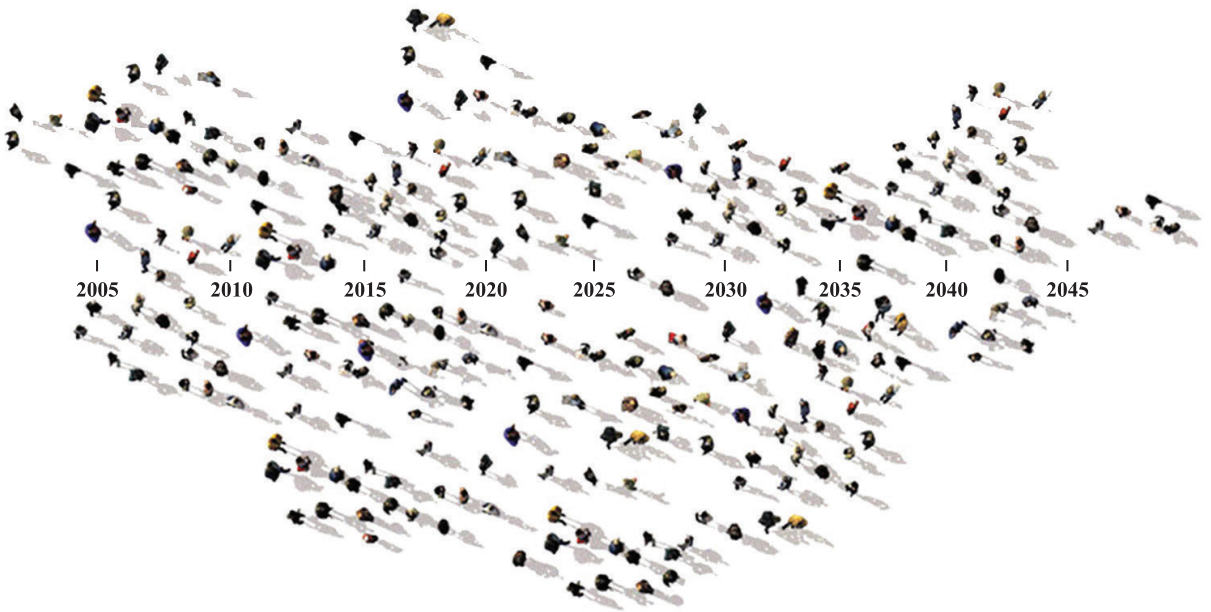


# ANNUAL REPORT 2024/2025



Independence

Quality

Impact

## Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM)

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## CHAPTER I

# INTRODUCTION

- A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO
- ABOUT US
- IRIM'S STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS
- IRIM IN NUMBERS

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND CEO



Ambassador Extraordinary  
and Plenipotentiary, President  
of IRIM

**H. Bekhbat**



Executive Director

**N. Minjirmaa**

The year 2024 has been a period of tremendous transformations, shaped by growing global challenges, including the rising climate crisis, shifting political landscapes, and the increasing demand for technological innovation in governance and research.

Climate change is no longer a long-term concern but an urgent reality with wide-ranging social and economic consequences. Mongolia is no exception, as rising temperatures, extreme weather, and environmental damage continue to affect its people, particularly herding communities that depend on fragile ecosystems for their livelihoods. In response to these urgent challenges, IRIM remains committed to research-driven solutions, strategic collaboration, and policy engagement. One of the key initiatives in this regard has been the Community of Practice on Climate Resilient Development, launched in 2023. This initiative has continued to expand in 2024, fostering interdisciplinary dialogue among researchers, practitioners, and policymakers. Through knowledge-sharing and coordinated strategy development, this initiative has reinforced IRIM's role as a leading institution dedicated to foster climate resilience and sustainable development, both within Mongolia and beyond.

On the national level, 2024 was a defining year in Mongolia's democratic history, as the country celebrated 35 years of democratic movement. This milestone is both a celebration of progress and a reminder of ongoing challenges in building strong governance, protecting human rights, and fostering meaningful civic participation. In response, we continued to actively support transparency and accountability through its Digital Transparency Index assessment, now in its 13th year, consistently evaluating the openness and accountability of government institutions. Additionally, IRIM has contributed to promoting civic participation and fundamental freedoms by developing a practical guide on peaceful assembly, empowering citizens with knowledge about their rights to assemble and protest

peacefully. Through those efforts, IRIM remains an active advocate for democracy and human rights, ensuring that Mongolia continues to uphold its values as an open and free society.

Beyond climate and democracy initiatives, 2024 has been a year of expanding IRIM's social responsibility agenda. Through the Core-to-Core Program, Mongolia's engagement in regional research networks has been strengthened, and IRIM hosted international dialogue in Mongolia under this program, helping ensure that national experiences contribute to broader regional discussions. A particularly meaningful achievement in 2024 has been the Mobile Center for Lifelong Education initiative in Renchinlkhumbe Soum, Khuvsgul Province. Situated in the remote Darkhad Valley, this initiative aims to provide essential educational services to out-of-school children, children with disabilities, and nomadic herding families, who face significant barriers to education. Through the generous support of Give2Asia and individual donors, the Ger School was successfully established. This initiative demonstrates our dedication to inclusive development, reinforcing the principle that every child should have the opportunity to pursue education, regardless of location or background.

Finally, we marked the first year of implementing our 2024-2030 strategic vision, setting the foundation for further advancements in technology and innovation to enhance our long-term impact. This is a key document that will support the integration of future development efforts and increase the impact of our initiatives across society. At the heart of our work remains our foundational philosophy: Independence, Quality, and Impact. We will continue to prioritize research-driven solutions that create real and lasting impact in our society. We, IRIM, extend our appreciation to all the partners, researchers, and supporters, whose collaboration and engagement make our work possible.

4 April 2025

## ABOUT US

The Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) started its operations in 2008 with a team of four and has since grown to 27 core staff members and over 300 national and international contracted consultants and researchers.

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.

Since 2016, the IRIM Research Institute has implemented the international Quality Management System standard ISO 9001:2015 into its operations. In August 2022, it received the international certification confirmation and in May 2023 it was granted the audit certification. As a result, the institute has been focusing on implementing its quality policy of “providing independent research and consulting services that meet international standards and customer needs, and being an organization committed to sustainable development,” while continuously improving its operations.



# IRIM'S STRATEGY FOCUSED ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

## VISION

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

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.

## MISSION

## 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.



The organization will focus on meeting the unique needs of its clients and strive to improve the consulting services provided in order to maximize their impact.

To prioritize technological advancements, IRIM Research Institute will place significant emphasis on incorporating cutting-edge technologies into the products and services it offers.



## IRIM STRATEGY 2030



Human resource development is a key focus of this strategy. The goal is to create a diverse, stable, and continuously evolving workforce while fostering a culture of lifelong learning and adaptability.

Building good governance, characterized by transparency, accountability, ethics, and sustainable (green) practices, is a crucial goal. IRIM aims to establish these principles at every level of its operations.



The 2024-2030 strategy of our organization is not merely a roadmap for our internal operations, but also a reflection of our efforts to contribute to regional and national sustainable development.

## 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'S STRATEGY FOCUSED ON THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

IRIM has taken significant steps to strengthen its operations in line with the evolving development demands of 2024. The institute has officially adopted a new strategy for the 2024–2030 period. Now, in its first year of strategy implementation, tangible progress has been made across four key objectives: increasing the impact of the organization's services, supporting the diversity of human resources, reinforcing technology-driven innovation, and improving internal governance.

The achievement of these objectives not only enhances the internal capacity of the organization but also lays the foundation for the successful implementation of projects with a positive social impact, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) 2030. IRIM is contributing to global sustainable development goals through multi-level efforts, including the continuous development of research methodologies, supporting policy decision-making, and expanding collaborative partnerships.

2  
ZERO  
HUNGER



**Zero Hunger, Food Safety:** Establishing a policy framework to enhance food security through the development of irrigated agriculture, improved access to food, and the identification of climate-resilient solutions.

**Good Health and Well-being:** Research is being conducted to identify the impacts of air pollution, social well-being, and climate change on health, highlighting the voices of vulnerable groups. These efforts aim to reduce social inequalities and improve access to health services.

3  
GOOD HEALTH  
AND WELL-BEING



5  
GENDER  
EQUALITY



**Gender Equality:** IRIM is implementing projects focused on developing gender-sensitive policies, supporting women-led small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and increasing the economic participation of rural women. These initiatives also promote gender equality in decision-making processes.

8  
DECENT WORK AND  
ECONOMIC GROWTH



9  
INDUSTRY, INNOVATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE



**Decent Work and Economic Growth, Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure:** Research focused on enhancing the sustainability of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) through green and circular economies, while also promoting technology-driven innovations, is contributing to resilient economic growth.

**Affordable and Clean Energy, Sustainable Cities, and Climate Action:** Research supporting sustainable urban development and climate-resilient solutions increases local community involvement and sectoral collaboration to address pressing environmental challenges.

7  
AFFORDABLE AND  
CLEAN ENERGY



11  
SUSTAINABLE CITIES  
AND COMMUNITIES



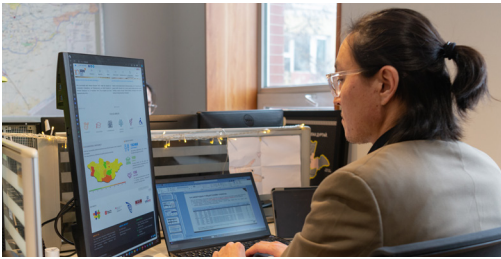
13  
CLIMATE  
ACTION



## 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. About 50% of all our projects are research-oriented, encompassing the following categories.



### 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.



## SECTORS SERVED

### GOVERNANCE

Since 2008, the IRIM has been a leader in governance, implementing over 70 research projects in this space. These projects account for more than 20% of the institute's total projects. In the governance sector, IRIM conducts research and policy impact activities in various areas such as government transparency, e-governance, local governance, quality and accessibility of public services, democracy, human rights, and civic participation.

IRIM works closely with international and government organizations, including the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), The Asia Foundation (TAF), The World Bank (WB), and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). Additionally, IRIM actively participates in regional and international networks such as Innovation for Change, the Asia Democracy Research Network (ADRN), and the Asia-Pacific Social Accountability Network (ANSA), to share knowledge, exchange experiences, and expand cooperation.

### SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND DEVELOPMENT

IRIM focuses on a wide range of topics, including labor market research, small and medium-sized businesses, social protection, and societal well-being. Additionally, it works on various development-related themes such as education, gender, public health, and urban-rural development. These sectors represent approximately 50% of the institute's total projects.

Furthermore, IRIM integrates the GEDSI (Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion) approach into all its research, ensuring active participation of vulnerable groups in line with the principle of leaving no one behind. This commitment is embedded across its projects, including those in education, gender, public health, and urban-rural development.

In the social, economic, and development sectors, IRIM has worked successfully with organizations such as the World Bank (WB), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and Save the Children Japan. It is also involved in regional and international research networks and professional associations, including the Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC), the International Sociological Association (ISA), and the International Social Welfare Research Consortium (ASWBC), to further its collaborative research efforts and share methodologies and knowledge.

### CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY

IRIM has been actively engaged in climate change and sustainability-related research and consulting services, following the principles of climate-resilient development. Projects in environmental protection, climate policy, green business, and responsible governance of mining represents over 20% of the institute's work.

In this field, IRIM collaborates closely with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MOET), the Ministry of Health (MOH), the Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry (MMHI), UNDP, ADB, the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI), and GIZ. Through these partnerships, IRIM has contributed to assessing the climate impact and readiness in the environment, food, and health sectors and supporting collaborative efforts among researchers. IRIM also initiated the "Researcher's Group" to promote regional cooperation among climate researchers, facilitating information and experience exchanges.



