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# *The Mongolia Monitor*

News from USAID/Mongolia

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## USAID PROGRAM NEWS

### STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: PRIVATE SECTOR-LED ECONOMIC GROWTH

#### **Economic Policy Reform and Competitiveness Project (EPRC)**

*Chemonics*

[www.eprc-chemonics.biz](http://www.eprc-chemonics.biz)

#### *Economic, Financial, and Trade Policy Support*

**Tax reform support.** EPRC, at the request of General Department of National Taxation's (GDNT) General Director, prepared an English brochure summarizing changes in the tax laws. The brochure contains the objectives of the tax reform, summaries of the four new tax laws and comparison matrices for each. A limited number of copies was printed for GDNT use in presentations to foreign investors.

**Implementation support for the new tax laws.** At the request of GDNT, the project prepared English version brochures of the new tax laws. These are being printed and are posted on different websites to facilitate access, including the GDNT website and EPRC's website ([www.eprc-chemonics.biz](http://www.eprc-chemonics.biz)). This will make the comparison matrices, tax statements and instructions available to English-speakers for the first time.

**Single window for trade facilitation.** Arranged by the project, three experts from the *Société Générale de Surveillance* (SGS) visited Mongolia to obtain first-hand information about current efforts to establish a single electronic window for trade facilitation. Philippe Isler, David Walker, and Chris Holden were in country from February 20-March 1. Based in Geneva, Mr. Isler is Project Manager for TradeNet, an SGS product for single electronic windows to facilitate trade. Mr. Walker is an SGS customs expert based in Dubai, and Mr. Holden is the Operations Manager of GCNet, the company that operates the Ghana single electronic window for trade. The visit of the SGS experts involved an intensive schedule of meetings with members of the Single Window Working Group, technical staff of agencies involved in trade, and private sector stakeholders. SGS ([www.sgs.com](http://www.sgs.com)) is a leading inspection, verification, testing, and certification company, with more than 43,000 employees in 140 countries and over 1,000 offices and laboratories around the

world. Through its TradeNet product SGS has become a major provider of electronic platforms for the exchange of trade-related data in Singapore, Mauritius, Ghana, Panama, and Saudi Arabia, with single electronic windows for trade currently under deployment in Côte d'Ivoire and Madagascar.

### *Competitiveness Support*

#### **Tourism**

**Reindeer people.** Recently, the Itgel Foundation, which has recently collaborated with EPRC, posted a new Tsaatan Community & Visitors' Center webpage. The page is operational and will serve to direct potential taiga visitors to the center, as well as inform project stakeholders and participants about this exciting project. The page can be found at [www.itgel.org/visitors\\_center.htm](http://www.itgel.org/visitors_center.htm).

**Horsemeat export.** EPRC has identified a significant potential market for horsemeat in Japan. The company "Kawasho Foods" has asked EPRC to survey slaughtering facilities in Darkhan and Erdenet prior to a planned visit to Mongolia later in the spring. The horsemeat is processed and canned in Japan to produce "Corned Horse Beef." Kawasho currently sources meat in France.

**Wild blueberry jam export.** Almost a year after the initial inquiry, the first consignment of wild blueberry jam was shipped to Japan on February 21<sup>st</sup>. This first shipment culminated efforts of the project to link Mongolian producer "Beneduct" and Japanese health food importer and distributor Pacific Trading. At the invitation of EPRC, representatives of the Japanese importer came to Mongolia to visit blueberry growing areas in the north and production facilities in Ulaanbaatar. At the end of the trip Pacific Trading signed a purchase order for 60,000 jars, with the first deliveries due toward the end of 2006.

### *Finance Support*

**Mongolia Mortgage Corporation (MIK).** EPRC continues to support MIK's work on its first securitization transaction. Khan Bank is nearing completion of due diligence on information for MIK review and analysis. The project will provide technical advice during negotiations among Khan Bank, MIK and the Bank of Mongolia (BoM) on structuring the transaction, including size, composition of the portfolio, and pricing.

