

Welcome to the Big Country with A Warm Heart



A Practical Guide to Developing Community-Based Tourism

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 GOVERNMENT OF
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MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
AND TOURISM

 MONGOLIAN
PROTECTED
AREAS

 ХҮН ТӨВТЭН
БАНГАЛ
ХАМГААРЛАГ

*Welcome to the Big Country
with A Warm Heart*

**A Practical Guide to Developing
Community-Based Tourism**

Ulaanbaatar



As a federally owned enterprise, GIZ supports the German Government in achieving its objectives in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development.

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The contents of this book are the sole responsibility of the authors and can in no way reflect the official opinion of GIZ.

On behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

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CONTENTS	4
Foreword	8
Introduction	9
Acronyms	11
CHAPTER 1. WHAT ATTRACTS TRAVELLERS TO MONGOLIA?	12
Nomadic Herders are the Inspiration for Travellers to Mongolia	12
Global Trends in Tourism – Opportunities for Community-Based Tourism	15
What is Community-Based Tourism?	17
Different Expectations of International and Domestic Travellers	18
Ethical Conduct in Tourism - Rights and Protection of Local Communities	19
Challenges of Tourism Development in Mongolia	20
International Visitors to Mongolia	22
CHAPTER 2. PROTECTED AREAS AND COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN MONGOLIA AND WORLDWIDE	23
State Special Protected Areas in Mongolia	24
Collaborative Management in Protected Areas in Mongolia	29
Local Protected Areas in Mongolia	31
Buffer Zones of Protected Areas and Opportunities for CBT	32
International Best Practice and Principles of Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas	33
CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT	34
Nature Conservation and Local Communities Worldwide	34
Community-Based Conservation and Natural Resource Management in Mongolia	36
Community Organizations and Community-Based Tourism	38
CHAPTER 4. UNDERTAKING A FEASIBILITY CHECK	42
Make an honest Assessment of your Opportunities and Challenges to successfully run CBT Activities	42
A Guide for Self-Assessment of Your Opportunities and Challenges for CBT	46
Undertaking a Feasibility Study with Local Community and Experts	48

CHAPTER 5. ESTABLISHING YOUR CBT ENTERPRISE FORMALLY	50
Choosing Your Organizational Form: Should it be a Business Entity or CBO?	51
Establishing a Nukhurlul for Natural Resource Management	56
Developing Your Business Plan	60
CHAPTER 6. REACHING THE TOURISM MARKET TO SELL YOUR CBT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES	61
The Target Markets for Herder Households or Communities	63
How to Reach the Local Market and how to Attract Local Customers	63
How to Find Customers from the Domestic Market – Ulaanbaatar or Distant Aimags	65
How to Reach the International Market or Attract Foreign Visitors to Mongolia, to Your Aimag and to Your Place?	67
Your Many Challenges as a local CBT Operator – and Some Suggested Solutions	70
Setting the Prices for Your Products and Services	71
CHAPTER 7. FINANCING YOUR CBT ENTERPRISE	74
Self-Reliance	75
Community Fund	76
Local Development Fund	77
SME – Small and Medium Enterprise Fund	79
Production and Marketing Cooperatives (Uildverleliin Khorshoo)	79
Donor Organizations and Projects	80
CHAPTER 8. UNDERSTAND AND SECURE YOUR LAND RIGHTS	81
Outside Protected Areas	82
Inside Protected Areas	83
Land Use by Mongolian Citizens, Business Entities and Organizations inside Protected Areas	83
Current Challenges and Practice in Law Implementation	86
Roles and Responsibilities of Land Users Inside Protected Areas	87

CHAPTER 9. BUILD YOUR SKILLS TO RUN YOUR BUSINESS AND CBT	
ACTIVITIES	89
Community-Based Tourism - A Very Broad Skill Set	89
Develop Your Capacity Building Plan	92
CHAPTER 10. MANAGING YOUR BUSINESS AND TEAM	96
Preparedness and Risk Management	97
Managing Your Team	97
Good Business Management Practices	100
Develop Community Capacity – Pass on Your Skills	101
CHAPTER 11. PLANNING AND OPERATING YOUR GUEST	
ACCOMMODATION/GER CAMP	102
General Principles for Overall Planning of Your Ger Camp	103
Choose the Right Location – For Your Camp and for Guest Gers	103
Natural Designs and Guest Comfort	105
How to Provide the Best Services	108
CHAPTER 12. DEVELOPING YOUR TOURISM ACTIVITIES	112
Designing Your Tourism Activities	113
Some General Guidelines when Planning Activities for Guests	114
Developing a Tour Itinerary	115
Making and Selling Souvenirs	115
Developing Your Souvenirs	117
CHAPTER 13. LOCAL FOOD EXPERIENCES FOR YOUR GUESTS	121
Understanding Travellers' Eating Habits	123
Cooking and Serving Food to Your Guests	124
Developing Your Menu	125
Your Ger Kitchen – Set-up and Good Practices	129
CHAPTER 14. SANITATION AND TOILETS	133
Providing Safe and Sanitary Toilets for Your Guests is a High Priority!	133
Regulations for Toilets inside Protected Areas, and Approved Standards	135
Make the Right Choice for Your Toilet Design	135
Providing Shower/Bath for Guests	138
Toilet and Sanitation Procedures on Hiking, Climbing and Riding Tours	139

CHAPTER 15. WASTE MANAGEMENT AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS	140
Reduce, Re-Use, Recycle!	141
Separating Waste	142
Organic Garbage, Food Waste, Grey/Wastewater	144
Other Environmentally Friendly Practices	145
CHAPTER 16. GUIDING	149
Your Role as a Local Guide	149
Planning and Time Management	150
Knowledge and Expertise	152
The Guide's Job - from Arrival to Departure of Guests	153
Select and Train Your Local Guides	157
CHAPTER 17. SAFETY AND SECURITY	158
First Aid Skills and Certification	158
First Aid Kits – for Ger Camp and Tours	159
Information for Emergencies	160
Fire Safety	161
Vehicle Safety	162
Guest Ger Safety and Security	163
Dealing with Stressed Travellers - Lost or Stolen Items	
Fear and Worry	164
Safety Measures before Leaving on Tour	166
Safety on Horse and Camel Riding Tours	167
Adventure Tours and Extreme Sports	170
ANNEXES	172

Foreword

The government of Mongolia recognizes tourism as an economic sector with growth potential and as an alternative to mining in its National Tourism Strategy. Nomadic culture and its landscapes are the primary tourist attraction in Mongolia and protected areas and the preservation of biodiversity are crucial values in nature conservation. Rural communities in Mongolia play an important role in making tourism sustainable.

Different models of Community-Based Tourism (CBT) have been developed with the support of various conservation projects and programs at the national level. At the same time the number of tourist visits to protected areas has increased, and with excessive numbers of livestock inside the protected areas, their biodiversity, scenic value, and ecosystems are under threat.

The "Supporting Protected Areas for the Conservation of Ecosystem Services" (SPACES) project funded by the German Government and implemented by GIZ in cooperation with the Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Tourism aims at enhancing the enabling conditions for the long-term strengthening of Mongolia's Protected Area system. One approach of the GIZ SPACES project is to support CBT as a local livelihood strategy and complement to conserving Protected Areas in a sustainable way.

This CBT handbook in your hand was developed with the support of GIZ SPACES based on a comprehensive review of experiences with CBT in our country in the past 20 years. It was produced by national tourism experts, and practitioners, and reviewed by community members running CBT activities in Mongolia.

I am fully confident the Handbook will give you step-by-step practical guidance on how to set up and implement successful models of community-based tourism that promote long-term benefits for your livelihood while encouraging and supporting you to safeguard the beauty of your areas including the Protected Areas.

The handbook will also serve as a comprehensive resource book for Environment and Tourism Agencies at Aimag level, trainers in this field, and tour operators to some extent. Last but not least, the Handbook will contribute to our effort to conserve the Protected Areas of the country for the sake of our next generation by reaching out to its primary guardians – herders.

Therefore, I on behalf of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism of Mongolia would like to express my deep appreciation to the GIZ SPACES project team and our national experts for their sincere work in developing this Handbook.



Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Tourism,
Department of Protected Area Management
Director D. Batmunkh

Introduction

Have you considered getting involved in tourism, but you are wondering whether it is feasible, and how to do it? Or have you got stuck and are looking for advice on the next step? This handbook was designed to help you move forward².

“Welcome to the Big Country with a Warm Heart” was developed as a practical handbook for local community members, whether as a group or individuals, in rural Mongolia. The handbook seeks to help these target groups assess and develop their capacity to successfully engage in tourism and to establish their activities in line with Mongolian legal requirements and the principles of sustainable tourism for the conservation of nature and sharing of cultural experiences.

Initiated and financed by GIZ SPACES, “Welcome to the Big Country with a Warm Heart” was created in a participatory way. A core team of project staff and consultants invited known experts with a wealth of work experience in tourism and with local communities in rural Mongolia as key contributors to the handbook. A series of meetings as well as drafting of individual contributions lead to the consensus on content, lay-out and format. Finally, the different sections were compiled into one coherent draft, which was then reviewed and edited for the final versions of the handbook in Mongolian and English language.

The handbook is primarily meant for self-study, but also as a resource for trainers. Information for quick reference, such as some definitions of terms, is provided in boxes within the text. More comprehensive background information, relevant sections on laws, regulations, and standards, and more can be accessed through QR Codes. The handbook is available online at the GIZ Mongolia website in Mongolian and English and can be downloaded via the QR Code given below.

The handbook does not go into an in-depth discussion of the definition of “Community-Based Tourism” but provides references to further reading on the topic and provides definitions of “sustainable tourism” and “responsible travel”. It takes a pragmatic approach in providing information and guidance to anybody, not only to formally recognized groups. However, it has dedicated sections on community-based organizations in Mongolia and how to establish and manage them.

²The Mongolian edition of this handbook has been printed as a hardcover book and distributed among herder households and relevant organizations. It intends to address the target groups directly, which is reflected in the language chosen in sections throughout the book. The English edition is mainly meant as a tool to help international organizations or non-Mongolian speaking trainers to use it effectively; it largely corresponds to the Mongolian edition.

Throughout the handbook, case studies of Community-Based Tourism initiatives from across Mongolia illustrate various experiences in overcoming challenges, seizing opportunities, working in different organizational settings and in different natural environments.

This handbook is organized into seventeen chapters. Chapters 1 – 3 provide an understanding of why travellers visit Mongolia, on nature conservation, different kinds of State and Local Protected Areas, and on the role local communities – in different organizational forms – can play in conservation and tourism. Chapters 4 – 10 guide you through all the steps necessary to assess your opportunities and challenges to engage in tourism, to legally establish a business entity, and to run an enterprise and manage your team. Chapters 11 – 17 share suggestions on how to design your facilities, and develop your activities, and provide information on how to operate safely and in an environmentally friendly fashion in line with required standards.

It is our hope that you will enjoy using this handbook and that it will serve you as a source of inspiration and encouragement and as a very practical resource for making your dreams come to life and your community-based tourism venture a success!

***Scan to download the full version of
the handbook in Mongolian***



Acronyms

ALAMGAC - Agency for Land Administration and Management, Geodesy and Cartography

CBD - Convention on Biological Diversity

CBNRM - Community-based natural resource management

CBO – Community-based organization

CBT – Community-based tourism

DPAM - Department of Protected Area Management

FUG – Forest User Group

GDP - Gross Domestic Product

GIZ SPACES – Supporting Protected Areas for the Conservation of Ecosystem Services project, GIZ

ICCA – Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas/Territories of Life

ITB – Internationale Tourismus Börse (German for "International Tourism Fair")

IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature

KTT NGO - Khomyn Talyn Takhi Non-Governmental Organization

LLC - Limited Liability Company

MET - Ministry of Environment and Tourism

NAMAC - National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Cooperatives

NEMA – National Emergency Management Agency

NGO - Non-governmental organization

NR - Natural resource

PA - Protected Area

PCC NGO – People-Centered Conservation Non-Governmental Organization

PUG - Pasture User Group

RUA - Rangeland Use Agreement

SME - Small and Medium Enterprise

TNC - The Nature Conservancy

UN - United Nations

UNDP - United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO - United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization



CHAPTER 1. WHAT ATTRACTS TRAVELLERS TO MONGOLIA?

Nomadic Herders are the Inspiration for Travellers to Mongolia

"Somewhere between the sand dunes of the Gobi Desert and the magnificent peaks of Khuiten in Altai Tavan Bogd, you'll uncover the meaning of Mongolian wealth. Our fortune is in our land, in our people and our way of life."²



This is how Mongolia portrayed its allure at one of the world's most prestigious tourism fairs, the ITB³, in Berlin in 2015. The short slogan to promote Mongolia was "Nomadic by Nature", capturing the essence of what attracts travellers to Mongolia – nature and nomadic traditions.

²<https://www.mcgroup.com/campaigns/mongolia-tourism>

³Internationale Tourismus Börse = German for "International Tourism Fair"



Lonely Planet⁴, one of the most widely used guidebook resources, notes that "Rugged Mongolia is an adventure destination where travellers can experience vast, untouched landscapes and learn about nomadic culture." A brochure on Mongolia developed by the Japan International Cooperation Agency is named "Go Nomadic - The Country of Nature and Nomads". There are many other examples, and tour operators also focus on "Nature" and "Nomads" when advertising adventures in Mongolia.

The words of these professionals promoting Mongolia as a travel destination make it clear – it is you, the local community, and the herder family that travellers are intrigued by and interested to learn from. It is the land that your ancestors have managed for millennia as nomadic livestock herders, and the protected and untouched wilderness of mountains, forests, steppes, and oases that have evoked dreams in travellers to visit Mongolia, to explore its vast landscapes, to listen to the silence, and to experience a starlit sky devoid of light pollution.

If you think something like "I cannot compete with a 5 Star Hotel of a big company" remember you can offer a "5 Million Star Hotel" by welcoming guests to the beautiful nature under the clear skies of your homeland. As a herder family or community, you are an important player in developing tourism in Mongolia. You can share your knowledge and daily life of nomadic culture directly with travellers, welcoming them to your home and guiding them to experience and learn about nature, wildlife, and local history.

Do not think there is nothing interesting for foreign visitors in the endless grasslands, the familiar mountains, and the clear night sky, or about your daily life as a herder family. Mongolia's ancient horse culture attracts riders from around the world, eager for the experience of riding a Mongolian horse in unfenced open landscapes and learning about local horsemanship.

Many travellers will have been inspired by books and movies about Mongolia's magnificent landscapes and outstanding natural and cultural heritage. The Gobi's wealth of dinosaur fossils, the story of their discovery, and their significance for science and our understanding of the evolution of reptiles, birds and mammals is a story told in well-known books abroad.

⁴<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/mongolia>



Why Travellers are attracted to the Landscapes and Wildlife of Mongolia

The landscapes of Mongolia are a great attraction for international visitors, due to their value as old cultural landscapes used by nomadic herders for millennia, for their relatively pristine state and wilderness value, for their vastness and the low number of people inhabiting them.

The Mongolian steppe is considered to be the last remaining pristine grassland in Eurasia that once stretched from Eastern Europe to Manchuria. The grassland steppe is home to many iconic species including an estimated 2 million Mongolian gazelles. The Mongolian gazelle's annual migration is one of the last large-scale migrations in the northern hemisphere.⁵

Parts of the Mongolian Gobi Desert region have been identified as among the world's largest and most intact (least developed) remaining wild areas with very low human population density up to now.⁶ The Gobi – Steppe Ecosystem is one of the most important regions for wildlife conservation. Mongolia's Southern Gobi area, in particular, is important for Khulan (Asiatic wild ass) and the Goitered (or black-tailed) gazelle.

Mongolia's wildlife includes globally endangered and vulnerable species, namely the six iconic species of Wild Bactrian Camel, Gobi Bear, Takhi/Wild Horse, Khulan/Asiatic Wild Ass, Saiga Antelope, and Goitered Gazelle. These species are all symbols of the well-being and health of the Gobi's ecosystems. Mongolia is home to the world's second largest population of snow leopards, which are important indicators of the health of the landscapes they live in and one of the most inspiring wildlife species for visitors. Migratory birds visiting the wetlands of Mongolia are another draw for groups of travellers coming for bird watching alone.

Natural and Cultural World Heritage

Mongolia has five areas that are inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Three as cultural heritage, including the "Great Burkhan Khaldun Mountain and its surrounding sacred landscape", the "Orkhon Valley Cultural Landscape", and the "Petroglyphic Complexes of the Mongolian Altai". Two natural heritage sites are the "Landscapes of Dauria" and the "Uvs Nuur Basin".

⁵<https://www.lonelyplanet.com/mongolia>

⁶https://mongolia.panda.org/en/our_work/grassland_steppe/



Global Trends in Tourism – Opportunities for Community-Based Tourism

Connection to the land and nature is part of your life as herders and it is obvious to you, but travellers do not know about it and find it very interesting. More and more travellers today are looking for new insights that leave a lasting impression on them and transform their outlook on life and the world. They want to immerse themselves in the culture, traditions, and also language of the places they visit. International travellers today are also very aware of environmental and social practices and consider eco-friendly and socially responsible operations when choosing a service provider. This will likely be a high priority for guests staying with you. Those travellers, interested in “transformational” and “experiential” travel, will be your most likely guests.

Your visitors therefore expect authentic experiences that help them understand and appreciate your way of life. Local food and cooking are another topic that many travellers are interested in and enjoy learning about and taking part in. Visitors will be interested in local legends and folklore and in special local places. Frequently used terms to describe these global trends in tourism are “Sustainable Tourism”, “Responsible Travel” and “Ecotourism”. They are all a potential opportunity for you to develop community-based tourism to increase income while protecting local natural and cultural heritage.

What is Sustainable Tourism, Responsible Travel, and Ecotourism?

Sustainable Tourism aims to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive ones. Negative impacts on a destination include damage to the natural environment, overcrowding, and also loss of economic benefits for the local area. Positive impacts on a destination include job creation, cultural heritage preservation and interpretation, wildlife preservation, landscape restoration, and other positive effects.⁷

The UN Environment Program and UN World Tourism Organization define it as “tourism that takes full account of its current and future economic, social and environmental impacts, addressing the needs of visitors, the industry, the environment and host communities.”⁸

⁷Encyclopedia of the World's Biomes, Goldstein, M. and DellaSala, D. (eds.), 2020

⁸<https://www.gstcouncil.org/what-is-sustainable-tourism>



Responsible Travel is "a term referring to the behaviour and style of individual travellers. The behaviours align with making a positive impact on the destination rather than negative ones."⁹ The Center for Responsible Travel defines "responsible tourism as that which maximizes the positive contributions tourism can make to local communities and promotes it so that local communities thrive and steward cultural resources and biodiversity."¹⁰

Ecotourism The International Ecotourism Society describes it as "responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment, sustains the wellbeing of local people and involves interpretation and education". The Encyclopaedia of Ecotourism identifies three common characteristics of the many types of ecotourism:

1. Nature based.
2. Environmentally educated.
3. Sustainably managed.

Ecotourism addresses both social and environmental goals, and it can benefit biodiversity conservation in four direct and indirect ways, including support for wildlife and protected areas, diversified livelihoods, environmental interpretation and ethics, and strengthened resource management institutions.¹¹

The term "ecotourism" is much used in Mongolia, as most travel in Mongolia takes place in natural areas. However, caution should be used to not overuse the term "eco"; nowadays it is often used just for advertising purposes, in all sectors, even when practices are not particularly environmentally friendly.

There are also large projects in some countries involved in ecotourism development that are being criticized for their negative impacts on indigenous peoples and local communities.

⁹<https://www.gstcouncil.org/what-is-sustainable-tourism/>

¹⁰www.responsibletravel.org

¹¹<https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/pdf/10.1146/annurev-environ-101718-033046>



What is Community-Based Tourism?

In this handbook we call tourism services which have been developed by local community members "community-based tourism". This is as long as the activities are environmentally and socially responsible, while improving the income of those offering the services - no matter whether the service providers are working together as a formal or informal CBT group or are an individual household or person. As a practical, hands-on guide for local communities to partake in tourism, this handbook does not engage in the discussion on the exact definition of community-based tourism. But here, we are sharing suggestions and principles based on experiences worldwide that we find important for developing community-based tourism.



Community-based tourism means that community members design tourism programs based on special features of local life, culture and nature which they feel proud of and comfortable to share with visitors.¹² Visitors are offered a "unique opportunity to meet local people, experience and learn about local culture, livelihoods and the natural world - directly from local people."¹³ It does not just address the question "How can communities benefit more from tourism?", but also the broader question of "how can tourism contribute to the process of community development?"¹⁴

The impact of tourism on the community and natural environment should be a key concern, and communities must be adequately prepared before starting CBT operations.¹⁵

¹² <https://www.unwto.org/node/12238>

¹³ *ibid*

¹⁴ Community-Based Tourism Handbook, 2003. Published by REST (Responsible Ecological Social Tour), Thailand, p11.

¹⁵ *ibid*



Guiding Principles for Developing CBT

- Recognize, support and promote community ownership of tourism
- Involve community members from the start in every aspect
- Promote community pride
- Improve the quality of life
- Ensure environmental sustainability
- Preserve the unique character and culture of the local area
- Foster cross-cultural learning
- Respect cultural differences and human dignity
- Distribute benefits fairly among community members
- Contribute a fixed percentage of income to community projects

*Source: Community Based Tourism Handbook, 2003.
Published by REST (Responsible Ecological Social Tour), Thailand.*

Different Expectations of International and Domestic Travellers

While this chapter focuses more on international travellers and explains their motivation to visit Mongolia, domestic travellers can also be an important market for your local community. In fact, depending on your location, they may by far outnumber international visitors. One of the major constraints of international guests to visit Mongolia is the limited number of flights into the country. This is another reason that you should consider the potential of domestic visitors just as much.

For you, as a local service provider, it is important to understand the different expectations of domestic and international travellers. It is probably fair to say that Mongolian travellers more often travel in groups of family and friends, and they will have their own transport. Domestic travellers are more likely to be fully equipped with camping equipment. Many of them might expect just "support" from locals, such as access to meat and milk products, rather than the full services such as guiding and other activities your international guests would enjoy.

Individual or small group travellers from overseas, particularly from European countries, North America, Australia and New Zealand, are more likely to seek quiet and enjoy solitude in their accommodation and at the sites you guide them to. This is in preference to spending time with large groups of other travellers. These are of course just general guidelines. This handbook does not want to make any generalizations regarding travellers from any particular country, let alone make any judgements.



Ethical Conduct in Tourism - Rights and Protection of Local Communities

While you should share authentic knowledge and traditions and offer genuine experiences reflecting your local life and culture, you NEVER have to share or



show anything or any place you don't feel comfortable sharing, for personal reasons or because it is not culturally appropriate. Explain to visitors what is not appropriate or acceptable for them to see or do or ask. Most of them will truly appreciate this because they want to adhere to local norms; and in case they don't it is still your right. You can even place a small sign or leaflet in your guest accommodation that gives visitors guidance on these issues. Also, do not bring guests to areas that might be environmentally too sensitive or

critical habitat of rare wildlife and don't risk disturbing wildlife for the sake of a sighting or a photo by a guest.

A "Global Code of Ethics for Tourism" was developed by the United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) to help minimize the negative impacts of tourism on the environment and on cultural heritage while maximizing the benefits for residents of tourism destinations. Its 10 articles were officially recognized by the UN General Assembly in 2001. While it is not a legally binding document, all those involved in tourism - travellers and providers - should commit in practice to its principles. Its full text is provided through the QR code below, and as **Annex 1**.

Scan to see the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by UNWTO





A Brief History of Tourism in Mongolia

A Tourism Bureau was established in Mongolia in 1954, but tourism was limited to visitors from socialist countries for exchange visits and hunting. In 1963, the Mongolian government started building tourism “bases”, e.g. Khankhongor Soum, South Gobi Aimag was a base from which to bring visitors to the iconic Gobi sites of Yoliin Am, Bayanzag and Khongoryn Els. Almost all tourism activities were managed through the state owned “Juulchin” company up to 1990, when this company was privatized.

Since the end of the socialist period and the opening of the country in 1991, numerous tourist enterprises have been established. Today there are 571 registered tour operators and 526 tourist camps in Mongolia. The tourism sector currently has 55,220 workers and entrepreneurs.¹⁶

Earlier in the 20th Century, foreign visitors were explorers, adventurers, and researchers. The most well-known today in Western countries is probably Roy Chapman Andrews, who led several expeditions from Beijing to Mongolia between 1922 and 1930. Chapman Andrews pioneered the first automobile travel into the Gobi, supported by camel caravans. These expeditions helped to make Bayanzag famous as a site of very important dinosaur fossils, unearthed dinosaur eggs, new species of dinosaurs, and the fossils of early mammals that co-existed with dinosaurs. Roy Chapman Andrews later became the Director of the American Museum of Natural History.

In 1946, a Russian Expedition to the Gobi did further paleontological research in collaboration with Mongolian experts. After 1990, the American Museum of Natural History continued support to paleontological research in the Gobi, which is today led by Mongolian scientists. Bayanzag, with a new Visitor Center and protection status, remains one of the most visited tourist sites in Mongolia, as well as a key paleontological site worldwide.

Challenges of Tourism Development in Mongolia¹⁷

Tourism is considered an important sector in Mongolia's efforts to diversify the economy and create more income opportunities outside the mining sector. The tourism sector contributes about 7% of GDP and offers nearly 8% of employment in Mongolia. However, development of tourism has been held up by many challenges.

^{16, 17}Source of all data under this heading: World Bank (2021). Mongolia: Fostering Inclusive Tourism Development in the Aftermath of COVID-19.



Tourism in general and to Mongolia is very vulnerable to global and domestic events that discourage travel. Examples in the last two decades include the attacks in 2001 on the World Trade Center in New York City, the 2003 SARS outbreak, the 2008/9 global financial crisis, the 2014/15 measles outbreak in Mongolia, and the 2020/21 COVID-19 pandemic. Apart from this, Mongolia faces more challenges for tourism development.

Tour operators and other companies involved in tourism (hotels etc.) listed as the top 10 challenges for tourism development:

1. Not enough international flights are available
2. International flights are very expensive
3. Tourism season is very short
4. Lack of centralized marketing support
5. Poor implementation of National tourism policy
6. Poor Tourism sector organization and coordination
7. Costs of domestic flights
8. Availability of domestic flights
9. Pollution and lack of environmental protection
10. Poor skills in the tourism workforce

The most common concerns were:

- The scarcity and inadequate sanitation of public bathrooms.
- Road conditions, status of maintenance, and traffic in the capital.
- Irregular room/camp services such as changing of bed clothes and waste management.
- Inadequate training of staff and modest foreign language proficiency.
- The lack of private taxi services for mobility in and around the capital.
- Inadequate internet connectivity in tourist locations.
- Limited food menus and lack of choice of vegan and vegetarian dishes in restaurants.



International Visitors to Mongolia

The number of foreign tourists arriving in Mongolia has grown since 1995. Arrivals grew rapidly between 1995-2011, and then slowed between 2012-2019. The number of arrivals was highest in 2019, a peak year for the tourism industry. Then, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 2020 was the worst year for tourism in Mongolia, and full recovery of the industry is not expected until 2023.

The increase in foreign tourists in the decade up to 2019 was from several key regions. The increase in tourists from the East Asia-Pacific Region was +245%, and 64 % of total leisure visitors in 2019 were from that region. The increase from Europe was +87%, and 28 % of all tourists were from Europe in 2019. The increase from North America was +80%, and 5% of all foreign tourists in 2019 were from the region.

Annex 2 provides details on countries of origin of travellers to Mongolia between 2015 and 2019.



CHAPTER 2. PROTECTED AREAS AND COMMUNITY-BASED TOURISM IN MONGOLIA AND WORLDWIDE



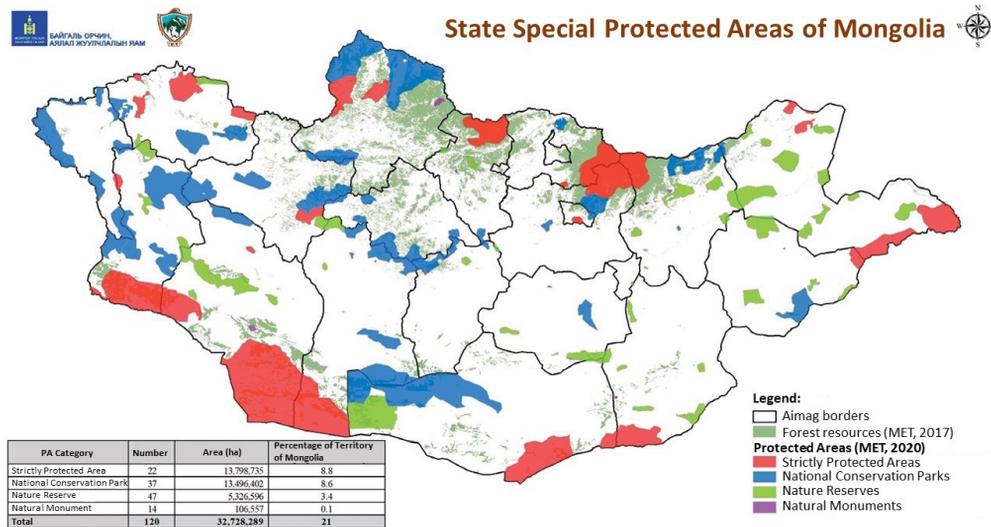


State Special Protected Areas in Mongolia

Protected Areas play a key role in sustaining the very conservation values that attract visitors to Mongolia. National Parks contain about 80% of the tourist attractions in the country. Parks protect landscapes and rare wildlife species, which, in some cases, represent the strongest remaining populations worldwide for their species. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Protected Areas are also crucial in helping to mitigate climate change, with their forest covers, wetlands and other natural landscapes acting as carbon sinks.



State Special Protected Areas of Mongolia



As of March 2021

There are four categories of state protected areas in Mongolia:

- blue* - National Conservation Parks (in English commonly referred to as National Parks),
- red* - Strictly Protected Areas,
- green* - Nature Reserves,
- purple* - Natural Monuments.

Mongolia has an ambitious national goal of protecting 30% of its territory by 2030, and has made such commitments under international conventions to which Mongolia is a signatory, like the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Mongolia's network of Protected Areas is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism.

Scan to visit the Electronic Information Centre of the Mongolian Ministry of Environment and Tourism





Each protected area, or sometimes two or more protected areas in geographic proximity are managed by a Protected Area Administration. Typically, a protected area administration has one specialist responsible for tourism. National and international NGOs, and international donors are contributing to strengthening the network.

Tourism, if not managed well, can negatively impact nature and protected areas. When managed well by all involved and with good guidance and services to visitors, it can benefit and support protected areas, nature, and wildlife. Such tourism is also an opportunity to create benefits to local communities and local enterprises. However, income generation from tourism, especially in the more remote rural areas, brings significant challenges and it is important not to create high expectations that cannot be met quickly, if ever.

State protected areas in Mongolia are managed based on a management plan. The management plan is developed with the participation of all stakeholders including local communities. The plan describes management actions and responsibilities based on key conservation values to be protected, the values that are the reason that the area is under state protection. An important element of the management plan is the zoning of the protected area.

Entrance Fees are to be paid by both international and national visitors to protected areas. As a tour operator, guide, or local guide, it is important to ensure that all fees are paid. International travellers usually will be happy to pay these fees; they are used to the concept that entrance fees are used for park management from their home countries, and they will be happy to comply and know that their fees help protect Mongolia's natural and cultural heritage. They will appreciate the fact that you alert them to the need to pay fees and that your operation respects and adheres by these rules. It is another element of responsible travel.

Scan to download the Mongolian Protected Area Law





What Activities are Allowed in the Different Protected Areas and their Different Zones?

Strictly Protected Areas are established for the conservation of the original conditions and features of their natural zones, in order to preserve specific traits of the zones and areas of scientific importance, and to ensure environmental balance.

Pristine Zone

Only protection activities conformant with the need to preserve original natural features may be conducted within pristine zones.

Research and investigation activities may be conducted within a pristine zone only by way of observation methods, and without causing any damage to the natural features.

Conservation Zone

All under the rules for Pristine Zones, and: biotechnological measures making use of environmentally safe technologies may be implemented in conservation zones to enhance flora and fauna reproduction and to mitigate damages caused by natural disasters.

Limited Use Zone

All under the rules for the Pristine and Conservation Zones and: Soil and plant cover restoration; Forest maintenance and cleaning; Animal inventories and activities to regulate animal population numbers, age, sex and structure, following an approved program and methods; Use of mineral water and other treatment and sanitation resources; Ecotourism organized following designated routes and areas, according to appropriate procedures; Use of accommodation constructed according to appropriate procedures and designated for temporary residence, camping, observation, research or investigation by travellers or other people with permission; Taking photographs, making audio or video recordings and using these for commercial purposes; Worshipping natural sacred sites and conducting other traditional ceremonies.



In the case of local residents, the collection and use of associated natural resources and medicinal and food plants, according to established regulations, for household needs.

National Conservation Parks have been placed under State special protection. Their natural original conditions are relatively well preserved. They are of historical, cultural, scientific, educational and ecological significance.

Special Zone

In addition to protection measures aimed at preserving natural features, measures using environmentally safe technologies for the conducting of research and investigation, enhancement of flora and fauna reproduction, restoration of soil and elimination of damage caused by natural disasters may also be undertaken in Special Zones.

Travel and Tourism Zone

All under Limited Use Zone and Special Zone, and: Fishing in designated areas.

Limited Use Zone

All under Special Zone and Travel and Tourism Zone and: Traditional animal husbandry; Authorized construction of buildings for travellers and others, using approved proposals and plans; Construction of roads and road stations following appropriate procedures and using approved proposals and plans; Support and maintenance of fields required for sports facilities and public activities; Conducting ecological assessments and developing the settled areas in the territory according to approved general plans

Nature Reserves consist of areas taken under State special protection in order to create conditions for the conservation, preservation, and restoration of certain natural features and natural resources. There are ecological, biological, paleontological, geological and water reserves.



Traditional household activities may be carried out in nature reserves provided they do not have a negative impact on the natural features, the condition and location of certain types of natural resources, species population levels, and the reproduction of flora and fauna for which the reserve is under protection.

Monuments consist of land taken under state special protection for the purpose of preserving the heritage of unique natural formations as well as historical and cultural artefacts in their natural state. There are natural, historical and cultural monuments in Mongolia.

Protection measures such as constructing fences, posting warning signs and assigning local residents to be responsible for the protection of the land shall be undertaken within the territory of monuments.

Scan to download Guidance on Protected Area Management Planning



The legislation is not quite clear about the rights and responsibilities of local communities with regard to sustainable use and conservation of natural resources and community-based tourism. In practice, formally established community organizations and local communities (in their customary social organization) are, to various degrees, active partners in co-management in protected areas. A revision of the Protected Area Law is currently underway; it includes a provision to enable local communities to conclude contracts with the Ministry of Environment and Tourism to manage an area within a Protected Area. The protected area administration would still reserve the right to approve/disapprove the management plan of the area under community management.

As there are still uncertainties in the legal framework regarding the rights and responsibilities of local communities in protected areas, it is particularly important to work closely with the Park Administration, and the Soum government, when planning and establishing tourism activities. This is to ensure that there is a common understanding and agreement and that PA and Soum government representatives support them.



