

Supporting REDD+ planning in Mongolia

Input into a proposed request for Targeted Support from the UN-REDD Programme

The activities proposed below will support the implementation of the national REDD+ Roadmap in Mongolia through the development of decision support tools for REDD+ planning, supporting Mongolia to enhance potential benefits from REDD+ and to reduce potential risks, through map-based analysis and technical capacity building on these issues, further informing the creation of a sustainable forestry sector and green development. The Environmental Information Center of Mongolia (EIC), the United Nations Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre (UNEP-WCMC), and other partners propose to work together to deliver this support.

Objectives

The activities have two main objectives:

1. To support Mongolia to develop decision support tools for REDD+ planning, to help deliver multiple benefits and reduce potential risks. The results would be designed to contribute to the planning of REDD+ pilot activities, and the harmonization of REDD+ policies with other national development policies and plans, and environmental and social priorities.
2. To build capacity with Mongolian partners on integrated planning and information system to support forest sector and REDD+ planning that incorporate multiple benefits and environmental safeguards.

Context and requirements

Mongolia is a country with limited forest resources, with forest covering 8.5% of the country's total area. Its forest area has decreased by 1.2 million ha over the past 30 years, due to global warming and human impacts (Source: Report of Forest Agency, 2010).

Disturbance type	% of total disturbance	Affected area (ha)
Logging	2.4	294,386
Fire	17.4	2,183,359
Other human activities	15.0	1,880,796
No disturbance	64.1	8,022,006
Pest	0.7	89,951
Natural disaster (strong wind, heavy snow etc)	0.4	49,064

Source: Land use and land use change assessment of Mongolia (MEGD, 2014)

More than 2 million ha of forest have been recently affected by fire, while 8 million ha do not show evidence of disturbance (this value is close to the area of 60% of forest with good canopy cover). Grazing (classified under other human activity) has affected over 1,880,796 ha of forest land close to the area of forestland with open canopy cover, i.e. 10-30%).

To improve forest planning, management and policy, including the planning and implementation of REDD+, Mongolia needs to develop an effective forest monitoring system appropriate to limited resources, including a Web/GIS-based shared forest database integrating different data sources. Mongolia has a large area with a sparse population and remote areas often hardly accessible. Therefore, remote sensing tools may be highly suitable for monitoring forest coverage changes. The development of a remote sensing-based national forest monitoring system (NFMS), updating of the national forest database, and the training of Mongolian specialists in the development of forest monitoring and information systems will be undertaken as part of Mongolia's National REDD+ Programme, with support from FAO.

To further support REDD+ planning and complement the development of forest monitoring and information systems, the activities proposed here will use and build on forest, land-use and other priority datasets to develop decision-support tools by presenting the benefits and trade-offs associated with REDD+ interventions in particular locations, ecosystems and land-use areas. There are various forest and land-use related datasets produced and held by different organizations within the country, however integration and sharing are an issue. Solutions should seek agreement between different datasets, avoid duplication of data and work, fill important gaps where possible and improve the quality of data available to support decision-making.

The Environmental Information Center of Mongolia (www.icc.mn, www.eic.mn), a key partner for the proposed activities, has long-term experience and expertise in the development of databases, the use of remote sensing data and geographic information analysis. Therefore the EIC has good foundation to introduce decision support tools within framework of these activities to support REDD+ planning to Mongolian Government organizations responsible for REDD+ activities and forest policy development and management.

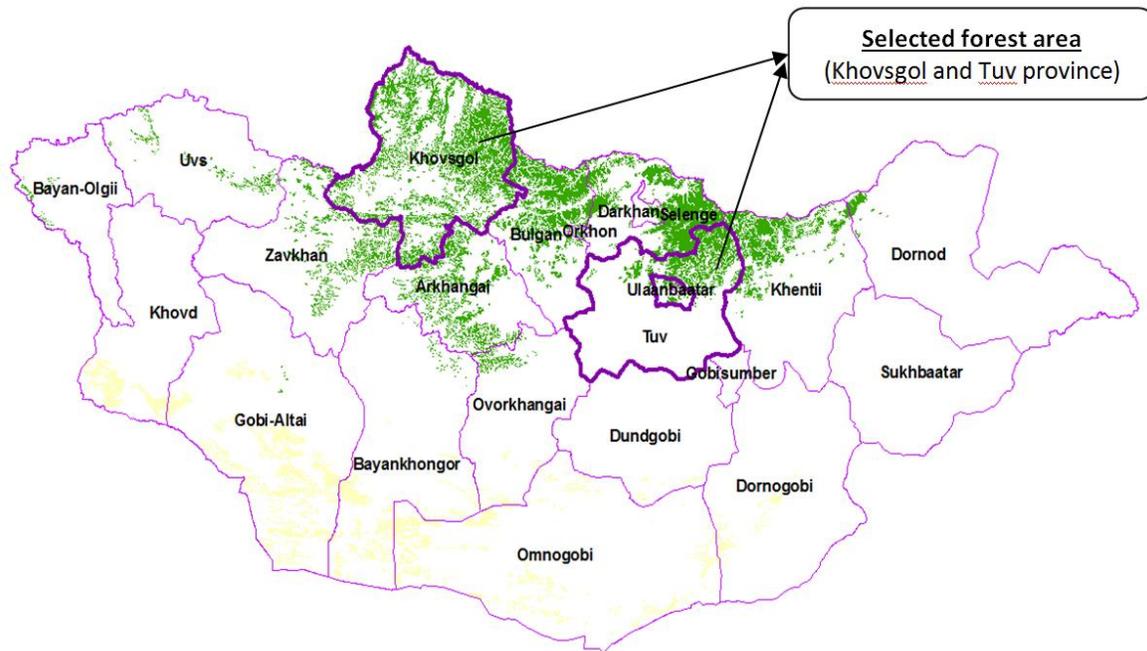
Activities

The proposed activities will include:

