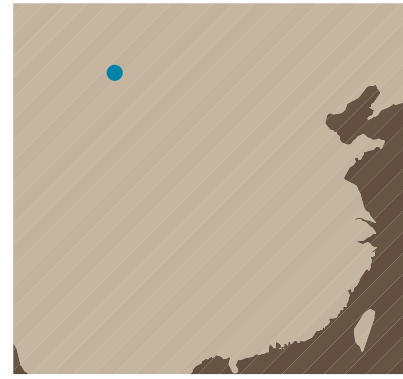


Case study 3: Rio Tinto in Mongolia

Gender sensitive baseline study

The project

Oyu Tolgoi, also known as Turquoise Hill, gold and copper project is located in the Aimag Umnugovi (south Gobi) in southern Mongolia, approximately 550km due south of Ulaanbaatar and 80km north of the Chinese-Mongolian border. An Ivanhoe-Rio Tinto Technical Committee will jointly engineer, construct and operate Ivanhoe's Oyu Tolgoi copper-gold mining complex. Ivanhoe Mines and Rio Tinto are currently co-operating with Members of the Mongolian Parliament to achieve a satisfactory conclusion of an investment agreement between Ivanhoe Mines and the Government of Mongolia.



Oyu Tolgoi
Mongolia (South Gobi)



The baseline study

There are several large mining projects in the pipeline in the Aimag Umnugovi, including Oyu Tolgoi, which will introduce a number of changes and impacts to the social, economic and physical environment of Aimag Umnugovi. Major infrastructure will be required to develop these mines, including rail, road and power infrastructure. In order to plan for these changes, it is important that stakeholders understand the current context of Aimag Umnugovi so that changes can be tracked over time.

In order to contextualise Aimag Umnugovi, the Oyu Tolgoi project funded a social baseline study to establish a set of reference points or indicators at the national, aimag (province) and soum (sub-province) level. The social baseline provides

a quantitative understanding of gender and other socio-economic and cultural aspects. The Oyu Tolgoi Communities team is also undertaking a social mapping exercise with families in the most immediate impact areas around the project site. This process will provide qualitative data and understanding and help to build relationships at the local level.

The baseline study used secondary sources for much of the national level data and conducted field research at the local household level. Focus group discussions (FGD) were used to gather qualitative data to complement the quantitative survey data. The groups were designed to ensure that all sections of society were represented, with gender being one of the main selection criteria. Detailed questionnaires comprising

43 sections with 417 questions were used to collect data from 1,325 households. Questionnaires covered representations from all social groups including women-headed households.

An Advisory Group (AG) comprising different stakeholders from different interest groups and areas of expertise, both within Mongolia and externally, guided the study and the final report to ensure that the data is accessible to those who may wish to utilise the findings in the future. The membership of the AG includes about one third women and approximately half of the research team were women, which helped to ensure that gender issues featured prominently in the study.



Some examples of gender-related aimag data procured from the baseline study

Category	Gender-specific findings – Aimag Umnugovi
Household dynamics and vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Around one fifth of the households are woman-headed. – Female participants from focus group discussions (FGD) felt that husbands should be the major breadwinner and they did not mind if wives engaged in paid jobs in addition to their housework. – Women’s participation in economic activities was reported to have significantly increased in recent years. – FGD participants reported that men/husbands and women/wives participate equally in making decisions regarding household property ownership and inheritances with household income distributed equally to household members. – Many FGD participants stated that domestic violence is fairly common in their communities.
Population and health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Births amongst adolescent girls account for 8.6 per cent of all births, a relatively high indicator in Mongolia. – Since 1980, fertility has declined by more than five children per household. – Life expectancy at birth for females (2005-2007) is 71.82, much higher than males, which is 61.21. – A decline in the sex ratio of the Mongolian population is expected: it is assumed that life expectancy at birth will widen due to women experiencing greater improvement in their life conditions than men.
Education and social institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – The absolute majority of people were literate: 96.6 per cent of men and 97.6 per cent of women. – The aimag has active organisations representing various social groups, including women, the elderly, Indigenous people, and environmental protection.

Key findings

The baseline report includes a description of Mongolian culture, which covers gender roles and responsibilities, both historically and currently. As stated in the report’s section on Mongolian culture, “unlike their counterparts elsewhere in Asia, Mongolian women historically enjoyed high status and freedom. Since fertility was valued over virginity, the Mongols did not place the same emphasis on female purity as found in the Islamic societies in Asia. Although women had legal equality with men under socialism, they were burdened with the responsibilities of housework and childcare as well as their labour for wages” (p35 *Social Economic and Environmental Baseline Study 2008*). The baseline report also touches on kinship relationship from the 13th century to date and more recent socialist system administrative arrangements that impacted traditional structures.

The Mongolian culture and nomadic way of life is described with a detailed account of husband and wife household workloads.

The study recognises the fast growing mining sector in Aimag Umnugovi, and details how residents want to benefit from new opportunities but at the same time ensure their concerns regarding losses of traditional culture, environmental degradation and social inequality are attended to. Notwithstanding, the baseline evaluates the process of development in the aimag, by means of an integrated focus that considers aspects of the economic, social, environmental and institutional elements of the region, inclusive of gender specific issues.

Next steps

Once the investment agreement is signed, Oyu Tolgoi will move to commission an intensive socio-economic and environmental impact assessment in the project area, and will use some of the information from the baseline study as a benchmark. The impact assessment team will be required to ensure that gender is considered in the methodology for the primary research.

For further information, the full English version of the study is available at: <http://en.umnugovi.mn/static/687.shtml?menu=817>. **3**