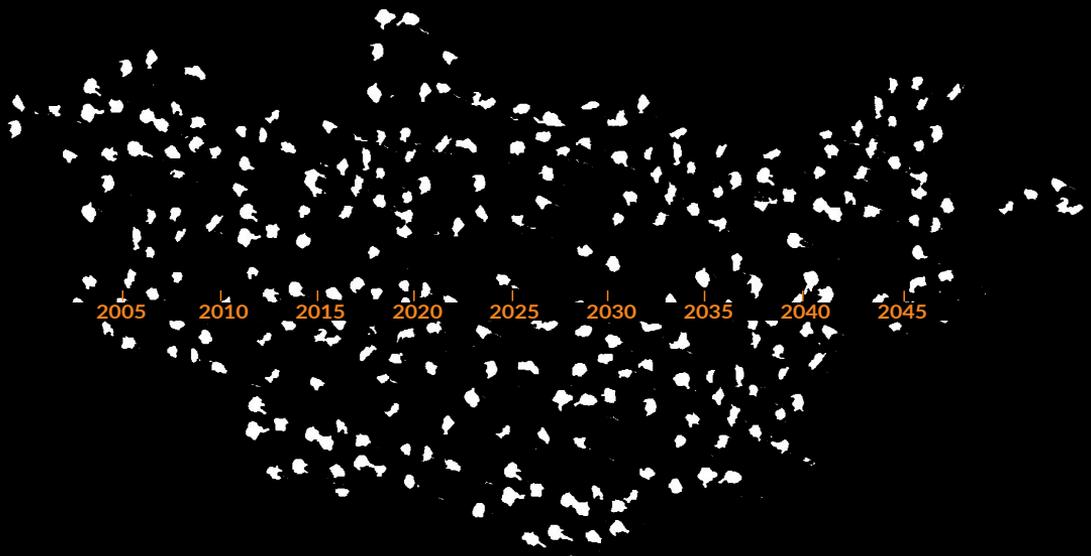


15TH
ANNIVERSARY
since 2008

IRIM
INDEPENDENT
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF
MONGOLIA

ANNUAL REPORT 2022/2023

Special edition



Independence

Quality

Impact

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Chapter 1

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH OVER 15 YEARS

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A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO



Ambassador Extraordinary and
Plenipotentiary IRIM President
Bekhbat Khasbazar

IRIM's journey, which began in 2008, has evolved continuously for the past 15 years, creating today's IRIM upholding the professional standards that define what IRIM is all about.

Today, we aim to become a center of knowledge based on Mongolia's experience that provides world-class, independent research and consulting services'. We strive to increase research impact to bring about substantial changes in the society.

IRIM's focus areas are Governance, Education, Social Protection, Gender and Sustainability. We continued working on **research, evaluation and advocacy** in these areas; with: bi-lateral and multi-lateral development partners, INGOs, government organizations and CSOs.

Today, we have 26 full-time staff, advised by a roster of 50 senior consultants. We conducted more than 300 research and consultancy projects with over 100 partners, we visited over 330 soums in 21 aimags and meeting with around 190,000 people to hear their opinions and experience.

During this past year in 2022, we **increasingly focused on the impacts of COVID-19** on vulnerable groups and the society in general. Also, we dedicated a lot of time and efforts to **defending civic space and democracy in Mongolia**. As part of our tradition, we continued our independent and **brand studies**, namely the Digital Transparency Index and the **Social Well-Being Survey**.



Executive Director
Tsalmegsaikhan Lkhagva

Looking at the history of the past 15 years, in the first five years between 2008-2012, we focused on IRIM's survival and internal capacity building. In the second stage between 2013-2017, we focused on our institutionalization (for example elaborating our processes and rules, improving quality, and strengthening our internal governance) and fostered meaningful ties with our stakeholders. In the third stage between 2018-2023, we have been focusing on increasing our research impact, to influence policies based on our research findings and to share Mongolia's development experience in the region.

Here, we would like to highlight some of the important **achievements and impacts in the past 15 years**:

It continues to contribute to the knowledge of Mongolian society from a social perspective. We believe that **social cohesion and trust are key** to ensure longstanding cooperation and sustainable development both at national and community level. In 2016, we initiated the Social Wellbeing Survey in Mongolia; a general social survey using large samples. The survey focuses on how - over time - people's **trust** in each other develops, how they **cooperate** with each other, and how they perceive their **quality of life**. This survey is only national and **independent** survey focused on social outcomes.

IRIM is **contributing to development policy planning capacity** and practice. The results of our research and evaluation determine the perception, attitude and expectations of the population about the policies and legal acts implemented by the government and the programs and projects implemented by international organizations. **In promoting good governance**, since 2010, IRIM developed the Digital Transparency Index (DTI) as a standardized method to compare digital transparency of the government.

Promoting the democracy, IRIM became a member of the **Asia Democracy Research Network** in October 2020. Collaborating with the network, IRIM organized **International conference on Democracy** in 2018 in duo with Swiss World Foundation Society. We edited and published the conference papers as **a book in two languages**, Mongolian and English, under the name of "Democratic Struggles in Challenging Times: Insights from Mongolia and around the World" in 2022.

Continues to demonstrate leadership in creating a national evaluation system and achieving the Sustainable Development Goals. Since the launch of the "National Evaluation Framework" initiative in 2015, IRIM has been elected as a member of the board of directors of the Asia Pacific Evaluation Association, contributing to strengthening the evaluation system and capacity in Mongolia and the region. In addition, creating a culture of evidence-based decision-making at the system level while working hand-in-hand in the development and evaluation of performance of international organizations and national basic sector strategies that are implemented in the development sector of Mongolia.

Strengthening the capacity of all parties involved, participated and worked together (were active and stable parties). About 300 projects completed in the past have created an opportunity to continuously document any changes that have occurred in Mongolia over the past 15 years and create evidence to represent them. In addition, the most important thing is to successfully and effectively fulfill the role of identifying the parties in the field, identifying common problems, discussing and connecting them, and regularly improving the knowledge and capabilities of the stakeholders.

Representing Mongolia in regional and international arenas. Join professional and industry networks and associations at the global and regional level and work actively, represent Mongolia. Despite the global pandemic and border closures, we have continued our regional cooperation initiatives, actively engaging in digital mode with Civil Society Network called 'Innovation for Change' with five Central Asian countries and Mongolia, and successfully implementing 'Virtual Marathon' and 'Action- based research' projects that aim to improve the regional integration in civic space.

Prospects: Although Mongolia is exiting from the pandemic, it will deal with the economic, political and social impacts of COVID-19 for coming years. IRIM, as a professional research organization, remains committed to our duty to the society that we must contribute and demand smart and inclusive decisions through independent, quality research evidence and analysis. IRIM's interest areas to collaborate:

- Research initiatives on Mongolia's society and social progress including the Social Wellbeing Survey
- Policy, program, and project intervention in the areas of governance, education, disabilities, gender, mining and sustainability
- Governance issues prevent from further backslides. In the areas of results-based management, strengthening national evaluation capacities, supporting civic space and CSOs.
- Initiatives to reduce the negative impact of COVID-19 on communities, vulnerable groups and better recovery.

IRIM's commitment to our core principles of **Independence, Quality and Impact** will remain strong and we will continue being the voice for Mongolia's development issues.

04 April 2023

ABOUT US



An ISO-certified, human rights and gender-sensitive colleagues

IRIM started operations in 2008 with a team of four people. Since then, it has expanded and is now on the threshold of its 15th anniversary. IRIM now has more than 25 full-time employees, and over 300 associated (national and international) experts and contracted researchers.

IRIM provides services in research, monitoring and evaluation, project management, and training; working mainly with public sector clients, international organizations, and donors. Through its work, IRIM strives to achieve real outcomes in addressing and solving some of the most pressing development issues.

Since its establishment, IRIM has been committed to providing results-based and client-centered project management solutions. Additionally, the Institute has always been guided by the principles of providing evidence-based and **high-quality** information, maintaining an **independent** and impartial perspective, and striving for improved **impacts** in society. Within these commitments, the ISO 9001:2015 International Quality Management System has been implemented throughout the organization's operations.

Promoting gender equality through operations and research projects has always been at the core of IRIM's principles as a representative of civil society organizations, and the private sector. As a result, IRIM developed the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse, and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy tailored to the needs and characteristics of a research organization, to mainstream gender equality into an organization's culture and all levels of management.

IRIM expanded its scope into the fields of marketing and innovation research and subsequently established the Marketing and Innovation Research Institute of Mongolia (MIRIM) in 2013. IRIM also continues to expand its activities internationally, by providing research and consultancy in Southeast and Central Asian countries.



IRIM'S MISSION

To be the leading center of knowledge in Mongolia on development-related issues and to provide world-class independent research outcomes.



QUALITY POLICY STATEMENT

IRIM is committed to providing independent research products and services with the highest possible level of quality; that meets international standards and customer satisfaction at all times and using continually improving processes.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

EXPERIENCE:

RESEARCH: IRIM has research experience in a wide range of sectors, where professional and scientific approaches are applied. We are dedicated to developing innovative quantitative and qualitative research methods and methodologies, and continuously introducing advanced data collection and processing techniques in the study of social issues. About 50% of all our projects are research related, and we aim to reach diverse groups of society and bring their voices to the attention of projects, programs, and government decision-makers. Throughout the process, we are committed to maintaining professionalism by considering research ethics, confidentiality, and diversity.

141 projects

- Policy research
- Opinion polls
- Socio-economic studies
- Thematic research.
- Knowledge, attitude, & practice (KAP) surveys
- Action-based research

MONITORING AND EVALUATION: Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are one of our most significant and important services, accounting for more than 30% of all implemented projects. Unlike others, IRIM's M&E projects are implemented from an independent and external perspective, entirely evidence-based, and seek to provide reliable and professional assessments. Within this framework, IRIM has become an active member of more than ten professional evaluation associations and networks. It continuously seeks to improve the M&E capabilities of its teams and experts, through collaboration and networking.

105 projects

- Monitoring
- Impact assessment
- Real-time monitoring
- Rapid assessment

PROJECT MANAGEMENT: In addition to professional research and evaluation, we offer consulting services for organizations, projects, and policy-level activities; accounting for 10% of our service. From empowering individuals and organizations through consulting services, we reach out to the policy level of international development programs and government decision-makers. Evidence-based delivery of consulting services is important for more effective decision-making and policy implementation. More than just delivering bespoke services, we also engage in corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities to empower non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and support vulnerable groups.

36 projects

- Campaign & advocacy
- Workshops facilitation
- Content & Communication

TRAINING: Based on our activities, knowledge, and experience, we provide training services aimed at supporting and improving the operations of customers and client organizations. Training and capacity-building projects account for more than 10% of our services. We customize our training programs and concepts to each client's needs and goals, so we can consistently deliver high levels of training outcomes, returns, and participant satisfaction. Based on our accumulated knowledge and experience, we are working to contribute to increasing the research skills and knowledge and strengthening the capacity of our partner organizations.

23 projects

- Research & Evaluation methodology
- Quantitative and Qualitative analysis & analysis software use
- M&E training
- Project writing and development

IRIM IN NUMBERS



2008 APRIL

2023 APRIL



214,635
Respondents



103
Client



159
Partners

GEOGRAPHICAL EXPERIENCE

Number of implemented projects

CENTRAL ASIA

- 2 Afghanistan
- 2 Kazakhstan
- 2 Kyrgyzstan
- 1 Pakistan
- 2 Tajikistan
- 1 Turkmenistan
- 1 Uzbekistan

MONGOLIA

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|
| 46 Arkhangai | 65 Umnugobi |
| 40 Bayan-Ulgii | 53 Uvurkhangai |
| 55 Bayankhongor | 49 Uvs |
| 31 Bulgan | 38 Sukhbaatar |
| 49 Gobi-Altai | 53 Selenge |
| 30 Gobisumber | 47 Tuv |
| 55 Darkhan-Uul | 67 Khovd |
| 52 Dornod | 57 Khuvsgul |
| 45 Dornogobi | 47 Khentii |
| 39 Zavkhan | 203 Ulaanbaatar |
| 49 Orkhon | |

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

- 1 Erliyan City in China
- 1 Timor-Leste
- 1 Bangladesh

IRIM'S ESTABLISHMENT



TAMIR Chultemsuren

The Chairman of the Board and one of the co-founders of IRIM. Since 1999, he has been working in research and consulting services.

'Although independent research and consulting can provide valuable insights, and play a critical role in government decision-making, few organizations were working in this field in Mongolia. Despite the fact that the NGO was established initially, both the company and the NGO forms were established after considering the lack of funds and human resources, for carrying out the activities of the NGO in Mongolia for long-term operation. We began building our team by recruiting young, and older experienced individuals, with high energy and motivation.

At first, our organization was unique in that we aimed to establish a career system for researchers. It provided opportunities to advance; in terms of experience. It allowed graduates - in sociology and social sciences - to use their knowledge to independently conduct research and evaluation. It also offered consulting services and created wealth and knowledge. We soon prepared a roadmap to become a knowledge center, exporting industry knowledge and experience from Mongolia to the international market.

IRIM is now preparing to compete internationally, as is well known to all parties.'



IRIM's Previous CEOs at the 30th Anniversary of the Department of Sociology and Social Work, 2021

THE STORY OF IRIM'S CEOs' LEADERSHIP



TSOGTBAATAR Gankhuyag

One of the co-founders of IRIM and worked as an Executive Director in 2008. Now, he is studying at the University of Melbourne through an Australian Awards scholarship.

IT WAS CRUCIAL TO STABILIZE OUR POSITION IN THE MARKET, AS AN INDEPENDENT RESEARCH INSTITUTE.

I worked as an Executive Director in IRIM in its first two years. After I graduated and had only one year of work experience, I got an opportunity to be part of establishing IRIM. IRIM was founded on 4 April 2008, by myself and university teachers Ts. Bold, Ch. Tamir and my classmate Z.Zorigtsaikhan. When I got an opportunity to establish a new research company in my specialized field, I gratefully accepted the offer. I was working as a senior researcher at the Press Institute of Mongolia.

Because it was a new organization, I had to be involved in all kinds of work related to running the organization from the beginning. From the company name, logo, first office rent, desks and chairs, brochures, website, first employees, and first projects. I had to mobilize myself, my experience, my networks, and my colleagues.

In choosing the name of the organization, the Independent Research Institute of Mongolia was selected because it indicates that we are an independent research institute. In this regard, it was critical to have a sustainable operation,

become financially stable, gain experience, and be independent of any political party and organization. To have sustainable and consistent operations, we were doing every possible research we could find. Because of our inexperience, we would only find research with high volume but low income. We could not go to our home because of our workload with many projects on board, and there were many nights when Zorigoo and I slept in our office (laying on newspapers). At first, we used to gather our classmates to work because we needed paid and unpaid support.

I may summarize my achievements and evolution as a director in three ways. Getting started was a core part of the task. Establishing the organization is a significant step. Following that, the organization took its first form, laying the groundwork for experienced human resources, and a material foundation for implementing specific projects and programs. And, perhaps most importantly, we acquired confidence in our ability to turn our beloved passion into a business in this manner.'



BOLD Tsevegдорж

One of IRIM's founders and Executive Director from 2009 to 2010. Currently a member of the board of directors and a professor at the National University of Mongolia's Department of Sociology and Social Work.

OUR MAIN OBJECTIVE WAS TO BE RECOGNIZED AND ACCEPTED IN THE INDUSTRY

I was forced to take over as CEO of IRIM eight months after its establishment. It was a significant challenge for a company with only three researchers, and no prior experience or track record of completed work. People in the area, as well as some coworkers, teased, mocked, and openly ignored us. We started with a small rented room of barely 12 square meters.

We dared to show that many specialists were trained and graduated as sociologists, that they could work in their profession and do their favorite jobs. We aimed to create an opportunity to conduct our favorite research in fields of interest; independent of politics, and financially independent. For that, we are still working hard to achieve our goals.

Initially, it was necessary to inspire the confidence of graduates, strengthen the ranks of researchers to cooperate with us and create a structure for long-term understanding and stable work. As a result, we made the starting point. To increase the number of researchers, we needed to expand our accommodation capacity and be able to cover costs. As a newly formed organization, we all of the problems of growth faced us.

Getting recognized and accepted in the industry was the main challenge. For this, it was necessary to create an experience and a history of stable two or three years of work in the organization. At that time, we decided to strengthen the Institute as an organization that worked fairly within the framework of the laws and regulations in Mongolia, prepared financial reports, paid taxes, and so on.

We developed project proposals that met the needs of international organizations, worked hard to get them approved, and proved to them that it is safe to believe us. Now, we want to compete with international consulting organizations, strengthen our capacity to carry out large-scale projects in Mongolia and build an excellent team of researchers, experts, and consultants.

We have made it our mission to create knowledge with a team of the best experts, create a knowledge center, propose policy solutions based on the results of independent research, and influence development to the best of our ability, and we are still working towards this goal.'



ARIUNTUNGALAG Munkhtuvshin

Started her working career at IRIM as a Researcher in 2008, and between 2010 to 2011, worked as an Executive Director. Now, she is working as an Asia Pacific Regional Grant Acquisition Advisor at World Vision International.

A WELL-INFORMED PERSON WILL LEAD THE MEETING

From 2010 to 2011, IRIM had 12 to 13 employees. At that time, the organization had our organization's introduction, logo, and organizational experience to a certain extent. As an Executive Director, I focused on external relations and worked to professionalize the Institute. This led to many significant works, such as obtaining official membership of the International Association of Sociologists, participating in the Australian Volunteers program, implementing a project to promote social responsibility in the Mongolian context, and creating the digital transparency index of governmental organizations.

Our focus as an institute has been to prepare for challenging ourselves, with big projects, such as those with the Asian Development Bank and Millenium Challenge Account Mongolia. These long-term projects have given us a wide range of experiences. However, with many projects on board, there can be times when not all information is well-known or studied. I remember what Mr. Bold

said to me at that time when I went to a meeting: "A well-informed person leads the meeting." Bold and Tamir were excellent mentors to me, even though they did not formally teach me what to do.

From the beginning, I admired IRIM's principle of being professional, and this has never been lost in any circumstance. Civil society organizations were not professional enough at that time; when compared to today. IRIM was able to add new insights to this space by enabling policy influence based on data, evidence, and facts. I wanted others to associate independence with the name of IRIM. I am proud that we have maintained our professional, evidence-based, and independent status; from the beginning to today. Even the organizations we collaborated with, and future partner organizations, know and will expect that we conduct research of excellent quality. I inherited and passed on this precious item, and while working, I have attempted to make it a brand'.



TSELMEGSAIKHAN Lkhagva

Started her working career at IRIM as a Researcher in 2009 and worked as Executive Director of IRIM in 2011-2012.

AS A SMALL ORGANIZATION, IT WAS IMPORTANT TO GATHER EXPERIENCE IN 'BIG' PROJECTS WITH HIGH CLIENT REQUIREMENTS AND A LARGE SCOPE OF OPERATIONS

After graduating from the Department of Sociology at National University of Mongolia in 2009, I started my career at IRIM, which had just been established at that time, together with five of my classmates. Looking back at the first years at the IRIM, we created the collaborative atmosphere and culture of the new organization together. After only 2 years of working in the organization, the IRIM's board asked me to work as an Executive director, which was very challenging task at time and I eventually accepted the job in September 2011. At that time, IRIM had only been established for 3 years, because it was its early stage of the establishment, had very few permanent staff, and was strengthening its capacity from project to project. Now I reflect that I focused on two things as leading the organization. First, attention was paid to the formalization of the organization's activities. First, the so-called instructions for keeping official records were developed, and according to them, decrees, orders, regulations, contracts, the composition of incoming and outgoing correspondence, and keeping were introduced and organized. In addition, I initiated planning and information flow mechanisms that have remained institutionalized in our organization until now, such as the "IRIM Executive Director Monday letter" and the "Annual General Meeting" which is organized in each January.

Second, as a small organization, it was important to IRIM to implement projects with high client requirements, large scope and budget for strengthening organizational capacity. Therefore, our founders worked very closely

with the executive team to develop project proposals at that time. Thanks to close hard work, in the fall of 2011, IRIM was selected to implement the bigger project commissioned by the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Social Security and Labor, to visit 33,000 households individually in 3 provinces and create livelihood database. It was very important to successfully implement the project. Because quality itself was the organization's only marketing. In order to implement the project, we mobilized a team with 20 researchers with two vans from Ulaanbaatar to Sukhbaatar, Dornogovi, and Govsumber provinces in January 2012, when winter started and returned back in July 2012, just before Naadam after completing the project. We had main office in Ulaanbaatar and another mobile office in the countryside, province to province. Through this project, we have learned many important skills such as the managing large-scale data collection that requires intense traveling in the countryside, the ability to work with rural communities and local government authorities, the creation of a database, and quality control. Another noteworthy thing is that the IRIM-ers that worked on this project were all under the age of 25 at that time, mostly graduates of 2009, 2010, and 2011. Even though we were young and had limited work experience, we had a good team mentality, focused on the quality of work, and tried to find creative solutions to the problems and challenges we encountered. These positive attitudes and growth mindset are still IRIM's outstanding strengths and quality.



DOLGION Aldar

Started her working career at IRIM as a Researcher and Project Manager in 2009. From 2012 to 2017, she worked as Executive Director, and since 2018, she has been working as a Consultant and Board Member (responsible for international relations).

AIMED TO FOSTER A CULTURE OF WORKING OUR BEST; REMEMBERING THE MEANING BEHIND EACH PIECE OF WORK, NO MATTER HOW BIG OR SMALL

From November 2012, I worked as Executive Director of IRIM for a total of five years. When I took the position of Executive Director, the organization was generally small, and in terms of human resources, we had only six full-time employees, and others as contract employees. At that time, we were recognized in our field to some extent; but we only did short-term research projects, that were mostly in the Mongolian language. Nonetheless, our preparations to reach the further stage in terms of governance were already underway.

For me, I focused on three essential things for the sustainable growth and development of the organization. As follows:

Quality. We established a quality control system at IRIM. It began with improving our main operation, which was collecting information and analyzing quality control. Our goal was to specialize in our main topics and raise awareness of the importance of research to people because the research did not have an essential role in the market position. Every project was implemented with high responsibility and quality, since our research and evaluation concentrated on pressing and demanding issues of society, and large projects and programs were planned based on our results. We aimed to foster a culture of working to the fullest and remembering the meaning behind each piece of work, no matter how large or small the work was.

