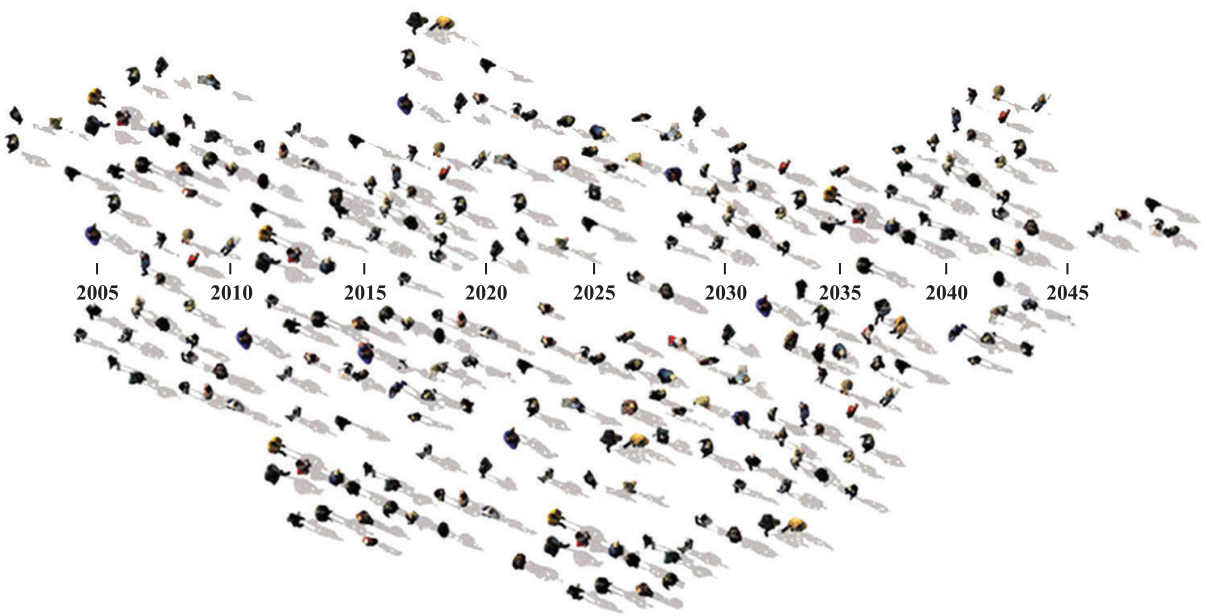


ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024



Independence

Quality

Impact

Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM)



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IRIM
INDEPENDENT
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE OF
AUSTRALIA

Chapter 1

IMPACT
IRIM IN 2023

- A message from our President and CEO
- About us
- Services we provide
- IRIM in numbers
- Highlights of 2023

A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO



Ambassador Extraordinary
and Plenipotentiary
IRIM President
Bekhbat Khasbazar

A stylized black ink signature of Bekhbat Khasbazar.



Executive Director
Tselmegsaikhan Lkhagva

A stylized black ink signature of Tselmegsaikhan Lkhagva.

Dear friends and colleagues,

As we stand on the cusp of a transformative decade, I am proud to share with you our vision for the future. By 2030, IRIM will stand as a **distinguished hub of governance and sustainability**, making substantial contributions to our country and region's development. Our **new strategy for 2024-2030** is centered on leveraging our strengths and seizing external opportunities. We will maintain our core activities such as social research and impact evaluation, with a heightened focus on addressing the **urgent challenges of climate change**.

At IRIM, we identify ourselves with **ORANGE**, symbolizing energy, knowledge, and optimism, and **BLUE**, representing independence, professionalism, and transparency. Today, we add **GREEN** to our identity, signifying our commitment to nature, love, and sustainability.

The urgency of our mission is clear. Mongolia has seen a 2.5-degree increase in average air temperature over the last 70 years, with a rising frequency of natural disasters. The ongoing climate crisis, coupled with the lessons from COVID-19, underscores the imperative of circularity, resource-friendliness, and sustainable practices.

Intergenerational equity is not just a moral imperative but a strategic necessity. Our actions today shape the world for future generations. We must ensure fair resource distribution, protect the environment, and promote sustainable practices for a harmonious global future.

The recent CoP 28 agreement sets a bold path towards a swift transition from fossil fuels, emphasizing social dialogue and inclusivity. Mongolia is leading by example, aligning with SDGs, adopting green taxonomies, and spearheading national movements towards sustainable development goals.

Our collaborations and research in Climate Change, Circular Economy, GEDSI, and Social Wellbeing are catalyzing change. In late 2023, we launched our **Community of Practice program in Climate change**, deepening our commitment to sustainable development in Mongolia. This initiative fosters a collaborative platform where experts and researchers share knowledge, foster mutual growth, and collectively contribute to Mongolia's **climate-resilient development**.

As part of our dedication to sustainability, IRIM actively adopts **green office actions**. We promote recycling, calculate greenhouse gas emissions from events, encourage eco-friendly procurement, and implement measures to reduce energy consumption, thus reducing our carbon footprint and fostering a culture of sustainability within our organization.

As we navigate post-pandemic challenges, IRIM remains steadfast in our commitment to society. Our principles of **Independence, Quality, and Impact** continue to guide us as we advocate for Mongolia's development.

Thank you for your support on this incredible journey towards a sustainable future.

4 April 2024

ABOUT US

The Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) was established in 2008 by a team of four individuals comprising university professors and students, united by a shared vision of promoting **independent** research in Mongolia and promoting evidence-based decision-making and **high-quality** information within the government and beyond. Over the years, our dedication to delivering tangible **value** to our clients has driven us to provide innovative research methodologies, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices. Through a steadfast focus on corporate governance, we have earned a reputation for excellence in development research, M&E, and consulting services; positioning IRIM as a leader in its field.

IRIM expanded its scope into the fields of marketing and innovation research; subsequently establishing 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.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

RESEARCH: Through research, we aim to reach diverse social groups and bring their voices to the decision-making level. We work to support projects and programs, with the goal of enhancing the impact of research, and about 50% of all our projects are research-oriented.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION: Monitoring and evaluation are two of our most significant and important services. Unlike others', IRIM's M&E projects are implemented from an independent and external perspective. They are evidence-based, and seek to provide reliable and professional assessments. M&E account for more than 30% of all our projects.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND CONSULTING SERVICES: Our consulting services encompass a broad spectrum of activities, from empowering individuals and organizations, to engaging at the policy level (to influence international development programs and government decision-makers). Over 10% of all projects are consultancies.

TRAINING: Based on our activities, knowledge, and experience, we provide training services tailored at supporting and improving the operations of customers' and clients' organizations. 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. Training and capacity-building projects account for more than 10% of our services.



To be a knowledge hub and driver of a social development change.

VISION

MISSION

To be a knowledge hub, delivering professional, independent products and services tailored to meet customer needs; fostering a continuously improving process, leading to sustainable development.

OUR VALUES

INDEPENDENCE

Ensuring our activities remain free from any influence of religion or politics is paramount. To uphold this commitment, we maintain transparency in all our operations and undergo regular external audits.



QUALITY

To maintain the excellence of our products and services, we adhere strictly to our organization's quality policy, aligned with the ISO 9001:2015 standards.

We consistently implement this policy and actively pursue measures for improvement.



IMPACT

Our primary focus is on contributing to addressing our country's most pressing challenges and fostering positive impacts in every endeavor we undertake.



ISO QUALITY POLICY

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

IRIM IN NUMBERS

TOTAL
312
PROJECTS



2008 APRIL

2024 APRIL



225,205
Respondent



110
Clients



161
Partners

By sector

107
Governance

38
Inclusive economy and decent work

60
Climate change and sustainability

147
Development

By service

111
Monitoring and evaluation

153
Research

28
Project management

20
Training

GEOGRAPHICAL EXPERIENCE

Number of implemented projects

CENTRAL ASIA

- 2 | Afghanistan
- 2 | Kazakhstan
- 2 | Kyrgyzstan
- 1 | Pakistan
- 1 | Sri-Lanka
- 2 | Tajikistan
- 1 | Turkmenistan
- 1 | Uzbekistan

MONGOLIA

- 47 | Arkhangai
- 42 | Bayan-Ulgii
- 55 | Bayankhongor
- 31 | Bulgan
- 50 | Gobi-Altai
- 30 | Gobisumber
- 55 | Darkhan-Uul
- 53 | Dornod
- 45 | Dornogobi
- 51 | Zavkhan
- 42 | Orkhon
- 66 | Umnugobi
- 54 | Uvurkhangai
- 49 | Uvs
- 38 | Sukhbaatar
- 54 | Selenge
- 47 | Tuv
- 68 | Khovd
- 60 | Khuvsgul
- 49 | Khentii
- 208 | Ulaanbaatar

SOUTH-EAST ASIA

- 1 | Eriyan City in China
- 1 | Timor-Leste
- 1 | Bangladesh

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS



INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS



ACADEMIA



NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS



PRIVATE SECTOR ORGANIZATIONS



HIGHLIGHTS OF 2023

IRIM'S NEW STRATEGY 2024-2030 APPROVED

In a strategic move to bolster its operations and align with evolving development demands, IRIM has officially approved its new strategy for 2024-2030. This strategy underscores four primary objectives aimed at enhancing the impact of services, promoting diversity in human resources, adopting technological innovations in services, and ensuring good governance within the organization. Consequently, we aim to contribute to the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* through four objectives of our comprehensive strategy.

IRIM STRATEGY 2030



MAXIMIZING IMPACT

The organization aims to elevate its consultancy services, tailoring them to meet the distinct needs of clients, and focusing on maximizing its impact.



ADOPTING TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS IN SERVICES

In a bid to stay at the forefront of technological advancements, the strategy places significant emphasis on incorporating cutting-edge technologies into products and services offered by IRIM. This move not only ensures relevance, efficiency, and competitiveness but also paves the way for innovation-driven growth in Mongolia.



PROMOTING DIVERSIFICATION AND CONTINUOUS LEARNING OF OUR HUMAN RESOURCES

Focus on human resources development takes center stage, with plans laid out to establish a diverse, stable, and continuously evolving workforce, fostering a culture of learning and adaptability.



ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE WITHIN THE ORGANIZATION

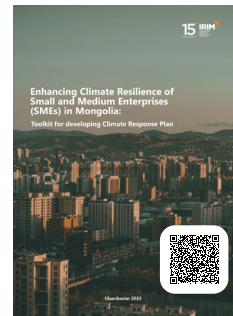
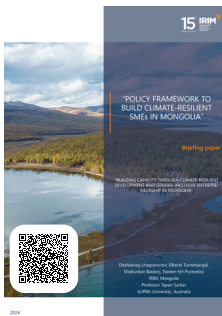
Equally vital is the commitment to organizational good governance, aimed at ensuring transparency, accountability, ethical conduct, and sustainable (green) practices across all levels of operation.

Our strategy for 2024-2030 is not just a roadmap for internal operations; it is a commitment to advancing regional and national sustainable development.

ELEVEN OF OUR RESEARCHERS PARTICIPATED IN A FIVE-WEEK FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM AT GRIFFITH UNIVERSITY, AUSTRALIA

In recent years, global focus has increasingly turned toward climate change and the pursuit of resilient and sustainable development. Our organization is committed to contributing to this goal through our professional research and consulting services.

In 2023, eleven of our researchers took part in the Australian Awards Fellowship, studying at Griffith University for five weeks to enhance their expertise in climate-resilient development. The program centered around the theme of *'Climate Change Resilient and Gender Equality in Small and Medium Enterprises.'* During this time, our team collaborated with researchers and professors of Griffith University and the University of Southern Queensland to develop three policy briefs and a toolkit aimed at helping small and medium enterprises (SMEs) respond to climate change.



Click on the image of each article to learn more.

At the conclusion of the program, IRIM hosted a conference that facilitated active discussions on various facets of resilient development. We also presented the research outcomes from the program. Furthermore, we initiated a *'Community of Practice'* involving professional researchers to further contribute to the creation of climate-resilient and sustainable development.

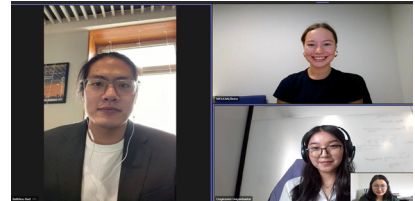


AUSTRALIAN VOLUNTEER PROGRAM IN 2023



IRIM has been successfully cooperating with the 'Australian Volunteer Program' since 2011 and has hosted many volunteers. As part of our long-term collaboration, 11 researchers participated an event that aimed to exchange experiences with Australian Volunteers living in Brisbane, Australia (in September 2023).

This year, we are collaborating with our eighth international volunteer; Eloise McClean from the Australian Volunteer Program. She is our third remote volunteer since the pandemic, and currently on a six-month assignment until 15 July 2024. During her volunteer period, she will aim to strength IRIM's capacity for project development in climate change and sustainability, and to improve IRIM's external network by establishing relations with a new international partner organization.



IRIM EMPHASIZES CLIMATE-RESILIENT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ITS ANNUAL RECEPTION IN 2023

As is traditional, IRIM organized its 'Annual Reception 2023' in November, under the auspices of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Dr. Bekhbat Khasbazar, the President of IRIM. The reception, centered around the theme of Climate Resilient Development, featured a collaborative keynote speech on '*Enhancing Climate-Resilient SMEs in Mongolia*', presented jointly by researchers from IRIM and Griffith University in Australia.' A highlight of the event was the launch of IRIM's new initiative on 'Community of Practice'. As the first step of this initiative, the **Toolkit for developing a 'Climate Response Plan' for SMEs in Mongolia** was presented and handed over to the guests. The reception facilitated a dynamic discussion and dialogue, engaging a total of 56 external guests and representatives, including honored ambassadors, international and government organization representatives, and consultants. The participants exchanged perspectives and shared important ideas during the event. For IRIM, Annual Reception not only mobilizes a diverse range of development partners, fosters collaborative relationships, and serves as a hub for knowledge dissemination, but also actively contributes to the country's sustainable development. This is achieved through proactive research and analysis, guiding initiatives to address the complex challenges in society.



REVALIDATED BY ACCREDITATION AUDITING OF ISO 9001:2015 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, resulting in IRIM being awarded international certification in August 2022. This was followed by receiving an audit certificate in May 2023. IRIM has been implementing 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.

