



Linking herders to markets for environmental services in Mongolia

Global Agenda for Sustainable Livestock



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations



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Key Messages

- Grassland degradation is often reflected in a deterioration of the quantity and quality of available forage, as well as the loss of soil carbon and other environmental services.
- Declining grassland productivity also affects livestock productivity and herders' livelihoods and well-being.
- Herders are often aware of these issues and challenges, but in countries where grasslands are not privately owned, sustained collective action is required to enable adoption of more sustainable grassland management practices.
- Markets for environmental services – such as carbon markets – can potentially provide a long-term source of finance to support and incentivize changes in management practices.



Livestock-based solutions

- In recent years, the Mongolian Society for Range Management (MSRM) has facilitated the formation of dozens of Pasture User Groups (PUGs) throughout Mongolia. PUGs are composed of herder families that use grasslands in the same territory. Together, they assess grassland resources and make and implement plans for grazing, hay making and other collective activities.
- PUGs in contrasting ecological zones to identify, map and value ecosystem services (ES)
- The ES assessed included grassland biodiversity, wildlife, soil carbon and culturally valued landscape features.
- Building on these assessments, PUGs were linked with markets for environmental services through Plan Vivo (PV) standard. PV is a private, voluntary standard which allows communities to engage with markets for carbon and a wider suite of environmental services, based on communities' own plans and priorities, where these maintain or improve ES. PV operates a rigorous approval and validation system to ensure ES benefits are realised and to enable release of funds to community members.



Results and evidence

- The program is collaborating with almost 200 herder households with territories covering a total area of 77,000 hectares to sequester more than 100,000 tCO₂ through improved grazing management practices. This equates to significant expected financial benefits for participating households, to be delivered and administered through existing community organisations (PUGs).

Expected outcomes include:

- Carbon sequestration through improved land managed and reduced grazing pressure, achieved through restoration of traditional seasonal mobility between pastures and/or reduction in livestock numbers;
- Biodiversity conservation through herders' cooperation to protect key wildlife species and habitats, for example Mongolian gazelle, ibex, red deer, saxaul forests, and through protection of grassland resources.
- Improvements in livelihoods and well-being, for example through herders' collaborative processing and marketing of livestock products, livelihood diversification, and protection of locally important cultural landscapes and resources.



Multiplier effects

- Engaging communities in collective action to improve ES and livelihoods requires that programs support locally-owned initiatives. In this case, community-driven plans for grazing and natural resource management are central to project activities.
- It also requires that a holistic and critical approach to ES and their assessment is adopted. Overall, the project approach is informed by our concerns with environmental and social justice, and framed by wider debates over PES and ES valuation practices.

Partners

Mongolian Society for Range Management: facilitated the formation of dozens of Pasture User Groups; Mongolian herders applying management plans. University of Leicester, research case providing methodologies
<http://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/geography/research1/projects/darwin/values-and-valuation>

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7th Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Meeting
 Achieving multiple benefits through livestock-based solutions, Addis Ababa, 8-12 May 2017



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