Foreign relations. Since our main goal was to become a development knowledge center, we focused on joining international professional associations, cooperating with international organizations (and, domestic CSOs), and various government organizations; and working

and cooperating with experienced and skilled experts and consultants in the field.

Strengthening our internal governance. As our organization expanded from a small to a medium-sized organization, we worked with the board of directors to strengthen and renew all aspects of our organization; such as human resources, finance, operations, quality control, project development, and health and safety standards. One of the key fundamentals of being an independent research institute is having sustainable finance; thus, we focused on strengthening this, and began the process of introducing the quality management system "ISO9001:2015". To ensure our core value, which is independence, we regularly conduct two research activities: the Digital Transparency Index of Governmental Organizations and the Well-being study of Mongolian Society.

Overall, we differentiate from other research institutes by specializing in social and development research, being independent of any political party or organization, and having good internal governance and democracy. IRIM was evaluated as the highest-rated research institute among governmental and non-governmental research institutes - according to an external evaluation with a wide range of indicators - in 2015.

Mongolia's democratic condition has recently deteriorated, and as a result, citizens' voices and positions are less reflected in policy decisions. In such circumstances, we are committed to furthering our mission of amplifying citizen voices through research and external evaluation'.



BATSUGAR Tsedendamba

Started his working career at IRIM in 2011 as a Researcher and Project Manager. From 2018 to 2019, he worked as an Executive Director, and since 2022, he has been working as a consultant for Project Development.

IMPACT IS OUR CORE VALUE

From 2015 to 2017, IRIM's activities, services, and human resources became sustained, and the number of contract consultants and researchers greatly increased. Following this, it was necessary to strengthen our institution, rules, quality controls, and standards; to the next advanced level. Since 2016, in connection with the introduction of ISO standards, project development, and policies have been intensified. These were years when we were growing and sustaining at the institutional level. There were many changes in our institution during this time, such as participating more in international projects; individually and collaboratively. When I was working as Executive Director from 2018 to 2019, we faced the need to stabilize these changes in our institution; but this was during a time of economic recession year. Our main task was to maintain, continue, and strengthen our expansion of activities.

The goals, direction, and results to be attained were relatively apparent for a business that had developed its strategy over five years; and we effectively allocated our resources. Our long-term strategy reflects our in-house discussions on becoming a market or field leader in Mongolia, expanding IRIM's operations internationally, and introducing Mongolia's experts to the global stage. To establish a bridge for Mongolian experts to go overseas, it was critical to increase personnel experience, knowledge, and abilities, get foreign expertise and information, and witness their career growth broadly (but on an individual level). This, in turn, established trust for both IRIM and the experts.

When I was working as Executive Director, our foreign relations expanded. We started to collaborate with research institutes and think tanks from Eastern Asia, and Southeast and Central Asia. In this regard, I believe that we opened many opportunities for our colleagues to learn from international experience and participate in job training. A large number of our employees have participated in training and international discussions and events. Also, the interest of international experts and master's and doctoral students - to practice volunteer work in our organization - has increased significantly. As I remember, there were four or five international experts, interns, and volunteers working in our institution in 2019. As we improved our foreign relations, more and more international foreign organizations were starting to cooperate with our institution. In the context of international relations, IRIM began expanding its capacity to work with partners on international initiatives. For instance, since then, the groundwork for four or five projects in Central Asian countries has been put in place; working there both virtually and physically.

The peculiarity of our organization is that our motto is independence, quality, and impact so that other organizations have a quality policy and can operate independently of any political and economic party. But the impact is our core value. In that sense, I think that IRIM is a team that strives to make a change in the issue, not something that just passes by providing research and consulting services.'



TSELMEGSAIKHAN Lkhagva

She has been working as Executive Director of IRIM for since 2020.

MY COLLEAGUES HAVE OVERCOME THE PANDEMIC WITH LESS DIFFICULTIES THROUGH STRONG TRUST AND CLOSE COOPERATION

Thanks to my working experience at IRIM, I had a chance to study in a Master of Development Studies at the University of Melbourne, Australia in 2016-2018. From 2020, I was appointed as CEO, the honorable and challenging role, at IRIM again. By 2020, our organization was already recognized in the industry, had good reputation, and had strengthened its strong governance and institutionalization. In the sense of the beginning of a new decade, 2020 started very optimistically, but very soon, we all faced COVID-19 pandemic, an unexpected challenge. It was not easy at that time, the situation was changing rapidly day by day, contracts were canceled, planned works were postponed indefinitely, unexpected bans were imposed, and the most difficult thing was to adapt to the changing social psychology. We used to have regular diagnostic monthly meeting to assess and respond to the situation. Now I reflect that our colleagues can overcome the pandemic period with little difficulty and without reducing the scale of our organization's activities because of strong sense of trust and close cooperation. The main changes of the 2020-2023 years at IRIM can be summed up in three points.

First, IRIM successfully made to digital transformation. Learning to work completely remotely and transitioning to a new digital working environment were a major organizational change management. There were a lot of fun days and lesson learnt, such as learning how to properly turn on and off the camera and mute and

unmute microphone to an online meeting that had never existed before. Also, this digital shift in working culture has provided opportunities for learning and improving work-life balance.

Second, pandemic urged us to seek and test new ways of collecting and analyzing information in a timely and quality manner, reduce bias when using these remote methods by overcoming connectivity challenges and engaging communities and minimize disruptions. With the introduction of the latest comprehensive call center software, we were able to ensure the safety of the people we serve and of our staff and continue valuable information to inform COVID-19 response projects and recovery measures. When future pandemic, natural disaster, and emergency situations unfold, we are better prepared to experiment new ways to collect data and evidence, regardless of space or time constraints.

Third, the issue of the rights of vulnerable groups was acute in the context of the closure of schools and kindergartens and the quarantine. In this context, IRIM has developed research capacity in study of social deviance and criminology through conducting research on particular topics such as child abuse, children and human trafficking, gender based violence among persons with disabilities and human right violations among assistant herders. Now, the research topic is more focusing on the direction of climate change, efficient use of resources, and green economy responding the need of understand the consequences of the pandemic.

IRIM-ERS' STORY



YANJINPAGMA Nyamsuren

Has been working at IRIM since 2009 as a Researcher, Senior Researcher, Project Manager, and Board of Directors Member.

(Staff representative of 2008-2012 period)

VARIOUS ACTIVITIES DIRECTED TO THE EMPLOYEES WERE INITIATED TO STRENGTHEN THE ORGANIZATION'S INTERNAL CAPACITY, AND THE EMPLOYEES STARTED TO ALIGN THEIR GOALS WITH THE ORGANIZATION'S VISION.

In our last year, the 2009 graduating class of Sociology at the NUM implemented the project "Research Student" and created a film project called "Utopia," illustrating the obstacles encountered while undertaking research and the social life of the period. The film project's management team comprised four people: Tselmeg (L. Tselmegsaikhan), Dolgion (A. Dolgion), Erdenee (B. Erdene), and myself. In this context, my class examined then-currently-running initiatives like "Lunch for school children" and "40,000 housing units," and we presented our findings to the relevant parties in the National University of Mongolia (NUM)'s round hall. At this point, my understanding of the significance and complete picture of research expanded. When we graduated, professor Ch. Tamir offered our film project team a job at IRIM, and we began our first employment. Soon after starting at IRIM, the National Committee on Gender announced a project on "Gender Sensitivity of the Media," which was directly related to my bachelor's thesis, "The Impact of the Media on the Election of Women at the Decision-Making Level." It was a fantastic opportunity to apply my research findings to a real-life situation. After being inspired by this effort, I discovered the possibilities for specializing as a researcher and influencing society via research.

Working at IRIM allowed learning from one another in terms of organizational culture. For example, when we started working, senior graduates - like Tsogoo (G. Tsogtbaatar), Tungaa (M. Ariuntungalag), Erdenee (E.Erdenebaatar), and Zorigoo (Z. Zorigtbaatar) - guided us rationally and honestly. I believe this served as the foundation for IRIM's current collective culture. Working with the most outstanding international and domestic experts allowed me to develop and grow as a researcher. During the first five years, our organization concentrated on building its vision, structure, and internal competencies. Various activities aimed at employees, such as summer training for researchers, employee satisfaction surveys, the organization's anniversary event, and so on, were initiated to strengthen the organization's internal capacity. These activities provided information on how to align one's aspirations with the organization's vision. As a result, the organization and the employees united their understanding in the idea that "Both the organization and the employee may grow by matching the employee's future ambitions with the organization's vision," which led to the development of a core team.

Working in research and consulting services for 15 years has allowed me to become more specialized in my profession. My career has progressed from field researcher to a senior researcher and board of directors member. In addition, in 2013, I co-founded MIRIM Consultant LLC, a subsidiary of IRIM, a business, market research, and innovation consulting firm where I am now employed.



ELBEREL Tumenjargal

Has worked continuously at IRIM since 2012 as a Researcher, Project Manager, Senior Researcher, and Consultant.

(Staff representative of 2013-2017 period)

WORKING AS A RESEARCHER AND EVALUATOR, LEADS NATURALLY TO CONTINUOUS LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OF OUR KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS

In 2011, after I completed my internship at IRIM, I switched my career from a social worker to a researcher. Since then, I have been working at IRIM for the last 12 years. I started my professional career by working as a research assistant on a public health project with the Asian Development Bank. While professor Tamir was supervising my bachelor's thesis, I expected that IRIM would be a more academic research institute. But, after I worked on projects, I felt it was more practical.

Looking back, my career development can be divided into three main stages. During the first two years, I challenged myself by changing my field of direction and entering a new sector, and I had to adapt to it. During years four to six, I became more mature and gained a better understanding of my work. I was able to collaborate with my team effectively, and we worked on many projects together. In the third stage - my sixth year - I went to study for my master's degree (in policy studies) at Georgia State University's Andrew Young School of Policy Studies (through the Fulbright Scholarship from the US government).

The experience and knowledge I gained from working at IRIM were great support for me to study with a scholarship. After graduating, I continued my career at IRIM, which has made my professional life inextricably linked to the Institute.

With regards to the personal level - when expressing an opinion on something - we have developed a culture of speaking based on evidence and facts, rather than a subjective approach due to our professional features.

Because the nature of our job allows us to investigate new issues and collaborate with new people, we are always learning, innovating, and progressing. By embarking on new research and evaluation projects, we are becoming more aware of other fields. The culture of learning from one another and supporting one another feels natural. During the second five years of my work at IRIM, great emphasis was placed on international human resource preparedness. In this regard, we have consistently prepared for international scholarships and programs as a team. These were the years when we focused on and contributed to, making our human resources (as individuals and as an organization) internationally acceptable'.



JARGALMAA Ganzorig

Has worked at IRIM since 2016 as a Researcher, Coordinator, Project Manager, and Secretary of the Board. Now, she is working as Operations Director.

(Staff representative of 2018-2023 period)

INSTITUTIONALITY OF THE ORGANIZATION, AND POSITIVE COLLEAGUES WITH SIMILAR VALUES, MAKE IRIM MY DESIRED WORKPLACE

While studying social work at the NUM, I was given the opportunity to do an internship at IRIM, and I became acquainted with the organization. Following the completion of my bachelor's thesis on "Inclusive education for children with disabilities," a project in this direction was launched at IRIM, and I began my work as an assistant researcher in the project (after being introduced by professor Ch. Tamir). At the time, I was delighted that I had the opportunity to use what I had learned at university.

When I first started working, I remember being introduced to the researchers' career path in "New Researcher Training," which covered a researcher's long-term career prospects; beginning with the assistant researcher, researcher, and coordinator and proceeding to the level of field expert and consultant. It also clearly explained the prospects for contribution and support that the organization can provide to the professional path. Looking back, we are exactly on the route that was explained to us.

When I first joined, our organization's ISO implementation had just begun; it was in the document processing phase, employee responsibilities were being defined, and regulations were being drafted. Having recently graduated from university, the topics discussed by Mrs. Minjirmaa and Mr. Sukhee - such as input, output, requirements, and audits - looked very far away to me. Now that we have ISO certification, and have applied the

standard, adopting the quality management system to become the culture in the organization's activities would require much effort, attention, and leadership. The ISO principle of continuous improvement appears to be highly compatible with our organization's culture.

Our fundamental human resources are quite young in comparison to other firms. As a result of everyone sharing the same ideals and a desire to grow, progress, and specialize, our organization's internal climate and team culture is incredibly welcoming. Outside of work, it is great to have such a team and learn a lot from young individuals my age. For instance, Eegii (Erdenetsetseg), who is presently studying in Australia, has a fast, energetic, and entertaining personality; Tina (Tuvshintugs) is hardworking, meticulous, and thorough; and Nara (Narantuya) always cares about her coworkers. Generations of IRIM-ers have shaped the organization's current institutional and cultural development. When reports' deadlines approach, we must work all night. When we come up with necessary projects at the meeting, we all sit together and discuss; if we find useful information for someone else's project, we share it; and when the pressure is on, it is wonderful to work with nice supporters, colleagues, and young people with a positive attitude.

The organization's institutionality, as well as the positive colleagues with the same values, make IRIM my ideal workplace.

CHRONOLOGY OF IRIM'S DEVELOPMENT OVER 15 YEARS

Establishment

ESTABLISHMENT

2008

IRIM was established on 4 April 2008 with a team of four people.

The *Glass Wallet* initiative, which enabled government institutions to create budget transparency in this context, led to the approval of the *Glass Account Law*. The first initiative to empower the organization's staff, "Summer training" was launched.

2009

ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES BEGAN

BECAME A MEMBER OF ISA

2010

Joined the International Sociological Association as an official member.

With the approval of *The Law of Mongolia on Information Transparency and Right To Information*, (the evaluation methodology that was previously a decree) was revised. The basic methodology - for measuring the websites of the government organizations was defined) and the methodology began to be evaluated consistently.

2011

STARTED TO MONITOR THE TRANSPARENCY OF THE WEBSITES OF GOVERNMENT AGENCIES OF MONGOLIA

BECAME THE RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION OF THE AYAD PROGRAM

2012

The first intake of participants from the Australian Volunteering Program marked the beginning of a significant change in the capacity of the organization; and the quality of its products and services.

Institutionalization

To spread the principles of independence and transparency, we started to publish the *"Annual Report"* for information about our projects and activities.

2013

STARTED TO PUBLISH THE ANNUAL REPORT

ESTABLISHED A SUBSIDIARY; MIRIM CONSULTANT LLC

2014

IRIM established a subsidiary company to provide marketing, business, and innovation services in the research and analysis market; and this experience was shared with the entire organization, laying the groundwork for future growth.

Evaluators working in M&E and with the desire to develop the sector participated in the formation of the Mongolian Evaluation Network.

2015

INITIATED THE MONGOLIAN EVALUATION NETWORK

UPDATED STRATEGY AND POLICY

2016

We developed a new organizational vision, values, and *Strategic Plan; for 2016-2020* as a result of the redefinition of global and national development goals.

Research on Subjective Well-Being has been initiated and the results are being disseminated to the public at international comparative and national levels. In this context, IRIM the *"Asia-Pacific Evaluation Organization"*; and the *"Central Asia group of the International Partnership for Subjective Well-being and Innovation for Change"*.

2017

FOREIGN RELATIONS AND COOPERATION EXPANDED, AND INITIATED THE SOCIAL WELL-BEING SURVEY OF MONGOLIA

Sustainability

THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON DEMOCRACY IN THE 21ST CENTURY: CHALLENGES AND WAYS FORWARD

2018

With the support of the World Social Fund (WSF), IRIM organized an international academic conference and, 31 researchers from 14 countries presented their reports and articles.

The methodology for measuring the transparency of government websites was revised and introduced to Central Asian countries as the *Transparency Index*, which can be used internationally. A pilot study comparing it to Kyrgyzstan, has been successfully completed.

2019

DIGITAL TRANSPARENCY INDEX IS INTRODUCED INTERNATIONALLY

A CALL CENTER FOR REMOTE DATA COLLECTION WAS ESTABLISHED

2020

During the curfews of the COVID-19 pandemic, we improved our remote data collection capabilities, established a comprehensive call center, and ensured continuous and stable operations.

In cooperation with the international donation network "Give2Asia" and Lantuun Dokhio NGOs, we have started an initiative that implements projects that can contribute to the activities aimed at the target group from the point of view of social responsibility.

2021

INCREASE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TOWARDS TARGET GROUPS

ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFICATION

2022

We were awarded the ISO 9001:2015 International Certification of Quality Management System, which has been in operation since 2016.

ANNIVERSARY PHOTOS



| IRIM's 1st Summer training, 2009



| IRIM's 2nd Year Anniversary, 2010



| IRIM's 3rd Year Anniversary, 2011



| IRIM's 4th Year Anniversary, 2012



| IRIM's 5th Year Anniversary, 2013



| IRIM's 6th Year Anniversary, 2014



| IRIM's 7th Year Anniversary, 2015



| IRIM's 8th Year Anniversary, 2016



| IRIM's 9th Year Anniversary, 2017



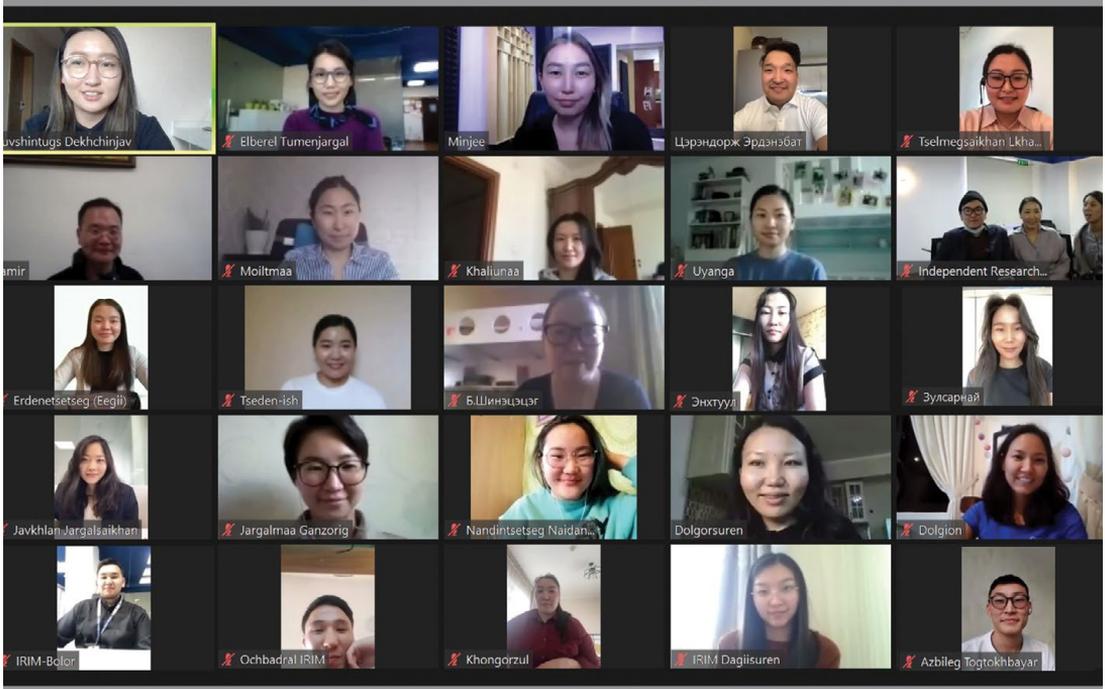
| IRIM's 10th Year Anniversary, 2018



| IRIM's 11th Year Anniversary, 2019



| IRIM's 12th Year Anniversary, 2020



IRIM's 13th Year Anniversary, 2021. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 13th anniversary was held online.



IRIM's 14th Year Anniversary, 2022

IRIM

INDEPENDENT
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF
MONGOLIA

INDEPENDENCE

QUALITY

IMPACT

Chapter 2

IRIM IN 2022

- ◆ Highlights of 2022
- ◆ IRIM's Flagship Projects
- ◆ Governance
- ◆ Sustainability
- ◆ Education
- ◆ Social Protection and Labor Market
- ◆ Gender and Disability
- ◆ Other Projects

IRIM HIGHLIGHTS 2022

CERTIFICATION FOR ISO 9001:2015 INTERNATIONAL QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM



IRIM has paid close attention to the continuous improvement of its operations in research, evaluation, and consultancy service projects at a professional level. As part of the Institute’s goal since 2016, the ISO 9001:2015 International Quality Management was integrated into operations, and in August 2022, IRIM was awarded international certification. IRIM has put forward the quality policy of ‘Becoming an organization of sustainable development that provides independent research and consultancy services *in accordance with international standards and customer needs*’ and will continue to focus on continuous improvement of its operations.

ACHIEVING ZERO TOLERANCE FOR WORKPLACE VIOLENCE AND SEXUAL HARASSMENT

Since 2017, IRIM has been a member of the National Committee on Gender Equality, taking initiatives to ensure the implementation of tasks included in the Committee’s annual plan, and carrying out relevant research and analysis.

To strengthen the internal cultural institution, and the capacity to ensure gender equality at all levels of management, IRIM developed and introduced the ‘Policy to prevent and protect against sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment in the workplace’ in 2022. This was based on the characteristics of research and consulting service organizations, with the support of the Australian Volunteers Program Impact Fund.

Implementing this policy, allows organizations to take steps forward, fulfilling their responsibilities as employers to prevent sexual harassment in the workplace. This is within the frameworks of national and international laws, and creating a workplace culture where human rights and professional ethics are respected, and potential human rights violations are prevented.

This policy was adopted internally by the organization, and presented to stakeholders in the industry. This was to encourage other research and consultancy service organizations in the industry to adopt the policy document based on the characteristics of the organization’s operations. In celebration of International Women’s Day, the policy document was shared in English and Mongolian, on IRIM’s website. The policy can be found via the following link” [Policy document](#).



