

Annex: Country info



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Country: Mongolia

1. SITUATION ANALYSIS

The Government of Mongolia took early action in response to the outbreak of COVID-19. In late January, the Government imposed stringent measures including closing schools and restricting public meetings as well as subsequently banning all international flights, road and rail passenger traffic. To date all confirmed cases are imported cases and there is no community transmission. The extensive prevention measures and the slowing down of economic activities have caused significant economic and social impact, especially on vulnerable groups¹. Mongolia is listed as the 6th economy in the region that will most likely be affected in a moderate case scenario, followed by China². According to the latest World Economic Outlook April 2020, the real GDP growth for Mongolia in 2020 is revised sharply downwards to -1 percent from 5.4 percent.

The challenges communities are facing in accessing health services are further evidenced by the alarming increase of maternal mortality in Ulaanbaatar in the first quarter, compared to the same period of previous years. COVID-19 has also heavily impacted on the well-being and safety within households as instances of domestic violence against women increased by 47 percent in the first quarter of 2020 compared to late 2019³. Emotional abuse was also reported at rates 57.6 percent higher compared to the first quarter of last year⁴.

In line with the UN's framework for immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, UNDP Mongolia is assisting COVID-19 response and recovery in Mongolia in the areas of livelihoods, economic recovery and governance by focusing on targeted protection measures and outreach of social services for vulnerable groups and building community resilience. UNDP Mongolia conducted a rapid socio-economic impact assessment of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups and value chains in March-April 2020. Results of the assessment indicated that young households, migrated households, and households with disabled persons were most affected by the impact of COVID-19 prevention measures. The assessment also indicated that children have been left unsupervised or with underage siblings during the quarantine period, putting them at high risk of

¹ UNDP Mongolia, 2020, Rapid Socio-Economic Impact Assessment of COVID-19 on vulnerable groups and value chains in Mongolia

² ADB, March 2020, The Economic Impact of the COVID-19 Outbreak on Developing Asia

³ UNICEF, April 2020, Mongolia COVID-19 Situation Report

https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Mongolia_COVID_19_Situation_Report_No._1_for_10_to_17_April_2020.pdf

⁴ UNICEF Mongolia, April 2020, Mongolia COVID-19 Situation Report

https://www.unicef.org/appeals/files/UNICEF_Mongolia_COVID_19_Situation_Report_No._1_for_10_to_17_April_2020.pdf

domestic accidents and violence. If timely measures are not taken, surveys illustrate that unemployment will surge, and people will continue to lose jobs and income in 2020 due to COVID-19⁵. There is anecdotal evidence that due to social distancing measures, the social protection services cannot be extended to new applicants due to limited restrictions on household visits. New and innovative ways of enhancing access for the marginalized is required to ensure the most vulnerable communities have safety nets.

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection (MLSP) in collaboration with the National Statistics Office (NSO) maintains and uses a household information database to manage the social welfare programs, for poverty reduction. The number of social welfare beneficiaries increased to 1,701,219 (almost half of the population) in 2020, while expenditure on social welfare benefits reached 5.5 percent of the total general government expenditure and net lending (MNT756.6 billion in 2020) mainly due to expansion of large social programs: child support, food stamps, and mothers' benefits. The effectiveness of the social welfare system is hampered by three main issues as identified by ADB⁶: They include, limited capacity of social workers and social protection policymakers to deliver effective social welfare benefits and services; uneven quality of community-based social welfare services; and limited evidence-based policy dialogue on existing and proposed social welfare programs.

Providing services for communities is a challenge as Mongolia is geographically dispersed in rural areas and overcrowded in urban areas. Mongolia is a unitary state with a central government and three tiers of sub-national governments. Administratively, the territory of Mongolia comprises 21 aimags (provinces) and the Capital city; aimags are further divided into 330 soums and over 1,600 baghs (rural), and the Capital city is divided into 9 districts and 173 khoros (urban). While soums have their own budget and spending authority, albeit quite limited, khoros are sub-administrative units of districts and their budgets are allocated by districts. There are currently around 617 social workers based at all 330 soums and 173 khoros, who work under the guidance of the Governor of the respective soum/khoroo.

