



FINAL PROJECT REVIEW REPORT

2020

United Nations Development Programme

Project title: COVID-19 Socio-Economic Assessment

Award ID:	00085915
Project ID:	00120580
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Implementing Partner:	UNDP
Total Budget:	\$50,000
CO Focal Points:	Delgernaran Tumurtogoo
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Brief project description (possibly from Project Document):

Project background

The Government of Mongolia took early action in response to the outbreak of COVID-19 in China. In late January of 2020, the government imposed stringent measures, including closing schools, restricting public meetings, movements, and banning all international flights, road and rail passenger traffic. The extensive prevention measures have resulted in significant economic and social impact, especially on vulnerable groups. The economy contracted by 5.3% due to the pandemic. The UNCT response to date has been led by the RC, who instituted the Humanitarian Coordination Team. WHO has been providing technical expertise to advise and assist the health sector on pandemic prevention and control. UNDP takes the lead on the Early Recovery Cluster and plan to roll out a socio-economic impact study on vulnerable groups. The study is to be undertaken jointly with government ministries and agencies and in close collaboration with UN agencies.

The pandemic is affecting everyone, and threatening progress made towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This assessment will contribute to defining development responses during the COVID-19 crisis, while also ensuring that no one is left behind and safeguarding progress on the SDGs.

This assessment is specifically focused on vulnerable groups including households with persons with disabilities; households that have migrated to and from Ulaanbaatar city in the past 2 years; single mother households; youth, the elderly and herders.

Project objective

The objective of this assessment is to understand the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the poor and the vulnerable groups, looking at the situation of women and youth in particular, and inform targeted service measures by the government to mitigate the effects and increase community resilience.

- **Section 1:**

- Intended Outcomes:

This project intended outcome is socio-economic impact assessment to inform targeted service measures by the government to mitigate the effects and increase community resilience.

To achieve this outcome, it planned to assess socio-economic impact of Covid-19 on vulnerable groups and value chains in Mongolia and Covid-19 impact on women and girls in Mongolia.

- Actual Outcomes:

- UNDP Mongolia conducted a rapid socio-economic assessment on the impact of COVID-19 prevention measures on vulnerable groups and value chains, in Mongolia, between March 30th and April 10th, 2020.

The assessment was specifically focused on vulnerable groups including households with persons with disabilities; households that have migrated to and from Ulaanbaatar city in the past 2 years; single mother households; youth, the elderly and herders. Surveys were held with these groups in 6 aimags (provinces), Sukhbaatar, Darkhan-Uul, Umnugovi, Orkhon, Zavkhan and Govi Altai, and 6 districts of Ulaanbaatar city.

The assessment at the household level was conducted via a quantitative evaluation survey of 397 households. Assessments for local governments and businesses, engaged in disrupted value chains, were conducted via qualitative interviews. UNDP Mongolia closely collaborated with Government partners such as the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry, the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, as well as UN Agencies, including UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO, ILO, and IOM, in consultation with the Resident Coordinator's Office.

The assessment provides measures by businesses to increase resilience as follows:

- Immediate actions taken by businesses
 - Requested banks, tax offices and partners to postpone payments

- Obtained loans from individuals and non-bank financial institutions
- Provided paid leave, reduced salary, or dismissed some employees
- Expended savings
- Support requested by businesses from the government
 - Extend/postpone loan repayments
 - Subsidize wages
 - Exempt utility payments
 - Offer loans to businesses affected by COVID-19 prevention measures
 - Corporate income tax exemptions/extensions
 - Compensate revenue losses
 - Support the import of necessary materials
 - Exempt social welfare payments

Moreover, the assessment provides recommendations for the government to mitigate the effects as follows:

- Protect the livelihoods and wellbeing of those that are most marginalized.
 - Although pensions and welfare benefits for vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly, and people with disabilities continue to be provided regularly, these fixed incomes are low and many continue to face difficulties. As a result of COVID-19, rising food prices, particularly of meat; loss of income; and providing additional care to children, are additional burdens, especially to households that are already below the poverty line. While a majority of herders livelihoods were not yet affected in the first quarter of 2020, this is expected to change, as the pandemic continues and the price of agricultural goods fall. For instance, due to COVID-19, the global price of cashmere fell, which is the main source of income for many herders. With declining exports, domestic cashmere processing factories are less inclined to buy raw cashmere, negatively affecting domestic demand. Moreover, it is unclear when the price of cashmere will stabilize again. To address these challenges, efforts are needed to ensure stimulus packages are orientated towards the poor and the most marginalized.
- Address the disproportionate burden of care and socio-economic impact on women.
 - With the closure of schools and kindergartens, many households now have to take care of children at home. The burden of childcare disproportionately falls on women, whose household workload has also increased, as they must cook more often and ensure children are attending online classes. As children stay at home for prolonged periods, their daily schedules are disrupted and they are likely to experience psychological stress, loneliness, fall behind in schoolwork, and lack exercise. Another major issue, since the declaration of the state of heightened alert and preparedness is the increase in domestic violence against women and children. This is likely due to quarantine measures, reduced working hours and employment, the closure of bars and other

places of entertainment, and the subsequent increase in alcohol consumption at home. It is critical therefore that any preparedness and response plan incorporate gender assessments and address the different socio-economic impacts women face. Additionally, it is worth noting that the sectors most negatively affected by the pandemic such as trade, services, and textile sectors, predominately employ women.

- Protect businesses, especially small and medium enterprises, that have been severely hit.
 - Households that rely heavily on wages and personal businesses for income, are at a higher risk of losing their main source of income. This risk is especially stark for those that work in the private manufacturing and services sectors, as well as those who rely on exports and imports. These include the wholesale, retail and trade sector, textiles, mining, hotels and accommodation, food services and the tourism sector. Efforts are needed to ensure safety nets and favorable loans are provided as an essential strategy for recovery. Also, further actions should ensure business continuity, in case of lockdown measures.
 - Build near and long-term resilience and focus on sustainability of the environment, addressing inequalities and reaching the SDGs.
 - Efforts to manage and control the COVID-19 pandemic have caused diversion of resources and political focus needed for efforts to address other critical priorities, such as climate change, the fight against poverty, displacement, and disaster risk. These efforts could further aggravate or threaten to set back gains made towards meeting the SDGs. It is also possible that any potential risk could magnify and aggravate other risks, for example, the occurrence of dzud and drought, in regions where livelihoods are already stressed by COVID-19. So, it is vital to ensure that value chains are climate resilient and sustainable. Efforts to recover must therefore attend to environmental and social aspects that are essential to attain the SDGs.
- UNDP, in partnership with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and the National Committee on Gender Equality of Mongolia (NCGE), joined together to conduct this impact assessment of the COVID-19 pandemic on women and girls in Mongolia. The assessment sheds light on the target group's specific needs and priorities for recovery measures and aims to assist the Government of Mongolia to mitigate the impacts and increase women's and girls' resilience. The assessment found that the COVID-19 pandemic is widening the socio-economic, educational and gender inequalities, while affecting equality in terms of human rights and livelihoods of the urban and rural communities in Mongolia. This assessment also provides findings on the various effects of the crisis and coping strategies with a particular focus on gendered socio-economic impacts, such as women's disproportionate burden of unpaid care work, domestic violence, access to essential social services and insights on the impacts of the all-out readiness strict lockdown measures imposed by the Government of Mongolia

intermittently from 20 November 2020 through 22 February 2021.

The assessment provides the following short-term, medium-term, and long-term recommendations to strengthen the resilience of women and girls, mitigate their risks, and not further exacerbate existing inequalities in relation to COVID-19 and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's principle of leaving no one behind:

- Short-term

- Continue the existing national social protection programmes to support children and vulnerable families until the economy recovery from COVID-19.
- Adopt innovative ways of early identification of gender-based and domestic violence during the COVID-19 restrictions to reduce the risk and prevalence of their incidence through routine GBV/DV screening by local multidisciplinary team members.
- Ensure parents' participation in protecting their children from cyberbullying and any other types of violence including GBV/DV during restriction and provide both children and their parents with online training and sensitization programmes.
- Develop remote learning packages for children who are living in rural areas, as well as children with disabilities.
- Develop individual learning plans for children with disabilities.
- Rights-based and inclusive approaches must be considered for all types of social services, especially during the emergency and stringent lockdown circumstances.
- To make gender-responsive decisions, sex-disaggregated data and gender-specific indicators should be further developed and made publicly available.
- Idle time compensation in the law in the Labour Code of Mongolia must be monitored and audited during COVID-19 measures. If the restrictions measures are considered a force majeure event, then the compensation should be stipulated in the Cabinet resolution and Law on Pandemic Preparedness and Response. Employees who are temporary laid off due to the COVID-19 lockdown must get salary subsidies.
- The monthly social insurance premium shall be exempted for persons unemployed due to the COVID-19, at least until normal times. This will help them to avoid the social insurance premium gap for further benefits.
- Include non-profit and humanitarian organizations who work with vulnerable people and are located in the ger districts or in rural or remote areas into the Cabinet resolution on reducing the briquette cost at a discount to support their daily activities without interruption to those needed during restriction.
- Improve easy access to and ways to access information on social services, including employment, for all ages of people with different literacy levels and make it publicly available.