UPGRADED DATA MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Based on 15 years of project management experience, IRIM has been using **Data Management System (DMS)** as an internal knowledge base of the organization since 2016. To keep up with the rapid development of technology, the Institute's internal system was transferred to the Power Platform-based version of Microsoft 365. This cloud-based solution is based on the history and deleted data of each version of the product. It supports users on a unified platform, is based on a shared database and communication, and was developed based on the organization's operational goals and process mapping.



This update allows IRIM to simplify the continuous improvement of its research and consultancy services, by easily searching and using information from previous projects and activities. This is accomplished through an internal database system, allowing improvement in developing products such as methodologies, reports, and analyses.

PURSuing MONITORING AND EVALUATION INITIATIVES

As one of the founding members of the Mongolian Evaluation Network, IRIM has been proactive and focused on promoting the increase of evaluation knowledge and skills in Mongolia. The network created an official website <http://www.evaluation.mn> and started development work. It aims of strengthening Mongolia's assessment capacity, and IRIM carried out the following activities in 2022.

IRIM consultant Ts. Batsugar participated as a panelist in the **Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) III Conference**. He presented the **Status of Mongolian Evaluation Policy and Systems** at the Asia Pacific

Regional Dialogue on National Evaluation Policies and Systems, on behalf of the Mongolian Evaluation Network in December.



Senior researcher T. Elberel took part in the 2022 International Program Development Evaluation Trainings (IPDET), - one of the

most reputable programs in the field of monitoring and evaluation - presented by the University of Bern in Switzerland, in cooperation with the Center for Evaluation and in partnership with the Independent Evaluation Group (IEG) and Global Evaluation Initiative of the World Bank. T. Elberel is currently Secretary of the Mongolian Evaluation Network, and has joined the working group for the preparation of the **Voluntary National Reviews (VNR)** for implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals; continues to contribute to the M&E sector.

CONTINUOUSLY CONTRIBUTING TO GOVERNANCE AND CIVIC SPACE

IRIM has expressed its position and promoted a civil society in social development, and conducted analysis on changes and reforms in national laws. For example, IRIM conveyed its opinion on the potential risks of the draft on *Law on Public Information* in 2021, and together with the Mongolian Evaluation Network, issued and submitted a statement against the draft on **Law on Oversight of the State Great Khural** to relevant officials in 2022. In the same year, with the support from the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), the research project *Lessons from Pandemic – Civic Space Resiliency in Mongolia* was undertaken and the findings were published to media platforms and presented to industry experts.



IRIM's Senior Researcher is part of the working group preparing for the *Voluntary National Reviews on the Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals*. Similarly, the Innovation and Technology Manager is part of the working group for *Determining the structural framework of public information, communication, and technological capabilities, and developing training programs*. As part of the Institute's research and impact activities on democracy and civil society, papers from the international conference on democracy (organized in 2018) were compiled and published – in [Democratic](#)

[Struggles in Challenging Times: Insights from Mongolia and Around the World](#) - in collaboration with the World Society Foundation. As a member of the Asian Democracy Research Network (ADRN), IRIM showcased Mongolia's practices through articles, "[Direct Democracy's History and Trends in Mongolia](#)" published in the *ADRN Working Paper journal* of the network, and "[Ups and Downs of Direct Democracy Trends in Asia: Country Cases](#)" published in the *ADRN Special Reports journal*.

TIMOR-LESTE: REMOTE DATA COLLECTION EXPERIENCE SHARING



In 2020, IRIM established a call center that provides remote data collection services; and has collected data from a total of 20,000 participants over two years. Based on collective knowledge and experience in data collection, IRIM organized training and data collection (with the Timor-Leste Directorate of Statistics specialists) on *computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI)* methodology in May 2022. This included selecting and localizing telephone research technology infrastructure solutions. The consultancy service project supported data collection for *The High Frequency (HIFY) Household phone survey for regular monitoring of the socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic*, jointly implemented by the World Bank, the UNDP

Timor-Leste, and the General Directorate of Statistics (GDS)

PARTICIPATED IN CENTRAL ASIAN REGIONAL ECONOMIC COOPERATION (CAREC) INSTITUTE DEVELOPMENT THINK TANK FORUM

IRIM joined the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) in 2022. The Sixth Think Tank Development Forum - organized annually by the CAREC Institute - was held on 15 and 16 September 2022 in Baku, Azerbaijan under the theme *Recalibrating Growth Dynamics for Inclusive and Sustainable Economies*. IRIM's Executive Director (Tselmegsaikhan L.) participated in the forum as one of the representatives of Mongolia. The conference emphasized that tax distribution for development, reducing climate change and gender inequality, strengthening digitalization, and improving regional cooperation were the priorities of CAREC countries' policies to ensure inclusive and sustainable growth.



SHARING THE FINDINGS OF THE SOCIAL WELL-BEING STUDY IN THE VARIOUS PLATFORMS

IRIM's consultant Batsugar Tsendendamba participated in the "Sixth Sociological Symposium"; organized after 22 years and presented on the topic of "Mongolian Social Cohesion". This topic is a component of the Social Well-Being Study, which has been independently researched and developed by IRIM since 2016.

The contemporary study findings were highlighted as the main topic of IRIM's 2022 Annual Reception; held annually under the auspices of the President of the Institute, Ambassador Bekhbat Khasbazar. The Executive Director (Tselmegsaikhan Lkhagva) presented the keynote speech "Social Well-Being and Vulnerabilities in Challenging Times in Mongolia" based on insights from IRIM's recent projects.

In the past, three research reports, one academic article, and presentations were prepared and provided to the public and target organizations.



PARTICIPATION IN THE YOUNG SCHOLARS PROGRAM: JOINT RESEARCH AND WORKSHOP IN TOKYO, JAPAN



The program was organized within the framework of the **Building Proactive Resilience in Asian Developing Countries Making Good Use of Social Capital** project, implemented between 2022-2024 within the Core-to-Core program. The project aimed to increase the capacity of international research networks and researchers. In the program, IRIM's researchers representing Mongolia, together with researchers from the Philippines and Vietnam, will conduct research on *Social*

Capital and Proactive Resilience to Natural Disasters in Three countries for the next three years. The study compares the situation of landlocked and island countries, on how social capital and community networks and trust conditions affect the proactive resilience of communities (before and after any natural disaster or risk caused by climate change).

AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER PROGRAM WELCOMES SEVENTH VOLUNTEER

IRIM has cooperated strongly with the Australian Volunteer Program, and one of the special partnerships is the volunteer program. Through this program, which started in 2011, IRIM has welcomed five volunteers to Mongolia and continues to successfully implement the program.

Due to the pandemic, the previous two volunteers worked remotely. The reporting year's program focused on the organization's public relations activities. Together with Mrs. Jenny Smith, an expert in this field, IRIM was able to design good practices to reflect the features of messages and points of view; in delivering the Institute's news, products, and services to the target groups.



Due to the pandemic, the previous two volunteers worked remotely. The reporting year's program focused on the organization's public relations activities. Together with Mrs. Jenny Smith, an expert in this field, IRIM was able to design good practices to reflect the features of messages and points of view; in delivering the Institute's news, products, and services to the target groups.

MOVING TO THE NEW OFFICE IN COINCIDENCE WITH OUR 15TH ANNIVERSARY

IRIM's operations started in the building behind the Building #2, National University of Mongolia. Since then, we have moved five different offices and now just moved into the our 6th office. On occasion of 15th Anniversary event, we are celebrating our new office warming party.

The new location of IRIM is [#301, Building #48, Baga Toiruu 6th khoroo, Sukhbaatar district, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.](#)

IRIM'S FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

DIGITAL TRANSPARENCY INDEX 2022



DTI-Dashboard

INITIATED ORGANIZATION

- Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM)

OBJECTIVE

Through the Digital Transparency Index (DTI), IRIM aims to quantify openness and transparency of the digital information of government organizations and inform further improvements. The DTI provides:

- measures and rankings the levels of digital transparency of government organizations,
- annual comparisons, and
- recommendations for further improvement.



2022 September

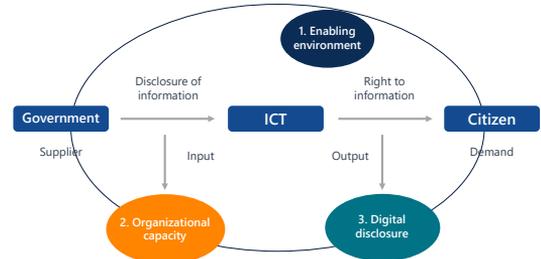
2023 March

SCOPE

93 government organizations

- 16 - Ministries
- 26 - Implementing agencies
- 10 - Parliamentary bodies
- 10 - Regulatory agencies
- 22 - Provincial government organizations
- 9 - District governor offices

DTI presents the findings and results of 93 government organizations.



Conceptual Framework of the Digital Transparency Index

The DTI generates a single consolidated score from three domains (which have several sub-domains within). The score shows the national and organizational level situations. The DTI is comprised of 35 indicators, within which are 150 questions.

BACKGROUND

The fourth industrial revolution came along with the rapid digitization, and popularisation of information, communication, and technologies (ICT), in the ways of communicating with the public, private organizations, and businesses. Advancement made the services of these organizations more accessible to the public.

The Government of Mongolia (GoM) made progress in the implementation of the Digital National 2021-2024 program. As a part of the program, the GoM revised existing legal documents and set up an implementing body. IRIM also updated the DTI methodologies in line with the adoption of the Law of Mongolia on Public Information (2022), making the data the starting point of the situations.

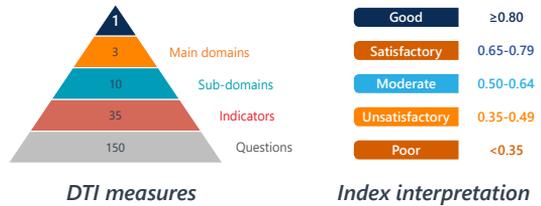
2022 marked IRIMs' eleventh year of releasing DTI, putting efforts into improvements of the digital transparency of government organizations of Mongolia.

PROJECT DESIGN

Assessing the digital transparency of government organizations is not merely about assessing the implementation of the law, it is more about assessing:

- enabling an environment of transparency,
- organizational capacity, and
- digital disclosure.

The figure shows the conceptual framework of the DTI, which comprises three components.



The DTI presents the organizations' strengths and weaknesses, and organizations can reflect the DTI results in their learning and strategic planning.

KEY FINDINGS

The consolidated score of the DTI of 93 government organizations, from six types of state and local government, was 63.1% nationwide. That is, the level of digital transparency of government organizations was 'moderate'. The result was slightly higher than that of 2021 (60.2%) and remained at the level of 'moderate'.



The enabling environment scored 78.8% 'satisfactory' in 2022. However, the implementing organizations need to improve digital transparency.

Organizational capacity was assessed as 'satisfactory' in 2022. Despite the improvement in human resource and technology capacity, weak leadership and accountability mechanisms to implement the law were holding some of the organizations back.

Digital disclosure was rated as 45.6% ('unsatisfactory') falling from the rate of 62.7% in 2021. This could be explained by the revision of the law in 2022, and the organizations not yet being able to ensure consistent implementation of the revised law.

#	Organizations	2021 DTI	2022 DTI	Change
1	Ministries	64.8%	66.6%	1.8%
2	Implementing agencies	59.5%	62.5%	3.0%
3	Regulatory agencies	63.3%	61.2%	-2.1%
4	Provincial government organizations	58.4%	65.6%	7.2%
5	District governors offices	61.2%	62.7%	1.5%
6	Parliamentary bodies	59.7%	64.5%	4.8%
Average		60.2%	63.1%	3.3%

Digital transparency of the government organizations, by their types

Among government organizations, the regulatory ones exhibited declines in their digital transparency while the others improved their DTI. Followed by the Ministry of Finance (75.3%) and the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry (75.3%), the Ministry of Construction

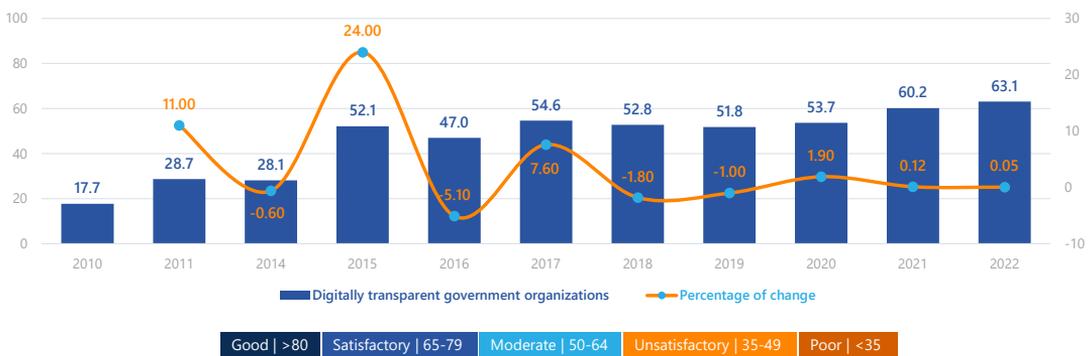
and Urban Development topped the list with a score of 76.8% with its digital transparency.

Of the organizations surveyed, only 36.6% had a 'satisfactory' level of transparency, and no organizations scored 'good' (with a score of more than 80%).

It could be concluded that most organizations saw the disclosure of information on their website as merely the implementation of the Glass Account Law; this restricts the accessibility of the information disclosed. To ensure satisfactory implementation of the Law of Mongolia on Public Information, each organization should internally approve and implement documents and procedures that reflect the scope of the information disclosed (including procedures, responsibilities, accountability, and resources).

Although website design and technology solutions have been improved, the user-friendliness of the websites needs more attention.

Overall, besides, ensuring the implementation of the law, government organizations need to give more emphasis to user-friendliness and accessibility, of the information they disclose on their website and on preparing specialized staff in this area. The report presents some good practices implemented, from which government organizations can learn. For the full report, follow the link www.irim.mn/web-monitoring.



Changes in digital transparency of the government organizations

SOCIAL WELL-BEING SURVEY OF MONGOLIA 2022



INITIATED ORGANIZATION

- Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM)

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The main objectives of this survey were to improve understanding of the factors influencing social development and to support evidence-based decision-making. Within the scope of the study, the following goals were established:

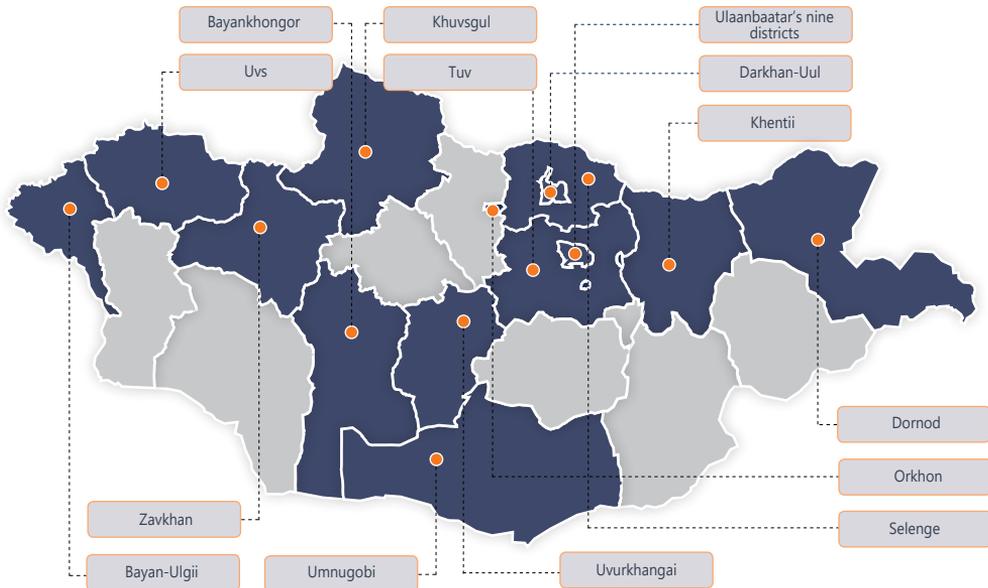
- Provide better measures of subjective well-being;
- Provide comparative analysis with social baselines;
- Present research results to decision-makers, and foreign and domestic researchers.



2022 June

2023 March

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

IRIM conducted the “Social Well-being Survey of Mongolia” for the sixth year in a row. The main objectives of this survey were to improve understanding of the factors influencing social development and to support evidence-based decision-making. For the previous surveys, the research team selected different social groups each year to analyze well-being and provide explanations.

These were based on scientific approaches, and research methodologies using collected evidence. Previously, the research was conducted with the following features in mind:

- The Social Well-being Survey of Mongolia’s first data collection (conducted from 2016 to 2019) was undertaken in different seasons (with consideration of the time and cycle of each season) and the results were used as key comparison indicators.
- In 2020, IRIM conducted “The Social Well-being Survey of Elderly People” and presented findings to the public.

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the conceptual research work ‘The Social Well-being of Health Sector Employees’ was carried out.

PROJECT DESIGN

In 2022, the ‘The Social Well-Being and Climate Change Survey’ was completed from a sample of 2’800, throughout 13 provinces and nine districts of capital Ulaanbaatar city.

Fundamental questions about social well-being were measured using Cantril’s scale (Cantril, 1965) with 11 options, with values ranging from 0 to 10, and the results were averaged

A report summarizing the findings of ongoing well-being research on climate change-related topics is planned to be released in 2023. In 2022, the following tasks were completed to share the findings of the social well-being research conducted using the organization's internal resources both internally and internationally, as well as to improve the methodology and index. It includes:



- Batsugar Tsedendamba, an IRIM research institute consultant, gave a speech on the topic of "Mongolian social cohesion" at the "Sociological Symposium VI," which was held after 22 years.
- In addition, the President of our research institute, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary Bekhbat Kh., highlighted the main theme of the 2022 Annual Reception, Executive Director Tselmegsaikhan L. highlighted the "Well-Being and Vulnerability of Mongolian Society in

Difficult Times: A report presented under the theme of observation based on IRIM's most recent research".

- In 2022, three researchers from IRIM participated in a program of the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (which will last from April 2022 to March 2024). The program aims to develop international joint research and support young researchers; to improve the methodology and index of social well-being research carried out (based on the internal resources of the organization). As a result, IRIM staff participated in a symposium (February 2023) with the theme 'Building Proactive Resilience in Asian Developing Countries Making Good Use of Social Capital'. Other participants included representatives from Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Vietnam. Within the same framework, IRIM is working to start research on the "Social Well-being of Mothers with Preschool and School-Age Children During Air Pollution in Mongolia" - using a photovoice research method - in 2023.

**EARLY-CAREER RESEARCHERS
WORKSHOP 2022**

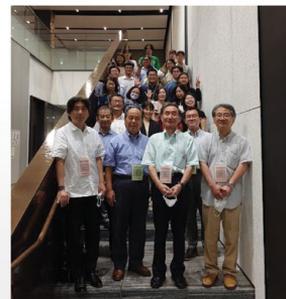
**"Building Proactive Resilience in Asian Developing
Countries Making Good Use of Social Capital"
(2022-2024)**



IRIM's team members



Group work with researchers from the
Philippines and Vietnam



All participants of the workshop

August 23-25, 2022

Ikuta Campus, Senshu University

GOVERNANCE

“LESSONS FROM THE PANDEMIC: CIVIC SPACE RESILIENCY IN MONGOLIA” RESEARCH

ICNL
INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR NOT-FOR-PROFIT LAW



CLIENT

- International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL)

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The objective of the research was to determine the policies, decisions, and measures taken by the Government of Mongolia (GoM) and government organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their impact on civil society in Mongolia. Specific objectives of the research were:

- assess and determine the impact of the GoM’s legislation, policy, and decisions (directly related to COVID-19 during the State of Emergency) on civic space, and rank decisions by their level of effect on civic space;
- conduct case studies to identify lessons learned and good practices - which enabled at the Government level (or among resilience/adaptation strategies of civil society) pushback against restrictive pandemic governance - by tracing affected groups and involved stakeholders;
- develop effective advocacy strategies to promote civic space by targeting the most concerning decisions to be reversed (or remedied) based on various consultations; and the participation of civil society organizations (CSOs), media, opposition parties, and researchers.



2022 July

2022 December

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, countries worldwide faced many challenges; in health, governance, social, and economic issues. There was a need to deal with the negative impacts in the financial, governance, and social sectors in the long-term, even though public health risks were decreasing and humanity had overcome further threats of the pandemic in 2022.

The retreat of good governance practices and widespread implementation of human rights violations and restrictions within the response measures (such as quarantines) had powerful impacts on civil rights, civic space, civil society, and future development.

In Mongolia, various thematic research and analysis - on how certain rights (such as freedom of the press and the freedom of speech and expression) were affected by the pandemic and its response measures - were conducted.

To eliminate the negative impacts on governance and civic space caused by the pandemic and to restore it to the pre-pandemic level, future requirements include comprehensive assessment and analysis of the short-term and long-term impacts (and lessons learned from governance during the pandemic), as well as policies and measures to be implemented to expand civic space.

This research was conducted with the support of the International Center for Not-for-profit Law (ICNL) to determine the policies, decisions, and measures taken by the GoM and government organizations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and their impact on civil society in Mongolia.

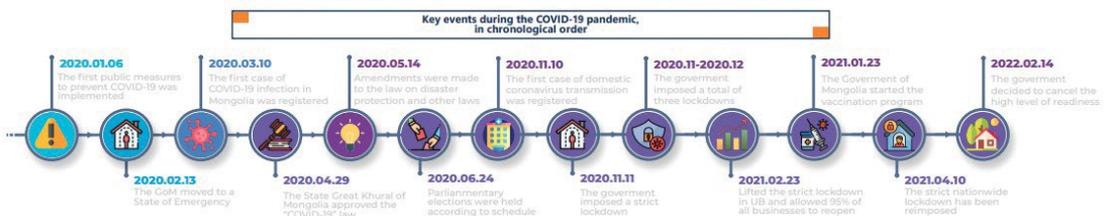
RESEARCH DESIGN

The analytical framework of the research was developed by comparing research and evaluation methods that were being implemented sustainably, such as CIVICUS, Open Government Partnership, the ICNL, Oxfam's Civic Space Monitoring Tool, the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development's Civic Space Scan, etc.