Collaborative Management in Protected Areas in Mongolia

Collaborative management of Protected Areas is a partnership by which various stakeholders agree on sharing among themselves the management functions, rights and responsibilities for a territory or a particular governmental agency staff - interested in pursuing the collaborative management option.¹⁸



Collaborative management has been taken as an approach in buffer zones in Mongolia as well as inside Protected Areas. Other than in many countries, Mongolia's Protected Area Law allows customary land use by nomadic herders in National Parks, though not in all zones.

Through collaborative approaches, local communities and other stakeholders are involved in developing the Management Plans of Protected Areas. There is an approved process and methodology on how Management Plans are developed, and the participation of local communities and other stakeholders is prescribed in the law.

In some cases, local communities, through their established community-based organizations (CBO) are active partners, not only in developing, but also in implementing a Protected Area Management Plan. For example, in Kherlen Toonot Nature Reserve in Khentii Province the local Nukhurlul (see below and pages 35-37 for background information on the history, legal status and organizational form of Nukhurlul) works with the park authority to develop the Management Plan and is responsible for management of the area, including monitoring wildlife including mountain sheep (*Argali*, *Ovis Ammon*) and protecting them from outside poaching.

In and around Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park, Mongolia's largest national park, community managed areas were piloted around two decades ago. They were defined by tripartite contracts (of 15 years' duration) between herder communities (who chose the term Nukhurlul for their organization), Protected Area administrations and local governors.

¹⁸Borrini, G. (1996): Collaborative management of protected areas: tailoring the approach to the context. IUCN, Gland.



The contracts recognized herders' collective grazing rights and conservation responsibilities in specific areas that could include land both inside and outside the boundaries of the National Park.

The community managed areas of 25 community organizations (Nukhurlul) overlapped or were situated entirely within Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park (in 2006), covering approximately 25 % of the entire park area of about 27,000 square kilometres. Not all of these may have had formal management agreements at the time. The early community groups have since merged into the larger Pasture User Groups, three of which have territory inside the park. Rangeland Use Agreements (RUAs) with Pasture User Groups (PUGs) can include grazing areas within National Parks outside of the core zones. They are co-signed by the PA Authority.

Protected area management and tourism activities can be developed collaboratively in different ways, with different actors. Conservation will be even more successful if several organizations are involved, meeting the needs to provide tourism services, scientific advice, and park management. In Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park new models of collaborative conservation and tourism management have been developed.

“Bayanzag Ulalzakh Tsonj” NGO from Bulgan Soum, Umnugobi Aimag developed tourism in Bayanzag (Flaming Cliffs) through the creation of an information center, facilities for its staff and an interpretive trail to view fossils. They also established a managed entrance area. Board members of the NGO include researchers and tourism experts who advice on the preservation of this landscape and its paleontological values.

In 2019, “Zuun Saikhan” Nukhurlul was established through the initiative of local herder households; its 18 current members are from 16 households in Khurmen, Bayandalai, Dalanzadgad and Khankhongor Soums. The Nukhurlul runs a ger camp and souvenir shops, sells food and offers horse riding for tourists into Yoliin Am (Vulture Gorge). “Zuun Saikhan” Nukhurlul has concluded a contract with the Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park Administration. The Nukhurlul organizes waste management in their area and has built and maintains a public toilet. The annual income (in 2021) from tourism for each member household was 5-8 Million MNT.

Source: B. Otgonjargal, Nukhurlul leader



The Protected Area Law in Mongolia permits delegation of the management of national parks to NGOs under contracts. The first such case was Khustain Nuruu National Park, where the managing NGO works closely with the local community of nomadic herders. Herders remain resource users in the park and adjacent buffer zones, with agreements to avoid grazing in areas critical to the re-introduced Takhi (Przewalski Horse, *Equus przewalskii*), an endangered endemic species of wild horse.

The delegation of National Park management to an NGO has also been agreed between the MET and the Mongolian NGO KTT (Khomyn Talyn Takhi) for the newly established Khomyn Tal National Park and handover is being prepared.

Scan to download Guidelines for Developing a Buffer Zone Management Plan



Local Protected Areas in Mongolia

Local Protected Areas are under the jurisdiction of Aimag and Soum governments, or the Capital City and District governments, and typically jointly managed by local authorities and local communities. In some cases, Nukhurlul or other community-based organizations (CBOs) are involved. Otherwise, community members, usually local herders, play a role in monitoring and management, namely as rangers, and often as volunteer rangers. The total area under local government protection has increased significantly in recent years, covering a total of 27 million hectares as of 2021. This formal local protection is also an instrument to secure grazing rights and other customary resource use since mining licenses cannot be issued in them.

Local Protected Areas and the natural and cultural values they were established to conserve can play an important role for community-based tourism. As a local community member, you will be able to provide a unique perspective and insights when guiding visitors. Local Protected Areas are just as important for community-based tourism as State Protected Areas; not only can they protect the pastoral resources upon which herders' livelihoods depend, but they can also safeguard other aspects such as landscape, history and local culture that are also important for CBT development.

As a local community, you can propose the establishment of a Local Protected Area. It may be useful to request the advice and assistance of experts to complete the justification why the area should be under local protection, and to determine the boundary.



The approval depends on the Soum Khural decision and the final step to formulize the Local Protected Area is its registration with the national cadastre at ALAMGAC (Agency for Land Management, Geodesy and Cartography).

At the time of compiling this handbook, an update of the Protected Area Law is underway. Legislators are discussing the establishment of a fifth category of State Protected Area in Mongolia called a "Sustainably Managed Protected Area". All Local Protected Areas would fall under this category and be under the responsibility of the Ministry of Environment and Tourism too.

Buffer Zones of Protected Areas and Opportunities for CBT

Most protected areas in Mongolia have a defined buffer zone around them to minimize and prevent actual and potential adverse impacts, to increase public participation, and to support local livelihoods. According to the law, buffer zones shall be established outside Strictly Protected Areas and may be either outside or overlapping with the Limited Use Zone of National Parks. Soum and Khoroo Citizens' Representatives' Khurals can also establish Buffer Zones around Nature Reserves and Natural Monuments.

It is important that you are well informed about, and actively engage in, discussions on establishing a buffer zone. You should also actively engage in the development of the Buffer Zone Management Plan, through your elected member to the Citizens' Representatives' Khural, or in public events that may be organized to encourage local community participation in these processes. Buffer Zone Management Plans will define local economic activities that are aligned with the conservation objectives of the protected area, and community-based tourism will be an important option.

You, or a representative of your community, can also become a member of the Buffer Zone Council. Buffer Zone Funds are established for the purposes of developing the Buffer Zone and providing support for local people's livelihood. They can be an important financial mechanism to support you and your community in developing CBT activities.

Scan to download the Buffer Zone Law





International Best Practices and Principles of Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas

The IUCN¹⁹ Best Practice Guideline on "Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas – Guidelines for Sustainability" (2018) has been translated into Mongolian language.

Scan to download "Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas – Guidelines for Sustainability"



It describes the key characteristics of best practices in protected area tourism. These are valid globally and can be applied to, and further specified for Mongolia, and for each Protected Area.

Annex 3 provides a summary of these best practices, and the 10 Principles of Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas under the IUCN guideline.

Annex 4 provides information on the Convention on Biological Diversity and Mongolia's commitments as a signatory to the convention.

¹⁹IUCN is the International Union for Conservation of Nature, an international organization active in research, field projects, advocacy and education in conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.



CHAPTER 3. COMMUNITY-BASED CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Nature Conservation and Local Communities Worldwide

Today, there is a growing number of studies concluding that more biodiversity is protected globally by indigenous peoples and local communities outside Protected Areas than within State Protected Areas²⁰. Studies have also shown that conservation is more successful in Protected Areas where local communities are involved in co-management and derive livelihood benefits.²¹



²⁰New estimates suggest that Indigenous peoples and local communities conserve at least a fifth of all land on Earth (The UN Environment Programme World Conservation Monitoring Centre/ICCA Consortium).

²¹Johan Oldekop et al, "A Global Assessment of the Social and Conservation Outcomes of Protected Areas", Conservation Biology, Vol. 30, (2015)



Internationally, areas managed under collective tenure and customary rules have been generally referred to as ICCAs – Indigenous and Community Conserved Areas. More recently, the term “Territories of Life”²² has been introduced. This term encompasses the great diversity of how any local community or indigenous group defines the area they have inhabited for generations, where they have developed their traditional knowledge, and their own ways of protecting or sustainably using natural resources and biodiversity.

Indigenous peoples and local communities are now better recognized for their role in conservation. Consequently, respect for their rights to customary use of the land and natural resources is growing. Also, the nomadic way of using grasslands has been better understood. Mobility has been better recognized as a crucial tool for sustainable use of pasturelands by modern science and the international conservation community in recent decades.

Community-Based Conservation and Natural Resource Management in Mongolia

In Mongolia, besides using nomadic practice to conserve grasslands, local herder communities have traditionally protected land, water and wildlife, as well as special sacred sites. In recent decades, community-based conservation and natural resource management have been more formalized. Different forms of community organizations are now utilized. They include Nukhurlul, which focus on collective conservation activities, Pasture User Groups (PUGs) for joint pasture management over larger territories, based on customary grazing patterns, and Forest User Groups (FUGs), for forest and Non-Timber Forest Product (NTFP) conservation and management.

Nukhurlul - Community Organizations for Conservation

A Nukhurlul is one form of community organization of rural households in Mongolia, a voluntary “partnership” that focuses on collective conservation activities, pasture management, income generation, and social activities. Nukhurluls conclude a contract with the Soum government and receive a Nukhurlul certificate.

The “community managed areas” of the first Nukhurluls established in and around Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park were defined by tripartite contracts between the Nukhurlul, the park administration and the local Soum Governor.

²²ICCA Consortium – Territories of Life - www.iccaconsortium.org



The legal framework to clarify the rights and responsibilities of Nukhurluls and strengthen their tenure is still evolving. The current Environmental Protection Law lacks clarity regarding local communities' tenure security, rights, and responsibilities, in resource use.

At the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, one officer is responsible for CBOs, and with MET support, a National Forum of Nukhurluls took place twice in Ulaanbaatar. The events included an exhibition/fair, experience sharing and meetings between communities, the public and government representatives. The national umbrella organization for Nukhurluls is the "National Nukhurlul Association"²³.

In 2021, 1692 Nukhurlul were active in 176 Soums of 21 Aimags. The area formally recognized as under Nukhurlul management comprised 8.3 million hectares, but much more land is under Nukhurlul management de facto, but not registered formally at ALAMGAC yet. The numbers above include Forest User Groups (FUG), as these are usually registered as Nukhurluls.

In the meantime, several manuals have been produced for the establishment and management of Nukhurluls, outlining success factors, suggesting planning formats and guiding the procedure to conclude a contract with the Soum government.

Scan to download the TNC Guidelines on CBNRM in Mongolia



Scan to download "Handbook on Community Organization in the Gobi"

²³www.facebook.com/nukhurlul.mongolia, info@nukhurlul.mn



The Legal Framework for Community-Based Conservation

The Environmental Protection Law (1995) was amended in 2017. Article 8 was adopted to provide a legal basis for collaborative management of natural resources. It defines collaborative management of natural resources as a process under which local people organized as a Nukhurlul have the right to manage (use, protect, rehabilitate) natural resources. Transparent and democratic principles should govern the process, and the Nukhurlul members are entitled to derive social and economic benefits.



Article 8 defines as key stakeholders in the co-management process: Nukhurluls, the Soum Citizens' Khural, Soum Governor, Environmental officer, and the NGO or project team working with the stakeholders. A contract is to be concluded between the Nukhurlul and the Soum government, specifying the size of the Nukhurlul managed area, depending on the number of Nukhurlul members. Upon the signing of the contract, the Soum governor is to support the Nukhurlul activities, and a certificate is to be issued to the Nukhurlul.

The Nukhurlul activity can be suspended if no conservation activities have been undertaken, or if members agree to discontinue the contract. Nukhurluls should report on the implementation of activities to their local soum. The Nukhurluls have a full right to be paid /compensated if any NRs in their area are degraded by other parties. The Nukhurlul is to develop a management plan with the participation of all its members.

The formal recognition of CBNRM and CBOs still needs to be strengthened to be sustainable. The terms of collaboration and roles of CBOs in pasture management, conservation, and management of other natural resources need to be worked out at local level, by herders, and Soum governments, whilst the legal and regulatory framework is being updated.



Pasture User Groups

Pasture User Groups (PUG) have become the most widespread organizational form of herders in Mongolia. They are territory based and usually have more members than Nukhurluls. Sometimes a PUG covers a whole Bagh, the smallest administrative unit in rural Mongolia. Membership and the pasture area of a PUG are decided in a participatory process involving all local herder households. While they are established primarily for pasture management, there is no reason why the group or some of its member cannot engage in conservation and community-based tourism too.

PUGs conclude 15-year Rangeland Use Agreements (RUAs) with the Soum government. RUAs are registered in the national cadastre at ALAMGAC. RUAs can include grazing areas within national parks outside of the core zones. RUAs for PUGs that overlap with protected areas are co-signed by the Protected Area Authority, as well as by all member households.

PUGs as the primary community organization with rights and responsibilities in pasture management are at the core of the draft pastureland law. When/if this law is approved, PUGs will have an even stronger status. Currently, the Mongolian land law provides the legal basis for collective tenure by PUGs.

By July 2021, 1522 PUGs had been established in 170 Soums of 18 Aimags. The PUGs were managing over 80 million hectares of pastureland under RUAs. 930 RUAs were registered at ALAMGAC and covered nearly 50 million hectares in 140 Soums.

Community Organizations and Community-Based Tourism

It should be mentioned again that this handbook on Community-Based Tourism does not only address formally established community organizations, or promote the notion that CBT is only for organized community groups. This handbook is for all – groups or individuals, formal or informal – among local communities, who want to engage in tourism activities.

However, it is crucial that a CBO wanting to engage in tourism business activities as a group has very good internal management in place. Mutual trust should be strong already if business activities are to be successful and sustainable. Early experience-sharing events between Nukhurluls have highlighted some success factors for developing strong internal governance. factors for developing strong internal governance.



Success Factors for Good Nukhurlul Governance

- » Good leadership with transparent decision making
- » A community council to support the community leader
- » Participatory decision making including all members (women/men, old/young, better off/vulnerable)
- » Holding regular meetings
- » Having a community fund
- » Having a participatory monitoring system to track social, livelihood and environmental changes as a result of Nukhurlul activities

It is also an option that only one or several members of an CBO form an entity for tourism activities. You cannot force all members to be part of a tourism venture, and not everybody has the talent, interest, or ability to work in tourism. In CBT, it is often single households or a small group of families who form a tourism enterprise, or work together under one. This can be a formal LLC, a business partnership (also called Nukhurlul, not to be confused with the CBO Nukhurlul), or individual ownership. For more details on different business types, see Chapter 5.

Community-Based Conservation and Tourism in Mongolia

It is at the heart of the concept of Community-Based Tourism that the community effort makes a real contribution to nature conservation while improving the income of the community members. It is not an easy goal to achieve, but some communities in Mongolia have already been successful or are on a very promising track.

As a first in Mongolia, Umnugobi Aimag started implementation of a program²⁴ called "Tourism – Household Income" between 2016 and 2020 to increase income for local households from tourism development. Under the framework of this program, the regulation on Mongol Ger Camps²⁵ was developed by the Umnugobi Aimag Citizen Representatives' Khural.

²⁴Order #09 by Aimag citizen representatives' Khural on Jan 25, 2017.

²⁵Order #9/11, Dec 4, 2019. Source: N. Burmaa, Officer in charge of tourism development of Umnugobi Aimag Environmental Department



Developing Community-Based Conservation and Tourism in Umnugobi Aimag

In Umnugobi there are currently 61 ger camps run by locals. 56 herders organize camel riding for tourists and six households operate ger shops at Yoliin Am. The local government of Sevrei Soum cooperates closely with the herder run ger camps and tourist camps. Every year before tourism season, the Soum organizes a joint workshop with the Administration of Gobi Gurvan Saikhan National Park, tourist camps and ger camps. The workshop defines the area managed and protected by the tourist camps and ger camps of local community members.

Herders have become involved in tourism, using their local knowledge and ability to guide visitors to sightings of rare wildlife, such as Snow Leopard (*Uncia uncia*), Pallas' cat or Manul (*Otocolobus manul*), and Marbled polecat (*Vormela peregusna*).

Tourist companies also work together with herders and make contracts to share information about wildlife locations and movements. The companies rent horses, hire local guides, buy milk products, and rent spare gers from households as overnight guest accommodation.

These initiatives not only support the livelihood of local community members but also increase their participation in conservation activities and their knowledge of wildlife and nature. During a wildlife watching tour around 3-7 herders participate, and one herder can earn 1-4 million MNT, equalling their total annual income from selling cashmere, meat and animal skins.²⁶ Of course, it is very important that conservation objectives remain primary. The additional income is, however, a real incentive to ensure that the local wildlife is not disturbed, so that wildlife watching can continue as an income generating tourism activity.

²⁶Source: T. Tselmeg, Manager of Tumen Eco Tour of Umnugobi Aimag



Local Festivals - Celebrating Natural and Cultural Heritage

Local festivals have gained popularity and grown in number in Mongolia. They also help to prolong the short tourism season by providing an incentive for winter and spring travel. Festivals rely on local communities to be the main organizers, performers in parades, competitions, and races, to showcase their skills, traditions, best livestock, local costumes, handicrafts, foods, and more.



The "Thousand Camel Festival" - takes place usually in early March in Umnugobi.

The "Yak Festival" - in late May in Umnugobi near Yoliin Am. Other yak festivals are organized by yak herders in Arkhangai and Bayankhongor Aimags.

The "Eagle Festival" - several eagle festivals are organized in Bayan-Ulgii.²⁷

The "Spring Eagle Festival" - near Ulaanbaatar.

The "Horse Festival" - in Khentii Aimag, showing horses, horsemanship and horse saddles and tack.

"One Day of Nomads" - is organized several times per season in Ulaanbaatar, or Aimag Centers.

The "Tea Road Festival" - in Khovd Aimag Center

The "Silver Shagshuurga" (ice festival) - in Khovd Aimag.

The "Blue Pearl -Winter Ice Festival" - at Lake Khuvsgul, Khuvsgul Aimag.

The "Golden Sand Dune Festival" - in Umnugobi.

What Festival Can You Organize to Share Your Traditions and Local Culture?

²⁷While the original Eagle Festival has become very well-known and popular among travellers and especially for photographers, some tour operators have stopped to bring guests there, because of overcrowding. Also, foreign visitors do not like some of the hunting activities that they consider cruel to animals.



CHAPTER 4. UNDERTAKING A FEASIBILITY CHECK

Make an Honest Assessment of Your Opportunities and Challenges to Successfully Run CBT Activities!

Being truly enthusiastic and committed to building your tourism venture is very important. Whatever business you want to run, you must love doing it. Otherwise, you cannot make it through the challenges you meet when starting and growing your business. But passion and commitment are not enough. Your community may already be talking about the unique local landscapes, scenic sites, and attractions they can guide visitors to, and the interesting local traditions, celebrations, and food they can share. These are great assets for developing tourism. But with that alone, you still fail if you don't reach the market effectively.





Once you have set up your operation, challenges might arise that you did not expect and consider properly. This can lead to disappointment, loss and even conflicts between community partners. Therefore, it is important that you take the time to do a self-assessment first, and then conduct an even more thorough feasibility study before you establish your business formally, build a camp, or make any other investments. This chapter guides you in determining what are your opportunities, and challenges, to become very aware of what are your strengths and weaknesses, what resource you have and what you lack. It will help you identify what skills you need to develop, and what training and learning you may want to spend time, energy, and money on.

Most important, if you want to operate sustainably in CBT, your activities need to be planned and developed from the beginning with two aims - to help protect nature and local culture, and to generate local income.

10 Steps to Develop Community-Based Tourism

Before going into more detail about the feasibility check, let's look at the overall process of developing community-based tourism. It is summarized in the 10 Steps below.

Step 1. Select the Area Where to Bring Tourists

- Identify the Bagh, Soum, Protected Area or other areas where you want to bring tourists. List all the unique features of your local landscapes, wildlife, history, culture, traditions (e.g. songs, etc.), local crafts – everything that may be of interest to visitors and that actually can be shown, seen and heard.

Step 2. Undertake a Feasibility Check and Self-Assessment of Your Capacity

- Involve your whole community/group and work with Soum/Aimag experts, Rangers, Protected Area experts, NGOs/projects, tour operators, other professionals to complete all elements of the feasibility check.
- Consider the positive and negative impacts of your planned activities.
- Double check potential negative impacts on nature, wildlife, the local community, and local culture.



Step 3. Develop the Vision, Mission, and Goals of Your Community-Based Tourism Activities

- Your vision is your dream²⁸. It's what you envision as ideal conditions, how things would look if CBT was developed perfectly. Your vision statement should inspire your community to dream.
- Your mission statement then expresses practical steps for action to achieve the vision. It describes what you are going to do and why. Your mission statement should inspire your community to action²⁹.
- Then you can develop goals to achieve in the next two years. Evaluate your progress towards them regularly and develop new goals after two years. Keep the planning realistic. Still, it is good to set yourself a bit of a challenge, then upgrade or develop your skills while moving towards reaching the goal. It will bring success and joy to everyone involved.



Step 4. Develop a Plan to Run Your CBT Activities

- With vision, mission, and goals in mind, you are ready to make a plan. First, try to learn from others about successes and failures, and the reasons for them.
- Involve all members of your group in learning and planning.
- Identify the combined skills you have as a group, and what skills you need to develop. Make a human capacity development plan (see more details on skill development in chapter 9).
- Make a plan with all members on who can contribute what, such as a ger, livestock for the community fund, transport, and more.

²⁸<https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/strategic-planning/vision-mission-statements/main>

²⁹ibid



Step 5. Establish/Strengthen your Community Rules

- If you work as a Nukhurlul or other community-based organization, you must have strong trust among members, based on transparent and participatory decision making and good leadership skills.
- This is the foundation for any work as a community, whether it is in CBT or other areas. If you don't have agreed rules, it is likely there will be problems, misunderstandings or even conflicts that tear the community apart.
- Develop your rules/norms to clearly identify each team member's role and responsibilities, key products, all members meeting schedule, agreements on co-investments, financial management, benefit sharing, etc. More detail is provided in Chapter 10.
- Organize meetings regularly and keep records of what was discussed and decided.

Step 6. Develop your Activities and Programs to Offer to Guests

- To develop good services and products, consider human capacity and experience, material capacity, how many guests you can receive at one time, your costs, how to manage the activity efficiently and safely, etc.
- When developing products and services, consider your unique cultural and local traditions. For more details, see Chapter 12.

Step 7. Train Your Team Members

- Research and identify all the available training centers, training organizations, and check what training is available. Locate where to train all your team members in their respective skills – for guiding and other services.
- Get in touch with the Aimag Tourism Association, the Aimag Administration Tourism Department, and inform them about your plan, request assistance for training and marketing, etc. (For more details, see Chapter 9).

Step 8. Develop Your Marketing Plan

- Your marketing plan is an important part of your overall business plan. Plan a budget for marketing!
- Make connections with the local Tourism Association and Aimag Administration Tourism Department to assist you with marketing planning and linking you to your target markets (see Chapter 6 for more detail on how to reach your target market).



Step 9. Conduct Test Tours

- It is very helpful to organize a “mock” tour. Community members, or better still, outsiders, can act as tourists and give their comments and suggestions on how to improve your services and products (For more details, see Chapter 12).

Step 10. Monitor your Activities and Achievements

- Keep in mind that your key objective for your service delivery should be to provide guests with a once in a life time experience.
- Constantly keep monitoring and ensuring a high standard in all operations (safety, cleanliness/hygiene, accurate and interesting information, etc.)
- It is a good idea to ask your guests to leave their comments, for example in a Visitor Book! You can use their positive feed back for your further advertising! And take critical comments serious, follow up on them and respond to guests if possible.

A Guide for Self-Assessment of Your Opportunities and Challenges for Community-Based Tourism

1. Ask yourself:

- *Are we truly passionate about Tourism and about Nature Conservation?*
- *Do we enjoy spending time with visitors – international and domestic - to share our local culture and nature?*
- *Are we interested in their culture? Or are we looking at CBT only as another way of income generation?*

2. If you are really enthusiastic about protecting nature and about sharing your local heritage with visitors, ask yourself:

-Are visitors already coming to our area?

If so, ask yourself:

- *Why are they coming? What is the attraction?*
- *How many service providers are already here, and what do they offer?*
- *Are more service providers needed? What different service can I provide? What better service can I provide?*
- *How will I attract visitors to my service? How to advertise it? How to connect to the market?*
- *Are there already too many visitors and activities in one area that are impacting the local environment and community negatively?*



If no or not many visitors are coming to your area (yet) ask yourself:

- What could our area offer? Local nature, protected areas, culture, traditions, festivals?
- Is it realistic that tourists will come here?
- Would our area and service be so unique that travellers would come all this way to visit?
- Do our Aimag/Soum Development Strategies and Plans include tourism development (infrastructure, transport)?
- How far are we from Ulaanbaatar, from other popular destinations, from common travel routes?
- Are there flights to our area?
- How good or bad are local road conditions? For how many/which months can our area be reached? What is the best season for our attractions/services/products? Is there public transport (air, bus and/or rail) to or near to our area?

3. If you have an idea of what your area can offer, what service/product you could offer, and that it is fair to assume that tourists can reach your area and that their number would grow over time, ask yourself:

- What is my/our capacity to provide the products and services? Our skills, knowledge, experience?
- What do we need to learn?
- Do we have a sufficient labour force especially in the tourist season?
- Do our young people, if they are at university in the city, come back for the summer to help?
- What is our situation in terms of power and water supply? Mobile phone signal? Internet?
- What are our resources to start operations? How would we access finance?
- How will we attract visitors to our services? How to advertise our services?
- How to connect to our potential market?
- Are we a strong enough community/group to start business activities together?

4. Now you have already reflected a lot on the opportunities and challenges you have for developing CBT. If you haven't done so yet, get advice and support. Contact your Aimag tourism expert, Aimag Tourism Association, Protected Area Tourism expert, tour operators that you may know, other organizations. Discuss your ideas. You should then do a more thorough feasibility study.



Undertaking a Feasibility Study with Local Community and Experts

A collaborative effort is the best way to do a more thorough feasibility study. Involve many local community members, as well as experts from the Soum/Aimag Administrations, Protected Area, Tourism Association or other NGOs, and tour operators if you already have connections. Young and old community members both can play an important role. Young people can interview elderly community members about local culture and history to create stories and information that will be interesting to share with tourists. The feasibility study can be a whole community effort, to raise awareness of local traditions, cultural and natural history. Local schools could also be involved.

Unique features in your area/community. Identify what makes your area and community unique. What unique features of local culture and nature do you have to share? Do some research how they differ from other community areas. This can include special historic and prehistoric sites. Famous people, historic events of which evidence can be shown. It could be local beliefs and legends, traditional greetings and sayings, celebrations, festivals, entertainment activities where tourists can be involved.

Also consider special local rules (e.g. do's and don'ts). It includes unique and beautiful landscapes, scenery, and wildlife. Furthermore, identify places where events and activities can be organized. Identify special features of local ways of living, special local skills and interesting practices in livestock husbandry, agriculture, or local handicraft and craftsmanship. Local foods and cooking can be very interesting for visitors.

Protection and Sustainable Use of Local Natural Resources. It is important to have a good picture and common understanding of local natural resources, their condition and special values to protect. This should be the basis for planning. The aim of community-based tourism is to generate benefits for the local community and to contribute to nature conservation. Tourism will not be sustainable if the very values of the natural scenery, wildlife or other resources are damaged through tourism activities.

For the assessment, work with the relevant officers (such as land managers, environmental inspectors, etc.), rangers, protected area experts and other experts if necessary. The purpose of the assessment is to identify areas and resources that are vulnerable, where activities cannot take place or need to be managed carefully. Consult existing plans – protected area management plans and buffer zone management plans if available.



The Soum Landscape Development plan is also an important resource and guideline to help with CBT planning. Consult the plan for details on natural resource maps for the Soum and the general development strategy outlined for the Soum. Also, the Soum pasture management plan should be considered, as it identifies areas for resting pasture, hay making, etc. In fact, it may be interesting for tourists how nomadic livestock husbandry is organized in your local area.

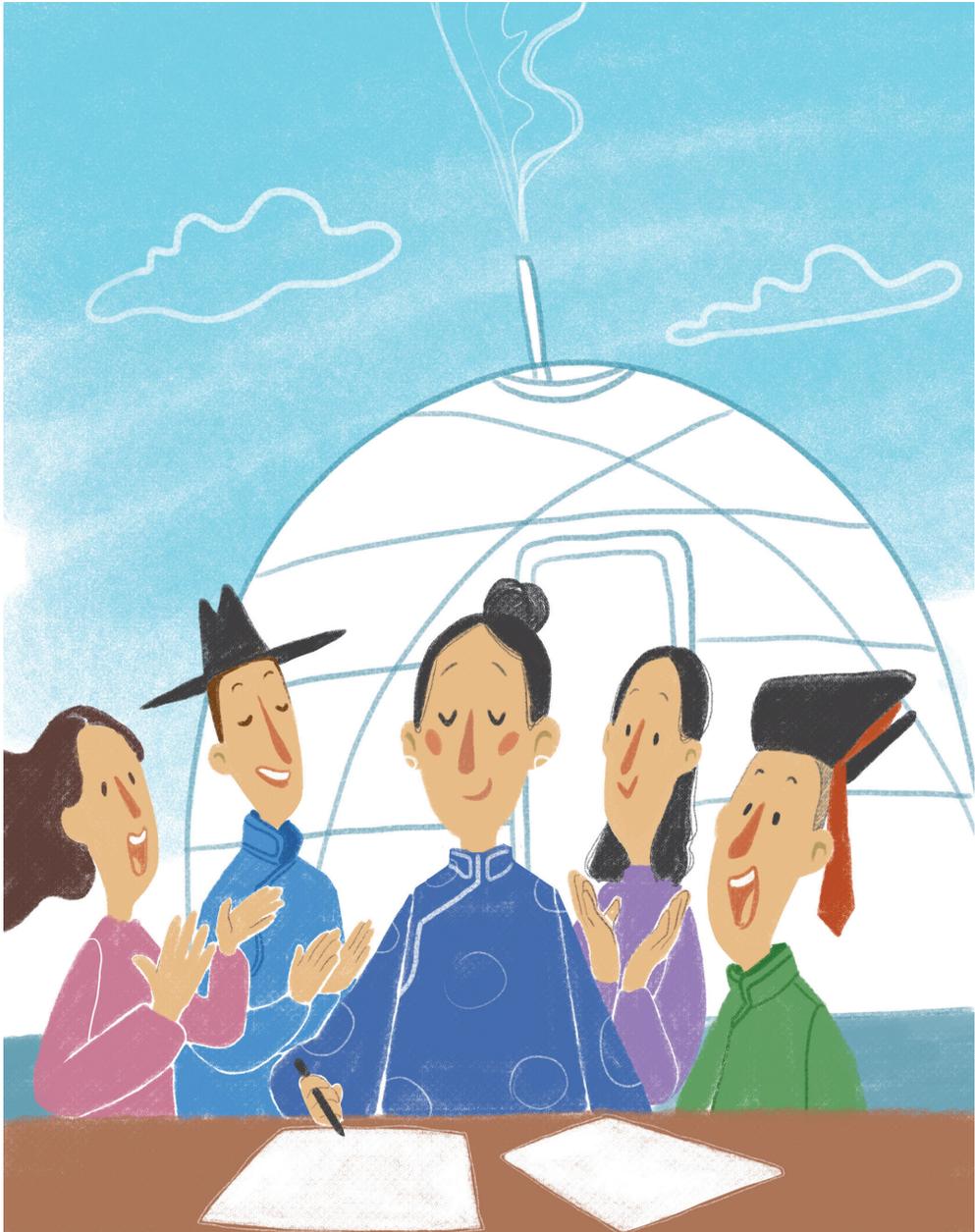
Your/Community Capacity for Developing CBT. It is equally important to have a clear idea of your current capacity in terms of your knowledge and skills regarding tourism, your financial resources, your available labour force, your seasonal workloads for livestock husbandry and other work. Work with the experts/advisers to answer all the questions listed under the self-assessment section above.

Visit a CBT enterprise for experience sharing – other groups involved in CBT may be the best experts of all to give advice to you!



CHAPTER 5. ESTABLISHING YOUR CBT ENTERPRISE FORMALLY

Once you have made the decision to establish a CBT operation, based on the feasibility check and thorough discussions in your community, you will want to develop your vision and mission. This will inspire and guide you, in the short, medium, and long-term development of your venture. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the vision is your dream, and the mission is a practical description of how to achieve it.





As it is an important step, it is crucial that all community members, or all team members of your CBT enterprise, are involved in developing the vision and mission. It's a great exercise to start building your team and its spirit to join forces to achieve your common goals.

The process will be most effective and creative if all team members actively participate, freely expressing their own ideas, dreams, fears, and concerns. It also ensures that everybody understands what you are all working for together. Last but not least, it should be a fun exercise to mark the start of your journey together.

Keep the original charts of your discussions and also write down the minutes of meetings for your records and share them with all members. You now also have a basis on which to make your work plans - annual plans as well as shorter term activity plans, which ever suits you best. An example of the Vision, Mission and Value developed by the members of one Nukhurlul in Mongolia is provided below.

Example Vision, Mission, and Value of a Nukhurlul

- **Mission:** Increase additional income of our members through developing ecotourism to preserve and restore Zakhchin ethnicity and nomadic culture and to protect local nature and manage natural resources in a sustainable way.
- **Vision:** To develop responsible tourism to preserve nomadic culture and living tradition for our next generation while protecting and keeping the local nature in wilderness condition.
- **Value:** Create a responsible and trustworthy team while placing customer satisfaction as a key priority through learning and implementing sustainable tourism standards.

Choosing Your Organizational Form: Should it be a Business Entity or CBO?

In order to run your operation properly, you will have to decide what kind of formal entity you will operate. Will you establish a company, such as a Joint Stock Company (JSC) or a Limited Liability Company (LLC), or a business Nukhurlul (partnership), with their different liability options? Or, will you remain as, or establish, a community-based organization, such as a Nukhurlul as per the Environmental Law of Mongolia?



If you are already a Nukhurlul, Forest User Group or Pasture User Group, and some of your members want to work as a CBT group then they can establish an enterprise. Or you can establish a Nukhurlul for CBNRM and CBT within a larger PUG. Another option is to run CBT activities if you are already an established cooperative, or to form a cooperative for CBT.

To provide a clear overview of the different types of companies and CBOs/NGOs, we have prepared a table that shows the names, legal status, license/permits/ certificate requirements, and purposes of the different types of business entities and of CBOs/NGOs – and discusses the advantages and disadvantages of each entity for CBT. This table is attached as **Annex 5**.

There are no clear rules as to which entity you have to form to be active in CBT. However, most successful examples of CBT initiatives are probably communities that are registered as a Nukhurlul for community-based natural resource management as per the Environmental Law of Mongolia.

There are several points that are in favour of a Nukhurlul (CBO) for CBT. You will need quite a large labour force to efficiently manage your small camp, and to run all the activities. And your Nukhurlul members can take on different responsibilities. It is an advantage that they have different skills and can provide different local experiences that are important for guests and characteristic of effective CBT.

