



PEOPLE IN NEED MONGOLIA  
COUNTRY STRATEGY  
2022–2026

## Content

1. Country context 3
2. PIN's Mandate & Presence in Mongolia 5
3. Programmatic priorities 6
4. Current and past projects 10



## 1. Country context

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One of the major long-lasting issues has been the impact of **climate change and deterioration of natural resources**. Anthropogenic climate change and other human-related activities have brought about higher **disaster risks and environmental degradation**. Over the last six decades the country has seen rising temperatures at one of the fastest rates globally, **increased air pollution and morbidity rates of associated diseases, and more extreme flood and drought events**.

**Rapid urbanization, reliance on fossil fuels, mining industrialization, unsustainable rangelands management** have increased **pollution of air** (Ulaanbaatar's air quality, especially in winter, is one of the worst in the world) and **water** (total water withdrawals outstripping renewable water supply, often by at least 50% annually in some areas), and brought about degradation of **pasturelands** (90% of grassland under some degree of desertification). Climate change is further amplifying and exacerbating these trends and all these factors, if not reversed or contained, will likely hinder economic growth and population wellbeing in the medium to long-term.

There are important and widespread efforts in the country to develop regulations and institutions to **stem this environmental stress**. However, increased participation from the public and less short-sighted policies from authorities are needed. The limited awareness of the public and policy-makers, seems to indicate a myopic behaviour that fails to address these grave problems and hence to implement the adequate policies to prevent further dissaving.

**Mongolia's economic growth** is expected to be constrained by high inflation, persistent trade disruptions, tighter external financing conditions, and complex geopolitical risks before accelerating in 2023 as coronavirus disease (COVID-19) concerns and trade disruptions ease. ADB projects Mongolia's economic growth to expand by 2.3% in 2022 compared to the 1.4% growth in

2021 before climbing to 5.6% in 2023, supported by domestic demand, investment, and recovery in industry, agriculture, and services.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine has already elevated the risks to the economic outlook for Mongolia, increasing pressures on the balance of payments, the fiscal position, inflation, and business activities. Per ADB, says that Mongolia should focus on designing a countercyclical policy package to maintain macroeconomic and financial stability and secure funds to meet external and domestic financing needs while deepening efforts to drive forward structural reforms to strengthen economic resilience and competitiveness<sup>1</sup>.

Growth prospects in 2022–2023 will depend heavily on when the major trade portals with the PRC reopen, whether there is a resurgence in COVID-19, and how Mongolia responds to economic pressures from the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Persistently high inflation and the continued trade disruption limit monetary and fiscal policy room, requiring a comprehensive macroeconomic policy adjustment plan to safeguard the economy. Average inflation will accelerate further to 12.4% in 2022 as supply shocks and trade disruptions continue, and significantly higher fuel prices translate into higher business costs. Tugrug depreciation will pass through to prices for imported goods. But inflation is forecast to moderate to 9.3% in 2023 as these factors ease.

Downside risks to the outlook stem from prolonged closures and restrictions at the main trade portals with the PRC, potential trade disruptions with the Russian Federation and Europe, and deeper impacts of the situation in Ukraine on the balance of payments and the government budget. The possible worsening of nonperforming loans and consequent balance sheet distress in domestic financial institutions and corporations weigh heavily on the growth outlook and on financial stability over the medium term.

**The backsliding of democracy and respect for human rights is a big concern** for many donors and development partners.

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<sup>1</sup> ADB News Release, [Mongolia's Growth to Stay Muted for 2022 at 2.3% Before Climbing in 2023 — ADB | Asian Development Bank](#), April 2022

As of June 2018, 17,634 CSOs were formally registered at the General Authority for State Registration. This includes 15,241 CSOs for “public benefit” and 2,393 “mutual benefit” CSOs. While the total number of registered CSOs is high, only a small proportion of CSOs have regular and systematic operations<sup>2</sup>. However, while an outside observer may consider the aforementioned as positive infrastructure for a young democracy, like Mongolia, there are serious challenges for a healthy and robust civil society.