# IRIM IN NUMBERS

TOTAL

# 312

PROJECT



## 2008

APRIL

## 2025

APRIL



## 240,113

Respondent



## 112

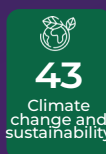
Clients



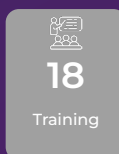
## 161

Partners

By sector



By service



## 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

- |                   |                   |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| 53   Arkhangai    | 71   Umnugobi     |
| 50   Bayan-Ulgii  | 60   Uvurkhangai  |
| 60   Bayankhongor | 54   Uvs          |
| 36   Bulgan       | 43   Sukhbaatar   |
| 55   Gobi-Altai   | 59   Selenge      |
| 35   Gobisumber   | 53   Tuv          |
| 63   Darkhan-Uul  | 75   Khovd        |
| 58   Dornod       | 65   Khuvsgul     |
| 50   Dornogobi    | 54   Khentii      |
| 44   Zavkhan      | 221   Ulaanbaatar |
| 56   Orkhon       |                   |

### SOUTH-EAST ASIA

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



## MEMBERSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Central Asia Regional Economic Cooperation (CAREC) Institute promotes development and accelerates economic growth through cooperation among the Central Asian countries and development partners. Since 2022, IRIM Research Institute has been actively participating in the annual forums of the Central Asian Think Tank Network organized by CAREC. This has allowed IRIM to continuously enhance its knowledge on regional economic cooperation.



Founded in 2013, the Asia Democracy Research Network conducts research and analysis to promote democratic governance and human rights in Asia. Since 2020, representatives of IRIM have been members of the network, actively sharing research findings on democracy and fostering collaboration in this area.

In 2019, IRIM joined the international fundraising network Give2Asia, based in the United States, which supports local initiatives and programs aimed at addressing critical issues in developing countries in Asia. In 2024, IRIM initiated and implemented a project through this network to support the educational needs of children in remote areas.



IRIM has been a member of the Innovation for Change Central Asia network since 2018 and was elected to the board of directors that same year. The network focuses on protecting civil society rights and overcoming challenges faced by civil society organizations in the region, and IRIM collaborates with its members on these goals.

Since 2016, IRIM has initiated and led the "Social Well-being Research" annually. In October 2017, IRIM joined the "Asia Subjective Well-being International Consortium" to represent Mongolia.



IRIM has been a member since 2016 and, in 2017, it became a member of the board. IRIM is actively sharing evaluation experiences and promoting regional best practices in evaluation to improve evaluation practices in Mongolia and the region.

IRIM became an official member of the International Sociological Association in 2010 and adheres strictly to its "Code of Ethics" in all its activities.



Since 2010, IRIM has been a member of the "20 Networks for Social Accountability" in the Asia-Pacific region.

The Mongolian Sociological Association aims to develop sociology, support research activities, enhance sociologists' knowledge and skills, and represent and protect the interests of professionals in the field. IRIM has been selected as a board member of this association since its re-establishment in June 2024.



IRIM has been a member of the National Committee on Gender Equality since 2017. In this role, it works to ensure gender equality across all sectors of society and advocates for gender equality principles in state policies on behalf of civil society and the private sector.

IRIM initiated the creation of the Mongolian Evaluation Network in 2016. The network brings together professionals and consultants from government, non-governmental, and international organizations working in the field of evaluation. IRIM plays an important role in implementing and disseminating regional and international evaluation standards in Mongolia.



## CHAPTER II

# IRIM IN 2024

- 2024 HIGHLIGHTS
- RESEARCHER ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS AND WORKS IN 2024

TOTAL

38

PROJECT



2024  
2025

APRIL

April



14,908

Respondent



38

Clients



2

Partners

### BY SECTOR



9

Governance



13

Social, economy  
and development



16

Climate change  
and sustainability

### BY SERVICE



25

Monitoring and  
evaluation



6

Research



7

Project  
management

## HIGHLIGHTS OF 2024

### KEY ACTIVITIES IN FOREIGN RELATIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

We actively participate in regional and global professional networks and associations, representing Mongolia and our respective fields. Through this engagement, we aim to share our expertise and perspectives on international platforms, address pressing issues, propose solutions, draw the attention of other countries to a specific issue, explore new opportunities for collaboration, and localize best practices and innovative approaches. In 2024, we successfully implemented the following key initiatives:

#### SUCCESSFULLY HOSTED THE 8TH CONFERENCE OF THE ASIAN WELL-BEING RESEARCH CONSORTIUM IN MONGOLIA

From July 31 to August 2, 2024, IRIM successfully organized the closing conference of the Young Researchers' Support Program and an international open symposium in Ulaanbaatar under the project Utilizing Social Capital to Build Resilience to Natural Disasters in Developing Asian Countries.

At the symposium, over 20 young researchers from 8 Asian countries, including Mongolia, Japan, Thailand, Vietnam, the Philippines, Indonesia, South Korea, and Taiwan, were divided into 4 groups. They presented their collaborative research findings on climate change and social capital on an international platform.

As the 8th conference of the Asian Well-being Research Consortium, it featured presentations and discussions among international researchers with the aim of discussing climate change, social capital, and promoting resilient development through increased participation, and increasing the participation of young researchers.

IRIM researchers, in collaboration with scholars from the Philippines and Vietnam, presented findings from their study Social Capital and Proactive Resilience to Natural Disasters. Additionally, research findings from a qualitative study utilizing the photovoice method – titled “Social Well-Being of Mothers with Young Children in Mongolia” – were shared during the conference.

This event was a significant milestone in strengthening the capacities of young researchers, advancing regional and international cooperation, and fostering the exchange of innovative ideas, methodologies, and solutions.





## Strengthening Mongolia's Evaluation Sector, Amplifying Its Regional Voice, and Activating National Network Activities

In the first quarter of 2024, Mongolia's evaluation industry focused on amplifying its voice on the international stage, revitalizing its national evaluation network with new objectives, and launching key activities.

On February 27–28, 2024, Elberel Tumenzhargal, Senior Researcher at IRIM, spoke at the 19th Official



Development Assistance (ODA) Evaluation Seminar, co-organized by Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Asia-Pacific Evaluation Association (APEA). Her presentation, "Effectively Utilizing Monitoring and Evaluation in the Development of Evidence-Based National Voluntary Reports," highlighted the importance of integrating evaluation outcomes into policy decision-making.

Additionally, on February 29, 2024, the Mongolian Evaluation Network held its first meeting of the year, reviewing the outcomes of APEA's 4th Conference and discussing the latest trends, domestic developments, and opportunities for collaboration in the field. As a voluntary professional association dedicated to enhancing evaluation capacity, the Mongolian Evaluation Network has been actively facilitated by IRIM since its inception in 2016.

These initiatives have significantly contributed to raising the profile of Mongolia's evaluation sector at the regional level, while fostering greater participation and collaboration at the national level.

## Participated in the Central Asian Civil Society Space Protection Regional Dialogue Conference.

Representatives from IRIM participated in the online conference and discussion on the topic "Regional Dialogue: Protecting Civil Space," held on September 20, 2024, where they presented papers.

At the event, IRIM researcher N. Minjirmaa delivered a presentation on "The Role and Influence of Civil Society in Central Asia and Mongolia," emphasizing the importance of civil space in the context of democracy in Mongolia. She discussed the key issues and challenges faced by civil society organizations. Additionally, she presented the findings of research on public participation, trust in democracy, and civic engagement, highlighting recent trends in the current state of civil space.



Since 2018, IRIM Research Institute has actively collaborated with the Innovation for Change (I4C) network organization, which organized this event.

## Key Activities Implemented to Enhance Resilience to Climate Change

As climate change presents a critical challenge to the sustainable development of countries, IRIM continues to enhance adaptive capacity by expanding interdisciplinary research, policy initiatives, and professional collaboration. We have launched new initiatives at the national level to connect climate change researchers and experts, improve information exchange, and support evidence-based policy development. These efforts continue to thrive through collaboration with international organizations.

In 2024, we implemented the following key activities, research, and initiatives aimed at increasing resilience to climate change.

### The “Expert-Researcher Group” Meeting to Support Research and Collaboration on Climate Change Was Initiated and Successfully Continued

To promote climate-resilient development, align interdisciplinary research efforts, and improve information exchange among researchers and experts, IRIM developed the “Expert-Researcher Group.” In 2024, two successful meetings were held.

The first meeting took place on June 7, 2024, where researchers from organizations such as GGGI Mongolia, NAP Mongolia Project, and URECA LLC shared their research findings. IRIM Senior Researcher E. Oyundelger presented her experience at Cornell University in the United States. Participants emphasized the importance of the initiative and discussed opportunities to hold meetings regularly, co-organize events, and provide policy-level recommendations from the researchers’ group.

The second meeting, held on October 7, 2024, focused on “Climate Change and Agriculture.” It brought together experts and researchers to present papers and engaged in discussions on the current state of the sector, policy reforms, best practices, and potential solutions to pressing issues.

These meetings will be held every six months, and the IRIM Research Institute is working to organize the first three meetings as part of this initiative. Our goal is to expand this dialogue and collaborate with organizations and individuals interested in supporting and further developing these meetings and discussions.





## Projects and Research Initiatives Being Implemented to Enhance Resilience to Climate Change are Expanding

Supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), this project aims to promote gender equality and sustainable livelihoods in rural areas through policy recommendations, training, and business support. The implementation of this project lays the foundation for gender-sensitive policy implementation in the food, agriculture, and light industry sectors.

### Research on Assessing the Climate Risk Readiness of Health Institutions:

Commissioned by the Global Green Development Institute (GGDI), this research evaluates how health institutions are prepared for climate change in 21 provinces and 9 districts. The findings provide a clear picture of the sector's capacity, based on various indicators such as healthcare services, infrastructure, and staff knowledge and attitudes.

### Impact Study of Climate Change on Health and Food Security:

Commissioned by the GGDI, this study identifies the negative impacts of climate factors on human health and food accessibility based on both quantitative and qualitative data. The findings serve as essential foundational information for planning adaptation policies and measures.



## Key Activities Implemented under Social Responsibility

IRIM is actively implementing meaningful initiatives and activities in the field of social responsibility, based on the needs of the social sector, local conditions, and public participation. In 2024, we successfully implemented the following key activities in collaboration with non-governmental organizations and local partners, with the aim of improving access to education for children in target groups, supporting public participation, and strengthening inter-sectoral coordination.

### “Friendly Sports Competition” Uniting Social Sector Professionals, Successfully Organized for IRIM Research Institute’s 16th Anniversary”

The “Friendly Sports Competition,” organized as part of the 16th anniversary of IRIM , was successfully held on April 13-14, 2024. The event aimed to improve communication and coordination among social sector professionals and enhance the social capital of youth. Athletes from 22 teams, representing 12 organizations in the development and social sectors, competed in basketball and handball, showcasing their strength and skills.

The competition was organized in collaboration with the Lantuun Tokhio NGO, and the centralized fees collected from participants were donated to support the organization’s “Magical Land – Local Communities” movement. This event became not just a sports activity, but also a model for collective charity and participation in the well-being of society.

The competition marks an important step in promoting cooperation and coordination among social sector professionals and lays the foundation for establishing a sustainable and positive sports tradition.



## Mobile Center Established to Improve Educational Accessibility for Children in Remote Areas

In 2024, with the support of the international donation network Give2Asia, IRIM implemented the “Lifelong Education for Children in Remote Areas” project in Renchinkhumbe, Khuvsgul Province. As part of the project, a “Lifelong Education Mobile Center” was established to reach children in target groups who are unable to access educational services. The center was built in response to the high risk of school dropout and educational exclusion in the remote area of the Darhad Valley, due to both natural and socio-economic factors.

The project involved purchasing and assembling a complete Mongolian ger (yurt) with equipment and learning materials for the mobile center, which is now in use. This provides over 100 children, who are unable to attend school during the spring and fall, with new educational opportunities. The project was carried out in collaboration with the local general education school, and a needs assessment was conducted to ensure the solution was tailored to local conditions. This collaborative planning was crucial in making the initiative more effective and sustainable.



Moving forward, IRIM plans to continue working with local organizations to improve the accessibility and quality of education in the area. We are always open to collaborating with organizations and individuals interested in supporting and further developing such initiatives.