As a Nukhurlul, you already have, or will develop, your rules, mutual trust and supportive mechanisms such as a community fund, all of which are also conducive for CBT activities. Importantly, as a Nukhurlul your heart and actions are already committed to nature conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources, which is the other "half" of the concept and principles of CBT – namely to contribute to local natural and cultural heritage protection.



Case studies

1. "Buurlyn Magnai" Nukhurlul

This community was established in 2010 in Mankhan Soum of Khovd Aimag. It consists of 21 members from 10 households.

The key activity areas of this Nukhurlul are CBT, vegetable growing, and making felt products. This Nukhurlul became one of the most successful communities for vegetable growing in the five western Aimags of Mongolia.

The Nukhurlul members have participated in a South Korean documentary on herder's life and snow leopards in 2012 and 2013 and also cooperated with the WWF on a study on snow leopards. The members make felt products by working closely with Irbes Enterprise, an NGO working with herder communities for snow leopard conservation while improving household incomes. The community played a guiding role in a joint Russian-Mongolian expedition to study local flora.

Since 2020 the community has been actively involved in different wildlife studies with research organizations and individuals. This has led them to run CBT activities such as guiding bird and wildlife research groups in their area.

During the summertime they operate a ger camp, providing services such as guiding and organizing camel trips for both foreign and domestic visitors. Additionally, the members make souvenirs on behalf of different organizations, and this is an additional source of income.

The community signed an official agreement with the Soum Governor after which they received the Nukhurlul certificate. The Nukhurlul prepares an annual report to its members on the activities they have undertaken each year.

2. "Tsast Undarga" Community

This community in Munkhkhairkhan Soum of Khovd Aimag was established in 2008 with the support of the UNDP Altai Sayan Project. Their main activity is nature conservation. The members work with the Snow Leopard Foundation to market their felt products in EU countries. The community-managed area has a unique landscape rich with rare wildlife and plants.



The community became a Nukhurlul in 2018, its members include 30 people from 13 households. The community operates a ger camp with a capacity for 12 guests. The members rotate their roles to help with receiving and serving guests. They also work as guides for visitors.

3. Tsaatan community

The Taiga communities became popular among tourists after 1990 when a German filmmaker made a documentary about the Tsaatan and their way of life.

The Itgel Foundation was established in 2005 through the initiative of an American tourist who visited Mongolia. The Foundation supported the Tsaatan communities in starting to develop CBT by organizing trainings in various necessary skills.

The foundation opened an office in Ulaanbaatar and facilitated the cooperation of the Tsaatan communities of the east and west Taiga of Tsagaan Nuur Soum of Khuvsgul Aimag.

Through the support and initiative of the Itgel Foundation, the “Tsaachin Visitor & Information Center” was built in Tsagaan Nuur soum center. The center organized numerous training and coaching activities for the local communities working with the Mongolian Professional Tour Guides Association. For instance, the community members got trained on how to effectively organize horse and reindeer tours, First Aid, English language, cooking for tourists, waste management, etc.

One key initiative was that all local communities agreed to fairly distribute tourists amongst themselves and set up a joint community fund. This also helped the tour operators from Ulaanbaatar, as they could directly contact the information center to book tours and services. The center then allocated the various tours to the different communities, thereby trying to create equal benefits for all.



Tourism developed further after an American family came to the area with their child who suffered from autism. The documentary "The Horse Boy" was made based on the experiences of this family. It was awarded the 2009 Feature Film Audience Award at the Sundance Festival and a book based on the movie was translated into 23 languages.

Tour operators made transfers directly to the Community Fund, from where the communities received their fee. Some amount was kept in the fund to support social, health and education activities of the community members. A community manager was elected by all the members to handle the fund and coordinate everything.



All these efforts and successes ended when the community manager took all the money from the community fund and disappeared. Since then Tsaatan communities have individually operated their CBT activities. Now the information center is occasionally used during summertime to receive guests stopping by.

However, still, Tsaatan communities receive tourists all year round. They are the only communities active in CBT in Mongolia during the extended season.



Establishing a Nukhurlul for Natural Resource Management

Currently, there are some uncertainties in the Environmental Law of Mongolia (Section 8) as to the exact definition of which natural resources Nukhurluls should be able to manage and what precisely are their rights and responsibilities. However, the legal framework is being developed and more good experience and best practice in real life can help shape the laws and regulations to ensure that they enable sustainable, community-based natural resource management and conservation and support local livelihoods.

The required procedures to formally register a Nukhurlul, to sign a contract with the Soum government, to establish the Nukhurlul's Community Fund and to develop the Nukhurlul's Natural Resources Management Plan are described below.

Scan to download the Environmental Law of Mongolia,
Section 8





Requirements and Procedures for Official Establishment and Registration of Nukhurlul

A. Requirements to be a Nukhurlul Member:

1. Must be permanent resident of respective Soum
2. Must be a Mongolian citizen
3. Must be at least 18 years' old

B. Procedure to establish Nukhurlul and get approval from Soum

Step 1: Approval of management plan by all members (see content of management plan below)

Step 2: Approval of norms (rules) by all members, must include roles and responsibilities of board members, monitoring committee and community leader, and community fund management procedure.

Step 3: Submit norms and management plan to Soum for approval. Must include report of the all members meeting that approved norms, with date and location of meeting.

C. Procedure for State Registration

Step 1: Inform and get approval from Bagh Citizens Representative Khural

Step 2: Make contract with Soum Governor and receive certificate

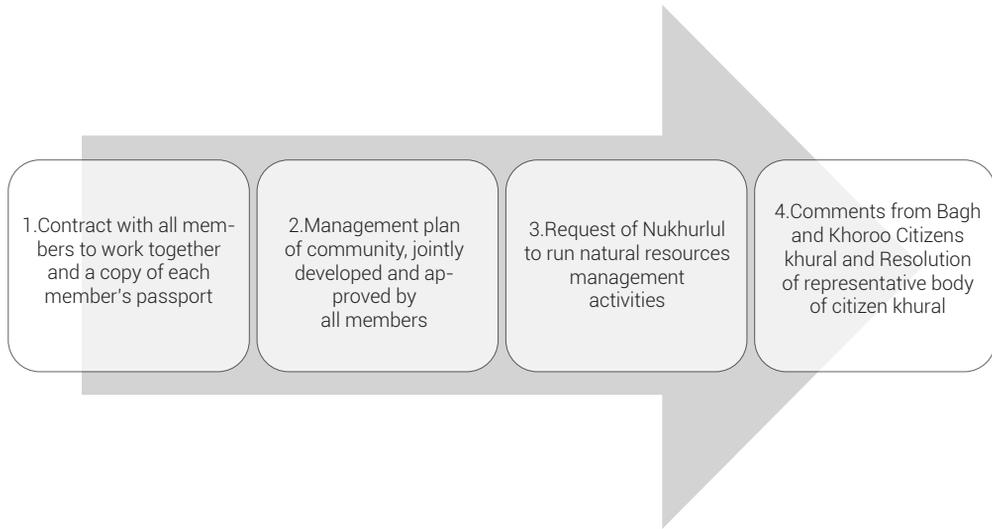
D. Annual Extension of Certificate

Step 1: Prepare Nukhurlul annual activity report

Step 2: Submit and present Nukhurlul annual activity report to Bagh and Soum citizen representative Khural



Documents to be Prepared by Nukhurlul



Objectives of the Community Fund

The community fund is used to implement the activities of the Nukhurlul as agreed by all members' meeting. These can include:

- Restore and protect natural resources
- Create work places
- Support livelihood of members (through micro loans or direct support in emergencies)
- Reduce damage from natural disaster

The fund should be managed as a revolving fund, by charging small interest fee in case of loans, and making profit on some activities.

Potential Sources for the Community Fund

- Contributions by members
- Assets of members (livestock, and other)
- Interest from loans to members
- Rental income
- Percentage of income from CBT (or other economic activities) as agreed by members

**Required Content of the Nukhurlul Management Plan**

The environmental law requires that the management plan includes at least the following:

1. Map of the area under Nukhurlul responsibility
2. Natural resource coverage, condition, pasture carrying capacity of community managed area
3. How does the Nukhurlul benefit, economically and socially, from the planned activities
4. Approach (methods and activities) to natural resource management
5. Monitoring program of natural resources condition in community managed area
6. Each member's responsibility to implement the management plan, and how the Nukhurlul works with other stakeholders
7. Financial Plan
8. Other management activities approved by all members



Developing Your Business Plan

Regardless of which organizational form you have chosen, most likely you want to improve your income through CBT and make a profit. Therefore, you should develop a business plan for your CBT activities.

If you are new to developing a business plan, it is a good idea to attend a training course, or to get advice on how to develop it. Consider asking your Soum SME officer. If they cannot advise themselves, they can refer you to an organization or expert who can provide training/advice such as the Mongolian National Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

During the feasibility check you have already considered all important aspects of establishing a CBT enterprise. But developing a business plan forces you to think in even more detail and that is very helpful to do before you start your actual CBT activities. Besides, if you are planning to apply for a loan (or other support), you will most likely be asked to show a business plan detailing how you intend to develop your business and succeed financially.

Developing your business plan will help you in several ways. You will plan your activities well and in the right sequence. You will determine how much investment you really need. It will make you undertake market research with your potential customers to develop your products. It will create opportunities for you to work with potential partners such as individuals, NGOs, international organizations, banks, and local government to develop and extend your business. Thus, you will build your network and you will be more socially active and better networked.

Annex 6 provides a typical business plan format that you can use, and adjust to your situation.



CHAPTER 6. REACHING THE TOURISM MARKET TO SELL YOUR CBT PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

This chapter is designed to help you understand how you can attract customers and recognize your opportunities and different possibilities to connect to your target market to sell your products or services.

You must first understand to whom you are trying to sell your services and products, so you can focus your strategies on your target market and find your target customers. So, when you start, it's important to think about who exactly your product or service is designed for.



There are different segments in the tourism market. Travellers are divided into different groups, depending on their geographical location (where they come from), age and gender and other demographic criteria, their income bracket, special interests and hobbies, and their travel goals, etc.



Dividing your potential customers into groups means that you can better understand their specific characteristics, adapt your services to their needs and desires, and set the appropriate price. This will increase your ability to sell your products and services.

Travellers can be divided into different groups under several criteria, such as:

- **Geography.** Customers from different geographic regions will have different needs. For instance, the needs and wishes of Ulaanbaatar consumers are different from those of Khovd Aimag, the needs of Mongolians are different from those of Japanese tourists, German tourists, etc.
- **Demography.** "Different demographic groups" means travellers of different ages (e.g. those over 50 will have different needs and interests to those aged 18-24), gender, occupation (e.g. managers versus manual workers), income (high, medium or low), education (university education versus secondary school education), religion (Islamic and Jewish travellers may have specific food requirements), and more.
- **Attitude, Mind Set and Travel Interests.** Different groups of travellers have different levels of knowledge, attitude, interests, and expectations

As mentioned earlier, the number of travellers concerned about environmentally and socially responsible products and services is ever increasing. They are interested in "ecotourism", they consider themselves to be "responsible travellers"; and they are willing to support nature conservation. They are most likely interested in local culture and lifestyle and want to experience the authentic life of livestock herders.

There are sub-groups such as those interested in hiking, cycling, horse-riding or more extreme adventures such as mountain climbing. Other sub-groups are photographers, wildlife and bird watchers, or star gazers. Others are interested in cross-country travel by motor bike or 4x4 vehicles.

A very different segment of travellers is more interested to travel in large groups, visit "big" attractions, stay in fancy hotels in Ulaanbaatar City, etc. They are not the target group of CBT.

Traveller's budget and spending priorities. Travellers come with different budgets to spend, based on their regular income, and the savings they have made for a long-planned trip.



Some may want to relax at a low price, others can afford a moderate price, and others are willing to pay a high price for luxury and high-quality services at high end accommodations. Others are not interested in expensive accommodation, but in special experiences and activities that may also be expensive.

Many international travellers are of retirement age. Having worked for many years, they now have the time and money to spend for travel and to visit places they always wanted to see (e.g. "bucket list" tourism). Many of them will also be interested in nomadic culture and therefore in CBT services.

However, there are also many young and middle-aged travellers with good jobs and the money to travel during their annual holidays. They may prefer to travel independently as "backpackers". In other countries, such "backpackers" are found to spend less on hotels, but a lot on "adventure" and other "experiences", and this may become true for Mongolia too. Therefore, do not disregard this market segment.

The Target Market for Herder Households or Communities

In this section we discuss the target market for CBT herder households and communities divided by geographical location, including:

- ***The local market*** of travellers from soums, aimags, and settlements closest to you.
- ***The national market*** of Mongolian travellers who are coming from Ulaanbaatar or remote provinces.
- ***The international market*** of foreign travellers coming to your country, your aimag and your household.

How to Reach the Local Market and how to Attract Local Customers

The first thing to do is spread the news that your household or your khot ail (group of neighbouring herder households, often kinship groups, sharing herding tasks and other work) has started a CBT service and is operating, for example, at Khairkhan Mountain, Galuut Bagh, Bumbugur Soum, Bayankhongor Aimag.

If you share the information about your services and location, tourists who travel in your area can get your contact details and make plans to use your services. In this way you are already connected to the nearest market.



Of course, as a herder you will move to different locations for much of the year according to your nomadic pastoral traditions and lifestyle.

Therefore, it is important that you don't change your phone numbers so you can always be contacted by tour operators and travellers. Let them know in advance about your current location, keep them updated about your intended movements. Also, keep your advertising on Facebook and other social media updated.

You can learn how to use the application What3Words to let your location be known accurately, or provide your coordinates through other GPS applications. Tsaatan families living in the Khuvsgul Taiga already have experience using such applications to provide Airbnb services to foreign guests.

Channels to Reach Local Customers



- Post and update your information on Soum and Aimag local media, television, and tourism-related websites in your Aimag.
- Share your printed information during Aimag and Soum level meetings and events.
- Place banners in public places during events such as Aimag and local festivals and give an advertising speech at the festival. If possible, sponsor such events.
- Depending on your target audience, offer services and trips, and provide information to primary, secondary, and high school educators and students.
- Attract office workers and offer travel programs on weekends to them.
- Use all your networks to advertise your services and products.
- Use customers' feedback to attract new customers. Word of mouth, when customers themselves talk about the good service or product they received from you, is the best advertising! Ask your guests to share their good experiences in their networks.



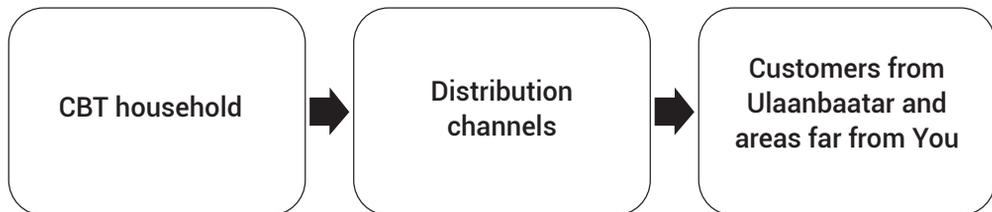
Establish or update your Facebook page about your CBT activities, and include on it:

- The different services and products you offer.
- When you began to offer your services.
- A map that shows how to get to your place.
- Your contact information.
- A quote/testimonial from a happy guest.
- Nice photos.

Keep Your Facebook page updated! Add new posts whenever you can.

How to Find Customers from the Domestic Market – Ulaanbaatar or Distant Aimags

With the global COVID 19 pandemic starting in 2020 and the closure of many countries around the world for international travel, domestic travel has seen a steep increase. This also happened in Mongolia. Since the summer of 2020, the flow of domestic tourists to some key areas has increased drastically. The majority of them tend to travel with their own vehicles and bring their own tents and food. Most domestic travellers choose their destination based on the advice of family and friends. Therefore, it would be effective to use the following channels to reach and attract domestic tourists:



- **Use your own social media.** It is the cheapest way to advertise your services, activities, and products, and nowadays has become the most effective way to reach your customers. Facebook and Instagram have become the most popular social media channels worldwide. Facebook is very popular in Mongolia, therefore, create a Facebook page and keep it updated with information on your services, location and contact details. When your tourism business is growing, you can also set up a Facebook business page and run paid advertisements.
- **Use your customers' feedback,** and encourage them to share their experiences on their social media and in their networks; use your own networks of friends and family in the city and other Aimags to promote your services and products.



- **Be proactive in sharing your information with Aimag and local tourism associations, and on Aimag's local websites.** In recent years, Aimag tourism associations have become more active, and all Aimag have a unified tourism database, website, and printed catalogs. Aimag Citizens' Khurals and Governor's websites could also be a place to introduce and promote your CBT services and activities.

Aimag Tourism Associations

Aimag and local tourism associations protect the common interests of tourism businesses in the region, speaking with one voice, and cooperating with state organizations as well as NGOs.

If you become a member of your Aimag's Tourism Association, you will have the advantage of being able to link to tour operators, receive tourism information, and have support to protect your rights and financial interests. We recommend that you first familiarize yourself with the objectives of the association, its board members, Action Plan, implemented activities and reports. You can talk to the head as well as to several members of the association. Then you can decide whether or not to become a member.

- Joinme.mn has become the main tourism website that domestic travellers check for ideas and advice on travel within Mongolia and on CBT services. It has all relevant information on each of the 21 Aimag, the scenic landscapes of Mongolia, and possible domestic travel routes.
- You can upload your tourism service information and products to the site for an annual fee. When guests contact/find you through the website, you pay a 10 % commission on what you charge for your services to Joinme.mn. Such commissions are common practice in tourism if an agency or tour operator confers guests to another operator. In the end, it's a win-win for all.
- Nowadays, not only larger tour companies are offering tourism services, but experienced individuals who formerly worked as tour guides or drivers have set up their own tourism businesses. You could contact individuals who organize tourism activities and introduce your tourism services and suggest cooperating.



One important segment of domestic tourism is foreigners who live in Mongolia and work in donor organizations, embassies, or projects. They are probably more willing to support CBT and interested to experience authentic Mongolian countryside lifestyles than Mongolians. You can try sending your information leaflets to them directly or to their organizations by email, or official post, and offer your services. There are also pages on Facebook which focus on foreigners in Mongolia such as Expats in Mongolia³⁰. You could contact them to see whether they are willing to place your information as a post/article, or you could place a paid advertisement.

- If you have the time and budget to participate in domestic tourism expos, you can participate in annual events like the “Ulaanbaatar Expo” in May and “ITM” in October in Ulaanbaatar.
- If you cannot join yourself, you can give your CBT information materials to Aimag tourism specialists or other people who participate in such events.

Perhaps you can join with other CBT operators from your Aimag and share a booth to present your services. Ask the Tourism Association and your Aimag Government Tourism Department how they can support you.

Present your information on social media – on Facebook and JoinMe.mn Describe your services and products using nice images. Create a space where your customers can leave a comment. It is most valuable if potential customers hear from your guests about their positive experiences.

How to Reach the International Market or Attract Foreign Visitors to Mongolia, to Your Aimag and Your Place?

International visitors to Mongolia come for different reasons. Some foreigners may come to Mongolia to visit friends and/or relatives, or to participate in conferences, or official meetings. Most come for Mongolia's beautiful nature and to learn about nomadic culture.

Foreign tourists organize their trips in different ways. They come alone, or they may travel in a group with friends and family. Many use the services of a tour operator and book a whole package that includes transportation in Mongolia, accommodation, all meals, guiding fees and different activities and experiences such as visiting herder families. Other travellers like to design their own itinerary independently, using different modes of transport and choosing activities and experiences exactly tailored to their special interests. Below, we discuss both groups – travellers buying a package, and independent travellers.

³⁰<https://www.facebook.com/MongolExpat/>



1. Tourists who Bought a Travel Package from a Tour Operator

Tour operator companies sell travel packages to foreign customers through their marketing channels and organize trips for the tourists who bought them. Today, there are 571 registered tour operators in Mongolia, mostly owned and operated by Mongolian citizens. There are a few tour operators that are foreign invested companies with their office in Mongolia, and a few tour companies are owned by foreigners with a head office overseas. Tour operators often collaborate with travel agents overseas who send travellers to them in return for a commission.

Tour operators all have their own target countries and customer segments. For example, one tour operator may receive almost exclusively German tourists, another may target just the Korean market. Another one may specialize in horse riding tours, whilst others offer wildlife watching or photography tours. According to their market and customers, tour companies will use different marketing channels to attract their guests.



Some participate in international tourism exhibitions to advertise their tour products. Except for very big companies, this is best done as a group, as it is very expensive for one company alone. Last, but not least, for any tour operator today the internet is the main marketing channel be it through company websites, pages on Facebook, Instagram or other social media.

If a tour company has included your CBT service in their travel package, there is a very good chance that tourists will come to your place, and that you can add to your household income as a CBT host. However, you must understand that the tour operator will have very high expectations from you.

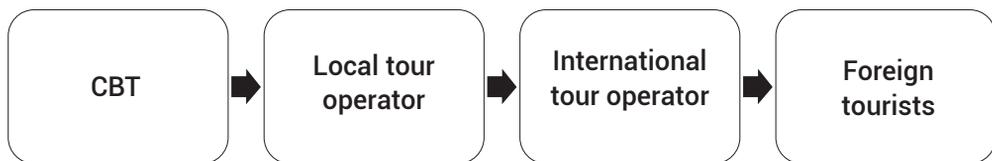


You must be reliable, reachable, and fully prepared when the guests arrive at your place. Your service must be as agreed, of high standard, and consistent irrespective of your other circumstances or workload.

For the tour operator bringing tourists to you is a very big commitment and risk. They will advertise on their website or other channels, promising a great experience for guests; and they spend money for marketing. Then they bring guests all the way to you. If your service is not good, it reflects badly on the tour operator. If your service is as agreed and guests have a great experience, it is good for everybody – the travellers, the tour operator and for you. It is the only way such a collaboration can be sustainable. Most likely, the tour operator you work and have a contract with will provide some training and guidance, and will do a practice run with you on handling guests. If not, you could suggest it to them.

To increase the chance, that tour operators will include your CBT operation in their tour packages, you should offer a unique service that is different from others. To actively engage tourists in nomadic every-day-experiences is much more interesting than just offering a simple homestay and horse or camel riding tours. For example, making a Mongolian “deel” together, embroidering, making things by using leather knots, etc. Be creative! You have much to share based on your local traditions and the skills you use in your daily life.

Usually, travellers sign up to package tours well in advance - ideally a year ahead. So the tour operator usually knows several months in advance whether and how many guests they will bring. Sometimes, there are also short-term bookings. In any case, make sure you have regular contact with and updates from the tour operator, and make plans accordingly and well ahead to receive guests in your accommodation, and to be ready to provide meals and activities.



2. *Independent Travellers, Backpackers*

How to promote your services online? Depending on the target market you can choose whether to work with a local or international online platform to share and advertise your services and enable direct booking possibilities and set out the terms and conditions.



Many tourists prefer to travel privately or with a small number of people rather than travelling in a large group. More than half of tourists who come to Mongolia are individual travellers. So, you should not ignore this market. Keep in mind the above comments about “backpackers”; they are usually not backpacking because they are “poor”, but because they are more adventurous, curious, and independent minded. There are popular social platforms where individual travellers share their experiences, including Trip Advisor and Airbnb.

Some individual travellers are inspired by guidebooks, handbooks, and websites written about Mongolia. Most of them read blogs or comments of other individual travellers before they choose and plan their trips. Therefore, be aware that tourists or backpackers who come to your place will probably share their experience online in text and photos, in blogs and on social media.

Ask them to comment on your Facebook page, and in your onsite Guestbook, and to spread information about your service by word of mouth in their networks. Use the positive comments they leave in all your advertising materials.

Your Many Challenges as a Local CBT Operator – and Some Suggested Solutions

As you might have already realized, when going through the feasibility check (Chapter 4) (or in real life, if you already started operations) running a CBT operation in the countryside is VERY challenging.

In most cases, communities are in remote areas, far from the city and from much-visited places and not near well-travelled routes.

You may be new to tourism and lack appropriate experience. The language barrier (lack of foreign language skills) makes it almost impossible to reach international markets directly. You may also not be used to carry out the communication required to establish and maintain your connections to the travel market. It is also likely you are busy with herding and daily life challenges.

Challenge	Potential Solutions
Isolated location	Turn your weak point into an advantage by building on the unique culture, tradition, and landscapes, for both domestic and foreign visitors.



<p>Lack of clear road signs and information boards to your location</p>	<p>You can use locally available materials such as wood, rock etc. to make nice looking, authentic sign boards.</p> <p>Talk to your local government administration to have standard signs.</p> <p>Use modern communication technology, such as the GPS system and What3Words to help travellers locate you.</p> <p>Please update your contact information, location, phone numbers, whenever there are changes.</p>
<p>Your services and products are not well known/ not well advertised</p>	<p>If you already decided to start CBT activities, make sure your services and products are always at a high standard.</p> <p>Use all the channels provided above to advertise your products and services.</p> <p>Once you plan well and provide consistent good quality services, your products and services will be eventually popular and well known among tourists and tour operators.</p>
<p>Lack of Experience in CBT</p>	<p>Your experience will grow as you develop and run your operations. Keep up the good work and experience will be accumulated.</p> <p>At the same time, identify your/your team's training needs. Make a training plan. Find out about training providers. Ask Aimag Tourism experts and the Tourism Association for advice and support.</p>
<p>Lack of foreign language skill</p>	<p>There are several ways to solve this problem. First, you can start learning yourself through Phone Apps, online courses, and by watching foreign language movies.</p> <p>Secondly, support one of your members/relatives to learn a language (as above or take a formal course).</p> <p>Lastly, you can work with tour operators who can communicate with tourists for you.</p>
<p>Lack of communication skills</p>	<p>Use your smart phone to improve your communication skills. There are many different opportunities and options to learn online and acquire the necessary knowledge and skills.</p> <p>See which of your members is the best communicator.</p> <p>Involve your young people.</p>

Setting the Prices for Your Products and Services

Setting the right price is important and tricky. In general, consider the kind of product and service and the type of customers you are targeting. Look at what other CBT operators charge for their products and services to get a general idea. Your price should be competitive in the market, affordable for customers, and give you a profit. Keep in mind that you want to make your product or service unique, standing out from those of others.



To determine the price, you have to accurately calculate all your expenses (materials/foods, fuel, payments to others, your own time, electricity, etc., depending on your product/service). Based on that set a price that leaves you with a reasonable profit.

Do not make the mistake of setting a low price because you think that will make you competitive. It will not, it will only make you look cheap, and customers will not value your service. The right strategy is to provide an excellent service, be ambitious, be proud of your high-quality work and the unique experience you provide – and charge a slightly higher price. Travellers can and will happily pay the set price when they see the high value and uniqueness of your provided service.

Do not make the price unreasonably high. As in any business, it takes some time to break even, to recover all the costs of your initial investment. That is the nature of business. But if you keep your work at a high standard and firmly establish your marketing channels, your outlook is good. Obviously, this assumes that tourism will continue to develop in Mongolia once there is a recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and that it is supported by government policies. If you are not recovering your investment costs and not making a profit even after several years, then you need to review your business model.

Tourism is very seasonal in Mongolia, and this influences prices too. The active tourism season is considered to be from June to September/October. July and August are the peak season. The off season is from November to May. Efforts are underway to make the off season shorter, for example by developing winter tourism activities, and wintertime festivals. As most travellers come during peak season, prices in peak season are highest. To attract travellers beyond the peak season, discounts may be offered.

It is always good to offer a package price – it gives customers the feeling that they are getting good value for money. You can design and offer a package that includes, for example, ger accommodation, with all meals included, and a horse ride or other activities. Be creative in developing your packages.

Your Service/Product Price and Different Marketing Channels

You have to find your best options in terms of marketing and channels through which to sell your products and services. Weigh the pros and cons carefully to determine your best strategy.



Most commonly today, as a CBT operator you will receive your guests, namely international travellers, through a tour operator. When the tour operator pays you, they have to consider their costs of marketing and transportation to bring the guests to you. Consequently, the payment you will receive under their contract is less than you will charge a guest who travelled to you independently.

However, the fact that the tour operator can bring guests regularly, will probably still make it more profitable for you, as you have more guests and less of your own marketing costs and effort. You need to take these factors into consideration. For domestic marketing, for example through Joinme.mn, you pay an annual fee and a 10 % commission to the site. If you have your own connections, perhaps relatives overseas who market your services directly, your own advanced social media outreach or a website that ranks well on search engines such as Google, you can see whether your own marketing is working well enough, such that you don't need to rely on tour operators.

If CBT in Mongolia will develop its own network, such as a central organization and online platform, it may become more feasible to rely less on tour operators.

Payment Conditions

Make the payment conditions clear and fair, whether you work with a tour operator or market directly to travellers. Conclude a contract with the tour operator that describes the responsibilities of both parties, including payment conditions. Do some research if you are unsure about the reliability of the tour operator company or individual you are dealing with. It is good to agree on an advance payment (20–30 %) for your services; that way, you have some working capital to prepare for the tour and more of a guarantee that the guests will come, and you will receive full payment upon delivering your service.

Financial Planning and Management

It is good practice to have a solid understanding of your expenditures and income and to see whether you need to adjust prices or your business model. It is recommended that you make a habit of planning/estimating your expenses and income. You are advised to monitor them regularly and calculate your profit at the end of the year.

Keeping financial records will be beneficial for your own business management and development. Also, it will help you with reporting income to the government and paying your taxes. Becoming a successful CBT operator, you will also become a responsible business owner/citizen, paying taxes and contributing to society. Chapter 10 will give more detail on business management.



CHAPTER 7. FINANCING YOUR CBT ENTERPRISE

It is likely that you will need some investment to start your CBT activities, whether it's for one or more extra guest gers, furnishings or other equipment and facilities for kitchens, toilets, security, and more. Or you may need to upgrade and increase the amount of horse-riding equipment you have available for guests. It is of course best to start small and build your business step by step.





You might already know how difficult it is to get a small loan in the countryside, whether it is for household support, consumption or an emergency or whether it is for establishing a business. A business plan and collateral are needed, and repayment conditions can be challenging, with a high interest rate and repayment typically required in a short time period.

As tourism is a very seasonal business activity, and income from tourism is mostly supplementary income to that from livestock and other sources, lenders will be even more hesitant to extend a loan for CBT activities. For communities that are organized as a Nukhurlul or other community-based organization (CBO) or as an NGO, it is even more difficult to access finance from a bank or non-banking financial institution, as compared to a small enterprise.

However, there are ways to find funding to realize your plans. Whichever means of funding you seek, make sure that you have a well thought out plan with realistic estimates of expenditures and income for specific activities and your overall operation. It is not only required by the funder but also helpful for you.

Self-Reliance

Besides starting small it is best of course to fund your first CBT activities from your own sources of finance. If you run other activities, for example beekeeping or vegetable growing, besides livestock husbandry, these are not only a possible funding source but also an interesting element to include in the CBT experience you offer to your guests. So if you can grow your CBT business slowly, with your own funds, and perhaps with support/loans from your family, it is the best option and you can avoid owing debt to a bank.



If you have a good and trustful working relationship with a tour operator, you could propose to them to support you with some equipment and materials, as an advance payment or as a grant/support to help get you going.



Community Fund

The next best option for finance is from your Nukhurlul's Community Fund. Having a Community Fund is a very important success factor for a community-based organization. It is common that Nukhurluls, Forest User Groups and Pasture User Groups have a Community Fund. Members have to agree on the rules on how the Fund is managed, the decisions on how the Fund is spent must be participatory and transparent.

A person responsible for fund management should be designated, and an agreement made on how they will work with the community leader and Council. There should be ongoing monitoring of the Fund and regular reporting to all members on the status of the Fund.

The Community Fund is a revolving fund. Members can make their contributions to the fund in cash or kind (such as giving livestock). You should decide with all members on the criteria and conditions for small loans to member households and other purposes that the fund can be used for. Typically, the Funds of Nukhurluls are used for some nature conservation activities and for loans to members. Of course, the community can also give support or a donation in an emergency to a member family or support its vulnerable members from its fund. Establishing and running a Community Fund successfully is a good mechanism to build trust among members and to strengthen the community internally.



If you are planning to run CBT activities with all your community members, as a Nukhurlul or other CBO, you can jointly decide to allocate an amount from the Community Fund for the CBT activities – both for facilities/equipment for tourism and for conservation activities. To protect and sustain your local nature or the special landscape, historical features, wildlife etc. that attract your tourists is just as important as your business activities if you want to continue to operate sustainably.

Once you generate income from CBT, this can further contribute to your Community Fund. In Thailand, for example, communities have adopted this practice.



They put some income from tourism back into the Community Fund to spend it on foodstuffs for tourists, fees for guides, phone units, community meeting expenses, payment for bookkeepers, and more. In addition, they contribute to local nature conservation activities or to solving social problems in the community from CBT income.

Local Development Fund

Another possible source of finance for developing CBT might be the Local Development Fund in your Soum. Its objective is to support local sustainable development initiatives by community members. It is governed by a participatory bottom-up process, whereby local citizens take part in the decision making on how funds are spent.





These Are the Steps of the Decision-Making Process for Local Development Funds:

Step 1. Proposals are Submitted by Local Citizens

Submit your CBT proposal by

- a) giving it to your Bagh Governor between January and May in writing on the provided form, or
- b) suggesting it during the focus group discussion on this year's use of the Local Development Fund organized in the Soum, or
- c) submitting it online here: <https://tusuv-oronnutag.mof.gov.mn/>

Step 2. Public Discussion and Prioritization of Submitted Proposals

Before 31st May of each year, you will be invited to attend Soum Citizen Representatives' Khural meetings to discuss all the proposals from your Soum, including your proposal, and to jointly decide on priorities.

Step 3. Prioritized Proposals forwarded to Soum Governor's Committee

Then, the prioritized proposals will be given to the Soum Governor's committee.

Step 4. Approval of Proposals by Soum Citizen Representatives' Khural

Lastly, the Soum Citizen Representatives' Khural approves the prioritized proposals.

Step 5. Soum receives Funds from Central Government

The budget to implement the proposed activities will be made available from the Mongolian Central Government in autumn.

Scan to visit the Local Development Fund official website



Scan to watch the "What is the Local Development Fund" Information Video



SME – Small and Medium Enterprise Fund

The SME Fund has been established by the Government of Mongolia to enable entrepreneurs to access loans with a lower interest rate than from commercial banks. The SME Fund is managed at Aimag level. Applications need to include a detailed business plan. Ask for detailed information from your Soum/Aimag about applying to the SME Fund. Unless you already have good experience as a businessperson, you will probably need support by a professional individual or government or non-governmental organization (NGO) in developing your business plan, and completing and submitting the application to the SME Fund. See also Chapter 5 for guidance on developing a business plan. There are some donor-supported technical assistance projects that provide assistance in accessing loans from the SME Fund. Ask your Soum Government whether such a project is being implemented in your area.

Production and Marketing Cooperatives (Uildverleliin Khorshoo)

There have been many challenges with developing a functioning rural cooperative model since 1990. First, people were reluctant and distrustful of any collective organization after it had been mandatory during the socialist era. Then there were some cooperatives that failed, or there were cases of financial fraud, and lack of transparency of benefit sharing. However, it is now well understood that herders in Mongolia have to work together in production, processing and marketing to create sustainable livestock husbandry that generates decent income for households and makes a significant and lasting contribution to the national economy.

Finally, after years of advocacy and discussions, the Law on Cooperatives was amended in 2021, and the national government promotes cooperatives³¹ as an important element in developing the livestock sector. Importantly, under the new Cooperative Law, the combined assets of cooperative members are recognized and counted towards collateral when applying for loans. This has greatly empowered cooperatives to access loans. Cooperatives also usually establish a Community Fund, which is an opportunity for members to access low interest loans. Cooperatives are exempt from VAT (Value Added Tax).