As a neighboring country to the People's Republic of China (PRC) - which originally spread COVID-19 - Mongolia implemented infection prevention measures early (starting from 6 January 2020) through corresponding laws and regulations. The Government of Mongolia (GoM) enacted and amended key laws and decisions during the two years of the pandemic. Examples included the transition to a 'heightened level of preparedness for disaster protection within the scope of a pandemic' with the issue of Resolution No. 62 (12 February 2020) by the GoM.

The research covered laws, policies, and decisions approved and implemented by the Government during the period mentioned above. The research reviewed 1,312 decisions in total and assessed decisions approved within the scope of the pandemic and measures for combatting its consequences. Of 286 decisions belonging to the pandemic response, 235 were directly related to the pandemic.

Of 74 legal acts approved (belonging to civic space), 63 were decisions issued within the scope of the pandemic response. In addition, the research made use of 16 interviews, corresponding reports, and information from participants. Although the research covered two constituent issues



- (i) civic space,
- (ii) and operational space of civic society it also sought to broach other issues concerning the impacts of the pandemic, and its impacts on civic space.

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RELEVANCE

Some (15.1%) of decisions related to the response to the pandemic affected civil rights issues; 20.2% addressed the operating environment of NGOs, and the remaining decisions addressed other human rights issues (indicating that it had wide-ranging and specific effects). The following three main legal documents were in force during the pandemic regime, but they were amended many times.

The *Law on Prevention, Combating, and Reduction of Social and Economic Impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic* and the *Law on Disaster Protection*, served as the legal foundation for the pandemic’s governance in Mongolia. Although, the adoption of the dedicated law on COVID-19 prevention was considered a good practice by many, further policies and legal acts exhibited limited compliance with the principles and good practices of human rights protection.

Amended number:	
10	Resolution No. 62 "Higher level of preparedness for disaster protection" of GoM
9	Disaster Protection Law
8	The law "On preventing and combating the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19), and reducing its negative impact on society and the economy"




The National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia (NHRM) and many other organizations confirmed through their reports, that pandemic prevention measures resulted in extensive human rights violations; including those of fundamental rights.

Some of the legal acts on pandemic prevention and other preventive policies did not meet the criteria of legislative processes and showed serious violations of the rule of law. Also, the government’s power has been greatly increased, checks and balances have been distorted, and good governance is rapidly declining. For example,

the national audit determined that a total of 13.6 trillion MNT was spent due to a lack of budget transparency and accountability.

Civic space: When restricting human rights, the restriction must be defined in compliance with certain criteria and principles. However, this was found to be considered unnecessary, and a broad range of restrictions were implemented. For instance, issues such as increased family violence, limited access to support against family violence, and an isolation measure of 21 days (resulting from quarantine) set when there was no spread of domestic infection).

The violations of human rights were widespread. They included prohibition (and dispersion by use of force) of demonstrations and assemblies. Similarly, taking unreasonable measures of violation and other actions - with legal acts regulating demonstration and assembly, by temporary regulation of the Head of the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) concerning the spread of the Coronavirus pandemic - contradicted the provision that states only the law can restrict civil rights. The Globe International Center registered 55 violations (24% civil rights) of the right to peaceful demonstration and assembly, related to disaster protection (Globe International Center, 2022).

The key decision restricting the civil right to information was the establishment of the temporary committee, ‘*obliged with delivering and announcing true, accurate and realistic news and information to the public about measures and activities*’ implemented by the Government and NEMA (Resolution No. 29, 10 February 2021). However, there were issues, such as the information provided from sources being contradicted, mismatching, being too general, and having the form of a notice. Some were misleading citizens with an evasive response regarding noteworthy issues; resulting in a loss of reliability, truth, and accuracy. There were also constraints on the ability to deliver news from different positions, and verification of information from multiple sources. The Mongolian Journalists Union stated such issues.

Freedom of expression was under extensive threat from the regulations to combat the spread of ‘*false information*’ in the *Law on Disaster Protection*, the *Law on Prevention, Combat, and Reduction of Social and Economic Impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19)*

pandemic; and the respective penalization in the *Criminal Code* and the *Law on Infringement*, etc. With further decrees, the Government mobilized police and intelligence agencies in their '*fight against false information*'.

Various sources recognized that these provisions resulted in extensive repression of the freedom of expression. This affected journalists, and the freedom of expression of ordinary people, including their personal spaces on social media. In 2020 only 1,790 infringement cases of '*distribution of false information*' had been processed. This number increased to 1,962 in 2021. And, 283 complaints regarding the '*spread of false information*' – according to an article of the *Criminal Code* were received in 2021. Due to the ambiguity, poor rule of law, and biased legal practices in the implementation of the law's provisions, the number of violations of freedom of expression increased.

Amid increased violations of fundamental rights, people failed to exercise their right to protection, despite the violation of freedom of expression and right to information being criminalized by the *Criminal Code*, and *Law on Disaster Protection*, *Law on Prevention, Combat, and Reduction of Social and Economic Impacts of Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic*, all of which set out the legal requirements for the decisions restricting fundamental rights.

Operational space of civil society. According to the research results, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Mongolia received different impacts as a result of the quarantine and other protective measures from disasters during the pandemic. This was because they operated with different structures, organizations, activities, capabilities, and resources.

No legal action, which would specifically regulate the space of NGO activities, was approved in the *Law on COVID-19* and other legal acts approved during the pandemic. In addition, the Government

decided it would be responsible for the payment of electricity, heating, and water; which was not included in the above program and plan. In principle, the support to be provided to legal entities included in the above decisions was limited by regulations.

The support for legal entities was limited to the provisions of tax and social insurance paying enterprises exemption from taxes, fines, and penalties, and exemption from electricity, water, and heat payments. Although other measures, such as preferential credit, were implemented in different sectors, there was no separate measure of support for NGOs.

The pandemic caused particular risks, and increased pressure upon NGOs, in terms of finance and activities. According to a study performed in 2021, 84% of NGOs had no savings that would protect them from financial risk and were at risk of direct cessation of operations (O. Saranchuluun, 2021). They were vulnerable to the effects of a pandemic. In addition, NGOs operating in social care and social security faced difficulties in reaching their target groups and victims during the quarantine. Some NGOs reported that financing was reduced and delayed during the pandemic. However, the common issues encountered in the operation of NGOs were; the complication of communication with government organizations, receiving information from them and collaborating with them. During the pandemic, processes and involvement in government decisions, and the activities of NGOs, were impeded; due to violations of the right to information and reduced civil participation.

Research results and policy summaries were presented by IRIM to relevant government agencies, civil society organizations, and researchers on 7 December 2022. Brief results of the survey are available on the following website: irim.mn/other-reports.

SURVEY OF CITIZENS' SATISFACTION WITH GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND SERVICES 2022



FUNDERS

- Swiss Development Agency (SDC)
- Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA)

CLIENTS

- The World Bank Group's Mainstreaming Social Accountability for Improved Transparency and Participation in Mongolia (MASAM) project
- Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of Mongolia

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The research aimed to clarify citizens' perceptions of the performance and outcomes of policies and activities implemented by government institutions. Also whether public services provided to citizens were high quality, accessible, bureaucracy-free, and timely. Within the scope of the survey, the following goals were targeted:

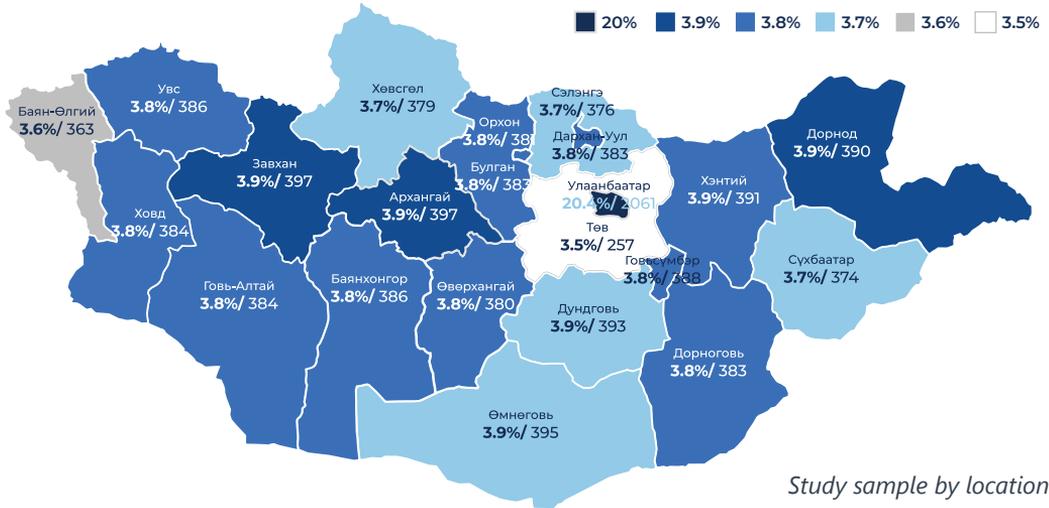
- In each province, the capital, and provincial districts, queries will be received from citizens regarding industry policy and implementation under the 'General Guidelines for Consumer Evaluation'.
- The results for each of the 21 provinces and 16 branches were compared, and recommendations and conclusions were developed.



2022 November

2023 February

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Government continues to undertake measures to evaluate the quality and accessibility of services provided to citizens, by the policies and activities implemented by government organizations. This is to improve government services and define future policies and activities (based on the results of evaluations. Examples include:

- Approval of Appendix No. 2 of Order No. 302 of the Head of the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of Mongolia – ‘General guidelines for consumer evaluation (2017).
- Approval of the resolution and decision of the head of the National Statistical Office (NSC) No. A/66-‘Sample Methodology of the Survey of citizens’ satisfaction with government policies and services (2019).

Before the adoption of these, government agencies conducted their consumer evaluations, which differed in methodology, had little comparability, and lacked reflection upon operations.

The Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of Mongolia, with the support of the World Bank Group’s *Mainstreaming Social Accountability*

for Improved Transparency and Participation in Mongolia (MASAM) project, developed the methodology for the ‘Citizen’s Satisfaction Survey’. It then organized the evaluation of public institutions, in a unified way, throughout the country. It was an important step to resolve the above-mentioned situation.

The survey was conducted for the first time in 2019 by four professional research organizations - one of which was IRIM - and covered a total of 13,860 citizens from 21 provinces and 291 *soums*. More recently IRIM was selected to conduct the survey alone. Data collection was carried out over more than a month with a sample of 10,111 citizens from 21 provinces and nine districts. As a result, this project was exceptional in that it increased the experience of gathering data in a short period and on a large scale.

PROJECT DESIGN

The research used a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Quantitative survey questionnaires were used under the ‘General Guidelines for Consumer Evaluation’ approved in 2017, with relevant improvements, Focus group

interviews were organized in each province and district according to, to the methodology developed by IRIM in 2019.

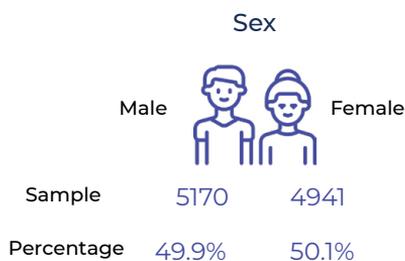
Quantitative survey questionnaires included features such as an increase in the number of sectors and functions to be evaluated (compared to previous years), updated, and expanded criteria questions (under the existing situation), and the addition of a group of human rights-related questions.

The sampling methodology for the survey was based on the ‘*Sampling Methodology of Citizen Satisfaction Survey on Public Policy and Services*’ approved by the order of the National Statistics Office (NSO) No. A/66 (14 May 2019).

SAMPLE SIZE

Data in the questionnaire survey was collected from a total of 10,111 citizens, covering 63 districts in 21 provinces (three from each province) and districts within the capital. More than two-thirds of survey respondents (8,050, 79.6%) were from Ulaanbaatar. Also, we conducted a total of 30 focus group interviews in each of the 21 provinces and 9 districts to clarify the research result.

Data collection was completed over 33 days, from 17 November to 23 December 2022. The findings were measured on a scale of 1–5, the collected data was compared and ranked by operational sector function and province, and conclusions and recommendations were prepared and presented.



Study sample, by gender

FINDINGS

The survey showed the national results of satisfaction with government services, classified by 16 sectors, functions, and provinces. Results included 21 provinces, 9 districts focus

group interview discussions, and comparative information about satisfaction with government services, classified by 16 sectors, functions, and provinces. As result, overall satisfaction with government services was an average of 3.12 from 5 points.

Results of 16 government sectors, functions

In 2019, indicators of the 16 public service sectors were divided into 11 sectors. But in 2022, indicators of five new sectors were added. So that means, the results of the 11 first-surveyed public sectors from 2022 could be compared with the result from 2019. As a result of the comparison, seven public service sector indicators had decreased slightly, and four sector indicators increased. However, the newly added public service sectors were positively received by citizens, and their activities were evaluated at a level above the general average. For example, citizens expressed great satisfaction with government e-services and E-Mongolia services.

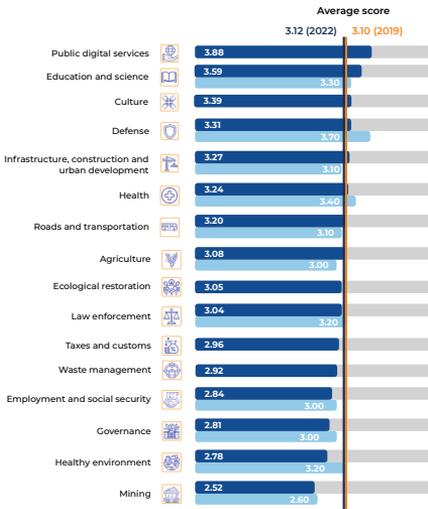
The growth of the education and science sector had increased significantly compared to the previous period. The main reason for this was that, during the COVID-19 epidemic, the content and results of e-courses were good. The Ministry of education, and related provincial institutions, took measures to increase education and eliminate lagging, elementary schools. They also increase the number of psychologists, private schools, and training centers in local areas. Furthermore, during the focus group interview respondents even mentioned that children's development opportunities have increased.

Also, the indicators of the transport and infrastructure sector had increased compared to 2019, and citizens were satisfied that paved roads, signs, and markers had been increased, new buildings were constructed, and activities related to heating were being carried out locally.

Conversely, perceptions of sectors related to the environment were the lowest. Citizens were the least satisfied with government services in the mining sector, and they believed that mining rehabilitation was insufficient. People thought the government needed to make effective use of the budget for rehabilitation activities and improve its control over it.

Thereafter, the issue of a ‘*healthy environment*’ was rated low, and citizens were concerned about

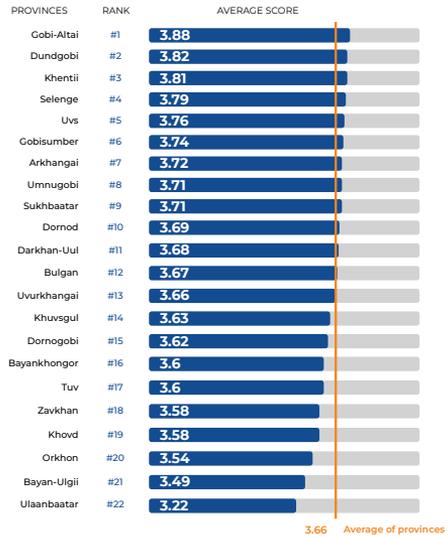
issues such as air pollution, food safety, and road traffic accidents. Respondents also mentioned that waste was a problem that needed to be solved, and the government should organize activities to improve waste management and improve citizens' knowledge and habits about waste.



Citizen satisfaction results of 16 government sectors (functions), average score (1-5)

Results of 21 provinces and capital

Fifteen of the provinces (and capital) revealed evaluation above the national average, while the rest showed below-average results. In Khentii province, regardless of the public services sector's function, satisfaction was relatively high in most indicators. Citizens of Ulaanbaatar were the least satisfied with government services. When conducting statistical tests on whether there was a difference in citizens' evaluations (depending on the location) it was observed that the satisfaction of citizens living in concentrated urban areas was significantly lower than that of citizens living in rural areas.



Results and average scores of citizens' satisfaction in each province

During this research, the provinces/capital's outstanding works that have been implemented best in the respective localities have been identified, and the works that need to be implemented as a priority in the future have been highlighted.

CONCLUSIONS

In general, the development policy and planning work of the state, local, and 16 public service sectors had been fulfilled; to a certain extent, at all administrative levels. However, the system for implementation, organization, evaluation of results, monitoring, and responsibility for activities was considered insufficient. Due to the insufficient participation of citizens in decision-making, implementation, and monitoring work, there was a lack of information exchange in the space created between the government and the public. This was the cause of dissatisfaction among citizens.

Also, the high level of political influence in public services is negatively affecting their quality (this makes the lack of communication, culture, and ethical standards of public servants, and the presence of incompetent public servants at all levels of public service). As result, people are dissatisfied with access to public service quality.

“THE YOUTH VOICES” SURVEY



CLIENT

- The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Mongolia

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The survey seeks to ascertain young people aged 16 to 24's perspectives on Mongolian and global social issues, as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). IRIM supported them by training and empowering them, in research methods and methodology.



2022 July

2022 October

SURVEY BACKGROUND

The United Nations member states approved the “Sustainable Development 2030” program in September 2015, within the *Sustainable Development 2030* framework of 17 goals and 169 targets, countries are working together to overcome the obstacles they face and prevent future risks. To achieve sustainable development, young people are actively participating in implementing and monitoring the sustainable development goals (SDGs). The UN Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, said, *‘we need to ensure that young people have a seat at the table – forging inclusive solutions that combine peace and security, sustainable development and human rights’*¹.

As of 2021, children and young people under the age of 24 make up 45.5% of Mongolia’s population. As a country with a relatively young age structure, it is critical to improve young people’s social and political participation and solve their problems. With the help of the Mongolian National Commission of UNESCO, the young people themselves asked questions such as “What do young people need?” “What problems do young people face?” and “What solutions do young people have?” The goal of this study was to find a real answer to such questions.

The survey covers a wide range of issues, such as youths’ social participation, human rights, gender issues, education and employment opportunities, psychological health, and disability. Following the UNESCO principle of *‘For the youth, with the youth, and by the youth’* young researchers conducted the survey and developed the survey report.

SURVEY DESIGN

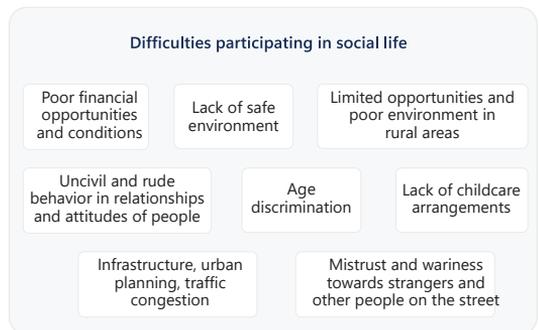
The survey had a predominantly quantitative methodology; combined with several open-ended questions for sequential mixed analyses (to fulfill the stated objectives). Within the survey framework, the researcher collected quantitative data and performed quantitative analyses (after taking into account the participants’ characteristics).

The Youth Voices Survey was conducted nationally, using quantitative research methods. The target group of the study was 600 randomly selected young people (aged 16-24 years).

FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There is a need to raise awareness and understanding of SDGs among young people. Regarding the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 51.9% of the respondents had moderate knowledge, and 26.2% had poor or very poor knowledge. However, 94.2% of young people believed that the problems faced by youths could be solved through SDGs, which indicates a high level of trust in them. By expanding knowledge and understanding of SDGs among young people, it will be possible to increase participation in implementing them.

For young people, the problems of concern in the world and Mongolia are similar, with a global emphasis on “Climate Change” and a Mongolian emphasis on “Decent Jobs and Opportunities”.



A closer look at the problems that Mongolia is facing:

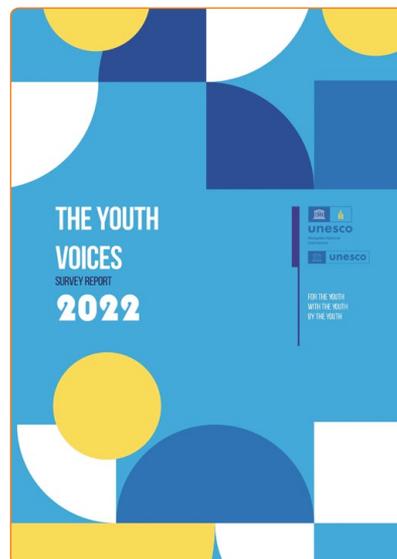
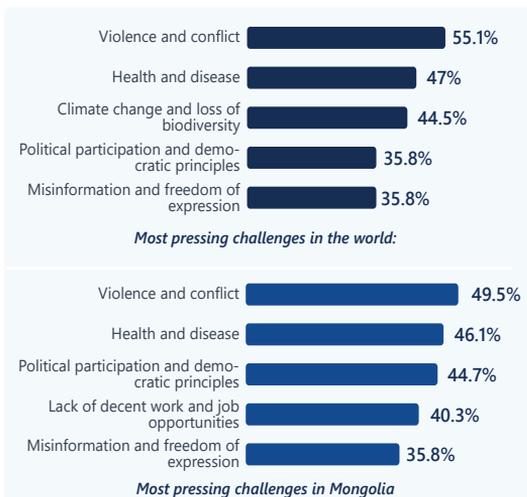
- a) The main problem faced by young people was **unemployment**. Young people believed that the way to reduce unemployment was to increase job opportunities, improve workplace standards, create a healthy and safe environment for work, reduce the tax burden, raise wages, and increase the level of competitiveness and participation of the workforce. Moreover, employed youths highlighted the need to improve working conditions and the environment.
- b) A second challenge for young people was improving the quality of, and accessibility to, **education and healthcare** systems. From the perspective of young people, the education and health system can be improved by reforms, such as making services accessible, empowering employees, increasing wages and creating a favorable working environment, and paying attention to the quality of services provided in local areas. The third pressing

problem for young people was inflation, the tax burden, and insufficient income.

- c) The third problem for young people is a **price increase, tax burden, and salary supply adequacy**. Young people imagined - and planned for their future in the next decade positively. For instance, young people defined themselves as the future of the country, energetic and ambitious, or innovative people. Furthermore, 45.7% of the respondents saw their future as bright and successful, while 18% also had a positive image, of having a family and a stable job.