Public support for the LGBTQIA+ community to support gender equality continues to grow year-by-year: Harmful gender stereotypes and biases does not only limit the opportunities of those affected (i.e women, LGBTQIA+ community, and men) professionally and personally, but are also the root cause of gender-based violence. Recently, PIN and the EU supported the LGBTQIA+ community to celebrate their Pride Days. More than 60 private companies, embassies, and NGOs publicly joined the campaign – up from 5 in PIN’s first year supporting in 2019. Unfortunately, there was some backlash as the UB City’s deputy mayor vandalized some of the campaign materials and a well-known Mongolian writer propagated homophobic rhetoric about the community. The positive is that much of the netizens pushed back and the National LGBT Center is now taking the Deputy Mayor to court for violating their civil and political rights to assemble. If victorious, an important legal precedent could be set. During Mongolia’s recent UPR review<sup>3</sup>, the GoM accepted 15 of the 17 recommendations set forth. Unfortunately, the GoM rejected a recommendation for marriage equality to be recognized. PIN continues to support the LGBT Center of Mongolia in advocacy efforts to have the community formally recognized and their equal rights respected by the national government.

COVID19 Law restricts press freedom and right to assemble: In April of 2020, Mongolia’s Parliament adopted a law to prevent the spread of COVID19 and mitigate the socio-economic impact. The law authorized the government to regulate quarantine, traffic movements and other public safety measures to prevent the spread of the virus. Whilst the law did note that the

aforementioned measures must be conducted with respect for fundamental human rights, in reality it gave the national government powers to restrict press freedom and freedom of assembly. Journalists and activists experienced arrest and detention throughout the pandemic. This law is still in-place, which is worrying as the pandemic, at the moment, has subsided within the country. This law should be repealed immediately and the fundamental rights of citizen, including journalists, fully restored.

Draft Libel Law threatens freedom of speech and expression: Article 13.14 of the Mongolian Criminal Code stipulates that disseminating false information can be punished by fines for individuals equivalent to approximately €600 - €900 Euros, 240 - 720 hours of community service, or restriction of the right to travel for one to three months. For companies, including newsrooms, can be punished by fines for equivalent to approximately €10,000.

Mongolian press freedom and anti-corruption activists are concerned that the law does not define the term ‘false information’. In practice, they say, police, prosecutors and judges involved in criminal defamation cases are not considering the accuracy of information reported in the media or proving that it is false when charging people under the law.

Environmental CSOs face significant gaps: As Mongolia re-opens, a flood of investment in the mining sector has re-entered the country – much of it from Chinese miners. There is little oversight and consultation by local communities. Civil society organizations, particularly those working in the Environmental sector have low capacities, vested interests, or face threats from within their communities.

Local environmental CSOs need capacity building, networking, and financial support to be able to play a watch-dog type role in heavily mined areas of Mongolia. PIN is looking into funding opportunities to support local CSOs in this regard.

<sup>2</sup> Civil Society Brief: Mongolia, ADB, 2019

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.ohchr.org/en/hr-bodies/upr/mn-index>

## 2. PIN's Mandate & Presence in Mongolia

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***Our Global Vision:*** *We strive for a world in which people can fulfil their potential, live in inclusive societies and in a sustainable manner.*

At the global level, People in Need (PIN) is a *Civil Society Organization* with more than 30 years of experience in humanitarian, development, and human rights programming. Today, PIN has headquarters in both the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom, with offices and programming in more 30 countries.