Perhaps your household or some members of your Nukhurlul or Pasture User Group, are members of a cooperative. Perhaps your group is discussing transforming yourselves into a cooperative.

³¹Agricultural cooperatives are a popular crop and livestock production model worldwide. They are producer owned businesses that are controlled by and operate for the benefit of their members. Producer owned cooperatives help members process their raw materials and market their products. In Mongolia, the National Association of Agricultural Cooperatives of Mongolia (NAMAC) provides support with capacity building and linking coops to resource agencies and marketing opportunities.



For more information on your opportunities to join or become a cooperative, or benefit from the new opportunities under the revised law, ask your Soum SME and Agricultural Officers. Or contact NAMAC, the National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Cooperatives. NAMAC is a very experienced and effective organization that provides information, training, and ongoing support to cooperatives and those who are interested in forming one.

Scan to visit NAMAC website



Savings and Credit Cooperatives

In some areas, namely in Bayan-Ulgii and Khovd Aimags, there have been very encouraging examples of Soum level Savings and Credit Cooperatives. When managed properly, they can accumulate significant financial capacity and even exceed that of a local commercial bank. This happened, for example, in Dariv Soum of Khovd Aimag, where a successful Savings and Credit Cooperative is acting as a microfinance institution, providing small loans to local residents, and outdoing the Khan Bank in the Soum.

Donor Organizations and Projects

There are opportunities to receive loans, from banks or non-banking financial institutions cooperating with donor projects, or to receive small grants from projects supported by international donor organizations and NGOs. Also embassies sometimes have regular/ongoing programs of small grants or will announce opportunities. For example, the Canadian Embassy has been operating the Canada Fund for many years to support community projects and enterprises.

Other projects, especially if their objectives are in strengthening protected area management, conservation, and tourism, or particularly CBT, may have special funds to support CBT initiatives, with trainings, loans, and grants. We mention here again the GIZ project SPACES, that also initiated and supported the creation of this handbook. The SPACES project is supporting the development of tourism in and around selected Protected Areas with a focus on CBT.

Projects, donor organizations and national and international NGOs might be helpful even if they do not have a Fund themselves. They may be able to provide you with information, training, or support in developing business plans and loan applications.

We do not list projects here, because project information will be outdated as soon as the project ends. It is better to ask your Soum Government Administration whether your Soum is included in ongoing projects on livelihood development, conservation or, specifically, tourism development. Furthermore, you could ask whether there are opportunities to access loans or grants as a community or small enterprise in CBT. Be proactive and enquire about possibilities from your local government, your networks, your collaborating tour operator, and online.



CHAPTER 8. UNDERSTAND AND SECURE YOUR LAND RIGHTS

If you are planning to establish a small ger camp or any other facility for CBT activities, it will be important that your tenure rights are clear and secure. If it is not clear what rights you have – of use, possession, ownership, and for how long, you cannot plan properly. It would be a shame if you put a lot of time, effort, and finances into establishing your facility, and after some time it turns out you cannot stay there.





Or, it could happen that you have established your ger camp or homestay and are attracting customers because you have become well known for your good service and the scenic area you are in. If other ger camps or homestays then move into the same area, it will soon be overcrowded, not as enjoyable anymore, the scenic value will be destroyed. Other negative environmental impacts are also likely to occur, such as waste, pollution, and disturbance to wildlife. Everybody loses!

Outside Protected Areas

It is of course up to the authorities in Soum and Aimag governments and Protected Area Administrations to regulate the use of areas for tourism. Regulation should be based on studies that assess which and how much tourism activity can be undertaken in an area, how many visitors should come within a certain timeframe, what activities should be prohibited, and which ones encouraged. A Tourism Management Plan should set out the framework for decisions on land use and relevant permits.

More and more Aimags consider tourism in their development strategies and plans. Some have specific tourism strategies. The Soum Landscape Development Plan also specifies which economic activities are most suitable and promising, and the land use planning procedures and documents should reflect this.

If you live in a buffer zone around a State Protected Area, the buffer zone management plan will probably have certain provisions on and opportunities for tourism development (see Chapters 2 and 3, and QR Codes for more details on buffer zones and their management plans). Being located in a buffer zone creates a good condition for developing your CBT facility and activities. You are close to a Protected Area with its visitor attractions, and can take visitors there, or provide accommodation for park visitors. With your facility you are not subject to the same restrictions as you would be inside the Protected Area which is an advantage.

So before you develop your plans further, establish a camp or start activities, make sure you know the Local Development Plans and procedures. Discuss your plans with your Soum Governor and learn what permits you need.

Scan to download the Guidelines on Developing a Buffer Zone Management Plan





If there is no Tourism Plan for your local area, propose that it be developed, and become active in supporting its development. Explain that tourism needs to be managed well to be sustainable, that an area should not be overcrowded with too many tourism activities, especially if everybody is providing the same service, like ger accommodation. Get other tourism professionals and experts involved to support you.

Inside Protected Areas

If you are planning to operate inside a State Protected Area, rules are stricter of course, and the procedures are more complex. This is because the legislation on Special Protected Areas of Mongolia consists not only of the Law on Protected Areas, but also the Constitution of Mongolia, the Law on Land, and other legislative acts issued in compliance with them. It can be confusing trying to understand and follow the procedures as they are defined under the current laws.

Changes to the Protected Area Law are being discussed (winter 2022/23, at the time of finalizing this handbook), and the updated Law may provide more clarity on the issue of Nukhurlul rights and responsibilities inside Protected Areas, including CBT activities.

We are describing here the key points and procedures on land use inside Protected Areas, while referring to the relevant sections in the legislation.

Land Use by Mongolian Citizens, Business Entities and Organizations inside Protected Areas

According to Article 33.1 of the Law on Protected Areas, land can be used by citizens, business entities and organizations of Mongolia in the limited use zones of protected areas for ecotourism activities and accommodations, if these are not harmful to the conservation values of the protected area. Such use rights are based on an agreement detailing the conditions, period of use and purpose. Only land use rights are granted, but not possession and ownership.



Applying for a Land Use Permit in a Protected Area – the Step by Step Process³²

Step 1. Submit Application to Protected Area Administration (or Soum Governor)

According to Article 35.1 of the Law on Protected Areas, citizens, business entities and organizations shall submit their applications for land utilization with the Protected Area Administration or, if an Administration has not been established in the special protected area, with the Governor of the Soum or City district.

Citizens and business entities intending to run activities should provide relevant documentation that they have the financial capacity to undertake these activities and that they have no tax or bank debt. They should describe in writing how the intended activities are in line with the Protected Area Management Plan. Also clarify with the authorities (park administration and/or local government what documentation is required to fulfil obligations to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment and prepare an Environmental Management Plan.

Scan to visit MET Official Website's Documents Section



Step 2. Protected Area Administration (or Soum Governor) Sends the Application to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism

According to Article 35.2 of the Law on Protected Areas, the Protected Area Administration or Soum Governor shall send the application of the citizen, business entity or organization for land utilization, along with their recommendations, to the state central administrative body (the Ministry of Environment and Tourism).

Step 3. Ministry of Environment and Tourism Approves/Disapproves the Application

According to Article 36 of the Law on Protected Areas, the State Central Administrative Body (Ministry of Environment and Tourism) shall make decisions on allowing citizens, business entities or organizations to use land in the limited use zones of the strictly protected areas and national parks, nature reserves and monuments on the basis of the recommendations of the Administrations and Soum and District Governors.

³²The exact procedure is described in the Law on Protected Areas (Articles 33 – 37) and in the Law on Land (Article 44. 7) and in Articles 32, 33.1.2, 33.2, 34.1-34.5, 34. 6.1-34.6.8, 34.6.10, 34.6.11 and 34.7-34.10 of the Law on Land.



If two or more citizens, business entities or organizations make applications to use one piece of land, the State Central Administrative Body (Ministry of Environment and Tourism) shall choose one of them taking into consideration the purpose of land utilization, environmental impact, and the costs of environmental protection measures.

Applications requesting land use for tourism purposes will be evaluated taking into consideration how their facilities meet international standards.

In case the application for land use and its supporting materials are found to be incomplete or not appropriate for evaluation and approval by the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET), the Department of Protected Area Management (DPAM) of the MET shall send a refusal and its explanation to the citizen or business entity applicants within 15 days after the submission of the request.

Step 4. A Tripartite Agreement is Developed between the Land User, Protected Area Administration and the Soum Governor

Upon receiving the permission for land use from the Ministry of Environment and Tourism, a tripartite agreement is developed between the Protected Area Administration, Soum government and the land user.

According to Article 37 of the Law on Protected Areas, the tripartite agreement should include the following important aspects:

- 1) measures to preserve, protect and reclaim the original condition of the land and the costs of such measures;
- 2) the amount of land fee and payment terms;
- 3) the rights, obligations and liabilities of parties regarding land utilization and protection;
- 4) the conditions and procedures for returning the land upon termination of the agreement and the procedures for reclamation, repair, improvement, and acceptance of the land.

Step 5. Department of Protected Area Management Issues Certificate of Land Use

Based on the land use permission, the tripartite agreement, and taking into consideration the Environmental Impact Assessment, the Department of Protected Area Management (DPAM) of MET issues a certificate of land use.



Step 6. The Tripartite Agreement is approved by the Department of Protected Area Management

Within three months, upon receiving the certificate of land use, the Tripartite Agreement among citizens, the PAA and local government should be finalized, and approved by DPAM.

Scan to visit the DPAM Official Website



Current Challenges and Practice in Law Implementation

Under current law, the contract over land use (Tripartite Agreement) is to be concluded for 5 years' maximum, and only renewed one time for 5 years. However, it is not feasible for tourism operators including CBT communities to develop their operation for 10 years, and then not have an extension of the permit.





In practice therefore, this is not usually implemented. Rather, land use permits are being renewed every 5 years, as long as a satisfactory management plan and Environmental Impact Assessment are submitted at the end of each 5-year period.

Roles and Responsibilities of Land Users Inside Protected Areas

The roles and responsibilities of citizens and business entities with land use permits inside a Protected Area include those defined under the Law on Land (Article 45), and in addition:

- to take measures to protect, preserve and reclaim the original condition of the land at their own expense;
- to enter and exit the land plot they obtained for use through an established route;
- if they want to change the condition and intended use of the land that they are using in connection with activities provided in the law or agreement, they shall submit the relevant project to the State Central Administrative Body for approval;
- to reclaim, repair and improve the land upon expiration of the license for land utilization and to hand it over to the Administration or Soum/District Governor.

Land use by legal persons of foreign countries, international organizations, foreign citizens, stateless persons, and business entities with foreign investment.

Article 33.2 of the Protected Area law states that legal persons of foreign countries, international organizations, foreign citizens, stateless persons, and business entities with foreign investment shall be prohibited from using land in the Special Protected Areas.

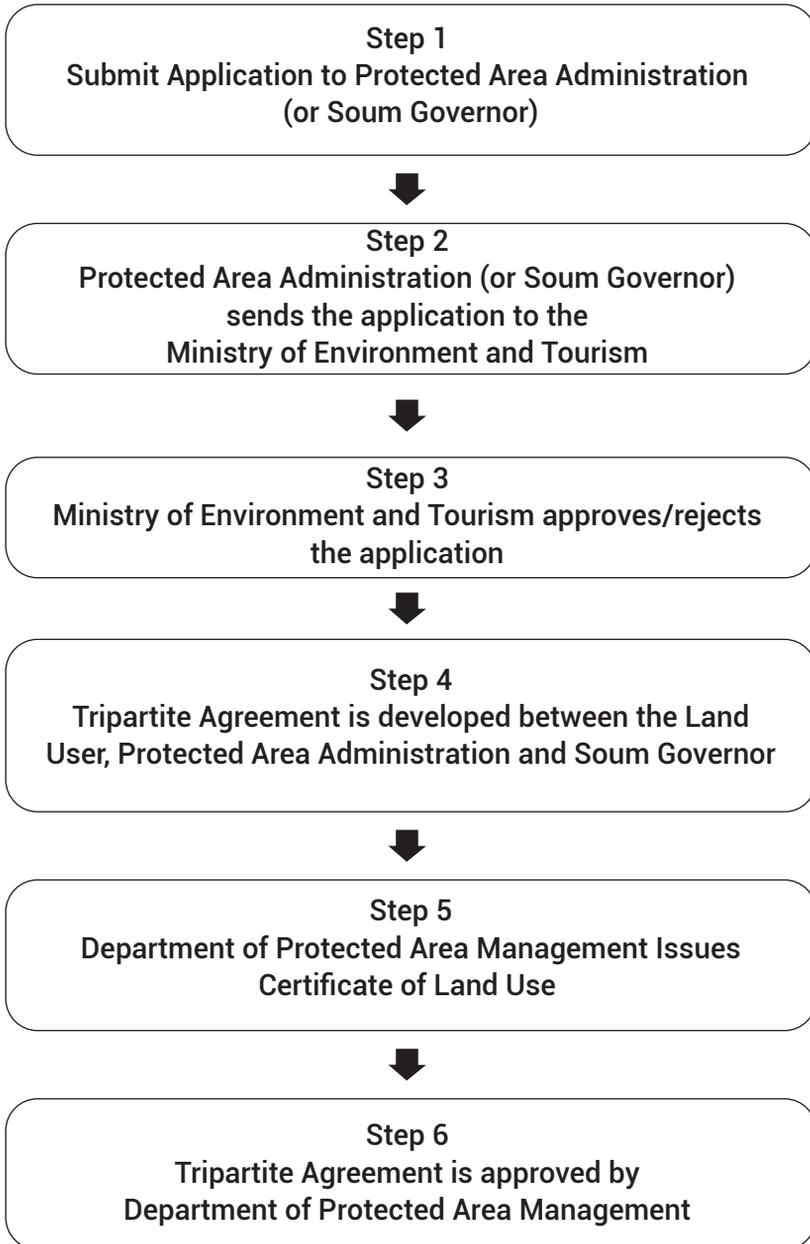
Scan to view the Protected Area Law



Scan to view the Mongolian Law on Land



Step by Step Processing of Land Use Permit Application in a Protected Area





CHAPTER 9. BUILD YOUR SKILLS TO RUN YOUR BUSINESS AND CBT ACTIVITIES

Community-Based Tourism - A Very Broad Skill Set

You need a very broad range of skills to successfully develop your CBT business and run your activities sustainably and safely. Not only do you need to understand how the tourism industry works, but you should also consider what travellers expect, how to reach the market, and with whom to collaborate in the tourism sector.





You need to learn business management skills, including financial planning, report writing and team management. Your communication skills need to be very good so as to work well with partners, such as tour operators.

With your combined skills as a community or company team you need to be able to perform at a high standard for every task in every service you offer. Among your team you need all the different technical and "soft" skills, from skills in driving and car repair, facilities management, hospitality, cooking, guiding, souvenir making, and many more. According to the different roles and responsibilities of your team members and yourself, each of you will need to develop their specialized set of skills. But there are also some areas where all team members should have basic skills and understanding, such as safety issues, general principles in hospitality, and in dealing with guests.

Upgrade/Update Your Local Knowledge

While you, of course, are the local experts, you may still need to upgrade your knowledge on local ecology and wildlife, geology and palaeontology, local history and prehistory, local legends, and more. That is all apart from your primary skills and knowledge in livestock husbandry, dairy processing, farming or whatever your main livelihood strategy is.

Your Daily Life Skills Adjusted to Tourism

Of course, as herders you are very skilled in horse or camel riding and packing, but you have to learn how to do it safely and enjoyably for guests. Many of them are for the first time in their life on horseback, and probably none of them have ever ridden a camel before. As a local horse/camel guide you also need to share information on local culture and natural history. It will take practice to become a good guide. More detail on Guiding is provided in Chapter 16.

Obviously, you are very experienced in cooking local food, but you have to consider what to cook for guests and how to serve it. As the dedicated cook in the ger camp, or on a tour, you need to know the specific "local" dishes. You need to attend training to learn about hygiene standards and food security. Also, you need to know how to adjust the menu for different seasons, and how to cook for guests with special needs and preferences. More detail on Food Preparation is provided in Chapter 13.

Likewise, you may be an experienced seamstress, felt maker, wood worker and more. But to make handmade souvenirs, you need to create them as local brand products that show the unique characteristics of your area. Training should be practical and cover this kind of local branding, local history, culture, and traditions, and information on raw materials for the handicraft products. You can find more detail on souvenirs in Chapter 12.



Communication Skills - Personal and Online

You need good communication skills to share your knowledge on all these topics with your guests in a way that is understandable and enjoyable, interesting, and polite. Be confident, be yourself – that is best. Most of you are good story tellers and have a natural talent for sharing and performing. Also keep in mind that most travellers are actually very experienced, likely having travelled to many countries. So do not try to fool them either.

Nowadays, to promote your services and products, you have to use modern Information and Communication Technology to directly target your market and customers. If you do not know yet, learn how to use social media on your smart phone, create your own business page on Facebook, create groups, post photos, write clearly and speak well to attract customers by Facebook Live. Your younger generation community/team members will for sure know how to do all of this; they can assist and show you, or you can put them in charge of your social media.

As you know “One Picture says more than a Thousand Words”. So, photos are really important – of guests having fun during their stay and activities with you, of your community members and daily life, your homestay or ger camp accommodation, scenic landscape, and more. Images of people are the most important. Almost everybody takes photos today with their phone; you can select the best photographer(s) in your team, learn some tips and tricks about photography and about editing photos before you post them. Again, your younger members probably will be good at it already. When editing photos, keep them natural looking; sometimes colours are made too bright, and they do not look genuine.

Know the Laws, Regulations and Standards

You will need to know all the regulations and recommendations for operating safely in all aspects. You need to know and adhere to regulations in hygiene, food safety, sanitation standards, and more.

Scan to view the Buffer Zone Law





Scan to download the Environmental Law,
section 8



Scan to download Improved Pit Toilet
Standard MNS 5924:2015

Strive for Excellence

Each team member in their special area must strive for excellence to ensure that your guests have a good time, from that "first impression" upon arrival until their departure. You want them to leave a very high rating and recommendation of your services in your guestbook or on social media. It takes only one activity or facility that is below standard, and this is what a guest might write or talk about. And it takes only one bad review to damage your reputation. So each team member must be excellent at their job to create an overall excellent experience for guests. There is no shortcut.

Develop Your Capacity Building Plan

As for any business, it is a good practice also as a CBT operator to have a Capacity Development Plan for each team member, building on the skills, talents and interests they already have and considering their responsibilities. With your whole team, you can first make a general assessment of how the overall performance is, and in what areas skills and knowledge are lacking to be able to provide excellent service.

Decide on the priority needs for skills improvement and who needs to acquire them. Then you can make a short-term plan for training. And with each team member, you can make a tentative medium-term plan to develop their skills; you can agree on how you could share costs, and how they can take time to participate in trainings, etc.

Develop Your Skills Through Training and Practice/Learning by Doing!

There are many training institutions in Mongolia, specifically for tourism related skills as well as for business and other skills. These are both in Ulaanbaatar and in Aimag Centers.



If you are working with a tour operator, or planning to do so, you can also ask them to consider providing basic training themselves. Many of them already do so for their tour guides, or they can recommend other training institutions and trainers.



#	Topic and context	Training provider institution	Website
1	Training on hospitality service	School of Tourism Mastery	https://tinyurl.com/bdeunz7t
2	Professional tour guide training	Mongolian Professional Tour Guides Association	http://www.mptga.org
3	Cook training and other relevant vocational training	Aimag Vocational Training and Production Center	
4	Information technology, digital marketing	IT Companies & Digital Marketing Agencies Nathouse – social channel development, online trade training, and advice HORECA soft	https://www.sortlist.com/l/mongolia-mn https://nathouse.mn/social-media-surgalt www.horecasoft.mn



5	Online platforms where you can list and market your services	iHotel – database of hotel booking JoinMe – domestic tour database	https://ihotel.mn https://joinme.mn/
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Much information is available online. The content in the table below corresponds to **Annex 11** of the Mongolian language version of this handbook.

#	Topic and content	QR code
1	Training material for tour guides co-authored by the Ulaanbaatar City Tourism Department and the Mongolian Professional Tour Guides Association	
2	Service, hospitality service training - Tourism Mastery Center, Ulaanbaatar City Tourism Department	
3	Tourist camp service - Tourism Mastery Center, Ulaanbaatar City Tourism Department	
4	Occupational safety and health handbook for herders (in Mongolian)	



5	Comprehensive nine-module training material on "Herders of the 21st century" with simple illustrations of principles to be followed in a herder's daily life and a step- by step guide of essential knowledge for herders.	
6	Set of self-study guides for young herders to improve their skills in pastoral animal husbandry, entrepreneurship, and social insurance.	



CHAPTER 10. MANAGING YOUR BUSINESS AND TEAM

The management of your business and team is the foundation for running all your CBT activities. It is therefore very important that it is done well, even though it is more often in the background, whereas the CBT activities are what customers, business partners, and the broader community see and experience.

You will have to build your team and business/community "culture" so that all team members have a common understanding of the objectives you are all working for under your short-, mid- and long-term plans. There should prevail a good attitude, ethic, and spirit in your team, and each team member must understand their own role and responsibilities.





It is a challenging task, but by following some key principles outlined below you will create the conditions to succeed.

Preparedness and Risk Management

Always Plan Ahead

- Always look ahead to plan activities in detail. Assign tasks, ensure all financial resources, equipment and materials are available.
- It is very good practice to have a detailed plan for the whole year, or tourism season, detailing activities and responsibilities of your community members. You can develop simple indicators of achievements so you can measure and celebrate your successes. As an example of good practice, the Tourism Activity Plan of Bortyn Mandal Nukhurlul from Munkhkhairkhan soum of Khovd Aimag is provided in **Annex 7**.

Foresee and Manage Risks

- Equally important is the preparation of a risk management plan. It helps you to foresee all possible risks you could encounter and how to prevent or minimize them. In **Annex 8** the Risk Management Plan of Bortyn Mandal Nukhurlul is given as an example, showing potential risks and how to prepare and manage them.
- Make your own list of potential risks in your area and situations that might arise (weather, availability of your team members, workloads in herding or other daily activities, etc.) and discuss with your team how to manage them.
- Have back-up plans ready in case you cannot carry out an activity as planned.

Managing Your Team

Hold Regular Meetings with All Your Team Members

- Hold regular team meetings, for planning activities, evaluating your work and results, and for reporting back to team members on finances and other issues. Remind everybody in advance of a meeting.
- Encourage everybody to share their ideas and opinions and to ask questions. But also keep the meetings brief and efficient, otherwise people will get tired of them and you all waste time.

Be transparent about Financial Matters

- It is very important to regularly share financial information and to be very transparent about the expenses of and income from CBT activities to your joint fund (either the CBT Fund or overall Community Fund).
- Train selected member(s) of your community in financial/fund management and ask them to report regularly in writing, and in meetings with all members.



- Designate one day each month to discuss financial matters with all members

Establish a Management Structure Suitable for Your Situation

- The Nukhurlul leader does not have to be the leader of CBT activities necessarily. If you have many members and your Nukhurlul is very active in conservation and natural resource management, or if not all members are involved in CBT, you can elect a manager/coordinator for the CBT activities. Otherwise, it may be too much work for the Nukhurlul leader. Or, it may well be that a person other than the Nukhurlul leader has skills and talent for CBT. Decide with all members what is most suitable for you.
- Have a Community Council to support the leader.
- Have a Community Fund Manager who is qualified and trusted by all.

Know, Manage, Support and Appreciate Your Team Members

- As the leader of the Nukhurlul (or the CBT activities), you will know your team members and the skills they can each contribute to your CBT activities.
- Know their strengths and weaknesses, and discuss and agree with them on their role and exact responsibilities.
- Agree with team members on what kind of training they need to develop their capacity and how the training is organized and paid for, including whether/how they contribute themselves to the cost.
- Assess their performance and discuss problems early and openly with team members. Encourage them to share their opinion and their problems.





- Let them know and feel that you appreciate and value them and their work.
- Explain clearly if their performance is not satisfactory and how they can improve.

Create an Incentive System

- Based on your indicators, evaluate the performance of your members, and give incentives for those who worked hard during a season. This can be mentioned in the work agreement with each member.
- Tourism business depends on good communication skills and attitude, so your business should encourage positive attitudes and behaviours amongst all team members from the start.
- Incentives could include experience sharing trips, training, tours to other areas, etc.
- Make the incentive system transparent, and fair to everyone.
- Do not favour some team members over others, otherwise the incentive system creates jealousy and a bad attitude in your team - exactly the opposite effect of what you intended with it.

Make sure Team Members know their Responsibilities

- Every team member should have a clear understanding of their role in the overall operation and their responsibilities in each activity.
- Team members should also be clear of who they ask in case they are unsure of something, and who they report to.
- When analysing complaints by guests, it often turns out that the problem was caused by a lack of good coordination among team members, or lack of awareness of team members of their exact duties, or a lack of clear division of tasks.

Establish Emergency Procedures that Everybody Knows

- It is also a very good idea to have emergency procedures in place and a clear "line of command" for such situations. Develop it with all members, and involve relevant experts from the Soum. You can develop procedures for medical emergencies/injuries, for natural disasters, but also for events such as tourists arriving unannounced.
- Send some (or all) members to important trainings, such as First Aid, or organize trainings in/for your community.
- See Chapter 17 for more details on safety precautions and procedures for all aspects of your operations.



Good Business Management Practices

Practice Good Paperwork

- Conclude a written work agreement with members that clearly lays out responsibility, how performance is assessed and how they are compensated.
- Develop a simple manual of your operations, describing what needs to be done/prepared when (months/date), and by whom. For complex activities, write down the exact sequence of steps. This manual should be available for all team members at all times to check.
- Conclude clear agreements with tour operators. File your orders from tourists and tour operators neatly and systematically. If bookings are cancelled by the tour operator, charge the tour operator a portion of the price since you prepared for guest. Record orders on a special form (date, number of guests, services required etc.) Example form is provided in **Annex 14** of Mongolian language version.
- Prepare accurate and truthful financial reports. Your whole community will be respected as good citizens, contributing to the common good. It pays in the long term and increases your self-respect.
- Also keep your registration as Nukhurlul and all requirements up to date; prepare and submit the required reports on natural resource management properly and in a timely fashion to the relevant authorities.

Practice Good Communication

- Communicate clearly and in a timely fashion.
- If you work with a tour operator, always communicate on time about orders.
- Communicate well with your team members, about plans, upcoming events/activities, sudden changes, etc.
- Be a good listener too!
- Make sure you can be reached by phone at all times. If you are going to be out of reach, notify business partners. Ask somebody to be reachable instead and give their contact to your business partner. You could get a community phone/number and make sure it is always with somebody in reach and calls are always answered.
- Check your e-mails, phone and chat messages regularly and reply promptly.



Develop Community Capacity – Pass On Your Skills

- It is of direct benefit to your venture in the long term if you have others, especially young people, able and willing to take over responsibilities, and eventually take over the whole operation.
- Otherwise, years of your hard work might be lost if nobody can take over.
- Of course, it will always be different how younger people will run the operation. Be prepared to accept that, while still providing support based on your experience.
- Building capacity in your community is rewarding for you and benefits all.

Annex 7 provides a sample of a tourism activity plan by Bortyn Mandal Community, Munkhkhairkhan Soum, Khovd Aimag. (It corresponds to Annex 12 in The Mongolian language version of the CBT Handbook)

Annex 8 provides an example of a risk management plan prepared by a Community. (It corresponds to Annex 13 of the Mongolian language version of this handbook.)

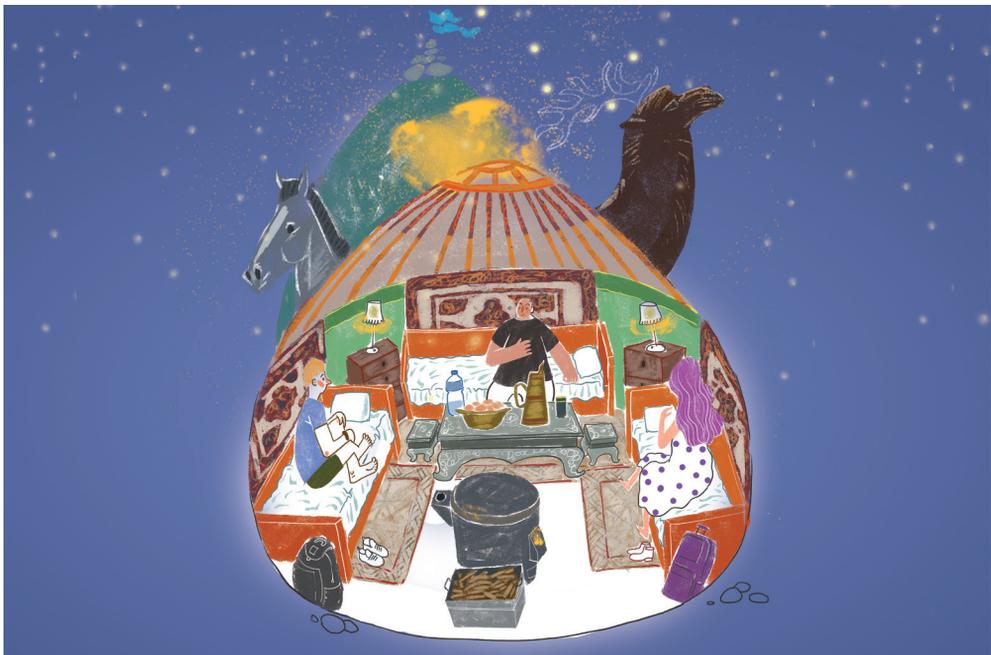


CHAPTER 11. PLANNING AND OPERATING YOUR GUEST ACCOMMODATION/GER CAMP

In most cases, your CBT services will include providing accommodation for guests. Your other activities may be guiding guests to cultural sites, wildlife viewing, demonstrating local crafts, and letting guests have a try at making them, horse or camel riding, etc.

When guests arrive, you will welcome them at your homestay, small ger camp, or wooden cabins. They will spend time, relaxing, eating and sleeping in the facilities you provide. The design, comfort, functionality, safety and security, and cleanliness of your place will shape the lasting memory that your guests will leave with, and that they will share with their friends and family, their networks and on social media. It takes only one bad experience that is shared on Facebook to be very damaging for your reputation.

A homestay, consisting of one or two guest gers near your family ger, or a small ger camp, are the most common guest accommodations in CBT, and we focus on these kinds of facilities here. This chapter points out some general rules for establishing a ger camp, and discusses criteria for choosing a suitable location, facilities to include, aspects of lighting, design, that is harmonious with the surrounding nature, services and activities, and safety.





General Principles for Overall Planning of Your Ger Camp

Consider the following general points for establishing and sustaining your ger camp:

- Tourism is a professional field, and you need to manage your camp and all other activities in CBT professionally in order to achieve success.
- If you have already decided to run a tourism business, you should share your ideas with people who have the appropriate professional background, knowledge, and experience in order to get their comments and thoughts.
- Learn from others who already started a similar venture and learn from their mistakes.
- While CBT ger camps take up less land area than large tourist camps, they still may sometimes attract crowds of people and vehicles; so you should foresee the potential impact on the natural surroundings and the living condition of locals and avoid these negative impacts in your planning and operations.
- Ensure there is enough space between gers, and use double cover material to reduce outside noise penetration that could disturb guests. Also consider the prevailing wind direction to reduce the gers being exposed to wind and gusts.
- Create a demarcation line around the ger camp with stones, or build a stone wall or fencing from other natural materials found locally to ensure vehicles do not enter or park directly by the gers. Make sure that cars are not driven between gers, to avoid the creation of vehicle tracks. This is also an important safety issue, besides being unsightly and a nuisance for other guests.
- Most importantly, designate one parking area for vehicles, at least 30 meters away and downwind from the gers/accommodation
- Finally, develop your program and options of activities just as much as your facilities. Some travellers will just come for an overnight stay. But others come for experiences – they will want to explore the area and learn about your culture and lifestyle. So be ready to offer your guests interesting activities. Chapter 12 goes into more detail on this topic.

Choose the Right Location – For Your Camp and for Guest Gers

The location is very important for any kind of facility development. Most people want to build their facility near or in the wilderness, or in popular visitor areas such as historical sites. This, however, has a negative impact on the value of these areas; not only do you create damage to the landscape, local wildlife, or cultural heritage, but you also undermine future tourism activities. Once the damage is done, visitors will not come anymore.



So always consider the following when choosing the location of your ger camp and when placing the guest gers:

- **Avoid creating a negative impact.** Choose the location so it does not negatively impact the area, site or natural and cultural heritage that attracts visitors in the first place. Work with professionals to make your choice. If you are near, or in, a Protected Area, learn about the zonation and the rules and regulations that apply to the different zones. Consult with the Park Administration, park and soum rangers, environmental inspector, land manager, experts from NGOs or research institutions, or the tour operator(s) you work with. Consider all the land use and conservation management plans including the Protected Area Management Plan, Soum Development Plan, Land Management Plan, Buffer Zone Management Plan, and Pasture Management Plans.
- **Scenic views.** Consider the views that guests can enjoy looking out from their ger. Many travellers like watching the sunrise and sunset. Seeing the starry sky and milky way is a special experience for many of them too. All guests like to have a scenic view from their ger door, onto the open space of the steppe or onto a forest, mountain range and other landscapes. A view onto a rural scene, with herder households and livestock - but not too close - or where birds or small mammals can be seen, is highly desirable.
- **Undisturbed from noise, pollution, traffic, and crowds.** It might feel convenient for you to be near infrastructure, but tourists come to Mongolia to experience the wilderness, peaceful countryside, solitude and quiet. They want to rest in undisturbed nature. Therefore, ensure that your guests are far from noise, pollution, roads, traffic, and modern infrastructure.
- **Lay-out of the camp.** From the beginning please carefully plan where you place the guest gers, toilets, car parking area, and the gers where you stay and work yourself. Consider the wind direction, and plan in such a way that the guest gers have maximum protection from wind, smell, noise, dust, and any other disturbances.
- **Weather and environmental conditions.** When planning the guest ger location, consider the prevailing wind direction during the different seasons, where snow may blow from and accumulate, where water could rise after a heavy rain, and where flash floods could rush through. You should also consider where there could be a pleasant breeze or shade during summer heat.



- **Quiet Night-time.** Many tourists are elderly, and once they wake up during the night it is hard for them to go back to sleep. This is another reason to place guest gers in the quietest location, away from roads/tracks, parking areas, and any other noise.
- **Clean and neat host ger area.** Keep the area around your own ger(s) clean and neat.

Natural Designs and Guest Comfort

Traditional Mongolian gers or small wooden houses, comfortable and in Mongolian style, will be the best choices for guest facilities. Whether gers or houses, any structure and building should blend nicely into the natural setting, like it is part of the landscape, like it belongs there. Use, without negative environmental impact of course, timber, dried wood, or stones from local rock formations. If your design and construction is inspired by nature and fits into the surroundings, your guests will feel comfortable and relaxed.

