



# Increase the use of the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure among CSOs and Grassroots Organizations

## Mongolia

The *Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure of Land, Fisheries and Forests in the Context of National Food Security* (VGGT) set out **internationally-accepted principles and standards** for responsible practices, providing a framework for governments, the private sector and civil society to use when developing policies and programmes for improving food security. FAO has been working in more than 58 countries, providing technical assistance for awareness raising, multi-stakeholder platforms, training and capacity development, and support to the assessment, formulation and implementation of national policies and laws.

Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) are **key partners** in this effort. It has been recognized time and again that ensuring the same level of information and capability among

stakeholders leads to more meaningful participation in dialogue processes.

In this project (2015-2018), FAO has worked in 21 countries (see map below) through partnerships with national CSOs in carrying out awareness-raising and capacity development workshops to:

- Enhance civil society's **knowledge and understanding of the VGGT**;
- Increase **network and advocacy skills** to defend their tenure rights and **strengthen partnerships** for wider application of the VGGT at all levels;
- Build capacities for **effective participation in policy processes** related to tenure reform processes and national VGGT multi-stakeholder platforms.

The main product of this project has been the **capacity development manual** for CSOs, *Putting the Voluntary Guidelines on Tenure into Practice: A Learning Guide for Civil Society* in partnership with FIAN International, which draws upon the *People's Manual on the Guidelines on Governance of Land, Fisheries and Forests*, developed by the International Planning Committee for Food Sovereignty



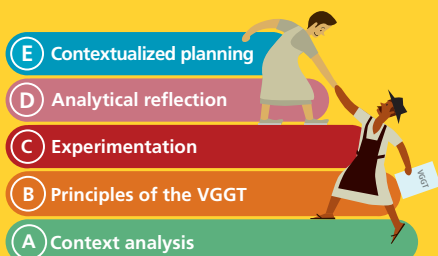
(IPC). In 2017, an adaptation of this Guide was developed to integrate the *Voluntary Guidelines for Securing Sustainable Small-Scale Fisheries in the Context of Food Security and Poverty Eradication*, the roll-out of which is currently in a pilot phase.

Local civil society partners played a key role in the successful implementation of the project. With their knowledge of the local context, the Learning Guide could be adapted to link the VGGT to on-going processes within the country.

As part of FAO's global VGGT implementation programme, this project identified specific opportunities for potential or ongoing processes of tenure reform, and/or specific CSO networks or multi-stakeholder processes where FAO input would be most effective.

## LEARNING GUIDE

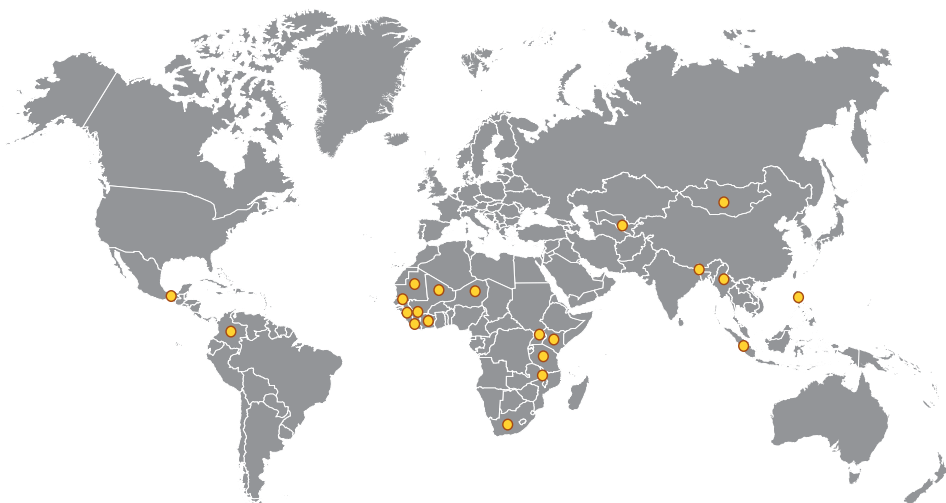
The Learning Guide uses **participatory and experiential learning, based on participants' active interaction and their direct experience on tenure**. The methodology follows a modular learning process of five main elements to gradually build the user's knowledge and capacities. This **modularity** allows for the guide to be adapted to the audience's needs, including knowledge level, CSO objectives, and specificities of the country tenure context.



### ACTIVITIES AT COUNTRY LEVEL

**AFRICA:** Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania. **ASIA & PACIFIC:** Indonesia, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines.

**EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA:** Kyrgyzstan. **LATIN AMERICA & CARIBBEAN:** Colombia, Guatemala.



# Mongolia

Tenure security has long been a fragile issue in Mongolia, with its legislature containing little guidance on tenure systems and governance of land, and further affected by changes towards a free market economy and rapid urbanization. This has led to a situation of tenure insecurity, with inequalities between rural and urban areas increasing, along with persistent poverty and gender gap.