Our Global Mandate: We work together with local actors to alleviate poverty and exclusion and strengthen the resilience of the most vulnerable people

***Our mandate in Mongolia:*** *PIN is mandated to support local communities and CSOs whereby their capacities are strengthened, they are respective of human rights, and empowered to be the drivers of change and equal opportunities to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and Mongolia's 'Vision 2050'.*

### Our presence in Mongolia

PIN came to Mongolia during the winter of 1993 with a 50-ton food and clothing donation as the Mongolian population was struggling to adapt to the new realities resulting from the collapse of the Soviet Union. PIN returned to Mongolia during the dzud (extreme winter disaster) of 2009–2011, with the permanent office being established in 2011. Since then, PIN has delivered **more than 30 projects covering all 21 Aimags** (provinces), impacting **thousands of people in rural and urban** settings. These projects have focused on **climate change and sustainable livelihoods, emergency response, gender and social inclusion, civil society empowerment and good governance**, as well as **education and skills** development sectors.

### Our main stakeholders and partnership

PIN Mongolia has developed a comprehensive donor engagement plan that's also inclusive of key stakeholders. Our key stakeholders include the academia (National University of Mongolia, Mongolian University of Life Sciences,

Mongolian University of Science and Technologies, and others), local governments at district and provincial levels, and national governments including ministries (Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industries, Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education etc) and their implementing agencies.

In addition, PIN widely recognizes the need for actions led by local CSOs, who form a crucial pressure group advocating for stronger governance in development agendas and climate responsibility. Over the years, CSOs have become critical influencers working alongside INGOs, upholding democratic values and promoting human rights.

PIN is committed to empower the civil society in Mongolia by actively seeking and building constructive partnerships with local CSOs that share similar values and visions, as well as by directly addressing the barriers they face. In particular, PIN Mongolia will continue to engage with CSOs and the private sector to amplify their voices and to empower them to take actions.

The identified stakeholders have strong relationships with PIN and see our added value. Many of these partners/stakeholders have already joined PIN in a consortium or expressed interest to do so. These partnerships could be leveraged to access funding that PIN would otherwise be unable to obtain (ADB, USAID, DRL, etc.). For contact details and some strategic opportunities, the 2022 [donor engagement plan](#) can be referenced.

Building on our current and past partnerships, PIN will continue to diversify its partnerships portfolio and develop strategic partnerships with like-minded organizations and institutions for sustained impact.

### 3. Programmatic priorities

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In this strategic period, PIN will define its programming by the three pillars described below. These pillars build on our previous sectoral strategies and have been defined based on an analysis of PIN's experience and expertise alongside a review of external trends and the changing contexts we work in.

1. **PILLAR I: Emergency response & recovery**
2. **PILLAR II: Climate resilience & environmental pollution reduction**
3. **PILLAR III: Civil Society and Inclusive Governance**

These pillars lay the foundation for our work and values in Mongolia as we are a non-governmental, non-profit organization founded on the ideals of **humanism, freedom, equality, and sustainability**.

We consider human dignity and freedom to be fundamental values. We believe that people anywhere in the world should have the right to make decisions about their lives and to share the rights expressed in the **Universal Declaration of Human Rights**.

Across the thematic pillars, PIN ensures synergies with the strategic orientations of the main actors in Mongolia. As indicated in the EU Roadmap covering the period until 2025 in Mongolia, there has been an increasing emphasis on CSOs' role to play in '*climate change adaptation and mitigation, including moving towards a low carbon, resource efficient, green circular economy*'.<sup>4</sup> Echoing the priorities of the key players in the country, the main programmatic focus of the Mongolia Country Office is likewise centred around **environmental protection and building climate change resilience**, whilst strengthening coordination and collaboration with **CSOs**.

#### **PILLAR I: Emergency response and recovery**

While Mongolia is often classified as a low-risk country when it comes to risk of disaster, PIN is committed to maintaining a high level of emergency preparedness. For instance, in the past five years, Mongolia has faced growing humanitarian challenges – deadly storms, flooding, dzuds, environmental

pollution, increasingly more frequent earthquakes and the COVID-19 pandemic.

PIN aims, together with our partners, to provide principled, relevant, timely, and high-quality humanitarian assistance in order to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain the dignity of the affected population, followed by recovery assistance and resilience building. Our humanitarian aid is based on the core principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality, and independence. The form of our assistance is contextual, needs-based, and focused particularly on Mongolia where PIN can demonstrate its added value in all three areas of emergency preparedness, response, and recovery.

