

ASSESSING THE BENEFITS OF THE GTZ-GOBI INITIATIVE TO PEOPLE AND BIODIVERSITY

- Working title: *Gobi grasslands: how the GTZ-Gobi initiative contributed to poverty reduction and conserved grasslands biodiversity.*
- Approach: Partners organizations and local experts contribute to a strong analytical study that shows the quantitative and qualitative evidence for conservation and poverty reduction in the GTZ-funded Gobi Component of the Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in Mongolia Program (GTZ-Gobi project).
- Hypothesis: Intensive rangeland management with frequent rotation of livestock to new grazing areas increased the productivity of the herds and strengthened the social fabric of the communities while decreasing the pressure on wildlife.
- Scope: Assessing changes in poverty levels and conservation indicators for approximately 5,000 people and 2,700,000 ha within the GTZ-Gobi project.
- Objectives: (1) identify success factors in GTZ-Gobi project that can be replicated in other sites; and (2) quantitatively determine actual benefits to the communities and the grasslands from the GTZ-Gobi project.
- Partners: The Nature Conservancy (TNC), VU University in Amsterdam, GTZ (?), New Zealand Nature Institute (NZNI), Initiative for People Centered Conservation (IPECON) and the project communities.
- Outputs: An empirical analysis of the GTZ-Gobi project using quantitative and qualitative tools to provide the numbers and the stories behind the numbers.
- Field team: A natural resource economist from VU University, a senior geographer from TNC, and 2 graduate students from VU University, collaborating with community leaders, NZNI/IPECON, and 6 Mongolian team members (plus local guides/former social mobilisers) to conduct household surveys and assist with the field work.
- Timeframe: Analysis and write-up to be completed within 10 months of partner Memorandum of Agreement signing.

Site selection

The GTZ-Gobi project will be part of a larger 3-country grasslands study that uses a similar methodology and tools to study 3 very different grassland conservation initiatives in Mongolia, Kenya and South Africa. The overall aim is to identify success factors common to the 3 grassland conservation initiatives. The 3 study sites were selected using a “positive deviance” methodology. The [Positive Deviance Initiative](#) at Tufts University describes it thus: “Positive Deviance is based on the observation that in every community there are certain individuals or groups whose uncommon behaviors and strategies enable them to find better solutions to problems than their peers, while having access to the same resources and facing similar or worse challenges.” The study team believes the GTZ-Gobi project is deviant in a positive way within grasslands conservation and its success factors may be replicable elsewhere.

A local site expert will be asked to be an advisor to the study team. The local site expert will help to ensure the field team works in a culturally sensitive and locally appropriate way. The local site expert will also provide introduction to local leaders and other local study partners.

The field work uses the World Bank’s poverty and social impact analysis [tools](#). This is a best-practice combination of qualitative and quantitative assessments. It is an evidence-based approach that collects both the numbers and the stories behind the numbers.

Poverty data collection

Data are collected using a triangulation technique. The first point of the data triangle is the household surveys. Sufficient households are surveyed to give a 95 percent confidence interval—around 300 households for this site. 200 of the surveys are conducted in the project area and 100 in control sites. Control sites are carefully selected using the [general framework](#) developed by 2009 Nobel Prize winner Elinor Ostrom on community management of natural resources. The control site selection criteria include 15 ecological and socioeconomic parameters.

For the household surveys, the field team will develop a household questionnaire in partnership with several local people and the local site expert. This questionnaire will be translated and tested in about a dozen households and revised as needed to ensure the questions are understood and relevant. After the pre-testing, 4 to 6 enumerators are trained to conduct the household surveys. These enumerators need to speak the local language fluently and be trusted by the community.

The second point of the data triangle is to conduct focus group discussions and key informant interviews. All these meetings are conducted in the local language with a facilitator and bilingual recorder taking notes in English. These discussions and interviews provide the stories to explain the numbers and corroborate the household-survey findings.

The third point of the data triangle is semi-structured interviews identifying changes over time. Here non-leading, neutral questions are asked to households about key elements of poverty and conservation. These questions measure perceived changes over time.

When the three sources of data are combined and they all agree, there can be some confidence the findings are accurate.

The field team provides some direct benefits to the community in exchange for their time (e.g., food and drink during discussions).

Poverty indicators

This analysis uses the World Bank’s definition of poverty because this is a well-regarded, widely used, multi-dimensional definition. It has three elements: opportunity, empowerment and security. “Opportunity” covers income, assets and education. “Empowerment” covers access to and control over local decision-making, public services, and resources. “Security” covers the risk of dropping below the poverty line due to a shock such as a health crisis, loss of income, or natural disaster.

The field team will use 11 indicators to measure changes in poverty: income, housing type, durable goods, natural resource use, education, alternative livelihoods, governance mechanisms, community participation, benefits to women, health, and social cohesion.



Income	Governance mechanisms	Health
Housing type	Community participation	Social cohesion
Durable goods	Benefits to ♀	
Natural resource use		
Education		
Alternative livelihoods		

All of these indicators were used successfully to measure socio-economic changes in TNC's 2007 marine protected areas and poverty reduction [study](#).

Both quantitative and qualitative information are collected for each indicator. The household surveys provide the quantitative, and the focus group discussions and key informant interviews provide the qualitative.

Poverty analysis

Statistical analysis is done for each indicator with the project site data compared to the control site data. Most of the quantitative information will be presented graphically. The write up of the analysis will blend quotes from local people with the numbers. It will use people's own words wherever possible to explain what worked and how it worked.

Biodiversity assessment methodology

The biodiversity assessment will build to the extent possible on existing data and surveys, such as wildlife and habitat surveys, mapping of ecosystems, and threatened species data. The key tool for the habitat assessment will be using multi-year satellite imagery to compare condition of the habitat in the project area with control sites where the precipitation, soil, latitude and longitude are approximately the same. This approach uses an analytical tool developed by NASA to measure the changes quantitatively. If possible, the study will use recent high-resolution data to provide a fine-scale change analysis of the study and control sites.

Timing

The GTZ-Gobi project study field work will take approximately 30 days in June and July 2010. The analysis and write up is expected to be completed in November 2010.