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1.1.

RATIONALE

Since 2015, Mongolia has been implementing rangeland change assessment through photo monitoring in order to regularly monitor short-term changes in rangeland condition and quality, provide objective assessments, and establish a relevant database. This work has been continuously organized by the GALAGC. As a result, Mongolia now has ten years of experience and a substantial information base for rangeland monitoring.

Photo monitoring data provide an important basis for identifying degraded rangelands, preventing further degradation, adjusting rangeland use, and incorporating restoration and management measures into land management plans.

In 2024, important amendments related to rangelands were introduced into relevant Mongolian legislation. These changes recognize rangelands not only as the foundation of traditional nomadic livestock husbandry, but also as natural resources that provide ecosystem services and support adaptation to climate change. They also provide a legal basis for rangeland management based on the collective organization of herders. This represents an important step towards reducing rangeland degradation, supporting restoration, and ensuring the sustainable development of the livestock sector.

The policy and legal basis for this work is reflected in several key documents.

- ✓ The long-term development policy, Vision 2050, approved by Resolution No. 52 of the State Great Khural of Mongolia in 2020, includes Objective 3.6 for 2021–2030. This objective calls for the implementation of a smart and citizen-centred integrated land administration and management system. Provision 3.6.10 states that a permanent monitoring system for land use and land monitoring shall be established, and that a system for land protection and restoration shall be developed.
- ✓ In addition, the Five-Year Development Guideline of Mongolia for 2026–2030, approved by Resolution No. 109 of the State Great Khural in 2025, include measures to improve monitoring of state-owned land by increasing the number of land monitoring points.
- ✓ The Action Plan for the implementation of the Government Programme of Mongolia for 2024–2028 also includes several measures related to rangelands, land monitoring and restoration.

These include:

- ✓ conducting quality verification of inter-aimag reserve rangelands as part of measures to restore, rotate, cultivate, protect and water rangelands, and improve plant protection;
- ✓ establishing an integrated land monitoring database, identifying severely degraded land by each land fund category, and establishing stationary research centres for reducing desertification and land degradation with representative ecosystems;
- ✓ developing a remote sensing module within the land monitoring digital system as part of the transition to faster, more productive and citizen-friendly digital government services.

The legal basis for monitoring changes in rangeland condition and quality, as well as for their sustainable use, protection and restoration, is further supported by the Law of Mongolia on Land. Relevant provisions include:

- ✓ Article 23.2.14, which provides for oversight of land protection, restoration and land management activities;
- ✓ Article 23.2.19, which provides for the operation of a monitoring network responsible for determining and assessing land condition and quality, and for monitoring changes in land quality at the national level;
- ✓ Article 52.1, which requires that the sustainable use, protection and restoration of rangelands be planned and implemented in stages through aimag land management general plans and annual soum land management plans;
- ✓ Article 52.2, which provides that rangelands shall be used according to general seasonal grazing arrangements, including winter, spring, summer and autumn pastures, reserve pastures and transit pastures, taking traditional use, sustainable use, protection and restoration requirements into account.

In 2024, the State Great Khural also adopted the Law on the Legal Status of Herder Household Associations. This law aims to support sustainable rangeland management, strengthen the collective organization of herders, promote livestock husbandry in line with rangeland carrying capacity, and support herder livelihoods. In connection with this law, Article 52.12 was added to the Law on Land. This provision requires the state central administrative body responsible for agriculture



A permanent and operational monitoring system for land use is established, and a system for land protection and restoration is developing.



and the state administrative body responsible for land matters to jointly approve the procedure and model agreement for granting rangeland use rights to primary herder household associations.

Furthermore, Government Resolution No. 91 of 2025 updated the Nationally Determined Contribution for the implementation of the Paris Agreement and defined Mongolia's NDC 3.0 targets. This document states that it is possible to restore at least 10 per cent of degraded rangelands in the forest steppe and steppe zones, and to improve greenhouse gas absorption capacity, by effectively applying traditional practices such as seasonal rangeland rotation and mobility, long-term resting of degraded rangelands, and regulation of livestock grazing pressure.

For these reasons, there is a growing need to strengthen the rangeland monitoring system, improve the database, integrate photo monitoring with remote sensing methods, and implement measures to reduce rangeland degradation and support restoration based on evidence at the planning and implementation levels.



A minimum of 10 percent of degraded rangelands within the forest steppe and steppe regions can be rehabilitated by reviving traditional nomadic practices of resting and rotating grazing.





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1.2.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this report is to provide a consolidated national assessment of changes in the condition and quality of Mongolia's rangelands based on photo monitoring results. It also aims to generate baseline information for rangeland use, protection, restoration, land management, local planning, and policy development.

To achieve this purpose, the report sets out the following objectives:

- ✓ to consolidate and assess changes in rangeland condition and quality at the national, regional and aimag levels;
- ✓ to assess changes in rangeland condition based on photo monitoring data by comparing them with reference levels for rangeland degradation and recovery class;
- ✓ to identify current grazing pressure, levels of degradation and trends in recovery class;
- ✓ to improve the use of monitoring results in soum land management plans, rangeland use regulation and restoration measures;
- ✓ to generate the evidence needed to develop practical recommendations for land managers, herders and local decision-makers.

In this way, the report represents a more advanced document than previous reports. It not only presents assessment results, but also interprets them in a user-oriented manner and links them to management decisions.



This report stands out as it presents the results in a user-focused way and connects them to management and implementation.

1.3.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report examines changes in the condition and quality of rangelands across Mongolia based on data from the national photo monitoring network. It covers the national assessment of rangeland condition, regional differences, trends in change, monitoring methodology, data processing, data use, technological development, cooperation, stakeholder participation and practical recommendations.

The scope of the report is not limited to ecological assessment. It also considers changes in rangeland condition in relation to land use, livestock husbandry, local management, the legal framework, information systems, capacity building and cooperation. This reflects the need to understand rangeland issues not only through natural conditions, but also through the interaction between use, coordination, policy and participation.



Besides ecological assessment, the report addresses land use, livestock management, local governance, the legal framework, information systems, capacity development, and coordination.

1.4.

PRINCIPLES AND DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE REPORT

The preparation of this report was guided by the following key principles.

FIRST, the report is evidence-based. It is built on multi-year photo monitoring data, national-level data processing and assessment against reference levels for rangeland condition. The comparison of photo monitoring results with reference levels provides the scientific and evidence-based foundation of the report.

SECOND, the report is application-oriented. The assessment results have been consolidated not only for reporting purposes, but also for practical use in preparing soum land management plans, adjusting rangeland use, planning restoration and protection measures, and providing information to local authorities, specialists and herders.

THIRD, the report takes into account the needs of different stakeholders. Information on rangeland condition is used by land managers, local decision-makers, herders, researchers and development partners for different purposes. Therefore, the structure and chapters of the report have been organized to support a wide range of uses, including policy development, planning, implementation, research and information dissemination.