To help the most vulnerable people of Mongolia recover, PIN has provided more than **1 million USD in humanitarian assistance since 2017**. The following are examples of some emergency support we have provided for people in the aftermath of rapid onset crises and support them in the time of recovery to help them to get back on their feet by leaving no one behind:

- In response to the dzud crisis in 2009, **PIN provided emergency support to the most heavily affected groups**, herders, by addressing their basic needs. PIN delivered humanitarian aid in the form of food, winter clothing, medicines, heating fuels and finances for buying telephone credit or costs of travel to the regional centres. In 2021, **PIN provided cash assistance to 381 households** in three Western provinces.
- In partnership with the Government of Mongolia, PIN ran an emergency response programme with the goal to provide aid to the most vulnerable populations impacted by the COVID19 pandemic. Relief was provided in the form of **vouchers and food kits to more than 5,000 households**, such as child-headed households, single parents, dormitory students, people living with HIV, PLWD (people living with disabilities), and other vulnerable families and communities.

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<sup>4</sup>Delegation of the European Union to Mongolia. Undated. EU Roadmap for Civil Society Engagement in Mongolia for the period 2021–2025.

Furthermore, in line with the Government of Mongolia's recently approved New Recovery Policy, **PIN is also committed to supporting communities to recover faster and greener.** What we aim to achieve:

- Building resilience of vulnerable communities;
- Supporting target communities facing disasters; and
- Building and strengthening coalitions, consortiums, and long-term partnerships with both local and international NGOs, as well as academia or the public sector.

## **Pillar II: Climate resilience & environmental pollution reduction**

PIN's role in addressing climate change is to enhance the resilience of the people vulnerable to a changing climate and environmental degradation, trying to maximise solutions in line with green growth and circular economy principles, and solutions to reduce the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and sequester/stock carbon. In Mongolia, GHG emissions per capita are some of the highest in Asia and nearly two times the global average. The country is disproportionately affected by climate change, with children, elderly and low-income families bearing the brunt of its negative impacts. PIN prioritizes **highly-contextual adaptation programming**, particularly in relation to environmental pollution that is posing severe, long-term health risks to the people of Mongolia and can increase people's vulnerability also considering a changing climate.

- Increasing productive and climate-resilient food and livelihood systems;
- Reducing environmental stressors such as air, soil and water pollution.;
- Developing, piloting, and scaling climate-smart energy solutions;
- Ensuring data transparency and accountability for environmental pollutants that pose risk to human health;
- Strengthening local capacities in monitoring, assessing, and reducing environmental pollution;
- Supporting CSOs on climate change advocacy and transition to green economy.

PIN assists governmental and non-governmental stakeholders in raising awareness about Climate Change and using civil society engagement techniques and behavioural science to promote the adoption of climate-smart solutions and green development, in line with Mongolia's commitments. PIN is also one of the leading organizations for the independent **monitoring and reporting of air pollution** in Mongolia. PIN provides the following support to the community at large:

- Environmental pollution capacity building and awareness campaigns to Local Authorities, schoolchildren, students and general public using social and behaviour change methods (see our resource website here: [www.behaviourchange.net](http://www.behaviourchange.net)).
- Use of technology to understand and map pollution causes and solutions: Air quality monitoring, drone mapping, air quality data accountability
- Climate-smart and environmentally friendly technical solutions at household level (e.g. animal husbandry, gardening, thermal insulation, modern heating and insulation for traditional Mongolian ger dwellings) and sustainable value chains
- Local communities, CSOs, private sector, local authority empowerment for good governance and networking on environmental protection in urban areas and rangelands, and leverage advocacy capacity.
- PIN has built the only air pollution prediction model which uses machine learning algorithms to predict air quality in Ulaanbaatar.