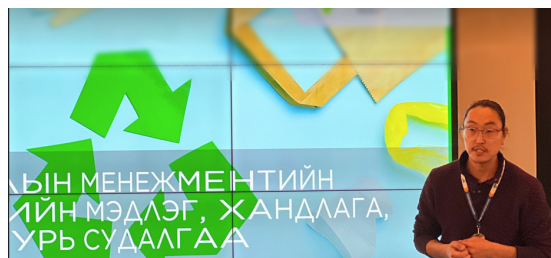
## “Ungu Nem” NGO and IRIM Research Institute Sign Memorandum of Understanding, Conducting Baseline Research on Public Waste Management

To increase public involvement in waste management and provide foundational data for policy reforms, the “Ungu nem” NGO and IRIM signed a memorandum of understanding and launched a joint research project. As part of this collaboration, the “Public Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices on Waste Management” baseline study was conducted, which involved a primary quantitative survey with 386 citizens across six districts of the capital city. The study provides valuable insights into citizens’ participation, behaviors, and infrastructure conditions, enabling a comprehensive evaluation.

The findings of the study show that while citizens are aware of the importance of waste management and have a positive attitude, there are significant gaps in information, practices, and infrastructure.

This highlights the need for more integrated and coordinated actions at the policy and regulatory levels.

Based on these findings, the next steps include developing policy recommendations and jointly implementing training and awareness-raising activities to increase public participation in waste management.



## Key Activities in Strengthening Institutional Capacity and Enhancing Researcher Development

The IRIM Research Institute places significant focus on the continuous development of professional researchers, the training of young researchers, the expansion of international cooperation, and enhancing institutional capacity to provide research-based, practical contributions to address societal challenges. In pursuit of these goals, we successfully implemented the following activities in 2024, aimed at advancing international partnerships, improving research methodologies, training young researchers, and increasing the institute's impact

## Sharing Experiences in Climate Change and Environmental Studies in the United States and Initiating Academic Collaboration

E. Oyundelger, Senior Researcher at IRIM Research Institute, participated in the U.S. State Department-funded "Specialist Exchange Program" and worked as a guest researcher for five weeks at the Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Sciences at Cornell University. During her time at this world-leading department in climate change and natural resource management, she gained valuable experience in research methodologies and international collaboration.

In addition, IRIM hosted climate change and public health researchers and faculty from U.S. universities who visited Mongolia through the academic program of the American Center for Mongolian Studies (ACMS) and the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC). During the meeting, IRIM

presented its latest research in climate change and public health, and discussions were held on research methodologies in social sciences, data accessibility, and the importance of including marginalized voices in the research process. With a focus on international cooperation and continuous development, IRIM continues its efforts toward building a greener and more sustainable society.



## IRIM Researchers Shared Knowledge and Experience Gained at Griffith University, Australia, with Gender Equality National Council Experts

As a member organization of the Gender Equality National Council, IRIM organized a knowledge-sharing meeting on the topic “Climate Change Resilient Development and Gender-Responsive Participation.” During the meeting, our researchers presented their experiences from the Australia Awards Fellowship program, where they studied at Griffith University in September 2023. The presentation covered international trends, research methodologies, and the implementation of gender-based policies.

Additionally, the meeting included a presentation on a series of review articles developed on climate-resilient small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs). The discussions highlighted the weaknesses in the policy environment, the challenges faced by women entrepreneurs, and the need to strengthen the capacity for collaborative governance. The research results, international experiences, and recommendations provided important





## “Researcher Student – 2024” Program Successfully Trains Young Students in Research Skills

Since 2013, IRIM has implemented the “Researcher Student” program and, this year, it was successfully organized for the 11th time under the theme “DataDive: Unlocking Analytical Potential.” The program aimed to equip students studying social sciences with essential skills in data management, information security, and research methodology.

Throughout the program, participating students engaged in various training activities, including research data analysis, familiarization with organizational experiences, and hands-on practice with real-life projects. Notably, they participated in research on e-government transparency, applying their knowledge in a practical setting. This initiative, which supports the future development of student researchers, has made a tangible contribution to preparing the next generation of professionals for the social sector in our country.



## IRIM’s Annual Reception – 2024: A Focus on Positive Change in Climate Action

IRIM successfully held its traditional “Annual Reception 2024” event on November 27, 2024. Under the patronage of His Excellency, the Ambassador, and IRIM’s President, K. Bekhbat, this year’s reception highlighted the importance of collaboration and participation in combating climate change, fostering active discussions on strengthening cross-sectoral connections.

IRIM’s Executive Director, N. Minjirmaa, delivered the keynote speech titled “Towards Progressive Climate Action,” emphasizing that environmental issues require the collective involvement of all sectors of society, not just one.

Additionally, the event showcased IRIM’s initiative to expand the activities of the “Experts-Researchers Group” and introduce the idea of forming a National Volunteer Partnership, marking a significant advancement in this year’s event.



## IRIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE'S ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS AND WORKS COLLECTION

In addition to policy research, the IRIM Research Institute is committed to amplifying the voices of its researchers on international academic platforms, fostering knowledge creation, and bridging the gap between theory and practice. In recent years, our researchers have successfully published collaborative and independent research papers in international journals and academic publications on a variety of topics, including climate change, gender, social well-being, and income inequality.

The following papers, published in 2024, reflect the research outcomes of our scholars on internationally relevant and policy-oriented issues. These studies address pressing challenges faced in Mongolia, the region, and globally, offering evidence-based solutions derived from scientific inquiry. We remain dedicated to actively participating in the academic space and supporting the knowledge creation process of our researchers moving forward.

### JOURNAL ARTICLE

Dorjnyambuu, B., Galambosné Tiszberger, M. (2024). The sources and structure of wage inequality changes in the selected Central-Eastern European Countries.

*The Journal of Economic Inequality* 22 (4), 893–935 .

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10888-024-09621-0>



Dorjnyambuu, B. (2025). A Systematic Literature Review of Income Inequality in Central–Eastern European Countries.

*Comparative Economics Studies* 67 (1), 1–49 .

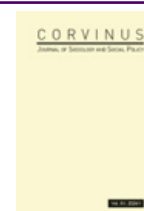
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41294-024-00240-2>



Dorjnyambuu, B.. (2024). The Financialisation of Housing and Housing-related Family Support in Hungary, By Bence Kováts (Budapest, Akadémiai Kiadó, 2023).

*Corvinus Journal of Sociocology and Social Policy*. 15 (1), 175-184.

DOI: [10.14267/CJSSP.2024.1.8](https://doi.org/10.14267/CJSSP.2024.1.8).



Tselmegsaikhan, L, Elberel, T, Jargalmaa, G, Dashzeveg L, Saruul, M, Exploring Social Capital's Role in Enhancing Mothers' Well-Being amidst Air Pollution in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: A Photovoice

*Study Social Well-Being Review* 2024, Vol.11(1) 19-28



## IRIM RESEARCH INSTITUTE'S ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS AND WORKS COLLECTION

### POLICY BRIEF

Lkhagvanorov, D., Tumenjargal, E., Batdorj, Kh., Tseden, P., Sarker, T., Hales R. and Shah, D. (2024). Learning from international experience: Improving institutions for climate-resilient MSMEs in Mongolia,

*Griffith Asia Institute, Queensland, Australia,*

DOI: 10.25904/1912/5204.



Khurelchuluun, B., Sukhbaatar, O., Shah, D, Sarker, T and Hales, R. (2024). Climate-resilient micro- small- and medium-sized enterprises in Mongolia: Understanding challenges,

*Griffith Asia Institute, Queensland, Australia,*

DOI: 10.25904/1912/5200.



Ganzorig, J., Uuganbaatar, D., Bud, B., Bold, B., Hales R, Shah, D and Sarker, T. (2024). Building capacity: Climate-resilient development and gender inclusive entrepreneurship in Mongolia,

*Griffith Asia Institute, Queensland, Australia,*

DOI: 10.25904/1912/5207



Tumenjargal, E., Ganzorig, J., Jessica Sandra, R. Claudio, Emily B. Roque-Sarmiento, Linh Dieu Khat, Social Capital and Community Resilience in Natural Disasters: Mongolia, Philippines, Vietnam

*Social Well-Being Review 2024: Special Issue: Proactive Resilience and Social Capital in Asian Societies*



### BOOK CHAPTER

Lkhagva, T., Tsevegдорж, B., Tsedendamba, B., Lkhagvanorov, D., Yadmaa, B. (2024). Social Well-Being in the Extractive Economy in Mongolia: The Case of Mining Sector Trust and Social License. In: Yee, J., Harada, H., Kanai, M. (eds) Social Well-Being, Development, and Multiple Modernities in Asia.

*Springer, Singapore.*

DOI: 10.1007/978-981-97-3866-3\_5







ЖИЛИЙН ТАЙЛАН 2023/2024

**CHAPTER III**

# IMPLEMENTED PROJECTS IN 2024

- IRIM'S FLAGSHIP PROJECTS
- COMPLETED PROJECTS
- ONGOING PROJECTS

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Чанар

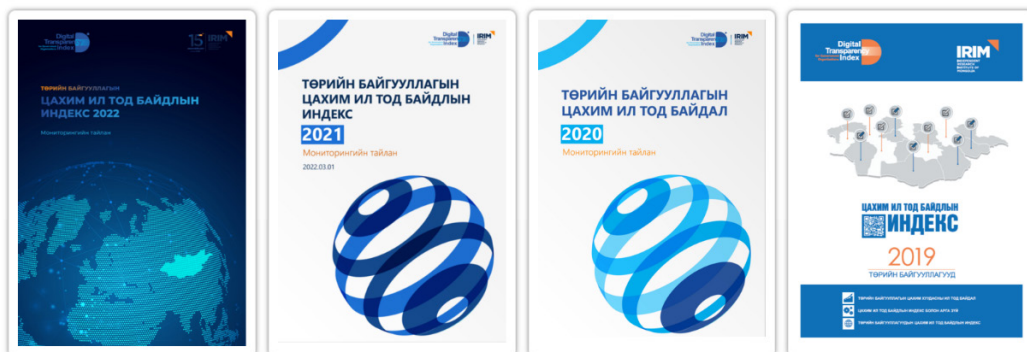
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## IRIM'S FLAGSHIP PROJECTS

### DIGITAL TRANSPARENCY INDEX FOR GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS 2024



2024.11 - 2025.03



#### INTRODUCTION

**Background:** The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) is increasing rapidly, and artificial intelligence is advancing at an unprecedented pace, making transparency of information highly significant. In recent years, the Government of Mongolia (GoM) has focused on developing e-governance and increasing the transparency of state information, creating new responsible structures and accelerating the implementation of accompanying legislation and policies. For example, the “Law on Transparency of Public Information” was revised six times between 2022 and 2024 to improve its provisions, and the GoM’s “Open Data List” was approved in 2022 and updated in 2024. Additionally, the government, in collaboration with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), introduced the “Big Data and Artificial Intelligence National Strategy” to the public and held discussions in February 2025, highlighting the importance of open data and information.

IRIM developed the first methodology to measure the digital transparency of government

organizations in 2010-2011 and has conducted regular annual evaluations since 2014. This methodology, based on legal monitoring, was used for evaluations until 2018. In 2019, the methodology was updated and improved by incorporating the assessment results of the “enabling environment” and “organizational capacity,” and the “Digital Transparency Index for Government Organizations” was created.

**Objective:** To assess transparency of government organizations transparency using quantitative indicators, provide a nationwide evaluation, and offer recommendations for improvement.

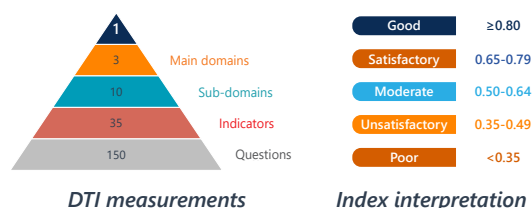
- Measure and rank the level of digital transparency of government organizations;
- Present evaluation results in a unified dashboard format;
- Compare results year over year;
- Provide recommendations for further improvement.