The VGGT were officially presented to the Government of Mongolia and other stakeholders during a national workshop in Ulaanbaatar in October 2014. The VGGT were positively received and seen as a timely and important tool to strengthen and improve the country's legal framework.

Since then, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry (MOFALI), together with the support of the FAO country office and CSOs, has worked to establish a multi-stakeholder platform and a related working group to support the dissemination and implementation of the VGGT including specific capacity development activities. The VGGT and the FAO Governance of Tenure Technical Guides "Improving governance of pastoral lands" were officially translated into the Mongolian language, with printed copies made available during events held at the MOFALI and the Ministry of Environment and Tourism (MET).

While much effort had been made to disseminate the VGGT at government level, there was a need to train other stakeholders, in particular civil society, on governance matters and the VGGT principles. A second national workshop was held in November 2015, bringing a wider range of actors, to ensure improved participation in decision-making processes on legislation, in particular on the draft pastureland law and other land policies.

The Government certainly took many positive steps in improving its legal framework and involving stakeholders in protecting its resources. This show of political will provided a great opportunity for this project to enter and continue efforts in furthering capacity development and dissemination of the VGGT, particularly among civil society at local levels.

## Partnering with civil society

FAO partnered with the national NGO **People Centered Conservation Mongolia (PCC)** which particularly supports local people in defending and protecting natural resources. PCC has worked with communities on conservation matters and livelihood improvement in all the Mongolian provinces. Their expertise in protection of natural resources, wide network with communities across the country, and experience in capacity building and promoting participatory practices was an asset for this project.

In 2016, a Training of Trainers (ToT) was held in Ulaanbaatar, which trained around 30 people. A MOFALI representative presented the draft law on pastureland and discussed it with participants. Four case studies were developed and discussed during the workshop on a variety of tenure issues (such as forest tenure, pasturelands, land loss to mining industry, and urbanization). The workshop resulted in jointly developed action plans to implement the VGGT. The participating CSOs created an informal network to implement these plans, through which specific activities were decided on to bring the VGGT to herders in two selected local areas. These two pilot awareness-raising workshops sensitized around 100 herders on the VGGT and how it could be used locally. These workshops led to further consultations with the same communities on the draft law.

## Activities in the country

PCC together with FAO organized a number of capacity development activities in various parts of Mongolia as well as developed some key materials between 2016 and 2017.

The initial workshops fed into a follow-up series of activities in 2017, which included four trainings at regional level, bringing circa 50 participants to each workshop, discussing regional action plans. These regional action plans were then presented at a capacity development workshop held at national level.

Special attention was given to the media, with a specific awareness-raising workshop held for national and local media institutions (circa 30 representatives). PCC also produced a short advertisement on the VGGT for broadcast at national level.

In order to disseminate the information to the widest range of local actors, the VGGT and all promotional and training materials were translated and made available in Mongolian. Online material in support of VGGT implementation and the draft law were also published on civil society web pages. Further pedagogical material was produced in order to help clarify certain concepts and definitions of the VGGT, including 3-minute animated vide-

© **People Centered Conservation Mongolia (PCC)** is a Mongolian NGO established in 2006 working for the protection of natural resources through supporting local communities in being proactive in actions for protecting nature. PCC has implemented community-based conservation practices and researches, including local capacity building, local community participatory approaches and poverty alleviation throughout Mongolia.

## ACTIVITIES

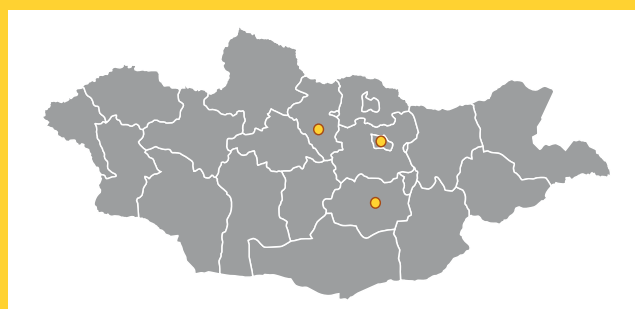
### Workshops:

- 1 ToT in Ulaanbaatar
- 2 awareness-raising workshops held in Selenge Soum (Bulgan province) and Khund soum (Dundgobi province)
- Community-level consultations on draft pasturelands law
- 4 regional capacity development workshops (North, South, West and East regions)
- 1 national capacity development workshop
- 1 awareness-raising workshop for media institutions
- 1 national multi-stakeholder workshop

### Other activities:

- 1 short VGGT advertisement for national broadcast

- Documentation of 4 case studies
- Development of online material published on CSO web pages
- Pedagogical material on VGGT concepts
- Animated 3-minute videos on key VGGT concepts\*
- Leaflet on the VGGT implementation at country level since 2014



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os. Finally, a leaflet presenting how the VGGT have been implemented in the country since 2014 was produced.