## **PILLAR III: Civil Society and Inclusive Governance**

Rooted in our commitment to empower local actors, PIN supports civil society to play a key role in social, economic and democratic development in our target communities in Mongolia. PIN provides opportunities for civil society actors to develop the technical skills and mechanisms to become more effective governance and development actors. We support civil society to engage with government actors to advance participatory democratic processes and the development of inclusive public services. Specifically, **PIN targets a range of civil society actors, including youth and marginalized communities – such as LGBTQIA+ persons, PLWD, women empowerment**

groups and others – in order to ensure that government policies and services are socially inclusive and aligned with international human rights and gender equality principles.

In parallel, PIN **promotes active citizenship and climate justice, empowering individuals to exercise their human rights**, engage in democratic processes and hold government officials accountable.

With the aim of supporting inclusive good governance, PIN focuses on active engagement of communities in local inclusive and equitable decision-making processes to achieve sustainable outcomes, and emphasises effective cooperation among civil society, governments, and communities. PIN's expertise builds up to:

- **Strengthening capacities** of local authorities and decision-makers.
- Raising the voices of **local communities** to national and international decision-makers.
- Improving **dialogue** between communities, CSOs, and national authorities.
- **Strengthening accountability of local authorities** toward communities and improving their ability to apply risk-informed, evidence-based decision-making in response to local needs.

In addition, prioritisation of local civil society leadership leads to more inclusive development and more effective humanitarian response. The future of international development and humanitarian response must be through supporting local action led by local civil society organisations alongside strengthening government systems. Social and behaviour change, skills' development, support to market and financial opportunities for green and climate-smart solutions, and sustainable livelihoods have been for years promoted in PIN's interventions.

- PIN has worked with **40 cooperatives and 10 CSOs** which were supported with increased access to market and financial opportunities.
- PIN works with local **journalism** organisations to provide investments and financing to ensure **independence** and **sustainability** in the **media sector**.

- PIN provides innovative and tailored **capacity building** that supports CSOs to leverage financing opportunities.

## OUR CROSS CUTTING APPROACHES

### Market Systems Development

At the core of PIN's MSD approach is the aim to achieve **greater sustainability, impact and scale** in development interventions that target poor women and men. Our approach is based on the premise that even the poorest and most remote communities are reliant on markets – as **producers** (smallholder farmers, micro-entrepreneurs), **consumers** (buyers and users of goods and services) and **employees** – but that these markets fail to function effectively for poor people. Interventions involve working to transform the behaviours and practices of market actors, such as shop sellers, service providers, national companies and government institutions that influence how markets work. The MSD Toolbox enables the programmes to:

- Green the urban living through **market-based energy-efficient solutions**.
- Increase vulnerable people's **access and motivation** to use products and services that can positively impact their lives and their local environment (e.g., agricultural inputs such as locally-produced food and beverages, financial services, and renewable energy products such as solar lanterns and biodigesters).
- Improve access to skills and decent work through **vocational and soft-skill training**.

### Gender Equality and Social Inclusion

Gender-based approaches are deemed crucial not only to assess how vulnerable groups are impacted differently, but also to adopt transformative mechanisms to address gender inequities and support social justice. PIN commits to implement its Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) policy in all of its provisions. Where the context allows it and it enables us to reach impact, PIN applies the Human Rights Based Approach, in line with internal



guidance, to support people in addressing duty bearers and realizing their rights.

Harmful behaviours and norms are interwoven into the fabric of Mongolian society as a result of “toxic masculinities” – the adherence to traditional male gender roles that restrict certain emotions and behaviours allowable for boys and men to express themselves. For example, in Mongolia, muscularity is often considered equal to strength and feelings (being too emotional) equals weakness.