Social workers, frontline civil servants interacting with vulnerable groups, conduct targeted needs assessments based on household visits, update household livelihoods related paper-based information and act as a liaison for the public to access social protection schemes. Digitization of some of these processes will ensure the continuity of critical government functions during public emergencies and strengthen Mongolia's emergency preparedness and resilience.

The social welfare system in Mongolia is 'demand-based', placing the responsibility on the beneficiaries to be aware of what they are entitled to and how they can claim these. This model poses challenges for the beneficiaries, especially marginalized groups, as majority of the beneficiaries are poorly educated, with little access to government information sources, with many unaware of their entitlements. Applying for benefits involves complex procedures and compliance requirements, with extensive documentation, authentication, and verification. Additionally, complex procedures may need the poor to make repeated visits, imposing economic opportunity costs on them of forfeiting a day's wage and incurring travel cost.

⁵ National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Mongolia, March 2020, Business Impact Assessment

⁶ Mongolia: Building capacity for an effective social welfare system, ADB, Dec 2019

As coping with and overcoming COVID-19 requires countries to have resilient institutions across all sectors, UNDP Mongolia proposes a bottom-up approach to strengthen the capacity of the social welfare system to reach the most vulnerable groups in an integrated manner, through the use of digital technologies.

The specific strategies proposed are:

- Strengthening the social welfare information system to allow rapid response to the most vulnerable groups and to provide immediate access to essential social services, including welfare, employment, education, health, and social protection, including protection from domestic violence;
- Strengthen outreach capacity of social workers by leveraging digital technologies; and
- Enhance intersectoral integration systems to leave no-one behind and reach furthest behind first.

Activities implemented under the initiative will be aligned with Output 2: Inclusive and integrated crisis management and response. Funds are not requested under Output 1 on Health System Strengthening as Mongolia has received significant support from the IFIs to strengthen health sector. With regards to Output 3, UNDP funding has been received under TRAC 3 for support in the area, while there is a significant funding gap for crisis management and responses that needs to be met.

The proposal is built on existing UNDP's programmatic work and the trust it receives from the government. The proposed strategy is in line with and supports the implementation of the recently approved Law on Covid-19 pandemic prevention, response and mitigation of its socioeconomic impact as well as the Parliament decree on actions to ensure financial and economic sustainability, risk prevention and digital transformation of public services. UNDP is working with the Government on a comprehensive response and recovery strategy for COVID-19 at the request of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The proposal will be implemented in close collaboration with the task force that has been set up to operationalize the UN framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19, where UNDP is the technical lead, as well as the Early Recovery Cluster of the HCT, that UNDP leads. The taskforce and the ER Cluster bring together UN agencies, the government, IFIs and development partners including JICA.

The project will ensure synergy with the ongoing projects being implemented by the Government of Mongolia in collaboration with the other UN agencies and development partners. Most notably, the project will engage with the current JICA projects in the area of improving access to basic social services and participation of people with disabilities in Ulaanbaatar.