**Secondary mortgage market.** Ashidmaa D., EPRC Business and Finance Advisor, attended a conference on Mortgage Backed Securities in Istanbul in February where she made contact with institutions potentially interested in providing assistance to develop the secondary mortgage market in Mongolia. IFC made an initial proposal on how they may participate.

**Credit Information Bureau.** On February 28<sup>th</sup>, the Mongolian Bankers Association (MBA) convened a meeting of senior bank executives to examine options to improve the services of the existing Credit Information Bureau. Nine commercial banks, two non-bank financial institutions, MBA executives and EPRC were represented at the meeting. After a review of the current status, possible courses of action, and discussion, the participants agreed to form a Working Group to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the organization of a private sector-controlled company to provide credit information services.

### *Energy Sector Support*

**Markets/tariffs.** The project has received an ERA proposal for the design of a competitive generation market. This effort will attempt to create competition among Central Energy System (CES) generating companies ("gencos") and prepare them and the National Dispatch Center for the advent of increasing competition in the future. This work will continue through the summer.

The ERA is continuing a series of meetings with the CES gencos to address and resolve their issues regarding the two-part genco tariff. The expected result will be approval by the ERA Board for the tariff methodology, which would constitute a major step forward.

**Energy sector strategy and planning.** In conjunction with assistance to develop an Energy Sector Master Plan, EPRC has continued the consensus-building task with selected MPs regarding the importance of a major upgrading in the sector and how it will benefit the GoM, industry and all citizens. The ERA has requested assistance to develop a public education program that will explain the role of the ERA as a regulator, what it is doing, and the benefits to the sector.

### *National Dialogue Support*

**National educational campaign on the new tax laws.** The first promotional spot for the new corporate, personal income and VAT tax laws was aired several times in February. The demo for the second spot was received; revision and approval will resume upon the return of GDNT's Deputy Director and Public Affairs Officer.

**Public communications handbook for public affairs officers.** Following training of GoM public affairs officers, subcontractor The Asia Foundation finished a Mongolian handbook for their use. The manual is currently being printed with assistance from the project and the Cabinet Secretariat will distribute it among GoM ministries and agencies.

## **The Gobi Initiative Phase II** ***Mercy Corps International and PACT***

**Gobi and GER Initiative clients sell \$140,000 in goods at market fair.** Mercy Corps, in partnership with the GER Initiative, organized a Tsagaan Sar Market Fair on February 9-11. The Market Fair exhibited products from 12 aimags including. The total sales generated by the 139 businesses present were MNT 163 million (\$139,900). Mercy Corps clients sold products worth MNT 58 million (\$49,785). The most popular items were dairy products. Approximately 16,000 people visited the Market Fair over three days, including the Prime Minister Mr. M. Enkhbold.

**Market fair in South Gobi nets \$5,000 in sales.** The 2007 Camel Airag Festival Market Fair was organized in Dalanzadgad, Umnugovi aimag on February 6-7. A total of 60 businesses sold products with a value of MNT 16 million (\$5,150). Approximately 6000 people visited the Fair.

**Gobi clients supply school lunch program.** Fourteen Gobi Initiative clients have contracts with soum schools to supply dairy and baked products under the GoM's School Tea Break program. The program is jointly implemented by the Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

**Total sales approach \$300,000.** To date total sales generated by GI clients has reached MNT 337.1 million (\$289,345), with the sales target for CY2007 for all GI clients being MNT 1.98 billion (\$1.7 billion). Herder clients have generated sales of MNT 126.6 million (\$108,660) and Non-herder clients have generated sales of MNT 210.5 million (\$180,685).

**New loans worth \$65,000 received.** In February, a total of 27 clients received loans worth MNT 75,620,000 (\$65,900) from three banks. Average collateral provided by the clients was 53.1% of the value of the loan, with the balance of collateral provided by Mercy Corps.