- Develop a community-based welfare programme to support female-headed households who are in or near the poverty line, older women and young women who are unemployed or self-employed to protect them from any discrimination and violence during this emergency.
- Medium-term
 - Develop child-care support for working parents, especially for front-line workers such as essential services in health, emergencies, food, the public sector, transportation, communication, energy and water management to encourage their psychosocial and family well-being.
 - Provide a mobile lab phone-based system so that reproductive-age females, people with disabilities, the elderly, migrants and herders living in ger district and in rural and remote areas can consult with General Practitioners and receive the medications as prescribed by them.
 - Strengthen the health and social care services through technologies such as health monitoring systems and health wearable devices to protect public service workers from the risk of infection by the COVID-19.
 - Provide basic technological support and facilities for teachers at general secondary schools—high school teachers are especially crucial.
 - Develop MSME's digital capacity with business development online services through extending online platforms operations, supply chains, capacity- building and counselling on setting up their post COVID-19 business model and helping them improve their technology and management, regardless of the type and size of their business.
 - A legal definition for women-owned MSME needs to be clearly described in the Law on Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises for strengthening access to finance for women-owned MSMEs. Entrepreneurs of MSMEs and the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, National Committee on Gender Equality and Ministry of Labour and Social Protection should take initiatives to make accurate and clear legal definitions in relevant laws and regulations.
 - Develop online and face-to-face psychosocial counselling and protection services for vulnerable groups, including adolescent girls and young women.
 - Ensure access to sufficient and affordable water, sanitation, latrine situation and hygiene services for vulnerable groups of girls and women in ger districts and in rural areas through “eco-tube toilets” to protect them from diseases including COVID-19.
- Long term
 - Ensure herder communities' accessibility to health (e.g. pregnancy monitoring) and social services (e.g. social protection) through developing a budget distribution system and regulations to meet the needs of herders and their families during the pandemic and otor period.
 - Empowering women and girls, including their economic empowerment, is essential for achieving gender equality and sustainable development. It's

critical to continuously strengthen young girls' and women's capacity to prevent and protect themselves from risks of violence in both public and private spaces.

- Reduce and redistribute unpaid work roles by increasing public awareness and community care services, family-friendly working policies, increasing male involvement in domestic chores and home-based care, investing in time- saving technology and infrastructure, and design suitable fiscal policies, such as tax- friendly procedures for women and family members.
- The cost of unpaid and caregiving work should be officially calculated and defined in monetary value, which can be used to influence behavioural trends and challenge existing gender norms.
- Retraining programmes and new skills development activities that support getting unpaid carers into the labour force need to be developed nationwide, especially after the pandemic. Promoting labour participation programmes like these should be included in relevant laws and regulations.
- Develop a training manual on rights-based, gender-responsive and socially inclusive public services for both multidisciplinary service providers and the service users during the emergency and beyond.
- Make gender-responsive decisions on socio-economic policies by encouraging civil society organizations' participation in decision making, especially involving gender specialists or specialized organizations that can be appointed as members of the State Emergency Commission.
- Promote the participation of civil organizations in political decision making to develop the post- COVID-19 socio-economic recovery programme.
- Gender quotas should be strictly obeyed by decision makers through enforcing laws and regulations, including the Law on Promoting Gender Equality. The mechanism of accountability of the law shall be followed and monitored.
- A long-term strategy and plan for mitigating impacts after the COVID-19 pandemic needs to be developed based on recommendations of international and national NGOs, and in line with the Sustainable Development Goals and relevant government strategies. The development of the strategy should include women's participation and a gender perspective.

- Analysis:

The outcome was met due to following main contributing factors.