IRIM ENGAGES IN 7th CAREC FORUM FOCUSED ON 'DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT'

The CAREC Think Tank Development Forum is organized annually under the CAREC Think Tank Network (CTTN). Each year, the Forum brings together leading experts from Central Asian regional think tanks, multilateral development partners, governments, and the private sector. The purpose is to discuss the region's pressing issues, foster dialogue, exchange experiences, and share knowledge; to offer multifaceted perspectives in addressing these challenges while upholding a tradition of providing innovative solutions. In 2023, the 7th Forum was held in Urumqi, China under the theme *'Adopting digital technology to promote environmentally friendly and sustainable economic growth,'* with IRIM participating as a member organization.

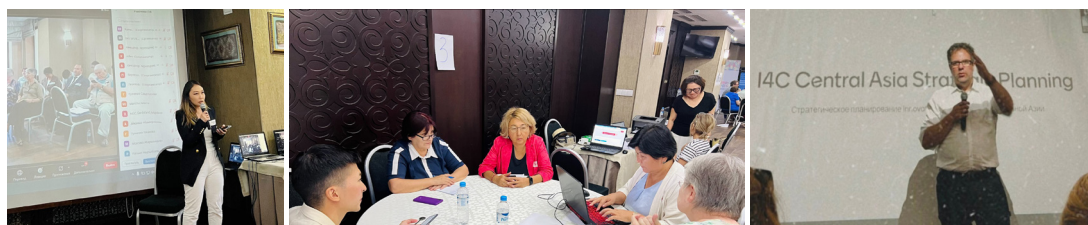
The forum discussed the role of digital technology in ensuring sustainable economic growth, the readiness for electronic technology transition in the Central Asian region, investment in digital infrastructure, fostering a favorable business environment, the development of e-commerce and digital finance, challenges and opportunities in the labor market, digital governance, and CAREC startup ecosystem.



PARTICIPATED IN THE INNOVATION FOR CHANGE (I4C) CENTRAL ASIAN HUB STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING IN BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN

IRIM has been cooperating with Innovation for Change (I4C) since 2018. Within this, IRIM’s consultants Batsugar Tsedendamba and Minjirmaa Namjinbaatar, and researcher Odontuya Sukhbaatar, participated in the I4C Strategic Planning Meeting in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan (during July 24 to 28, 2023). There they presented the results, experiences, and impacts of the ‘Virtual Marathon’ and ‘Action Research Innovation Lab’ projects; implemented in cooperation with I4C from 2020-2021.

In the remaining days of the meeting, IRIM representatives provided inputs to produce a new Strategic Plan for the I4C Central Asia hub for the timeframe 2023-2026. The existing Strategic Plan 2019-2023 was developed in 2019 and updated in 2020 during the Covid-19 pandemic.



EMPOWERING SOCIAL WELL-BEING: PROGRESS REPORT OF THE THREE-YEAR JOINT RESEARCH ON PROACTIVE RESILIENCE TO NATURAL DISASTERS, IN MONGOLIA, THE PHILIPPINES, AND VIETNAM

In 2022, IRIM embarked on a three-year joint research program. This initiative - part of the Early Career Researchers Program under the Core-to-Core Program, Asia-Africa Science Platforms, Japan Society For the Promotion of Science (JSPS) - aims to empower young researchers in Asia by enhancing their research capabilities and fostering international collaborations. The program’s objectives align closely with IRIM’s commitment to enhancing social well-being through research and innovation.

IRIM’s collaboration with researchers from the Philippines and Vietnam has advanced the project, comparing social capital and proactive resilience in landlocked and island countries. The research focuses on understanding how social capital contributes to climate resilience, and shedding light on the factors that influence community resilience before and after natural disasters. By comparing the experiences of communities in Mongolia, the Philippines, and Vietnam, the researchers aim to identify best practices and strategies that can be implemented to enhance community resilience in the face of natural disasters.





IRIM's young researchers, Elberel Tumenjargal, Jargalmaa Ganzorig, and Bilguunzaya Ganzorig along with consultants Bold Tsevegdorj and Byambasuren Yadmaa, have been at the forefront of the data collection efforts in Mongolia. The team has made significant progress in collecting data and gaining insights into the factors that contribute to community resilience. As the joint research program enters its second year, IRIM remains committed to advancing the understanding of proactive resilience to natural disasters. The team is optimistic about the outcomes of the research and believes that the findings will have

significant implications for social well-being and disaster resilience in Mongolia. IRIM's participation in the program has provided its young researchers with invaluable opportunities to expand their networks and deepen their understanding of social well-being and disaster resilience.

MONGOLIAN EVALUATION NETWORK (MEN)'S ENGAGEMENT UNDERSCORES MONGOLIA'S COMMITMENT TO ADVANCING EVALUATION PRACTICES IN ASIA PACIFIC REGION

The Asia Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA) hosted the '4th APEA Conference and EvalVisionAsia 2023' in December in Manila, Philippines. Focused on the 'Future of Evaluation: Leveraging Partnerships for Equitable Development in Asia Pacific,' the event delved into the Asia Pacific Regional Strategy developed in 2020 by APEA and its partners. Representing the Mongolian Evaluation Network - a voluntary organization for professional evaluation (VOPE) - IRIM's Executive Director Tselmeagsaikhan Lkhagva, and Senior Researcher Elberel Tumenjargal participated. Elberel Tumenjargal took the stage at the conference, presenting insights into the institutionalization of the national evaluation system in Mongolia. The conference participants highlighted that the APEA 4th Conference had emerged as a pivotal and diverse event, marking significant strides in APEA's development. The Manila Declaration was officially signed during the 4th APEA Conference in Manila; a significant event on Parliament Day - December 7, 2023 - at the Congress of the Philippines. IRIM has been a member since 2016, and previous CEOs Dolgion A. and Batsugar Ts. and senior researcher Elberel T. were elected board members (in 2018-2019, 2020-2021, and 2022-2023 respectively). More recently, the current CEO Tselmeagsaikhan L. was selected as a board member in 2024.



IRIM'S REPRESENTATIVES ATTENDED THE 20th WORLD CONGRESS OF SOCIOLOGY IN MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

The 20th ISA World Congress of Sociology was held in Melbourne, Australia, June 25 to July 1, 2023. The Congress focused on how sociologists worldwide can (and do) contribute to understanding of the resurgent authoritarianism, and analyze the new entanglements of religions, politics, and economies. As a member of the Council of the National Associations in the International Sociological Association, IRIM attended the 20th ISA World Congress. IRIM's Executive Director L. Tselmejsaikhan, Board Member A. Dolgion, and Consultant Z. Manlaibaatar, presented papers titled '*Mongolian Imagination of Subjective Wellbeing*,' '*An Assessment of Climate Change Vulnerabilities: The Case of Mongolia*,' and '*Assessment of Subjective Well-Being during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Timor-Leste: Evidence from a Nationwide Household Survey*,' respectively.



THE SEVENTH CONFERENCE OF INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM FOR SOCIAL WELL-BEING STUDIES WAS HELD

The Seventh Conference of International Consortium for Social Well-being studies was held in Tokyo, Japan, in February 2023. The main theme of the academic conference was '*Resilience and Well-Being in East and Southeast Asia*'. Scholars and researchers from eight Asian countries - including Mongolia - participated, and held discussions about the well-being issues of each country. IRIM's CEO Tselmejsaikhan Lkhagva attended the conference and presented the study design of the newly starting photovoice research project under JSPS Core-to-Core project, '*Building Proactive Resilience in Asian Developing Countries Making Good Use of Social Capital*' in 2022-2024. The research project aims to elucidate the mechanisms by which social capital leads to the building of proactive resilience. That is, the capacity to prepare in anticipation of and promptly respond to unknown crises of the modern world. Based on empirical evidence from Southeast and East Asian developing countries, this research will serve to advance academic discussions on the concepts and realities of social capital and resilience.



IRIM ATTENDED TRAINING ON 'THE ART AND SCIENCE OF FUNDRAISING' IN NEW YORK CITY

IRIM's CEO Tselmegsaikhan Lkhagva attended training on *'The Art and Science of Fundraising'* in New York City in May, 2023. This invitation-only program provided university and research institution partners from around the world with a unique opportunity to learn about best practices in fundraising, and to meet with some of their most successful American colleagues. The training consisted of four days of interactive discussions with the *'best of the best'* of New York City's fundraising world. Participants were introduced to in-depth knowledge of the fundraising landscape in the US, practical tools specific to fundraising at universities and research institutions, and creative solutions to broaden their funding. The study visit was organized by the King Baudouin Foundation United States (KBFUS) and Give2Asia. The Independent Research Institute of Mongolia has been a member of the Give2Asia Friends Fund network since 2018.



PROMOTING DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS: IRIM'S CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESEARCH INITIATIVES

IRIM works actively in the fields of democracy, civic space, and civil rights. To increase the effectiveness of activities in the fields of democracy and human rights (to make them known internationally, and to establish cooperation) IRIM became a member of the **Asia Democracy Research Network** in 2020 and continues to actively cooperate with them. IRIM's Board member Ms. Dolgion A. attended the 13th Regional Workshop of the Asia Democracy Research Network (ADRN) program organized by the East Asia Institute (EAI) in March, 2023, in Seoul, Republic of Korea. During this workshop, Dolgion presented the interim outcome of horizontal accountability research started in 2022 and exchanged feedback and recommendations. Also, her co-authored latest research paper *'History and Trends of Direct Democracy in Mongolia'* was published.



Chapter 2

IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS IN 2023

- IRIM's Flagship Projects
- Governance
- Inclusive Economy and Decent Work
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Climate Change and Sustainability
- Development

IRIM'S FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION'S DIGITAL TRANSPARENCY INDEX 2023



Click on the image to access the dashboard.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) is rapidly transforming the world, reshaping public, private, and business sectors alike. Advancements in ICT make information transparent, accessible, and available in a timely manner, regardless of space or geographic location.

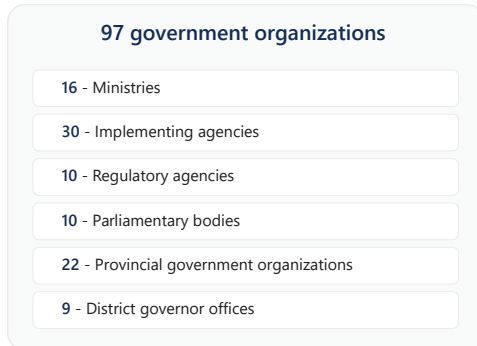
In recent years, the Government of Mongolia (GoM) has intensified its efforts in advancing e-governance, establishing implementation structures, and adopting major policies and measures. In 2022, IRIM updated the Digital Transparency Index (DTI) methodology following the adoption of the *Public Information Transparency Law 2022*. 2023 marked IRIM's twelfth year of releasing the DTI, putting efforts into improvements of the digital transparency of government organizations of Mongolia.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Through the 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.

SCOPE



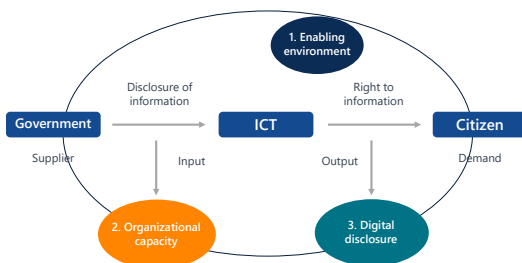
Based on the results of a total of 97 government organizations, the digital transparency index is calculated.

PROJECT DESIGN

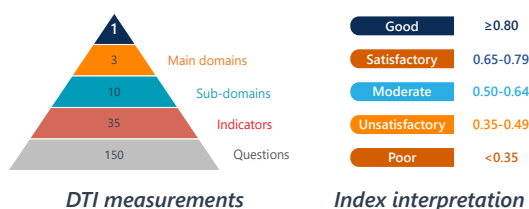
Assessing digital transparency of government organization is not merely about assessing the implementation of the law, it is more about assessing (i) enabling environment of transparency, (ii) organizational capacity, and (iii) digital disclosure.

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

Conceptual Framework of the Digital Transparency Index



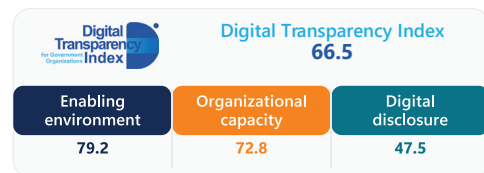
The DTI generates a single consolidated score from three domains (which have several sub-domains within). The score shows the national and organizational situations by levels. The DTI is comprised of 35 indicators, within which are 150 questions.



The DTI is based on a comparative analysis of each organization, to identify its strengths and weaknesses. It is proposed to serve as a tool for organizations to learn from each other, to identify the capabilities and challenges of digital information dissemination, and to define policies and strategies in this area.

KEY FINDINGS

In 2023, the level of transparency across 97 government organizations, spanning six types of state and local government, reached **65.2% nationwide**, marking a milestone as it attained the level of **'satisfactory'** for the first time. While there was only a slight increase - from 63.1% in 2022 to 65.2% - in 2023 in terms of overall percentage, the transparency level showed an upgrade across categories.



The **sub-index for the enabling environment** was assessed as **'satisfactory'** (79.2%), marking a slight increase of 0.4% compared to 2022 (78.8%). Positive progress was observed across all five subgroups related to the policy environment. With the establishment of the Ministry of Digital Development and Communication (MDDC) under the GoM, a distinct policy environment has emerged, catalyzing the digital transformation of government institutions. This concerted effort has resulted in the transparent and swift dissemination of information to the public.

The **sub-index for organizational capacity** saw a significant increase to the **'satisfactory'** level (72.8%), rising by 6.6% from the previous year's (66.2% in 2022) result. This improvement had a notable impact on the overall index, elevating it from **'unsatisfactory'** to **'satisfactory'**.

The **sub-index for digital disclosure of information** was rated as **'unsatisfactory'** (47.5%), showing a 2% increase compared to previous year (45.5% in 2022) but indicating limited progress. Despite implementation of the Law on Public Information, digital transparency has not improved as expected due to unsatisfactory procedures and orders within organizations.