**First soum economic development master plan completed.** Delger soum (in Govi-Altai aimag) became the first soum to complete a socio-economic master plan with GI assistance. A total of 13 soums in the 6 Gobi aimags have been selected through a competitive process to

develop soum socio-economic master plans. Delger soum's plan will serve as a guide and example for others.

**New radio and tv series to be broadcast this spring.** Pact and Rural Business News (RBN) have completed the translation into English of the synopsis for the Radio Drama 'Directions' and TV series 'Final Destination'. The project has developed content and story lines to reflect seasonal activity and planning requirements. The two series will be broadcast in the spring.

**US Ambassador visits GI site.** The US Ambassador in Mongolia, Mr. Mark Minton, visited Dundgovi aimag in February, where he met with Mercy Corps clients and was introduced to the activities of the program representative office in the aimag.

## **The GER Initiative** *CHF International*

In February, GER helped to improve or expand 34 businesses, create 8 new startups, match 29 people to jobs, and generate 17 new job placements.

**Financial Services.** GER facilitated 99 loans worth \$90,755 and 27 Capital Augmentation Fund (CAF) loans worth \$18,400 this month. There are twenty five loans in arrears, nine defaults in facilitated loans and two defaulted CAF loans over the life of the program.

**Information.** GER provided information services to 303 clients this month. We distributed the first issue of our redesigned newspaper for free. We finished collecting and collating data for the 2006 khashaa survey report, based on 1053 surveys. Even with the Land Office data, it is still difficult to identify khashaas that have been sold in the past year. The survey results demonstrate that the price of khashaas in the Ger Areas continue to increase at all sites. For example in UB, the average increased from \$2,800 in 2005 to \$4,200 in 2006. (This, however, does not take into consideration the number of khashaas with permanent buildings on the property compared to last year's survey.) The full report should be finished next month.

**Linkages.** GER's facilitated sales and input linkages worth \$6,079 this month. GER identified sales linkages for 47 clients to 23 companies and input linkages for 18 clients to 9 companies. New relationships were established with Makh (Meat) Market and Churchill's.

**High-quality seeds distributed to clients.** GER received 5,700 packets of vegetable seeds from SEEDS Programs Inc., a US based NGO partner, and distributed them to more than 250 clients at all sites. We are distributing the seeds and providing training on their cultivation, as well as information about the vegetables' nutritional content, as many of the vegetables are not commonly eaten in Mongolia. There will be more trainings and consultations about growing, maintaining, and storing these vegetables throughout the year. We will track all clients' success and report back to the SEEDS Programs Inc.

**Holiday trade fairs earn \$30,000.** GER co-organized four Tsagaan Tsar fairs for 148 clients in Erdenet, UB, Choibalsan and Zuunmod. Total sales for all sites was over \$30,000. Partner organizations and sponsors included Dornod Employment Office, Dornod Business Incubator, Khaan Bank, Xac Bank, Mobicom, and Mercy Corp.

**Business Associations.** This month, GER provided services to 52 business groups including two new groups and one cooperative. The cooperative is "Jimst Dulaankhan" Cooperative. The cooperative is interested in expanding its operation from berry and juice canning to noodle and bakery production.

**Employment Services.** GER matched 29 clients to jobs this month. New relationships were established with OB Capital Company, Blue Pearl Center, UB Road Making Company and Elite Construction. We developed new trainings for employment clients on preparing for Job Interviews and Writing Resumes.

**Other.** GER Initiative increased service fees charged to clients by an average of 55% this month.

## **STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE #2**

### **MORE EFFECTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE**

#### **Judicial Reform Project (JRP)** *National Center for State Courts (NCSC)*

**Publication of General Prosecutor's Office annual report improves transparency.**

JRP funded the first ever publication of the annual report of the General Prosecutor's Office (GPO). The report provides information on trainings, management issues, foreign relations, procedures, public relations and the prosecutor's association. By providing public access to this information, the GPO is improving transparency and accountability. In future years, the GPO will publish the report without JRP financial assistance.

