in whole or in part, in any manner whatsoever".[11]

II. The bylaws must also include the following two compensation provisions:

"Members of the association's executive committee or the Board of Trustees serve in a voluntary capacity and are entitled only to reimbursement of their actual expenses and travel costs. Any attendance fees may not exceed those paid for official committees. For activities that go beyond the usual scope of their duties, each committee member may receive appropriate compensation."

"Paid employees of the institution may serve on the association's committee or the Board of Trustees only in an advisory capacity."

III. At least one member of the executive body (association committee or foundation board) or of the management (e.g., director, secretary general) with signing authority must be a Swiss national or a resident of Switzerland.

The procedure may take up to three months upon the receipt of all necessary documents. The fiscal administration takes the final decision, which can be challenged by the association if refused. Finally, it is necessary to keep in mind that a tax exemption does not preclude an association from filing its taxes.

Related to the TVA, the association is subject to it if its annual revenue exceeds CHF 250,000. Therefore, it does not affect Altai Blue Horizon for the time being.

[11] This example and those below were provided by the International Geneva Welcome Center (CAGI) on their website https://www.cagi.ch/fr/infos-pratiques/impots-directs/



Logistics

The transport and shipment of products from their local source to their destination of sale comprises a range of considerations. The transfer is divided into two parts: transporting the product from Ulgii to Ulaanbaatar, then international shipment to Switzerland.

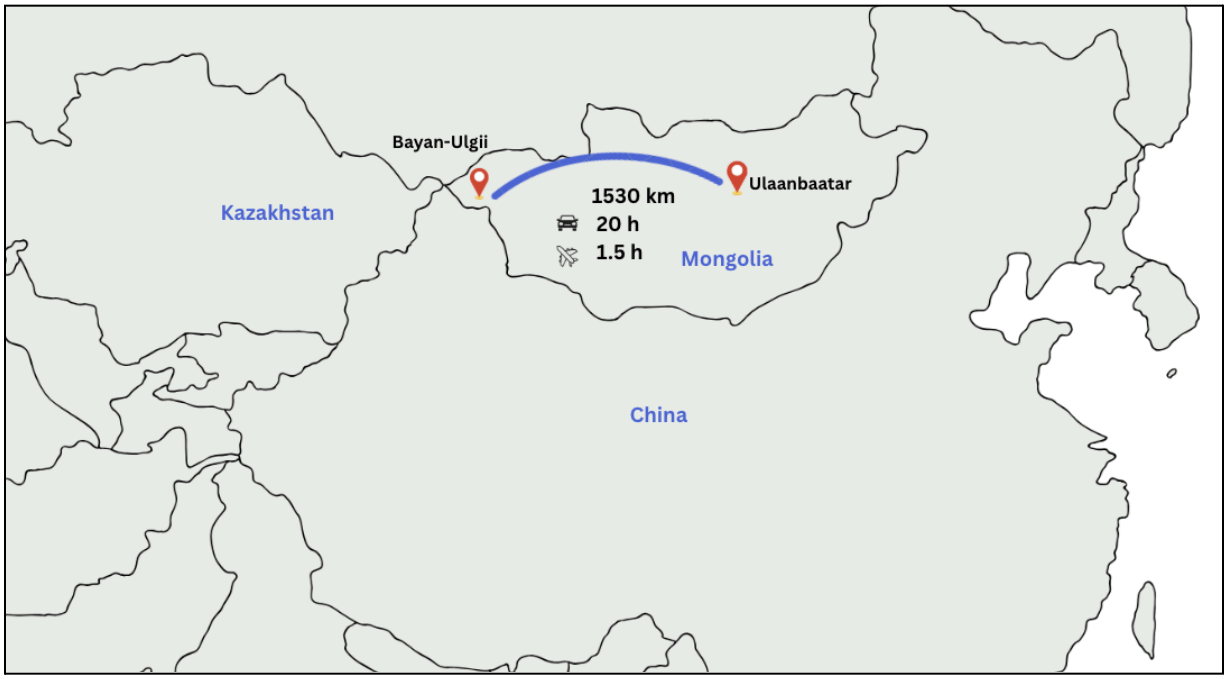


Figure 9: A map of Mongolia depicting the region of Bayan-Ulgii within Mongolia and the wider region, showcasing the distance to the capital city Ulaanbaatar. The image was generated on Canva with the distance and travel time referenced from Google maps.