Building on this progress, the work of the national multistakeholder platform, and other VGGT-related activities (see below), another national multistakeholder workshop was organized in early 2018 (the fourth national workshop held since the Government of Mongolia began the work in 2014), bringing around 80 participants, to further the work particularly in relation to the pasturelands law. There are plans to continue the work beyond the scope of this project, further reaching grass-roots communities through trainings at local level.

## Links with other VGGT initiatives

The activities of the project were very closely linked with an already active and ongoing national process of VGGT implementation. In March 2015, a national Working Group (WG) was established to support the dissemination and the implementation of the VGGT, which met monthly to discuss and follow up on the various VGGT-related interventions. After the 3rd national workshop, in May 2016, a broader multistakeholder platform was established to discuss tenure-related issues at the national level in a more participatory way.

Five series of trainings, including trainings for CSOs ("Governing land for Women and Men"; "Implement Responsible Governance of Tenure" and "Safeguarding land tenure rights in the context of Agricultural investment"), successfully strengthened technical and institutional capacities for enhancing the dialogue on the VGGT. In these workshops, 120 people were trained, including representatives from the government, CSOs, research institutes and the private

sector. Learning programmes (both online and face-to-face) and mentoring sessions were an important part of these trainings.

In support of creating a legal framework for protecting pasturelands, the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Light Industry of Mongolia requested technical support in developing a law on pasture land and ensuring its alignment to the VGGT principles. The consultations were conducted in 134 provinces of 14 regions amongst 1128 participants (out of which 70% were herders) representing different social groups and all ecological regions of the country. The consultations were led by the Center for Policy Research (CPR) cooperating with the SDC's Green Gold Project, PCC, NGO and FAO-GEF project.

As a result of the various initiatives on VGGT, numerous activities to assess the state of current tenure laws and identify gaps and inconsistencies with VGGT principles led to Mongolia to use the VGGT to undertake an assessment of forest tenure governance in the country. This has given a chance to stakeholders from the forestry sector to partake in a similar consultative process on using the VGGT.

## Main areas of impact

The project had an impact on a number of areas, including strengthening CSO networks at provincial level, encouraging the exchange of experiences and proactive involvement in policy decision-making processes and increasing knowledge, participation and tenure security at the local level.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pcc.mn/37.html>

# Mongolia

For example, during the ToT in Ulaanbaatar, participants autonomously organized side events and experience-sharing meetings in order to develop an informal network. This network was further consolidated thanks to a cultural event where participants performed songs from their respective ethnic groups. The ToT also enhanced the spirit of collaboration between CSOs and the government on developing responsible governance of tenure and provided key spaces to present and discuss draft legislation such as the draft law on pasturelands.

Local level trainings increased community-level knowledge on the VGGT. Members of the community who took part in these trainings were able to better contribute to the consultations on the draft law on pasturelands that were held immediately after the workshops.

The translation of the VGGT and the training material was essential in facilitating their dissemination at local level. Participants discussed at length the appropriate terminology in the Mongolian language. This active involvement in the translation demonstrates the great level of ownership by CSOs and trained communities. Online learning material was also developed, written in a simpler language to increase the outreach of the VGGT basic contents. After the workshops, herders recognized the VGGT as a useful guide to secure their tenure rights over pastoral lands. Two trained CSOs, Mongolian Land Management Association and Steps Without Border, conducted consultation meetings on the draft law on pasturelands, analysing it in light of the VGGT. Moreover, after the ToT, representatives of Food Coalition conducted presentations on food security where they included their knowledge on the implementation of the VGGT in Mongolia.

<sup>1</sup> Project funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation in Mongolia: [https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/mongolia/en/Factsheet-GG\\_EN.pdf](https://www.eda.admin.ch/dam/countries/countries-content/mongolia/en/Factsheet-GG_EN.pdf)

## PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

- ✓ VGGT and training material translated and distributed in Mongolian.
- ✓ Previous sensitization of Government's officials through the implementation of trainings and workshops on the VGGT greatly facilitated the impact of this project.
- ✓ Previous drafting of the law on pasturelands included some VGGT principles. Therefore, it was possible to introduce and discuss the law with CSOs during the ToT and local workshops.
- ✓ Inter-sector issues are important and require continued discussion and strategy.
- ✓ Facilitating viable solutions to address the issues of mining licenses and the related conflicts with herders.



For more information on this project and FAO's work on the VGGT see:  
<http://www.fao.org/in-action/increase-use-of-vgmt-in-civil-society/en>  
<http://www.fao.org/elearning/#/elc/en/course/CSOMOB>

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