The UNDP CO took urgent actions to conduct the rapid assessments, including immediate meetings with stakeholders, applying fast-tracking procurement, and hiring specialized international and local consultants.

Moreover, the UNDP CO closely worked with main government stakeholders who are responsible for the pandemic response and recovery. Especially, it collaborated with Government partners such as the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry, the

Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, as well as UN Agencies, including UNFPA, UNICEF, FAO, ILO, and IOM, in consultation with the Resident Coordinator's Office.

- Stakeholder and Beneficiary Contribution:
The stakeholders provided the opportunities to have extensive consultations to identify the main issues in COVID-19 to the consultants for assessing the impacts and developing the recommendations. Also, it provided effective and timely guidance and informed UNDP CO of urgent needs and evolving situation.
- **Section 2: Project Implementation**
 - Updated Project Risks and Issues
 - No major risks apart from strict lockdown. Strict lockdown imposed nationwide hindered face-to-face meetings and actions required for collecting data and qualitative surveys, etc. UNDP CO immediately shifted to digital workplace and conducted the assessment every possible way to carry on the rapid assessment without breaking the lockdown procedures, such as having efficient meetings online.
- **Section 3: Project Performance (per output)**
 - Deliverable Description
Within this project, two assessments, namely Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of Covid-19 Prevention Measures on Vulnerable Groups and Value Chains in Mongolia and Covid-19 Impact on Women and Girls in Mongolia, were developed and published.
 - Quality Criteria
The project output and deliveries well met the project indicators set in the resulting framework.
 - Results of Activities
The project assisted the Government in developing a recovery strategy with targeted mitigation measures to increase community resilience. Both assessments provide necessary Covid-19 Prevention Measures for businesses and the Government in short, medium, and long terms. These assessments became one of the bases of evidence-based policy recommendations to the government to develop their 4-year action plan.
- **Section 4: Lessons Learned**
 - Timely coordination and close partnership with all counterparts were the key to success.

Section 5: FINANCIAL STATUS AND UTILISATION

The funding received from the UNDP TRAC3 fund (Atlas fund code 04120; donor code 00012).

Financial Overview

Donor	Committed	Received (US \$)	Expenditure (US \$) in 2020 and 2021	Remaining Funds (US \$) i.e. (Received total exp)
UNDP TRAC3 fund	50,000.00	50,000.00	43,234.07	6,765.93
Total	50,000.00	50,000.00	43,234.07	6,765.93

Financial report by account

Donor	Description	Expenditure (US \$) in 2020
UNDP TRAC3 fund	Services to projects -CO staff	1,473.84
	Local Consult.-Sht Term-Tech	13,762.97
	Local Consult-Security	19.26
	Scv Co-Social Svcs, Social Sci	27,188.84
	Hospitality Catering	145.91
	Services to projects -GOE	631.64
	Learning costs	180.06
	Realized Loss	8.32
	Realized Gain	-190.20
Total		43,220.64

Donor	Description	Expenditure (US \$) in 2021
UNDP TRAC3 fund	Realized Loss	13.43
Total		13.43

Checklist of Project closure				
Ref	Task	YES	NO	Notes
1.	There is no pending PDR related to this project	Yes		
2.	No Outstanding Commitment such as office rental, maintenance bills, or any disputed invoice. Also please confirm all commitment outside ATLAS is resolved	Yes		
3.	Please confirm that all pre-financing activities have been recovered and/or reimbursed (If any)	Yes		
4.	All assets and inventory transferred/disposed please confirm that there are no uncapitalized assets that need to be cleared off for this project (if any)		NA	Project hadn't any asset and inventory
5.	Project Bank Account is fully reconciled and closed, if applicable, the confirmation to be attached in Atlas attachment tab.		NA	Project hadn't any bank account under project name
6.	Final LPAC / Steering committee minutes are available, and All audit observations are closed if applicable, supporting documents to be uploaded into Atlas Project Management (Grants > Project Mgt. > Approved Projects > Monitoring/ Attachments Tabs.		NA	Project hadn't LPAC and steering committee members.
7.	All donor reports, as established in the Cost Sharing agreement, submitted, and acknowledged receipt by the donor representative (Supporting documents if any should be uploaded to Atlas Project Closure Workbench (Attachments Tab) (if any).	Yes		CDR and Final Project Review report, Lessons Learned report are uploaded into Atlas Project Closure Workbench (Attachment tab)

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