Within Mongolia

The road distance between Bayan Ulgii and Ulaanbaatar constitutes approximately 1530 kilometers. Product transfer by car seems to be generally the easiest and least costly option. It seems that it is often possible to transport a parcel with products through individuals already driving from Bayan-Ulgii to Ulaanbaatar for other purposes, most likely in exchange for a small fee. Further, transporting products through mail is also feasible. Mongol Post offers parcel shipments from Bayan-Ulgii to Ulaanbaatar. The prices are determined by weight and size. The long distance between Byan-Ulgii and Ulaanbaatar makes the shipment unpredictable, as products can sometimes be stuck along the way and take a long time to arrive. Although the involvement of a variety of different actors within the chain can further complicate a quick and efficient transfer, a private transfer by car seems to be the safest and cheapest option.

International Shipment

For transporting the products from Ulaanbaatar to Switzerland, there are a range of different options depending on the scale of the products. Generally speaking, these can be divided into **private arrangements**, transferring the products through individual suitcases or joint efforts, as well as **commercial arrangements** through the major companies.

I. Private Arrangements

Transferring products through private channels proves to be a possible and efficient option concerning the distance from Mongolia to Switzerland. Particularly when the quantity of products is rather small scale, which will likely be the case for the handicraft products, transport through suitcases by members or associates of the NGO, who are already commuting once or twice a year, provides a cheap and reliable means of transport.



For slightly larger quantities, it is feasible to join already existing container shipment arrangements organized by Mongolian expats in Switzerland. Potential partners include **Sharav Byambaa** in Lausanne who is involved in shipping a container between both countries biannually. Further, Ulzibat Enkthur is the owner of a small family business selling handicraft Mongolian products in the Swiss market. Based in Neuchâtel, their business Mongolian Handicraft also includes a private shipment company. In exchange for a small fee she offered willingness to cooperate in the shipment of Altai Blue Horizons products through the entity. This seems like a particularly reliable option, especially given their long-established business and strong experience with shipment processes and international sales.

II. Commercial shipment

Further, the option to send products through **commercial companies** holds. For a smaller scale of products, parcels can be sent through ordinary shipment companies. For a large scale, container shipment can be considered. The prices depend largely on the **weight** and **size**, as outlined in the capacity and price overview in relation to the different providers, below. Additionally, **Crowd Shipping** could be considered with the aim of reducing shipment costs and exhausting container and parcel capacities. The feasibility of such a strategy is further discussed below.

A. Overview of postal shipment

This section compares the estimated costs of feasible shipping companies and the required documents for international shipments, followed by additional findings. The quotes were generated using the designated quote-calculating websites based on the following **[Measurements]**. Currently, the size, weight, and corresponding costs are estimates for comparison purposes only.



Measurements	
From: Mongolia, Ulanbaataar	Size: 45 x 35 x 30 cm
To: Switzerland (Geneva)	Weight: 10kg

Company	Requirements	Cost
DHL	Commercial Invoice	CHF 315 ~ CHF 530
	Air Waybill	Insurance: ~1% of the total value of the package.
FedEx	Commercial Invoice	CHF 260 ~ CHF 270
	Airway Bill	Insurance→Declared value: The first $100 of value in your shipment is included in your shipping rate.

Figure 10: Overview of shipping options. *Air WayBill is usually automatically created when you book the shipment. Information on the Commercial Invoice System can be found here: DHL[12] and FedEx[13].

[12] DHL. (Feb, 2025) How to prepare a commercial invoice for global shipments. https://www.dhl.com/discover/en-my/logistics-advice/essential-guides/how-to-prepare-a-commercial-invoice
[13] FedEx. (n.d). How to complete international shipping documentation. https://www.fedex.com/en-ch/customs-tools/customs-documents-online.html



DHL and FedEx seem like the most reliable commercial shipment companies in the context of the business, as they are able to reach remote areas in Mongolia, such as Bayan-Ulgii. The prices listed above exclude insurance. The DHL[14] Insurance rate can be estimated relatively straightforwardly, as outlined in the table. However, FedEx[15] uses a system called "declared value" for securing liability for your shipments.

In this system, the amount you declare for your shipment sets the maximum liability for lost, damaged, or misdelivered packages. This is not insurance, so FedEx will only cover up to the declared amount once they approve the issue was their fault. For more comprehensive coverage, you may need to apply for a third-party insurance provider. Further information could be found on this website. Both DHL and FedEx allow you to open a business account, which provides benefits such as reduced shipping fees, access to express shipping, priority customer support, and more.