The reason for the large migration of young people is to obtain a quality education. Young people are highly valuing and defining their contribution and responsibility to society. For example, 63.5% of young people defined their contribution to society as great or very great, and 51.8% expected that, by 2030, the situation of Mongolian youth would improve compared.

The survey is open to the public, click here for a [link](#) to the survey.



SUSTAINABILITY

CLIMATE CHANGE AWARENESS AND MEDIA CONSUMPTION SURVEY IN MONGOLIA



CLIENT

- Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)

SURVEY OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the survey was to assess awareness, knowledge, attitudes, practices, and media consumption, related to climate change, among the population (including the most vulnerable in society).

The specific objectives were to:

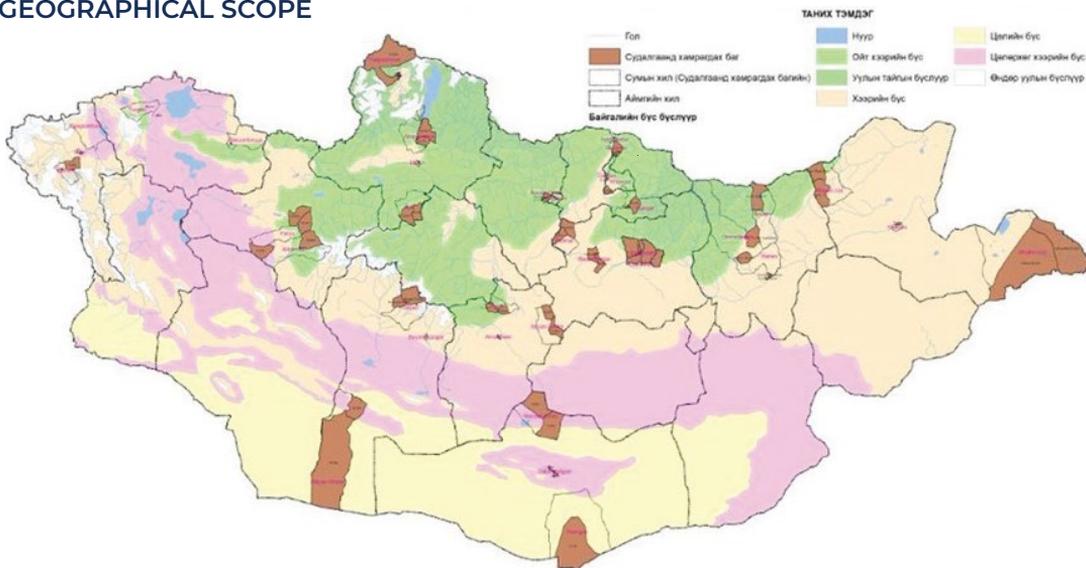
1. Assess the information and knowledge of citizens, communities, vulnerable groups, and stakeholders about climate change, its causes, and ways to reduce it.
2. Understand people's attitudes and practices about climate change.
3. Analyze potential inequities - in terms of gender and existing socio-economic vulnerabilities - in climate change awareness, access to information, and ability to act.
4. Understand citizens' expectations about necessary actions and key actors to address climate change.
5. Assess key stakeholders' perceptions of readiness for climate change mainstreaming in the country, and the capacity-building needs of stakeholders.
6. Identify key considerations for designing climate change awareness campaigns, aimed at specific population groups.
7. Recommend which groups need prioritization with help to respond to the climate-related challenges they face.



2022 June

2023 March

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



Note: on the map, Darkhan-Uul, Darkhan XVII; Orkhon – Jargalant IV; Bayan-Olgii – Höhninnuur – VIII; Khentii - Binder VI teams are not shown. Map source: www.eic.mn. Baghs selected for the study are marked in brown.

SURVEY BACKGROUND

Climate change is expected to intensify over the next several decades, resulting in a myriad of impacts on natural and human systems¹. The impacts of climate change are severe in Mongolia, a country that already faces rapid desertification, water scarcity, changing precipitation patterns, and seasonal intensification of extreme weather events. Over the last 80 years, Mongolia's average annual temperature increased by 2.25°C². Population groups, in particular the more vulnerable, are likely to be disproportionately affected, due to their exposure to shocks and stresses, and their limited capacity to withstand and respond to climate-induced disasters and risks.

¹ Ategeka, John, and others, Behavioural science interventions within the development and environmental fields in developing countries: 2022.

² Ministry of Environment and Tourism, the contribution target defined at the national level for the implementation of Paris Agreement, 2020

The priorities of protecting vulnerable groups against the impacts of climate change, and empowering the general public to respond to climate-induced risks, were mentioned in the 2019 Nationally Determined Contributions to the UNFCCC³. However, few studies have been conducted in Mongolia to identify what opportunities exist to increase knowledge and promote positive attitudes and practices, among the general population and vulnerable groups.

SURVEY DESIGN

The sampling design of the survey aimed to provide results that were represented at the national level and covered all regions. Data were collected face-to-face, across 13 provinces and Ulaanbaatar, covering 2,804 respondents. In total, 49 key informants from national and local government, NGOs, academia, the media, and the private sector, were purposefully selected. A total

of nine focus group discussions were conducted among community representatives – men, women, youths, older people, herders, farmers, and ethnic minorities; and in communities in ger areas, mining-affected areas, and remote border areas.

The survey examined how socio-economic status can influence climate change awareness, information needs, and the processing of climate-related information. In doing so, the team constructed and used a simple vulnerability index, measuring the number of characteristics of persons that place them at higher risk of economic deprivation, health issues, and social isolation of climate change.

A total of 13 characteristics (age, disability, chronic illness, income, level of education, migration status, and engagement in livelihoods vulnerable to climate change impacts) were used to construct the index. Using the index, respondents were divided into two groups - 'less vulnerable' and 'vulnerable' to allow disaggregated analysis by vulnerability status.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Awareness, knowledge, attitudes, and practices. Mongolians possess a relatively good awareness of climate change (67.3% had heard about climate change). Nearly half (46.6%) stated that climate change had affected their lives and livelihoods in the previous 10 years. Most (84.0%) respondents strongly agreed that human activities were the main causes of climate change. However, citizens in both rural and urban areas exhibited poor knowledge, awareness, and practices (KAP) regarding climate change.

For example, only 23.6% indicated they found their knowledge about climate change to be sufficient and, 35.9% mentioned Mongolian citizens were causing climate change. Interestingly, more than one-fifth of the respondents (22.5%) believed that climate change impacts were signs of punishment by supernatural forces.

Mongolians have a strong tendency to see climate change as something happening far away from where they live, and they believe it will not affect them shortly (67.1%). This is due to a lack of knowledge about climate change's current and future effects.

Most people believed that climate change was caused by their daily practices including electricity and water consumption, and coal burning. However, respondents from vulnerable groups indicated changing their daily practices would be difficult due to various trade-offs. These included saving the cost of heating by burning coal to feed their families, paying higher electricity bills to keep their homes warm, and using electric heating (for those with babies).

There were significant differences in the levels of awareness and KAP by demographics. Although more women were worried about climate change than men, they believed climate change would affect their lives in the short term; and expressed their need for further knowledge and skills related to climate change. By age, more youths (aged 18-24 years) had heard about the term climate change, and more believed that climate change was happening than any other age group. However, they were the group least concerned about climate change, and least interested in getting further knowledge and skills concerning climate change adaptation. Respondents with lower levels of education and lower incomes were more likely to fail to associate environmental changes with climate change and to understand the effects of climate change on their livelihoods. Within the rural population, knowledge about the causes and effects of climate change was low; they were likely to believe that climate change was not occurring (globally or in Mongolia). Although they were more aware of various environmental changes and had experienced natural disasters, they believed that such things occurred in ten-year cycles, and were natural.

Perceptions about climate action: With respect to tackling climate change-related issues, the majority of the respondents (62.9%) believed it was up to the Government of Mongolia (including the local government) to introduce and enforce changes for mitigating climate change impacts in Mongolia.

Only 12.0% of all respondents believed industrialized countries were causing climate change and just 6.8% believed they were responsible for addressing climate change. The lack of understanding about industrialized countries' impacts on climate change and their capacity to address it, was notable and revealed

through focus group discussions, where the participants associated climate change only at the national level.

According to the respondents, the most common climate action that the Government should take is Energy, waste, and transportation were mentioned more often by urban residents, while livestock, agriculture, and environmental conservation measures were common preferences among rural residents.

Media consumption and communication.

Mongolians are aware of the seriousness of these issues, where more than 92.7% of respondents were concerned about climate change and were interested in receiving more information about climate change via the media (85.1%). Television and the Internet were the two main sources of information. Television is the most accessible source of information for vulnerable groups; including older people, those in rural areas, people who have secondary education only, and those living in ger areas. In terms of climate change and media consumption, 44.1% of respondents had received information mentioning the terms ‘climate change’ or ‘global warming’ from the media while 45.3% had not received anything. The top two sources - that reached the biggest audience were both television programs: “Khureelen” an environmental documentary program and “Nogoon Shoshgo”.

Stakeholders’ views about climate action and mainstreaming in Mongolia. According to key informant interviews, government officials and

independent experts had a good understanding and knowledge of climate change impacts, and climate responses in general as well as in their major fields were good. All participants highlighted the importance of addressing climate change issues at the highest level. They emphasized the leadership of the government; particularly the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, due to its mandate for implementing integrated policy, and coordinating climate change efforts among internal and external stakeholders. Furthermore, respondents indicated that a participatory approach - that involved diverse stakeholders at all levels needs to be improved - to consider climate change and find solutions to manage and mitigate its impacts.

When asked to rate the level of readiness to mainstream climate change in Mongolia, the stakeholders’ responses averaged 2.6 on a scale of 1 to 4. However, almost all respondents highlighted that other necessary factors were low and needed to be improved urgently.

It is also necessary to pay attention to the lack of specialized and competent human resources and experts at the sector and organizational levels, particularly in rural areas.

Based on the results of the survey, strategies for awareness-raising and capacity-building campaigns were developed. Detailed survey results will soon be posted on the www.irim.mn, and <https://ggi.org/> websites.

CONSULTANCY SERVICE TO DEVELOP CAPACITIES ON CIRCULAR ECONOMY FOR MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM- SIZED ENTERPRISES IN MONGOLIA



CLIENTS

- Asian Development Bank
- Ministry of Environment and Tourism

PARTNERS

- Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association
- Development Solutions NGO

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

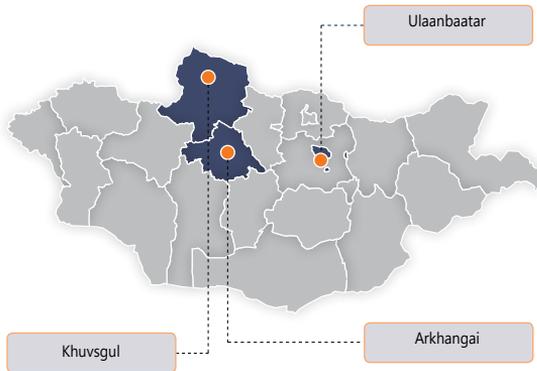
The main objective of the consulting service 'Building the capacity of MICRO, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES (MSMEs) in the direction of circular economy (CE) and green business' is to support gender equality by strengthening knowledge and capacity about the circular economy and green technology. The consultancy service will help women-owned, and women-managed MSMEs, recover from the post-COVID-19 crisis and achieve a sustainable green recovery.



2022 November

2024 May

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

More and more countries started embracing a new economic model, where environmentally friendly and reusable products are preferred; giving greater importance to the efficiency and effectiveness of the usage of natural resources with the least possible waste production.

As environmental issues become more pressing, businesses have to be more aware of their responsibility to the environment. However, the COVID-19 pandemic had an adverse impact across the spectrum of society; from individuals to businesses. Among them, MSMEs were hit the hardest; temporarily and/or permanently closing. Studies showed that businesses were still struggling to resume normal operations and ensure their sustainability.

This project is one of the examples, where development organizations are funding many projects and programs to fight climate change and mitigate the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Asian Development Bank continuously implements regional technical assistance, to support gender-inclusive green businesses for the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, in China and Mongolia.

IRIM, in cooperation with the Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association, Development Solutions NGO, and German Adelpi organization, started implementing a 1.5-year consultancy in Mongolia.

PROJECT DESIGN

The scope of the consultancy service includes women entrepreneurs operating in the food and packaging in the tourism industry and supports the circular economy and green business activities. To achieve this objective, three components were planned to be implemented, as follows:

To analyze the policy environment and legal documents supporting the circular economy, to make a comprehensive assessment of the opportunities and difficulties of introducing the circular economy

Firstly, to analyze the policy environment, and legal acts supporting the circular economy, make a comprehensive assessment of the opportunities and difficulties of introducing the circular economy.

Secondly, based on the results of the research, develop and implement a program aimed at improving understanding and knowledge of the circular economy, and strengthening the capacity of the target sector MSMEs.

Thirdly, based on the results of the capacity building program, organize best practice and information sharing events and policy dialogues, at national and international levels.

CONCLUSIONS

The project is currently implementing the first component, the collection of baseline data, capacity building, and support planning based on results.

ASSESSMENT OF PAST AND ONGOING COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES RELATED TO THE EXTRACTIVES SECTOR IN MONGOLIA



CLIENT

Australia Mongolia Extractives Program Phase II (AMEP 2)

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

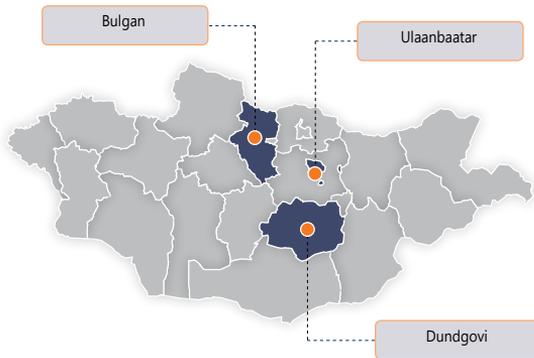
The purpose of the assessment is to evaluate the effectiveness and sustainability of activities carried out in Mongolia's extractive industry over the last five years in terms of public participation, information dissemination, and local cooperation, and to identify ways to improve them.



2022 December

2023 March

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The mineral resources sector is one of the supporting sectors for development, making a significant contribution to Mongolia's economy. For example, between 2010 and 2021, the mining sector accounted for 23% of the gross domestic product. In addition, this sector alone accounts for about 3.6% of the total workforce, more than 20% of the national budget, and more than 90% of exports (*Baatarzorig, Galindev, & Maisonnave, 2018*).

The Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry identified the need to build stronger collaborative relationships with communities, better understand roles and responsibilities, and create an opportunity to share concerns and voice opinions. Until recently, traditional institutional communication, public relations, and marketing outreach proved to be not so effective in engaging and stimulating citizens' participation and debate. Thus challenging public trust and institutional credibility.

Australia Mongolia Extractives Program Phase II (AMEP 2) initiated the Making Minerals Valuable project to enable communities, CSOs, herders, and youths to share their views and practices, via

new and innovative communication methods. The initiative had two components: (i) assessing public participation policy and outreach efforts in the Mongolian extractive sector, and (ii) developing a new communication strategy plan adapted to the local context.

PROJECT DESIGN

The overall approach for the research assessment was formulated fully in line to deliver a precise, evidence-based assessment of past and ongoing community engagement and outreach activities related to Mongolia's extractive sector (with a focus on mining). For that, the assessment undertook an exploratory and consultative approach to better understand stakeholders' perceptions and perspectives on community engagement and outreach activities.



The research employed a systematic literature review, qualitative discussions, and gap analysis methods, to assess the effectiveness of community engagement and outreach efforts in the extractive sector, based on secondary and primary data.

CONCLUSIONS

The study report has been prepared and is being finalized by the Client's feedback.

MID-TERM REVIEW OF AUSTRALIAN RED CROSS INTERNATIONAL PROGRAM 2019-2024



CLIENT

- Australian Red Cross (ARC)

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

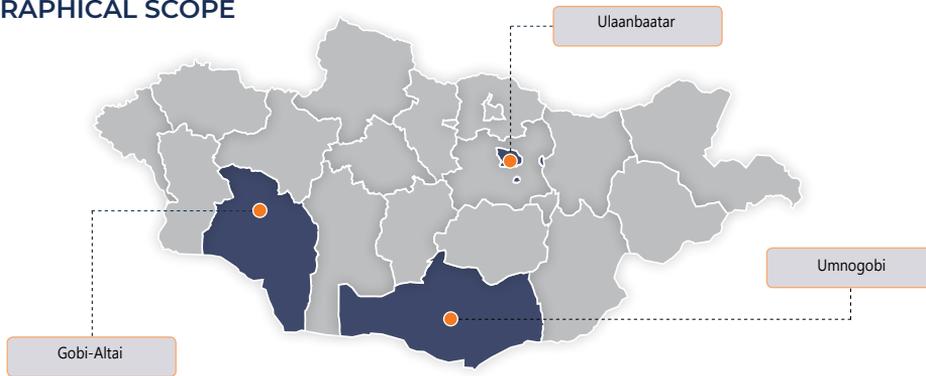
The objectives of the mid-term review were to:

- assess progress towards the goal and the objectives of the five-year international program of ARC;
- provide in-depth analysis and findings about the program's three outcome areas; and
- generate evidence-based recommendations to inform the final two years of the program, and guide strategy beyond 2024.



2022 September 2023 December

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Australian Red Cross International Program 2019-2024 has the following three end-of-program outcomes.

Results to be achieved 1: Strong national society.

Results to be achieved 2: Effective national-society-led disaster risk management.

Results to be achieved 3: Influence upon humanitarian policy and practice

Regarding its outcomes, ARC supported the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) to be the strongest locally-led organization that it might be. Enabling it to fulfill its role as an auxiliary to the Government of Mongolia, and its responsibilities related to disaster preparedness response and recovery.

PROJECT DESIGN

A mixed methods approach - combining key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and document review - was used in the review.

Primary data collection was organized, covering representatives of the MRCS, public authorities, civil society, UN agencies, Red Cross volunteers, and community members.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The MRCS is considered by stakeholders as a strong, reliable, and trustworthy partner. Its leadership

and management were recognized as exemplary of international standards, with clear internal procedures, and a strong culture of efficiency, discipline, and open-mindedness. Furthermore, the MRCS is fully involved in numerous policy-making initiatives, and an active participant in humanitarian coordination mechanisms (such as cluster coordination working groups, task forces, and strategic dialogue platforms).

At the same time, stakeholders were critical of the existing communication channels (to the public) of the national society, the weak advocacy and promotional reach to the broader community, minimal innovation, and the repetitiveness (in terms of annual action plans). Stakeholders had recommendations for changes/improvements in the national society's existing focus and practices following:

- enhancing the communication to broader masses;
- developing the leadership succession plans;
- strengthening the mid and primary levels (human resources and materials base);
- proactivity in terms of local fundraising, and increasing membership.

The review report will be integrated with mid-term reviews conducted in other countries (where the ARC International Program is being implemented) and will inform and contribute to future program implementation.

REVIEW OF THE MONGOLIAN RED CROSS SOCIETY COVID-19 RESPONSE



CLIENT

- International Federation of Red Cross (IFRC) and Red Crescent Societies
Head of the Country Cluster Delegation in Beijing

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

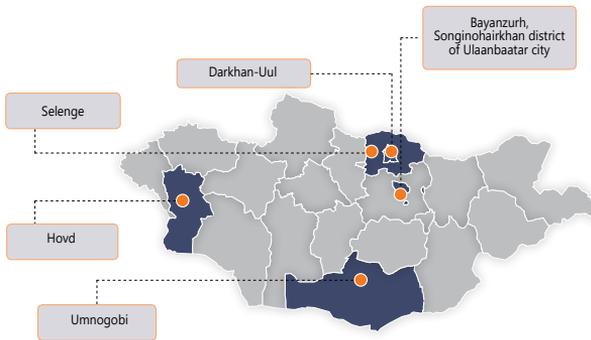
The objective of the review was to assess the progress, results, and achievements of the overall response action undertaken by the Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) regarding COVID-19, from February 2020 to January 2022. The review was also to provide recommendations for modification to strategies during the post-pandemic period of the operation, to transit into routine programs.



2022 February

2022 August

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The MRCS organized a COVID-19 nationwide response operation to support the health system and assist vulnerable populations during the crisis. Within the framework of the response plan, the MRCS as a member of the State Emergency Commission and with several various governmental organizations, international agencies, and partners.

In the review of the MRCS COVID-19 response, activities under the following three operational priorities were assessed.

Priority 1: Health and water, sanitation and hygiene;

Priority 2: Addressing Socio-economic impacts of COVID-19;

Priority 3: Strengthening National Society.

PROJECT DESIGN

For the review, the IFRC Evaluation Framework was used to assess the progress and results of the overall COVID-19 response of the MRCS (between February 2020 and January 2022) in terms of (i) relevance and appropriateness, (ii) efficiency, (iii) effectiveness, (iv) coverage, and (v) sustainability and connectedness.

This was to provide recommendations for further improvement, and scale-up of the intervention in a similar situation.

In line with the review framework, a mixed method approach was used, comprising quantitative and qualitative methods (including desk review,

questionnaire survey, key informant interview, focus group discussion, and case studies). The quantitative research covered 390 people who had received assistance from the MRCS, and 80 volunteers who worked in the activities implemented by the MRCS (in response to COVID-19). In the qualitative research, 28 key stakeholders (including representatives of government bodies, international institutions, and MRCS staff) were covered.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

All representatives of stakeholders interviewed during the review highlighted that the MRCS response activities were very effective and achieved their objectives.

The MRCS trained and mobilized 1,440 volunteers during the COVID-19 response, to provide support at primary health units and in the National Center for Communicable Diseases (NCCD). As a result, a total of 148,200 COVID-19 contacts were identified, 534,250 people were supported through community water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities (that reduced the risk of COVID-19 transmission), and 118,200 people were vaccinated.

The MRCS distributed pandemic-related information (COVID-19 risk communication, health, and hygiene promotion messages) to a total of 2.9 million people nationwide. This was accomplished through different channels with support from their volunteers, and this had a significant impact on enhancing public health and disease prevention.