Points to consider when offering traditional Mongolian Gers as guest accommodation:

- Most ger camps have 5-wall gers (sometimes 4-wall gers). Consider the number of beds in one ger. If there are more than 3 beds in one ger, space is limited and the ger may become uncomfortable for tourists.
- Guest beds should be no less than 90 cm wide, and no less than 2 meters long. The mattress should be thick enough to avoid feeling the wood below, but also not too soft.
- Sheets must be very clean, always fresh and washed! Provide enough bedding and extra blankets as nights can be cold for guests.
- Provide a simple hand washbasin and always keep water filled up or at least available. Empty the wastewater bucket regularly. Let guests know there is a bucket below that needs emptying. Tourists are not used to that. Provide soap, and clean towels.





- Do not use cement to make the foundation and floor of the gers. It is eco-friendlier and nicer looking without cement. Use a wooden floor, or place linoleum cover on the bare ground. If you use carpets, make sure they are clean. Dirty, old carpets create a very uncomfortable feeling.
- Most people build ger camps with one felt layer for summertime use. But a one-layer-ger has bad insulation. It is also not stable in the spring wind, and it lets in too much noise from outside and vice versa. It is not waterproof in the rain, and when the felt gets wet it often smells bad, and tourists do not like it. Always have a top roof cover (urkh) for every ger.
- In the Gobi it is often best to have protection from dust on the roof. Increasingly, people are using thick plastic sheets to protect from dust. However, while it protects from wind and dust, it also blocks air circulation.
- The “Dul” stove type has become the most used stove in ger camps, as it is fuel efficient, has a good heat output and is clean to operate. Most guests, however, will not know how to start a fire in a stove. You can show guests how to start the fire and maintain it; show them the functions of the stove, how to regulate the airflow and heat. You can also place instructions on how to make a fire and be safe. Ask guests whether they need a fire and whether they want/need help with it. Sometimes, hosts make the guest ger too hot!
- It is a nice feature and much appreciated by guests if they can sit outside, for morning tea/coffee or to watch the sunset. You should provide chairs and a table for this purpose. This can be picnic/camping tables that are portable and collapsible. Or, if it is possible, you can build a wooden picnic table with benches, or something similar.
- Toilets/sanitation and waste management are VERY IMPORTANT aspects of your ger camp design and operation, and we have included dedicated chapters on these topics in this handbook.

Please consult Chapter 14 – Toilets and Sanitation and Chapter 15 Waste Management and other Environmental Concerns!

Lighting

- Almost all foreign tourists enjoy watching the stars at night. “Light pollution” is affecting most parts of the world. In most countries, unless in very remote wilderness, it is not possible to see a night sky like in Mongolia, because all the artificial light disturbs the view of the dark sky.



It is important to consider this when planning and installing lighting for your ger camp. Make it safe and comfortable, but minimize "light pollution".

- Install lights at your ger camp in a way so they do not shine right into peoples' eyes and avoid placing lights high so that they shine into someone's eye when they are looking at the night sky. When you avoid such lighting and "light pollution", guests will be able to enjoy themselves watching the stars and galaxies.

It is best to place lights in lower places with sufficient distance from each other and with a top cover for each light.

It is best to use self-sufficient renewable energy resources for each piece of lighting equipment, such as outside lights that come with their own small solar panel. It is cheapest in the long run, eco-friendly, safe and will be appreciated by guests. If you use one energy source for all lights, your lighting may be more vulnerable to failure and damage, and electrical wiring can be dangerous if not correctly done.

Designs in Harmony with Nature and Traditional Mongolian Styles

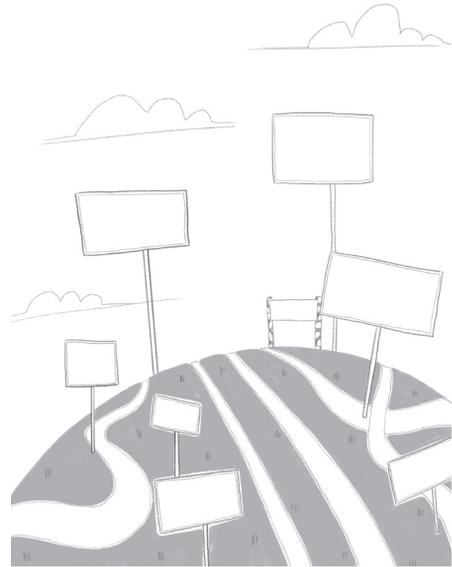
- For all design aspects, from the overall look of your camp, to the gers and the interior of the gers, keep it as natural looking as possible.
- Chose colours that match your natural surroundings, e.g. colour tones that are like the earth, sand, and rocks. Make colours match each other. Do not use many different colours. Avoid bright colours outside and inside (except for important signs that should be easily seen).
- Create the design in harmony with nature and with traditional Mongolian styles. Use materials (rock, wood) from your natural surroundings. Design buildings to blend in with the landscape, and avoid very high structures.
- You can look up online how facilities for eco-tourism are designed in other countries - in desert, mountain or forest environments, and inside protected areas.
- Rehabilitate an area or site that has been impacted, e.g. where rocks, trees or other vegetation were removed. Make it look natural again by restoring the soil cover and replanting it.

Signs and Information Boards

- A large number of signboards does not look good, and might even be prohibited. Better design one information board with all important information and place it at an appropriate location where it is easily accessible but does not obstruct the view. Make signs look pleasant and craft them from natural materials.



- Provide accurate and relevant information whilst using a nice design. Get professional support. You could ask Protected Area staff, rangers, Soum/Aimag specialists, tour operators, or others to provide accurate & interesting information on local wildlife, the landscape, the Protected Area, and local cultural and natural heritage.
- The only exception to making signs that blend in well are of course signs that are supposed to stand out. For example, signs pointing out fire extinguishing equipment or a first aid kit, and signs warning foreign guests to watch their head when entering the ger.



How to Provide the Best Service

There are some key criteria to make your operation successful.

The first impression that guests have upon arrival is very important. Make sure your area, facilities, and gers are well designed and organized as described above, and in clean and neat condition, so that the first impression of visitors is good.

You want guests to feel welcome, inspired, comfortable, relaxed, and safe in a clean environment, at a nice place that reflects local nature and culture, and offers beautiful views.

A key part of a good first impression is you and your staff/team members of course - right there to welcome and assist guests, and inform them about camp facilities, the program, mealtimes etc. You should all look neat and clean, and it is best if you wear traditional Mongolian clothes.

A good first impression creates the foundation for tourists to have a good rest and nice time in your area. If there are some small mishaps later on in the program, guests can easier overlook or forgive them if they had a great first impression. On the other hand, if you ruin their first impression, they are more prepared to be critical of your activities and services and start complaining. So, really work on creating that good first impression.



Good Attitude and Communication Skills. To create a good impression, you need to develop a good attitude towards greeting, welcoming, and caring for your guests. To develop this attitude and appropriate communication skills you need to practice and receive training which often takes time.

Don't worry though, be yourself, be natural and build on your general practice of hospitality. Nomadic herders of Mongolia are known for their hospitality.

Working in the tourism sector gives you the opportunity to develop yourself. In tourism, we are always encouraged to meet with new people, to work and communicate with them while creating a positive attitude among our team and push us to learn foreign languages.

Cooperation and Good Business Practice. In tourism, we work and make agreements with different individuals, businesses and organizations in the private sector and with government institutions. If you want to run your business smoothly you have to learn about and practice good principles of cooperation, with mutual trust, reliability and understanding based on clear agreements and communication. To grow your business by attracting more tourists, you will make agreements and contracts, be trustworthy, keep up your good quality and efficient service, and keep improving your activities and services all the time.



Professional Skills. There is still a lack of properly trained/skilled professional staff in Mongolia's tourism sector. Ger camp directors and heads on CBT enterprises should educate themselves and acquire the required skills and knowledge for their work.

You and Your Team. As a good director/boss, you should always have a close working relationship with your staff, and jointly implement your internal rules. Make job descriptions clear for everyone and follow all the safety rules for your activities and services.

It is often said that for a business, its people are its greatest asset. Always make an effort to improve the capacity of your staff, improve your communication skills and attitude, create your own organizational culture and be an organization that "learns by doing" together. This will drive your business's further development and your success.

Chapters 9 and 10 provide more detail on developing your and your team members' skills, and how to work with your team.

More Domestic Travellers and Longer Tourism Season. While the tourism season in Mongolia is still rather short, your opportunities to provide CBT services have improved in recent years. The number of domestic tourists has increased significantly, in part due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which gives you the opportunity to develop more products, and have a longer tourism season. This challenges you to find ways to run your business into and through the colder season. Please see Chapter 12 for more ideas on developing your activities and programs.

Safety Issues

Keep in mind the principle of "Safety First" when designing, building, and running your facilities, and activities. A few points are mentioned here, and Chapter 17 gives much more details on safety.

Ger Entrance. A very common hazard and cause of injury for foreign visitors is the low door opening of the Mongolian ger. Tourists often hit their head when entering the ger. Therefore, maybe place a sign "Watch Your Head" above the door, and/or attach a piece of felt or other soft material to the upper door frame.

Dogs. Most international travellers have a very different attitude towards dogs than is common in rural Mongolia. In their home countries, dogs are pets, often treated as family members and living inside the home. Families often get a puppy when they have a new baby, so the two grow up together.



Therefore, guests may want to pet your dog; they don't know how different your dog's lifestyle is and what it eats. Make sure you explain to them that your dog is a guard dog, not used to being petted, and that it may not react in a friendly way! Let guests know to practice good hygiene after touching a dog.

But if you have friendly dogs, especially puppies, it most likely will be an attraction for guests. They will like to see the puppy or dog and play with it. Just handle the situation safely and with common sense.

Many countries have strict laws against animal cruelty. Guests will have a very bad impression if you mistreat a dog, or any animal in front of them.

Fire extinguishing equipment. Have basic firefighting equipment in your camp, kitchen, or even in each ger. You and your staff should know where it is and how to use it.

First Aid. Have a basic First Aid kit at your camp. You and your staff should know where it is and how to use it.

See Chapter 17 for much more information on safety!





CHAPTER 12. DEVELOPING YOUR TOURISM ACTIVITIES

As mentioned in the previous chapter on how to establish and run your homestay or ger camp, it is equally important to have interesting activities and experiences to offer to your guests.

When developing your activities, remember why tourists come to Mongolia and what Community-Based Tourism is.



A 2018 survey³³ asked international visitors for their reasons to come to Mongolia, and this is what they said:

- 70 % of them mentioned nature and pristine wilderness
- 50% mentioned the nomadic culture and way of live
- 25% mentioned the history of Mongolia and Chinggis Khan.

Also, 70% of the survey participants had planned their visit to be 2 weeks long and with the idea to experience the Mongolian countryside. 62% of them thought that there are good opportunities for local herder communities to develop CBT.

³³Bayasgalan, B., 2018, Tourism Market Study, GIZ IMRI Project.



The survey confirmed that most visitors to Mongolia not only have a great interest to see nature and nomadic culture. They, in fact, want to be part of it. They want to experience the real nomadic way of life, stay in a ger and talk to members of herder households. They want to have authentic experiences.

This interest of travellers is your opportunity to promote your local nature, culture, traditions, and history through the development of tourism activities that give a once in a lifetime experience to international guests.

Taking advantage of this by developing, owning, and managing a CBT venture as a local community group you can achieve several objectives:

- Protect and preserve your local resources such as nature, history, culture, tradition, wildlife, and livestock to pass them on to the next generation.
- Promote local tourism products and features that are unique for your area and community. Coordinate with different CBT groups in your Soum/Aimag to develop a compelling travel itinerary, with various, locally specific activities and features.
- Create additional income for your member households. Fairly share the benefits and profits from tourism activities among members, seeing it as a blessing from Mother Nature.

Designing Your Tourism Activities

Your CBT activities are developed based on the unique way of life, culture, and history of your local area and community. As a local resident, and with your family having lived there for generations, you have the best knowledge of how to share the unique local features with international and domestic visitors. Your local community members will have the best knowledge on local wildlife and natural sites to see. Since you own and run your CBT activities, you choose what to show to visitors.

Before choosing what to show, and creating a program, you can look at different areas of interest, and what may be of special interest to visitors:

Nature- Unique, wild landscapes, beautiful scenery, mountains, forest, taiga, plants with valuable medicinal properties, grassland, lakes, rivers, and basins, etc.

Culture – Traditional costumes, local foods and drinks, traditional ways of life, traditional dwellings, cultural events, etc.

People – Local traditional wisdom, local history, local leaders, artists, local legends/folklore, local crafts and skills, traditional horsemanship, livestock husbandry skills, songs, etc.



Some General Guidelines on Planning Activities for Guests

- Offer interesting, entertaining, and safe activities that provide guests with learning and experiences.
- Consider both "sightseeing" (visiting natural and cultural heritage sites), and "experiential" tours.
- Aim to involve guests in activities. Offer activities not only to watch, but to join in, to "make something by hand". Give an opportunity to tourists to use their senses and their imagination.
- Strive to show to tourists the connection between people, culture, and nature through tourism activities.
- It is always interesting for tourists to meet local people and talk to them.
- Activities and products should be designed with the visitors' perspective in mind. When planning specific activities, consider guests' interests, age, abilities, and health, on a case-by-case basis.
- Also assess carefully whether you have the resources and team members with required skills for the activities in question when planning a program. Do not plan anything beyond your capacity to maintain a high standard and deliver safely.
- Also consider which activities can be offered year-round, and which are seasonal.
- Think of what tours you can offer – half day, full day, or multi-day, and what is required for these - especially for multi-day, overnight tours. These are much more complex to plan and run. You will need to consider transportation and organize accommodation or camping for each night.
- If you already run activities, keep notes on what has worked, what were guests' favourite activities, what didn't work, what needs to be improved. Have a Guest Book for comments.
- Train your local guides well, so that they can give accurate and interesting information to guests.
- Always be aware of safety issues (see Chapter 17) and time management, when planning and running a trip.



Developing a Tour Itinerary

Having thoroughly considered all options for local activities, and listed the best choices for sites, areas, and events to visit, and experiences to let guests participate in, you can develop your tour itineraries, or event schedules.

Some guidelines for a good itinerary are:

- Remember to start with a warm welcome and introduce community members to the guests.
- Start by giving the guests the “bigger picture” – an impression of daily life in the local community, such as visiting a herder family, and having a local meal.
- Then go into more details to let guests learn and experience. Meet other community members, maybe local craftspeople, musicians, and artists, and show them your places of worship if you like.
- Be creative and remember that things that may be very commonplace for you might be very interesting for foreign guests. It is even interesting for them to visit a small shop in the local Soum or Bagh center.
- Involve guests in the work of livestock herding. Let them take part in cooking, felt making and other crafts.
- Also plan for free time in your program and itinerary. Do not fill the itinerary with too many activities or covering too long distances into one day.
- Plan well where and when to have meals.
- Plan for bathroom breaks – whether it is at a real toilet facility or “nature’s bathroom” ensuring some privacy.

Making and Selling Souvenirs

In addition to developing tours and offering services, as a community you can also generate income from tourism by selling local products. Some of these products are already produced in and used by your community, like honey, sea buckthorn, meat, aaruul and other dairy products. With a little change concerning packaging or labelling, some of these products can be sold as souvenirs.

But there are even more opportunities. There might be members of your community who are skilful craftsmen or craftswomen who can create items that reflect the uniqueness of your area or that tourists find handy to use while travelling through Mongolia.



What are Souvenirs?

Souvenirs are items that tourists buy or keep as a reminder of a person, an event, or a place they visited. It can be almost anything, from a small stone they pick up at a lake shore to a pair of felted slippers, from a cashmere shawl to a leather bag, from an ankle bone game to an *Arag*.³⁴

In general, we identify the following categories of souvenirs:

- » Wearables like mittens, slippers, sweaters, hats, scarves, jackets, T-shirts, etc.
- » Food products like locally produced tea, honey, jam, candies, cheese, (alcoholic) drinks, etc.
- » Jewellery such as necklaces, bracelets, earrings, etc.
- » Toys and games like stuffed animals, felted puppets etc.
- » Books, stationery, and music.
- » Collectables such as fridge magnets, key chains, miniature traditional puppets.
- » Beauty products, such as soap, creams, lip balm, etc.
- » Practical items such as bags, leather wallets, knives, felted slippers, etc.
- » Art such as paintings and sculptures



³⁴Basket for collecting livestock dung as fuel for the household stove



Developing Your Souvenirs

Since there are so many options you will need to keep a few things in mind if you are thinking of developing souvenirs. Never just start producing souvenirs, hoping that you will sell them, but carefully develop your products to make them as attractive as possible to guests.

A few tips:

1. Have a **clear idea who your (potential) customers** are and what they would like to buy as a souvenir. The interests of domestic tourists are different from those of international tourists. International tourists from different countries, age groups, and with different personal interests, will look for different types of souvenirs. Domestic tourists will probably travel with their own car, making it easier for them to carry bigger and heavier things.

For international tourists, who come to Mongolia by plane, weight and size are limiting factors. Domestic tourists will like the food products from the countryside while international tourists might like to try these items while in Mongolia, their interest focusses probably more on items they can use (like a warm pair of winter socks, a nice leather bag, etc.) or decorative items (local embroidered cushion covers or a well painted Mongolian landscape).

2. Understand that a **visit to your community is part of a bigger trip**. International tourists usually start and end their journey in Ulaanbaatar, where there are many souvenir shops that offer a wide variety of items to choose from. This means that many international tourists might want to wait to buy souvenirs at the end of their trip. However, they will buy a locally produced item, when this item reflects the uniqueness of a specific area.

Khovd Aimag, for instance, is known for its watermelon cultivation. Tourists visiting Khovd will certainly be attracted to watermelon-themed souvenirs. Communities with many yaks, might want to consider making products from yak wool, like socks for instance. Maybe not a unique item in itself, but if the souvenir is somehow linked to the visit to that specific community, it will make a good souvenir.

Tourists visiting the countryside, admire the herder lifestyle and like to support local communities by buying their products, especially when the price of these souvenirs is modest.



3. It is key to offer souvenirs that are **not easily available elsewhere in the country**. Making felted slippers in the countryside might not be such a good idea. There are specialized shops in Ulaanbaatar that offer felted slippers in different designs, colours, and sizes, making it hard to compete with them, unless you can offer a type of felted slipper that is not for sale in Ulaanbaatar.

Engaging the tourist in the process of making a certain souvenir, will add to the experience and increase sales. Bayan-Ulgii is known for textile products with the typical Kazakh embroidery, while Uvs is known for its products with sea buckthorn and the taiga of Khuvsgul for its souvenirs made of reindeer antlers.

4. Try to work as much as possible with **locally available materials**. Leather products usually make good souvenirs. However, if nicely processed leather is not available in your community and you have to buy the leather from Ulaanbaatar, the extra costs of organization and transportation, will make the souvenir more expensive. Only when the quality of the souvenir increases significantly can you consider using raw material from outside your community.





5. **Use your ethnicity.** Mongolia has many different ethnic groups who distinguish themselves from each other not only by their traditional dress but also through other aspects. Blending these aspects into your souvenirs will give them more meaning. For domestic tourists these ethnic items might be a good reason to attempt to collect them all, such as miniature dolls in the traditional costume of each ethnic group, miniature size boots of each ethnic group, etc.
6. Consider **working together with shops in your region.** The tourism season is short and only selling your souvenirs during the tourism season might not generate enough income. Working together with local or regional shops (e.g. bookshops, coffee shops, displaying on a shelf in a hotel or restaurant, etc.) will increase sales opportunities.
7. **Set the right** price for your souvenir. Calculate the cost of the material and determine the time investment to produce the souvenir. Ask too little for the souvenir, and you will not be able to buy enough new material to sustain your souvenir production. Ask too much for the souvenir and you will not sell enough items to continue your production.
8. Consider developing souvenirs linked to **specific festivals or events** in your region. Festivals and events play an important role in the tourism sector and provide opportunities to sell your souvenirs. This is especially the case when the souvenirs are related to the theme of the festival or the event. The Tea Road festival in Khovd provides a good opportunity to sell miniature stuffed toy camels carrying tea or to create a Khovd local tea in a nice package with an image of the camel caravan. Different Ice Festivals in the country or the Yak Festival also provide inspiration for the creation of souvenirs.
9. **Labelling and packaging of souvenirs.** Adding a label to the souvenir provides the opportunity to inform the buyer about the product, and also about your community. You can achieve this by adding a little story. You can also add contact details making it easier to order items. For food items and beauty products, a label is essential. Date of production, expiry date, information about the ingredients and how to use the product should all be on the label. When it comes to packaging, consider the environment, and avoid using plastic as much as possible. Making gift bags from fabric, that can be reused, will for sure be appreciated by international customers. Packaging should be functional, mainly to protect the souvenir during transportation.



10. **Be inspired by nature.** Mongolia is known for its vast landscapes and nature-based tourism is what motivates most tourists to visit Mongolia. Souvenirs inspired by nature, like a special bird or mammal species seen in one of the protected areas, evokes the image of Mongolia as a paradise for nature lovers. But do not use any parts of endangered plant or animal species!
11. **Start modest.** Finding the right type of souvenir to produce and sell, takes time and is a process. When you think you have a good souvenir to offer, produce just a few at first and see if they sell. Only when tourists show an interest should you start thinking about upscaling production.
12. **Maintain a consistently** high quality and continuously do quality checks.
13. Over time, **further fine-tune your souvenirs and constantly develop new ideas.**





CHAPTER 13. LOCAL FOOD EXPERIENCES FOR YOUR GUESTS

Along with accommodation and scenery, food is one of the key experiences for travellers. "Culinary tourism" has even become one of the faster growing segments in travel, where the exploration and experience of national and local food is the main purpose for travel. International tourists are interested in Mongolian traditional food as it is part of the nomadic life and culture. But it is very important that food is safe, and that preparing and serving food adheres to good hygiene standards.

The comments of international travellers in the box below about their food experiences in Mongolia give you an idea of what you have to consider when preparing and serving food and drinks to guests. The comments are from tourists from different countries, but certain similar experiences were mentioned in many of the comments. They illustrate why (most) international travellers cannot eat our daily food exactly as we do.





What Travellers Say About Food in Ger Camps:

- The food served was the same in each ger camp.
- Some big tourist camps decorate their dining hall with skins of wild animals, and this looks and feels strange.
- Meals were usually mostly meat based.
- I got stomach ache after eating a vegetable salad.
- When the source of water changed, I felt bad.
- Usually only one kind of coffee and tea is offered. The same with desserts.
- Some take-away food was not good and cold.
- I visited many different Aimags, but really could not see local differences in food.

What Travellers Say About Food Served on Tours:

- A variety of food and salad was served.
- They use plastic utensils in the kitchen and excessively use single use/plastic utensils. Also, small plastic water bottles were served a lot.
- Often meals are prepared from canned food.
- The meals had lots of meat which made it difficult for us to sleep at night.

What Travellers Say About Their Food and Drink Experiences at Herder Homestays:

- They were very hospitable.
- We were forced to drink a lot of Mongolian vodka. We were told "Mongolia has a 3 times culture", so we had to drink 3 times. I had a headache the next morning.
- We were served lots of homemade airag and yogurt which were not fully cooked/processed.
- I ate khorhog, buuz and khuushuur one after another which caused me stomach ache.
- I could not eat aaruul. I broke my false teeth.
- I burned my mouth because I did not know that khuushuur are juicy and hot.
- The hygiene was not satisfactory.



Understanding Travellers' Eating Habits

First, understand that travellers are used to quite different eating habits from ours in Mongolia, based on their climate and geography, culture and religion. Also, many travellers will be very conscious about their lifestyle and health in which their diet plays an important role. Of course, it is not possible to generalize, but here are some tips to improve our knowledge and capacity regarding serving food to tourists from other countries

Travellers from warmer, tropical regions, are probably used to eating more fruit and vegetables, fish, and chicken. Often, mealtimes are a very social events and families take the time to eat long meals, with many courses of different dishes, together with friends. Having wine with dinner is also common, especially in the Mediterranean countries like Italy, Spain, and France.

Quite a few travellers are vegetarian (no meat) or vegan (no animal products), while others may be on diets (keto, paleo) that favour meats and fats but don't eat flour (carbohydrates). Travellers are conscious about harmful chemical ingredients in foods, especially common in many processed foods. Canned foods are sometimes handy on trips, but they are not much appreciated by health-conscious guests.

There are numerous allergies, some of which can be life threatening, and they are increasing in many countries. It is quite common that people cannot digest dairy products or foods with gluten such as in flour, noodles, bread, and other bakery goods.

There are also religious practices and cultural norms of travellers to consider. In general, Muslim and Jewish travellers do not consume pork, and Hindu guests from India may not want to eat beef. For North Americans and most European travellers it is unusual to eat horse meat. Of course, it differs to what extent individuals follow religious and cultural norms, so do not stereotype anybody. It is best to ask your guests about their preferences if you are unsure.

Just imagine what it would feel like if you were travelling in another country and could not eat what you are used to. If we are away from home and every day have meals served to us that we never experienced before, it may not be pleasant for us. Of course, we also might want to try famous local dishes, but if we are constantly served food that we do not like it could ruin the entire trip.



Cooking and Serving Food to Your Guests

You are probably asking now “then what can we offer to guests”? Actually, it is not so difficult. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, in general guests are very interested in your cooking and food, in national and local specialties and recipes. But please keep in mind:

Don'ts

- Don't push your guests to eat or drink anything!
- Don't be offended if they turn down certain foods and drinks, or cannot finish them after tasting!

Do's

- Respect your guests' cultural, religious, and individual eating and drinking rules and preferences.
- Ask in advance, if possible, about restrictions and allergies.

If your guests had a taste of airag, milk tea, or other dairy products and cannot finish their cup, don't be offended. It is very strange for many people to have tea with salt. Do not push your guests, men and women, to drink vodka, or any alcohol.

Cooking Local Food – Together!

Don't be discouraged by the above points. In general, local food and how it is made is very interesting for tourists. And you have many options to serve your guests and give them a good culinary experience.

They usually love to see how local households prepare and serve food. Also, traditional ways of preserving and preparing food for travel, without relying on a freezer, are very interesting – for example, the preparation of dried meat (*borts*) and “*shuuz*” to ensure safe meat supplies for travel.

Cooking Lessons and Providing Food Experiences

There are quite a few foods, drinks and dishes the preparation of which you can invite guests to watch and to take part in. The traditional Mongolian milk products and ways of preparing meats offer lots of opportunity for interesting demonstrations, “cooking lessons” and enjoying food together.

- Making all the different dairy products offers many options for guests to watch and try themselves – starting with milking, then making yoghurt, and more.
- It will be very interesting for travellers to witness how airag is made, from milking the mares to keeping it in the special leather bag, to “stirring” it thousands of times.



- Watching *khorkhog* being prepared and served is a real experience for travellers. Plan some time so they can observe the process. Making *boortsog*, preparing *shuuz*, preparing *buuz*, *khuushuur*, *bansh*, *tsuivan*, various soups, etc. is also interesting.
- Seeing how traditional vodka is distilled on the ger stove is quite an experience. Tasting it is also nice, but again not for everybody. Be careful to warn guests that it still has a considerable alcohol content even if it tastes milder than industrial grain vodka.

If you have a real local dish typical for your area, that can be especially interesting to present to guests. Explain to guests what you could cook together and ask how much they want to participate and try themselves. You know best about your options.

Sourcing and Storing Your Foods

It is preferable to use ingredients that are produced locally - meat and dairy, as well as vegetables from your community garden or greenhouse. These are also nice to show tourists. Some of the most highly rated restaurants in the world today cook only what they produce on their own local farm. This is a new trend not only in travel but in gastronomy.

Of course, you will probably need some items from shops, but think carefully and keep them at a minimum. Ensure that you have a way to keep groceries fresh and safe. If you are a vegetable grower, you already may have a cellar. Try to minimize packaging already when shopping.

Developing Your Menu

Local, authentic, and simple is good. Sometimes ger camps or households try to make "fancy" foreign dishes, and they do not come out right. That is an unnecessary risk. It is nice if you or your cook know some "foreign" recipes, but don't develop your menu based on these. When you develop a food menu always consider which foods fit well with each other. As mentioned in Chapter 9, it is a good idea for you or your cook to undergo training to learn about menus, recipes, food safety, hygiene standards and more.



Examples of a daily menu

Breakfast

Local foods you can serve for breakfast

- *Boortsog*, cream, milk, Mongolian cheese, *aaaruul* (fresh, not hard), yoghurt, jam (local), berries,
- Soup (Asian guests will probably like Mongolian soup for breakfast, guests from Western countries probably less)

What you can add - if you can get these items fresh and store them safely.

- Bread
- Muesli, or plain oats
- Fruits (apple, orange), nuts
- Sausage, and cheese (fresh)
- Eggs (fried, scrambled or boiled) – make sure they are fresh!



Consider Tea and Coffee!

Many travellers will not be too keen on milk tea in the morning – but really appreciate if coffee and teas are available! It is easy enough to have several kinds of teas (tea bags) like black, green and herbal tea.

For coffee, instant is easiest. If you can make fresh coffee (in a plunger or coffee machine) it is a real bonus for some guests! It is not a must. But if you invest in a coffee maker, make sure you do prepare the coffee properly.

Scan to watch "How to Use a Moka Pot"





Lunch

Soups, *tsuivan*, *khuushuur* filled with some cooked vegetables or salad are good. "Soup and salad" is a very common lunch in some countries. If you make a *khorkhog*, lunchtime is probably better than dinner. It is too heavy for dinner.

You can make packed lunches with *khuushuur*, or *tsuivan*, both kept warm in a thermos container. You can make sandwiches, or easier take bread and sausage, fruit and vegetables (cucumber). For sausage, foreigners probably prefer salami-type sausage, and it's safer to keep. When packing lunches, avoid plastic containers and utensils and cut down on packaging.

Dinner

Unless the guests come back from a hike or long ride and are very hungry, a light dinner is probably best. Soups are always good, especially after exercise, to rehydrate and regain salts. *Khuushuur*, *buuz*, vegetables are fine too. Of course, you should not serve the same dish you have served at lunchtime. Other simple dishes are goulash, beefsteak etc., but with enough vegetables and salads, to balance the meal.

Some Tips for Preparing Meat Dishes

- For guests it is best to remove the fattiest parts of the meat from the lean meat. Most guests probably like lean meat better.
- Let guests know what meat it is you are serving. It is best to ask beforehand whether they mind eating the kind of meat you are planning to cook. Horse meat, in particular, might not be acceptable. Too much mutton is probably also not popular. Many travellers might not like the smell of mutton.
- After a heavy meat dinner, guests might take a shot of vodka. But again, do not force it.
- Intestines, all the animal parts you enjoy after an animal was slaughtered, blood cooked in animal guts etc., or animal heads, tongue are likely to be not appreciated, or may even upset guests. Some may like it and find it interesting to taste. Be careful when suggesting and offering such local delicacies.
- Do not offer marmot! It is illegal, unsafe and will not be appreciated by most guests. The same goes for meat of other wild animals. Unless your guests are hunters who have come during hunting season to hunt with a proper license do not serve such meats.
- When you prepare any meat for cooking, clean it well and remove the skin and hair. Be careful that the meat is fresh and safe. Refer to cooking training and food safety information in Chapter 17.



Some Tips for Preparing Vegetables - Cooked and as Salad

- Do not overcook vegetables, and don't make salads too "soggy" (wet), but rather fresh and crunchy. Make sure vegetables for salad are washed properly and safe. Avoid mayonnaise; it's not safe unless really fresh, and it's not liked that much either. A salad with just olive oil is best. Homemade "salads" – pickles go well with most Mongolian meat dishes.
- Refer to cooking training for more information and to Chapter 17 on Food Safety.

Special Needs

If you haven't asked beforehand, or if guests arrive unexpected, ask them if they have any dietary restrictions due to allergies or other medical conditions, or have chosen diets, or religious and cultural related food requirements.

- **Vegetarians** do not eat meat (they may eat fish).
- **Vegans** do not eat any animal products – so no meats, no milk products, no eggs, and no dishes with any such ingredients. They eat vegetables, fruits, rice, noodles, potato, breads, etc.
- If somebody is **lactose intolerant**, they cannot eat milk products.
- If somebody needs **gluten free** food, they cannot have wheat, rye, or barley. This means they cannot eat normal breads, cookies, crackers, and other bakery goods as most of these contain wheat. Gluten is also in soy sauce, ketchup and other such sauces; noodles/pasta made from wheat; beer, chocolate milk, coffee mixes "3 in 1"; and many processed and canned foods such as breakfast cereals, canned soups, etc. They can eat fruits and vegetables, legumes (lentils, beans etc.), buckwheat, millet, oats, quinoa; eggs, meat, fish, yoghurt, and fresh cheese; nuts and seeds.
- **Allergies** are too many to list here. The most common are peanuts and other nuts, cow milk, eggs, wheat, soy, fish, and certain fruits and vegetables.
- Allergies can cause mild reactions, but also life-threatening conditions. Take it seriously if a guest has an allergy. In extreme cases allergies can be triggered if the allergic person only uses a utensil or plate that was in touch with the food they are allergic to, or even just smell it.
- Guests with a serious allergy (to certain foods, and also bee stings) likely will carry their own medication including antihistamines and an "EpiPen" to administer adrenaline/epinephrine to themselves in an emergency. They should still see a doctor after that.



Safe Drinking Water

- You should not forget about drinking water. Most travellers probably drink more water than you are used to. Sufficient water intake is stressed as part of a healthy lifestyle and people are very aware of that. Many travellers probably have their own water bottle. Set up a supply of safe drinking water at your ger camp or provide it in the guest accommodation.
- Be very aware of drinking water safety. You may drink from the creek (and even you can get sick from it), but foreigners are much more likely to get sick. To be on the safe side, always treat (boil or filter) drinking water for guests, even if it is from a clean creek or spring.
- Boiling water might be the most practical way to make it safe. A few minutes boiling is sufficient. You can boil water in the evening and let it cool overnight. You can make it available in a clean metal pot, with a cup/spoon, or in a container with a tap. If it is a plastic container, try to use a plastic that is safe (BPA free); such containers are available in Ulaanbaatar at household and camping shops.
- There are different kinds of water filters. Some are for table top use, with a pump. Others are for travel use. Good filters are not cheap though. See Chapter 15 for more information.
- Be aware of the environmental aspects. If you have to provide water in plastic bottles, buy large bottles (at least 2-liter bottles) or better the 5-liter ones. You can serve water in cups (paper or better provide guests with reusable cups for the tour), give a larger bottle to guests, or enable them to refill their own water bottles.
- If you are near a center and have electricity, you could make 20-liter water bottles available, for example at a hot/cold water station.
- Guests will like not only the fact that you make safe drinking water available, but also that you reduce plastic waste. Keep in mind that most travellers are environmentally very aware. There is even a movement "Travellers Against Plastic".

Your Ger Kitchen – Set-up and Good Practices

The tips below are both for your ger kitchen at your camp or homestay, and for your field kitchen during travel.



Food Safety, Cooking and Kitchen Hygiene



- Personal Hygiene and safety
 - As a cook, use an apron
 - Tie your hair in a ponytail or cover it.
 - Wear clean clothes, and wear shoes not slippers.
 - If you feel unwell, do not cook for guests and team members.
 - Have a health check before the tourism season starts.
 - Wash your hands before preparing food, and definitely wash your hands after using the toilet!
 - Have a hand washing station with water and soap near your workplace, plus hand sanitizer.
 - During the Covid-19 pandemic - use a mask and disposable gloves, and have a PCR or rapid test before a trip (72 hours or less)
- Have thick gloves to safely handle hot pots and pans
 - Be safe when making Khorhog! Consider the high pressure of the Khorhog container and handle with care, for yours and everybody's safety!
 - Have knives, cutting boards and bowls/plates that are used for meat only.