Opening a business account usually requires several steps and approval, so it may not be feasible for the business at this stage, but it could be considered in the future. Further information on how to open a DHL business account can be found here, and information on a FedEx business account can be found here.

[14] DHL. (May, 2023). Shipping insurance: A quick guide. https://www.dhl.com/discover/en-global/ship-with-dhl/documents-and-customs-advice/shipping-Insurance-a-quick-guide
[15] FedEx. (n.d). What is declared value. https://www.fedex.com/en-us/shipping/declared-value.html



Commerical Container Shipments			
DHL Global Forwarding	process through request and quote	€100–200 / m^3 in a shared container	€2,500–3,500 in 20ft container
DB Schenker	possibility to book online	€80–180 / m^3 in a shared container	similar rates
DSV	process through quotes	similar rates	similar rates
Kuehne + Nagel	focus mainly on businesses but possible via agent, located in Switzerland	similar rates	similar rates

Figure 11: Overview of commercial container shipment.

Container Shipment is usually handled by **freight companies**. For some, as listed above, it is possible to transfer goods as a private entity; however, the process is handled through specific requests and external booking processes. As the smallest scale usually starts at 20 feet, the large capacity, as well as high pricing, seems to be rather unsuitable for transporting the given amount of artisan products. However, opting for a **sharing container option** could be a suitable option for conducting larger shipments, for example, before the first product launch.



B. Crowd Shipping

An alternative option for shipments is crowd shipping, a logistics method in which individuals transport packages for others using trips they are already planning, coordinated through a digital platform.

This method is usually beneficial for cost and time efficiency. In addition, because it relies on already existing infrastructure, it has the potential to mitigate carbon footprints[16], which supports our ethical business practice. However, at the same time, it presents concerns about service reliability, such as damage and theft, lack of formal insurance mechanisms, and the need to establish trust between sender and couriers. Additional issues relate to the administrative complexity of coordinating deliveries. Furthermore, crowd shipping is often associated with gig work, it raises ethical considerations regarding labour conditions, worker reliability, and security.

Scholars such as Cebeci et al., highlights several factors that can enhance the reliability of crown shipping systems, including the availability of insurance for loss or damage, transparency and information sharing, courier experience, tracking and tracing capabilities, reputation, reasonable pricing and so on[17].

In the context of rural Mongolia, however, platform-based crowd shipping services are not widely available, limiting the feasibility of this model. In addition, ethical concerns related to gig work further complicate its adoption into our model. As a result, an alternative may be a hybrid, relationship-based delivery approach. By leveraging trusted personal networks, such as with Sharav Byambaa in Lausanne and Ulzibat Enkthur in Neuchâtel could maintain some of the efficiency and sustainability benefits of crowd shipping while improving reliability and aligning more with our ethical values.

[16]Cebeci et al., 2023
[17]Cebeci et al., 2023



Future Development

This section outlines long-term perspectives of the Altai Blue Horizon Business presenting a potential timeline for starting the enterprise. Further, potential expansive developments regarding logistics, additional funding sources and partnerships, as well as marketing strategies and challenges are discussed.

Project Timeline

The intended project timeline is divided in 3 sections as outlined in the table below. Each phase should last for a period of around 6 months. With the potential start of Phase 1 in June 2026, the business could start running for the end of 2027.

PHASE 1	PHASE 2	PHASE 3
Finalise research and securing of financial start capital	Creation and distribution of first round of samples	Final and fixed confirmation of partnerships
Product concept development and design	Local quality and authenticity testing in Mongolia and Switzerland	Distribution of final product and establishment of fixed transport routes
Confirmation of concept and production plan for trial run with artisans	Feeedback and potential readjustments	Start of marketing campagin
Preliminary confirmation with commerical and logistical partners	Fixed confirmation of logistical chains including storage andtransport	Product Launch

Figure 12: Overview of the Project Timeline and actions to be included in each phase.



Logistics: Storage options in Switzerland

Once the products arrive in Switzerland, they could be stored in a storage unit. Below are the storage companies that could be found in Switzerland and price comparison. For a comparison purpose, the costs are estimated by using the following **[Details]**.