Moreover, 184,380 people who have become vulnerable (through income loss due to COVID-19) received food and other in-kind assistance. This reduced the risk of malnutrition during the pandemic. Most (91.9%) of households (among the 390 survey respondents of the review) that regularly received food assistance from the MRCS, stated that support provided by the MRCS satisfied all their needs by improving their livelihoods. The results from the review demonstrated that the MRCS made significant contributions to the Government of Mongolia.

MONGOLIA RESILIENT WATER SUPPLY FEASIBILITY STUDY



CLIENT

- European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)

PARTNERS

- Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry
- Sustainability East Asia LLC
- ATKINS Member of the SC Lavalin Group
- Eco Trade LLC

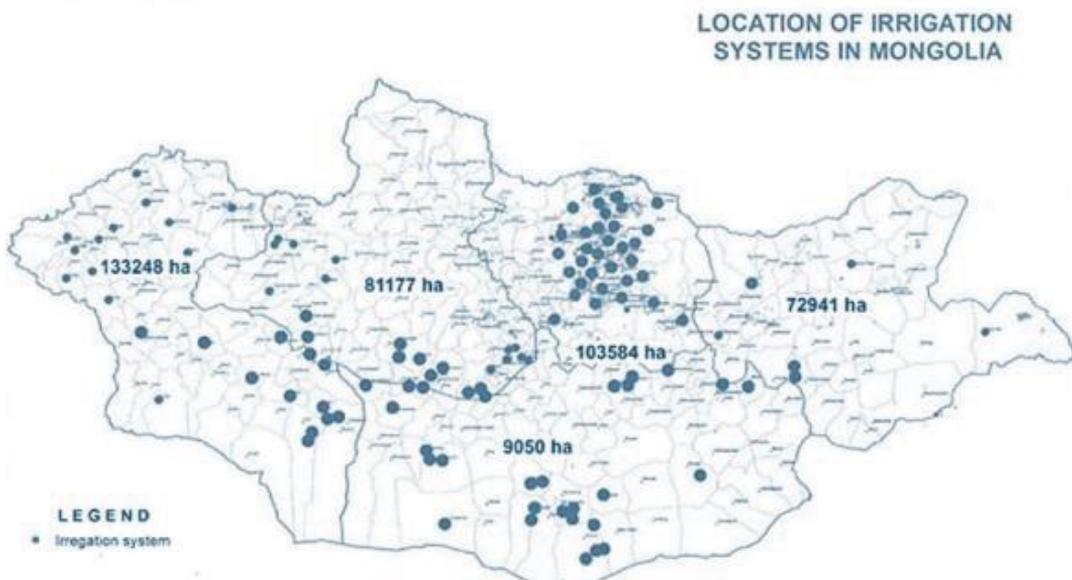
PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the Study was to enable the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) to comprehensively assess, approve and implement the irrigation rehabilitation project. In doing so, economic, demographic, operational, and institutional information was collected to establish a baseline to which the project interventions might be compared.



2022 August

2023 August



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Only one percent of Mongolia (1.3 million hectares) is arable, and 0.4 million hectares have the potential for agricultural use. The agricultural sector is the primary user of water in the country and faces several climate risks, including drought, temperature extremes, rainfall variability, and extreme rainfall events that can damage crops and pastures. Surface water is primarily used for agriculture, and some irrigation systems use groundwater. There are no regulated tariffs in place for the existing systems, though the provinces have some sort of irrigation tariff collection system.

The study is commissioned by the EBRD - from August 2022 - to improve water management in the agricultural sector and develop climate-resilient irrigation systems. Within the framework

of the project, comprehensive hydrological, tariff, social, environmental, and legal environments will be completed in about 20 locations; with irrigation systems related to the construction, renewal, and restoration of irrigation systems.

The main implementer of the project was WS Atkins International Limited (which has extensive experience in 175 countries), Sustainable East Asia, Eco Trade, Mon-Energy, and IRIM; working together as local partners. In this project, IRIM was responsible for supporting hydrology, environment, tariff, and gender analysis, to international consultants.

CONCLUSIONS

The project has been implemented since August 2022, and the results of the project have not yet been released.

'MY IS MINE' CAMPAIGN'S CONTENT EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION RESEARCH



CLIENT

- Love Frankie agency

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this research was to organize a discussion among the target group to clarify its views and attitudes and increase the effectiveness of the activities and content developed within the framework of the 'My is Mine' campaign; organized by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Development Alternatives, Inc. (DAI).



2022 April

2022 July

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The campaign aimed to increase awareness, skills, knowledge, and behaviors - around digital literacy, online security, and cybersecurity - among the Mongolian public.

Main objectives of the campaign:

1. Raise awareness of privacy as a concept, and its relation to key cybersecurity issues/crimes in Mongolia.
2. Educate Mongolians about how to increase their privacy protection measures.
3. Encourage young Mongolians to spread awareness about digital literacy, and online safety practices, among their community, relatives, friends, and family.
4. Educate Mongolians about how to protect themselves and prevent themselves from falling prey to cybercrime.
5. Equip civil society organizations, the private sector, and influencers, with knowledge and educational materials to amplify in their respective communities.

The campaign was divided into two phases that targeted different target groups, namely:

Phase 1: The focus group discussion (FGD) participants youths aged 16 to 25 years, living in Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia.

Phase 2: Respondents aged 41 to 55 years; parents, and business owners, who were online financial services users.

ACTIVITIES OF THE PROJECT

The IRIM gathered the necessary information and delivered it to the implementing party via a focus group to clarify how this impact campaign is reaching its target group and what to consider in the future.

The Phase 1 FGDs were to assess the first four goals mentioned above by testing video and advertising campaigns among the 16-25-year-old youth group and working with the youth. We also tried to evaluate the following activities carried out within the campaign. This includes:

1. How effective and clear the video’s content and the key message of the artist’s campaign are expressed; and
2. The posters’ effectiveness in increasing activation and audience access to the Live Music Session competition was assessed as part of the impact work.



In the first phase, 4 sessions of FGD were organized, and interview participants were selected by groups of men and women aged 16-21 and 22-25 years.

The Phase 2 FGDs were to assess:

1. Awareness changes in online privacy, password security, and online financial security (before and after the campaign's content exposure);
2. Perceived utility of the online safety habits shared by the campaign in daily lives;
3. Perceived utility of the campaign to Mongolian parents and local business owners in general.

Likewise, in the second phase, four FGD sessions were held, and interviewees were chosen from groups of men and women aged 41-49 and 50-55.

The findings of the impact work done in the first and second phases of the project were clarified through focus group interviews based on the questions and guidelines provided by the client organization, and the information gathered was compiled and delivered in English with quality assurance.



EDUCATION

STUDY ON THE READING HABITS OF PARENTS AND YOUNG CHILDREN IN ULAANBAATAR, MONGOLIA



The Asia Foundation



CLIENT

- The Asian Foundation (TAF)

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The scope of the baseline study involved the reading habits of parents (with children under six years of age) and their understanding of contributions to children's love of reading. It also examined the benefits of reading books to children and measured access to books, along with early educational stimulation in the home and kindergartens.



2021

November

2022

March

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Studies show that developing reading skills in children improves their communication and comprehension skills. It also builds personality, sparks curiosity, develops concentration, and enhances emotional development, social involvement, cultural awareness, and intelligence.

In September 2021, TAF introduced its 'Let's Read' Mongolia Initiative, to promote reading and improve education outcomes. The initiative is a comprehensive program, that will increase the availability of high-quality Mongolian language children's books, and encourage adults to establish reading routines with young children. The initiative aims to help parents and caregivers use children's books as critical tools to actively contribute to early childhood development

PROJECT DESIGN

In the study, quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were used. A total of 834 parents, of children under six years of age, were selected from among schools and kindergartens in Ulaanbaatar; and included in the quantitative survey. In the qualitative research, one-on-one interviews were conducted with representatives of the Ministry of Education and Science, the Metropolitan Department of Education, the Teacher Training Institute, district education departments, kindergartens, and school administrators.

The baseline study used methods comparable with the monitoring (midterm) and endline studies.



Baseline study design

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- Parents lacked the habit of reading to their children and encouraging them to love books. Only 9.7% of parents read to their children daily. Reading times lasted up to 10 minutes.
- Parents' habits of reading books and engaging in reading activities with their children correlated with their educational attainment. The lower their educational level, the less likely parents were to undertake such activities or read books themselves. Compared to lower-income households (HH), in higher-income HHs, the higher the income, the lesser time parents spent reading books to their children, as a lot of time was spent on income-generating activities.
- Apart from being busy, the main reasons why parents did not read to their children were: the inability of HHs to afford to buy books, and problems with the accessibility and availability of books near the khoroods.
- Most parents agreed it was important to develop children's interests and confidence by reading books.
- Many parents (41.9%) believed the most appropriate age for exposing children to books and reading-related activities was three to five years, compared to 39% who felt it was appropriate for children under three years. Only 11.3% of parents thought it was important to start such activities when the child was in the mother's womb.
- Parents with first and second graders were asked if they read books to their children before sending them to primary school and how they saw the benefits of reading for their children's development. Only 10.9% of parents in the target khoroods (and 8.8% of parents in the non-target khoroods) said they 'very often' read books to their children

before sending them to school. With respect to gender, the share of mothers who read to their children (11.6%) was higher than that of fathers (0%).

- Digital books were not popular among parents. The acquisition of digital books was 18.1% in the target khoroods and 10.8% in non-target khoroods. Other respondents did not attempt to get digital books. Some kindergartens, however, had started promoting digital books on their websites, which was believed to be helpful to HHs that could not afford printed books.
- The accessibility and availability of public libraries and bookstores were poor in the surveyed districts; 51.8% of parents said there was no library near their home.
- Parents and teachers had a good understanding of the importance of placing books where children could reach them without the help of an adult. A majority of parents in the target (62.1%) - and non-target khoroods (79.7%) - said that children could reach books at home without an adult's help. A majority of parents in the target (62.1%) - and non-target khoroods (79.7%) said that children could reach books at home without an adult's help.

- As highlighted by officials from preschool education institutions, the standards for children's books should be revised, especially those written by Mongolians.
- Even though kindergartens support children's development through books (within the limits of their budgets), the availability and quality of books are still insufficient.

"Let's Read" digital library for all children

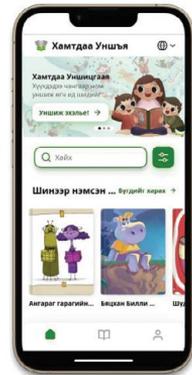
Explore the world with your children through reading hundreds of high-quality books from "Let's Read" library.

Download
Let's Read app:



www.letsreadasia.org

Free to read online and offline,
and print from any device.



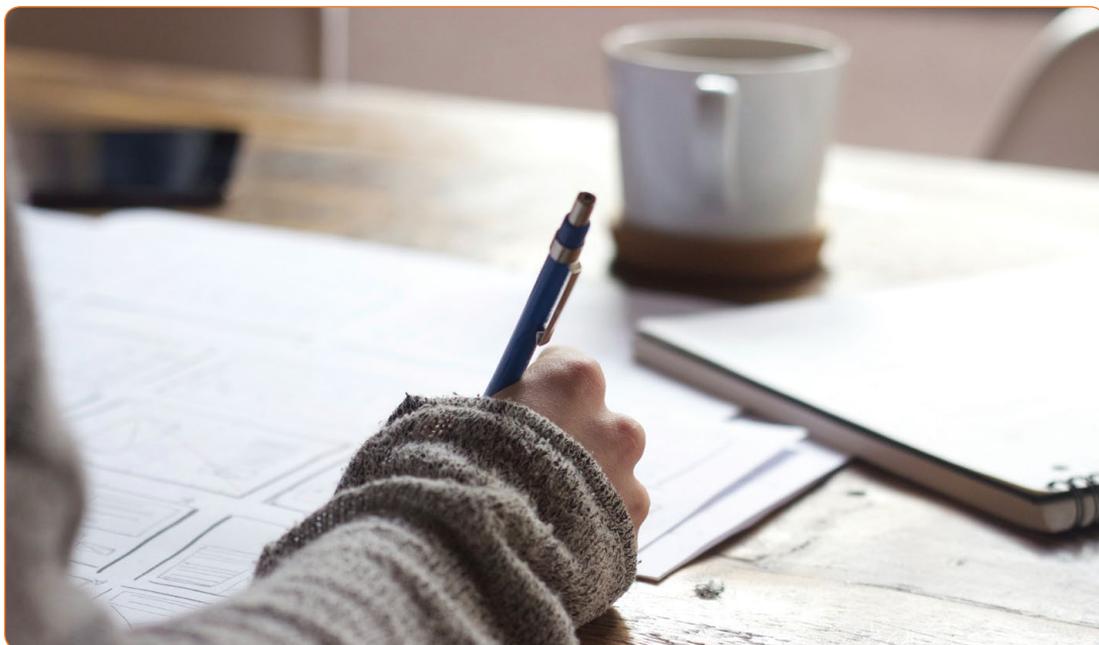
EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF CYCLE V OF THE “SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM”



БОЛОВСРОЛ,
ШИНЖЛЭХ УХААНЫ
ЯАМ



THE WORLD BANK
IBRD • IDA | WORLD BANK GROUP



CLIENT

- The World Bank Group
- Ministry of Education and Science

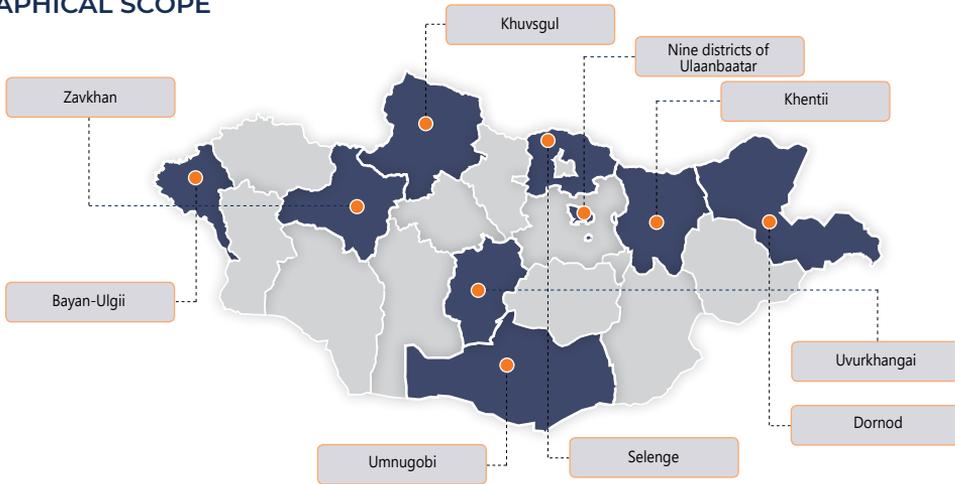
PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to (i) Conduct an external evaluation of the Cycle V implementation, and (ii) evaluate the level of satisfaction with the program among beneficiaries.



2022 January 2023 May

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

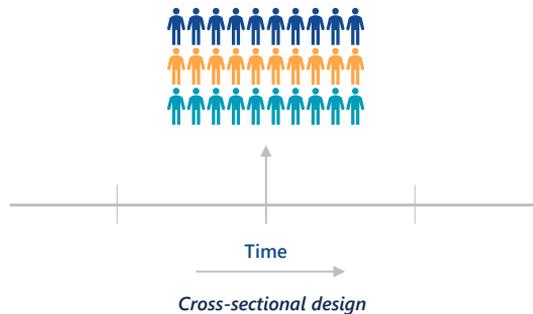
The Ministry of Education and Science (MES) decided to implement the Education Quality Reform Project (EQR) at the national level - in August 2015 - with the financing of a soft loan from the World Bank.

Within the framework of Component 3 of the Project - to support innovative activities aimed at improving the quality of primary education and enriching teaching materials - the MES selected proposals for projects initiated by state-owned secondary schools and awarded grants. From 2016 to 2021, within the School Grant Program, five cycles of grant programs (with the abbreviations C1, C2, C3, C4, and C5) were implemented. Within this framework, the IRIM implemented the external evaluation of 'Cycle V of the School Grant Program'.

PROJECT DESIGN

A cross-sectional design will be used in this evaluation. The cross-sectional design¹ provides for the collection of data on a specific issue, from many different individuals at a specific point in time. This design has important implications for evaluating the effectiveness of a particular

implementation, and for exploring factors that require quality improvement.



CONCLUSION

This evaluation was implemented during the writing of the IRIM's Annual Report and will be finalized in May 2023. Therefore, it is not possible to provide further information in this section

¹ The Cohort as a Concept in the Study of Social Change, Ryder, Norman B., 1965

SOCIAL PROTECTION & LABOR MARKET

STUDY ON HERDERS' BEHAVIOUR TOWARDS SOCIAL AND HEALTH INSURANCE



CLIENTS

- International Labour Organization (ILO)
- UN Joint SDG Fund

PARTNER

- Maastricht University

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objective of the study was to study herders' behaviors toward social and health insurance schemes in Mongolia. For this study, the following objectives were set:

- Study herders' perception of, and behavior towards, social and health insurance schemes;
- Study herders' current accessibility, needs, barriers, and obstacles; in social and health insurance schemes;
- Review comparative international and national good practices in social insurance schemes designed for nomad populations; and in social insurance and financial sector service delivery and payment systems for mobile, nomad populations;
- Conduct stakeholders' and gap analysis on legislation, regulatory framework, and service delivery;
- Identify bottlenecks in the legal environment and service delivery of the Government in the area of social and health insurance that delimit the effective coverage of herders.
- Review organizational and technological delivery systems to facilitate herders' access to social and health insurance.
- Develop recommendations to improve social and health insurance activities for livestock herders'.



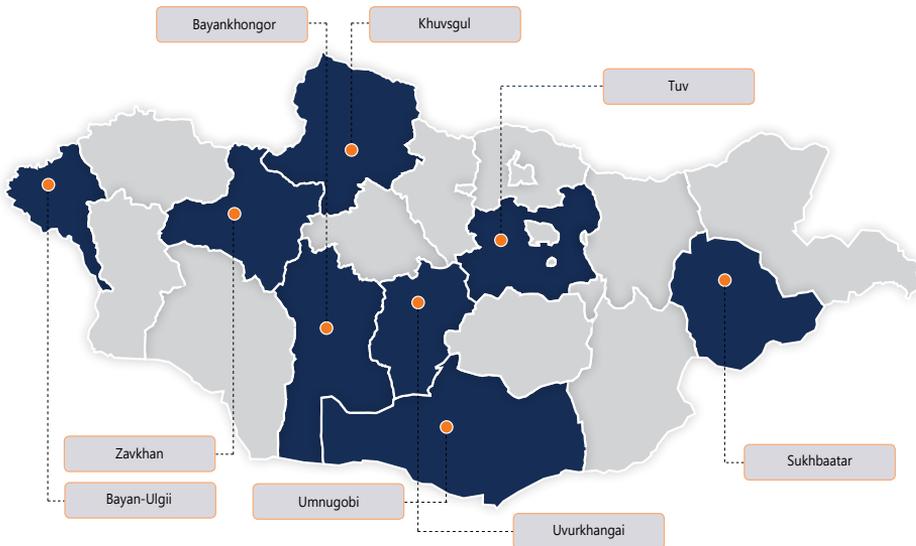
2021

April

2022

May

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



BACKGROUND

Due to patterns of extreme climate change, herders with restricted information and access to services are highly vulnerable to adverse livelihood risks; and hence more likely to fall deeper into poverty. Therefore, the Government of Mongolia considers social protection a key instrument in the provision of income security for herders.

The State Policy on Herders; 2009-2020 states 'Herders will be covered by health and social insurance at 100%, and will receive state social welfare services'. The United Nations Joint Programme Extending Social Protection to Herders with Enhanced Shock Responsiveness (SP-Herders, MNG/19/01/UND) contributed to achieving these goals by developing 'social security innovative solutions responding to life contingencies and social insurance needs of herders'. For these reasons, there are demands for data and evidence to support decisions aimed at the extension of coverage of social insurance to the population of herders in Mongolia. Accordingly, the ILO commissioned a study to contribute to decision-makers and social partners' improved understanding of the behaviors and

behavioral patterns of herders. This was expected to provide solutions to increase the health and social insurance coverage of herders.

In this context, IRIM Research Institute conducted the research in collaboration with Maastricht University, and our organization led the research project, with Maastricht University as the research work's leading partner.

PROJECT DESIGN

The study was the first conducted in the field of social and economic issues and social insurance among Mongolian herders. The sample was nationally representative since there had been a lack of large-scale studies that have previously investigated the social issues of herders. For the study, an experimental model was used, and detailed analysis was carried out by creating four types of experimental groups. These were to provide reasons for the participation of farmers in social insurance and ensure that results were innovative and realistic.

Herders were divided into four experimental groups when participating in the study, and in doing so, they were divided into two target

groups, one active control group, and one control group.

The study consisted of two main components - quantitative and qualitative - as illustrated below.

Component 1. Quantitative: questionnaire (all herders)

- Survey among 4,000 herders using CATI

Component 2. Qualitative: key informant interviews (stakeholder)

- Interviews among 52 relevant stakeholders at national and local levels

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

In 2020, nearly 27% of all (242,024) households in Mongolia derived their livelihoods from livestock herding; 9% of the Mongolian population was registered as herders. While 32% of pastoralists were estimated to be poor (Ganchimeg et al., 2019), inequalities among herders persist. Five percent of herder households own 22% of all livestock, and about 45% of herder households own fewer than 200 heads of livestock; the generally accepted threshold for subsistence (UN & ADB, 2018).

With regards to the legislation and regulatory framework, the Law on Social Insurance allows individuals (such as the self-employed, herders, and freelancers, who create employment opportunities for themselves) to be excluded from social insurance coverage. In particular, because of the traditional herding of animals in Mongolia, herders are categorized as self-employed individuals, hence they can be covered by insurance voluntarily only. As a result of restricting the rights of the compulsory insured - to a subscription to voluntary insurance - coverage remains low. And among the few that choose to pay, the voluntarily paid contributions equal to the minimum allowed; meaning they will receive low pension entitlements in the future, and are likely to live in poverty. Moreover, Mongolia's legal framework for retrospective insurance (1990-2000) has the negative effect of discouraging herders from contributing to the Social Insurance Fund.