**Study will help investigative unit prevent crimes committed by police.** The Special Investigative Unit (SIU) has requested assistance in conducting a study on police crime (cause, circumstances, etc.) and developing recommendations/guidelines for its prevention. The Unit has requested assistance primarily in terms of the scope, methodology and techniques of the study in order to ensure accurate and reliable data collection. The Unit decided to conduct the study because most of the cases it investigates are crimes by police officers. The study will be conducted in cooperation with the Police Academy. The JRP will include this activity in its police expert's scope of work.

**JRP to automate three police stations in 2007.** The JRP will be piloting automation in 3 police stations in 2007. The General Police Department (GPD) submitted material on 5 locations for the project's review. The locations are Baganuur, Bayangol, Bayanzurkh, Khan-Uul District Police divisions and the Computer Skills Training Center. JRP has requested the GPD provide criteria and justification for selecting these locations before finalizing 3 locations.

**Computer trainings conducted in newly automated prosecutors' offices.** On February 5-6, 16 prosecutors received computer training following the recent automation of their offices. The training covered basic topics such as the configuration of a computer, downloading applications, understanding virus software, and the basics of the Internet.

#### **Mongolian Electoral and Parliamentary Support Project** *International Republican Institute (IRI)*

**IRI supports first open hearing of Parliamentary standing committee.** On February 6, IRI attended an open hearing on air pollution organized by the SGH Standing Committee on Nature, Environment, Food and Agriculture. This was the committee's first open hearing. The committee conducted an open hearing according to the relevant clauses of its Standing Committee rules. Six witnesses were invited to offer testimony. The Committee assumed responsibility for compiling recommendations made during the hearing, drawing conclusions, and subsequently,

seeking ways to reflect these recommendations in draft legislation. Prior to the meeting, IRI advised the Committee Chairman MP Bakei on open hearing practices.

**IRI supports public forum for an MP.** On February 3, IRI held a public forum for constituency #69 (UB), represented by MP Oyun. MP Oyun discussed legislation she will introduce during the spring session that would increase public access to government information.

## **Mongolia Anti-corruption Support Project**

### ***The Asia Foundation (TAF)***

**ACA begins staffing up.** The Anti-corruption Agency (ACA) recruited new staff in February and parliament ratified the appointment of Mr. Sunduisuren, ex-deputy head of State Investigation Department and prior deputy head of the UB City Police, on February 6<sup>th</sup>. The ACA also hired heads for the Investigations; Prevention, Public Awareness and Communications; and Asset & Income Disclosure Departments.

**TAF begins to engage new ACA staff, with focus on public awareness.** TAF staff met actively with ACA representatives over the month. TAF delivered preliminary Public Awareness and Communications training materials to the ACA on February 8<sup>th</sup> and will conduct a two-day training for staff on March 1st and 2nd.

**Former Hong Kong corruption agency official works with ACA.** TAF organized a visit on February 4-9 by Mr. Tony Kwok, ex-Deputy Commissioner of Hong Kong's Independent Commission against Corruption, who engaged ACA Head Dangaasuren and his staff on organizational and technical matters. Mr. Kwok prepared a Draft Action plan that will be the basis for a Business Plan and supplemental budget request that will be submitted to Parliament in the spring. In addition to ACA staff, Mr. Kwok met with Deputy Prosecutor General Mr Tserenbaltav, Deputy Speaker Mr. Lundeejantsan, Legal Advisor to the President Mr. Zumbrellham, Head of the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) Mr. Tomorbat, and others.

**Kwok outlines key challenges facing the new Anti-corruption Agency.** Mr. Kwok commended the Anti-corruption Law which guarantees the independence of the ACA and endows it with adequate investigative authorities. He praised the passage of the UN Convention against Corruption, and cited the appointment of a respected head and active donor support as strengths of the new agency. Among the weaknesses that were of greatest concern, he highlighted the lack of staff and budgetary resources which he tied to a lack of government will, the absence of Criminal Code clauses on Illicit Enrichment, and limits on ACA jurisdiction to investigate corruption-related offenses.