## SCOPE



Based on the results of a total of 98 government organizations, the digital transparency index is calculated.

**Methodology:** The evaluation index is developed based on 3 main components, 10 subcomponents, 35 criteria, and 150 questions. The index result ranges from 0 to 100, where a value closer to 100 indicates better digital transparency of government organizations, while a lower value signifies insufficient transparency.



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Digital Transparency Index for Government Organizations in 2024 reached 69%, showing an increase of 3.8% from the previous year (65.2%), reaching a "satisfactory" level. Over the past 5 years, the index has increased by 2.5 - 3% annually, demonstrating positive improvement. The increase in the Digital Transparency Index is directly linked to the improvements in the components of open government information.

The open information component grew by 5.3% compared to the previous year, becoming a key driver of this year's growth in digital transparency.

| # | Domains                 | 2023 index | 2024 index | Change |
|---|-------------------------|------------|------------|--------|
| 1 | Enabling environment    | 79.2%      | 79.5%      | 0.3%   |
| 2 | Organizational capacity | 72.8%      | 74.6%      | 1.8%   |
| 3 | Digital disclosure      | 47.5%      | 52.8%      | 5.3%   |

Over the past three years, while the legal environment and institutional capacity have shown steady growth, the open information section declined due to legal and regulatory changes. However, in 2024, the overall improvements in the implementation of the "Law on Transparency of Public Information" was clearly visible in the information provided by government organizations' websites.

Compared to last year's evaluation, the digital transparency index of all government organizations has increased, with "regulatory agencies" and district governor's offices (DGTs) showing above average growth. Over the past three years, ministries and implementing agencies have consistently led in annual growth, while in 2024, district governor's offices (DGTs) showed the largest increase.

| #               | Types of organization              | 2023 index | 2024 index | Change |
|-----------------|------------------------------------|------------|------------|--------|
| 1               | Ministries                         | 70.7%      | 72.4%      | 1.7%   |
| 2               | Implementing organizations         | 66.8%      | 68.8%      | 2%     |
| 3               | Regulatory organizations           | 63.1%      | 68%        | 4.9%   |
| 4               | Provincial government organization | 66.1%      | 68.7%      | 2.7%   |
| 5               | District government organizations  | 63.8%      | 68%        | 4.5%   |
| 6               | Parliamentary organization         | 65.7%      | 67.5%      | 1.8%   |
| General average |                                    | 65.2%      | 65.2%      | 3.8%   |

If the growth rate over the past 5 years (2 - 2.5%) continues, the Digital Transparency Index could reach around 85% by 2030, which would be rated as "good." This would significantly enhance citizen participation in government activities and further improve the level of transparency and accountability in governance.

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





## SOCIAL WELL-BEING OF MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN IN MONGOLIA

2023.11 - 2024.02



### INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Since 2016, IRIM has conducted annual surveys on the well-being of Mongolian society, and in 2024, it publicly presented the results of its seventh survey. Each year, the survey focuses on different social groups, selecting them as target samples and analyzing their well-being based on data gathered using scientific methods and approaches. This report emphasizes the issue of air pollution, which significantly affects the quality of life for citizens in Ulaanbaatar, and examines the well-being of mothers with young children, one of the groups most vulnerable to its impact.

Over the past decade, air pollution in Ulaanbaatar has sharply increased, severely impacting human health. As of December 2024, PM2.5 levels were 6.9 times higher than the World Health Organization's recommended annual limit, posing a serious threat to public health, particularly the well-being of vulnerable groups. Mothers with young children are among the most affected, facing significant challenges to their daily lives, health, social participation, and psychological well-being. This highlights the urgent need for an in-depth study on the health, social, and economic impacts of air pollution to protect their well-being

and inform targeted policies and interventions.

This research was conducted in collaboration with Senshu University and the Core to Core Program, "Enhancing Resilience through Social Capital in Developing Asia." Central to this study's design was the use of Photovoice, a unique participatory method that empowers participants to document and share their personal experiences, enabling powerful storytelling.

**Objective:** To enhance understanding of the well-being of mothers with young children and support evidence-based policy and decision-making aimed at improving their quality of life.

**Project design:** The study employed a combination of qualitative methods, including (1) Photovoice, (2) focus group discussions, and (3) in-depth interviews. Photovoice method is a unique and participatory qualitative approach that enables participants to express and share their experiences, well-being, and challenges through photography.

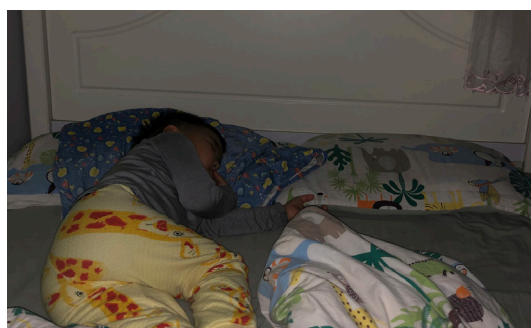
**Geographical scope:** Ten mothers with young children residing in Ulaanbaatar.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

**Outcome 1:** Mothers' well-being declines during periods of air pollution. In these seasons, mothers spend more time at home to protect their children's health and minimize risks. This includes staying home during their free time, taking time off work and working remotely. These adjustments limit their social interaction and negatively affects their wellbeing. While mothers try to remain connected with friends, relatives, and mothers' groups, this is often irregular and limited.

**Outcome 2:** Mothers are actively implementing measures to prevent, adapt to, and cope with the day-to-day challenges caused by air pollution and its consequences. They regularly assess risks during polluted periods, take preventive and adaptive actions, and consistently share information and experiences with one another. However, it has been observed that the approaches they use are mostly based on traditional knowledge and do not sufficiently incorporate research-based and scientific solutions. Therefore, in order to address the risks associated with air pollution more effectively, there is a need to increase access to information and promote evidence-based approaches.

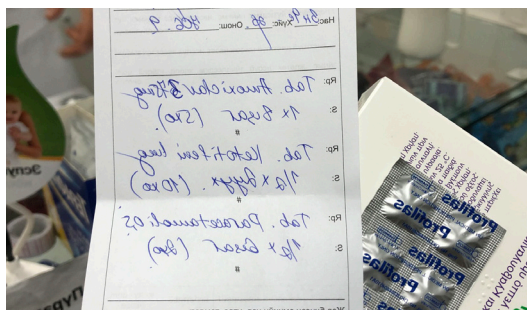
*Photo 1. Psychological well-being of a mother with a sick child during the winter.*



*Photo caption: I feel distressed every time my child gets sick. My son caught a cold, developed pneumonia, and was hospitalized with low oxygen levels. The two-year-old spent three nights without a caregiver, separated from his mother. For three days, I could do nothing but watch him through the door. After being moved from the intensive care unit and staying in the hospital for five days, the doctor warned me that if my child catches another cold, he could develop chronic lung disease.*

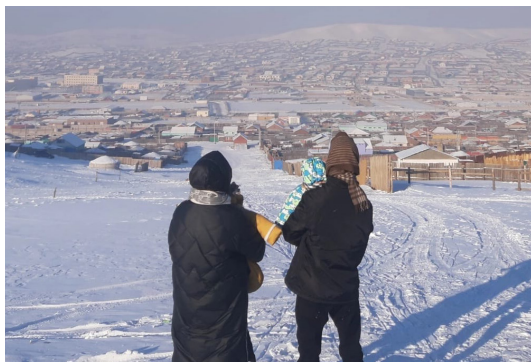
**Outcome 3:** The role of social capital is crucial for helping mothers increase their resilience and address their challenges. First, strong family and community support is closely associated with greater resilience in mothers. Second, active communication among mothers facing similar issues helps build supportive social network. Therefore, encouraging family members to share the caregiving responsibilities and developing support groups/community support networks for mothers with similar challenges represents an important opportunity to improve their well-being.

*Photo 2. The economic impact of colds and flu.*



*Photo caption: During the winter, with increased air pollution and flu outbreaks, it is crucial to take extra vitamins to support the immune system. Young children often catch colds due to the smoke, and each child requires cold medicine that costs between 70,000 to 100,000 MNT. This means that winter air pollution places a significant financial burden on households.*

*Photo 3. Clean air is a luxury.*



*Photo caption: My husband and I are both very busy, but we try to take our children outside on weekends. Their lungs are heavily affected by the dust and air pollution, so we make an effort to get them outside whenever we can. However, when we return to the city, the air smells terrible.*

While it is clear that mothers' responsibilities and social participation are greatly diminished during periods of high air pollution, there are very few targeted, inclusive programs, initiatives, or interventions designed to support mothers' psychological, educational, and social involvement. Therefore, there is an urgent need for efforts to strengthen social capital within the community.

Although this study is based on the lived experiences and evidence of ten mothers, it has revealed meaningful and specific results that

*Photo 4: It's very difficult to go out alone with my children, so I take my grandmother or other family members with me for support.*



reflect broader social patterns, which is a key feature of qualitative research. Based on these findings, the research team emphasizes that there is significant opportunity to initiate social services and projects that ensure the participation of mothers with young children at the policy and development levels, while also improving their accessibility.



# LIFELONG EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN IN REMOTE AREAS

2024.06 - 2024.10



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** In 2021, IRIM initiated the “Promoting Inclusive Education for Children with Disabilities in Mongolia” project and began collecting donations through the Give2Asia international fundraising network, engaging donors from the USA and other countries. Under this initiative, IRIM established connections with secondary schools in three remote soums of Khuvsgul province, home to ethnic minority populations, to assess conditions for children excluded from educational services. Based on the findings, collaboration commenced with the general education school in Renchinlkhumbe soum, Khuvsgul province, launching the “Lifelong Education for Children in Remote Areas” project.

Renchinlkhumbe soum, located approximately 1,000 kilometers from Ulaanbaatar city, the capital of Mongolia, and 265 kilometers from Murun, the capital of Khuvsgul province, is surrounded by high mountains. The area experiences severe winters with temperatures dropping below -50°C and heavy snowfall. Due to its remoteness, harsh environmental conditions, and socio-economic factors, approximately 100 children do not participate fully in regular classroom education during the 2024-2025 academic year, while around 40 children remain entirely excluded from educational services. The Renchinlkhumbe’s General Education School currently educates about 37 children through equivalency programs but faces significant challenges in consistently

reaching all targeted children due to budget limitations, lack of infrastructure and inadequate resources.

The successful implementation of this project is expected to make meaningful contributions to the development of children in remote areas who are currently excluded from educational services.

**Objective:** To support the development of ethnic minority Darkhad children in remote areas and expand their access to education.

**Geographical scope:** Renchinlkhumbe soum, Khuvsgul Province



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Through a collaborative, needs-based approach, IRIM carried out the following key activities:

**Phase 1.** School Selection and Needs Assessment: IRIM introduced the project to the management of three schools, conducted a needs assessment, and reviewed project proposals. Based on the proposals and subsequent discussions, Renchinlkhumbe's General Education School was selected for the project activities.



**Phase 2.** Preparation and Procurement: Regular meetings were held with the selected school, considering the unique conditions and educational access issues. It was jointly agreed to establish a "Mobile Lifelong Education Center." Essential purchases, including a Mongolian ger, equipment, and educational materials, were made to establish the center.

**Phase 3.** Establishing the Mobile Education Center: The project team visited Renchinlkhumbe General

Education School, set up, and delivered the fully equipped Mobile Lifelong Education Center. This enabled the provision of mobile education services to children in Renchinlkhumbe during spring and autumn, significantly contributing to the development of the local Darkhad children.

**Phase 4.** Future Activities Planning and Initiation: IRIM and Renchinlkhumbe General Education School agreed to maintain and expand their



collaboration to improve educational access and quality in the soum. They committed to collaborating on future initiatives, with planning and preparation for upcoming activities already underway.

We remain open to collaborating with organizations and individuals interested in supporting educational development for children in Renchinlkhumbe.