Cleaning and storing utensils and dishes

- Always keep utensils clean, and pack and store them properly so that they are not exposed to dust and dirt.
- Try not to use chemical dishwashing liquid, but use local natural substances like salt, soda, *khujir* etc.
- There are also organic, dishwashing soap bars; they have the advantage that you do not use another plastic bottle. You should rinse dishes with very hot/ boiled water.

Kitchen towels

- Do not mix up towels for hand drying and for dishwashing and drying.
- Sanitize towels after each use by boiling.



Storage of Foods

- Keep your foods and ingredients separate and in cotton (or paper) bags. You can easily make such cotton bags.
- Keep drinking water in clean containers that are only used for water and marked clearly as such.

Safety in Your Ger Kitchen

- If you use a traditional stove in the ger kitchen, be cautious about dust, and always check your safety.
- If you use a gas stove, buy containers and gas from reliable suppliers. Follow the instructions. Check for leaks (by smelling and listening). Turn off the gas when the stove is not in use. Safely store and transport gas containers. Make sure you always have full spare containers.
- If you use a small size gas stove, set it up in a safe and stable place; dispose of empty gas containers responsibly and safely.
- Have thick gloves to handle hot pots. You can easily sew them yourself.
- If you use electricity, make sure the wiring has been done properly so there is no fire hazard and to prevent electrocution. Have a professional install and check the wiring.

Safety in Your Field Kitchen

When you cook for guests and guides on a hiking or riding tour, the same rules and guidelines as above apply for safety, food storage and waste management. There are additional points to consider such as taking food that does not spoil, and how to store food safely for travel and in the camp, and how to create a safe and comfortable place for cooking and eating. Some tips are:

- A kitchen tent should have enough space for the cook(s) to work, store foods, and allow enough distance for the stove from the tent wall to ensure fire safety.
- You should choose a tent design that is stable in the wind and secure it properly when pitching it.
- Buy gas containers and gas from reliable suppliers/refillers and check that they are safe.
- If you use a small stove with gas cartridges, make sure to bring out all empty cartridges (they have become a common rubbish item spoiling the countryside and wilderness areas).
- Place gas stoves on a table or some kind of solid base, off the ground.
- Store water only in designated water containers.
- Do not purchase food that cannot last safely for the duration of the trip.
- Store food in cotton bags.



- You can use cold bags to store some food (for a day or two).
- Don't expose food to direct sunlight.
- Best use meat that is preserved for travel such as *borts* or *shuuz*.
- Store meat properly to keep it safe.
- Prepare a tent or shelter for serving meals to guests, and where guests can relax before and after mealtimes.
- If you use plastic utensils, choose thick, strong ones that are safe for cooking.
- Keep a clean kitchen and camp site, and do not attract wildlife to food or leftovers through careless disposal.
- Take out all rubbish, except organic waste/vegetable skins etc.

See Chapter 15 for more eco-friendly travel and camping practices, and Chapter 17 for more detail on food safety.

Waste Management

Chapter 15 provides more information on waste management. Here are just a few basic rules to follow:

- Separate your waste into plastic, cans, glass, metal, paper, organic, and non-recyclable categories.
- Bring back all waste from a field trip.
- Burn only paper, and if doing so, do it safely! Do not burn plastic waste.
- Bury or leave only organic waste/vegetable skins.
- At your ger camp, vegetable skins can be used as compost in your greenhouse or for livestock
- Do not feed birds and wildlife with leftover food, at your ger camp and on field camps.

Making a Kitchen available for Guests

There is also the option that you do not cook for guests but make a kitchen facility and water available for them to cook their own meals. This may be the case if a tour operator is bringing guests and they come only for the overnight accommodation and a certain activity, like camel riding or seeing the daily life of herders. They may also bring their own cook. Or, it could be independent travellers, especially Mongolian tourists, who are bringing their own supplies and need a kitchen in which to cook their own food. Make sure the kitchen is well set up, clean, and safe as described above.

Ask well in advance whether tour operators or travellers want a kitchen in which to cook their own food.



CHAPTER 14. SANITATION AND TOILETS

Providing Safe and Sanitary Toilets for your Guests is a High Priority!

As mentioned earlier, and as surveys with visitors to Mongolia show, a rural toilet experience may be the only bad experience visitors will leave Mongolia with. Most likely, they will take with them fond memories of great adventures, of the hospitality of their hosts, of amazing landscapes and learning about the culture and history of Mongolia. That said, toilets in the countryside will most likely have made a bad impression, and indeed can pose a health risk for your community and a threat to the environment.





The Health Hazards of Common Pit Toilets

Improving toilets and sanitation is not only a priority for your guests. The commonly used open-pit latrines in the countryside increase the spread of infectious diseases like typhoid fever, dysentery, and hepatitis A. They are particularly unsafe for children, and diarrhea is the cause of 6% of mortality of children under five in Mongolia.³⁵

The hazards from open pit latrines include direct soil contamination as well as threats to water sources in case of flooding and airborne health risks as germs also evaporate into the air. In 2017, poor sanitation and hygiene conditions have been estimated to cost the Mongolian economy 35.5 billion MNT (US\$ 26 million), or 0.5% of GDP.³⁶

More information on pollution caused by open-pit toilets and how to reduce it is available, for example, in a handbook on reducing soil pollution. The handbook was published by a UNDP supported project³⁷ in Orkhon Aimag to deliver clean and safe sanitation system for residents, in line with the MNS 5924:2015 standardization for eco-toilets in Mongolia.

Scan to download Improved Pit Toilet
Standard MNS 5924:2015



Regulations for Toilets inside Protected Areas, and Approved Standards

To avoid soil pollution, a decree³⁸ to ban the use of non-standard toilets in Protected Areas was issued in 2018 and became effective 1st June the same year. Several toilet designs are permitted as "standard". They include a) holding tank toilet, that can be regularly emptied by a vacuum truck (only feasible in areas where sewer vacuum trucks can operate, b) eco-friendly dry toilet, c) portable or mobile toilet or d) improved and ventilated pit toilet.

According to the decree, citizens and entities operating in Protected Areas must use sanitary facilities that meet standard requirements starting June 1, 2018. In case of failure to comply with the requirements, licenses will be revoked.

³⁵<https://www.unicef.org/mongolia/stories/improving-childrens-well-being-through-innovative-solutions-sanitation>

³⁶<https://www.unicef.org/mongolia/press-releases/sanitation-cold-climate-meeting-held-mongolia>

³⁷<https://www.mn.undp.org/content/mongolia/en/home/blog/2021/OrkhonSoilProject.html>



A standard for “pit latrines and sewage pits” MNS 5924:2015 was approved by resolution #59 of 24th December 2015 by the National Council of Standardization and Metrology and became effective 1st February 2016. The purpose of this standard is to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, protect the environment from pollution and to create a safe living environment. It applies to the assembling, operating, maintaining, and designing of sewage pits and pit latrines for households and organizations who are not connected to the central or piped sewer systems.

The technical requirements document³⁹ (scan QR Code above), available in English and Mongolian, for standard MNS 5924:2015 (for pit latrines and sewage pits) provides guidance on all requirements in general and with regard to hygiene, the environment, fire safety, assembling, emptying/disinfecting/reusing the pit, and dismantling it safely.

Make the Right Choice for Your Toilet Design

When deciding on what toilet design to choose, be very realistic. Obviously, you need to adhere to the legal requirements. But importantly, also ask yourself - will the design work for my circumstances and environment?

Eco Toilets

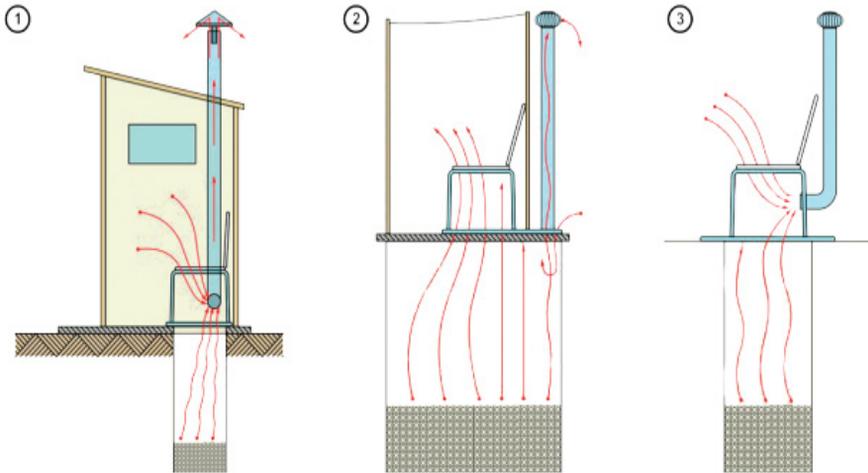
Eco-toilets (toilets where compost or other organic materials are added to the faecal matter to break it down) need regular maintenance - after each use, or at least daily. One person needs to be in charge of maintaining it. Users need to have clear instructions on how to use them properly. If not used and maintained properly, eco toilets become just as bad in terms of hygiene, aesthetics, and environmental hazard as pit latrines. It is great if you can install and maintain an eco-toilet properly but make an honest assessment whether it is feasible before investing in it. At much visited sites, eco-toilets can work if, for example, a ranger is responsible for maintenance. Alternatively, a fee can be collected from users which can be used to pay a maintenance person.

Improved Pit Toilets

An “improved pit toilet” may in most cases be the better, more realistic solution. The basic features of the “improved pit toilet” are the pit lined with material that prevents soil pollution and simple measures to prevent odours and to keep flies from accessing the pit.

³⁸On 27 March 2018, Minister N. Tserenbat of MET issued a decree (No. A/73) prohibiting the further use of hygiene facilities and pit toilets that are not in accordance with the government standards MNS5924:2015 (technical requirements for pit toilets and sewage pits) and MNS6426:2013 (prevalent requirements for eco-tourism related to housing and accommodation in protected areas). (Information from Consultant Report to the Biodiversity and Adaptation to Climate Change Project (BACCP) (MET/KfW): “Toilet Design for Ranger Posts of BACCP Sub-Projects”, used with permission of the project).

³⁹Pit latrine and sewage pit. Technical requirements, MNS 5924:2015, Official Publishing, Mongolian National Agency for Standardization and Metrology Ulaanbaatar 2015



Pic 1:

The toilet pit wall should be 1 meter wide on each side and 3 meters deep. If the groundwater level is deep enough, the pit could be even more than 3 meters deep as long as it doesn't reach the groundwater.⁴⁰ Also, if the ground is firm enough, such as rocky, a wooden lining inside the walls is not needed. The toilet pit should be rather narrow to reduce odour. The lower end of the vent should be closely near the toilet (seat) and not extend down into the pit.

Pic 2:

This image shows a toilet built with the wrong design. The pit is too wide and it could easily spread the bad odors. The air vent is outside the toilet room which could cause ineffective ventilation.

Pic 3:

If the air chimney is connected right to the toilet (seat), ventilation may work better. In this case, the air chimney directly sucks air from inside the toilet hall, which makes it much less smelly.

If you have two toilet compartments, you could do one with a toilet seat, and the other one for squatting, with just a hole and without a seat. The toilet seat height should be well-adjusted, not too high. A squat toilet, without seat, may often be more suitable with regard to hygiene in rural areas. However, many foreigners are not used to squat for using a toilet without a seat. Therefore, it is a good idea to fix handles to the front wall of the toilet for users to hold on to while using the toilet. If you install handles, make sure they are fixed securely and strong enough.

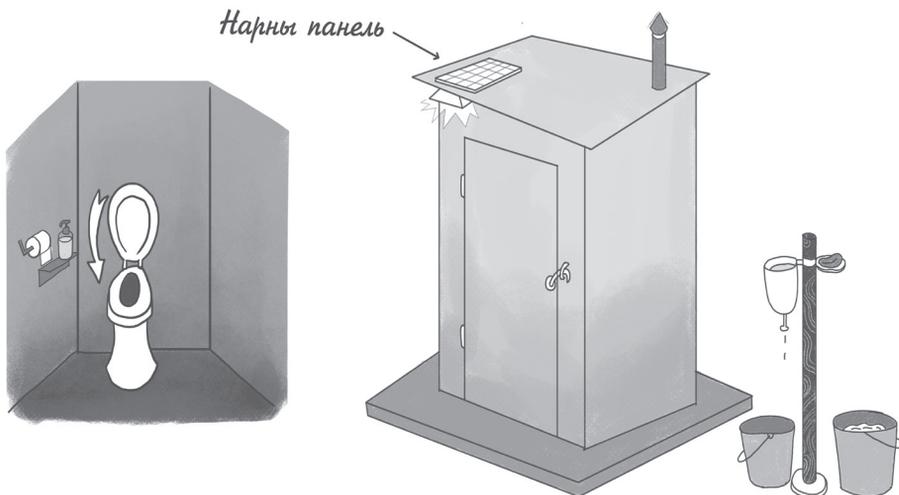
⁴⁰Choosing the location of the toilet therefore is important, well away from and above water sources



If you decide to install a toilet seat, choose one that is easy to keep clean and hygienic, plastic being the best choice in this case. It is better not to cover the seat with soft/textile material, for reasons of hygiene. Also make sure that it is at a convenient height and position to sit on.

Install a toilet paper roll holder, and ensure that there is always toilet paper available. For hygiene, make available a simple hand wash facility, with water and soap. This can be on the outside wall or on a post nearby. Hand sanitizer is a good idea too. Ensure that the toilet has a simple lock for users to have privacy and the door is not opening in the wind.

Also ensure that people feel safe to visit the toilet at night. Solar powered, motion triggered lights to light the way to the toilet are a good idea, and it will be helpful to have an inside light option too.



Choose the Correct Toilet Location

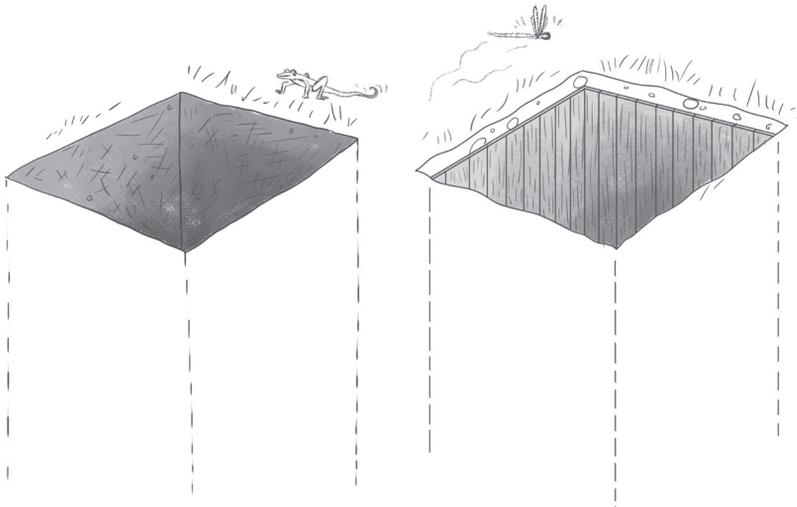
When choosing the location for the toilet, ensure that it is far enough from water sources and the pit does not reach the water table and so contaminate it.



Practical Designs for Improved Pit Toilets

Below, you will find designs and construction details for improved pit toilets that have been developed and tested in Umnugobi Aimag and found to be practical and hygienic. In the Gobi region, the pit does not need lining with wood. If you are in the Khangai region, make sure the pit is lined/re-enforced with wood.

Important! Make it a “dry” toilet - Do not combine the wastewater pit with the toilet pit!



Providing Shower/Bath for Guests

Often your guests will stay only one night, and therefore it is not absolutely necessary for you to provide shower facilities. It is easier, and will be appreciated, if you provide a bucket with warm water, with a ladle, soap and shampoo and a clean towel. Make sure there is a place of privacy for the guest to take a “bucket bath”. This can be a separate tent or ger, or a closed area outside made by walls of cloth/tarp, or other materials. A floor cover/ grid that lets water run through is helpful, or alternatively plastic slippers for guests. Also, wet/hot towels, neatly and cleanly provided, are a welcome surprise for a guest to freshen up after a day of travel.

If you want to provide a shower, you can set up a “solar bag shower” or use some other kind of sturdy bag that can be filled with warm water. Another option is a camp shower that can be pressurized to create the shower effect. Make sure there is a privacy shelter for guests wanting to shower.



Toilet and Sanitation Procedures on Hiking, Climbing and Riding Tours

Safe and environmentally friendly toilet and hygiene procedures for backcountry travel when no facilities are available, such as on a multi-day hiking or horse-riding trip when travellers and guides camp overnight, are just as important as sanitation at your homestay or ger camp.

It is your responsibility when taking guests on a trip to provide them with instructions and equipment to practice an eco-friendly backcountry toilet procedure. It has become a terrible sight and hazard in the vicinity of camp and picnic sites to come across the remains of open defecation, human waste, and toilet paper, as well as wet wipes and menstrual pads or tampons. Not only is it extremely unsightly, it is also a health and environmental hazard, and even a hazard for wildlife if they ingest it.

The recommended procedure is to bury human waste and toilet paper. And in most situations (unless for a very large group of campers) it is better to do this individually. Bring a dedicated shovel for the purpose of digging the hole, and "train" your guests in the procedure for handling waste as set out below:

- Find a spot far enough from camp and from any water source (minimum 100 meters) where it is possible to dig.
- Dig a hole (approx. 20 x 20 cm wide) and about 15 – 20 cm deep. This is the depth where enzymes and bacteria are most active in the soil, and faecal matter will be broken down the fastest. If it is shallower, there is a risk of animals uncovering it, if its deeper it takes longer to break down.
- Do your business, and SAFELY burn the used toilet paper before burying.
- Cover the hole again. Ideally, if you made the hole with a spade, you set aside the top cover of grass or other vegetation and you can put it back on again like a "lid".

As a guide/tour leader, it is good to have available, or better still, to give to each guest, a toilet kit consisting of toilet paper, a lighter and hand sanitizer. You can either have a larger shovel/spade for everybody to use or distribute small shovels (like for gardening, or purpose-built ones) to each guest. Also, please advise female guests not to leave out wet wipes, toilet paper or feminine products. If needed, provide them with a garbage bag to take out used items.

If the individual toilet procedure is not suitable, build a temporary group pit toilet at a suitable location, far enough from camp and any water sources. Provide a shovel to throw soil over waste after each use of the pit, and make a shelter for privacy, at least to two sides. Before leaving the camp site, ensure the pit is covered and the surrounding area restored.



For mountain climbing or glacier hiking trips, procedures must be stricter. No human waste should remain on snow or ice. In such cases, carry out any solid human waste. This will be more pleasant in cold temperatures, when the material is frozen, but should be done in any case. Bring suitable plastic bags for this purpose.

Scan to watch How to Use a Bio Toilet Bag



Hygiene in Camp – Bathing/Washing, Dish Washing, Laundry

Share with guests how in Mongolian culture water sources are revered and protected, and what to do and not to do. This information can also be part of the check-in information sheet you provide for guests at your ger camp or homestay (see **Annex 9**).

It is good practice to have a facility for hand washing in camp, for staff and guests. It can be a simple bucket/container or a container with a tap that is filled and hung on a tree, or elsewhere. Provide water, soap, and a brush. Nowadays, hand sanitizer should also be available – at the wash facility and during mealtimes.

If guests want to wash or bath, ask them to NOT use soap or shampoo in natural water sources, unless it is a special, biodegradable detergent. Even in that case, it is better to not wash/shower directly in the river or lake. Instead, make available a bucket or two for a “bucket bath”, away from the water source. Or, set up a camp shower as described above.

Scan to download Eco Toilet
Examples and Experiences

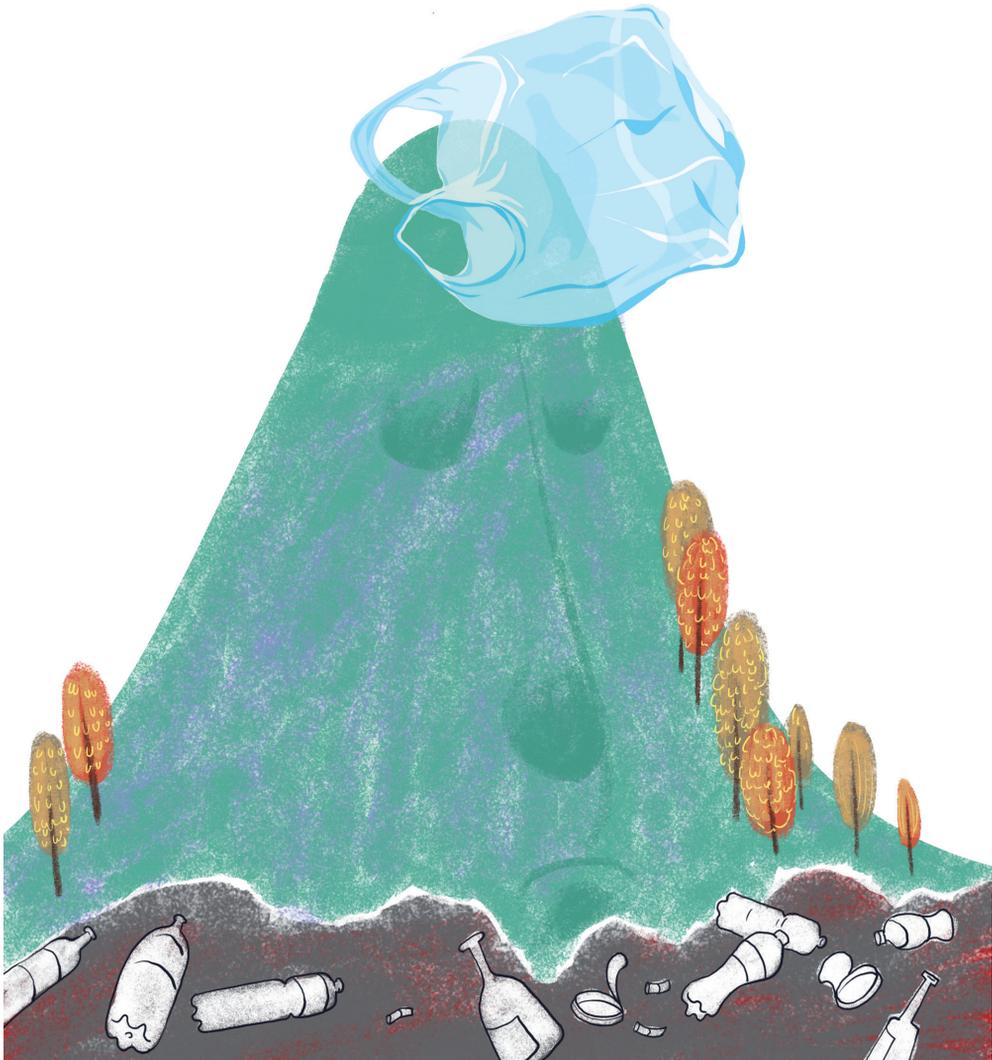




CHAPTER 15. WASTE MANAGEMENT AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Waste has become an enormous problem worldwide, with huge islands of plastic floating on the oceans, plastic items becoming a threat to marine and terrestrial animals when they ingest plastic or get caught in it, suffering and dying from it. Small micro particles of plastic today are found in many foodstuffs, in water, and even in humans and animals.

While two decades ago this would have seemed not a problem for Mongolia, now it pervades even the countryside almost everywhere in Mongolia, including Protected Areas. Everybody has seen unsightly rubbish heaps, witnessed livestock "grazing" on garbage and many have seen rubbish inside the organs of animals that were slaughtered, or died from the ingested rubbish.





Waste and its improper disposal leads to pollution of water sources, soil and air, apart from the unsightly appearance of rubbish in the landscape. Tourists returning to Mongolia year after year to enjoy the pristine nature have definitely noticed the difference and are appalled to see places like the Gorkhi Terelj National Park and the Khan Khentii Strictly Protected Area littered with rubbish, along trails, at campsites and around much visited, iconic sites.

This degrades the very values that attract visitors, apart from the hazards to the environment and wildlife. It is incomprehensible why people take full containers and bottles of food and beverages into the backcountry and wilderness but leave empty packages there!

Reduce, re-use, recycle!

You might be familiar with the slogan: reduce, re-use, recycle! These are the most important and basic principles to follow. They are also the key principles of the Mongolian government's policy on waste management.

Reduce - be mindful during shopping to reduce waste

Reducing of course begins with shopping for supplies. Plastic bags with certain specifications have already been banned in Mongolia since 2019⁴¹. Many shops offer alternatives such as reusable bags, or cardboard boxes. If you frequently shop to provide for guests, it is practical to have bags or boxes of a durable material to use for shopping. You can even cut down on small plastic bags commonly used for fruit, vegetables, and other items by having your own cotton or mesh bags.

Such cotton bags of different size are also useful for storing and transporting food during tours. You can make them from the white cotton used for ger covering. You can even sell them to guests, perhaps with your logo or some other nice design on it. And guests surely will notice and appreciate all these small efforts you, as a host, make to operate in an environmentally friendly way.

So, the first step is to try reducing packaging when buying provisions. It is not possible to avoid packaging altogether when shopping, but when you pack for a hike or horse ride, you can cut down even more on packaging materials, putting provisions in re-usable containers and sacs. Take as little packaging as possible on the trip.

⁴¹Government resolution No 189 bans import, sale, production and use of disposable plastic bags came into effect from March 1, 2019. The ban prohibits single-use plastic bags thinner than 0.035 mm nationwide.



Avoid/Reduce Plastic Bottle Use

It has become a bad habit to give people small plastic bottles of water, whether during meetings in the city, or to guests travelling in the countryside.

It is best to avoid plastic bottles entirely. As explained in chapter 13 under the section on Safe Drinking Water, many travellers have their own water bottle and it is best to refill those with SAFE drinking water. The water supplied should be boiled or filtered, and from a larger water container or at least from larger plastic bottles (1,5 or 5 litres). Alternatively, you can give people bigger bottles, ideally at least 1,5 litres. The larger bottles can also be reused more easily by herders for milk products.

Also bear in mind that water from plastic bottles, especially when it is stored for a long time and exposed to the sun, is contaminated with small plastic particles. It is not healthy, though it might still be a safe option in terms of avoiding sickness like food poisoning, or germs from open water sources.

If you have no other safe method, you can provide bottled water to guests. But for the long term, plan to have an alternative more environmentally friendly way of providing safe drinking water. By having a special container/canister for cooled down/boiled water, or a well-functioning and efficient filter set-up, or a water station such as those in offices, guests can refill their bottles in this way.

Avoid Single-Use Plastic Containers

Avoid using plastic utensils and containers that are only for single use. As utensils, you can have stronger plastic (if you don't want to use metal) so that it can be cleaned and re-used. If you pack lunches, avoid the thin, single use plastic containers. You can buy containers for the same purpose, made of paper/ waxed paper/cardboard.



Recycling

For recycling, probably your Aimag and/or Soum have certain rules and programs, provide advice on doing it effectively and perhaps even provide support in organizing it.

Umnugobi Aimag also has a guideline for waste management in tourism that requests that all garbage will be transported from the country side to Soum centers, where it will be managed according to government procedures.



Arrange your waste collection, in your ger camp or at your homestay so that it is in line with the local recycling program. It is usually the case that plastics, glass, cans/ metal, and cardboard are separated for recycling. It is important to educate your guests about it, and also not to mix organic waste, like food leftovers, with any other garbage. Many international guests will already be used to recycling their household waste so this should not be a new experience for them.

Scan to view the Mongolian Waste Management Law

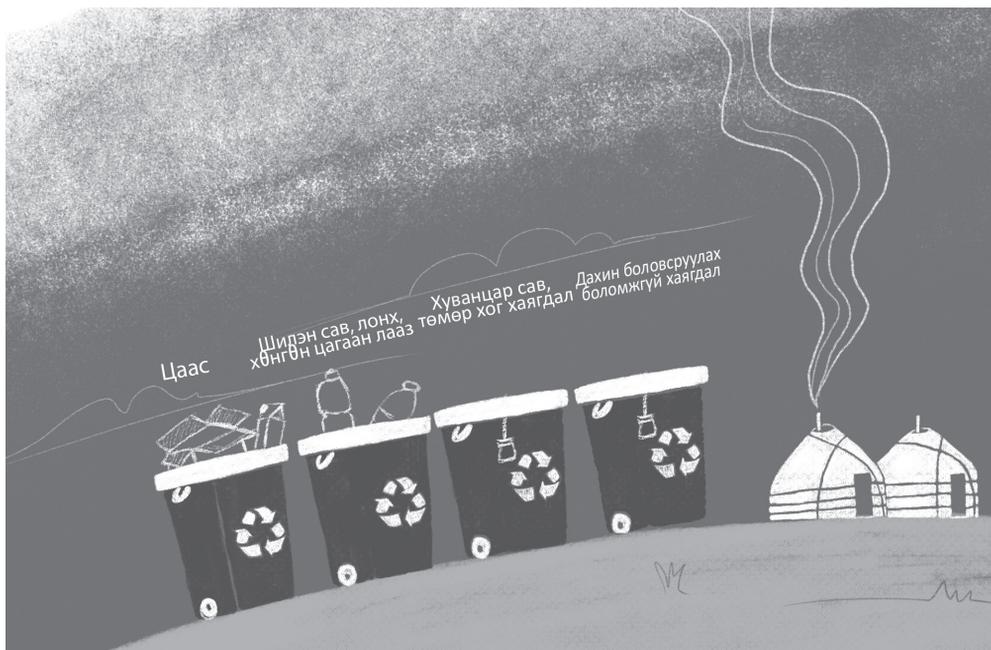


Separating Waste

Arrange waste collection in a way that makes it easy to separate waste, as it is practiced and required in public places. You can buy waste bins that are coloured and marked for the different types of waste:

- Paper
- Glass bottles and jars, and aluminium cans
- Plastics (and metals)
- Non-recyclable materials (mixed material packages, plastic coated packages, foil coated packages, non-recyclable plastics/without the "recyclable" symbol, etc.)

Or, you can make your own containers to separate waste into these categories. Make sure that containers are heavy enough not to be blown over, that they have an adequate lid so materials do not get blown away, and that livestock cannot get to the content, or open or knock over the containers.





Organic Garbage, Food Waste, Grey/Waste Water

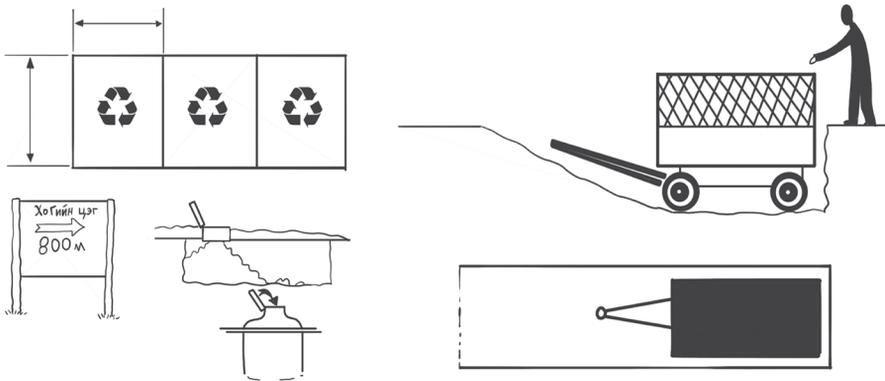
Make the best use of organic waste. You know what vegetable skins you can feed to livestock, but also make sure there are no heaps lying around, rotting or blowing around until livestock eats it. The best use for all other organic waste is to make compost, in a separate container, for your garden or greenhouse.

If there is other food waste and liquid waste that is disposed of in the ground, make sure the hole for this is well away from guest gers, and that it is covered safely. Chapter 14 mentions that toilets at your ger camp should be “dry” toilets, not combining human waste and wastewater in one pit.

Waste Collection Site

Dedicate an area, as much as possible out of sight and downwind from guest gers, but easily accessible.

You can also set up waste collection containers - or one container if you transport waste to the Soum center and separate it there – on a trailer that is lowered into the ground as in the illustration below. Once it is full, it can be easily hooked up to a vehicle and brought to the Soum or Aimag waste collection center. Make sure it is safe to access, that garbage does not blow away, that animals do not get to it, and that transportation is safe too.



Burning Rubbish at Your Ger Camp/Homestay

Burn only paper, cardboard, or wood waste, in a stove inside. Or, when it is safe to do so (no wind), in a metal barrel or other specially designed metal container outside. Prevent sparks and burning materials to be carried by the wind to avoid starting wildfires. Attend to the fire, and make sure it is safely extinguished when finished. Have a safe cover/lid for the barrel.

Do not burn plastics! It is harmful for you and the environment.



Tour Operators and Travellers – Do Not Leave Rubbish

Discuss and agree with your tour operator, or independently travelling guests (including Mongolian travellers) that they do not bring and leave rubbish at your ger camp or homestay. They should take measures to reduce, re-use and recycle themselves – collecting their rubbish in bags and bringing it back to the Soum or Aimag center or the city and dispose of it properly so it can be processed/recycled in the waste management facilities there.

Waste Management on Hiking and Riding Tours

Firstly, as emphasized above, reduce – take as little packaging materials and containers of plastic, glass, or cans, as possible, on your trip. If you provide authentic, simple cooking, these items will be few anyway. For any rubbish that will accumulate, take suitable bags with you for collection and disposal.

Take All Rubbish Out!

Burying rubbish has been practiced a lot in the past in Mongolia's countryside including Protected Areas, but it is not an environmentally safe practice. Bringing out empty packaging and some additional rubbish that has accumulated on a trip, will always be less weight and volume than it was bringing in the packaged goods. Depending on the circumstances, you can collect rubbish in separate bags/containers during a trip, or separate the recyclable materials daily, or on your return. Ensure that rubbish and bags/containers are secured to not blow away in the wind, and that dogs or wild animals cannot get into them.

Prevent Wildlife Accessing Food and/or Rubbish

Especially in areas that are in bear habitat, it is vital that rubbish and food scraps are not accessible to wildlife. If you are a small group, couple, or single traveller, you might consider hanging food and strong-smelling rubbish, high into a tree. Bears accustomed to finding food at camp sites have become a problem and considerable danger in other countries, e.g. the U.S. and Canada namely. Do not create such a situation in Mongolia. One day, with bear populations potentially increasing (in Gorkhi Terelj and Khan Khentii in recent years), this could also become a problem in Mongolia.

Scan to download "Solutions and Methods to Reduce Soil Pollution" Handbook by UNDP





Other Environmentally Friendly Practices

Clean Sheets for Guest Beds

ALWAYS change sheets after guests leave. A bed sheet that is not fresh and clean is completely unacceptable for a guest, even if it was cleaned but does not look and smell fresh, clean, and hygienic.

In case guests stay with you for more than one night, ask the guests whether it is okay that sheets are not changed every day. Most hotels do this nowadays as an eco-friendly practice to save using electricity and detergents. It is most likely that guests will be happy with such arrangements, and in fact even appreciate your environmental awareness and eco-friendly practice.

The sheets do not have to be white as long as they are cotton and comfortable to sleep in. It is nice to dry them under the sun and wind and not iron the sheets, unless the air is dusty, or it is too windy.

Hygiene in Field Camp – Bathing/Washing, Dish Washing, Laundry

Share with guests how in Mongolian culture water sources are revered and protected, and what to do and not to do.

It is good practice to have a facility for hand washing in camp, for staff and guests. It can be a simple bucket/container or a bag/container with a tap that is filled and hung on a tree or elsewhere. Provide water, soap, and a brush. Nowadays also hand sanitizer should be available – at the wash facility and at mealtimes.