Details	
Location	Options include Geneva, Basel, Bern, Lausanne and Zurich
Size (Volume)	2-4m³ (space for 50 medium size boxes)
Duration	12 months (monthly fees)

Figure 13: Details to consider regarding the choice of storage.

Most storage costs range from CHF 100 to CHF 200 per month, depending on location, duration and unit size. Certain providers, such as **ZebraBox** and **MyPlace Self Storage**, offer services such as accepting deliveries and placing items directly into storage units on behalf of customers. The choice of storage provider and location should be determined in alignment with the broader logistics strategy, particularly the shipment of products between Mongolia and Switzerland and the geographic distribution of operational patterns within Switzerland. Selecting an appropriate facility is therefore essential to ensure practicality, cost efficiency, and smooth coordination across the supply chain.



Company	Address	Details	Costs
Zebra box	Eigerstrasse 82 3007 Bern Several Locations: Basel, Bern, Lausanne, Zurich and more	Private/ self storage and business customers options available. With business option:Lower cost and receipt service in most cities *Receipt service: accept the delivered goods and store it for you. *No location in Geneva→ cost output from Bern	**Private:** CHF 114.35/month **Business:** CHF 104.85/month
Para Box	Rue des Quatre-Saisons, Geneva, 1201	central location, right next to Gare Cornavain	CHF 200/month
placeB	Seilerstrasse 8, Bern, Switzerland	Most cost efficient but minimal service available *Geneva location opening in summer 2026. Price reference are not available at the moment.→ cost output from Bern	CHF 57.10/month with 50% off on the first month
myplace self storage	Grubenstrasse 28 8045 Zürich Binz	Their service includes package acceptance (receiving delivered goods and storage) *Location only available in Zurich	**Private:** CHF 102.4/month **Business:** CHF 102.4/month

Figure 14: Overview of Storage companies and options.



Quality control mechanisms

To ensure the proper quality of material as well as authenticity of products, **quality control mechanisms** are necessary. In Bayan-Ulgii, this takes place through close cooperation with artisans. Ideally Mongolian members of Altai Blue Horizon on the ground, assess the products on ground for quality of material as well as cultural authenticity. In Switzerland product testing would take place in close cooperation with sales partners, assessing the requirements for quality, price and design.

Initial Funding

The implementation of the project will require **securing initial funding**. This start capital will be used to pay the artisans upon reception of the first products. Some similar organizations we talked to do not pay their artisans until the product is sold to the final consumer, but we do not recommend to follow that procedure. Indeed, one of the aims of the social business is to be socially responsible and provide small artisans from Ulgii with an additional income. In that perspective, it seems crucial that our partners in Mongolia are being treated fairly, which includes remunerating them for their work, regardless of it being sold in Switzerland or not. Start capital will also serve for transportation, and other necessary expenses to this commercial activity (for instance storage or the accountant's salary).

Such initial funding can be acquired by applying for grants. Here is a non-exhaustive list of **foundations and governmental bodies** whose mission match our project Altai Blue Horizon could apply to:

- Fondation Alfred et Eugénie Baur
- Thomas & Doris Amman Foundation
- Fondation Philanthropique Famille Sandoz
- Fondation Stanley Thomas Johnson
- Ursula Zindel-Hilti Foundation



- Fondation Audemars-Atkins
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)
- Fédération Genevoise de Coopération (FGC)

Before considering these options, Association Genève Asie (AGA) should perhaps be contacted first. Indeed as an association which provides funding and possesses a vast network of people interested in relations between Switzerland and Asia, AGA could prove a valuable contact for funding as well as advancing awareness and knowledge of the business in new circles. To that end, please note that Prof. Christophe Gironde (Geneva Graduate Institute) has offered to act as a facilitator for connecting Altai Blue Horizon with the association.

Challenges

To ensure the smooth continuation of the project, a set of potential challenges for a swift and successful implementation of the business should be kept in consideration.

Firstly, the essential **precondition** for the realization of the project will be to secure initial funding. Indeed, as mentioned above, start capital will be needed to pay the artisans upon first delivery, as well as covering the costs of logistics. Thus, securing initial funding should be a primary focus of phase 1.

Moreover, there is a need to **maintain trusting relationships** that were established between Altai Blue Horizon and the Mongolian partners over the past months. Regular communication of the project handlers with the artisans needs to be facilitated, to maintain their interest, as well as ensuring a continuous state of information regarding the progress of the project and the development and expected official start of the commercial partnership.