**Follow-up sub-grant will increase the number of corruption hotlines.** In February, the Asia Foundation signed a follow-on grant to The Academy for Political Education (APE) to expand the number of corruption-reporting hotlines from six to nine aimags, and to Ulaanbaatar. The three new aimags where the hotlines will be established are Erdenet, Umnugobi, and Selenge. The call center that will be established in Ulaanbaatar will be staffed by three operators that will field calls and refer them to the appropriate local government agency in the instance of reports of institutional corruption, and to the ACA in the instance of reports of individual corruption. This has been coordinated with the ACA.

**Donors to coordinate assistance to ACA.** TAF continued to work actively with the World Bank in February to assemble a complement of technical advisors to deliver assistance in establishing the Anti-Corruption Agency. The World Bank hosted a donor-coordinating session on February 2nd that included Mr. Dangasuuren, his Deputy Designate Mr. Sunduisuren, and Mr. Munkh Orgil, Chair of the Legislative Steering Committee in Parliament. Representatives from the ADB, UNDP, USAID and the Japanese Embassy participated. Mr. Munkh Orgil nominated the World Bank to serve as the coordinator for all donor-provided assistance to the ACA, and this motion was seconded by Mr. Dangaasuren. The World Bank pledged ongoing support under its Governance Assistance Project for broad organizational assistance, and for more specific interventions associated with the introduction of Asset & Income Disclosure, which comes into force on June 15 for all civil servants.

## **OTHER USAID/MONGOLIA PROJECTS**

### **Eastern Steppe Living Landscape Project**

#### ***Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS)***

In February the WCS/USAID Eastern Steppe program planned 2007 field-based wildlife conservation activities for the Eastern Steppe and prepared for the semi-annual Living Landscapes meetings to be held in the Adirondack Mountains of New York in May 2007. Additional activities in February included meetings to coordinate activities and the planning of future initiatives with our conservation partners in Mongolia including the World Bank's Netherlands-Mongolia Trust Fund for Environmental Reform, the World-Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Mongolia and the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ) program "Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources" in Mongolia.

**Living Landscapes Program (LLP).** With WCS-Mongolia Living Landscapes team has worked closely with our New York-based support unit in February to finalize the LLP models (**biological, human and conservation landscapes**) for the Eastern Steppe. Once finalized, the models will be used to set specific targets levels (population levels) for selected Eastern Steppe Landscape species. Much of February was spent confirming our assessments of the current distribution and population sizes of the selected species. This population target setting process will allow the project and Eastern Steppe stakeholders to make explicit plans for future conservation programs and interventions needed to meet the defined targets. The **Landscape Species Approach** is a conservation planning tool used to identify conservation opportunities and priorities based on the diverse ecological needs of key wildlife species and the geographic location and severity of wildlife/human conflict.

**Mongolian Gazelle Research and Conservation.** The Mongolian Gazelle, *Procapra guttorosa*, is featured in the "Great Plains" section of the landmark BBC TV series Planet Earth, which has captured some of the most spectacular footage of wildlife and natural events ever seen. The Mongolian gazelle is one of the Eastern Steppe Landscape species and has been the focus of WCS research since 1998. WCS field staff worked closely with the BBC crew over three years (2002-2005) to facilitate their filming of the gazelle herds. The migration of this population across Mongolia is the last large scale migration of ungulates in Asia. The "Great Plains" component of the BBC Planet Earth series was first shown in November 2006. The entire Planet Earth series is now available on DVD. The WCS-sponsored monthly conservation networking event will be showcasing the episodes featuring Mongolia and regional wildlife in April 2007.