If guests want to wash or bath, ask them to NOT use soap or shampoo in natural water sources, unless its special, biodegradable detergent. But even in that case, it is better to wash/shower not directly in the river or lake. Instead, make available a bucket or two for a “bucket bath”, away from the water source. Or, set up a camp shower – either a “solar” bag, or another type of suitable bag where warm water can be filled in, and hang it up high enough. Another option is a camp shower that can be pressurized to create the shower effect. In any case, either have a purpose made shelter/tent, or create a makeshift shelter from tarpaulin.



Eco-friendly and Safe Campfires

Firstly, it is best to avoid open fire altogether. Check the seasonal fire restrictions and safety rules that are in place for the area and time of your trip. If you have to make a fire for cooking, warmth or enjoyment, consider using some kind of "fire-pan", a metal sheet or container off the ground. This way, the fire is contained and controlled, there is no danger of grass fire, and the ground does not get burnt.



If you have made a fire on the ground, restore the site afterwards. Bring the large stones that formed the ring around the campfire back to where they came from. Remove ash, coal, and any burnt/half burnt materials. Bury ash and coal in a hole in the ground. Any plastic, glass and other remains should be removed and taken out! Sprinkle some soil from another area, forest floor material etc. on the barren spot where the fire was. This gives some substrate for vegetation to regrow faster and restore the spot.

If there is an existing campfire spot from previous users, use it and don't make a new fire spot. Some camp sites at popular places, around lakes and elsewhere, are spoilt by many fire pits. Even if you used a fire pit that was already there, restore it as described above, or leave it clean and neat so others can use it and will not create more fire pits.

Eco-friendly Power

It is likely, that you already have or will have solar power at your ger camp, for lighting and other purposes. In the long term, it is a good investment, it is safe, and it makes a good impression on guests if they see solar panels, or small wind generators, to provide power for their ger and for operating your camp.



CHAPTER 16. GUIDING

Your Role as a Local Guide

As a local guide you will have several roles. To fulfil them all well requires a number of skills, qualifications and talents. As the guide, you are the link between the visitors, the local community, the local area, and its natural and cultural heritage. Your role is to bring all of them together. You are an ambassador to promote local tradition and culture, and you are seen by guests as a representative of the community and its values, behaviour, and voice.

So, the local guide is actually much more than just a local person who shows guests around the local landscape and scenery. Guiding is also not only about showing the area or guiding a horse or camel trek. Guiding can also include a walk through the Soum center and visiting the local museum. Your community can have several guides for the different types of activities.



Tourists will be eager to learn about nomadic culture and how it is preserved by local herders until today. There is much information to share that guests find interesting – about your way of living, family life, how children are educated, important holidays, how weddings and other events are celebrated, etc.



Guests want to have a once in a lifetime experience by seeing and experiencing, talking with local people, and being part of their lives during their journey. As discussed in Chapter 12, actively taking part in activities, trying their hand in milking a cow, preparing local foods, helping to set up a ger – these will all make for great memories for your guests.

Also do not neglect things that are normal for you and perhaps do not seem interesting at all. A visit to a Soum center shop can be very interesting for tourists; they want to learn about daily life and living conditions in rural areas. The local shop keeper will also appreciate you bringing the guests.

You can see from the above that it is a really diverse set of skills and talents that are expected from a good guide. All local guides must have the key skill to give true and interesting information to visitors in an interactive way. There is much more to it than that though. But do not worry, you can acquire the skills and experience to do a good job. Keep in mind that your knowledge is already vast – about your lifestyle, herding, your local area; and that you have the amazing skills to be able to live and survive in the countryside in all seasons with your livestock. Be confident and your natural self at all times!

Below is an overview of qualifications, skills, behaviour, and attitudes that make for a good guide. You will also find some tips on how to organize your work and yourself to give your guests a good experience.

Planning and Time Management

Planning and time management skills are very important for the guide to master and apply at all times. The important points for effective planning and time management are:

- Plan and manage time very well!
- Plan together with others involved to make sure that they know about their role and the planned schedule. You can create and write down your own script, especially for multiple day trips, to cover different topics and spread them out over different days. All members can check it to help you improve it.
- Know how long travel and activities take and plan appropriately.
- Know of any possible and actual changes in routes, roads and trails and their condition.
- Plan everything in a logical sequence.
- Have packing checklists – for your personal gear, horse/camel riding/ packing equipment, camping equipment, and camp kitchen to ensure nothing critical is left behind.



Your Appearance, Attitude and Aptitude

To be a good guide, you have to have certain skills and knowledge, but also have a good feel for people. You need to have the ability to remain calm, friendly, supportive and reassuring to guests even when things are going wrong. You have to find the right balance between being alert all the time, and at the same time relaxed.



You have to manage time well, but also be flexible when something unexpected happens, be it good or bad. Be creative and take the initiative. You could come across something new and interesting and build it into the activity. Or, a planned route may not be possible to take, and you have to find a good alternative. Always anticipate and prepare for possible problems. Remain calm and mindful when dealing with a difficult situation.

A good guide has great social skills, is energetic and cheerful, and has a sense of humour. Be always friendly, kind, generous and hospitable. Be mature, polite and humble. At the same time, be active, curious in a pleasant way, and show much initiative. Be tactful, sensible and able to be discreet.

A good guide has a clear understanding of the expectations of tourists and their main reasons to visit Mongolia and is able to respond to these. He/she has to be able to motivate their guests to explore, learn and participate in activities. The guide has to speak clearly and pleasantly.

Do's and Dont's for the Guide

- Do wear traditional clothes if possible.
- Do keep your overall appearance neat and clean.
- Do be punctual.
- Do not drink alcohol when on duty as a guide, before or during the tour
- Do avoid smoking near guests.
- Do go far from guests, if possible, out of sight, to relieve yourself/use the toilet.
- Don't spit!
- Don't mistreat animals. Make sure that horses and camels are in good condition, that they get no saddle sores or other injuries, and that they are not overloaded.

Most tourists are very concerned about how animals are treated, and animal welfare is among the criteria to rate tour experiences or evaluate operators.



Knowledge and Expertise

One part of your required knowledge as a guide is related to the specific activities you undertake, such as horse riding, so you can provide a safe trip, and about the routes you travel, the campsites you stop at, places to get water, etc. Besides that, you should have good knowledge about local culture and history, local legends and folklore, wildlife and plants, landscape, and special scenic sites.

It is important to make an effort to brush up on your knowledge. Chapters 4 and 9 have mentioned ways to compile local knowledge from elders in the community and by making an inventory of all historic sites, cultural traditions, etc.

If you are working with a tour operator, they may be able and willing to provide you with some guidebooks on wildlife, plants, etc. Look for other books, applications, and online resources. Ask from Aimag tourism experts and the local Tourism Association for good sources of information about your area.

Always stay enthusiastic about your work and keep thinking on how to improve your skills and knowledge. Take pride in your job, and remember that you are representing your community in front of your foreign visitors.

See Chapter 9 for training institutions for guides. Some applications to use are:

Scan to download the Baigali App by
GIZ SPACES (from *Google Play Store*)



Scan to download the FEEL Mongolia App by
MET (from *Google Play Store*)



The Guide's Job - from Arrival to Departure of Guests

1. Welcoming Guests Upon Arrival

- Inform all community members well ahead of guests' arrival so that all your community members are gathered to introduce themselves. You can do a quick practice beforehand.
- Introduce yourself and your community nicely. This can be fun and relaxed, setting the atmosphere for the whole experience, making guests feel welcome, safe, comfortable, curious, and excited.
- This is a good time to ask guests about their experiences and expectations. Have they been to Mongolia before? What is their riding experience, etc.?
- Explain the camp and all its facilities to the guests.
- Give an overview of the schedule of planned activities, and of mealtimes.
- Give guests an opportunity to ask questions.
- Point out things they should not do or be aware of (ger door, dogs) and refer them to the Do's and Don'ts Sheet in their ger.
- Give guests some free time after the welcome to settle in, rest, and freshen up if they want.

2. Before the Tour/Activity

- Try to find out more about your tourists. Have they been in Mongolia before? Have they done this kind of trip/activity before?
- Inform tourists one day prior about planned activities (dressing suitably for different activities) or details of the tour program so that they can prepare accordingly (they may need to be informed if they need to get ready early the next morning).
- Make sure guests know how long the planned tour/activity will take and what level of physical activity it requires. Assess and ask them if they can participate in outdoor activities for the whole day.
- If necessary, plan alternative activities that are suitable and interesting and just as rewarding. Otherwise, the guests might feel left out or that they missed out on a good experience.
- Always plan enough time, so that the schedule is not rushed, that guests have enough time to talk to people and look at things, that it is not overwhelming or too tiring. Plan for breaks in between and make sure there is enough time in the evening to rest and relax.



- For each activity, make sure all involved are informed and prepared. If you will bring guests to a family to watch and try milking cows, inform the household early enough and schedule it for the appropriate time – for the herders and livestock.

Be well prepared and ready!

- Make sure your own household chores are managed properly; prepare in advance, and delegate tasks for the time you are away with guests.
- As the guide, you have to make sure you are well prepared, and that your body and mind are in good condition. Guests will depend on you, so you must be fit. It is not selfish, but good practice to take care of yourself - both of your appearance and your wellbeing.
- Before the season begins check and prepare your gear – everything you need for a trip, whether it is riding, walking/hiking, or driving. Have a checklist and know what you need to pack. Be ready and packed before the guests. It looks unprofessional if you are running around looking for your things. Remember, you need to help the guests, to make sure they don't forget anything.

Essential Items the Guide should pack:

- Your own clothing should include rain gear, warm clothes, good boots, and a hat. Your own cup and utensils. Flashlight. Phone with units and charger. Your tent and sleeping bag. Knife. Lighter or matches. Binoculars. First Aid kit. Personal toiletries (soap, toothbrush, comb). Towel. Other items according to the type of tour.
- Have all equipment required for the trip ready - loaded in vehicles or on horses/camels when guests are getting ready. Riding equipment, camping gear, camp kitchen, and food - properly packed and stored.
- Take care of guests' luggage – make sure any luggage they may leave behind at the ger camp is safely kept. Make sure all the trip luggage is packed in a way that it will not be damaged. Be aware that guests are watching and worrying.



3. During the Tour/Activity

Interacting with Guests

- Always give guests a good idea of what the plan is. Follow the plan unless circumstances require changes. Inform guests about any changes and the reasons for making them.
- Be engaging with guests, but find the right balance between looking after them and letting them experience, explore and enjoy on their own.
- Always make sure guests are safe, comfortable, and happy. But be sensitive not to watch them too closely, and especially careful not to stare at them. Leave guests enough privacy and space. Just ask, if you are unsure, whether they are okay. Leave them alone if they want to have a quiet moment, enjoy nature, or the view.
- Communicate with guests by teaching them some Mongolian and using/learning some of their language. It is good to know a few important words and phrases in English. You could also carry a little Mongolian/English phrasebook.
- Share information about your culture and traditions. If a guest breaks a rule that is important to your community, explain to them about cultural norms in a polite way. Don't be offended if they break a rule without knowing. Be calm and assertive if they are disrespectful.
- Explain to guests about things and situations that may be very strange to them – for example, they might be very surprised to see many people sleeping together in one ger.
- Respect and be interested in your guests' culture, country, and customs. Respect and treat all people equally, regardless of their country of origin, nationality, culture, religion, colour of skin, gender, age, and sexual orientation.
- You may sometimes need to help guests physically, getting on and off a horse or camel, climbing up somewhere or extending a hand to cross a creek. But be conscious that foreigners may more easily feel offended or even harassed by touching, especially by someone of the opposite gender. So just be mindful of this, while putting safety first.
- Let tourists join in activities with the host family and community. Explain to them what is happening, invite them to watch and participate.
- At the end of each day, ask and check with guests whether they are happy and satisfied. Were there any problems? Was it too much or too long? Is there anything to do differently next time? etc.
- At the beginning of each day, check that all guests are feeling well and happy. Do they have enough drinking water for the day?



Working with Your Team

- Make sure all team members know their responsibilities. Keep in mind that you are one team, and that the most important task is to jointly provide your guests with a good service.
- If there are misunderstandings or arguments among team members, stay calm. Do not argue in front of guests.

Meeting Other Tours

- Should you meet another tour group on the way, greet them and be polite. Should you camp near another group, don't have a noisy "party" at night with the other groups' guides or drivers.
- If you meet another horse trek, act with foresight as not to get pack horses mixed up and create a frightening situation for guests.

4. After the Tour/Activity

- The guide's job is not finished until:
 - all guests are "delivered" safely back to camp, to the tour operator, or the planned destination.
 - all guests' luggage is sorted and returned to guests complete and in good condition.
 - all animals are taken care of.
 - all equipment is sorted, returned, cleaned, stored, etc.
 - all waste is returned, sorted, and separated, for proper disposal.
- The guide has reported back to the team leader or camp and informed them about anything they need to know, such as incidents that have occurred during the trip or equipment that needs to be repaired, serviced, or replaced, etc.
- The guide has shared any suggestions with the team leader on what could be improved on the next tour/activity.



Select and Train Your Local Guides

- Discuss within your community who are the most suitable members to be guides – for horse and camel rides, for a vehicle tour around the local area, for visiting herder families, for a nature hike, for wildlife viewing, for a walk around the Soum, for explaining about special historic, prehistoric, cultural, and spiritual sites, for taking guests to the local museum, and more.
- If you are working with a tour operator, coordinate with them and their tour guide or translator how to divide the tasks. What exactly are the duties of the local guide? You can also discuss with the tour operator whether they can provide some advice and training, or do some practice with your local guides before the season starts.
- Select your local guides according to their skills, abilities, and talents. Having horses and camels is not enough to be a good horse/camel guide. If the horseman or camel herder is to be the guide for riding tours, they must have a good attitude towards treating their animals, select and prepare the animals for riding and packing way ahead of the planned trips, learn and implement measures to keep guests safe and comfortable, and know how to communicate with guests.
- Of course, you will have developed your CBT and Activities Plan based on the abilities, skills, and talents of your community members. But check again and discuss who can be a guide for which activities. Then see what skills each of them needs to acquire or improve on. Besides getting some training from the tour operator, there are other options to access training for guides. Please refer to the table in Chapter 9 which lists various options.



CHAPTER 17. SAFETY AND SECURITY

First Aid Skills and Certification

Acquire and keep up your First Aid skills and certification. If not all, then at least several members of your team, both at the camp/homestay and your guides should have basic knowledge and skills in First Aid. Such training is offered by the Mongolian Red Cross. They are the certified organization to provide First Aid training in Mongolia, and they issue certificates to participants who attend trainings and pass their tests.



It is best, if all team members receive training, and it is also important that they receive updated training regularly. In fact, you should do a refresher course before each season. This is not just because you might forget, but also because emergency medicine is constantly evolving and improving, and new techniques, methods, materials, medicines, and equipment, are becoming available all the time. If the costs for a First Aid course are too high, you can try to organize a course together with several other organizations or companies. Ask from the health professionals in your Soum about opportunities to participate in a course or organize one yourselves.

Scan to visit the Red Cross Mongolia Website





The Mongolian Red Cross First Aid Manual is included as **Annex 16** in the Mongolian language version.

Study especially the sections on how to:

- treat wounds and **stop bleeding**.
- treat fractures and how to **stabilize broken bone(s)**.
- **check airways, bleeding, circulation** (is the person breathing/can they breathe? Are they bleeding anywhere? Do they have a pulse?).
- check/assess **vital signs** (breaths per minute, heartbeats per minute, body temperature), also blood pressure if possible.
- give **CPR** (cardiopulmonary resuscitation=restarting breathing and heartbeat).
- check for spinal injuries and how to **properly stabilize** a person and move them only when properly stabilized.

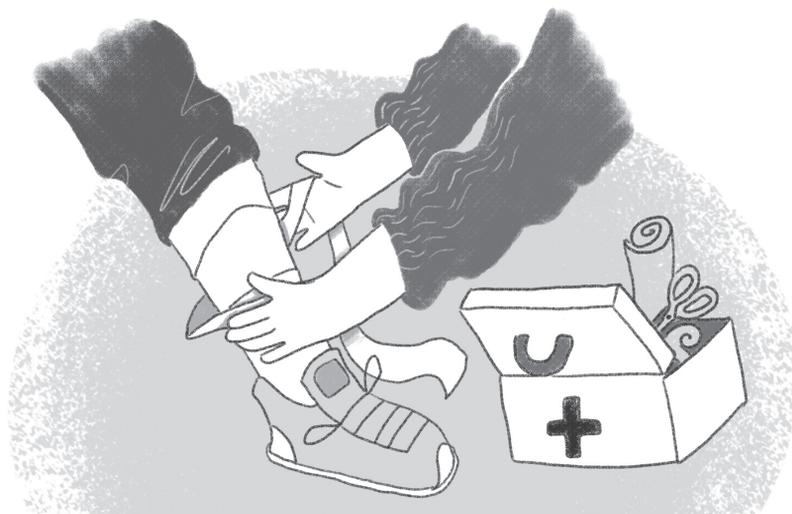
In case of an emergency/accident, always remember:

- Make sure **you are safe**, and the **accident scene is safe** before, and while you help, or provide First Aid.
- Remain calm. Take charge and tell team members what to do. Keep everybody calm.
- Be very careful about using traditional treatments and practices – do NOT use them in case of serious injuries or illness.

First Aid Kits – for Ger Camp and Tours

Prepare basic First Aid kits, based on what you learned in the First Aid course, or ask a professional for advice. It may be easiest to buy a First Aid kit (in a box) made for car travel, and then add some further items and medicines to it. Keep the First Aid kit at the ger camp/homestay. Make sure all your team members know where it is and how to use it. Put it in a place where it can be seen easily. Keep it complete and updated. Replace items, materials, medicines that have been used as soon as possible. Check your First Aid kit before every tourism season. Check that the medicines in the kit have not expired. Below is a suggestion on what a basic First Aid kit should contain.

Prepare First Aid kits to take on tours, so that each tour group has one, in the car or on horse/camelback or when hiking.





A basic First Aid Kit should contain: wound plasters (e.g. Band Aids) of different sizes, sterile gauze dressings of different sizes, triangular bandages (to stabilize an arm), elastic, rolled bandages, safety pins, disposable sterile gloves, tweezers, scissors, cleansing wipes, small sticky tape. Alcohol wipes. Iodine. Antiseptic cream.

Basic medicines like paracetamol, aspirin, ibuprofen, an antihistamine (for allergies), rehydration tablets or powder (although, be careful to use clean water with them). Make sure medicines are not expired and know how to use them/what they are for. The kit could also include a thermometer (preferably digital) to help you check for heatstroke, fevers, etc.

It may also be useful to keep a basic first aid manual or instruction booklet with your First Aid kit. Also, include a list of important phone numbers such as emergency agencies, hospitals, and police, as well as a map of where the closest hospitals are.

Scan to visit the Mongolian National Emergency Management Agency Official Website



Information for Emergencies

Prepare emergency contact information and other important emergency-related documentation to have with you during a tour. Besides the above-mentioned information on emergency services, police, and hospitals, also include:

- Contact emergency information of Embassies of the guests' countries
- Insurance documents (car insurance, accidents insurance, etc.)

Reporting an Emergency

When reporting to a medical professional, ambulance, or hospital about an injured or sick person – be calm, speak clearly and give relevant and important information, including:

- Your name and who you are (guide), and contact (*in case your phone number does not register on their phone*).
- Location of accident/injured or sick person. Place name (*Soum, Bagh, local place name*), GPS coordinates.
- What happened (*describe how the accident happened, e.g. fall from a horse, car accident, etc.*); When did it happen?
- Details on injured/sick person (*age, gender, other details such as prior health condition, allergies, etc.*).



- Details of the condition of, and/or injury the person sustained. Symptoms, vital signs if you can obtain them (heart rate, breathing, temperature). Changes in condition/trend.
- Care/treatment you are providing. Also, how you are stabilizing and sheltering the injured person.

Warnings and Precautions for Common Causes of Injury

Besides **car accidents** and accidents during horse or camel riding, there are some common causes of injuries to visitors:

- Visitors are not used to the **low entrances of gers** and can hit their heads. Warn your guests upon their arrival and remind them about the low entrance and watch them when they enter the ger to warn them if necessary. Place a sign "Watch you head" above the ger door or place a soft material on the upper part of the door frame.
- Visitors often like to approach and pet **dogs**. As mentioned in chapter 11, their attitude to and expectations of dogs are quite different than those of people living in the Mongolian countryside. Warn guests to not approach dogs alone and explain that dogs are used to being guard dogs and therefore might bite.
- Most guests are probably not used to heating with a wood or coal burning stove. Touching the **hot chimney** and getting burned is another common cause of injury. Warn/remind guests not to get too close to or even touch the chimney, with their body and clothing, and not to place items too close to it. It is common that people want to dry their clothes and damage them on a hot chimney or stove.

Fire Safety

Knowledge and skills to prevent and fight fires are an important part of safety, both at the ger camp and on field trips. If possible, organize a fire safety training for your team members.

1. Fire Safety at Your Ger Camp

- Have firefighting equipment ready at a dedicated location:
 - Place at least one fire extinguisher in the kitchen and each guest ger.
 - Check them regularly to make sure they are operational.
- If you are in an area with the risk of steppe fire, you will have firefighting equipment/ tools according to the Soum Disaster Risk Preparedness Plan for each household.
- Determine a mustering point where everybody gathers in case of a fire and make sure to account for everyone.
- Do fire drills with your team so everybody knows what to do, where the equipment is and where to gather.



- Be careful with candles - provide candle holders that are safe.
- Take precautions to manage stove fires in guest gers. Give proper instructions on how to use stoves and not to place items close to the stove and stove pipe.

2. Fire Safety on Tours

- Observe official fire restrictions – when open fires are not allowed due to high fire risk (especially in springtime).
- Check about fire risk level warnings and when fires are not permitted due to dry or hot weather.
- If possible, do not make open campfires at all.
- If you make a fire, use a “fire-pan” – a metal sheet or pot to make fire in, off the ground – it is safer and prevents the destruction of the vegetation cover
- Watch for sparks flying to trees and bushes, dry grass, and tents.
- Make sure the fire and/or ashes are totally extinguished. Pour water on it to make sure. It is best to bury ashes in a hole, pour water on them and cover it. See Chapter 15 on how to restore a fire site after use.
- Use camping stoves carefully so as not to start grass fires, or have anything else catch on fire.
- Be very careful with cigarette butts - or better still, don't smoke!
- Be careful with glass – it can cause a fire when exposed to sunlight.

Vehicle Safety

Car accidents are one of the common causes of injury, or worse, to travellers.

1. Responsible and Qualified Driver

- Ensure the tour driver has proper licenses, experience as a driver in the countryside, knows the routes well and is a responsible person.
- The driver should have skills as a mechanic to diagnose and fix common problems with cars.
- The driver should not consume alcohol while on the tour.
- The driver must also know how to keep the car in a safe and working condition as well as clean and neat inside and out.

2. Safe and Good Condition of Vehicles

- Cars should be in good working order.
- Tires should be in good condition and spare tires available in case of flat tires.
- An adequate tool kit should be carried to enable basic repairs and easy tire changes in case of flat tires.
- Seat belts must be available and functioning.



3. Driver's Occupational Safety and Permits

- Routes should be planned in a way that the driver does not get too tired; it is important for drivers to take regular breaks on long tours to avoid excessive fatigue.
- Adhere to all regulations regarding vehicle conditions and permits, driver licenses, traffic rules, occupational safety, and workers' protection.

Food, Cooking and Kitchen Safety

Please see Chapters 13 and 15. Chapter 13 provides details on:

1. **Food Safety, Cooking and Kitchen Hygiene**, and on safety in your ger kitchen and field kitchen, and Chapter 15 on waste management.
2. **Drinking Water Safety**. It is very important to provide sufficient and safe drinking water to guests. See Chapters 13 and 15 for details.

Guest Ger Safety and Security

It is your responsibility as the host of a ger camp or homestay that your guests are safe and secure. Safe from any health or accident risks, and secure from becoming a victim of theft or assault or harassment. You also have to make them FEEL safe and secure. Foreign guests might have fears and concerns that are unfounded. Because they don't know the country and customs, or don't know the sounds they hear, they may be frightened or concerned about harmless things. Think about that, explain things to guests if needed, and take precautions that they feel, safe and actually are secure.

Do's and Don'ts for Guests

Explain to Guests what is culturally appropriate and what is not appropriate to do. Guests are interested to learn this, and will be happy to comply if you share this information.

We have prepared a list of Do's and Don'ts in English language in **Annex 9**. You can use it as a guideline to make your own version of Do's and Don'ts, or you can print it and place in the guest accommodation or other place for guests to see it.

1. Guest Ger

- The low entrance to the ger has already been mentioned as something to warn or protect guests from hitting their head on. You should also check whether the wood is smooth. Sometimes it is rough and wood splinters could cause injury to your guests.
- When guests settle in for the night, they will want to lock the ger door from the inside for security. So make sure there is a lock on the inside.
- If, at any time, you want to enter the ger, please knock. It is very unusual for foreigners that people enter without knocking or calling before entering.



- Explain to guests, that if they want you to start the stove in the morning, not to be startled when you come in, and to open the door or leave it open. It is very unusual for guests that strangers enter the room while they are in bed. Although, they will surely enjoy the warm ger when they get up! Just make sure all is well understood beforehand to avoid surprises and misunderstandings.
- If the ger floor is made from linoleum, make sure it is dry and not slippery.
- Keep batteries (used with the solar panel) in a safe place and in safe condition
- Make sure the stove and chimney are safe, airtight, and that the chimney does not touch the ger cover at the top. Give instructions on how to use the stove safely. Place a fire extinguisher in the ger.
- Make sure the ger is set up well, that roof poles are all tightly connected to the wall and can't fall down.

Places, Situations and Behaviours

- Advise guests on how to be safe and secure, and on how to avoid situations that could lead to problems.
- Guests should not count their money, nor display their valuables in public places.
- Remind guests to look out for their luggage, and keep an eye on their luggage too.
- Do not bring guests to local pubs and bars.
- Advise guests to stay away from drunk people or people drinking alcohol.
- Stay clear of any situations and people that are, or could become violent.
- Approach strangers in your ger camp or field camp and make sure they have no ill intentions. If in doubt, make them leave without arguments or a fight.
- Do not let or make guests get drunk.

Dealing with Stressed Travellers - Lost or Stolen Items, Fear and Worry

It can be quite stressful for a traveller if they lose documents such as their passport or airline tickets, or their bank cards or money. So be calm and helpful. Make sure they can make the phone calls and arrangements they need to make. It is in such situations that your guests may feel scared, and it makes them feel very vulnerable and worried to be in a foreign country, not knowing the language.

Guests may also suddenly become worried or frightened about something that they do not understand and interpret wrongly. When the driver or guide asks for the way, or just stops for a chat, guests might think they are lost and get scared. Or they may just be tired, and then all kinds of worries come up.



Just use your common sense and feeling to monitor how guests are feeling, whether they are getting stressed or worried.

- If a guest has lost their passport, make it possible for them to contact their Embassy as soon as possible.
- If a guest has lost their wallet, and/or credit card(s), help them to call their banks, credit card companies, or other support.
- Inform the tour operator about such incidents, so they can talk to the guests and assist them.

Illegal Activities

Should travellers engage in or attempt to engage in illegal activities, do not let it happen. This could be tourists asking for illegal substances/drugs, trying to obtain wildlife or wildlife parts that are illegal to possess, trade, export, or asking for the services of sex workers, wanting to pay for sex or worst of all, it could be the intention to engage in human trafficking. Use common sense to prevent it without altercation. Stay safe yourself and do not get involved. Notify the police.



Worker's Protection and Occupational Safety

To protect yourself from financial hardship and ensure you get medical care in case you are injured or fall ill while you work in tourism, take the following precautions:

- Ask tour companies to include you in their insurance policies; insist that insurance coverage for you is included in your contract with them.
- Get (additional) insurance coverage, if possible, yourself.
- Pay social insurance taxes on time to get the support that you are entitled to in case of injury or illness.



Safety Measures before Leaving on Tour

1. Leave Your Trip Plan with Someone

When leaving on a trip, whether it is a day hike or several days' hike or ride make sure that somebody reliable knows where you are planning to go and when you plan to be back. They should be familiar with the area you travel to. If you are not back at or soon after the agreed time, they will have to decide whether it is necessary to look for you, or even alert officials at the Soum government, police, NEMA, park administration or other Search and Rescue organizations.

2. Know Emergency Contacts and Procedures

Do you know who to contact in case of an emergency? You should know the numbers of medical services, ambulance services, and Search and Rescue. Have all emergency contact numbers ready at your camp, or ger, and take them with you on a trip. Somebody at your camp or home should also know whom to contact. If you are hiking or riding, think about what places are accessible by car, in case somebody has an injury or cannot continue and has to be picked up by car.

If you are travelling in areas with phone signal, it's a good idea to have an App based on GPS (Global Positioning System) on your phone that shows your coordinates; familiarize yourself with using it, so you can send the coordinates to somebody looking for you. For travel in remote areas without phone signal it is best to have a satellite phone.

3. Ensure proper Clothing and Equipment for Safe Travel

Check that everybody is well equipped – both you as the guide and/or tour leader, as well as your guests. Do they have proper clothing and equipment to protect them against cold, wind, snow, rain, heat, and sun? Do they have shoes appropriate for the activity? Explain to guests, if necessary that evenings in camp can be cold in any season in Mongolia.

Also assess whether all guests are fit enough for the planned activity? Do they understand where they are going, and how long it will take?

4. Check the Weather Forecast for Any Warnings of Severe Weather Events

Check with TV/radio forecasts, online forecasts, and other weather warnings by local or national authorities, or with people with good local knowledge of weather conditions if you are not experienced yourself, or not a local. Think of possible river crossings, and campsites that could flood. Be aware of potential flash flood risks and camp in safe spots.

For mountain hiking/climbing, take only experienced guides who know the mountain, have the needed skills, knowledge and equipment for mountain, snow, and glacier travel. They should also be able to assess weather and snow/ice conditions.



Safety on Horse and Camel Riding Tours

Accidents from horse riding are amongst the most common causes of injuries that travellers show up with at medical clinics in Ulaanbaatar. By its nature, horse/camel riding is never totally safe, but as a guide or horseman/woman you have to make it as safe as possible.

If you hire out horses or camels for short rides, make sure that ALL guest riders have proper instruction and supervision. Do not have too many guests or groups at the same time.

1. Preparation and Selection of Riding and Pack Horses

One problem with many horse-riding tours is that horses are from different herds and do not know each other. They will then have "arguments" and fight over rank during the trip. It may be just a little annoying and challenging for their owners/horsemen to handle and control them. Still, it is disturbing and scary for guests and can create potentially dangerous situations.

Horses used on a horse trek, whether they are for riding or carrying gear, should be used to their "job". Obviously, they should be "*nomkhon*" (tame). They should be well used to have people around them and to be mounted, i.e. standing still while the rider gets into the saddle. They should know to start moving when the rider is secure in the saddle and "asks" them to start walking, not WHILE the person is mounting. It is advisable to hold the horse while the guest gets on, but it should not be necessary to have to really hold it back hard because it wants to go.

Herders and countryside children can jump on the horse when it is already moving and certainly can do all kinds of tricks. Do not show off with your horse-riding skills, but be calm and safe, around and on horses, thereby instilling calmness in all horses and riders.

2. Instruct and Watch Guest Riders

Most travellers will have little or no experience of riding. Even "experienced" riders among foreign guests are likely to have a very different kind of experience on horseback, with saddles and with horse care in general.

Also, do not assume or demand that every Mongolian person can ride a horse. Mongolian guests from the city can be totally inexperienced as riders. Many accidents have happened to young women guides just because horsemen have said "You are Mongolian – you can ride a horse", giving them any horse and not helping them to cope with riding them.



3. Animal Welfare

Make sure the horses used for riding with guests are in good health and condition, well fed and without saddle sores from poor fitting saddles or from using a saddle without a blanket (*tokhom*). Foreign riding guests will watch very carefully in what condition your horses are, and how you treat them when riding, loading, and in general.

4. Saddles and Tack

Mongolian saddles and tack, while beautiful, will be unusual, and often uncomfortable, for international riding guests. Make sure saddles are in good condition – that cinches are safe, stirrup straps do not break, etc. Observe what shoes or boots riders are wearing. Getting caught in a stirrup by a foot and being dragged along the ground is much more dangerous than just falling off. Check that boots are not too big and likely to get stuck in the stirrup. If people wear sneakers/trainers, or other shoes without heels, warn them to be careful NOT to slip through the stirrup with their foot. It is best if they wear boots with some heel - but not high heels either.

Check all equipment for safety – for both riders and horses. Riding guests will notice if the saddle or cinch hurts the horse. Foreign riding guests are also not used to how tough Mongolian horses are and what endurance they have. So they may be worried that the horses are getting too tired. Of course, you do not want to tire out the horses. It is useful to explain to guests about the skills, and intelligence and way of life of Mongolian horses. Guests will enjoy watching the horses at the campsite, when they enjoy good pasture and water.

5. Safe Riding Speed

Except for very experienced riders who come for the thrill and adventure of an endurance ride or race, riders will want to enjoy the experience of being on a horse and seeing the beautiful Mongolian landscapes from horseback at a slow pace. It is frightening, and very dangerous, to start galloping and taking the whole group of horses and riders with you. If one or a few guests are experienced and want to go fast, they should leave the group and only go for a canter or gallop when they are some distance away. The others can then keep moving at a slow pace.

Make sure you have enough experienced guides/horsemen or -women on the ride to watch and take care of all the guests.

Most or all of the above also applies to camel riding. Choose animals that are calm and used to guest riders, make sure all equipment is in good order and safe. Create a calm atmosphere, instruct and watch riders at all times, and go slowly.



6. River Crossings

Mongolian horses are very skilled and courageous in crossing rivers, even when running quite fast. But make a good assessment whether a river is too fast, or too deep to cross safely.

It can be a hard decision to make and to tell guest that you have to camp and wait for the river level to subside. Still, it is better to be a day late, even miss a plane, than to drown. It is up to you as the guide to make that decision and stick to it when needed.

Know the river well, and know the places where it could be crossed even at high water. Ask locals for these places. If locals say do not cross – do not cross!

Choosing Camp Sites

- Choose camp sites that provide shelter from wind/storm, but watch for possible risks. If camping near a river, watch the weather for rain. Even rain far upriver could cause the river to rise suddenly and significantly and flood your camp. Therefore, it is best to choose a site above the river, not at water level, or better still away from the river.
- Avoid places where flash flooding could occur. Never camp in a dry riverbed!
- When camping near the forest, watch for large/dry trees that may fall in a storm or get struck by lightning.
- Do not camp too close to rock walls or slopes where rock fall could occur.
- Do not camp near water sources that are used by wildlife.
- Do not camp near sacred/worship sites or directly near, or on historic, or prehistoric sites.
- Do not camp where you and your horses would impact the water and pasture resources of locals.
- Do not camp close to wild animals' or rodent dens.



Adventure Tours and Extreme Sports

For adventure travel and extreme or specialized sports activities, including mountain climbing, and boating on lakes and rivers, expert guides should be involved in preparing and leading such tours.

It is not sufficient to have ropes and climbing gear to take guests on a mountain climb, you need to know how to use these, have the skills and experience for mountain climbing, know the mountain and the weather, and much more.