Digital transparency of the government organizations, by types, 2022 and 2023 (%)

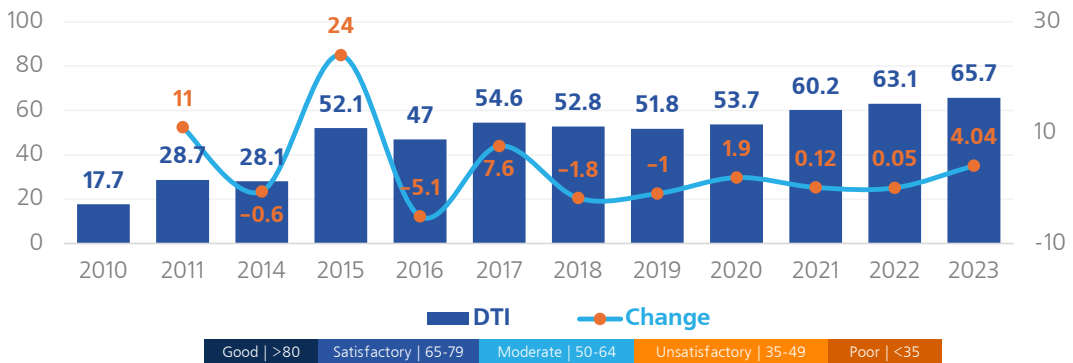
#	Types of organization	2023 results, %	2022 results, %	Difference
1	Ministries	70.7%	66.6%	4.1%
2	Implementing organizations	66.8%	62.5%	4.3%
3	Regulatory organizations	63.1%	61.2%	2.9%
4	Provincial government organization	66.1%	61.4%	4.7%
5	District government organizations	63.8%	62.7%	1.1%
6	Parliamentary organization	65.7%	64.5%	1.2%
General average		65.2%	63.1%	2.1%

The ministry, implementing agency, and provincial governor sectors demonstrated the most substantial growth compared to the previous year. In terms of ministries, the Ministry of Road and Transport Development (MRTD) secured the top rank among all organizations with a score of 81%, followed by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture, and Light Industry (MFALI) at 77%, and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET) at 76%.

It can be concluded that most organizations saw disclosure of information on their website as merely the implementation of the *Glass Account Law*; and 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, user-friendliness of the websites needs more attention.

Overall, besides, ensuring 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.



Changes in digital transparency of the government organizations, %, by year

WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE AFFECTED BY NATURAL DISASTERS CAUSED BY CLIMATE CHANGE 2022-2023



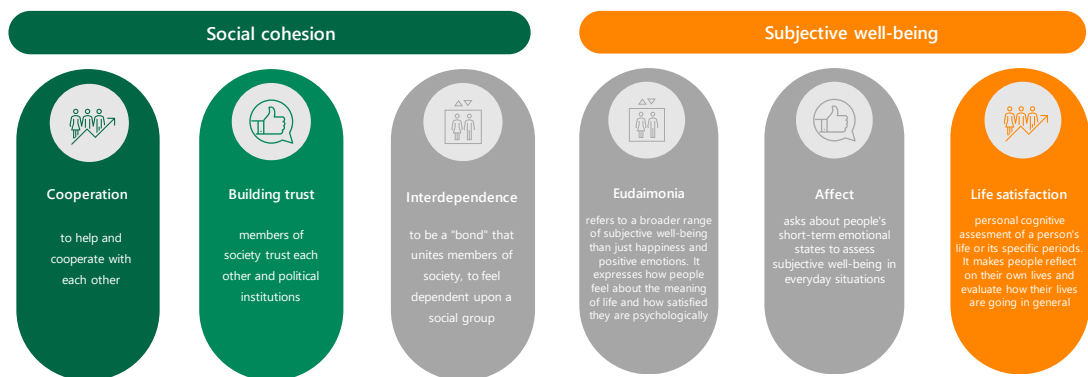
Source: Voice of America

Click on the image to access the report.

PROJECT INTRODUCTION

IRIM completed its flagship survey, the *Social Well-being Survey of Mongolia*, for the sixth year in a row. The main objective of the survey was to improve understanding of the factors influencing

social development and the well-being of society and to provide valuable evidence to support decision-making based on data. For this purpose, researchers used the following two concepts as the basis for measuring social well-being in Mongolia.



The survey team selects different social groups each year to analyze their social well-being. Previously, the research was conducted as follows:

- Data collection for the Social Well-being Survey of Mongolia conducted during 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 conceptual survey The Social Well-being Survey of Elderly People.
- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, the conceptual survey The Social Well-being of Health Sector Employees was carried out.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The survey team focused on the impact of climate change on social well-being, which was the emerging global concern of 2022-2023; aiming to clarify **how Mongolians’ knowledge, attitudes, habits, and resilience to disasters and risks affected the overall well-being of the population.**

SURVEY DESIGN

Well-being is a compound index measured using the Cantril Ladder (self-rating scale). It asks how people rate their well-being on a scale from the best possible (10 or 7) to the worst possible (0). Fundamental questions about social well-being were measured using *Cantril’s scale* with 11 options, with values ranging from 0 to 10 and the results were averaged.

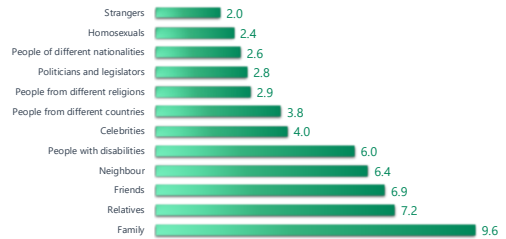
The survey included approximately 2,800 respondents from all districts of Ulaanbaatar, 13 provinces, and 26 sub-districts. The results of the survey highlight comparisons of groups affected or unaffected by climate-induced natural disasters and their social well-being.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

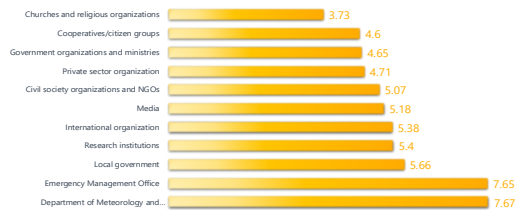
The survey findings provide valuable insights into three critical dimensions: trust, cooperation, and life satisfaction.

- Trust was notably higher among the disaster-affected group, highlighting the importance of interpersonal connections and community resilience.
- However, there remained a concerning lack of trust in institutions such as the government, posing challenges to effective disaster response and climate change adaptation efforts.

The social trust of respondents in social groups (Mean value).



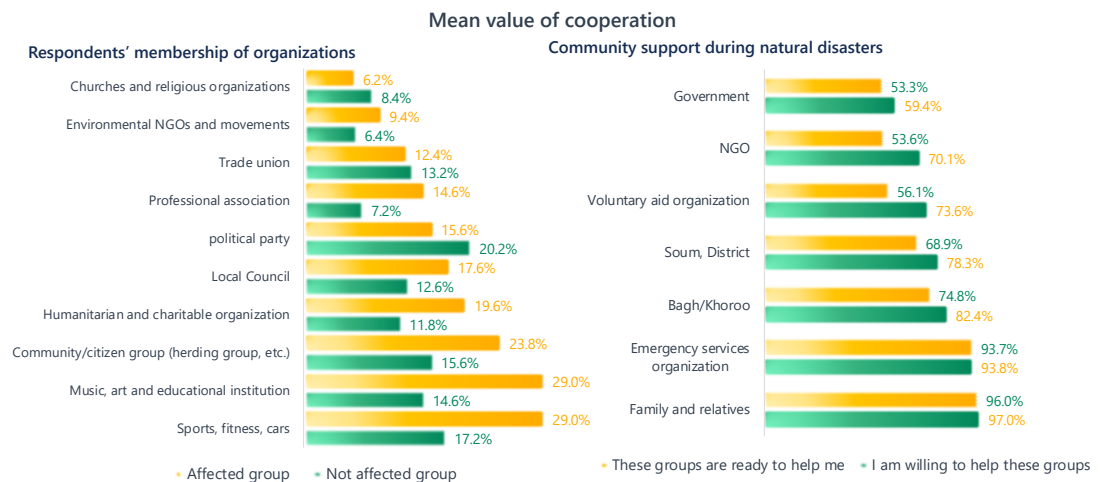
The social trust of respondents in social institutions (Mean value).



- On the cooperation front, there was a strong inclination among respondents to participate in climate change mitigation and disaster preparedness activities, demonstrating a collective willingness to address pressing environmental challenges.

Life satisfaction, assessed using the 'Cantril Ladder' approach, revealed varying levels of contentment among respondents, influenced in part by their experiences with disasters.

These findings underscore the complex interplay between environmental stressors and individual well-being, suggesting the need for holistic approaches to community resilience building. Moving forward, targeted interventions aimed at fostering trust, enhancing community cooperation, and promoting overall life satisfaction will be essential for building resilient communities in disaster-prone regions. By addressing these critical dimensions, stakeholders can work towards creating more adaptive and resilient communities capable of facing future challenges with confidence and unity.



GOVERNANCE

Since its establishment in 2008, IRIM has focused on the governance sector, and projects related to this field alone account for more than 20% of all projects. Currently, more than 70 long- and short-term governance projects have been implemented. Among them, examples are focusing on research activities aimed at strengthening **data-driven, e-governance digital transformation, and open governance initiatives**. The Institute is constantly developing research methods in governance sector-related topics such as:



MEMBERSHIP



Increasing the access to information and transparency of public services.

During 2010-2011, to increase the transparency of public services and the access to information, IRIM developed the first version of the methodology for evaluating the e-transparency of government organizations. Since 2014, the Institute has been independently evaluating the e-transparency of government organizations. The methodology for measuring the transparency of government websites was revised, and developed into the **Digital Transparency Index**, which can be used internationally, and has been successfully implemented in Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan. IRIM independently conducts this index every year within the framework of social responsibility, and aims to make comparisons over many years.

Since 2008, IRIM has carried out research activities aimed at strengthening the budget transparency of the local government agencies. In 2014, IRIM influenced adoption of the **Law of Mongolia on Glass Account**, and for the last five years, has been participating in the empowerment of the parties; implementing the **Soum Local Development Fund Annual Performance Assessment** at the national level, and contributing to the development of local governance.

In the area of governance, IRIM has been a member of the **Innovation for Change (I4C)** international network since 2018. It aims to protect the rights of civil society organizations across the Central Asian region. Additionally, IRIM maintains robust partnership with governmental and international organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Asian Foundation (TAF), and the Independent Authority Against Corruption (IAAC).

Determining the quality and availability of public services and the satisfaction of citizens.

Another major activity in the field of governance is research evaluating the performance of government policies and initiatives of the public. Also preparing conclusion and recommendations for policy makers aimed at increasing the quality and accessibility of government services.

Since 2012, IRIM has carried out the Citizens' Satisfaction Survey on Public Policy and Service at the sector level in cooperation with ministries and agencies, and (since 2019, at the national level) in cooperation with the Cabinet Secretariat of Government of Mongolia. Also, the **Baseline and outcome monitoring surveys for the One-Stop-Shop project (2013-2014)** was carried out; an important task of collecting basic information to improve the provision of public services to citizens from One-Stop-Shop.

Since 2010, IRIM has been working as a member of the **Affiliated Network for Social Accountability** in East Asia and the Pacific (Foundation) within the framework of the goal of improving access and the quality of public services and improving social responsibility. Also, IRIM is working with the government and international organizations - such as the World Bank (WB), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), and the Cabinet Secretariat of the Government of Mongolia - in projects and research within this topic.

Promoting democracy, human rights, and civic participation.

IRIM has been working in the field of democracy, civil space, and civil rights. Among the outstanding projects implemented in this field, in 2018, with the support of the World Society Foundation (WSF), ***an International Conference on Democracy in the 21st Century: Challenges and Ways Forward*** was successfully organized in Mongolia, which included 31 speakers from 14 countries and about 100 participants. As a result of this conference, a publication titled ***Democratic Struggles In Challenging Times: Insights From Mongolia And Around The World*** Publication was prepared. It was distributed to the public (in English and Mongolian) and made available to researchers in many countries. Also, on the issues of democracy, the electoral system and citizens' participation, public opinion surveys have been organized every year; and the results (presented to policymakers, academics, and citizens) and have become popular topics of discussion.

Since 2020, IRIM has been a member of the **Asian Democracy Research Network (ADRN)**, working to share the results of research in the field of democracy internationally and networking. Also, the Institute is cooperating with international organizations - such as the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), and the International Republican Institute (IRI) - in research and projects on this topic.

Since the issue of ensuring the participation and representation of diverse social groups is important in the field of governance, IRIM adheres to the **GEDSI approach (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion)**. This seeks to include equal representation of gender, disabilities, and vulnerable groups in all of IRIM's research and projects in this field. In 2024, political elections (an important way to ensure citizens' participation in governance) will be held in more than 60 countries around the world, and half of the world's population will participate in the elections. In this regard, IRIM aims to ensure the equal representation (of those groups at risk of being left out) in all stages of research projects in the field of governance; in order to contribute to the equal empowerment of the right to vote and be elected by all social groups.

UPHOLDING RIGHTS TO THE FREEDOM OF ASSEMBLY IN MONGOLIA

2023.12-2024.04



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Constitution of Mongolia stipulates that citizens of Mongolia shall have freedom of thought, opinion, expression, speech, press, and peaceful assembly; and procedures for organizing demonstrations and other assemblies are determined by law. Although the Law on Procedures for Demonstrations and Assembly has been amended five times since its first approval in 1994, human rights violations, crimes, and infringement still occur during demonstrations and assembly.

During 2020 and 2022, there were 710 demonstrations and assemblies held in Mongolia. After observing large-scale assemblies in Ulaanbaatar from 2020 to 2022, the National Human Rights Commission of Mongolia (NHRCM) found that the assurance of people's freedom to peacefully demonstrate and assemble in Mongolia is precarious, with a potential risk of shrinking space for such activities. So, the NHRCM, the National Legal Institute, and researchers, evaluated the status of the freedom of peaceful assembly in Mongolia and the enforcement of the Law on the Procedure for Demonstrations and Assembly. They identified specific concerns and formulated recommendations based on their assessment. For instance, Monkhsaikhan (2018) pinpointed three instances restricting citizens' freedom of assembly:

- spontaneous assemblies are not permitted

- permits for assemblies granted by political officials, and
- police not adhering to legal procedures while forcibly dispersing unregistered assemblies.