Finally, ensuring the **origin of the materials** and the **cultural authenticity** of the products will pose a significant challenge, and so will be ensuring ethical and fair



collaboration with the artisans in Mongolia (i.e. fair payment). The participation of a trusted and knowledgeable collaborator in Mongolia is recommended to overcome these hurdles.

Outreach and Marketing

I. Brochure

Creating a brochure and displaying it when selling the products is beneficial for marketing and for mindful consumption. Being a social enterprise at its core, it is the business's responsibility to spread awareness of the cause it supports. Sharing Altai Blue Horizon's mission, the Mongolian local artisan's story and our social business's story and values will help state the purpose and potentially benefit for consumer cultivation (capturing the interest of customers) and also stewardship (maintaining the interest to donate). Below are examples of what details should be included in the brochure for a stratified relationship building.[18]

[18] Access to canva link for edits:
https://www.canva.com/design/DAHBxKEOhP8/eqSXGPxkdgCvtfC8jAV2pA/edit?ui=eyJBljp7fX0



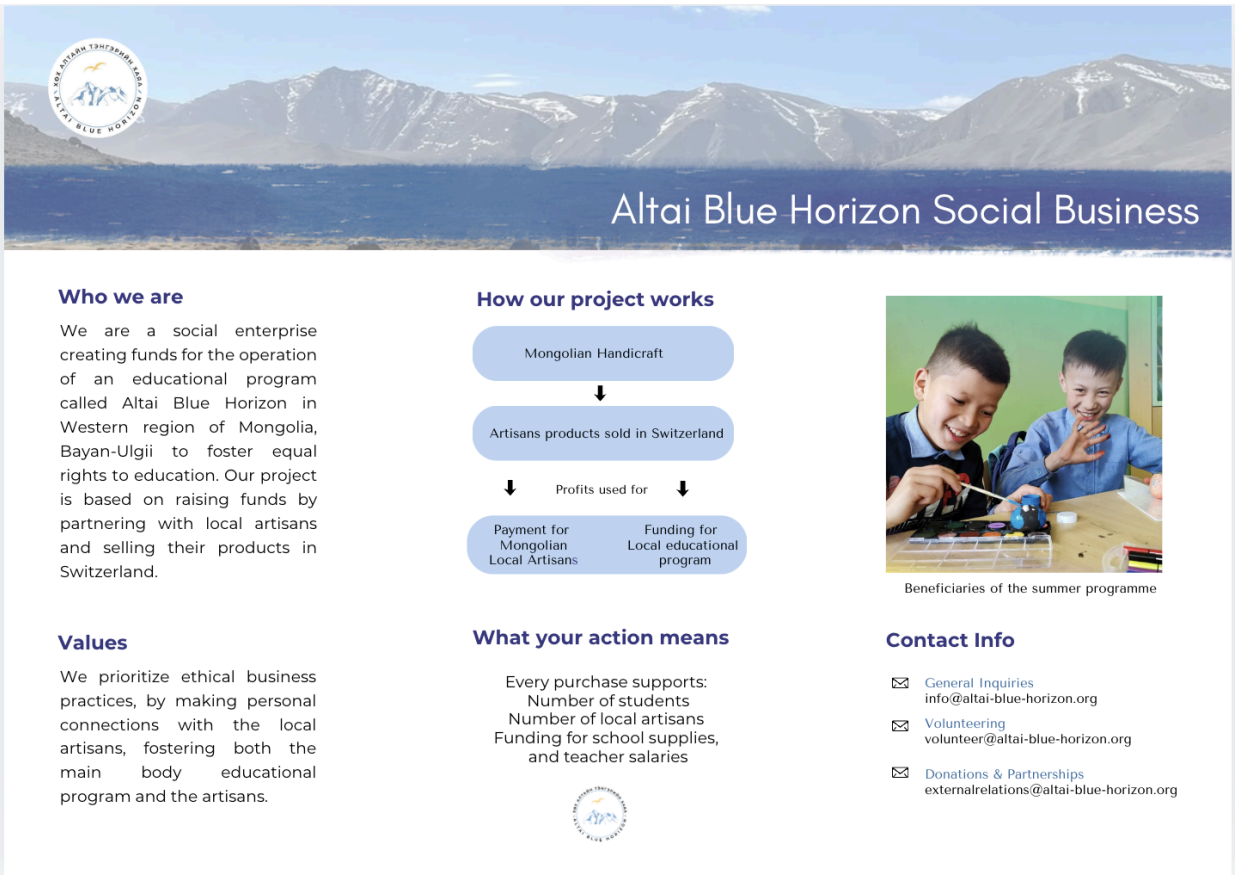


Figure 15: Page 1 of the Brochure giving a general introduction of the purpose of the social business. The contents were designed on Canva.