- a) Conduct a consultation and learning workshop, building knowledge about potential benefits and potential risks for REDD+ in Mongolia, and identifying priorities for multiple benefits (linked to the listing of key social and environmental benefits under Component 4 of the National REDD+ Roadmap).
- b) Support national/subnational partners in Mongolia, through training and joint working sessions, to develop decision support tools, such as maps, for the analysis of potential benefits and risks from REDD+, with a focus on the subnational level. These decision support tools will assist in an analysis of REDD+ potential that takes into account the conservation of natural forest, biodiversity and multiple functions of forest, as well as Mongolia's priorities for multiple benefits from REDD+. These will support land-use and forest sector planning and help to identify priority areas for REDD+ piloting.
- c) Support partners to hold collaborative workshops with relevant subnational, national and international actors in Mongolia, in order to: test the utility of the decision support tools and build capacity in REDD+ planning for the potential risks and benefits from REDD+.
- d) Support partners in Mongolia to finalize the analysis and to produce a report and other materials, discussing the tools and their relevance, and highlighting the potential contribution of multiple benefits to the development and implementation REDD+ in Mongolia.

Project pilot areas

Mongolia is divided into 21 provincial administrative units, known as 'aimags'. Most of the country's forested areas are located in Khuvsgul, Tuv, Selenge, Arkhangai, Khentii and Bulgan aimags. For the proposed activities, Khuvsgul and Tuv aimags are selected for consideration as pilot areas (see map below)



Forest condition and external interactions with the forest varies depends on the natural and climate situation, landscape, distance from settled areas, infrastructure development, and other factors. Most or 2/3 of Mongolia's forested area is located in Khuvsgul aimag, with a forest area of 4 million ha. Khuvsgul is a high mountain area, far away from densely settled areas and with poor infrastructure. In this aimag, natural regeneration capacity is high and forest coverage is expanding, but in the case of nomadic livestock, damage is being caused to young trees, affecting regeneration. In addition, local habitants are using timber for fuel wood.

One million hectares of Mongolia's forest area located in Tuv aimag. This aimag is located close to Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, with a high density population and the forest area is degraded by infrastructure, fires and mining. Since 2001 there has been an 8.2% reduction in Tuv's forest cover, with 18.5% damaged by fire, 26.2% damaged by human impact and 3% damaged by natural disasters.

Forests in these two aimags represent different natural zones in Mongolia, such as high mountains, forest steppe and steppe, and include the major tree types of the country.

Expected outputs

The activities will result in a number of outcomes and outputs, including:

- Increased capacity for Mongolian partner organisations and their staff at the national and subnational level in the development and use of spatial decision support tools for planning for REDD+;
- Increased capacity for Mongolian decision-makers in the consideration of potential benefits and risks and spatial analyses related to REDD+;
- Identified priorities for enhancing the potential benefits from REDD+;
- Workshops and associated materials on identification of priorities for multiple benefits and safeguards for REDD+ in Mongolia, and the development and application of multiple benefits analysis;
- A printed report and map transparencies, in Mongolian and English, showing process and results of multiple benefits analysis for REDD+;
- A journal article to be published in a Mongolian journal, in Mongolian and English.

Project timeline and budget

The expected duration of the project will be approximately 11 months, starting in June 2014 and extending until April 2015.

Activities	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
1. Prepare and hold workshop to identify priorities for MB/REDD+ planning; and follow up											
2. First session to build capacity and initiate data collection; data collection and processing											
3. Second session and devt of spatial layers for decision support											
4. Collaborative workshops to test and refine results											
5. Review/adjust spatial decision support tools											
6. Finalize analysis and products											

Budget:

The estimated total cost for the proposed activities is: USD xxx. The broad components of this cost are shown below:

Component	Amount (USD)	Source
Technical support from UNEP-WCMC staff	105,000	UNEP-WCMC ICA (targeted support component)
International/domestic travel for UNEP-WCMC staff	15,700	UNEP-WCMC ICA (targeted support component)
Technical and logistical work (EIC staff)	24,500	Proposed targeted support allocation to EIC
Workshop and training costs (including domestic travel for participants)	17,000	Proposed targeted support allocation to EIC
Materials, translation of materials/products, printing	8,500	Proposed targeted Support allocation to EIC
Total estimated cost	170,700	

Partners

The main partners to be involved in the proposed activities are as follows:

- The Environment Information Center of Mongolia (working with UNEP-WCMC to support the development of spatial decision support tools for the two pilot provinces).
- UNEP-WCMC (providing technical support and guidance for capacity building and the development of spatial decision support tools).
- The Forest Conservation and Reforestation Division of the Ministry of Nature and Green Development, and Forest Research and Development Centre.
- Government departments and technical staff in Khuvsgul and Tuv aimags (working to collect data and develop spatial analyses to support REDD+ planning at the aimag level)

The activities will be conducted with the participation of and coordination with other actors engaged in REDD+ planning and capacity building in Mongolia, including the UN-REDD Programme partner agencies (UNEP, UNDP and FAO), key government departments, and international organisations and NGOs, such as GIZ.