## COMPLETED PROJECTS

### MID-TERM EVALUATION OF THE “COMMUNITY-LED CONSERVATION” PROJECT AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC BASELINE STUDY FOR THE NEXT PHASE



2024.02 - 2024.07



#### INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Community-led conservation approaches are recognized as effective strategies for sustaining healthy ecosystems, ensuring responsible natural resource management, and supporting positive socio-economic wellbeing of local communities. In Mongolia, the Community-Led Conservation (CLC) Project has built valuable experience in implementing conservation initiatives with local participation. This project seeks to explore, develop, and promote sustainable conservation models that actively engage local communities in environmental protection.

To evaluate the project’s effectiveness and inform its future direction, Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM), on behalf of the TNC, conducted a mid-term evaluation and socio-economic baseline study for the next phase of the project. This research assessed the project’s outcomes and impacts while identifying

challenges, achievements, and recommendations to guide future interventions.

**Objective:** The study aimed to assess the project’s outcomes and its impact on local communities and conservation efforts, identify challenges, lessons learned and recommendations for the next phase, and conduct a socio-economic baseline study to support future planning.

**Methodology:** A mixed-method approach combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection tools was applied. A survey was conducted with 360 herder beneficiaries, individual interviews with eight stakeholders, and focus group discussions were organized in seven soums.

**Geographical scope:** Five target provinces - Govi-Altai, Khovd, Khentii, Dornod, and Khuvsgul.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The study reveals significant financial challenges among beneficiary households, with an average negative balance of 6.74 million MNT, as household expenditures consistently exceeded income. While Khuvsgul and Govi-Altai aimags show financial surpluses, Khovd, Dornod, and Khentii aimags experience severe seasonal deficits. Household annual income rose from \$4,039.70 in 2017 to \$6,670 in 2024, but expenditures increased more sharply from \$4,154.70 to \$8,663.70, further widening the gap. Additionally, 75.8% of households had no savings, well below the national average of 33.7%, highlighting widespread financial vulnerability.

Herders view themselves as “perseverers of traditional culture”, “guardian of the land”, “resilient,” “hardworking”, “protectors of nature”. 86.7% believe that maintaining traditional herding is crucial, however, generational differences were evident. 76.6% of older herders want their children to continue herding, while only 28.9% of young herders agree, suggesting a potential threat to the sustainability of the traditional herding lifestyle.

Regarding risk management and resilience, 45.3% of surveyed households reported serious difficulties in the past year, with 95.1% affected by dzud (severe winter conditions). While the losses



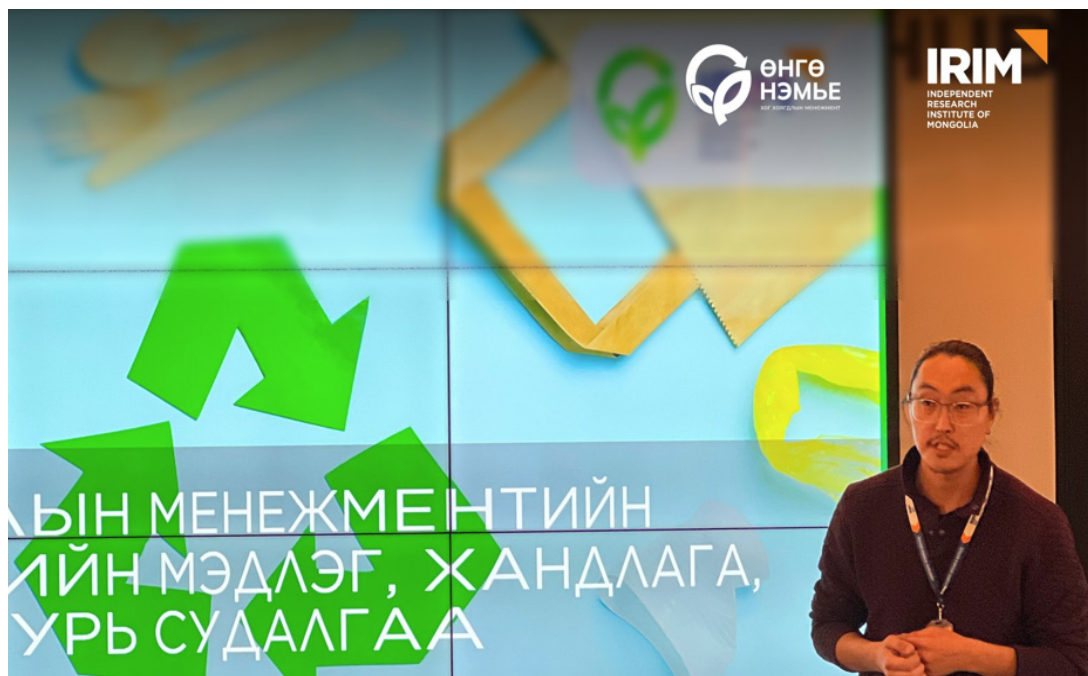
were substantial, 58.6% of affected households had no plan to reduce herd size and 90% intend to continue herding. In response to natural disasters, herders focus on stockpiling fodder, improving livestock shelters, and ensuring animal health, however these actions require significant financial resources. Support from local governments and community organizations remains insufficient, highlighting the urgent need for risk funds, shared savings, and emergency reserves.

The baseline study findings highlight the need for targeted measures to sustain traditional herding, improve herders’ livelihoods, diversify income sources, and strengthen risk management. Suggested solutions include emergency response tools and insurance schemes that enable herders to reduce the impact of climate-driven challenges.



# BASELINE STUDY ON PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICES (KAP) OF WASTE MANAGEMENT

2024.09 - 2025.02



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Waste management remains one of the major environmental challenges in Mongolia. Due to the lack of established waste segregation and recycling habits, the negative impact on the environment persists, and public participation remains insufficient. One of the main reasons for this is weak policy implementation and inconsistent regulatory oversight. Therefore, improving waste management requires not only raising public awareness and engagement but also strengthening policy implementation and regulatory enforcement.

Thus, “Ungu Nem” NGO and IRIM have signed a Memorandum of Understanding to initiate research-based public engagement and policy reform efforts in waste management. As the first step in this initiative, the Baseline Study on Public Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices of Waste Management was conducted, and relevant findings were presented.

**Objective:** To assess public knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) regarding waste management and establish a foundational dataset necessary for formulating evidence-based policy recommendations.

**Methodology:** This study utilized both primary and secondary data sources, including an analysis of policy documents and a public survey. The quantitative survey was conducted among 386 randomly selected residents from six central districts of Ulaanbaatar. The sample design allowed for a comparative assessment



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

**Knowledge:** Respondents rated their knowledge of waste processing at an average of 2.22 out of 4, indicating that their awareness is at a basic or generic level. While 53.1% of respondents had received some form of information on waste recycling, only 31.6% were aware of recycling facilities operating in Mongolia, highlighting limited access to reliable information.

**Attitude:** Respondents rated their ability to contribute to waste reduction at an average of 3.76 out of 5, reflecting a generally positive attitude toward waste management. Furthermore, 81.3% expressed concern about waste issues in their living environment, while 95.3% considered waste reduction a highly important and responsible behavior.

**Practice:** The primary reason for the underdeveloped practice of waste segregation among residents is the lack of accessible sorting bins and collection points. 78% of respondents stated that no designated waste sorting bins were available in their area. However, among those who had access to sorting bins, 81.1% reported actively using them. This indicates that insufficient



infrastructure is a major barrier to developing sustainable waste sorting habits.

The findings show that while public awareness and attitudes toward waste management are generally positive, their knowledge and practices remain relatively weak. The main challenges preventing the formation of proper sorting habits are the lack of information access and infrastructure. A comprehensive policy response and strengthened regulatory mechanisms are necessary to address these issues.

# “FINAL EVALUATION OF THE BUSINESS EXCELLENCE FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY (BEST)” PROGRAM



Хөгжлийн  
ШИЙДЭЛ

2024.07 - 2024.10



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** The BEST program, funded by the USAID, was implemented over a five-year period (2019-2024). The program aimed to promote Mongolia’s economic diversification and growth by improving small and medium-sized enterprise (SMEs)’ access to finance and enhancing economic governance, accountability, and transparency.

**Objective:** The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the program’s effectiveness, intended and unintended outcomes, and impacts. It also aimed to identify ways to improve development outcomes and provide recommendations to enhance accountability and learning from implementation.

**Methodology:** The evaluation was conducted in alignment with the BEST program’s Results Framework and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and applying its Theory of Change (ToC) to assess implementation, results, impacts, and longer-term implications.

The mixed-methods approach was used, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. Quantitative data was collected from 450 randomly selected SMEs. Qualitative methods included

document review, five focus group discussions (FGDs), and 16 key informant interviews (KIs). Additionally, five case studies were conducted to gain deeper insights into program impacts.

**Geographical scope:** Ulaanbaatar city and Bayankhongor, Darkhan-Uul, Dornod, Dornogovi, Khovd, Orkhon, Selenge, Khuvsgul, Uvurkhangai, Umnugovi, and Zavkhan aimags.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The BEST program, implemented in Ulaanbaatar and 12 aimags between 2019 and 2024, successfully achieved its goal of supporting Mongolia’s economic diversification and growth by strengthening SMEs. The program’s five core objectives, including expanding SME access to finance, enhancing corporate governance, strengthening public-private partnerships, developing research-based strategic approaches, and providing microfinance, were effectively interlinked, demonstrating the program’s overall effectiveness.

- **Access to Finance:** By establishing local offices and offering financial support, the program significantly improved SMEs' access to funding. According to survey results, 85% of SMEs received financing they applied for.
- **Corporate Governance:** SMEs received training and consulting services on business and financial management, and corporate governance. According to the survey results, 73.1% of SMEs rated the support as highly useful, and 61.6% emphasized the importance of accelerator activities in growing their businesses.
- **Transparency and Oversight:** The program strengthened collaboration among the government, private sector, and financial institutions. 73.3% of respondents noted improved transparency and fairness in financing mechanisms. However, gaps remain in government financial systems which require further improvement.
- **Research for Strategy:** The program conducted research on SME needs, access to finance, gender participation, and corporate governance. 97% of respondents considered these studies important for shaping development policies.



- **Microfinance:** While 50.2% of respondents believed that government financing was insufficient, the program's microfinance support was rated as significantly more effective.

The BEST program made substantial progress in improving SMEs' access to finance, governance practice, and transparency, contributing significantly to creating a more supportive business environment in Mongolia.

To sustain the program's achievements, future efforts should expand SME financing, reinforce public-private cooperation, and promote gender equality. Continuing these initiatives, especially in rural areas, will stimulate SME growth and support Mongolia's economic stability.



# BASELINE SURVEY FOR THE “PROMOTING HOLISTIC AND INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENTAL SUPPORT IN EARLY CHILDHOOD IN MONGOLIA” PROJECT.

2024.04 - 2024.07



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Save the Children Japan (SCJ) started a new project aimed at enhancing early childhood development support in Mongolia through the project “Promoting Holistic and Inclusive Developmental Support in Early Childhood”. Spanning from March 30, 2024, to March 29, 2025, this project aims to improve the physical environments and capacity of local public service providers – namely Family Health Centers (FHCs), the branch commissions for health, education and social protection of children with disabilities, and kindergartens – in Ulaanbaatar (specifically Bayanzurkh, Chingeltei, Songinokhairkhan districts), and in Selenge and Bayankhongor aimags.

**Objective:** (i) Assess the current policy and environment conditions related to early identification and intervention of disabilities and understand the preparedness of FHCs, branch commissions, and kindergartens prior to implementation; and (ii) Collect baseline data to monitor the project. Additionally, the research team identified key needs, priorities, challenges, and opportunities within the project’s target areas.