**Community-Based Conservation on the Eastern Steppe.** In February WCS/USAID Eastern Steppe project staff worked with the director of the Eastern Mongolian Community Conservation Association (EMCCA) to plan a May workshop designed to provide the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of training to

newly appointed community wildlife rangers. The WCS/USAID Eastern Steppe project is compiling material for a "community wildlife ranger manual" which will be used in the training and will be provided to community rangers. This initiative is an example of the technical assistance the Eastern Steppe project is providing to the EMCCA members who have expressed their interest in engaging in environmental monitoring and wildlife protection as the main components of their community conservation activities.

**Avian Influenza.** The WCS Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance (GAINS) program sponsored three Mongolians to attend an Avian Influenza Surveillance Training Course organized by the Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust (WWT) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) from February 18-23, 2007, at the WWT Slimbridge Centre in Gloucestershire, United Kingdom. The Mongolian attendees represented the State Central Veterinary Agency, the Ornithology Laboratory of the Mongolian Academy of Sciences, and the WCS/USAID Mongolia avian influenza project team. The three training participants have returned to Mongolia and report that the training, which focused on wild bird capture and sampling for avian influenza, was a great success. The training participants will be members of the 2007 WCS GAINS avian influenza surveillance initiatives in Mongolia. WCS Field Veterinarian, Dr. Martin Gilbert, also participated in the WWT/FAO training to further mentor the Mongolian participants. The techniques and methods demonstrated at the training will be used in Mongolia in 2007, allowing further opportunities for capacity building in avian influenza surveillance in wild birds in Mongolia.

### **Training, Advocacy and Networking (TAN) Project** *Mercy Corps International*

**Updates on community projects.** Currently there are 7 community projects implemented in 5 aimags. The Khentii Deep Water Well Project has completed their work on constructing a well house and preparing the well to be handed over in March. The soum government has raised additional MNT 700,000 (\$602) from World Vision to remove garbage from the area around the well. The Arkhangai Youth Training and Information Centre has engaged 50 young people in project activities during the last 3 months, including bagh meetings, computer training, and visits to the youth center to use internet facilities. The Dundgobi Green Zone project, which constructed a 150 meter bridge and 35 meter path to address the consequences of desertification, has handed the complete project over to the local government and community. The Uvurkhangaï Unemployment Reduction project provided training on business management and legal issues to 40 people (33 women and 7 men). Following the training 7 people applied to receive small credits. Out of 7 people, 5 wrote project proposals to expand their business and signed agreements with the banks. The Bulgan Alcoholics Anonymous Association visited 26 families of people who have alcohol abuse problems in order to discuss strategies for jointly assisting their family members. The project team is currently working on training materials to be used with project clients.

**Internal audit of grants conducted.** Mercy Corps Mongolia conducted an internal audit of grants in Arkhangai, Bulgan and Khenti. The audit provided recommendations for partners to improve their financial and accounting systems, internal controls and financial procedures. The findings and recommendations were discussed in a team meeting, where the group decided to review grant financial guidelines and provide training for all grantees at the start of project activities.

**CSO Network Support.** Networks had their regular meetings in the aimags and discussed the implementation of the network strategic plans and other issues. A network survey was conducted in 5 aimags to find out how much ordinary citizens know about the activities of the CSO network and individual CSOs. The network in Dundgobi aimag discussed the possibility of carrying out their own research on the transparency and accountability of local government in order to



formulate their plans and to improve their efforts in this area. TAN provided training for 18 CSOs in Dundgobi and Uvurkhangaigai on Organizational Plan Development and provided consultation on conducting internal surveys to assess organizational capacity and external surveys to assess the outreach of the CSO to their constituents. Local ToT trainers consulted with several CSOs on topics including project development, fund-raising and citizen's participation. The trainers requested more resources and materials to conduct consulting work for CSOs.

## **PACT Community REACH HIV/AIDS Grant** **PACT**

The National Aids Foundation (NAF) has purchased a centrifuge that is enabling mobile voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) services. This will increase access to a discreet VCT service, which is especially needed outside of Ulaanbaatar, where breeches of confidentiality inhibit voluntary testing.