‘The fear of showing weakness has profound impacts on Mongolian men’s attitudes toward embracing health-seeking behaviour and preventing high-risk behaviours detrimental to their health. It also results in men using violence as a mean to assert their authority or control – often resulting in intimate partner violence. PIN strives to address the above-mentioned barriers by:

- Integrating gender equality, inclusion and protection principles into the project planning and management cycle ensuring gender-disaggregated indicators are in place;
- Strengthening the staffs’ knowledge and capacity to manage exclusion, gendered and protection risks; and promoting continuous cycle of learning on gender mainstreaming.
- Including the gender and inclusion agenda at all levels of the project cycle, from project proposal to the projects’ end; at the programmatic side, as well as communications & advocacy;
- Integrating gender-sensitive and gender-transformative messages into PIN’s communications strategy that challenges gender stereotypes and discriminatory practices;
- Identifying the specific barriers and challenges that women and socially excluded groups in Mongolia experience and integrate the solutions and measures to address those into PIN Mongolia’s programming;
- Promoting best practices in combating gender inequalities and social exclusion and actively advocate for inclusive gender policy-making;

In addition, PIN Mongolia uses two field-tested tools, the **Designing for Behaviour Change** (DBC) framework and **Barrier Analysis** (BA) study to enable

people to practice positive behaviours. PIN’s expertise in behaviour change includes:

- Understanding what **barriers** prevent people from practicing the desired behaviours.
- Realizing what **enablers** can help people with adopting such behaviours.
- Using this understanding to design effective behaviour change interventions, e.g., **Ending Violence Against Women and Girls**.
- Implementing and evaluating such interventions in a maximum quality.

PIN strives for excellence and excellent results are achieved not only thanks to its consolidated experience and expertise in Mongolia and the other Country Programmes, but also thanks to the technical expertise of a support team of advisers from its Knowledge and Learning Department (KLD). The KLD team supports PIN’s projects implementation worldwide with technical expertise on a variety of subjects, e.g., education and skills, market systems development, businesses and small and micro enterprises, climate change, Gender Equality, Social Inclusion and Protection Mainstreaming, and behavioural change.

## 4. Current and past projects

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### **Switching On the Green Economy (2022–2025, EC-SWITCH):**

Setting up an ecolabelling scheme in the Agri-Food and Beverage Sector in Mongolia and promote food to fork principles – €2.2MM

### **Youth and children to advocate for climate change and clean air (2021, UNICEF):**

Youth engagement activities for children and adolescents (aged 15–24) through social media, traditional media and messaging across main Mongolian urban cities – €112,796

### **Ending Gender Based Violence (2021–2022, UNFPA):**

Strengthening national capacity for gender-based violence prevention by promoting gender equitable social norms through effective prevention mechanisms at the community level – \$74,000

### **Independent Media Project (2021–2022, Spirit of America, American Embassy):**

The aim is to foster independent and sustainable media through a market-based approach, aimed at providing investments to scale novel business models – \$130,000

### **Emergency response to COVID-19 (2020, SDC, German Embassy, PIN HQ):**

PIN and its partners have supported more than 30,000 people and 6,000 families economically impacted by COVID-19 with food and pharmaceutical vouchers and nutrition, education, and hygiene kits – \$250,000

### **CashEval (2021–2023, German Federal Foreign Office):**

PIN contributed to increasing the resilience of households to cope with extreme weather events of dzud by providing early action unconditional cash assistance to households who are living in the dzud risk area – €199,856

### **CHIP (2020–2024, UNICEF, SDC):**

Improving air pollution and energy efficiency in traditional gers and communities through climate-smart cooking, heating, and insulation products and services solutions – €332,929

### **Web-based Air Pollution Monitoring Platform – HazeGazer (2020–2022, UNDP, UNICEF):**

Mapping air quality and run air pollution awareness-raising campaigns to support UNDP's efforts to bring data to the public and civil society – €110,000

### **SOAP – Switch off Air Pollution (2018–2021 EC- SWITCH, CzDA):**

Reducing air and environmental pollution with energy advice and green financing support for sustainable housing in UB through community-based drone mapping – €499,081

### **R2B – Right to Breathe (2018 –2019 EC, EIDHR):**

Setting up an air quality monitoring network and promote transparency and accountability, as well as fostering action at the level of civil society – €314,590