Even if you take guests for a hike on a mountain, it can easily turn very dangerous. If the weather changes and you are exposed to cold temperatures and rain or snow, there is a real risk of you or your guests developing hypothermia. If snow of the mid-day turns to ice in the afternoon, then you might not be able to climb down safely. Warmer weather may also create avalanche conditions.

Therefore, be very careful about mountain travel. Work with an expert guide, local rangers, and check the local weather forecast.

The same goes for boating activities. If you take guests out on the water, do it with an expert operator/guide, who has safe equipment, knows the river, or lake, and has the skills and experience to operate safely. Every person should wear a safety/swim vest.





ANNEXES



Annex 1

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism by UNWTO

As a fundamental frame of reference for responsible and sustainable tourism, the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism (GCET) is a comprehensive set of principles designed to guide key-players in tourism development. Addressed to governments, the travel industry, communities and tourists alike, it aims to help maximise the sector's benefits while minimising its potentially negative impact on the environment, cultural heritage and societies across the globe.

Adopted in 1999 by the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization, its acknowledgement by the United Nations two years later expressly encouraged UNWTO to promote the effective follow-up of its provisions. Although not legally binding, the Code features a **voluntary implementation mechanism** through its recognition of the role of the **World Committee on Tourism Ethics** (WCTE), to which stakeholders may refer matters concerning the application and interpretation of the document.

The Code's **10 articles** amply cover the economic, social, cultural and environmental components of travel and tourism:

Article 1

Tourism's contribution to mutual understanding and respect between peoples and societies

1. The understanding and promotion of the ethical values common to humanity, with an attitude of tolerance and respect for the diversity of religious, philosophical and moral beliefs, are both the foundation and the consequence of responsible tourism; stakeholders in tourism development and tourists themselves should observe the social and cultural traditions and practices of all peoples, including those of minorities and indigenous peoples and to recognize their worth;
2. Tourism activities should be conducted in harmony with the attributes and traditions of the host regions and countries and in respect for their laws, practices and customs;
3. The host communities, on the one hand, and local professionals, on the other, should acquaint themselves with and respect the tourists who visit them and find out about their lifestyles, tastes and expectations; the education and training imparted to professionals contribute to a hospitable welcome;
4. It is the task of the public authorities to provide protection for tourists and visitors and their belongings; they must pay particular attention to the safety of foreign tourists owing to the particular vulnerability they may have; they should facilitate the introduction of specific means of information,



- prevention, security, insurance and assistance consistent with their needs; any attacks, assaults, kidnappings or threats against tourists or workers in the tourism industry, as well as the wilful destruction of tourism facilities or of elements of cultural or natural heritage should be severely condemned and punished in accordance with their respective national laws;
5. When travelling, tourists and visitors should not commit any criminal act or any act considered criminal by the laws of the country visited and abstain from any conduct felt to be offensive or injurious by the local populations, or likely to damage the local environment; they should refrain from all trafficking in illicit drugs, arms, antiques, protected species and products and substances that are dangerous or prohibited by national regulations;
 6. Tourists and visitors have the responsibility to acquaint themselves, even before their departure, with the characteristics of the countries they are preparing to visit; they must be aware of the health and security risks inherent in any travel outside their usual environment and behave in such a way as to minimize those risks.

Article 2

1. Tourism, the activity most frequently associated with rest and relaxation, sport and access to culture and nature, should be planned and practised as a privileged means of individual and collective fulfilment; when practised with a sufficiently open mind, it is an irreplaceable factor of self-education, mutual tolerance and for learning about the legitimate differences between peoples and cultures and their diversity;
2. Tourism activities should respect the equality of men and women; they should promote human rights and, more particularly, the individual rights of the most vulnerable groups, notably children, the elderly, the handicapped, ethnic minorities and indigenous peoples;
3. The exploitation of human beings in any form, particularly sexual, especially when applied to children, conflicts with the fundamental aims of tourism and is the negation of tourism; as such, in accordance with international law, it should be energetically combatted with the cooperation of all the States concerned and penalized without concession by the national legislation of both the countries visited and the countries of the perpetrators of these acts, even when they are carried out abroad;
4. Travel for purposes of religion, health, education and cultural or linguistic exchanges are particularly beneficial forms of tourism, which deserve encouragement;
5. The introduction into curricula of education about the value of tourist exchanges, their economic, social and cultural benefits, and also their risks, should be encouraged



Article 3

Tourism, a factor of sustainable development

1. All the stakeholders in tourism development should safeguard the natural environment with a view to achieving sound, continuous and sustainable economic growth geared to satisfying equitably the needs and aspirations of present and future generations;
2. All forms of tourism development that are conducive to saving rare and precious resources, in particular water and energy, as well as avoiding so far as possible waste production, should be given priority and encouraged by national, regional and local public authorities;
3. The staggering in time and space of tourist and visitor flows, particularly those resulting from paid leave and school holidays, and a more even distribution of holidays should be sought so as to reduce the pressure of tourism activity on the environment and enhance its beneficial impact on the tourism industry and the local economy;
4. Tourism infrastructure should be designed and tourism activities programmed in such a way as to protect the natural heritage composed of ecosystems and biodiversity and to preserve endangered species of wildlife; the stakeholders in tourism development, and especially professionals, should agree to the imposition of limitations or constraints on their activities when these are exercised in particularly sensitive areas: desert, polar or high mountain regions, coastal areas, tropical forests or wetlands, propitious to the creation of nature reserves or protected areas;
5. Nature tourism and ecotourism are recognized as being particularly conducive to enriching and enhancing the standing of tourism, provided they respect the natural heritage and local populations and are in keeping with the carrying capacity of the sites

Article 4

Tourism, a user of the cultural heritage of mankind and contributor to its enhancement

1. Tourism resources belong to the common heritage of mankind; the communities in whose territories they are situated have particular rights and obligations to them;
2. Tourism policies and activities should be conducted with respect for the artistic, archaeological and cultural heritage, which they should protect and pass on to future generations; particular care should be devoted to preserving and upgrading monuments, shrines and museums as well as archaeological and historic sites which must be widely open to tourist visits; encouragement should be given to public access to privately-owned cultural property and monuments, with respect for the rights of their owners, as well as to religious buildings, without prejudice to normal needs of worship;



3. Financial resources derived from visits to cultural sites and monuments should, at least in part, be used for the upkeep, safeguard, development and embellishment of this heritage;
4. Tourism activity should be planned in such a way as to allow traditional cultural products, crafts and folklore to survive and flourish, rather than causing them to degenerate and become standardized

Article 5

Tourism, a beneficial activity for host countries and communities

1. Local populations should be associated with tourism activities and share equitably in the economic, social and cultural benefits they generate, and particularly in the creation of direct and indirect jobs resulting from them;
2. Tourism policies should be applied in such a way as to help to raise the standard of living of the populations of the regions visited and meet their needs; the planning and architectural approach to and operation of tourism resorts and accommodation should aim to integrate them, to the extent possible, in the local economic and social fabric; where skills are equal, priority should be given to local manpower;
3. Special attention should be paid to the specific problems of coastal areas and island territories and to vulnerable rural or mountain regions, for which tourism often represents a rare opportunity for development in the face of the decline of traditional economic activities;
4. Tourism professionals, particularly investors, governed by the regulations laid down by the public authorities, should carry out studies of the impact of their development projects on the environment and natural surroundings; they should also deliver, with the greatest transparency and objectivity, information on their future programmes and their foreseeable repercussions and foster dialogue on their contents with the populations concerned

Article 6

Obligations of stakeholders in tourism development

1. Tourism professionals have an obligation to provide tourists with objective and honest information on their places of destination and on the conditions of travel, hospitality and stays; they should ensure that the contractual clauses proposed to their customers are readily understandable as to the nature, price and quality of the services they commit themselves to providing and the financial compensation payable by them in the event of a unilateral breach of contract on their part;



2. Tourism professionals, insofar as it depends on them, should show concern, in co-operation with the public authorities, for the security and safety, accident prevention, health protection and food safety of those who seek their services; likewise, they should ensure the existence of suitable systems of insurance and assistance; they should accept the reporting obligations prescribed by national regulations and pay fair compensation in the event of failure to observe their contractual obligations;
3. Tourism professionals, so far as this depends on them, should contribute to the cultural and spiritual fulfilment of tourists and allow them, during their travels, to practise their religions;
4. The public authorities of the generating States and the host countries, in cooperation with the professionals concerned and their associations, should ensure that the necessary mechanisms are in place for the repatriation of tourists in the event of the bankruptcy of the enterprise that organized their travel;
5. Governments have the right – and the duty - especially in a crisis, to inform their nationals of the difficult circumstances, or even the dangers they may encounter during their travels abroad; it is their responsibility however to issue such information without prejudicing in an unjustified or exaggerated manner the tourism industry of the host countries and the interests of their own operators; the contents of travel advisories should therefore be discussed beforehand with the authorities of the host countries and the professionals concerned; recommendations formulated should be strictly proportionate to the gravity of the situations encountered and confined to the geographical areas where the insecurity has arisen; such advisories should be qualified or cancelled as soon as a return to normality permits;
6. The press, and particularly the specialized travel press and the other media, including modern means of electronic communication, should issue honest and balanced information on events and situations that could influence the flow of tourists; they should also provide accurate and reliable information to the consumers of tourism services; the new communication and electronic commerce technologies should also be developed and used for this purpose; as is the case for the media, they should not in any way promote sex tourism.

Article 7

Right to tourism

1. The prospect of direct and personal access to the discovery and enjoyment of the planet's resources constitutes a right equally open to all the world's inhabitants; the increasingly extensive participation in national and international tourism should be regarded as one of the best possible expressions of the sustained growth of free time, and obstacles should not be placed in its way;



2. The universal right to tourism must be regarded as the corollary of the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay, guaranteed by Article 24 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and Article 7.d of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
3. Social tourism, and in particular associative tourism, which facilitates widespread access to leisure, travel and holidays, should be developed with the support of the public authorities;
4. Family, youth, student and senior tourism and tourism for people with disabilities, should be encouraged and facilitated.

Article 8

Liberty of tourist movements

1. Tourists and visitors should benefit, in compliance with international law and national legislation, from the liberty to move within their countries and from one State to another, in accordance with Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; they should have access to places of transit and stay and to tourism and cultural sites without being subject to excessive formalities or discrimination;
2. Tourists and visitors should have access to all available forms of communication, internal or external; they should benefit from prompt and easy access to local administrative, legal and health services; they should be free to contact the consular representatives of their countries of origin in compliance with the diplomatic conventions in force;
3. Tourists and visitors should benefit from the same rights as the citizens of the country visited concerning the confidentiality of the personal data and information concerning them, especially when these are stored electronically;
4. Administrative procedures relating to border crossings whether they fall within the competence of States or result from international agreements, such as visas or health and customs formalities, should be adapted, so far as possible, so as to facilitate to the maximum freedom of travel and widespread access to international tourism; agreements between groups of countries to harmonize and simplify these procedures should be encouraged; specific taxes and levies penalizing the tourism industry and undermining its competitiveness should be gradually phased out or corrected;
5. So far as the economic situation of the countries from which they come permits, travellers should have access to allowances of convertible currencies needed for their travels.



Article 9

Rights of the workers and entrepreneurs in the tourism industry

1. The fundamental rights of salaried and self-employed workers in the tourism industry and related activities, should be guaranteed under the supervision of the national and local administrations, both of their States of origin and of the host countries with particular care, given the specific constraints linked in particular to the seasonality of their activity, the global dimension of their industry and the flexibility often required of them by the nature of their work;
2. Salaried and self-employed workers in the tourism industry and related activities have the right and the duty to acquire appropriate initial and continuous training; they should be given adequate social protection; job insecurity should be limited so far as possible; and a specific status, with particular regard to their social welfare, should be offered to seasonal workers in the sector;
3. Any natural or legal person, provided he, she or it has the necessary abilities and skills, should be entitled to develop a professional activity in the field of tourism under existing national laws; entrepreneurs and investors - especially in the area of small and medium-sized enterprises - should be entitled to free access to the tourism sector with a minimum of legal or administrative restrictions;
4. Exchanges of experience offered to executives and workers, whether salaried or not, from different countries, contributes to foster the development of the world tourism industry; these movements should be facilitated so far as possible in compliance with the applicable national laws and international conventions;
5. As an irreplaceable factor of solidarity in the development and dynamic growth of international exchanges, multinational enterprises of the tourism industry should not exploit the dominant positions they sometimes occupy; they should avoid becoming the vehicles of cultural and social models artificially imposed on the host communities; in exchange for their freedom to invest and trade which should be fully recognized, they should involve themselves in local development, avoiding, by the excessive repatriation of their profits or their induced imports, a reduction of their contribution to the economies in which they are established;
6. Partnership and the establishment of balanced relations between enterprises of generating and receiving countries contribute to the sustainable development of tourism and an equitable distribution of the benefits of its growth



Article 10

Implementation of the principles of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism

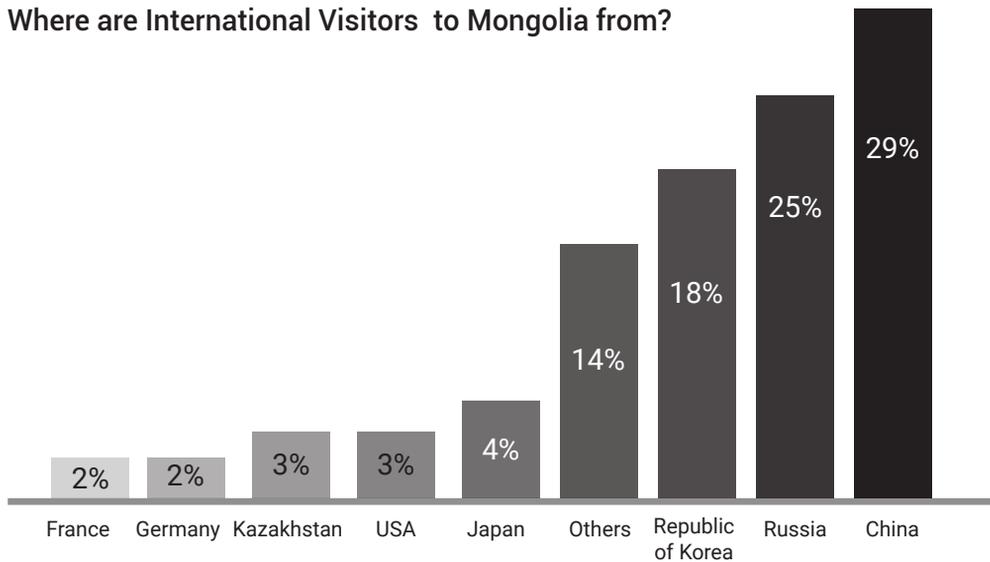
1. The public and private stakeholders in tourism development should cooperate in the implementation of these principles and monitor their effective application;
2. The stakeholders in tourism development should recognize the role of international institutions, among which the World Tourism Organization ranks first, and non-governmental organizations with competence in the field of tourism promotion and development, the protection of human rights, the environment or health, with due respect for the general principles of international law;
3. The same stakeholders should demonstrate their intention to refer any disputes concerning the application or interpretation of the Global Code of Ethics for Tourism for conciliation to an impartial third body known as the World Committee on Tourism Ethics.



Annex 2

Countries of origin of travellers to Mongolia between 2015 and 2019.

Where are International Visitors to Mongolia from?



Numbers of International Visitors to Mongolia and Changes 2015 – 2019							
	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	% 2019	% Changes 2015 - 2019
Total	386.204	404.163	469.309	529.370	577.297	100.0	49 %
China	145.029	131.312	142.481	163.979	168.298	29.2	16 %
Russian Federation	70.668	84.065	106.885	129.095	141.927	24.6	101 %
Republic of Korea	47.213	57.587	74.921	84.184	101.279	17.5	115 %
Japan	19.277	19.985	22.519	20.990	24.419	4.2	27 %
USA	14.420	15.859	16.667	17.838	18.838	3.3	31 %
Kazakhstan	14.434	13.370	14.234	16.144	16.264	2.8	13 %
Germany	8.992	9.709	10.582	10.819	12.405	2.1	38 %
France	7.989	9.026	10.038	9.773	10.572	1.8	32 %
Australia	4.804	5.631	7.287	7.495	7.014	1.2	46 %
United Kingdom	6.148	6.161	5.996	5.905	5.931	1.0	-4 %
Taiwan	2.810	3.732	4.452	5.233	5.930	1.0	111 %



Hong Kong, China	1.848	1.583	2.808	3.121	4.311	0.7	133 %
Italy	2.853	3.000	2.971	3.192	3.655	0.6	28 %
Netherlands	2.495	2.876	3.099	3.777	3.613	0.6	45 %
Canada	2.566	3.052	3.430	3.578	3.594	0.6	40 %
Singapore	1.755	2.064	2.485	2.649	3.010	0.5	72 %
Switzerland	2.378	2.627	2.767	2.665	2.927	0.5	23 %
Belarus	1.078	1.329	2.107	2.210	2.902	0.5	169 %
Thailand	962	1.100	1.492	2.259	2.631	0.5	173 %
India	1.478	1.713	1.874	2.298	2.478	0.4	68 %
Spain	1.309	1.461	1.647	1.969	2.080	0.4	59 %
Turkey	2.421	2.209	2.189	2.999	1.874	0.3	-23 %

Source: World Bank (2021). *Mongolia: Fostering Inclusive Tourism Development in the Aftermath of COVID-19.*



Annex 3

Summary of best practices, and the 10 Principles of Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas under the IUCN Best Practices Guideline on "Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas – Guidelines for Sustainability" (2018).

In summary, best practices include:

- Tourism in protected areas should (i) contribute to the conservation of nature (have environmental value); (ii) generate economic benefits to Protected Area authorities and owners to help support management costs, and also sustainable livelihood opportunities in local communities (have economic value); and (iii) contribute towards the enrichment of society and culture (have social value).
- For tourism to be an effective conservation and community development tool, a high-quality visitor experience is important. The kinds of experiences managers and tourism operators provide in Protected Areas need to be different from those offered in other destinations. They should aim to build a conservation ethic. Visitors should be aware of how and why conservation is taking place in the Protected Area.
- Both negative impacts as well as benefits of tourism in Protected Areas should be acknowledged openly. The social as well as the environmental impacts of tourism-related decisions should be stated, analysed, and monitored.
- Tourism in Protected Areas should respect the special needs of local communities. The benefits of Protected Area tourism should flow to local communities as well as to outside providers. The negative impact of tourism should not fall disproportionately on local communities.

IUCN Guideline - 10 Principles of Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas

Drawing on experiences from across the world, the IUCN Guideline states that through the application of best practice, sustainable tourism can contribute both to the conservation mission of the Protected Area and create benefits for local communities. The challenge is how to maximize the benefits from tourism while minimizing its negative impact.

The IUCN Guideline shares 10 Principles of Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas:

- Identify clear tourism and visitor management objectives that connect to equally clear conservation values.



- Plan proactively, with foresight of changes in the future, for the development, operation and decommissioning of tourism activities, both for commercial tourism and for individual visitors. For commercial tourism and infrastructure development, have in place a policy framework, prepare contracts, ensure Environmental Impact Assessment and ongoing monitoring.
- Requirements for visitor experiences and for activities in different areas within the PA can change over time. This is a challenge, but also an opportunity to facilitate new visitor experiences that support conservation.
- The zonation, as in place in parks in Mongolia, already guides the different use types. However, activities for specific areas can be planned in more detail than the zonation provides.
- Impacts on natural resources and social conditions are the inevitable consequence of tourism activities. Approaches to assess and manage impacts include determining tourism carrying capacity by agreeing on “Limits of Acceptable Change”, and on indicators of the quality of PA management. The guidelines elaborate on these concepts and methods.
- There are four types of strategies to manage tourism and visitors to PAs and to reduce impacts:
 - a) increase the supply (of visitor experiences),
 - b) reduce the impacts of use,
 - c) increase the durability of experiences/resources,
 - d) limit use (rationing). The most common tools used to manage tourism impacts are zoning, rationing, and enforcement of rules and regulations.
- Negative impacts result from a range of factors such as mode of transport, group size, and season of use. Differentiated pricing (by scenic value of campsites, by season, etc.) and influencing visitor decisions on activities may be a better long-term strategy than simply applying restrictions.
- Sustained monitoring is an essential element of PA management to learn whether management actions are efficient and what adjustments are needed. The key questions to ask when designing a monitoring system are:
 - Why monitor?
 - What to monitor?
 - Where and when to monitor?
 - Who will monitor?
 - Who will analyse the data?
 - How will the information be used?

The role of citizen scientists, and especially of local community members in Mongolia, can be crucial for a functioning monitoring system. The guideline provides a wealth of examples of monitoring activities in protected areas around the world.



- In making management decisions, technical description should be separated from value judgement.
- All groups (stakeholders, rights holders) should actively participate in planning as true consensus and partnership are crucial for effective implementation of sustainable tourism in protected areas.
- “For a partnership to be truly successful, managers must ensure that:
 1. All partners decide on, understand, and agree to their roles and responsibilities and document them in writing;
 2. All those involved equally shoulder the duties and commitments;
 3. The partnership is mutually beneficial.
 4. Mechanisms are in place to evaluate the success and benefits of the partnership;
 5. Open and honest communication is a matter of priority.
- Partnerships between Protected Area Agencies and NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, local communities, and the private sector can be very rewarding, but also highly challenging because each group has different goals as well as different ways of achieving them. By working jointly through participatory planning to develop management plans and activities, effective partnerships can be established between multiple stakeholders and with local communities.

Source: Tourism and Visitor Management in Protected Areas, Guidelines for Sustainability, 2018.



Annex 4

Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)

The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which entered into force in December 1993, is an international treaty for the conservation of biodiversity, the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity and the equitable sharing of the benefits derived from the use of genetic resources. With 193 Parties, the Convention has near universal participation among countries.

The Convention seeks to address all threats to biodiversity and ecosystems. It does this through scientific assessments, the development of tools, incentives and processes, the transfer of technologies and good practices, and the full and active involvement of relevant stakeholders. These stakeholders include indigenous and local communities, youth, NGOs, women, and the business community.

The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the CBD, held in 2010, adopted a revised and updated Strategic Plan for Biodiversity for 2011–2020, comprising five strategic goals and 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets. The Plan is the overarching framework on biodiversity, not only for the biodiversity-related conventions, but for the entire United Nations system.

Mongolia is a signatory to the CBD, and a member of the High Ambition Coalition, the group of nations that have committed to placing 30% of their territory under protection by 2030.



Annex 5

Table on different legal entities for CBT

No	Category	Types	Purpose	Documents needed	Permission or License needed	Collaboration	Advantage	Disadvantage
For profit entities								
1.	Company	A. Joint stock company(USC) B. LLC/LTD	Earn profit, income from tourism activities	By-law	Get registered in state registration office of Mongolia as a legal entity If independently receiving tourists, get certificate from Mongolian tourism association	Run business independently or establish joint entity	Easy to extend your business and market on tourism	Need to have staff who is certified to run tourism activities (at least bachelor degree on this field) Should have an office to run business activities and obtain website Required to have staff to be able to run tour operation Staff should have sufficient foreign language ability
2.	Nunkhurul (profit making)	A. All member's liability Nukhurul B. Some member's liability C. Limited liability Nukhurul		Contract for establishment	Get registered in state registration office of Mongolia as a legal entity	Every member can represent the entity Leaders are chosen on vote of all members		
Non-profit entities								
3.	NGO	A. Serves society C. Serves its members		By-law	Get registered in state registration office of Mongolia as a legal entity	Board of directors		Operates with certain organizational
4.	Cooperative	Serves its members, at least 9 people should get together to establish	Collaborate to run any sort of business	By-law	Get registered in state registration office of Mongolia as a legal entity	Every members have right to share their opinion		
5.	Foundation	Serves society		By-law	Get registered in state registration office of Mongolia as a legal entity			
6.	Natural Resource Collaborative management Nukhurul	For tourism activities (hunting and receiving tourists) Forest User Groups (FUG) Run Ger camps for tourists	Manage and protect Natural Resources and get benefits from doing so	Contract and Management plan	The establishment will be discussed during Bagh meeting. Soum governor issues a certificate based on the order by Soum Rep. Khural	Nukhurul members	Manage and protect natural resources All members get equal benefits	Not registered as legal entity, thus have no right to open bank account, not able to obtain official seal. Only work in the framework of MNET. The legal aspects of nukhuruls are still unclear Contract shall be extended every year



Annex 6

A Typical Business Plan Format

A typical business plan could be divided into the sections shown below. But only use those sections that apply to your situation and make the most sense for your needs.

Executive Summary

- Briefly explain what your company does and why it will be successful.
- Include your mission statement, your product or service, and basic information about your company's leadership team, employees'/ team members'/community members, and location.
- Include financial information and a plan of how the business will grow/succeed if you intend to ask for external finance.

Description of Your Enterprise (Company or Community)

- Describe your CBT enterprise/initiative. Be specific, and list the different customer groups you are targeting to serve.
- Really explain your strengths! In this section, sound confident, but keep it realistic and credible.
- Explain the competitive advantages that will make your business a success.
- Describe your experience, and special skills. In particular, set out your location, unique attractions, services and products.

Market Analysis

- Show that you have a good understanding of your target market and positioning; Here it will be good to add some information on tourism trends in Mongolia, and how travel to rural areas (especially to your area) and visitor interest in CBT can be expected to increase.
- Provide some information on competitors - what are other businesses doing, and what are their strengths? What do successful competitors do? Why are they successful?
- How will you be better, or at least competitive with them?

Organization and Management

- Explain how your company or community is organized, and who is leading it.
- Describe the legal structure of your business or community, or what structure you intend to have (see the above table for options of legal structures).
- You can use an organizational chart to show responsibilities and lines of decision making. Show who is in charge of what, and how each person's unique experience will contribute to the success of your venture.
- Consider including short resumes, CVs or just key prior work experience and successes of key members of your team.
- Consider including references from respected persons, officials, former employers, and others.



Services and Products

- Describe your services and products in more detail and explain how they benefit your customers.

Marketing and Sales

- Describe how you will attract and retain customers. Describe how sales will actually happen, how exactly you will reach tourists. Will this be in one or several ways?
- You will refer to this later when you make financial projections, so make sure to thoroughly describe your complete marketing strategies (how you will find tourists to visit your area).

Financing Request

- If you are asking for financing, outline your financing requirements.
- Clearly explain how much finance you need, what exactly it will be used for, and over what timeframe.

Financial projections

- When applying for finance, you need to show your financial projections. Here you have to convince the reader that your business will be stable and financially successful.
- If your business is already established, include income statements, balance sheets, and cash flow statements from previous years.
- List any collateral you could provide against a loan.
- Provide a financial outlook for the next (five) years with as much detail as possible, including expected income and expenditures. For the first year/season, be even more specific and use monthly projections if possible. Make sure to clearly explain your financial projections and match them to your financing requests.
- If you already have been running your CBT business for a while, you can use graphs and charts to explain your financial history, if you think it will be helpful for the reader.

Appendix

- Provide supporting documents or other materials as specifically requested.
- Include, for example, credit histories, resumes, product/service pictures, letters of reference, licenses, permits, other relevant legal documents, and contracts (for example with tour operators).



Annex 7

Sample Tourism Activity Plan (of Bortyn Mandal Community, Munkhkhairkhan Soum of Khovd Aimag)

The community leader and 12 community members planned to work from 1st of June to 25th of August to implement the following plan. The implementation status of the plan will be discussed in May and October, annually. The income and expenditure report will be presented to all members of the community on a monthly basis.

Nº	Members	Position	Will also work as	Planned activity
1.	Soyolmaa	Manager	Cook	Take guest orders, guest registration, information sharing
2.	Bayarkhuu	Horse and camel guide		Organize horse and camel trips, manage horses and camels, and all the equipment
3.	Ankh-Erdene	Horse and camel guide		
4.	Bataa	Horse and camel guide		
5.	Shagdarsuren	Horse and camel guide		
6.	Chojijjav	Finance	Driver	Book keeping of income and expenditure, cash record
7.	Ganbold	Ger service	Driver	Building and taking down gers, cleaning
8.	Tserendorj	Ger service		
9.	Chojjilsuren	Ger service		
10.	Gantulga	Guard	Assistants	Cleaning, cooking and helping horse guides
11.	Ganchimeg	Guard		
12.	Gantulga	Guard		
13.	Tsogt-Erdene	Guard		



Annex 8

Risk Management Plan of Bortyn Mandal Community, Munkhkhairkhan soum of Khovd Aimag

№	Causes of risks	Types of potential risks	Potential ways to overcome risks
1.	Potential risks from suppliers	Supplier refuses to give service, services from supplier are not sufficient.	Indicate it in the contract from the beginning, ensure they compensate insufficient services Make contract with different supplier
2.	Potential risks from business partners	Bad quality work and low standard service for clients. Misunderstandings	Develop collaboration agreement, review and access the agreement, organize meetings and discussions and document any damages or violations.
		Business partner refused the provided services, violates the contract and bad quality service given.	
3.	Risks due to information technology	Due to network, or internet service outage unable to get order and/or lose customers	Have designated date and time to contact clients to share information. Warn guests about it and guide them if you have different options
4.	Risks due to bad infrastructure	Bad road conditions, blocked road due to snowstorm or heavy rain, no clear road signs, car accidents	Report road conditions to your clients. Every time you move inform them of the place you are moving to and how to get there safely. Also, inform if transportation cost has increased. Always place reliable signs to help clients reach you.
5.	Risk due to local and national level conditions and holidays	National holidays, no electricity hours/days announced by authorized agencies, border issues, human and livestock disease etc.	Indicate those risks in the contract and specify the potential measures to overcome them



6.	Financial risks	Problems in transferring money, withdrawing, loss due to foreign currency exchange etc.	Use Community Fund
		Price increase of common goods	Indicate to use/spend/borrow from community fund
		Due to flight delay or cancellation guest visit postponed or cancelled	Indicate disposal amount and make compensation if trip is cancelled
7.	Risk due to natural disaster	Trip cancelled due to extreme weather conditions, strong wind, heavy rain, earthquake, disease etc.	Indicate disposal amount and make compensation if trip is cancelled
	Risks related to deliberate misinformation	Fraudulent information about your activity: negative news among clients about your services etc.	Correct them as much as possible using your social networks
	Risks related to lack of human capacity/skills/ bad preparation	Did not reach guests' expectation Threat to guests' safety	Train staff and follow the standard safety procedures
		Insufficient human capacity	Train your staff, allow them to grow professionally
		Misunderstanding due to lack of regular information	Inform your staff about organizational rules and ensure the staff follow them
		Bad vehicle condition, limited availability of petrol and car parts	Inform drivers to report about their car condition regularly Monitor vehicle condition regularly



Annex 9

Do's and Don'ts for Guests¹

The Mongolian Ger

Mongolian gers are usually set up with the door facing south. So when you step into the ger, you are facing the north side, which is the most honoured place, where the family's altar usually is. Very honoured guests will be asked to sit at the north side.

The west side of the ger is the men's side where saddles and other equipment are stored. The east (right) side of the ger is usually where women sit and work. The stove door is always facing east, and cooking/kitchen equipment is stored on the east side.

When You Visit a Family in their Ger - Entering the Ger

- Do not step on the threshold when entering.
- Usually, guests entering the ger go to and sit on the left (west) side.
- Do not stop at the door with one foot inside and one outside the ger.
- You do not need to wait to be invited to sit down. Sit down on the bed or stools, or on the floor. Don't squat, rather touch the ground sitting cross legged with one or both legs.
- Do not sit with your feet pointing to the altar.
- It is nice to bring a gift – candy is common as a gift. Hand it to the lady of the ger upon entering.

Snuff Bottles for Greeting Guests

It is a common ritual that the man of the household will offer a snuff bottle to guests, one after the other in turn.

- When he offers it to you, receive it with your right hand, while your left hand supports your right elbow.
- Open the bottle and try a little of the snuff, (careful it can be powerful and make you sneeze or burn the inside of your nose). It is best to do this by putting a little on your fingers and carefully sniffing a bit.
- Hand it back to the host, with the lid NOT closed tightly, with your right hand, left hand supporting your right elbow.

¹Some of the content of this guideline was adapted from https://www.notesofnomads.com/mongolian-gers/?utm_source=pocket_mylist



Accepting Food and Drink

The family will probably offer you food and drink. They are most likely to offer you milk tea, home-made deep-fried pastry (boortsog) and curd (aaruul).

- Do not turn down the tea.
- If you don't want to finish any food or drink, it is okay to place it down.
- Receive the tea bowl with two hands, or with your right hand, your left hand supporting your right elbow

Vodka, homemade milk vodka or airag (fermented mare's milk) are commonly offered to guests. You do not HAVE TO drink alcohol if you do not want to. But if you can, at least take a sip or try it. The procedure is this:

- The host will pour the drink and pass it to you. Receive it as described above.
- Drink/taste and then pass the cup back to the host who refills it and then passes it to the next person. Do not pass it to the next person, always pass it back to the person who gave it to you.
- You can observe a Mongolian custom and dip the ring finger of your right hand into the vodka, and then sprinkle some vodka into all four directions, by flicking the ring finger against your thumb. This is a symbolic offering.
- If you do not want to drink, you can make the offering as described above without drinking, or by only touching the vessel to your mouth, and pass it back. This is also a sign of accepting their gesture of hospitality.

Inside the Family's Ger

- Do not walk over bowls, cups, food, or anything in the ger.
- Do not walk between the two main poles, and do not lean against them.
- Do not whistle in a ger.
- Do not throw trash directly into the fire/stove.
- If you accidentally touch someone's feet/legs with your feet/legs, it is customary to do a handshake/touch hands (anywhere, not just inside the ger).

When Sleeping in a Ger as a Guest of the Family

- Do not sleep with your feet facing the altar
- Do not step over someone sitting or lying on the floor.

In Your Ger at the Camp or Homestay

- Watch your head when entering!
- Do not hang things from the red (sometimes it's not red) rope that is placed in loops between the roof poles and the roof cover. It has special meaning as a symbol for the family's happiness and long life.
- Do not sit on the threshold (and do not step on it or stay standing over it)



Receiving and Giving Gifts and Other Items

- Do not receive or give things with your left hand.
- In general, do not point fingers at anything or anybody. Show a direction or point to something or somebody with your whole, open hand.
- When giving something to somebody (money, a gift, etc.) hold and offer it with both your hands. Do not hold, for example, a bank note between the fingers of one hand. Instead, present it with fingers pointing at the receiving person.
- Have your sleeves rolled down when giving and receiving something.

Handling Knives and other Sharp Items

- Do not point at someone with a knife or sharp tools.
- Do not hand sharp tools to someone with the sharp end pointing at them.
- Do not stir food with a knife.
- Do not use a knife for picking up things from the stove.

Other Rules to Observe

Household and Livestock

- Do not step over a saddle or any other gear for herding and making a livelihood.
- Do not hit the head of a horse or any other livestock.
- In a thunderstorm with lightening a horse bridle (bit) should be removed.

Visiting a Monastery and/or Temple:

- Do not wear a hat in a monastery and/or temple.
- Do not enter a monastery or temple without a shirt. Wear modest clothes.

At Places of Worship, Sacred Mountains and Ovoos

- Do not pick up and take away any stones, plants, or other items.
- Do not hunt or kill any animals/ insects.
- Do not urinate near an Ovoo (or close to any water source).





Welcome your guests in your "5 million star hotel" - vast and beautiful nature under the eternal blue sky of your homeland.