At the institutional level - due to the shortage of financial resources and lack of technical and human capacities - local insurance officers are unable to reach out to herders to promote and expand social insurance coverage. Moreover, there is a lack of accessible and user-friendly call center services that might otherwise enable herders to check and pay their contributions (and access) other services.

The reasons for participating (and not participating) in the health and social insurance of herders, as well as the entire organization, community, and national level policy and regulation have been studied in a detailed and extensive manner. Based on the study results, policy options and recommendations, aimed at social insurance and social security issues of herders, were presented to the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, and the project unit of the ILO. This was used as a basis for reforming social insurance policies, and for changes in laws and related regulations. The results of the research were presented to national and local level parties, herders, and civil society organizations. A formal presentation of the results of the report took place on 2 June 2022. [Click here](#) to see the report.



MARKET RESEARCH SERVICES FOR GRADUATION PILOT PROGRAM



ХӨДӨЛМӨР, НИЙГМИЙН ХАМГААЛЛЫН ЯАМ



МОНГОЛЫН УЛААН ЗАГАЛМАЙ НИЙГЭМЭГ



CLIENT

- Asian Development Bank
- Ministry of Social Protection and Labour

PARTNER

- Mongolian Red Cross Society

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of the market system analysis was to identify 8-10 sustainable livelihood options (for each district) that met the criteria for the targeted families of the Graduation Pilot Program. Within the market research, a market system analysis was to be conducted, to identify 8-10 sustainable livelihood options (for each district) that meet the criteria for targeted families; participating in the Child Money Program, receiving food vouchers, residing in the three districts, etc.). In this context, the following was to be undertaken:

- Analysis of the general situation of the markets in the districts; to understand how poor households participate in the market, identify barriers to market access, and identify the market system and the value chain within the system.
- Livelihood assessment of potential market systems and value chains; to identify opportunities and risks faced by the poorest and most vulnerable households in each district.
- Prepare a portfolio of 8-10 livelihood options (or potential business portfolios) for each district.
- Develop a business readiness assessment (profiling) tool, based on the skills, experiences, and resources of households that will participate in the Graduation Approach Pilot Program.



2022 December

2023 May

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

Bayanzurkh, Chingeltei and
Songinokhairkhan districts of
Ulaanbaatar



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Poverty has not significantly decreased in our country since 2016, but this national average conceals important differences by location, gender, and age. In addition, about 14% of the population is just above the poverty line, indicating that these populations are ready to fall into poverty under a small shock. Not only is 42% of the total poor population in Ulaanbaatar, but poverty in the capital has not decreased at all in recent years (World Bank, NSC, 2021). Although many economic and social factors contribute to the slowness of poverty reduction, many sources mention that increasing the efficiency of targeted social welfare programs has a special contribution to poverty reduction. Within the framework of social welfare laws, the government implements 12 basic sets of social welfare and service programs. In 2018-2019, the cost of social welfare measures and services accounted for about 2% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on average, but due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the cost has increased by an average of 2.5 times in the last two years, reaching 4.6% of GDP in 2021 (NSO, 2022).

As part of the 2nd phase of the social protection project of the Asian Development Bank and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to respond to

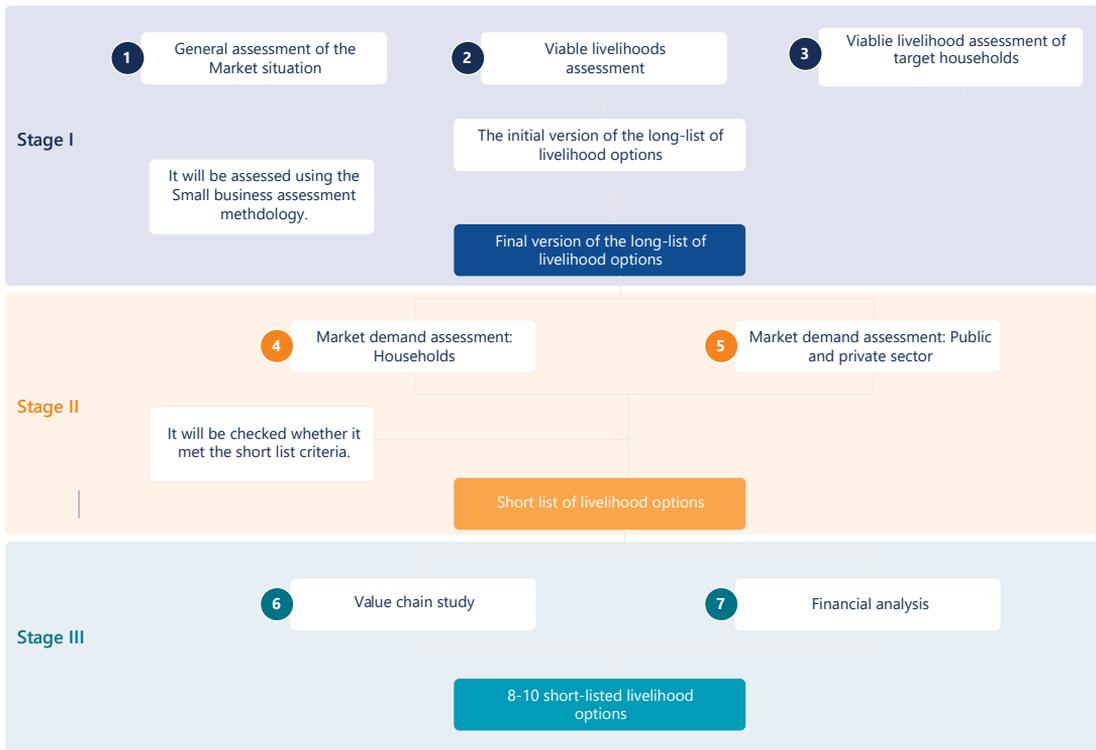
the pandemic, the program aims to provide comprehensive support to the economic participation of poor and vulnerable groups, increase livelihoods, and reduce poverty in Songinokhairkhan, Bayanzurkh, Chingeltei. implemented in the district. It is planned to include a total of 1,520 citizens aged 18-55 who have at least one poor member and who participate in the food voucher and child benefit program, and preparations are underway.

PROJECT DESIGN

The Graduation Approach Pilot Program market research was to be conducted in the same way in all three districts, within Ulaanbaatar. Therefore, the presented research method was a general implementation without a focus on one district. The market assessment was to be carried out in three stages.

The first stage, The 'General assessment of the market situation', 'viable livelihood assessment', and 'research on compatibility between the target household's livelihood capacity and business opportunities' will be determined. The research will be conducted with a sample of 308 people (those who participated in the baseline research of the *Graduation Approach Pilot Program*). The research will use a questionnaire survey method, to study the compatibility of household livelihoods and business opportunities. Based on the result of these studies, the first version of a long list of *Business Activities* will be prepared. The list will be evaluated, based on the capabilities of the target population, using the *Small Business Assessment Methodology* (MIRIM Consultancy 2015) and used to develop the final version of the long list of more viable business activities.

Second stage. A market demand assessment will be conducted; to determine the extent of market capacity for the long list of business activities. In this context, potential demand generators will be classified into three main groups: *household*



Graduation Approach Pilot Program market assessment design

consumers, industrial consumers, and procurements by government institutions. The household consumer survey will be conducted by random sampling of 285 people within the three districts. The government and industrial consumer survey will be conducted through individual interviews, and document research.

Based on the results of the research conducted in the first two stages, a short list of 8-10 business activities will be prepared for each district. This list will also be checked to ensure that the criteria for the short list of the *Graduation Approach* are met. *Third stage.* For each of the short-listed business activities, a study will be conducted to examine

the value chain. Within this framework, the raw materials and supply chains will be identified, and required information will be collected (through secondary quantitative data and individual interviews). Moreover, financial analyses will be conducted, and the prices of goods, services, and transportation costs will be obtained from quantitative data from secondary sources. Based on the results, a set of business activities will be developed.

CONCLUSION

The Market Research is still under implementation, and the final results will be completed by the end of April 2023.

“HIGH FREQUENCY (HIFY) HOUSEHOLD SURVEY FOR REGULAR MONITORING OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT OF COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN TIMOR-LESTE”



FUNDER

- The World Bank Group (WBG)

CLIENTS

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- General Directorate of Statistics of Timor-Leste

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of the survey is to implement quick-deploying high-frequency (HiFy) phone surveys of households in Timor-Leste to help identify the mechanisms of socio-economic impact, identify gaps in public policy response as the Government response, generating insight that could be useful in scaling up or redirecting resources as necessary as the affected population copes and eventually regains economic stability.



2022 May

2023 March

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

In March 2022, The World Bank (WB), the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) Timor-Leste, and the General Directorate of Statistics (GDS) of the Ministry of Finance (MoF) initiated a 'High-Frequency Household Survey, for Regular Monitoring of the Socio-Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic in Timor-Leste'.

The purpose of this survey is to clarify the household's pre-pandemic living conditions and how it copes with the effects of the long-term quarantine period of COVID-19. As a result of the research, Timor-Leste's decision-makers will have real-time access to real-time information about the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on households, which can be used to support an evidence-based response to the pandemic.

The HiFy survey has several features:

1. It uses the SEIA 2.0 survey conducted by the UN and the Government of Timor-Leste in 2021 to draw its sampling. Hence it is a continuation of an ongoing national effort.
2. The HiFy survey introduced the Computed Assisted Telephone Interview method to GDS – using CsPro digital questionnaire and Bitrix24 telephone interview tracking and monitoring software. This required extensive on-the-job learning and capacity building for the data collection team.

3. The questionnaire was adapted to the national context and comparisons were made with other ongoing and existing surveys to avoid duplication.

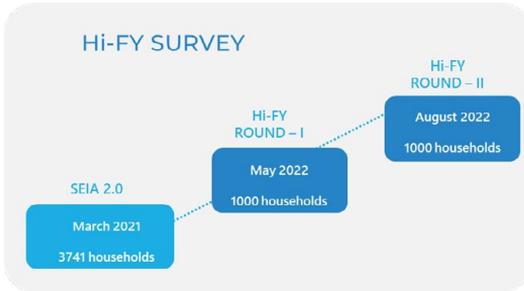
The research team was led by A. Dolgion, an IRIM board member and UNDP East Timor consultant, with L. Tselmegsaikhan and Ts. Batsugar from IRIM as data collection consultants.

PROJECT DESIGN

The sampling frame used in this survey is a list of selected households of the Socio-Economic Assessment of COVID-19 Round 2 (SEIA-2) in 2021 whose head of household or one of the household members has a mobile phone. Using a sampling strategy, a total of 1000 households will be interviewed in this HiFy survey Round 1, and ideally, the same households should be interviewed in Round 2.

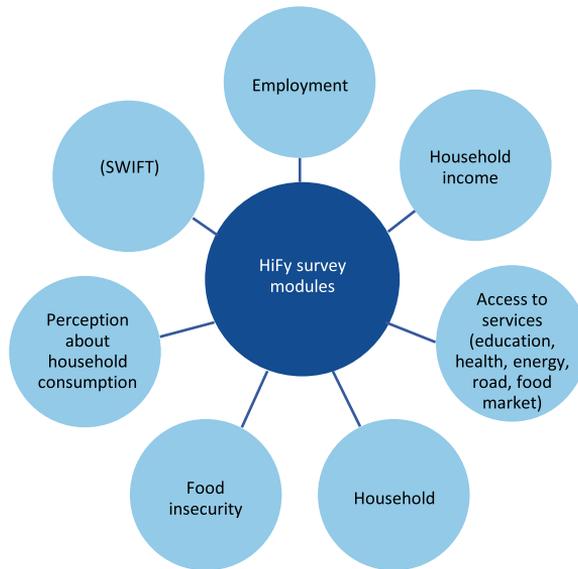
The sampling method used in this survey is stratified random sampling. To ensure the representativeness of the sample, households are stratified based on some potential variables of the head of household. To select the variables used as strata, we compared the distribution of the 2021 survey data with the 2015 census data.

The survey was conducted by IRIM Research Institute based on its expertise in telephone data collection (CATI), and the survey consisted of 2 phases.



The survey covers many topics about the socio-economic impact and other current global impacts of COVID-19 on households in Timor-Leste.

COVID-19 Socio-economic impact on households in Timor-Leste



CONCLUSION

Since 2020, IRIM Research Institute has been establishing a Call Center, a remote data collection center based on Bitrix 24 software. Till today, the call center has a database of more than 64,000 non-duplicated numbers and has successfully collected more than 20,000 surveys for 15 projects commissioned by international development organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and universities. BITRIX 24 differs from other online data collection platforms in that it works in combination with cloud-based customer service management (CRM), process, and human resource management automation (business automation) platforms.

IRIM Research Institute has been developing a Call Center, a remote data collection center based on Bitrix 24 software, since 2020. The call center

currently has a database of over 64,000 non-duplicated numbers and has collected over 20,000 surveys for 15 projects commissioned by international development organizations, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and universities. BITRIX 24 is unique among online data collection platforms in that it integrates with cloud-based customer service management (CRM), process, and human resource management automation (business automation) platforms.

In 2022-2023, we organized our data collection work by training and empowering experts from the Statistics Department of East Timor in the CATI (computer-assisted telephone interview) methodology, as well as selecting and localizing the infrastructure solution for telephone survey technology based on our knowledge and experience.



2021

May

2023

March

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE

Three districts of Ulaanbaatar:
Chingeltei district (khoros 14, and 18);
Songinokhairkhan (khoros 9, 9.10, 11,
28, and 40), and Sukhbaatar (khoros
13, and 14)



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The *Ulaanbaatar Urban Services and Ger Areas Development Investment Program* - funded by the ADB, the European Investment Bank, and the Mayor's Office of Ulaanbaatar – is implemented in three phases over nine years. Within this framework, social and engineering infrastructure works will be completed and 6 sub-centers will be established.

The program will aid in the decentralization of services in Ulaanbaatar, transforming it from a single-center city to a multi-centralized one; that provides equal access to social and urban services. The Program will also improve living conditions in Ulaanbaatar and create a network of sub-centers in Ulaanbaatar's ger districts. The four outputs of the Program include:

- Roads and urban services expanded within the targeted sub-centers, and connectivity between sub-centers is improved.
- Economic and public services in sub-centers improved.
- Service providers become more efficient.
- Institutions and capacity for urban development, program management, and service delivery are strengthened.

Concerning these objectives, the ADB, IRIM, Bodhi Financial Advisory Services LLC (BFAS), and

Women Entrepreneur Mentors Club (WEMC) jointly implemented research and technical assistance to empower MSMEs and service providers; to support the social welfare and economic situations of the Bayankhoshuu and Selbe sub-centers.

PROJECT DESIGN

The overall three goals of the Survey were as follows:

1. Conduct a needs assessment of the MSMEs.
2. Build knowledge and capacity of the MSMEs in the selected khoros.
3. Provide equipment support to the MSMEs in the selected khoros.

Goal 1: Assessment to identify business service needs of the MSMEs: The survey was conducted to identify the MSMEs' needs of the sub-centers, and the results were used to determine future project activities. Within this goal, using quantitative and qualitative research methods, a total of 276 MSMEs were interviewed, from the Bayankhoshuu and Selbe sub-centers. In-depth interviews were conducted with 16 representatives from the government, international projects, banking, and financial institutions that worked with MSMEs.

MSME's study design



Based on the results of the needs assessment, necessary training, and support were provided, while the baseline was used to measure the final results of the project. The final evaluation of the project was organized at the end of 2022, and the beneficiaries were informed about the changes and the results of the project, which were compared with the main indicators of the basic research.

Goal 2: Improved knowledge and capacity of the MSMEs. Based on the results of the needs assessment survey, a total of 84 pieces of training, four practice-sharing activities, and three training trainers were planned and implemented. Also, mentors worked in the two sub-centers daily during the training, to provide advice and information. To improve the training results, pre- and post-training evaluations were regularly organized, improvements were made, and the results were evaluated.

Goal 3: Increased equipment for the MSMEs. In the needs assessment survey, the equipment needs of the MSMEs were studied. As a result, equipment support was organized. Studying the existing business situations of the MSMEs allowed the development of selection criteria for the Evaluation Committee to use to choose MSMEs to receive the equipment, and three levels of monitoring of use were organized.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The following results and changes were achieved within the scope of the project objectives.

Output 1. A large proportion (71.7%) of MSMEs were interested in training or consulting services, needed to further develop their business (80% have not attended any business or financial training). MSMEs also reported their first and foremost need was to purchase equipment, and this was followed by the expansion of sales channels, networking, access to loans, and improvement of financial accounting. Only 7.2% of MSMEs had purchased new equipment in the previous two years.

The business management competency of participants was assessed using six criteria: Compared to the results of the baseline study, financial management had improved by 10.5%, human resource management by 13.3%, management and organization by 4.4%, sales

channels by 1.9% and the use of information technology by 0.9%.

Output 2. In total, the project team conducted 105 capacity-building training sessions (compared to 95 planned activities) for 1,357 (with some double counting) among which 81% were female. And, 84 capacity-building pieces of training were organized as planned, with 1,004 entrepreneurs participating. Another 44 entrepreneurs were trained as trainers, in three different topics. Special 1:1 and group mentoring sessions were provided to 229 businesses during the project. Participants rated their level of knowledge pre-training at *'slightly higher'* on average. Post-training participants rated their knowledge as *'good.'* Compared to the pre-training, the average rating increased from 2.58 to 4.06 and the post-training knowledge rating indicated that the activity was effectively implemented.

Project trainees reported that their desire and interest to expand their business and network had increased. Furthermore, improvements were also identified in self-confidence, communication, self-awareness, stress management, marketing, product promotion, general business acumen, financial planning, documentation (such as how to write projects and strategic planning), knowledge of business-related laws and regulations (such as taxes and social security), knowledge and skills of financial income and expenses recording, and management. Most (72%) of the participants had applied what they learned from the training to their business.

Output 3. Based on the Feasibility Study conducted by the consultancy team, 77 beneficiaries were selected in four rounds of selection and received 341 items of equipment or equivalent (valued at MNT 446 million) in support of their operations.

Over 95% of beneficiaries rated the entire selection process as objective and fair. Positive changes to their businesses were reported by the beneficiaries of equipment support, with 62.7% reporting increased sales, 59.7% an increase in production, 53.7% saving of time, 52.2% had increased their workforce, and 52.6% intended to improve quality and introduce new products. Beneficiaries of the equipment grant plan used equipment to expand their business to the next level; in line with the project's primary goal.

Stakeholders from the government side expressed their desire and need for the business incubator sub-center to continue to organize regular activities aimed at MSME. The sub-center had limited capacity and budget to support businesses in training, network expansion, and organizing trade fairs. In particular, they wished to have a permanent

mentor to provide advice and information about similar international and government projects. They also wanted the centers to organize relevant training, offer intermediary services for workplaces (raw materials and equipment), and promote communication and cooperation between MSMEs through formal and informal activities.



MIDTERM PERFORMANCE EVALUATION OF BUSINESS EXCELLENCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY (BEST) PROGRAM



CLIENT

- Development Solution NGO.

PROJECT OBJECTS

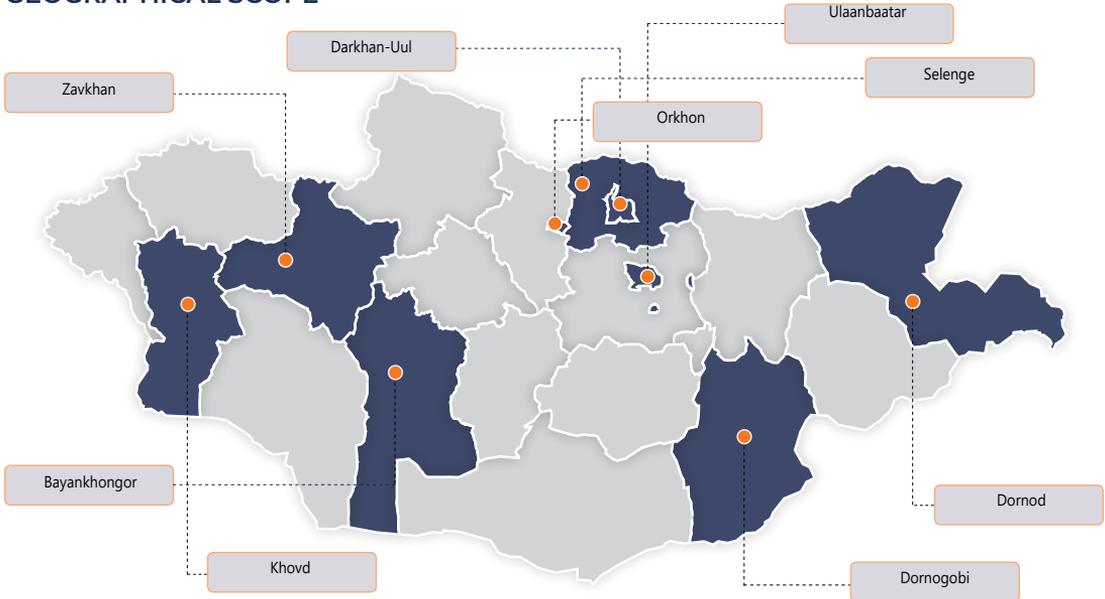
Evaluation of the planned and unplanned results of the BEST program implemented by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) during the previous two years and proposals and recommendations for inclusion in the program need to be further included in the program.



2022 October

2023 February

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Business Excellence for Sustainability and Transparency (BEST) program is funded by USAID and is being implemented for five consecutive years (2019-2024). The program aims to increase access to financing for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and to enable good economic governance; by diversifying and growing Mongolia's economy and improving accountability and transparency. The program's design and implementation cover five core goals:

1. Increase SMEs' access to finance.
2. Improve corporate governance among SMEs.
3. Improve capacity within Mongolian institutions.
4. Maintain the analytical agenda for strategic learning.
5. Provide small grants to disadvantaged - but otherwise well-qualified - SMEs.

The midterm performance evaluation will assess the results of these objectives, and provide suggestions and recommendations for further attention by the program implementers.