Expected output	Planned activity	Description of activities /with revisions suggested by the PIU/	Budget amount /PIU revision/	2020					2021					Person in charge	Main partners	Budget (Aug - Dec 2020)			Budget (Jan - Jun 2021)							
				8	9	10	11	12	1	2	3	4	5			Account	Acct desc.	Amount	Account	Acct desc.	Amount					
																	Account	Acct desc.	Amount	Account	Acct desc.	Amount				
Output 2: Inclusive and integrated crisis management and responses (retrieved from the Global Project document)	2.1 Support national and sub-national capacities for planning, coordination, and crisis management	2.1.1 Develop Digital <u>social services strategy</u> and strengthen intersectoral legal environment	102,000																\$	45,818			\$	56,182		
		2.1.1.0 Project administration Consultancy: SC holders to recruited as NPC & AFO	50,000													Programme manager			71400	Contractual Services - Individ	\$	14,318	71400	Contractual Services - Individ	\$	35,682
		2.1.1.1 Conduct analysis of the existing social services provision system and identify areas for upgrading (e.g., integrating job matching services into the normative social services); - IC#1 & IC#4	17,000													NPC, AFO, IC#1 & IC#4	SHD & DuG	71300	Local Consultants	\$	10,500	71300	Local Consultants	\$	6,500	
		2.1.1.2 Assessments of broader stakeholder identification and analysis (including CSOs, private sector players) and the governance environment, relevant laws/policies/regulations/mechanisms to engage them in social services provision, esp in times of crisis - IC#2	15,000													NPC, AFO & IC#2	ADB, WB, JICA MLSP	71300	Local Consultants	\$	9,000	71300	Local Consultants	\$	6,000	
		2.1.1.3 Develop in consultation with the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection MLSP a digital social services provision strategy (i.e., horizontally and vertically integrated & citizen - generated data collection enabled) - IC#3	20,000													NPC, AFO & IC#3	MLSP, ADB, MLSP	71300	Local Consultants	\$	12,000	71300	Local Consultants	\$	8,000	
		2.1.2 Improve outreach capacity of social workers by leveraging digital technologies Gender marker: 2	174,476																\$	65,738			\$	108,738		
		2.1.2.1 Design and re-engineer the needed upgrade of the current intersectoral information platform and enhance its interface in line with the agreed <u>Digital social services strategy</u> (Social services digital strategy) - IT company	57,699													IT Company & IC#3	MLSP	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	28,850	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	28,850	
		2.1.2.2 Develop online application, for outreach of social workers & citizens, that can support the data - based decision making by the MLSP, and the Cabinet when and if necessary- IT company	66,777													IT Company	MLSP	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	33,389	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	33,389	
		2.1.2.3 Pilot both the enhanced intersectoral information system and online application for social worker usage in selected amigas and districts - IC#1-3 & IT company	35,000													IT Company, IC#1, IC#2, IC#3	SHD & DuG	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	3,500	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	31,500	
		2.1.2.4 Based on the assessment of the pilot, upgrade and improve the information collecting, disseminating and analyzing application. Finalize and prepare for roll out.	15,000													IT Company, IC#1, IC#2, IC#3	MLSP	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	-	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	15,000	
		2.1.3 Enhance <u>intersectoral integration information platform</u> to leave no-one behind and reach furthest behind Gender marker: 2	\$ 658,000																\$	421,718			\$	236,282		
		2.1.3.1 Procurement of equipment (e.g., tablets for social workers in rural areas, self - service desks in selected UB khoroos). Installation of the software and application on the equipments and the equipment placement	373,000													NPC& AFO	SHD, DuG, TAF	72800	Information Technology Equipmt	\$	368,203	72800	Information Technology Equipmt	\$	4,797	
		2.1.3.2 - Conduct trainings/meetings for social workers and other stakeholders preparing for the rollout. Prepare and conduct training packages for social workers for the roll out and continuous learning (e.g., life coaching ,stress management etc. <u>potential of developing online training modules</u>).	200,000													Training company	SHD, DuG, MLSP	75700	Training, Workshops and Confer	\$	37,394	75700	Training, Workshops and Confer	\$	162,606	
		2.1.3.3 Rollout of the improved and enhanced <u>integrated intersectoral information platform</u> nationally. Assess the rollout of the platform/application [at the pilot locations, i.e. Songhairhan Duureg SHD, Dundgovi DuG and <u>Tuv aimag</u> ?].	65,000													Monitoring company	SHD, DuG, MLSP	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	12,000	72100	Contractual services - Company	\$	53,000	
		2.1.3.4 Information campaign for public outreach (e.g., monthly updates on the UNDP project page/social page, a short documentary on the project designing and rollout, launch and closing reception)	20,000													NPC& AFO	MLSP, GOJ, JICA	74200	Web, Audio Visual & Print Prod Costs	\$	4,121	74200	Web, Audio Visual & Print Prod Costs	\$	15,879	
Subtotal for Output 2	934,476																\$	533,273			\$	401,203				
Programme budget total	934,476																\$	533,273			\$	401,203				
DPC (10%)	113,143																	64,567				48,576				
Subtotal	1,047,619																\$	597,840			\$	449,779				
GMS (8%)	83,810																	47,827				35,983				
TOTAL	1,131,429																\$	645,668			\$	485,761				