Hence, it is crucial to equip citizens with thorough information on preparing for involvement in demonstrations and assemblies. This includes understanding how to safeguard their freedom and safety during and after such events, and addressing conflicts or issues encountered. This support is vital in upholding citizens' right to assemble peacefully.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The prevalence of violations of rights to protest persists due to the inadequate knowledge and information among citizens regarding the protection of their freedom of peaceful assembly. Therefore, the project proposal was developed with the aim of enhancing awareness and knowledge regarding citizens' rights to protest and assemble. Simultaneously, it seeks to bolster the capacity of lawyers in safeguarding these rights, contributing to an improved legal framework for the freedom of peaceful assembly.

Within this framework, IRIM, together with the Legal Information and Research Cooperation Association, is implementing the project Upholding Rights to the Freedom of Assembly in Mongolia with the support of the International

Center for Non-Profit Law (ICNL) Foundation; during December 2023 to April 2024. The project consists of the following two components.

Component 1: Empowering citizens on the Peaceful Assembly

- Conduct a case study on demonstrations and assemblies in Mongolia
- Develop and disseminate guidelines for citizens based on the findings of the case studies

Component 2: Strengthening lawyers to support the freedom of Peaceful Assembly

- Translate “Guidelines for lawyers in support of peaceful assemblies” released by UN Human Rights Council
- Organize the training for 15 lawyers

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Component 1: Empowering citizens on Peaceful Assembly

The research team selected 10 demonstrations and assemblies organized throughout Mongolia and carried out a case study. The following three general criteria were taken into account when selecting the demonstrations and assemblies (Table shown below).

Based on the experience and lessons learned from the case study, the team released a guide for the public, which contains the risks and recommendations to be considered during the process of organizing demonstrations and assemblies. Recommendations included in the manual are developed within three main sections:

- Before assembly: Preparation stage.
- During assembly stage.
- After assembly stage.

It should be noted that the recommendations in the handbook are not suitable for all situations and that each case (demonstration, assembly, etc.) is different, with its own circumstances and unique characteristics.

Component 2: Strengthening lawyers to support the freedom of Peaceful Assembly

Translated Guidelines for lawyers in support of peaceful assemblies (developed by UN Human Rights Council) into Mongolian. This universal guideline provides a set of key principles on the role of lawyers in upholding the rights to freedom of assembly and association, and a non-exhaustive list of practical recommendations for lawyers.

Using the translated Guidelines for lawyers in support of peaceful assemblies, the project team organized a one-day training among 15 lawyers, which focused on enhancing the overall capacity of lawyers to actively contribute to a safeguard freedom during peaceful assemblies.

Develop recommendations for Law on Procedures for Demonstrations and Assembly and decision makers: At the end of the training, the lawyers aimed to formulate practical suggestions for enhancing the Law on Procedures for Demonstrations and Gatherings. These proposals were derived from the experiences and insights of the participants, aimed at addressing issues and enhancing the legal framework for protecting citizens’ rights during demonstrations.

List of case studies

v	Names of demonstration and/or assembly	Period	Criteria	
			Quantification of protest participation	Location
1	Strikes and sit-ins by doctors and medical staff demanding increase in salaries	2021	Large	Ulaanbaatar
2	Demonstrations and assemblies on ‘NoDoubleStandard, NoNaadam, NoWar’ themes	2021-2022	Large	Ulaanbaatar
3	Demonstration, during which the Prime Minister resigned	2021	Large	Ulaanbaatar
4	‘Save Mongolia’	2022	Small	Ulaanbaatar
5	Revolt on the First of July	2008	Large	Ulaanbaatar
6	Local demonstration	2022	Large	Local area
7	Demonstration of ‘Fire Nation Union’ and ‘United Movement of Mongolian Rivers and Lakes’	2012-2013	Medium	Ulaanbaatar
8	‘Let’s exercise the right to unionize and labor rights’ demonstration	2016	Large	Ulaanbaatar
9	Demonstration of Mongolians living in Japan held outside the Shogakukan publishing company	2018	Small	Foreign country
10	‘Let’s live well in Mongolia, do your job’ demonstration	2022	Large	Ulaanbaatar

NATIONAL POLL SURVEY IN MONGOLIA 2024

2024.02-2024.05



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Public Opinion Survey - 2024 is part of an ongoing series of surveys aimed at gathering citizens' opinions on democracy, human rights, and political, economic, and social conditions. The International Republican Institute (IRI), is dedicated to promoting global democracy, freedom, community-based development, and the rule of law. IRIM collaborated on the public opinion surveys conducted by IRI in 2020, 2021, and 2022.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of the project was to investigate (i) citizens' satisfaction with government, (ii) accountability of elected officials, (iii) political inclusivity of women, youth and people with disabilities, and (iv) general performance of the government. Within this framework, the research team is working on the following:

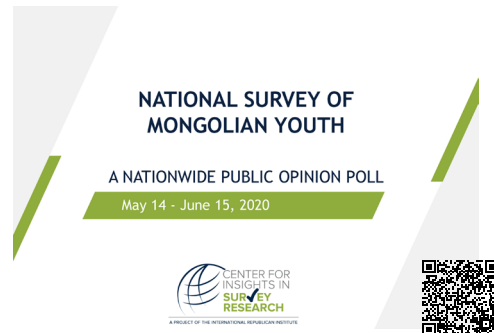
- The Public Opinion Survey - 2024 is part of an ongoing series of surveys aimed at gathering citizens' opinions on democracy, human rights, and political, economic, and social conditions. The International Republican Institute (IRI), is dedicated to promoting global democracy, freedom, community-based development, and the rule of law. IRIM collaborated on the public opinion surveys conducted by IRI in 2020, 2021, and 2022.
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The study employs a 'cross-sectional' design, spanning a period of time. The national-level survey aims to assess the current state of government policies, activities, and politics through public opinion.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

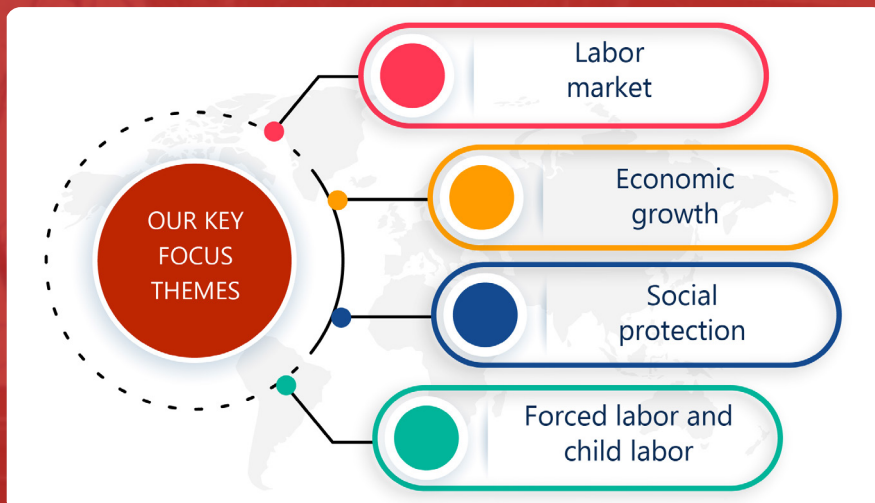
The project will run until May 2024 and is currently in the data collection phase. Additionally, IRIM is only providing consulting services during the data collection stage and will not be involved in the development of results and reports.

Findings of the previous poll surveys:



INCLUSIVE ECONOMY AND DECENT WORK

IRIM is working in the field of economy and the labor market, to contribute to Sustainable Development Goal 8 - Decent work and economic growth - through its research and evaluation work. The Institute has gained many years of knowledge and experience in this field, and it accounts for about 50% of all IRIM's projects. In particular, research projects on **small and medium-sized enterprises, labor market trends and dynamics, labor productivity, and decent work** are prominent. Moreover, IRIM is focusing on strengthening the capacity of research and consulting services in the field of Care Economy, which has become one of the major concepts in the labor economy in recent years.



MEMBERSHIP



In 2022, IRIM joined the **Central Asia Institute for Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC)**, an institute dedicated to promoting development through cooperation; leading to accelerated economic growth and poverty reduction. Since then, IRIM has been participating in the Central Asian Think Tanks Development Forum (organized annually by CAREC) and consistently enhances its understanding of regional economic cooperation; sharing Mongolia's contextual experience as a research organization.

Labor market. Studies on employment policy, legal frameworks, and labor market dynamics, including demand, supply, and stability across various sectors are main areas of IRIM's competence. In this regard, IRIM is conducting research and consulting services focused on **tracking the employment status of graduates from higher, technical, and vocational education institutions to assess whether their skills align with the requirements of employers.**

Economic growth. In addition to conducting research in priority areas of the economy such as mining and agriculture, IRIM also undertakes research aimed at enhancing the contribution of **micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSME), as well as herders and farmers,** to the economy. These projects encompass identifying opportunities to increase the value chain for products, services, and production processes. In particular, IRIM conducted a ***Small and Medium-sized Enterprises competitiveness survey*** nationwide in 2023, following the methodology of the International Trade Center (ITC) SME competitiveness matrix. The study comprehensively determined the competitiveness of MSMEs and their environment, enabling precise identification of areas for improvement of future needs. Moreover, the survey served as important evidence that will be used in the development of policy solutions to improve the future business environment.

Social protection. Social protection programs directly contribute to sustainable economic growth by enhancing labor productivity and empowering people's ability to secure decent work. In addition to conducting **evaluations on social protection programs and projects,** IRIM has been actively engaged in research and consulting services aimed

at enhancing household livelihoods. This includes **empowering targeted households and fostering decent work opportunities through support for small businesses.** For instance, in 2023, IRIM conducted market research (to support targeted households in initiating their businesses) by using the Graduation Approach, and successfully provided consulting services for developing a business model for these households. Based on this market research and the business models, a total of 1,520 households in Songinokhairkhan, Bayanzurkh, and Chingeltei districts in Ulaanbaatar received equipment support for implementing suitable businesses and were provided with the opportunities to improve their livelihood financed by ADB's ***Second Shock-Responsive Social Protection Project.***

Forced labor and child labor. Forced labor is one of the biggest challenges to creating decent work. This is not only a gross violation of human rights, but also distorts the labor market, artificially increases wages, reduces investment in human resources and skill development, and damages economic growth. In Mongolia, there is a high risk of exposure to forced labor, especially among workers in the informal sectors (including mining, heavy industry, transportation, construction, and services). IRIM has extensive experience in conducting research in area of forced labor as a form of human trafficking. For example, the Institute conducted the ***Baseline assessment into the causes, dynamics, vulnerability, and resilience levels to trafficking in Mongolia*** in 2020, ***Child Protection Compact: Baseline study*** in 2021, and ***A Data Driven Report on Combatting Trafficking in Persons in Mongolia*** in 2022.

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

2022.11-2025.05



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The world is moving towards a new economic model that will create conditions for producing 'reusable' products from the very beginning; emphasizing the efficient and low-waste use of natural resources. At a time when environmental issues are becoming more pressing, businesses are faced with the need and requirement to develop responsible business practices. However, the effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic have had a negative impact on individuals, businesses, countries, etc., at all levels and in all sectors. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) is funding regional knowledge and technical assistance project in China and Mongolia to support the gender-inclusive green business after the COVID-19 pandemic. IRIM, in partnership with the Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association, Development Solutions NGO, and German Adelphi organizations, is delivering consulting services in Mongolia; from November 2022 to May 2025. This initiative spans 3.5 years and encompasses areas including Ulaanbaatar, Khuvsgul, and Arkhangai provinces.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main goal of the consulting service Building the capacity of Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in the direction of circular economy and green business is to support gender equality by strengthening knowledge and capacity about 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.

PROJECT DESIGN

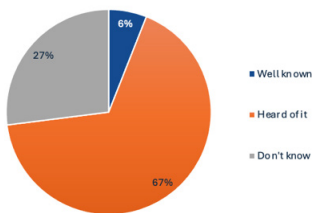
The scope of the consultancy service will include women entrepreneurs operating in the food and packaging in the tourism industry, and support circular economy and green business activities. To achieve this, three activities were planned, to be carried out and implemented in 2023 are summarized below.



1 Comprehensive assessment: A report was prepared after (i) analysing the policy environment and legal documents supporting the circular economy, (ii) conducting a survey of women entrepreneurs in the target sector, (iii) making a comprehensive assessment of the need, readiness, opportunities, difficulties, participation, and (iv) cooperation of parties to introduce circular economy practices. The brief results of the study include, for example, the following.



Understanding and knowledge of the CE



Most of SMEs' have a limited understanding of the circular economy ; **focusing more on waste management.**

Although the survey results indicate a high interest among business owners in integrating circular economy practices into their operations, they often struggle to initiate the process due to a lack of understanding and knowledge. Additionally, the prevalent belief that it demands substantial financial resources and ongoing costs, acts as a barrier to taking progress.

2 Capacity building program: Following the needs assessment results, a program has been developed and implemented targeting Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) operating in the food and packaging sectors within the tourism industry.

This program was aimed at enhancing understanding and knowledge of the circular economy and strengthening capacity.

A total of seven in-person - and two online - training sessions were conducted in the project's focal areas: Ulaanbaatar, Khuvsgul, and Arkhangai provinces. Over 1,300 MSMEs participated in these sessions. Furthermore, mentoring services were extended six times to the entrepreneurs who engaged in the training sessions.

As this annual report is being prepared, the top 15 entrepreneurs who had successfully implemented the circular economy concept into their business activities (setting a benchmark in the tourism industr), are being selected to receive a grant of up to \$10,000 each.

3 Policy discussion: Building upon the results of the the assessment and capacity-building program, preparations are underway to organize policy discussions (during May to October 2024). These discussions aim to facilitate the exchange of information, and experiences regarding the outcomes achieved, at both national and international levels.



SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES COMPETITIVENESS SURVEY

2023.06-2023.11



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Small and medium enterprises (SMEs) play a crucial role in the economic development of developing countries. Consequently, many nations prioritize the development of SMEs, recognizing that their growth significantly contributes to increased employment and poverty reduction. In the context of Mongolia, as of 2021, 66.1% of enterprises were classified as small and medium industries and service providers. These entities represented 5.5% of the GDP, 2.4% of exports, and 9.7% of imports. The National Statistical Office (NSO) has noted that the participation of SMEs in foreign trade has been decreasing year-by-year (NSO, 2021).

