

# **Innovative good practices for inclusive and gender-equitable land governance, land management and landscape development planning in Mongolia**

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**Key words:** Access to land; Capacity building; Land management; Security of tenure

## **SUMMARY**

The WOLTS (Women's Land Tenure Security) Project has been implemented in Mongolia since late 2015. From the start we worked closely with the National Land Agency (ALAMGAC) to amplify efforts to develop inclusive and gender-sensitive land governance tools to address climate-related social and economic challenges facing Mongolian herders, to support implementation of the VGGTs and achievement of the SDGs. Key here is pastureland degradation, resulting in decreased livestock productivity which impacts family livelihoods and social norms and structures.

WOLTS promotes participatory engagement in local land governance, with all men and women encouraged to be part of decision-making on land. Along with our efforts to strengthen capacity of locally-chosen Gender and Land Champions, this was recognized by ALAMGAC, leading to development of new 'Gender Guidelines' for inclusion in broader national guidelines for local landscape development planning. The WOLTS team worked closely with local herders to develop the new guidelines that were endorsed by ALAMGAC and introduced to over 300 land officers around Mongolia in late 2021 via online training, and in-person to higher-level land officers from every province in late 2022, with WOLTS Champions also taking part in the training to share their experiences with senior government. Initial feedback suggests the guidelines are beginning to be used in practice, with donors supporting additional training in districts undergoing donor-funded landscape planning.

The Gender Guidelines support herders to plan for sustainable pastureland management as full and effective participants alongside local leaders, with positive impacts for local land governance.

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Increasing awareness of the importance of gender-equitable participation in land governance has also strengthened herders confidence to defend their land rights when these are challenged by mining companies not respecting licensing processes or environmental standards, as demonstrated at a recent successful protest in the capital. The authors show that addressing gender equity, participation and inclusion must be essential parts of successful solutions to managing competing interests in land and need now to be formally adopted in national land planning legislation and rolled out fully across all districts. This will also support security of tenure and access to land for all. The approach taken offers valuable lessons for other pastoral landscapes and beyond.

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