The first Page of the Brochure entails an **Introduction** *section,* explaining the function and the purpose of the social business, as well as a Values section emphasizing the ethical aspects of the project.



The section **How our project works** is a visual representation of how our social business operates: Selling Mongolian artisanal craft in boutiques in the Swiss market. The sales are used for funding for Altai Blue Horizon: Local educational program and the payment on local artisans. It helps to deliver the authenticity of the project.

The first page is concluded by the section: **What Your Action Means To Us**. It includes **measurable objectives** related to how their purchase benefits the beneficiaries, such as, "Every purchase supports X" (e.g., school supplies and teacher salaries) and expected or current impact, such as number of students supported, number of artisans partnered with and percentage of revenue reinvested.



Figure 16: Page 2: Demonstrate the value beyond the product itself. The contents were designed on Canva.



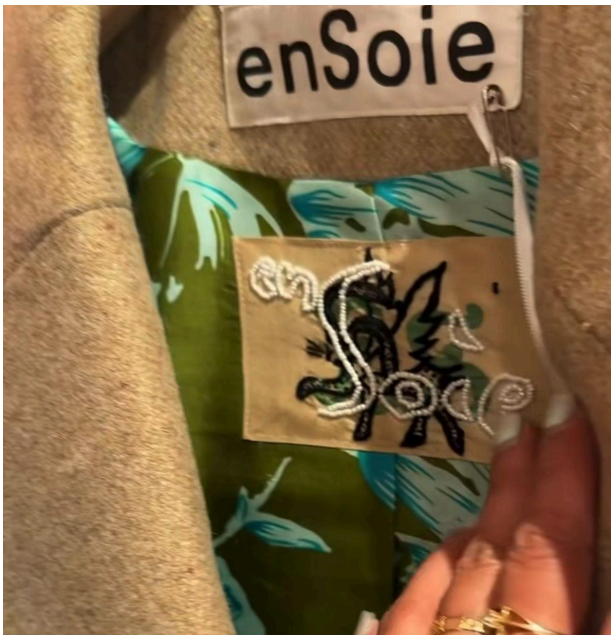
Page two gives an overview of **Our Partners**, using story telling. The main purpose is to help people to see the value beyond the product itself. This includes information about the products and specifically introducing the Mongolian artisan's story. Information about **types of handicrafts** (textiles, felt goods, jewelry, etc.), **materials and traditional techniques, cultural significance of the crafts** and **handmade / sustainable aspects** of the products can be further included here. Including a personal story of a partner artisans is an effective way to encourage customers to purchase the products. However, it is very important to get the individuals' consent when sharing their stories and photos on brochures or other marketing strategies. Further this includes the following note on authenticity: Our products are individually made by hand, so no two pieces are exactly alike. Variations in shape and detail are part of the process, making each item uniquely its own.

Lastly, the backstory of the Logo will be introduced: The logo is designed by the students who benefit from the Altai Blue Horizon summer project. This is where the social business and the summer programme can bridge connection. It works as a call-to-action guiding that the sales of products with this logo gets funded for the summer program on the ground.

II. Easily recognisable Logo

When displayed in shops, products should be tagged with an easily recognizable logo. Items bearing this logo **indicate that their purchase contributes to funding the Altai Blue Horizon summer programme.** This message will be clearly communicated in the brochure's call-to-action section. Creativity and collaboration can be fostered by involving children from the Altai Blue Horizon summer programme in the process.





For example, the logo featured on the tags could be designed by the children themselves, adding a meaningful and tangible element to each piece. The attached image illustrates a possible direction for the logo design. This concept is inspired by a small Swiss brand that values locally produced, low-volume collections, traditional craftsmanship, as well as environmental sustainability.

The background artwork could be created by the children, with the brand name placed on top. This approach adds a distinctive, personal element to the logo while making each product feel more meaningful.

Figure 17: The Logo of EnSoie[19].