In addition to assessing the competitiveness of SMEs at an organizational level, it is imperative to thoroughly analyze the macro-level factors that shape the business environment and influence SME competitiveness. This facilitates a holistic evaluation of SME competitiveness within its broader context, providing a more accurate identification of future optimization needs.

This study sought to assess the competitiveness of SMEs operating in Mongolia, utilizing the SME competitiveness methodology outlined by the International Trade Center (ITC); and subsequently, to analyze and interpret the findings.

PROJECT DESIGN

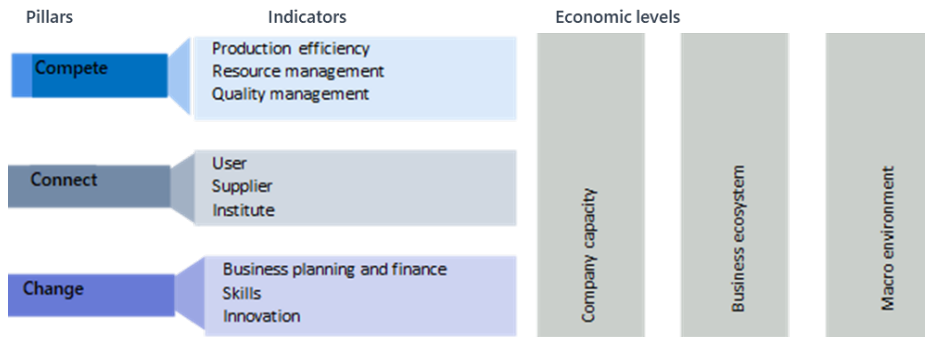
In this survey, the assessment of SME competitiveness was conducted using the ITC's SME Competitiveness Matrix, with corresponding indicators tailored to the specific conditions of SMEs in Mongolia. ITC's SME Competitiveness Matrix is a tool that defines enterprise competitiveness based on three key factors (capacity to compete, capacity to connect, and capacity to change) while considering the involvement of micro, meso, and macroeconomic environments within these factors.

The survey included 703 registered and active SMEs operating in 21 provinces, and nine districts of Ulaanbaatar city. This project was completed in five months, from June to November 2023.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

For the the organizations' capabilities, the overall index was 48.7, showcasing an average score of 49.7 for the capacity to compete, 42.9 for the capacity to connect, and 53.3 for the capacity to change. Notably, the capacity to connect pillar falls below the reference level, trailing behind both the capacity to compete and the capacity to change by approximately 7-10 score. This deficiency is particularly pronounced for micro-enterprises, indicating a need for improvement in capacity to connect at the company level.

SMEs Competitiveness Matrix



Regarding the business ecosystem, the general index was 52.2, with average scores of 56.6 for capacity to compete, 42.9 for capacity to connect, and 57.0 for capacity to change. While the capacity to compete and capacity to change scored above the reference level, the capacity to connect fell below it, suggesting a need to enhance the capacity to connect at the business ecosystem level.

Considering the macro environment, the general index was 57.9, with an average score of 39.2 for capacity to compete, 57.1 for capacity to connect, and 77.4 for capacity to change. The capacity to compete pillar scored below the reference level, while the capacity to change pillar was rated at a strength. Across all three economic levels, the pillar of capacity to change was rated higher than the other two pillars.

The macro environment, often referred to as the national environment, plays a crucial role in establishing the fundamental conditions for the efficient operation of goods and services production factors, and financial markets. Specifically, government policies within any country - concerning the economy and business - should be oriented towards creating a favorable institutional environment at all levels (micro, meso, and macro) facilitating business operations across various sectors.

Average score [0-100]		Index	Capacity to compete	Capacity to connect	Capacity to change
Company capacity	Total	48.7	49.7	42.9	53.3
	Micro	44.1	46.3	38.4	47.5
	Small	52.1	52.6	47.0	56.8
	Medium	58.3	56.8	51.7	66.5
Business ecosystem		52.2	56.6	42.9	57.0
Macro environment		57.9	39.2	57.1	77.4
Reference level: 44.2					
Weakness: ≤ 66.5 score			Strength: ≥ 70.7 score		

MARKET RESEARCH SERVICES FOR GRADUATION PILOT PROGRAM

2022.12-2023.05



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

In 2020, Mongolia had 903,400 poor people, and about 14% of them were just above the poverty line. To enhance social welfare support for the target population, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the Government of Mongolia (GoM) implemented the LOAN-4052 MON: Second Shock Responsive Social Protection Project. The detailed market research of the *Market Research Services for the Graduation Pilot Program* component of the project was completed by IRIM during December 2022 to May 2023.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

In the program, 1,520 households and citizens of Songinokhairkhan, Bayanzurkh and Chingeltei districts of the capital city were randomly selected. The goal of the project included obtaining the necessary products for organizing various impact measurements, such as enhancing social participation among citizens, identifying and nurturing skills, and providing appropriate sustainable livelihood options to households.

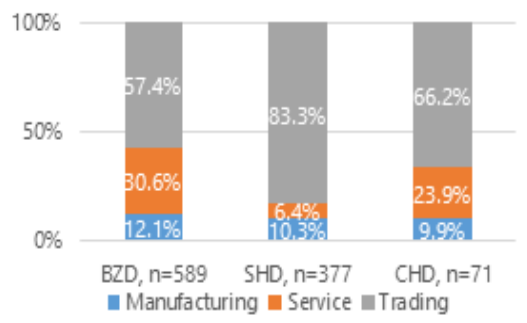
PROJECT DESIGN

As part of the consulting services, the following products were developed according to the market evaluation design of the Market Research Services for Graduation Pilot Program:

- An assessment of the general market conditions was conducted; followed by the compilation of a long list of sustainable livelihoods, and an evaluation of the capabilities of the target group of citizens using the small business assessment methodology.
- Conducted market demand research to determine the extent of market capacity for livelihood options from the long list above.
- Afterwards, a total of 24 livelihood packages were developed in the target districts, based on the results of the research conducted in the aforementioned two stages. In developing these portfolios, the value chain for each activity was identified, and financial analysis was performed
- Tools for the evaluation of readiness for self-employment of the participants (profiling tool) of the program have been developed.

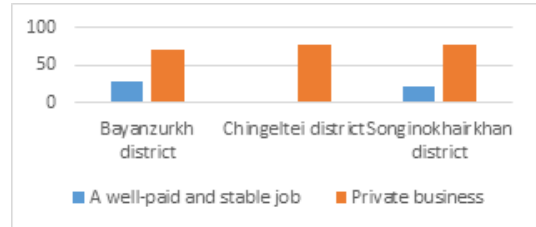
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

According to the research, the market capacity of the three target districts is determined by the fact that most of the enterprises operate in trade, while a few operate in production, and a small number operate in services.



- The percentage of traders among the number of enterprise organizations in Songinokhairkhan is very high.
- The percentage of service providers in the number of enterprise organizations in Bayanzurkh is higher than in the other two districts.
- The share of producers in the total number of enterprise organizations in Chingeltei is lower than in the other two districts.

In order to improve the livelihood of households, the interest of the participants in starting a private business dominated in all districts.



According to the results of the demand survey, the types of sustainable livelihood options that the target households want to engage in were as follows:

Based on the deliverables provided by the market research, the MRCS provided MNT1.5 million worth of equipment and tools to the households, suitable for each household's chosen sustainable livelihood option.

According to the results of the demand survey, the types of sustainable livelihood options that the target households want to engage in were as follows:



Catering
24%



Hairdressing
23%



Clothing shop
20%



Market
11%



Butcher
10%



Home furnishing
10%

CONSULTANCY SERVICE FOR DATA COLLECTION OF BASELINE RESEARCH UNDER SOGE PROJECT

2023.02-2023.03



switchasia



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The **Switch of Green Economy** (SOGE) project aims to align with the nationally defined objectives of the Paris Agreement, striving to achieve a 22.7% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. It is the first project of the SWITCH-Asia program implemented in Mongolia's agriculture-based food, water, and beverage industry.

The project was jointly implemented by People in Need (PIN), Caritas Czech Republic (CCR), Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association (ToC), and Development Solutions NGO. The project is planning to support micro, small, and medium producers (SMEs) and distributors - engaged in the production of food, water, and beverages based on food and agriculture - in the following ways:

- Provide necessary technical assistance to MSMEs and distributors in the food, water, and beverage industry to transition their established models to greener ones, enabling them to access green financing by introducing eco-labeling to the market, and facilitating their transition to a circular economy;
- MSMEs and distributors in the agriculture, food, and beverage industries will be able to

certify their goods and services and obtain eco-labels by acquiring knowledge, skills, and experience in the circular economy, through a green value chain.

- Develop an electronic platform to assist SMEs and distributors in obtaining green certification and eco-labels, and to provide certification services.
- Integrate green certification and eco-labels into existing electronic payment and reward systems.
- Conduct a campaign aimed at promoting green certification and eco-labels to encourage behavioral change.

Within the scope of this project, IRIM conducted baseline data collection utilizing a computer-assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) method, reaching out to a total of 300 micro, small, and medium enterprises, as well as retailers within the agricultural food, water, and beverage production sectors. The aim was to gather insights on the adoption of circular economy principles and eco-labeling practices. The data collection process took place in February 2023 and involved business owners from micro, small, and medium enterprises located in Ulaanbaatar city, as well as in Erdenet and Selenge provinces.

RESEARCH TO DETERMINE THE SCOPE OF SERVICES AND SUPPORT REQUIRED BY INVESTORS

2023.10-2023.12



giz Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

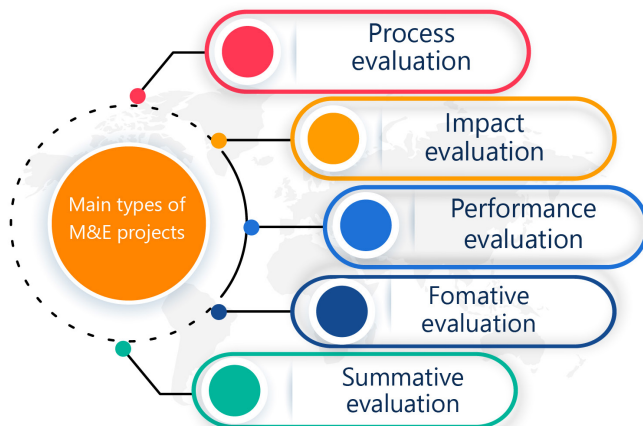
The Government of Mongolia (GoM) is making efforts to diversify the economy by expanding the agricultural supply chain, as well as developing tourism, light industry, and the energy sector. As part of this initiative, the Ministry of Economy and Development (MED), in cooperation with the German Cooperation Agency (GIZ), has been implementing the **Promotion of Growth and Employment in the private Sector** (PROGRES) project since 2021. The project operates in three areas, one of which is to strengthen the infrastructure for economic development and investment.

In the framework of this activity, IRIM conducted the data collection for baseline research 'To determine the need for services, scope of activities, and support for investors' to plan the future activities of the Investment and Trade Agency (ITA) under the MED and to improve the quality and availability of services provided to investors.

The survey included representatives of foreign-invested companies operating in Mongolia, and data collection was completed during October to December 2023.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are systematic processes that help to determine the effectiveness of projects, programs, and policies, and are key areas of expertise with the highest capacity of IRIM. M&E projects alone account for about 35% of all those implemented by IRIM, and through them, IRIM aims to support the coherent, effective, efficient, impactful, and sustainable implementation of projects in the development sector. IRIM avoids reinforcing the traditional approach of perceiving M&E as monitoring and audit. As part of a process of continuous improvement of projects and programs, and the system for evaluating the lessons learned, IRIM strives to make stakeholders aware, and understand its importance, and organize its result- and participatory-based M&E methods.



MEMBERSHIP



Depending on the sector, topic, project activity, and the beneficiary parties - and according to the style and characteristics of the stakeholders - when performing M&E projects IRIM collects data using anonymous surveys, interviews, spider webs, problem trees, H-forms, and card sorting methods; in traditional and digital form. Recently, IRIM has been using innovative methods in M&E projects, based on public participation; such as, Photovoice and Participatory video.

Process evaluation aims to determine whether the methodology and design used in development projects are effective. It provides information necessary for innovation and changes in order to improve operations, and allows reviewing and improving project goals and plans. When performing process evaluation, IRIM mainly use methods such as the '*Process tracing evaluation approach*' and '*Mapping a Theory of Change*'.

Impact evaluation aims to identify and clarify the consequences and impacts of a project. Understanding the changes that are occurring as a result of these efforts helps to identify the root causes of the problem and allocate resources to initiatives that create greater impact. As part of impact evaluation, IRIM uses methods such as '*Outcome Harvesting*' and '*Social Network Analysis*'.

Performance evaluation aims to calculate the progress of a project or program according to the expected results and predetermined indicators. Creating evidence of any progress and results builds trust among stakeholders and promotes transparency and accountability.

Formative evaluation is carried out during the *planning and implementation phases* of a project or program and provides opportunities for learning and improvement by identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges of projects. It aims to determine the methods - to achieve the results intended to be created - by incorporating suggestions and opinions for improvement and change from key stakeholders. As part of formative evaluation, IRIM uses methods such as '*Participatory action research*', '*Participatory evaluation*', '*Community mapping/asset mapping*', and '*Problem tree*'.

Summative evaluation is carried out at the **end of a project** and focuses on identifying the mistakes and lessons learned from the project, as well as evaluating the results and effectiveness of the intervention. By evaluating the long-term results of any initiative, one can improve the strategy and approach for similar projects in the future. In this evaluation, IRIM used methods such as '*Outcome mapping*', '*Outcome harvesting*', '*Delphi technique*', and '*A randomized controlled trial (RCT)*'.

M&E projects tend to be more independent and evidence-based than other research projects, requiring a professional and external perspective and analytical capacity from the evaluation team. Therefore, in order to improve IRIM's M&E skills, the Institute works as a member of national, regional, and international associations and networks of professional evaluators, and pays attention to continuous improvement of the M&E capabilities of the organisation's teams and experts. For instance:

- Since 2016, IRIM has been a member of the Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA), demonstrating its commitment to improving evaluation practices in the region (and in Mongolia) by sharing evaluation practices and adopting regional best practices.
- In 2017, IRIM initiated the Mongolian Evaluation Network (MEN) and is currently working as the Secretariat, to promote the adoption of the Asia Pacific Regional Evaluation Strategy and international evaluation standards in Mongolia.
- In addition, IRIM continuously strengthens its expertise and knowledge by being regularly involved in the International Program for Development Evaluation Training (IPDET).



EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF CYCLE V OF THE SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM

2023.01-2023.05



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The need to implement a fifth cycle of a project in the series was based on conditions such as the lack of cooperation of teachers, and activities were aimed at evaluating the quality of education, academic progress, and the factors that affect learning success and ability in the primary education sector at the national level. Based on the situation and problems of primary education, the Ministry of Education and Science (MES) had been implementing the Education Quality Reform Project (EQRP) with the financing of a soft loan from the World Bank (WB). This was to support the improvement of the quality of primary education by improving the native language and math learning outcomes (since August 2015). 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. During 2016 to 2021, within the School Grants Program (SGP), a total of five cycles of grant programs with the abbreviations C1, C2, C3, C4, and C5 were implemented. Within

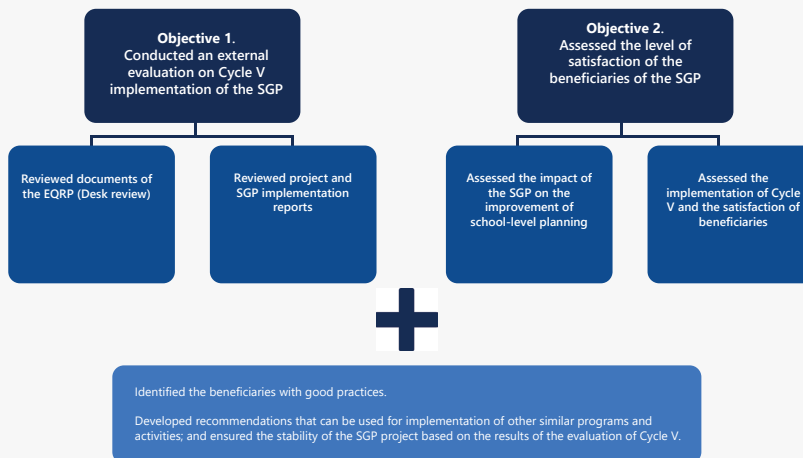
this framework, IRIM implemented the external evaluation of Cycle V of the School Grant Program from January to May 2023. The evaluation covered regions including Bayan-Ulgii, Dornod, Zavkhan, Uvurkhangai, Umnugobi, Selenge, Khuvsgul, Khentii, and nine districts within Ulaanbaatar.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVE, AND SCOPE

The objectives of the External Evaluation of Cycle V of the SGP were to

- conduct an external evaluation of the Cycle v implementation, and
- assess the level of satisfaction of the beneficiaries of the program.

Within the framework of these two objectives, the IRIM team implemented the following activities:



FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Cycle IV of the SGP focused on improving learning quality, while Cycle V aimed to address pandemic-induced learning loss through IT advancements. Both cycles aligned with MES objectives and policy documents. Projects implemented within these cycles emphasized parental involvement and extracurricular activities, aligning with MES guidelines.

The SGP efficiently allocated resources, with high teacher satisfaction in management and organization. Projects were awarded based on school needs and capacities, encouraging effective resource allocation. Stakeholders at various levels benefited from grants, fostering multi-stakeholder participation and addressing learning quality and loss.

Effectiveness was measured through external evaluation and satisfaction indicators. Most Cycle V schools achieved project objectives and supported teaching methodologies. Beneficiary satisfaction was high, with positive impacts on students, teachers, and parents. Projects also improved IT skills, remote learning, and content creation.

Sustainability was evident as teachers and managers sustained project activities, sharing experiences and good practices. Also, projects formed a culture of cooperation and mutual learning, benefiting school stakeholders.

Detailed evaluation of results, dissemination of effective methods, support for teacher initiatives, and promoting initiatives within the sector and to university students and new teachers were included in the recommendations section.

WATER PERCEPTION SURVEY

2023.05-2023.09



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

In less than three decades, the population of Mongolia’s capital, Ulaanbaatar, has nearly tripled in size. Following this, Ulaanbaatar faces the risk of a significant shortage of potable water, which has been exacerbated by climate change and threatens to undermine its economy and impact the quality of life of its residents. Based on this problem the Government of Mongolia (GoM) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) signed the second Millennium Challenge Compact (Mongolia Water Compact, which aims to reduce poverty through economic growth in Mongolia) on July 27, 2018.

Under the Mongolia Water Compact, the MCC implementing a Water Supply Project that comprises three closely related investment activities aimed at addressing the problem of limited long-term sustainable supplies of water for the capital city, Ulaanbaatar, as described below.

- Downstream Wells Activity.
- Wastewater Recycling Activity.
- Water Sector Sustainability Activity.

With funding from the MCC, IRIM implemented the Water Perception Survey during May to September 2023. The primary goal was to determine the level of public knowledge and understanding regarding Ulaanbaatar city’s water shortage, availability, and usage by different parties. Additionally, the survey aimed to assess public sentiment toward the Water Project and to formulate a communication and outreach strategy.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

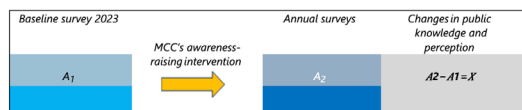
The Water Perception Survey pursued four key objectives:

- Determination of the level of public knowledge and understanding regarding Ulaanbaatar’s water shortage and public opinion on water availability in Ulaanbaatar – now and in the future.
- Better understanding of the public’s knowledge of the importance of water, not only at the individual household usage level but for commercial business and industrial energy generation.
- Better understanding of public opinion on the Water Compact and its activities, e.g., do they know it is a partnership between the Governments of the United States and Mongolia, with sizable funding from both sides?
- Provision of recommendations for effective communication and outreach efforts.

A total of 2,002 citizens from six districts of Ulaanbaatar were included in the survey and their perceptions and opinions were summarized, and a report was prepared.

PROJECT DESIGN

The survey applied a measurable and comparative design that relied on a quantitative method with closed and open-ended questions.



ENDLINE EVALUATION OF THE YOUTH SUSTAINABILITY CORPS (YSC) PRO-

2022.10 - 2023.01



Mongol Ecology
Center



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The Youth Sustainability Corps (YSC) program's main objective is to educate young people - aged between 15 and 22 years - about the environment, and sustainable development. Training them to be socially involved, responsible, and environmentally-friendly citizens by encouraging personal growth and competencies. During 2019 to 2023, the Program provided activities through ten sub-programs. A total of 1,539 children and youths from 71 national schools and six general education schools (located near the Protected Areas of Khovd, Umnugovi, and Ulaanbaatar city) participated in the Program's activities (in person and online).

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main goals of the 2019–2023 program's endline evaluation were to assess activities implemented within the Program, and to provide proposals and suggestions for future consideration to the Program. The evaluation applied an integrated research approach; combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Specifically, data from 20 key informant interviews (KII) and focus group discussions (FGD) - conducted within the framework of qualitative research – was analyzed. Additionally, 230 samples were obtained through questionnaires as part of quantitative research.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The results of the final evaluation demonstrated the program's accomplishment of its primary objectives. For instance:

- The YSC program achieved its main goal to confer upon children and youths (aged 15 to 22) international experience and knowledge, enrich

their perspective and information source on protecting the environment and appropriate use of natural and cultural resources, prepare future citizens with the ability to participate in, manage, and influence the sustainable development of their country.

- The program established a platform for the YSL to support the creation and implementation of innovative projects and internship programs that benefit society through comprehensive trainings.
- Results generally met the purpose of providing children with information by empowering Protected Areas' schools and other stakeholders.

One particularly impactful initiative within the YSC framework was the international experience study trip, which garnered significant interest and enthusiasm among students and children. Participation in the internship program not only facilitated extensive learning but also provided opportunities to observe diverse solutions. Furthermore, students actively engaged in program-organized activities, sharing acquired knowledge with others, and contributing positively to their communities.

There is a need to continue the YSC program of environmental and sustainable development education for children and youths with special content and methodology, as well as to reach and expand it to more schools and students. To that end, it is necessary to find a source of funding for the Program's continued operation, as well as to ensure the stability of human resources, improve the participant registration system, and improve the organization of supporting and encouraging stakeholders' activities and participation.

FINAL EVALUATION OF SMALL PROJECT FUND AS WELL AS CONSULTATION FOR POVERTY-ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT WORK IN MONGOLIA 2020-2023

2023.05 - 2023.06

MISEREOR
IHR HILFSWERK



CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN MONGOLIA



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The *Small Projects Fund as well as consultation for Poverty-oriented Development work in Mongolia* project's objective is to provide comprehensive support to residents in rural and suburban areas by:

- addressing their humanitarian, domestic, social, and intellectual needs,
- fostering employment opportunities, and
- contributing to local development.

A total of 14 small projects were funded within this framework during 2020 to 2023, with allocations distributed as follows: five projects in Ulaanbaatar city, our projects in Kharkhorin soum of Uvurkhangai, three projects in Dornogobi and Umnugobi provinces, and two projects in other regions.

IRIM conducted the project's final evaluation work for a period of one month (May to June 2023) at the request of the German organization 'MISEREOR'.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The main purpose was evaluation of the results of the small projects' within the main areas of supporting rural development, poverty reduction, education and humanitarian support; as implemented within the *Small projects fund as well as consultation for poverty-oriented development work in Mongolia* project.

The overall evaluation of the project involved a total of 31 implementers/partner organizations and beneficiaries. The procedures used followed the guidelines of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD-DAC) methodology. The evaluation process included two focus group discussions (FGDs) with the participation of 10 individuals, as well as 21 interviews and case studies.

GOAL: The project contributes to the provision of basic education, environmental protection, the promotion of democracy, equal rights for women and the preservation of local culture and traditions.

01/07/2020 - 30/06/2023

OBJECTIVE №1

Measures for environmental protection, in particular in regions affected by the mining industry, have been implemented and local traditions, especially traditional medicine, revived and adapted to modern challenges.

OBJECTIVE №2

Civil society and democratic forces are strengthened in promoting political and socio-economic transformation of Mongolia.

OBJECTIVE №3

Socially disadvantaged groups in rural areas receive access to counseling, training and capacity building measures which open new perspectives for their future life. Migrants in Ulaanbaatar have access to social services and are informed about their rights.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The evaluation sought to evaluate whether the project was making a difference, and whether there was a need to support such initiatives in the future (and identify successful practices and methods).

The majority of 14 projects funded by the project had been carried out in rural areas, and suburban districts of Ulaanbaatar. This was inline with the main focus of the project. All 14 initiatives were aligned with the objectives set by the contracting organization within the three general goals of the project.

The partner organization rated the project’s activities at 9.25 points on a scale of 1-10, while beneficiaries overall rated it at 9.5 points based on feedback collected through focus group discussions (FGDs). The following results were obtained when evaluating each criterion - relevance, coherence, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability - using a scale of 1-5 points.

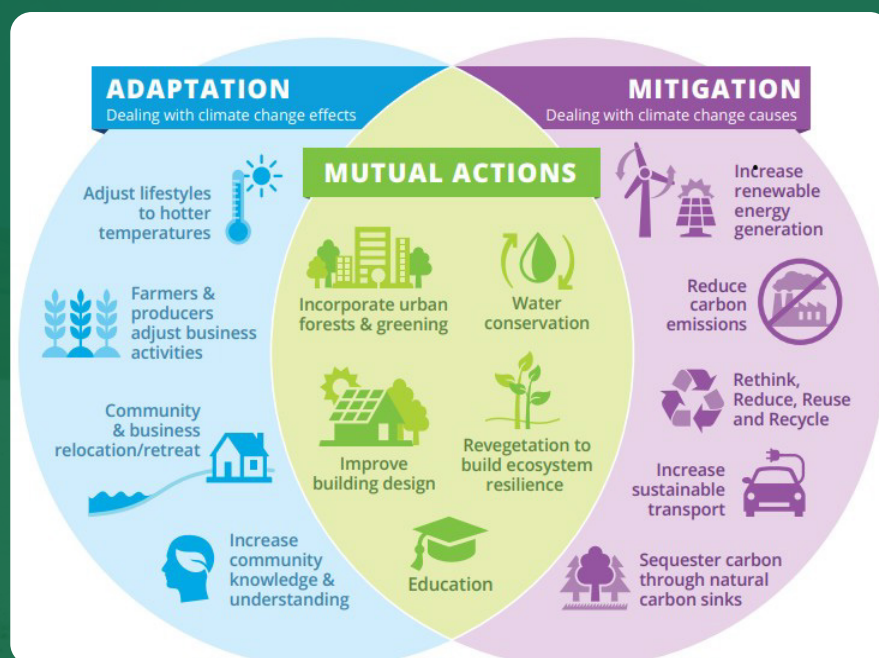
Based on these findings, the project implementers have made a notable impact in areas that government organizations may not always prioritize. MISEREOR successfully facilitated the execution of activities that specifically contribute to the expansion of organizations’ operations, and the implementation of socially beneficial projects.

Criteria	Evaluation	
	Partner organization	Beneficiaries
Relevance	4.8	4.5
Coherence	5.0	5.0
Effectiveness	5.0	4.8
Impact	5.0	5.0
Sustainability	5.0	5.0

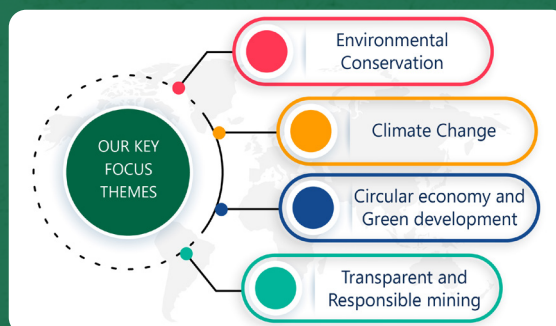
(1 = Very poor, 2 = Poor, 3 = Fair, 4 = Good, 5 = Very good)

CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

IRIM's core approach to addressing the challenges posed by climate change and sustainability is to embed **climate-resilient development** aspects throughout all sectors of research, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E). This approach encompasses both climate change **adaptation** and **mitigation** efforts. By integrating these considerations into policy planning, decision-making, and investment processes across all sectors, IRIM is actively working towards reducing the impacts of climate change on communities, economies, and ecosystems.