**Methodology:** The baseline survey was conducted by IRIM in close collaboration with SCJ, applying a comprehensive mixed-method approach across five strategic project areas. The data collection

included structured questionnaires distributed to parents of children in target kindergartens, semi-structured interviews (SSIs) with key stakeholders, and in-depth case studies (CS) involving parents of children with disabilities or developmental delays in the project’s focal kindergartens.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

**Outcome 1:** The baseline survey indicates that the coverage of health and developmental checkups for children across all targeted FHCs is 63.7%, with notable variations. These checkups assess children’s overall health, growth milestones, and developmental delays and are integral in early intervention strategies. However, parental involvement in these checkups is reported to be low, which may be attributed to a lack of awareness, accessibility, or trust in the process. Additionally, FHCs face legal gaps and policy related challenges that hinder comprehensive checkups of children’s health and development. Doctors at the targeted FHCs rated their ability to identify childhood delays and difficulties as intermediate and expressed a need for further training to strengthen their capacity in this area.

**Outcome 2:** The baseline survey reveals a mixed picture of strengths and limitations. The Branch Commission for Health, Education, and Social Protection of Children with Disabilities self-



assessed their capacity to fulfill responsibilities under the relevant regulation at 4.0 (good). However, the lack of an objective evaluation tool was noted, highlighting the need to develop a more reliable and standardized measurement system to accurately assess performance and guide improvement efforts.

**Outcome 3:** Parents generally prefer consulting kindergarten teachers rather than doctors at FHCs regarding their child's development. This trend was observed across all sites, though levels of engagement between kindergartens indicated differences in accessibility, trust and communication across institutions.

**Outcome 4:** While the survey results show that parents are aware of the importance of early identification and intervention, only (7.7%) of them have actually participated in early intervention programs. This demonstrates a clear gap between awareness and behavior, suggesting a need to design interventions that encourage and support parental participation in these services.



**Outcome 5:** As a result of our study, it was found that numerous legal documents related to inclusive education have been developed in recent years. These provide a legal and policy foundation for inclusive education and reflect a growing awareness of the importance of ensuring access to quality education for children with developmental delays and disabilities.

# THE UN MULTI-COUNTY STUDY ON MEN (MCS) ON MEN AND VIOLENCE: MEN'S LIFE EXPERIENCE AND USE OF VIOLENCE

2024.04 - 2024.09



ХУУЛЬ ЗҮЙ, ДОТООД  
ХЭРГИЙН ЯАМ



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Gender-based violence (GBV) remains a significant global challenge in promoting human rights and gender equality. Effective prevention and response efforts require not only survivor-centered support but also a deeper understanding of the root causes and influencing factors of violence. Examining how men's attitudes and life experiences influence violent behavior is key to developing impactful policies and programs. In Mongolia, localizing and implementing the UN Multi-County Study on Men (MCS) and Violence plays a key role in developing new GBV prevention initiative and enhancing current policies and programs. Building a strong evidence base through this study enables more informed and effective interventions. In this context, Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM) was responsible for localizing and implementing this international study in Mongolia, ensuring that its methodology and implementation align with the local context.

**Objective:** This study explored men's life histories to understand how their past experiences shape their present lives, views on gender, and interpersonal relationships.

**Methodology:** Participants provided information using two methods: self-administered questionnaires and researcher-administered interviews. The survey covered childhood experiences, perceptions of gender relations, intimate relationships, roles as fatherhood, health and well-being, and sexual experiences. As recommended by ADB team and senior GBV researchers, the IRIM team led the ethical clearance process. Official approval was granted by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the National University of Mongolia (NUM) on May 17, 2024.

**Geographical scope:** Khovd, Uvs, Uvurkhangai, Khuvsgul, Darkhan-Uul, Orkhon, Umnugovi, and Dornod and six districts of Ulaanbaatar.

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



2023.05 - 2024.04



## INTRODUCTION

**Objective:** The aim of this research is to determine how climate change and related factors affect population mortality and morbidity. The findings will contribute to the development of evidence-based public health policies for climate change adaptation and provide practical recommendations for policymakers.

The research aims to achieve the following main objectives:

- Analyze existing policies and public health programs related to climate change, human health, food security, and nutrition in Mongolia.
- Examine the relationship between climate-related health risks and selected diseases, as well as their associated mortality.

**Methodology:** This study employed a combination of primary and secondary data collection methods.

**Desk review:** The study analyzed monthly data from 2012 to 2022 for five disease groups: respiratory diseases, cardiovascular diseases, digestive diseases, zoonotic diseases, and overall mortality. It also utilized 12 extreme weather indices, along with air temperature, precipitation, wind, and humidity data from approximately 30 weather stations covering the same period.

**Qualitative data:** Data was collected through individual interviews with representatives of key stakeholders, including decision-makers, national and local government agencies, development partners, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Focus group discussions (FGDs) were also conducted with representatives from populations most affected by climate change, such as herders and farmers.

**Geographical scope:** Ulaanbaatar city and 21 aimags



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The research indicates that climate change has significant negative impacts on human health, particularly in regions with cold and dry climates, increasing the risk of cardiovascular diseases, respiratory illnesses, and digestive system disorders.

- **Cardiovascular Diseases (CVD):** The relationship between air temperature and CVD risk varies by province, with mortality rates tending to rise in colder and drier regions. This trend is particularly evident in Ulaanbaatar City and the northern aimags, where intensified cold weather is expected to cause increased mortality from CVD.

- **Respiratory Diseases:** As temperatures drop and the number of cold days increases, respiratory illnesses also become more prevalent. However, the effects of dry air differ between western aimags and urban areas, reflecting environmental and socio-economic differences. Elderly individuals and women are more vulnerable, requiring targeted policies and social support services.
- **Digestive System Diseases:** The impact of air temperature and humidity varies by province. In the southwestern aimags, increasing dryness has contributed to a rise in digestive disorders, particularly among the elderly. Therefore, targeted interventions and support services are required.



The findings further reveal that climate change is negatively affecting food production and availability, leading to reduced crop yields and declining livestock health, which in turn exacerbates food and nutritional insecurity.

In addition to cold weather threats, Mongolia experienced significant warming with an average temperature increasing by  $\geq 2^{\circ}\text{C}$  between 1940 and 2015. This warming has directly impacted crop yields, livestock health, and overall food production. For example, both daytime and nighttime temperatures influence wheat yields. The climate change outlook indicates a decrease in cold days and nights, alongside an increase in hot days and nights. Interestingly, cold nights show a positive correlation with commodity weight, highlighting the important link between temperature fluctuations and food productivity.



# BASELINE SURVEY FOR THE “INTEGRATED APPROACH TO TRANSITIONING ULAANBAATAR CITY TO RENEWABLE ENERGY” PROJECT



2024.02 - 2024.04



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** The “Integrated Approach to Transitioning Ulaanbaatar City to Renewable Energy” project, implemented by URECA LLC, aims to reduce air pollution and promote sustainable energy consumption by transitioning ger district households to renewable energy. The project will install electric heating systems and solar panels in selected households in Ulaanbaatar to test new heating solutions. Additionally, a smart monitoring system will be introduced to track household energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, households with reduced emissions will have the opportunity to validate and trade their carbon credits.

The project is supported by UNDP, The Asia Foundation (TAF), and the “Ger Hub” NGO, with active involvement from the MUB in its implementation. The baseline survey was conducted by IRIM to establish essential data. The survey results offer objective, data-based quantitative insights into fuel consumption, heating habits, and greenhouse gas emissions, which will serve as a critical basis for assessing the project’s impact and guiding policy decisions.

**Objective:** The primary objective of the baseline survey is to collect detailed data on fuel use, energy consumption, and heating conditions among ger district households. This information

will support evidence-based policy decisions and serve as key input for URECA’s “Coal-to-Solar” project, helping to ensure alignment with “Gold Standard” international certification requirements.

**Methodology:** Since ger district households are major contributors to air pollution in Ulaanbaatar, this baseline survey followed the “Gold Standard” methodology to assess their potential for transitioning renewable energy sources.

Gold standard is a globally recognized certification system that validates emission reduction and sustainable development projects, ensuring their credibility and climate impact.

The survey initially aimed to include 120 households. To account for potential risks and uncertainties, a total of 130 households were approached, and full data was collected from 122. Each household was visited four times over four days, during which detailed measurements of fuel consumption and heating patterns were recorded. The survey primarily focused on single-female-headed households using traditional stoves.

**Geographical scope:** Six central districts of Ulaanbaatar (Bayanzurkh, Chingeltei, Songinokhairkhan, Sukhbaatar, Khan-Uul, and Bayangol)





## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- The survey results show that ger district households mainly rely on traditional stoves, which are associated with high fuel consumption, frequent heating cycles, and low energy efficiency. Fuel usage and costs are significantly influenced by household income, insulation quality, and access to fuel. Key findings from this study are presented below:
- High fuel consumption and costs: On average, households consume an average of 4.6 tons of refined coal and 321.3 kg of wood annually, incurring an average fuel cost of 893,700 MNT. Fuel consumption is closely linked to the availability of insulation, distance from fuel distribution points, and access to affordable fuel.

- Frequent heating cycles: Households light their stoves approximately 3.2 times per day, with each heating session taking approximately 12 minutes. Morning heating typically starts at 6:00 AM, while evening heating occurs between 5:00 PM and 2:00 AM.
- Limited access to electric heating: 94.2% of households surveyed had never used electric heating. Among those who had used it before, most stopped due to high electricity costs, unstable voltage, and frequent power outages.
- Fuel consumption in single-female-headed households: These households consume 10-15% less fuel (averaging 4.1 tons of refined coal and 147.7 kg of wood per year) compared to the average household.



## MONGOLIA RESILIENT WATER SUPPLY FEASIBILITY STUDY – ADDITIONAL SCOPE



2024.04 - 2024.07



### INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Mongolia's agriculture is highly vulnerable to climate-related risks driven by climate change. These risks pose serious threats to food security and create challenges in crop production due to reduced yields and declining soil fertility caused by droughts. The development of irrigated agriculture in Mongolia is widely recognized as a key strategy to mitigate these risks and improve agriculture productivity.

To address this, MOFALI submitted a request to the EBRD to explore the possibility of securing a sovereign-guaranteed loan to finance the rehabilitation and expansion of the state-owned irrigation water conveyance infrastructure.

In response, the EBRD appointed Atkins to carry out a Feasibility Study (FS) to assess current irrigation water resource practices in Mongolia and identify a priority investment programme (PIP). The FS also includes an environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA), under which IRIM conducted the socio-economic baseline.

**Objective:** The goal of the study was to assess the current socio-economic conditions of households in five project impact areas, evaluate the potential effects of establishing irrigation systems and water conveyance channels, and identify measures to mitigate negative impacts.

**Methodology:** The research was conducted in accordance with the EBRD's Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) requirements and methodology. This includes the following steps:

Desk Review:

- Collected and reviewed secondary data on the social, economic, and gender conditions in the project locations.
- Identified key project stakeholders.

Data Collection:

- Quantitative Research: A socio-economic baseline survey was conducted with 125 households within the project impact areas.

Qualitative Research: Key informant interviews and focus group discussions were held with local authorities, experts, herders, farmers, and project beneficiaries to gather further insights.

### Geographical scope

Arkhangai (Khar Khul Khan scheme), Darkhan-Uul (Khongor and Shariin Gol scheme), Gobi-Altai (Shokhoin Bulan scheme), Khentii (Ulziit scheme)

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The final research report and deliverables were submitted to the client, EBRD. The findings are yet to be publicly disclosed.



# "ASSESSMENT OF HEALTH INSTITUTIONS' PREPAREDNESS AND HEALTH WORKERS' KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDE, AND PRACTICE IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE"



2024.01 - 2024.12



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** In recent years, countries have increasingly focused on the health impacts of climate change. One example is the adoption of the "Declaration on Climate and Health" by the 2023 Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) to United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). This declaration highlights the urgent need to address the global health impacts of climate change globally, while highlighting the interconnectedness between climate and public health within the frameworks of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement.