PROJECT DESIGN

Besides applying OECD-DAC's six evaluation criteria, the evaluation was also aligned with the BEST program's results framework and performance monitoring plan (PMP). The latter defined all activities, and formulated the program's theory of change, along with outcomes, outputs, and inclusion-responsive indicators.

For the evaluation, an extensive desk review was carried out on all program-related documents. A total of 400 program participants were surveyed using a statistically representative sampling composition. Five focus group discussions were organized (covering a total of 33 program participants), along with five case studies, and 16 key actors were interviewed.

FINDINGS

The BEST program is the largest and most comprehensive program - aimed at empowering MSMBs – being implemented in Mongolia. They play an important role in their dialogue with policymakers; advocating for policy-oriented changes, and engaging with the implementing agencies of the Government of Mongolia and other local public institutions to foster more favorable economic and market environments for the development of SMEs at both local and national levels.

The comprehensive planning and implementation of the program were important in contributing to the development of SzMEs in local areas. This was accomplished by:

- increasing access to finance for MSMEs,
- improving governance,
- improving cooperation between the public and private sectors,

- influencing evidence-based decision-making, and
- including grants for innovative proposals and initiatives (that cannot be covered by financial resources)

The results of the evaluation showed that by improving financial education and management of businesses (and officially registering them), there were many opportunities to participate in loans and projects implemented by the government; participate in tenders, and cooperate.

In addition to empowering entrepreneurs, the BEST program has become a bridge to improve, strengthen, and regularize cooperation between the MSMEs sector decision-makers, NGOs, and the private sector. This will have a positive effect on building trust in the future operation of the program and achieving the planned results. The program will continue until 2024, and the midterm evaluation has provided the information necessary for the successful completion of the project.

EVALUATION OF THE MOBILE HEALTH SERVICES IN RURAL MONGOLIA



CLIENT

- Spirit of America NGO

PROJECT OBJECTS

There were two main objectives of the Project:

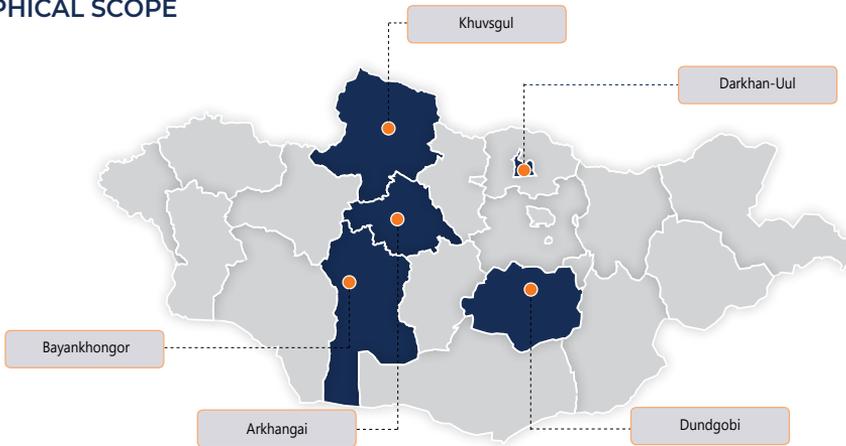
- Measure the Mongolian rural population's sentiments towards the USA.
- Measure the effectiveness of the media campaign plan conducted by Viral.



2022 October

2023 March

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

Mobile public health services have been established to prevent non-communicable diseases, improve health services, promote early screening, and strengthen the capacity of health professionals. In 2009, under the Millennium Development Goals Fund project new vehicles (Toyota Landcruiser 76) were provided for each of the 21 provinces in Mongolia; which enabled the delivery and outreach of all intended actions.

Nine vehicles are still running; fulfilling all health service-related purposes (especially in situations like the COVID-19 outbreak) for surveillance and vaccination campaigns. Four vehicles were out

of use due to certain technical issues but could be utilized if properly serviced and repaired. As a result, The Ministry of Health and the Spirit of America NGO jointly implemented the repair and operation of the four vehicles.

PROJECT DESIGN

To implement the two main objectives of the project, the following methodology was used to collect data remotely.

FINDINGS

The final report was incomplete at the time of preparing the Annual Report.

Main theme	Data Source	Method
1.1 Mongolian rural population’s sentiments toward the USA		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General sentiment. Awareness of other programs/interventions. 	Rural populations in five target areas.	Questionnaire (phone survey, 600)
1.2 Media consumption		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Information source. Preferred channels. 	Rural populations in five target areas.	Questionnaire (phone survey, 600)
1.3 Relevance, effectiveness, and impact (initial)		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key performance indicators Internal/external factors that affect the intervention (Landcruiser repair and campaign) Expected and unexpected results Stories/cases related to the benefits of the project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project reports. Local policies and health statistics. Stakeholders. Beneficiaries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document review. Key informant interviews, 10

GENDER & DISABILITY

EVALUATION OF THE GEOLOGY, MINING, PETROLEUM, AND HEAVY INDUSTRY SECTOR GENDER RESPONSIVE POLICY



FUNDER

- Mongolia: Improving Mineral Resource Management through Institutional Change (MERIT) Project

CLIENT

- Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry (MMHI)

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this evaluation was to evaluate the implementation of the action plan and provide recommendations to address gaps and strengthen the implementation of the Gender Responsive Policy (approved by Order No. A/114 of the Minister of Mining and Heavy Industry, in May 2019). To achieve this, the following tasks were specified in the Teams of Reference, for completion during the evaluation:

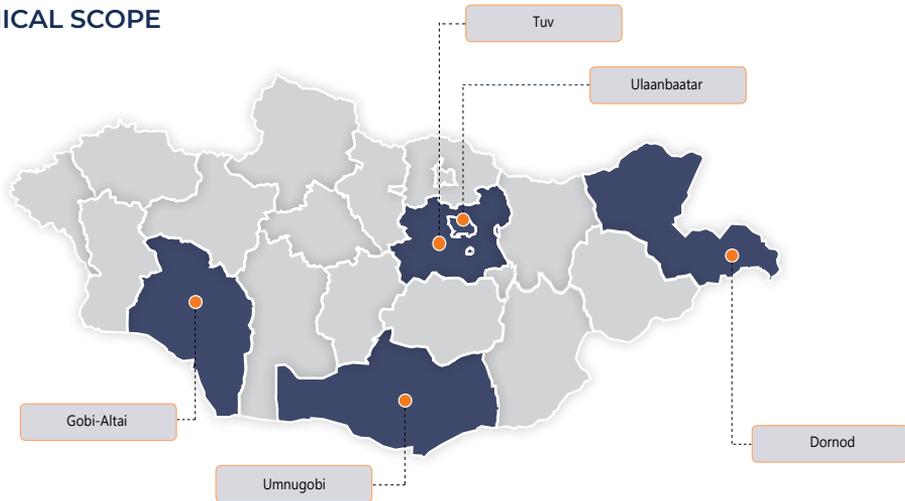
1. Review and analyze monitoring and evaluation reports, and documents on the subject of the implementation of the Gender-responsive policy and its action plan.
2. Conduct interviews with staff of the Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry (MMHI) and the National Committee on Gender Equality (NCGE), gender experts, and staff from related organizations (regarding the content of gender policy and the action plan, as well as the qualitative impact of its implementation).
3. Capture and analyze the implementation of the sector's gender policy (using indicators in the action plan) throughout ministries, agencies, enterprises, and non-governmental organizations, and prepare conclusions.
4. Discuss assessment findings and recommendations, with sector and gender experts.
5. Develop a report - that reflects the assessment, conclusions, and recommendations - for implementation of the gender policy in the sector.



2022 November

2023 March

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry (MMHI) is implementing the *Geology, Mining, Petroleum, and Heavy Industry Sector Gender Responsive Policy* in two phases (2019-2022, and 2023-2026), and the first phase is completed in 2022. The policy is being implemented in collaboration with the National Committee on Gender Equality (NCGE), sector agencies, investors, donors, local organizations, non-governmental organizations, and the industry.

This evaluation work is an important task to indicate how the activities of ensuring gender equality in the sector are implemented under the leadership and initiative of the Ministry of Education and Culture in the gender policy of the sector.

PROJECT DESIGN

The *Geology, Mining, Petroleum, and Heavy Industry Sector Gender Responsive Policy* - approved by the Minister for Mining and Heavy Industry Order No.A/114 (May 2019) has four objectives, eight sets of expected outcomes, and 29 planned activities. The evaluation was based on actual examples of enterprises and localities - where the sector's gender-responsive policy was being implemented - to provide recommendations for improvement.

This external evaluation was carried out under the *“Common procedure for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of policy documents and the activities of administrative organizations”* approved by Resolution No. 206 of 2020 of the Government of Mongolia. Evaluation data collection was carried out by a combination of 4 types of quantitative and qualitative research methods, including literature review, individual interviews, cases, and questionnaires.

FINDINGS, RELEVANCE

The evaluation was done within the framework of the following: i) Relevance/coherence, ii) Effectiveness/efficiency, iii) Feasibility, and iv) Sustainability.

Relevance/coherence: The policy is still relevant. The policy is consistent with:

- Mongolia’s mid- and long-term development policies,
- The Cross-sectoral Strategic Plan for Gender Equality (2022-2031),

and recently adopted revised laws.

Since the launching of the policy and the active introduction of activities organized in 2019, there has been no regular re-introduction of the policy with stakeholders. Information about,

and understanding of the policy, is weak among stakeholders (other than within the ministry and its agencies). There is a lack of understanding and support at the management level within the MMHI.

Leadership is insufficient. There is no evidence of gender mainstreaming in the sector, funds are not budgeted, and the gender-related budget is cut to make 'savings'. A situation that is not limited to one sector; it is observed in other sectors as well. There are no cross-sector cooperation or initiatives.

Effectiveness/efficiency: Gender-sensitive and accurate statistics for the sector are still lacking, and a reporting methodology has not been developed and distributed. An ender-sensitive budgeting methodology is not available, and reporting is inadequate. There is no feedback and evaluation of the results of the organized training that was fully dependent on funding by international organizations and donor-sponsored projects and programs, as such training was ad hoc, not ongoing. No information is available on the evaluation of the training of trainers. Given the limited number of trainers prepared annually, there is a high probability that the expected policy results will not be achieved in the future.

There is no monitoring report on the implementation of the policy, which makes it impossible to verify the activity completion reports submitted during this period. There is no information that the implementation of the policy has been carried out by thousands of enterprises operating in the sector. The NCGE, the MMHI, and the enterprises themselves criticized their inability to reach local communities.

Feasibility: The eight sets of expected outcomes that follow four policy objectives are all lacking specified performance measures and are not measurable or non-quantifiable. Although criteria are defined for each of the 29 activities, however, the objectives, baseline levels, and targets are not defined or planned. This limits the ability to evaluate policy outcomes and measure changes and incremental progress.

The activities implemented under the program are primarily funded by international organizations. No data is available on funding from local resources. No examples of actual budget allocation and implementation were found.

Inadequate implementation of the provision that the Gender Sub-committee will be responsible for reporting progress and challenges in the

implementation of the policy to the public through the website to increase transparency and accountability.

Sustainability: Although the legislative environment for further sustainable implementation of the sector policy is in place, the sector's management leadership required to implement the policy is weak; the implementation is fully dependent on funding by donor projects, and sufficient funding is not ensured within their mandate. The lack of cross-sector collaboration platforms and lack of information exchange negatively affect sustainability. Furthermore, it is not clear whether the policy has been implemented in public or private enterprises, and the lack of information makes the sustainable implementation of the policy uncertain.

Recommendations to intensify policy implementation: Several proposals and initiatives have been implemented at the operational level aimed at implementing the policy, however, these proposals and initiatives have not yet delivered results, whereas some planned outcomes/results are not measurable. Therefore, to improve the practicality/feasibility of the policy document, it is recommended to refine the goals and expected outcomes to make them measurable. It is also recommended to define existing baselines and targets and set measurable criteria. In doing so, it is advisable to ensure coherence with other legal documents such as the Law on Development Policy Planning and Its Management, the Law on Promotion of Gender Equality, VISION-2050, and the Cross-sectoral Strategic Plan for Gender Equality. It is recommended that a working group consisting of the MMHI, the NCGE, and researchers (experts) be formed to improve the policy document, make it practical/feasible for implementation, and refine the outcomes to make them measurable.

It is recommended that the proposed Working group when making amendments to the policy develops recommendations for a separate group of stakeholders, namely recommendations targeting public servants and recommendations at the industry level. It is also recommended to continue implementing good initiatives and practices during the next Phase.

Since there is no stakeholder engagement plan, responsibility matrix, and benefits mapping related to the implementation of the policy, the proposed working group is recommended to clarify the roles of all stakeholders.



STUDY ON IDENTIFYING THE MAIN FACTORS AFFECTING INFRINGEMENT AND CRIMES IN SUKHBAATAR PROVINCE



CLIENT

- Citizens' Representative Khural of Sukhbaatar province

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

The objectives were to identify the five most common crimes in Sukhbaatar province (and their underlying causes), assess the results of activities organized to prevent the identified crimes and develop recommendations to reduce the crimes. The research team set the following goals:

1. Identify the underlying causes of crimes and offenses in Sukhbaatar province.
2. Select the top five crimes, and identify the factors affecting their levels of incidence.
3. Assess the effectiveness of crime prevention activities.



2021

December

2022

March

GEOGRAPHICAL SCOPE



PROJECT BACKGROUND

The *Long-term Development Goals (2020-2028)* of Sukhbaatar province were adopted by the Citizens' Representative Khural on 4 December 2019. The fourth policy directive of the document is to mature the existing governance (to be more impactful, accessible, responsible, participative, open, and democratic) and create a peaceful and safe living environment for citizens. Objective 10.1 is to create a safe environment for living (through improving legal education for all), prevent crimes and offenses, and maintain social order. The results of the study will be fundamental to reducing crimes and offenses in Sukhbaatar province, and to planning and implementing evidence-based prevention activities more effectively.

PROJECT DESIGN

The term '*crime*' can refer to the broad concept and minor infractions, and the five most common were examined in Sukhbaatar province. A non-experimental, cross-sectional research design was used; collecting and summarizing quantitative and qualitative data at a single point in time.

Non-experimental. There is no control group in the study, and the citizens of Sukhbaatar province, along with the Chair and members of the Citizens' Representative Khural members were identified as the sampling frame.

Cross-sectional. The study collected data from different individuals at a single point in time, and

it was not to be repeated.

Explorative. The study aimed to identify the causes, trends, and patterns of the selected crimes, and identify their causal relationships.

FINDINGS

Analysis of the data revealed the following five groups of crimes; with the highest levels in Sukhbaatar province during the previous four years (2018-2021):

- Offenses against life.
- Offenses against health and safety.
- Sexual offenses.
- Offenses against the property.
- Traffic offenses (personal safety, vehicle safety, and traffic regulations).

Overall, in Sukhbaatar province domestic crimes were five times more common than crimes committed in public places. Domestic crimes had increased in the previous two years, suggesting that pandemic restrictions had a significant impact. Lockdowns during the pandemic could play a significant role in the rise of domestic crimes.

Crimes against life. Crimes against life in Sukhbaatar aimag made up 1.6% of the crimes committed at the national level and 24.3% of the crimes committed at the provincial level. Besides inflation, level of education, and unemployment, alcoholism was named the prevailing cause. Settlement areas - urban and rural - made no difference in the incidences of such crimes.

Crimes against health. A majority of the crimes were committed under the influence of drugs and alcohol. Alcoholism is dependent on social factors, including educational level and unemployment. In particular, most victims and perpetrators were young people with secondary education, or lower education. Unemployment and lack of spare time activities, and lack of knowledge and skills in dispute resolutions, were contributing to people harming each other's health. Examples included domestic abuse caused by alcoholism and jealousy.

However, weak sanctions such as low fines and short imprisonment were not identified as effective to reduce such crimes. In rural areas, domestic abuse was hidden. It is necessary to undertake basic measures to reduce the effects of factors such as poor education, unemployment, and low income, that affect domestic abuse. Education, employment, and income can be critical to reducing the impact of crimes and measures should address these factors.

Crimes related to sex. This type of crime is on the rise in Sukhbaatar province, and the victims were mostly children under 18 years of age. Underlying factors included a lack of parental supervision and the lack of awareness and practices to protect children from such crimes. Sex-related crimes were common in sub-districts and perpetuated by young people. The level of education and gender ratio were also contributing factors, as young women are more likely to be encouraged to pursue higher education in cities while the young men are left herding livestock. This results in the ratio of young men being lower than young women in the countryside. Most of the cases were committed within the circle of close acquaintances, so there was little chance of detection; the perpetrator attempt to negotiate and influence a court decision. Sexual harassment was more likely to involve school and health care providers when the victims become pregnant or suffered sexually-transmitted diseases. Otherwise, there was little reporting. Thus, it is important to provide knowledge and information to high-risk groups and improve their awareness to avoid becoming victims.

Crimes and offenses against property. According to information provided by the Police Department of Sukhbaatar province, cattle theft, and burglary tend to be prevalent in rural areas. The study results showed that people paid little attention to the integrity of their property and safety, and weak investigation of such crimes was contributing to the high incidence. These crimes were often committed by outsiders, and perpetrators tended to be young people. Also, it was common for perpetrators to take advantage of the victim's lack of power to take care of their property, their poverty, and their weakness, to violate their property rights. Apart from unemployment and poverty, poor investigation and weak law enforcement were contributing factors.

Crimes and offenses against traffic safety, vehicle safety, and traffic regulations. Despite the lack of traffic lights and signs, the main causes of crimes and offenses committed in recent years included: driving while intoxicated, driving without having a license, and without wearing seat belts; and crimes were often committed by minors. The fact that offenders usually received a minor charge, was warned, and given only a small fine, could result in more serious damage to human life, health, and property.

Improving awareness and increasing employment in Sukhbaatar province were seen to be effective to reduce these crimes.

OTHER PROJECTS

THE USE OF SOCIAL SCIENCE INFORMATION IN CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PROJECTS

The training was commissioned by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia, and conducted by joint initiative of the WSCC, IRIM, International Programs, U.S. Forest Service (USFS), International Crane Foundation, and the Freshwater Resource and Nature Conservation Center of Mongolia. The purpose was to provide knowledge and understanding to natural science specialists, on the topics of international experience of social research, opportunities for cooperation, practical experience, theoretical bases, needs, and instrument development.

The training included representatives of the Provincial Environmental Protection Agencies, River Basin Administrations, Protected Areas Administrations, Departments of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia, and the Water Agency. The results of the training showed that there is a need for a more detailed understanding and practice of social research in the field of natural sciences.

COUNCIL OF DISABLED PEOPLE'S ASSOCIATIONS OF ARKHANGAI RESEARCH METHOD TRAINING

In connection with Arkhangai province's plan to make 2023 a year for people with disabilities, preparations are underway to develop a "Sub-program to Support the Development of People with Disabilities" in the Erdenebulgan soum. Within the framework of this initiative, training on basic research knowledge and practical skills is being organized for the Provincial Council of Disabled People's Associations (from 7 to 13 April 2022) to plan for the needs and priorities of the sub-program, based on research.

PUBLIC OPINION POLL: RESIDENTS OF MONGOLIA 2022

The public opinion poll provides an overview of citizens' opinions, participation, and positions on topics such as priority social issues facing the country, democracy, human rights, the electoral system, political parties, and other institutions. The poll was conducted by the International Republican Institute (IRI), in collaboration with IRIM Research Institute under the USAID-funded "Strengthening Women and Youth Engagement in the Electoral and Political Processes in Mongolia" (SWYEEPPM) program. The IRIM was mainly responsible for the data collection and the sample consisted of n=2500 residents of Mongolia aged 18 years and over. Data collection was performed between March to April 2022 through computer-assisted telephone interviews (CATI) at the national level.

The public opinion poll completed in 2022 can be accessed through the following link.

Link: [Public-Opinion-Poll-PUBLIC-MON-20220808.pdf \(iri.org\)](https://www.iri.org/public-opinion-poll-public-mon-20220808.pdf)

HUMAN RIGHTS DUE DILIGENCE ASSESSMENT ON FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC AND ACTION PLAN (2021-2025) FOR WWF MONGOLIA

On the order of the program department of the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Mongolia, a human rights feasibility study (of some of the organization's activities) was completed. The work was undertaken by IRIM and Khan Lex Partners LLP, during October and November 2022.

The assessment was conducted to identify and prioritize, any potential negative human rights impacts and risks to stakeholders while implementing the following:

- WWF-Mongolia strategic plan (2021-2025),
- Amur Heilong Ecoregion Complex,
- WWF Strategic Plan (2021-2026), and Altai Sayan Ecoregion Conservation Strategy (2021-2030).

DEVELOPMENT OF A SHOCK-RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION (SRSP) CAPACITY-BUILDING PACKAGE FOR GOVERNMENT COUNTERPARTS IN MONGOLIA

Within the Development of an SRSP Capacity-Building Package for Government Counterparts in Mongolia project commissioned by UNICEF and EPRI, IRIM conducted the data collection including a total of 58 relevant experts from local departments and donor organizations, to identify knowledge, attitudes, and practices of social protection in response to shocks, and collected and delivered information on the need for further capacity building in this area.

The data collection was collected between August 2022 and December 2022, and based on the results, the project implementers will develop a training package to increase the general capacity of civil servants working at the national and local levels to respond to shocks and implement capacity-building activities.

MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE MONGOLIAN VEGETABLES PROJECT

IRIM completed the midterm review of the Mongolian vegetables project' between August and September 2022. The Project is funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and implemented by the Mongolian Farmers Association for Rural Development (MFARD), the Mongolian Women Farmers Association (MWFA), and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations (UN).

The evaluation team defined the results of the target indicators for the Project as:

- the amount of income earned by vegetable farmers from farming, and the level of household income,
- consumers' satisfaction regarding the price and quality of domestically produced vegetables,
- the results of policies and measures being implemented by the government in support of the vegetable sector, and comparisons with the result of the baseline survey.

In the midterm review, 300 vegetable farmers (working in the provinces of Darkhan-Uul, Orkhon, Selenge Tuv, and Uvs; within eight particular districts) were involved. As a result of the Project, their average income from vegetables and crops increased by 13.5%.