Projects dedicated to addressing climate change and sustainability comprise over 20% of all projects, with a particular focus on the following sub-themes:



Environmental conservation. Mongolia's diverse landscape and abundant biodiversity are fundamental to the country's economy, culture, and overall development. In alignment with this significance, IRIM has been engaged in conducting research and M&E projects tailored to tackle sector-specific challenges and strengthening the resilience of the sector's system. These efforts include enhancing stakeholders' understanding and knowledge, assessing the impact of climate change on the livelihoods of citizens and communities, and assessing adaptive and coping capacities. For instance, IRIM's primary focus and expertise lie in implementing research projects aimed at **strengthening the management of protected areas and integrating nature conservation schemes with active participation from local communities.**

Climate change. In the realm of climate action, IRIM's primary focus lies in supporting the implementation of the Paris Agreement, Nationally Determined Contributions and National Adaptation Plans (NAPs). IRIM provided stakeholders with evidence-based information and enhance coordination and cooperation in information sharing. In 2022, IRIM conducted a nationwide survey titled *Climate Change Awareness and Media Consumption Survey in Mongolia*, commissioned by the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) and is now organizing campaigns based on the survey findings to raise awareness among citizens and the public.

Also, in 2023, IRIM initiated a *Community of Practice* among research experts focused on climate change-resilient development. This initiative was to streamline research activities within various climate-related fields and foster information exchange between researchers and experts. In the future, through this community of practice, IRIM intends to discuss the results of research in the climate sector and initiate policy discussions aimed at solutions.

At the 28th session of COP 2023 (convened annually by the United Nations to address climate issues) Mongolia pledged to prioritize addressing the impacts of climate change on **the food system and the health sector**. Mongolia also affirmed its commitment to endorse relevant documents in this regard. To enhance the sector's

readiness to contribute in this direction, IRIM in collaboration with the Ministry of Health and GGGI, is conducting assessments on (i) Impacts of Climate Change on Human Health, Food Security and Nutrition in Mongolia, and (ii) Health workers knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) and health institutional preparedness to monitor, prepare for, respond to and manage climate risks to human health in Mongolia.

Circular economy and green development. Globally, there is a growing emphasis on efficient utilization of natural resources, minimizing waste within economic systems, and moving away from the linear economy towards the adoption of renewable circular models, which rely on resource efficiency and sustainable practices. The concept of a circular economy is relatively new in the Mongolian context, with ongoing efforts to introduce and test it through policy and legal documents in specific sectors. Between 2022 and 2025, IRIM is spearheading the project *Building the capacity of Micro, Small And Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSMEs) in the direction of circular economy (CE) and green business* in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association (MSFA), and Development Solutions NGO. As part of this initiative, IRIM is developing a policy roadmap to integrate the circular economy concept into the tourism sector and conducting various activities to empower MSMEs.

Transparent and responsible mining. One of IRIM's main areas of expertise lies in conducting research activities within the mining and extraction industry. These activities aim not only to effectively direct mining investments towards local development and the economy but also to assess the impact of mining activities on the local community and the environment, while simultaneously striving to promote equality among all stakeholders in society.

IRIM collaborates with the Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry, as well as representatives from the private sector including Oyu Tolgoi LLC, Energy Resources, and various international organizations such as UNDP, GIZ, and AMEP. Additionally, the Institute engages with programs, universities, unions, associations, and communities to develop initiatives in this direction.

ASSESSMENT OF CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACTS ON HUMAN HEALTH, FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION IN MONGOLIA

2023.05 - 2024.04



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Once again, the world is confronted with the pressing issue of climate change, with its attendant health ramifications reaching alarming proportions. The adverse effects, including extreme heat, cold shocks, and other climatic shifts, have escalated to unprecedented levels. Mongolia, experiencing a warming rate 2-3 times faster than the global average, is witnessing a surge in negative health impacts attributed to climate change. Moreover, expanding desertification and land degradation are significantly altering Mongolia's landscape, leading to frequent dust storms that pose a considerable threat to public health, particularly respiratory ailments.

Increasing occurrences of extreme weather events are intensifying desertification and grassland degradation, diminishing crop yields, and heightening the risk of a shortage in nutritious domestic food supplies. In the future, there is a need to conduct more detailed studies on the effects of climate change on human health and food safety. This entails implementing a responsive system, exploring the correlation between new and emerging infectious diseases, and devising population protection measures that consider the specific characteristics of infectious diseases.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of changes in air temperature and other climate factors on population mortality and selected diseases in Mongolia. The aim was to develop evidence-based recommendations to support public health adaptation policies against climate change. IRIM is conducting research from May 2023 to April 2024.

PROJECT DESIGN

This study applied a mixed method approach including both quantitative and qualitative methods. Monthly data spanning a decade, from 2012 to 2022, were gathered for four groups of diseases (respiratory, cardiovascular, digestive, and zoonotic) and mortality. These data were analyzed alongside 12 extreme climate indices. Additionally, key informant interviews (KIIs) were conducted among the key stakeholders in the health sector.

Disease	Variable	Source	Time interval	ICD-10 code	Frequency
Respiratory	Number of new cases	Center for Health Development	2012-2022	J00-J99	By month
Cardiovascular				I00-I99	
Digestive				K00-K93	
Zoonotic				A84 A20	
• Tick-borne encephalitis • Marmot plague					
Mortality (respiratory, cardiovascular, and cancer)				I00-I99 J00-J99 C00-D48	

Data from actual meteorological observations

The research utilizes air temperature, precipitation, wind, and humidity data collected from 2012 to 2022 across more than 30 meteorological stations.

Impactedness is directly related to climate extremes. Temperature and precipitation extreme indices are widely used to assess the risks and impacts on environmental and socio-economic sectors. ClimPACT software (<http://etccdi.pacificclimate.org/software.shtml>), developed by the CCI/CLIVAR working group of the World Meteorological Organization (Zhang & Feng, 2004), was utilized to estimate the impacts of water vapor on agriculture, surface water, and

human health. Twelve indices of air temperature and precipitation were selected from more than 80 extreme indices. The definition of selected extreme precipitation indices is provided in the table below.

Researchers are endeavoring to establish evidence-based recommendations that support the development of public health adaptation policies concerning climate change. This involves investigating how specific climatic factors or extreme climate indices influence certain diseases and mortality rates within the population.

Definition of climate extreme index

Abbreviation	Index name	Definition	Unit	Impact sector
Temperature index				
F0	Cold day	The number of days when the minimum daily temperature exceeds 0 degrees	day	Agriculture, health
SU30	Hot day	The number of days when the maximum daily temperature exceeds 30 degrees	day	Agriculture, health
Tx10p	Cool day	Number of days with 10% supply of absolute maximum daily temperature	day	Water, agriculture and health
Tx90p	Hot day	Number of days with 90% supply of absolute maximum daily temperature	day	Water, agriculture and health
Tn10p	Cool night	Number of days with 10% absolute minimum daily temperature supply	day	Water, agriculture and health
Tn90p	Hot day	Number of days with 90% supply of absolute minimum daily temperature	day	Water, agriculture and health
WSDI	Length of hot day	The number of days with 6 or more consecutive days in which the maximum daily temperature was 90% supply	day	Water, agriculture and health
Precipitation index				
RX1day	Max. precipitation in one day	Maximum precipitation observed for the day	mm	Water, agriculture and health
RX5day	Max. precipitation in 5 days	Maximum precipitation observed in 5 days	mm	Water, agriculture and health
SPEI12	Climate drought or dryness	Standardized precipitation index calculated for 12 months		Water, agriculture and health

BUILDING MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS AND GENUINE DIALOGUE WITH THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

2023.12



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

IRIM organized a one-day capacity building retreat on Building meaningful relationships and genuine dialogue with the local community for the Community Relations Team of Oyu Tolgoi LLC in Umnugobi province, in December 2023. Twenty participants from Oyu Tolgoi LLC and five participants from Oyu Tolgoi Catalyst Fund took part in the training. The training was to:

- Present the key outstanding results of IRIM's research on mining, public opinion, and local relations in Umnugobi province.
- Share information and knowledge about the latest trends and discourse of Alternative Community Development approaches in mining.
- Organize workshops for a participatory team-based approach to address several crucial points.



ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN THE INVESTIGATION OF CRIMES AGAINST THE ENVIRONMENT TRAINING EVALUATION

2023.05 - 2023.06



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

In May and June 2023, the Hanns-Zeidel Foundation successfully organized four series of trainings focusing on *Issues to consider in the investigation of crimes against the Environment*. These trainings were specifically tailored for environmentalists and ecological police officers.

A total of 68 civil servants hailing from 10 provinces within the Central and Eastern Regions (Khuvsugul, Arkhangai, Bayankhongor, Umnugobi, Uvurkhangai, Bulgan, Selenge, Tuv, Khentii, Darkhan) actively participated in these sessions, with each lasting for two days.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

IRIM conducted an evaluation of the course, wherein changes in knowledge and skills among participants before and after the course were assessed. Subsequently, based on these findings, recommendations were formulated for enhancing future courses.

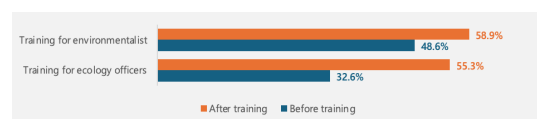
FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Training content was related to awareness of crimes against the environment for ecological police officers, and about conflict for environmentalists.

Before and after the training, a knowledge checking test was used to see the changes in the participants' knowledge.

According to the knowledge checking test results, participants knowledge increased from pre-training assessment (32.6%) to post training assessment (55.3%), and it was observed that there was an improvement in knowledge in all answers for the ecological police officers. On average, the knowledge of environmentalist increased from the pre-training level (48.6%) to the post-training level (58.9%). But, it was observed that the level of knowledge decreased in some of the content of the training among the environmentalists. The knowledge of ecological police officers increased to a maximum of (46.0%), while the knowledge of environmentalists increased to a maximum of (36.8%); both of which are positive results.

Changes in the knowledge of the respondents



DEVELOPMENT

Over the past 16 years, IRIM has successfully conducted regional and national research and evaluations in key areas including education, gender equality, social protection, public health, and urban and rural development. In doing so, the Institute prioritizes the concept of '*leaving no one behind*', advocates for the interests of different social groups, and strives to ensure equal opportunities for all.

The primary development sectors and areas IRIM focuses on include:



MEMBERSHIP



Social Well-being. In 2016, IRIM initiated the *Social Well-Being Survey of Mongolia* and has conducted it annually as part of IRIM's social responsibility efforts. The primary objective of this study is to disseminate scientific information about **subjective well-being indicators, including social cohesion, social trust, and happiness**, to the public. Additionally, it aims to influence decision-making by emphasizing the importance of considering social capital indicators. In 2017, IRIM became a member of the International Social Well-being Research Consortium and has since been engaged in this field through participating in, and co-organizing with, regional and international conferences, implementing collaborative projects, and co-authoring academic publications. Moreover, since 2010, IRIM has been a member of the International Sociological Association (ISA), representing Mongolia, and adheres to the Code of Ethics endorsed by the ISA.

Education. IRIM provides research and consulting services on the **quality and accessibility of primary and secondary education, as well as on issues related to education and employment** in higher education and technical and vocational institutes. In recent years, the Institute has collaborated with international organizations, such as: the World Bank, the United Nations Children's Fund, and Japan's Save the Children Fund, as well as government organizations including the Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection. This was to study the issues of **inclusive education** and generate evidence-based information to support decision-making. Projects implemented within this sector represent around 10% of the total.

Gender and Target group issues. Since 2017, IRIM has been serving as a member of the National Committee for Gender Equality. IRIM has extensive experience in implementing projects on gender equality in Mongolia, as well as evaluating the implementation of gender policies and plans across various sectors. In addition, IRIM integrates the **GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion)** approach into its research projects in other fields, ensuring gender equality is mainstreamed in every phase of the project. For instance, in all IRIM's research across various fields, data is disaggregated by gender, identify any results related to gender differences and characteristics, and reflect these in the findings and recommendations of the research.

IRIM has extensive experience in implementing numerous research and evaluation projects that specifically focus on the interests of socially disadvantaged groups that are hard to reach, such as: people with disabilities, victims of violence and crime, LGBTQ+ communities, ethnic minorities, residents of remote areas, and migrants. IRIM prioritizes a **human-centered approach** in human rights research, and our researchers participate in the **Research, Ethics, Compliance, and Safety Training** provided by the internationally renowned Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program). IRIM adheres to the guidelines of this standard in all research activities related to human rights and dignity.

Public health. IRIM has been implementing projects aimed at evaluating public health policies and programs in Mongolia, studying access to health services, health education, practices, and behaviors of different groups, and identifying the main factors affecting human health.

When conducting research on human health, IRIM presents its research methodology to the **Academic Council and the Ethics Committee** of the Ministry of Health, the Mongolian National University of Medical Sciences, and the Ach Medical University, and obtain their approval.

In addition to research projects, IRIM also initiates and implements projects aimed at supporting the health and well-being of vulnerable populations during disasters. For instance, with the support of the Give2Asia donation network (an international non-profit organization active in humanitarian efforts in over 20 countries in Asia and the Pacific), the Institute successfully carried out the two-phase **Food Support Project for Target Groups Affected by COVID-19** in 2020 and 2021, providing direct assistance to over 40 vulnerable households.

Urban and Rural Development. IRIM has extensive knowledge and expertise in designing and conducting comprehensive research and assessment focused on local development, urbanization, and community engagement. IRIM's studies delve into the challenges and difficulties encountered by various groups in relation to infrastructure development, urbanization dynamics, rural livelihoods, and migration. IRIM aims to identify innovative solutions and opportunities for these groups, contributing to the sustainable development of urban and rural areas.

In terms of geographical experience, IRIM has a proven track record of conducting data collection across all 330 soums of 21 provinces. Leveraging this expertise, fieldwork is planned while considering the **regional and seasonal characteristics of each area, as well as the cultural traits of ethnic minorities, nomads, and herders.**

CONSULTING SERVICE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOBI OYU DEVELOPMENT SUPPORT FUND'S STRATEGY (2024-2028)

2023.10 - 2024.05



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

IRIM has (from October 2023 to May 2024) been delivering consulting services for development of the upcoming strategy of the Gobi Oyu Development Support Fund; 2024-2028. Previous (2017-2018) IRIM delivered consultancy services for development of the first strategic document; Strategic and focus areas of the Gobi Oyu Development Support Fund for 2018-2021. Once again, IRIM is collaborating to craft the upcoming strategic directions for the subsequent five-year term.