III. Online Marketing

Another avenue to consider is marketing through online media. This seems increasingly important for creating outreach, making people aware of the project and potentially interested in purchasing products. Potential ways of reaching customers and supporters could include promoting on Instagram, Facebook and TikTok channels. However, as social media momentum is potentially rather short lived, this method of promotion might be less sustainable for the long run.

[19] EnSoie. (n.d.). *EnSoie Elements pouch dupion silk embroidery gold linen*. Retrieved May 4, 2026, from https://ensoie.com/en/shop/accessories/bags/handbags/ensoie-elements-pouch-doupion-silk-embroidery-gold-linen



However, it can help raise awareness of the cause and increase the reach to people through specific campaigns, for example during the launch of the products.

IV. Build relationships with new partners in Geneva

A goal of Altai Blue Horizon social business is to establish new partnerships within Geneva to extend outreach. Collaboration with the **Mongolian Embassy** could be a feasible option in reaching a wider Mongolia-interested audience. For example, a small exhibition could be organised presenting the mission of Altai Blue Horizon's Business through presenting photos and pieces of the local artisans from Bayan-Ulgii.

In addition, the embassy occasionally hosts cultural events such as the "Mongolian Naadam Festival 2024"[20], which could be a good opportunity to sell the products and spread the word about our social business. However, this is not an annual event, so keeping a close eye on future events is crucial. The *Embassy of Mongolia, Permanent Mission of Mongolia in Geneva* website demonstrates several cultural collaborations with Mongolian artists, showcasing their cultural representation in Switzerland. Directly contacting them will be the most reliable source for collaboration and participation in future events.

Further, The **Mongolian restaurant** in Geneva *Ulaanbaatar* has voiced interest in collaborating with Altai Blue Horizon for advertising purposes. They are open in displaying brochures, or potentially products, to promote the Altai Blue Horizon Social Business. This seems a useful strategy, as the restaurants' customers might already be interested in the Mongolian culture, and therefore potentially open to support Altai Blue Horizon's mission, as well as buying Mongolian artisan products.

[20] Embassy of Mongolia. (July, 2024). Mongolian Naadam Festival 2024. https://geneva.embassy.mn/post/3759



V. Artisans Christmas market in les Pâquis and annual Christmas market in Carouge

Every year a non-profit artisanal Christmas market takes place for the duration of a week-end in les Pâquis neighborhood in Geneva. Organized by La Maison de Quartier des Pâquis, it constitutes an interesting opportunity to **spread the word** about the business as well as making some **direct sales**, all while targeting a wider public.

It is an **associative process**, which means that participant associations must take place in the organizational process. In practice, it means at least one member has to be physically present at the biweekly meetings starting at the end of August. Be in part of setting up and cleaning up at the end of the week-end of the event. Also there is a small bar selling drinks and homemade food and cakes, made by the participant organization (and each receives a share of the total profits at the end of the week-end). Finally, any product sold there must be handmade by artisans, and all profits must be dedicated to further the association's activities.

Participation in that event requires a certain amount of **time and commitment**, however, contrary to some other Christmas markets in Geneva, participation is **free**. Thus it could be a relatively obtainable opportunity to spread the word about Altai Blue Horizon's work, the business and the products being sold elsewhere in Geneva and other cities in Switzerland, all without additional monetary costs on the new business.

If Altai Blue Horizon is interested in participating, simply email sarah.stegmukker@fase.ch before mid-August (2027 probably based within the mentioned timeline above).

The **annual Christmas market in Carouge** held over one week-end in mid December could also be considered. A rather wealthy and highly frequented neighborhood of Geneva, known for its small stores and artisans, Carouge constitutes a very good opportunity to touch directly the business' **target audience**. The organization is out of the season at the moment, no details regarding conditions or cost of participation could be collected, other than participation is based on a selection process following registration, but more should be made accessible on their website in the coming months.



Contact Information

Altai Blue Horizon – Switzerland

1200 Geneva Switzerland

Altai Blue Horizon – Mongolia

18, Street No. 27 Kharasai 10th bagh,
Ulgii soum Bayan-Ulgii, Mongolia

E-Mail Contact

General Inquiries:

info@altai-blue-horizon.org

Donations & Partnerships:

externalrelations@altai-blue-horizon.org

Volunteering:

volunteer@altai-blue-horizon.org

Website

https://altai-blue-horizon.org/



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