**Subgrantee NAF reaches out to female sex workers (FSWs).** In the past month, NAF visited two sites - Zamiin-Uud soum of Dornogovi province and the Erlian border port between China and Mongolia. Eighty-four FSWs and seven commercial sex clients were given pre- and post-test counseling, and all received their test result. Eleven people were diagnosed with an STI (sexually transmitted disease).

**Subgrantee Together continues outreach to men who have sex with men (MSMs).** The Mongolian NGO *Together* used the NAF centrifuge to conduct rapid VCT for twenty MSMs in February. All received their test result. Based on the results, three were then referred for HIV/AIDS counseling and testing at the Red Ribbon Hospital – a clinic based at the Government facility, the National Centre for Communicable Diseases (NCCD). Two of these people were diagnosed with HIV and another was infected with an STI. Another case was then identified through testing of contacts of one of the positive cases. One hundred and thirty calls requesting counseling services and information on STI symptoms were made to the hotline targeting MSMs. Advice on STI treatment and the importance of voluntary counseling and testing was delivered.

**Confidentiality in HIV testing still lacking in Mongolia.** The Red Ribbon Clinic keeps statistics on the number of tests they conduct and send data (including the name of the person) on all positive cases, to the STI/HIV Aids 'Cabinet' within the NCCD. From time to time, they are asked by the Ministry of Health to provide information on the 'positive' cases. Officials currently put the number of positive cases nationwide at 28, while the UN estimates there must be at least 500 cases in Mongolia. The counseling and voluntary testing support delivered through REACH is building a more accurate profile of national statistics. It does so by providing VCT for individuals to be tested without their identity being disclosed and increasingly in areas where testing is difficult to access. The results are reported to the NCCD via coded information. People who show positive results in the rapid test are counseled and referred to the Red Ribbon Hospital where they are at greater risk of losing their anonymity.

### **Pact Base line Study on Knowledge and Awareness about HIV/Aids**

Research exists to indicate that the Mongolian population has a high level of awareness about HIV/Aids and the main ways in which it can be prevented. Equally, research confirms a low level of preventative behavior and a high level of sexual activity, alarmingly so among young people, who are highly represented in the data as not using any of the possible preventative measures.

Other worrisome indicators indicate that an HIV epidemic may be on the horizon, but these are not well linked across the country. One example of this is deaths caused by TB and pneumonia outside of Ulaanbaatar. In the city, these patients are tested under mandatory testing regulations. This is not implemented consistently in rural areas. Just under 50% of all reported infectious

diseases nationally are STIs. Research indicates a high level of self-treatment, which if reported would increase this statistic. There are an estimated 19,000 female sex workers in UB alone. They report not being able to negotiate condom use with 15% of their clients.

There has been little analysis of the human rights aspects of HIV and the attitudes surrounding HIV, including stigma and discrimination. The Mongolian Parliament ratified a law on HIV/Aids in 1993. A 2004 amendment included a section protecting human rights and prohibiting discrimination.

Pact is currently compiling early results of a base line study to measure knowledge, misconceptions and attitudes about privacy and the rights of people living with HIV. Consultations are in progress with the MSM community on a public awareness campaign to address some of the emergent issues. The outcome messages will not necessarily relate directly to MSMs.

In principle, among health professionals, it is agreed that the identities of people returning positive HIV results will not be disclosed. However, not all people who have access to the data have been sensitized to this, and the protection of patient confidentiality remains a problem at all levels of the health care system.

Some of the findings of Pact's survey illustrate attitudes that are not aligned with national human rights legislation or global standards:

- A third of respondents think the government should force people who are suspected or at high risk of infection to be tested.
- A similar number of respondents felt positive people need to be known and avoided.
- There is a high level of misconception about transmission routes in communal areas such as workplaces and eating areas.
- Just under half of respondents thought that HIV positive women who become pregnant should be forced to have an abortion.