A 2024 study commissioned by the Global Green Growth Institute titled "Assessment of the impacts of climate change on human health, food security, and nutrition in Mongolia" revealed that climate change is increasing the prevalence of cardiovascular, respiratory, and digestive diseases and contributing to elevated mortality rates. Additionally, extreme heat and drought increase the risk of tick-borne infections, while the Dzud disaster negatively impact herders' mental health. These early health impacts and the growing risks associated with climate-related disasters are placing a heavy burden on health institutions and intensifying vulnerability across populations.

**Objectives:** The main goal of this survey is to assess the impact of climate change on the health sector and evaluate the preparedness and response capacity of health institutions. To achieve this, the survey team set the following objectives:

1. To evaluate healthcare workers' knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) related to climate change.
2. To assess disaster preparedness, infrastructure, and service readiness of healthcare institutions in the context of climate change.

**Methodology:** This cross-sectional study applied quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure comprehensive analysis. The survey consists of two main components:

1. Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) Survey

A quantitative survey was conducted to assess healthcare professionals' understanding of climate change, their attitudes, and practices they take in response. Data was collected through both face-to-face and telephone surveys.

2. Assessment of Health Institutions' Preparedness for Climate Change



Preparedness was assessed using structured observational tools to evaluate the disaster readiness of health facilities. In-depth interviews with senior-level health facility staff were conducted to verify findings, identify root causes, and explore possible solutions.

This assessment was guided by the “Checklist for Assessing the Vulnerability of Health Facilities in Climate Change Contexts”, developed by the World Health Organization (WHO) in 2021.

**Geographical scope** The quantitative survey involved 1,200 healthcare workers from 9 districts and 21 provinces. The qualitative component covered 78 hospitals located in 8 aimags (Gobi-Altai,Uvs, Dornod, Sukhbaatar, Dundgovi, Uvurkhangai, Bayankhongor, Arkhangai) and 9 districts.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Knowledge and understanding of climate change

While the majority of healthcare workers acknowledged that climate change is occurring, there was a lack of comprehensive understanding of its scope and impacts. Many lacked the foundational knowledge needed to evaluate the vulnerability of the health system to climate change.

Attitudes toward climate change: Approximately 50% of healthcare respondents were aware of natural disasters such as floods and dzuds linked to climate change. Many considered the health sector unprepared for these impacts. Nonetheless, healthcare professionals demonstrated a strong

sense of personal responsibility for contributing to climate change, mitigation and adaptation. Concerns varied depending on organizational level, location, and age of the respondents.

Practices related to climate change: The study explored health workers’ experiences responding to climate-related and other emergencies, and their current disaster risk mitigation. It found that cross-sector collaboration experience was limited. While some eco-friendly practices were commonly observed, there was little renewable energy adoption at the facility level.

Assessment of Health Institutions’ Preparedness

Availability of services: Although respondents rated overall health sector preparedness as insufficient, they considered the availability and readiness of healthcare services as above average. Coordination between different levels of health institutions was reported to be strong. However, staffing and financing emerged as major challenges. In particular, resource mobilization remains an issue, with funding shortages limiting the availability of essential medicine, supplies and equipment.

Facility preparedness: The assessment reviewed leadership, organizational structure, planning and documentation, human resources, water and sanitation (WASH), hygiene, waste management, energy infrastructure, communications, and technology. Results indicated that overall facility preparedness was rated average, but critical infrastructure areas such as energy, water, sanitation, and hygiene were rated as inadequate.

# PUBLIC OPINION SURVEY ON JUST ENERGY TRANSITION



2024.09 - 2024.12



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** The Government of Mongolia has reaffirmed its commitment to reforming the energy sector and has begun taking concrete steps toward a comprehensive energy transition. In this context, the UNDP introduced its “Just Energy Transition” framework to the public in November 2024. This framework emphasizes the urgent need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels and accelerate the shift towards renewable energy solutions.

Within this initiative, Independent Research Institute of Mongolia (IRIM), under the commission and funding of the WB and the UNDP, conducted a “Public Opinion Survey on Just Energy Transition” at the national level in two phases.

**Objective:** The main objective was to assess the public’s opinion on developing and implementing fair, sustainable, and politically feasible energy transition policies, and to equip relevant stakeholders with evidence-based insights.

**Methodology:** A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used for data collection over two phases. In Phase 1, data was collected using quantitative research methods only, with a general sampling approach. In Phase 2, the sampling was expanded to include more households from ger areas, and qualitative research methods were added.

Based on the survey findings, a social analysis and policy recommendations will be developed to ensure a just energy transition in Mongolia, aligned with the global Sustainable Development Goals.

**Geographical scope** The survey covered 1,500 households located in Ulaanbaatar and 21 provinces, as well as 15 private sector organizations working on the implementation of renewable energy solutions.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

This consultancy assignment was limited to data collection only. No data analysis or final reporting was conducted as part of the scope of this work.



# MONGOLIA'S ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI) READINESS ASSESSMENT

2024.12 - 2024.04



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Artificial Intelligence (AI) is becoming a crucial driver of global digital transformation, accelerating economic growth, improving public services, and supporting sustainable development. In collaboration with the UNDP and the Communications and Digital Development Office (CDO), the Government of Mongolia has initiated policies aimed at leveraging AI for national development. This required an evaluation of Mongolia's institutional capacity, legal and policy frameworks, data accessibility, and socio-economic impacts to effectively implement AI technologies.

On behalf of UNDP in Mongolia, IRIM conducted the "Mongolia's AI Readiness Assessment" to identify current capacities, existing challenges, and opportunities for future development. The assessment provides essential foundational insights to guide Mongolia's AI strategy and the effective integration of technological advancements into policymaking.

**Objective:** This assessment aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of Mongolia's preparedness to adopt and use AI responsibly and effectively.

**Methodology:** The assessment applied UNDP's global Artificial Intelligence Readiness Assessment (AILA) framework, which is structured around three core pillars:

- Government capacity to effectively adopt and use AI.
- Government's role in enabling a supportive AI ecosystem.
- The national capacity and conditions for establishing ethical principles for AI.

As part of the assessment, data and interviews were collected to evaluate Mongolia's current AI capacity, leading to results and recommendations to support the development of future strategies and policies.

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

**Government as a user:** Mongolia is actively advancing its use of AI in government services and is currently in the ‘Differentiating’ phase, where initiatives are formalized but remain fragmented. Mongolia is actively developing its approach to AI in government services, placing it in the “Differentiating” phase, which is characterized by formalized yet fragmented initiatives. Although digital infrastructure and data governance frameworks are improving, challenges such as database fragmentation, low interoperability, and unclear regulations hinder efficient AI adoption. Additionally, the public sector faces considerable skill shortages, highlighting the need for enhanced technical expertise and digital literacy among civil



servants. Despite strong political will to promote AI for economic modernization, the lack of a national AI strategy limits coherent, long-term development.

**Government as an enabler:** The government is making visible progress, however, continues to face ongoing challenges. Investments in digital infrastructure and connectivity have increased, but AI-specific capabilities, such as high-performance computing, remain limited. Persistent skills gaps,



driven by insufficient STEM education and talent retention issues, highlight the need for stronger AI-focused training and incentives to reduce brain drain. While legal and data governance frameworks exist, their quality and interoperability remain limited. Additionally, the absence of a national AI strategy and a weak innovation ecosystem hinder development, highlighting the need for coordinated public-private partnerships and targeted policies.

**Ethical AI:** Mongolia is in the early stages of developing an ethical AI framework, with ongoing policy discussions but notable gaps that still need to be addressed. Clear accountability and legal mechanisms for challenging algorithmic decisions are still lacking, though relevant institutions have recently been assigned responsibility. Public engagement has begun but remains limited, and inclusive policymaking is weak. In terms of safety, existing regulations cover general data protection but do not address AI-specific risks, highlighting the need for dedicated AI safety regulations and capacity-building. Transparency is also limited, with little formal documentation of government AI use and few legal requirements to explain how AI systems make decisions.



## ONGOING PROJECTS

### ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (ESIA) CONSULTANCY FOR THE KHALZAN BUREGDEI PROJECT

2024.05 - 2026.02



#### INTRODUCTION

**Background:** The MNREC plans to develop rare earth element mining operations at the Khalzan Buregdei and Ar Khuren deposits, for which it holds special mining licenses. To ensure the project meets international standards, an Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) is required.

In this context, conducting a socio-economic baseline study in the project-affected areas is essential to identify potential impacts, mitigate risks, and safeguard community interests. In partnership with Sustainability East Asia LLC and SLR Consulting, IRIM is undertaking this socio-economic study to assess social and economic impacts of the project, incorporate local community feedback, and propose appropriate mitigation measures.

**Methodology:** The assessment employs qualitative and quantitative methods in line with international standards:

- Quantitative Socio-Economic Survey: Assessed with local livelihoods, income sources, and access to public services.
- Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): Conducted with local authorities, governmental and international development partners, private sector stakeholders and NGOs.
- Case Studies: Collected reliable information to guide strategic decisions, resource allocation, and ensure alignment with community needs.
- Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Conducted with herders, farmers, women, youth, and local businesses to capture diverse perspectives.

**Geographical scope:** Myangad Soum, Khovd Province

## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

Baseline data collection for the study has been completed and is currently in the data consolidation and reporting phase. The results have not yet been publicly disclosed. Based on the findings, MNREC intends to implement the project in accordance with international standards, ensuring active and meaningful participation of local communities. As a result of the study:

1. Baseline data and indicators on the socio-economic conditions in the project area will be established.
2. Community and stakeholder needs, perceptions and priorities will be better understood to support solution design.
3. Potential risks associated with project implementation will be identified, enabling the development of targeted mitigation strategies.



# SURVEY ON SOCIALLY SUSTAINABLE TRANSITION TO LOW CARBON DEVELOPMENT IN MONGOLIA

2024.09 - 2025.04



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Mongolia is experiencing significant challenges related to climate change and environmental degradation. Between 1940 and 2013, the average temperature increased by 2.07°C, and 77% of the country's territory has been affected by desertification. In recent years, the frequency of droughts and dzuds (harsh winters) has notably increased, severely impacting livestock and agriculture.

Under the Paris Agreement, the Government of Mongolia (GoM) aims to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 22.7% by 2030. Additionally, the "Vision 2050" policy emphasizes the development of a green financing system and promotes sustainability and productivity in the agricultural sector. While Mongolia is not a significant global emitter of GHG, domestic issues like pasture degradation due to livestock overpopulation have caused severe environmental and socioeconomic impacts. Maintaining livestock numbers within sustainable limits and enhancing pasture management practices are vital for Mongolia's social, environmental, and economic stability.

This survey aims to generate foundational data crucial for enhancing local policies, financing mechanisms, and citizen participation in climate adaptation and mitigation.

**Objective:** The primary objective is to provide evidence-based policy recommendations and practical guidance to support Mongolia's inclusive, sustainable, and well-managed transition to low-carbon development. The study specifically focuses on identifying the impacts of climate change on rural populations, particularly herder communities, to inform targeted adaptation and mitigation strategies.

**Methodology:** This research employs both quantitative and qualitative methodologies.

**Quantitative Research:** A total of 1,400 were randomly selected participants across three distinct groups—urban residents, rural residents, and herders. Before finalizing the quantitative tools, a pilot and qualitative pre-assessments were conducted to refine the methodology and ensure validity. The key areas of inquiry included:

- Public knowledge and awareness of climate change, including observed environmental and climate changes related natural disasters.
- Attitudes towards climate adaptation measures and GHG mitigation strategies.
- Practices related to adaptation and preventative actions.
- Levels of citizen engagement, perceptions of policy implementation, and expectations for governmental actions.

- Perceptions on sustainable pasture management, challenges faced by herders, and potential solutions.

**Qualitative Research:** Qualitative data was gathered through 24 key informant interview (KIIs) with local government officials and sector stakeholders, and 6 focus group discussion (FGDs) with members of public and herders.

The study design ensured gender-sensitive and equal participation. Both survey and FGDs included balanced male and female representation, with separate groups where needed to encourage open discussion. The analysis examined whether there were any statistically significant differences based on sex, using comparative methods and statistical tests, and key sex-specific insights were integrated into the findings.