### **LTT4R (2016–2019 CzDA, ECHO, FAO):**

Building resilient households to dzud-affected herders in eastern aimags and improving disaster preparedness through EWS, disseminating weather information on mobile phones – €526,547

### **EPIL (2016–2019 CSO-LA, CzDA):**

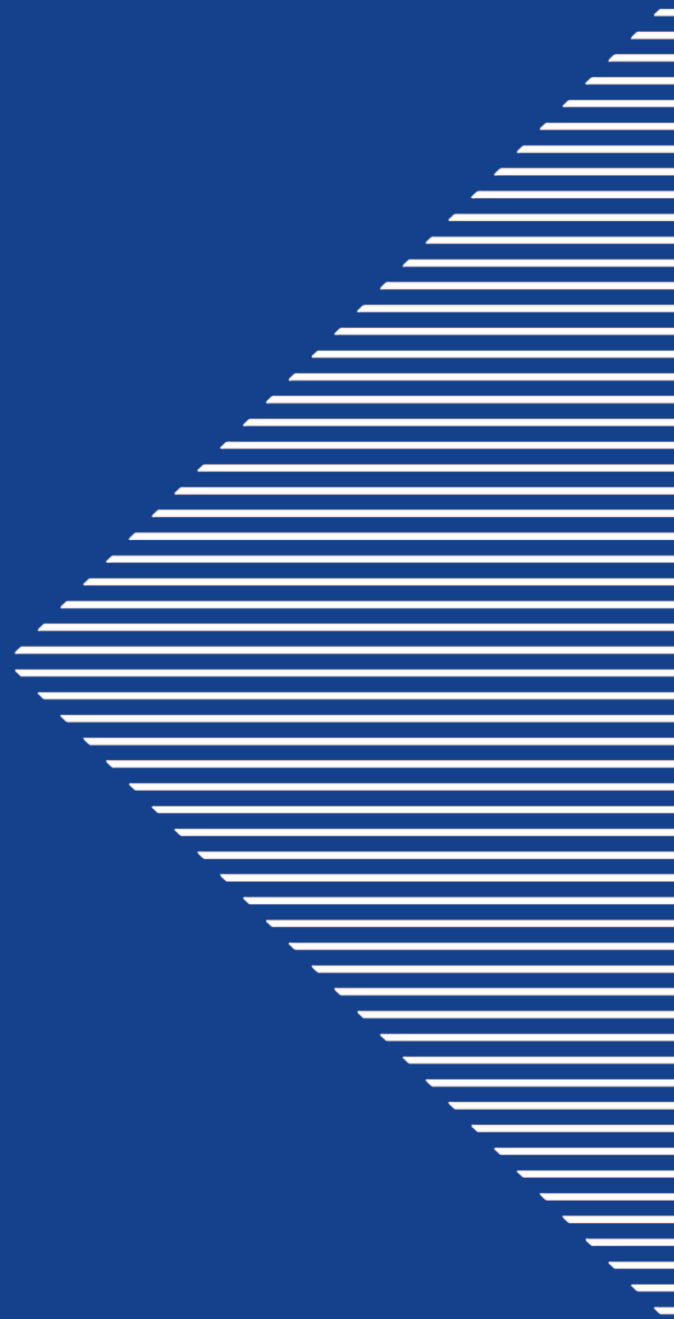
Promoting sustainable livelihoods by strengthening cooperatives in Arkhangai and Uvurkhangai – €932,697

### **Cooperation between Czech and Mongolian universities on understanding interactions between livestock and wildlife (2017–2018, CzDA):**

Improving university education on ecological interactions in rangelands and promote proper natural resource management – €103,000

### **SWBI (2013 –2015 EC, SWITCH, CzDA):**

Promoting sheep wool as an eco-friendly and energy-efficient solution for thermal insulation of buildings and creating alternative value chains to support sustainable livelihoods – €891,412



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