The Gobi Oyu Development Support Fund - established in 2015 as a non-governmental organization - aims to oversee the implementation

of the Trilateral Partnership Agreement (CAG) involving the Government Office of Umnugobi province, Khanbogd soum, and OyuTolgoi (OT) LLC. According to the agreement, Oyu Tolgoi LLC annually provides \$5.0 million for voluntary funding within seven focus areas, including water management, environmental protection management, agriculture, culture, tourism, basic social services, local business development, and social infrastructure. To ensure sustainable local development, projects and programs are funded accordingly.

As the previous strategic plan had expired, IRIM is currently providing consultancy service for the development of the Strategic Plan 2024-2028, which involves three main stages.

STAGE 1

Rapid assessment of the implementation of the previous strategic plan



STAGE 2

Organization of community discussions for input and feedback



STAGE 3

Development and finalization of the new strategic document

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

During 2015 to 2023, 88.54% of a total of investment of \$123 billion, was spent on projects and programs as stated in the report.¹

The three phases of the consulting service yielded the following results.

Rapid assessment of the previous strategic plan. This action was primarily aimed at identifying focus areas and new strategic directions to be followed in the next five years, by evaluating the effectiveness of the strategic plan. Within the scope of the assessment of the previous strategic plan, the performance of the activities undertaken during 2018 to 2022 were considered and reviewed. As the rapid assessment was conducted, organizational and operational reports (documents, and a list of participants in consultation workshops, customers, and employees) were gathered and reviewed; to ensure diverse perspectives and inclusivity in the assessment.

The following figures summarize 284 projects and programs, valued at \$74.4 billion, funded during 2018 to 2022.

Of all projects and programs implemented, those in social infrastructure and investment accounted for 68.4%, while the remaining 31.6% were implemented in sustainable development. Upon comparing the number of remaining projects and programs by their areas of focus, it was found those in basic social services received the highest support. Conversely, the number of projects implemented in environmental protection

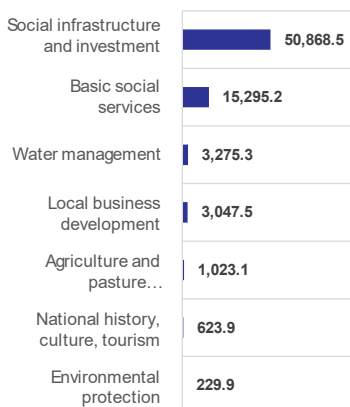
management was the lowest. Therefore, focus areas with the lowest percentage of investment or the fewest number of projects require further attention in the future.

When partners assessed their partnership with the Gobi Oyu DSF on a scale of 1 to 5 (1-poor and 5-excellent), they rated the organization’s activities as ‘satisfactory.’ Organizational arrangements received a score of 4.2, and the implementation of basic services received a score of 4.0. Additionally, 86% of the partners involved in the study reported no difficulties in working with the DSF.

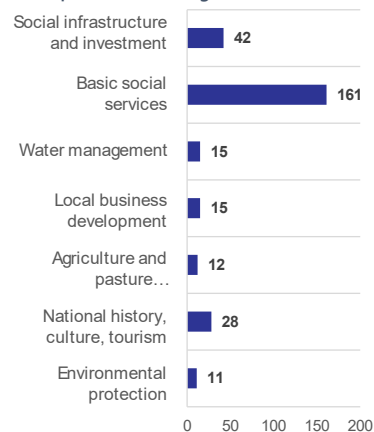
As outlined in the Gobi Oyu DSF’s strategy, one of the goals is to ‘Develop a stable fund that garners trust from funders, customer organizations, and citizens’. Therefore, a baseline indicator for the level of the partnership confidence index was compared to the level of 2018 (the baseline level). The result was commendable, with overall findings indicating a significant increase in confidence in the DSF, an increase from 8.3 to 8.9 (on a scale of 0 to 10). However, it is worth noting that the assessments underscore the need to enhance information dissemination and accessibility to information of the fund.

Organizing discussions on focus area priorities. Discussions were organized in each focus area to gather recommendations, opinions, and needs from citizens and experts. The aim was to develop a core course of action and a plan for the Gobi Oyu DSF for the next five years. Discussions held in each of the seven thematic areas, prioritized the participation of representatives from relevant

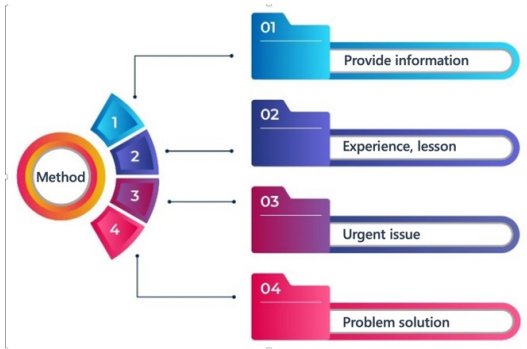
Funding allocated to projects and programs implemented during 2018 to 2022, by focus areas, \$, millions



Number of projects and programs implemented during 2018 to 2022



parties; and aimed to ensure broad participation and diverse voices from both government and citizens at the soum and aimag levels. Each discussion was organized with 20 to 40 participants, and the main part of the debate took place within the framework of the following four general sections.



Information about the activities that was carried out in each area of focus was provided in the first section and assessed by the participants. The next section included tasks aimed at identifying and prioritizing activities that need to be undertaken in each area, and identifies the main stakeholders to be involved in implementing these activities. The relevant report was developed, to highlight benchmark concerns for attention over the next five years.

Developing a strategic document. The first version of the strategic document for 2024-2028 is being developed, based on both assessment of the previous strategic implementation and proposals to address the needs of the relevant stakeholders. Currently, the document consists of eight strategic goals, 30 focus areas and 96 activities. Further developments and approvals are ongoing as the strategic document is presented to the decisionmakers at different levels including the Relations Committee and the Board of Directors.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE RAPID ASSESSMENT DURING DZUD

2023.06 - 2023.08



World Vision



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

Mongolia is a country extremely susceptible to climate change due to its isolated geographical location, vulnerable ecosystem, and economic dependence upon nature and climate. Within the last 40 years, the ecosystem of Mongolia has undergone a significant change due to global climatic change and human activities. And thus, it is being threatened by desertification, an increase of repeated drought and dzud, water resource issues, and scarcity of diverse biological species.

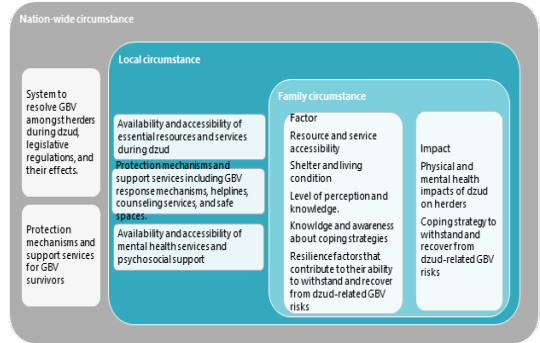
In Mongolia, there have been occurrences of minor and major dzuds 27 times since 1921. There were dzuds every two to four years in Gobi aimags, and nation-wide dzuds every 13 years. With the increased frequency and intensity of natural and climatic hazards and catastrophic phenomena (such as drought, dzud, deluge, hail, strong snowstorms, sandstorms, and torrential flood due to climatic change, and the considerable increase of resultant population accidents and incident) the damage caused to society and the economy has doubled during the last 20 years.

Studies conducted since 1944 indicate that our country has experienced a significant loss of livestock, with one to nine million headcount being affected at most due to the occurrence of dzud. This represented approximately 2-33% of the total livestock count for the given year. Over the last 30 years, there has been a cumulative reduction of 21.1 million headcount of livestock, accompanied by damage estimated at MNT860 billion.

As members of socially vulnerable groups are susceptible to violence during catastrophes, the issue of protecting them is emphasized globally. From this point of view, IRIM collected information with the support of World Vision for the assessment '*Gender-based violence rapid assessment during dzud*'. In doing so, IRIM conducted key informant interviews and organized group discussions at locations of dzuds in 2023. In particular, with representatives of 14 soums of seven aimags (Bayan-Ulgii, Khovd, Gobi-Altai, Uvs, Zavkhan, Khentii, and Khuvsgul) that had received humanitarian aid and support.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

The main objective of the assessment was to determine potential protection issues among affected families including minority groups (such as Kazakh, Tuva, and others) with geographical, cultural, and traditional differences. Rapid assessment was carried out within the following scope and it considered not only the vulnerability during dzud, but also the vulnerability to gender-based violence (GBV) during dzud. In addition, not only the pressing matters of women or men during such circumstances, but also demographical and social characteristics such as age, location, and information accessibility were account for..



SCOPE OF THE RAPID ASSESSMENT

Data of the rapid assessment were collected using a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches.



Document review

- Project documents.
- Existing practices of undertaking measures against GBV (during dzud) and practices of identifying emerging issues and assessing GBV
- Reviewed the laws on violence and disaster, legal protections, reporting procedures, and past records.



Key informant interview

- In a total of 12 key informants, representatives of the local area, were interviewed in the assessment.



Focus group discussions

- A total of three focus group discussions were organized involving representatives of herders and households affected by Dzud.



Questionnaire (In person and via phone)

- Quantitative survey data were collected in person and by telephone from 382 herder households that benefited from the project and were affected by Dzud.



Case study

- Conducted a total of three case studies by selecting women, who were at risk, and/or had suffered GBV; from among those families exposed to dzud.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- In Mongolia, legal provisions addressing natural disasters and those aimed at preventing and protecting against Gender-Based Violence (GBV) are distinct, resulting in fragmented mechanisms and services. When these circumstances intersect, the systems for prevention and protection, as well as planning and resource allocation for GBV during disasters, prove inadequate. Consequently, there is a lack of comprehensive instructions and guidelines on recognizing and delivering inspection, diagnosis, and services during disasters or when faced with specific challenges or resource constraints.
- The vast majority (79.8%) were unfamiliar with the term “GBV” or had only encountered it without grasping its meaning. Their comprehension of GBV was notably lacking, particularly among male herders, those aged 45 years and above, and individuals with lower levels of education.
- During the dzud, 61 herders, comprising 15.9% of the total, experienced various forms of violence, with heightened incidents of anger and blame directed towards family members, occurring at a rate three times higher than usual. Additionally, households were significantly affected by the unavailability of basic services.
- During dzud, 38 children (20 boys, 18 girls) from households, could not attend school because they had to assist family and had no one to carry them to school, or the road was closed.

- Also, fundamental medical requirements - such as medicines (45.3%), and sanitary items (35.8%) - were somewhat sufficient, or completely insufficient.
- 67.3% of herders did not know about service provider organizations, shelter, mental health counseling hotline 1800-2000, to which they could go in case they were at risk of exposure to, or exposed to GBV.

The local joint teams need to update constantly database, by collecting data on at-risk populations, studying the ways and conditions to outreach and provide services to at-risk groups, and providing material and financial resources in advance. Moreover, it is needed for international non-governmental organizations to provide technical assistance in the development of integrated methodical guidelines for prevention from and response to GBV during disasters, taking account of the distinctive features of each disaster. In particular, there is an opportunity to prepare and deliver information and consultation on how to overcome mental breakdown during dzud, train professional psychologists towards providing consultation remotely. Also, knowledge of necessary aid and services was inadequate, along with the lack of knowledge of herders regarding GBV. Therefore, it is required to organize training and promotion - with a methodology based on participation consistent with herders’ distinctive features - in order to increase the understanding and knowledge of herders regarding GBV and prevent GBV.

MONGOLIAN COMPANIES' CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY AND WOMEN'S RIGHT

2023.07 - 2023.11



PROJECT INTRODUCTION

The study's purpose was to determine the implementation of corporate social responsibility (CSR) or Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), environmental, social, and governance (ESG), and gender equality policies and practices. Qualitative methods were used in accordance with the research methodology, and a sample list was compiled based on the data of the top 100 enterprises presented by the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MNCCI) at the end of 2022. Data were collected through a review of documents, and semi-structured interviews. In carrying out the research, 72 documents and other materials were gathered. These included open source reports from organizations' websites, and documents detailing their activities. In addition, qualitative interviews were conducted with representatives of 19 organizations who consented to participate in face-to-face interviews. Subsequently, the findings from these interviews and document analyses were synthesized, culminating in the development of a research report.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Within the framework of corporate social responsibility, the activities carried out by companies in the field of ensuring gender equality were classified into three directions: environment, society, and economy.



In the field of **environment**, companies were paying great attention to joining the national movement 'Billion Trees' initiated by the GoM and the President of Mongolia, within the framework of the CSR and increasing green facilities in urban areas. Increasing the number of green buildings is important to improve the living environment of sensitive and vulnerable social groups such as children, pregnant women, mothers with young children, and the elderly, and to support temporary jobs among socially targeted groups of people.



Health is the priority sector in which companies invest in **society**. The companies strongly support the activities of donating equipment and providing funds for solving, preventing, and diagnosing health problems of low-income, vulnerable groups, disabled children, and the elderly. Also, to increase

equality and access to education in the field of education, companies often invest in initiatives that support the participation of children with special needs in education, support the increase of access to schools and kindergartens, and support educational innovation.

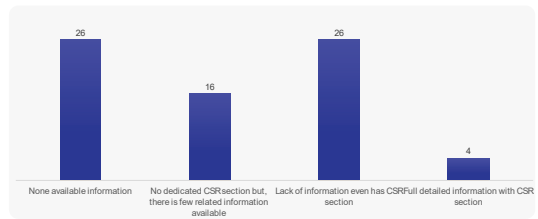


Initiatives to support women-owned SMEs are common among companies leading the way in supporting the **economy**. In the banking sector,

companies have implemented activities including women entrepreneurs in green and discounted credit services and providing training and skills to support women's employment.

Currently, the development and use of corporate social responsibility policies by companies are insufficient. By visiting the websites of the leading top 72 companies, social responsibility policies of only eight organizations were open.

Number of companies reporting their CSR activities (n=72)



Considering the principal areas of activity within the scope of the corporate social responsibility policy, the problems of education, health, environment, and SMEs are considered important. In terms of corporate social responsibility policies, the mining and banking sectors are leading the way.