**Geographical scope:** Ulaanbaatar city, 16 soums across eight aimags, including Khovd, Gobi-Altai, Khuvsgul, Arkhangai, Selenge, Umnugovi, Dornod, and Sukhbaatar.



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The project is currently in the data analysis and report drafting phase. The findings are being synthesized and will be finalized in the upcoming stages.



# ENHANCING GENDER EQUALITY FOR RURAL WOMEN AND GIRLS THROUGH CLIMATE-RESILIENT AND GENDER-RESPONSIVE POLICIES – CONSULTING FIRM (CSO) ON GENDER, AND MONITORING AND EVALUATION



2024.08 - 2026.12



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Climate change has a significant impact on the agriculture and livestock sector, creating multiple negative consequences for rural populations, especially women. Due to these effects, women's labor opportunities have diminished, increasing their vulnerability to economic hardship. Statistics show a continued decline in the number of female herders since 2000, lower enrollment in social insurance schemes, and more limited participation in the labor market access compared to men. As women's involvement in rural agriculture and livestock declines, their livelihood security is weakened, forcing many to migrate to urban areas. Consequently, concerns have been raised regarding an increase in poverty and lack of social protection for these women. Although progress has been made in increasing women's participation in decision-making roles, gender equality within traditional agriculture is

insufficiently addressed. Therefore, it is essential to promote gender equality, expand women's participation, and support sustainable livelihoods through policy-level interventions.

IRIM, funded by ADB and in collaboration with NCGE, launched a technical assistance project to improve gender equality in rural areas through climate resilient and gender-sensitive policies, particularly in agriculture and light industry sectors most affected by climate change.

**Objective:** To support the effective implementation of gender equality and climate resilience efforts through targeted policy recommendations, regional seminars, international conferences, and empowerment programs for women-led micro-business entrepreneurs, while promoting best practices in agriculture and light industry.

**Expected Outcomes: Policy Support:** To prepare an evaluation report on the implementation of the Cross Sectoral Strategic Plan for Promoting Gender Equality (CSSPPGE) (2022-2031), focusing on the evaluation of the policy's outcomes in two selected aimags by local NGOs. This includes monitoring and analyzing the implementation of gender-related sub-programs in these aimags. The following actions will be undertaken:

- Develop and present a methodology for evaluating the effectiveness of gender policies in the Food, Agriculture and Light Industry (FALI) sector.
- Assess the implementation of the policy of FALI at the local level, evaluate the gender sensitivity of the services provided, and translate the report.

**Capacity Development:** Organizing knowledge-sharing activities to promote gender equality and improve the livelihoods of rural women.

- Organize two regional conferences with 200 participants from 21 aimags.
- Hold an international conference with over 150 representatives from more than 20 partner organizations).

**Economic Empowerment: Women's Economic Empowerment Activities.**

- Support a total of 10 small businesses run by women in the two selected aimags and four soums.
- Document and disseminate best practices to local small businesses.
- Develop recommendations for improving the Mongolian National Herder Program and the TVET Herder Program with a gender-sensitive approach.

**Geographical scope:** Jargalant and Bayanchandman soums of Tuv aimag, and Umnudelger and Tsenkhermandal soums of Khentii aimag.



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Currently, the project is in the phase of developing the conceptual framework, methodology, and design of the planned activities. This includes:
2. Under Outcome 1, the methodology for assessing gender policies implementation in agriculture and light industry was developed.
3. Under Outcome 2, the concept note, agenda, participants' list, and invitations for the international conference were prepared and shared with stakeholders.
4. Under Outcome 3, as a part of the micro-entrepreneur empowerment initiative, 10 micro-businesses were selected through a structured process to support their development.
5. Additionally, gender-sensitive recommendations were developed to improve the Mongolia's National Herder Program and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Herder Program.

# STUDY ON THE CURRENT SITUATION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN MONGOLIA



2024.12 - 2025.04



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Combating gender-based violence (GBV) is one of the key directions of JICA's global strategy on "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment." Within this framework, JICA aims to expand services and protection for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence, strengthen the capacity of relevant institutions, and promote changes in social attitudes and behaviors to create a violence-free environment.

In Mongolia, GBV continues to be a pressing societal issue. In particular, the number of domestic and sexual violence cases has increased significantly in the post-pandemic years, raising serious concerns. According to statistics from the

National Police Agency (2020-2024), an average of 115 cases of domestic violence under Article 11.7 of the Criminal Code were committed and over 10,500 cases of infringements related to domestic violence are recorded annually. This indicates a rising trend compared to previous years.

**Objective:** The primary goals of this study are to analyze the causes of the increase in GBV, assess the effectiveness of recent interventions, and evaluate the collaboration between government and international organizations in addressing GBV.

**Geographic scope:** Ulaanbaatar, Darkhan-Uul, and Khentii aimags



# CONSULTING SERVICES TO STRENGTHEN THE CAPACITY OF MICRO, SMALL, AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES IN CIRCULAR ECONOMY AND GREEN BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



БАЙГАЛЬ ОРЧИН,  
АЯЛАЛ ЖУУЛЧЛАЛЫН ЯАМ



2022.11 - 2025.05



## INTRODUCTION

**Background:** As ecological concerns grow, businesses are increasingly compelled to adopt responsible and sustainable practices. Globally, companies are shifting toward a circular economy (CE) model that reduces environmental impact by minimizing the use of natural resources and producing less waste. This model promotes the sustainable use of resources and offers the potential to enhance cost-effectiveness, productivity, and profitability, all while preserving the environment. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has hindered these efforts, affecting individuals, businesses, and economies at all levels. Additionally, it is crucial to include women in business development and COVID-19 recovery efforts to ensure an equitable transition to circular economies, where women have a greater voice and involvement.

To address these challenges, the Asian Development Bank funded a regional project in China and Mongolia to promote gender-inclusive green business practices and post-pandemic recovery. In Mongolia, IRIM, in collaboration with the Mongolian Sustainable Finance Association, Development Solutions NGO, and the German organization Adelphi, launched a consultancy service to support these goals from November 2022 to May 2025.

**Objectives:** The consulting service aims to promote gender equality by enhancing the knowledge and capacity of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) in circular economy principles and green technologies. The service particularly supports women-owned and women-managed MSMEs in recovering from the post-COVID-19 crisis and advancing toward a sustainable, green economy.

**Methodology:** The project was implemented in 3 components. These include:

- 1) Review the policy and legal environment to facilitate the adoption of a circular economy, conduct a comprehensive assessment of opportunities, readiness, challenges, and stakeholder participation, and carry out a needs assessment and baseline survey among female entrepreneurs in the sectors most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic
- 2) Based on the assessment findings, a bootcamp program was developed and implemented to raise awareness and knowledge of CE, while strengthening the capacity of MSMEs in target sectors.



3) Building on the results of capacity-building efforts, national and international knowledge exchange events were organised, and policy dialogues were held at the policy level.

**Geographical scope:** Ulaanbaatar, Khuvsgul, and Arkhangai aimags



## FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

1. Comprehensive Assessment: A comprehensive assessment was conducted through policy and legal analysis, a survey with female entrepreneurs and evaluation of the enabling environment, readiness, opportunities, challenges, and stakeholder engagement for introducing CE. Most of the MSMEs have limited knowledge of the CE, often associating it with waste management. Although interest in CE is high, common challenges include lack of understanding, knowledge, and financial barriers, hindering practical implementation.
2. Capacity Building Program: Based on the needs assessment, a program was designed and implemented to improve the understanding and knowledge of the circular economy and build the capacity of entrepreneurs engaged in food and packaging sectors in tourism. Seven in-person and two online training sessions were organized in the project's target locations, UB, Khuvsgul, and Arkhangai aimags. A total of 1,300 MSMEs participated in the training and received six rounds of mentoring services.
3. Grant program: To support women-owned MSMEs in the food and packaging sectors of the tourism industry in recovering from the post-COVID-19 crisis and advancing green recovery, the "Best Green Business Grant Program" was launched. From 60 proposals, 30 business projects were selected for the second round. A selection committee composed of representatives from the MECC, ADB, and the project implementing organizations selected the top 16 businesses. Each business received equipment worth \$9,000 with no repayment obligation.
4. Study Tour: The study tour aimed to meet with international organizations and policymakers in the field of gender-sensitive green finance and CE to learn from their experiences. The delegation also attended "Rethink" Sustainable Development event in Hong Kong, where they observed real-world project implementations. Six representatives from the MECC, the ToC, the ADB, and MSMEs participated.
5. Policy dialogue: A national policy dialogue was successfully organized to share findings, policy implementation trends, good practices, and lessons learned in CE and gender-sensitive policy implementation. The discussion also addressed key challenges, including financing of green and inclusive tourism development.
6. Online Dialogue with CAREC countries: An online discussion was organized with 163 participants from CAREC member countries and Mongolia. This served as a critical platform to share experiences and information on CE and the green transition and to deliberate on increasing women's participation at the regional level.

## LOCAL BUSINESS CONSULTANCY SERVICE

2024.09 - 2026.12



### INTRODUCTION

**Background:** Oyu Tolgoi (OT) LLC has invested over US\$10 billion in Mongolia, significantly contributing to national economic development through taxes, fees, procurement at the national and local levels, salaries, and other contributions. While OT LLC has had a positive impact at the local and regional level, major socio-economic challenges remain in Umnugobi aimag. These include:

1. High dependence on the mining sector and insufficient economic diversification;
2. Inadequate human resources in state and private sectors; and
3. Underutilization of emerging sectors, such as renewable energy, agriculture, and tourism.

OT's New Business Strategy is built on four pillars. Within this framework, the Partnership pillar is designed to support socio-economic development of Umnugobi aimag through proactive partnership engagements. Newly established Regional Economic Development (RED) team within OT's Community and Social Performance (CSP) Department plays a key role in implementing this initiative. Accordingly, OT has commissioned the Local Business Development Consultancy Services Project for the period 2024-2026, with IRIM and MIRIM selected as implementing partners.

**Objective:** The overall objective of this consultancy is to promote economic diversification and long-term development in Umnugobi province

by strengthening local capacities. The project focuses on achieving progress in four non-mining economic sectors:

1. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and manufacturing.
2. Sustainable livelihoods and income opportunities for herders.
3. Tourism development.
4. Development of agriculture and livestock sector.

**Methodology:** The consultancy encompasses 13 initiatives, categorized into five levels of intervention. These levels ensure strategic, policy and operational collaboration with local stakeholders to support economic development in a systematic manner.

#### Level 1 – Strategic Planning and Development

Activities include developing regional economic strategies through systemic analysis, stakeholder consultations, and evidence-based planning. Key achievements at this level includes:

- Developing a Regional Economic Development Roadmap.
- Strategic planning for SME, local business, and eco-tourism sectors.

## Level 2 – Policy Development

This level focuses on the formulating and implementing policy documents targeting specific economic sectors and groups. This includes:

- Developing a Youth Herder Support Program.
- Developing a climate change impact mitigation strategy for the livestock sector in the Gobi region.

## Level 3 – Capacity Building and Institutional Strengthening

At the next level, the focus is on enhancing local institutional capacity and promoting self-reliant, sustainable institutional development. Expert consultants are stationed locally to ensure coordination and effectiveness. Key activities include:

- Business strategy and planning for cooperatives.
- Implementation planning for a Cattle Fattening Project.
- Implementation of sustainable livelihood projects (e.g., eco-hostel, candle production, fodder and vegetable cultivation).



## Level 4 – Research and Innovation

This level promoted innovation through feasibility studies, and new business model development, with the following studies performed:

- Feasibility study and business planning for camel and sheep wool processing and value-added production.
- Feasibility study for a camel milk farm project.

## Level 5 – Technical and Operational Support

This level includes direct technical implementation and advisory services for OT-initiative projects and includes:

- Developing a close out plan for sustainable livelihood projects
- Business planning and technical advisory for a meat processing plant.

Currently, all 13 projects are under active implementation. Additional capacity-building initiatives and complementary programs will be developed to further strengthen local economic resilience and sustainability.