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FINAL REPORT

PROJECT 46.09.06

SUPPORT HERDERS INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH COMMUNITY MANAGED AREAS AT THE BORDERS OF BUREN AND BAYAN-UNJUUL SOUMS OF TUV AIMAG

General view of winter camp of herder family at the Argali wild sheep (*Ovis ammon*) ***habitats near the Unjuul mountain area***

DECEMBER 2007

CONTENT

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Aimag	Second level of Government; largest political territorial division in Mongolia (English equivalent: “province”)
Soum	Third level of Government; second largest political territorial division in Mongolia (English equivalent: “district”)
Bag	Fourth level of Government; smallest political territorial division in Mongolia
Sum Khural	District citizen representative
Ger	Traditional nomad dwelling

Abbreviations

CBWM	Community Based Wildlife Management
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
GPS	Global Positioning System
MNE	Ministry of Nature and Environment
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NP	National Park

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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We also want to express our sincere thanks to Mr. Budsuren. B (the herder community leader), Mr. Togoldor.E (Field biologist and research worker of “Argali” research center), Ms. Ichinnorov.M (herder group member), Mr. Batchuluun.B (herder group member), Mr. Mandakh (volunteer ranger from herder group), Ms. Namjilmaa (State inspector for Nature and Environment from Bayan-Unjuul soum) for constant support and active involvement during the planning process and survey to visit the respective sites in the area.

We are extremely thankful to all stakeholders and local communities who live around the Unjuul mountain area for their involvement, understanding and support the team in the implementation of the project activities.

SUPPORT HERDERS INITIATIVE TO ESTABLISH COMMUNITY MANAGED AREAS AT THE BORDERS OF BUREN AND BAYAN-UNJUUL SOUMS OF TUV AIMAG

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SUMMARY

The Argali wild sheep's historical home range is threatened of disappearance and the planned area is one of them in Mongolia. The focus of this particular project was to build local level capacity through establishment of community managed area while supporting the herders' initiatives. The report presents activities and achievements from February 2007 to January 2008 as set in the project document.

Two communities established in the planned area and two more communities formed outside of the area in the Bayan-Unjuul soum territory and they addressed to the project to help to get a non-governmental organization (NGO) status. A small management plan developed with participation of community members and baseline data collected and available for the area. The communities need to strengthened and supported in developing alternative income generation activities for sustainability of the conservation efforts and to improve livelihoods of the herders. Besides the promotion of community based approach there are needs to develop scientifically based active management. We suggested a creation of Argali breeding and study centre at the site along with the community managed area during the project implementation. The Institute of Biology Academy of sciences agreed on cooperation and the Ministry of Nature and the Environment of Mongolia passed a resolution about to support the proposal at the Minister's board meeting in July 11, 2007.

INTRODUCTION

The population of argali in Mongolia seems to be declining rapidly due primarily to poaching and competition with domestic sheep and goats, which have increased over the past decade. At the same time, argali trophy hunting has been increasing (Amgalanbaatar.S, Reading.R.P, Lkhagvasuren.B & Batsukh.N. Mountain Ungulates Research 2002).

Official government figures from Mongolia's Scientific Authority (the Mongolian Academy of Sciences) estimated 50,000 argali in 1975, 60,000 animals in 1985, but only 13-15,000 in 2001 (Dulamtseren et al. 1975, General & Experimental Biological Institute 1986, Institute of Biology 2001). The estimated area inhabited by argali declined from about 264,000 km^2 in 1985 to about 48,000 km^2 in 2001 (General & Experimental Biological Institute 1986, Institute of Biology 2001).

Argali undoubtedly suffer from competition with livestock, particularly domestic sheep and goats, for limited forage and water (Mallon et al. 1997, Amgalanbaatar and Reading 2000, Schuerholz 2001). Livestock numbers in Mongolia increased dramatically after the fall of communism, but especially after 1993 when most herds were privatized (Amgalanbaatar and Reading 2000, Shagdarsuren, 1999). The total number of livestock in Mongolia increased from 24.7 million animals in 1989 to 32.9 million in 1998, or an increase of 33.2% (Bajiikhuu et al. 1998, 1999). Much of this increase can be attributed to increasing numbers of cashmere goats, which produce highly marketable wool. Goat numbers have grown from 4.96 million animals in 1989 to 11.06 million animals in 1998, or a 123% increase (Bajiikhuu et al. 1998, 1999). This has resulted in substantial degradation of pasturelands throughout large portions of the country (Schuerholz 2001, Finch 2002). In addition, as the number of livestock increases, herders move their animals into more marginal lands that were traditionally little grazed, often displacing wild ungulates in the process (Lushchekina 1994, Mallon et al. 1997, Amgalanbaatar and Reading 2000, Schuerholz 2001). Poaching is another major and growing cause of argali decline in Mongolia (Mallon et al. 1997, Amgalanbaatar and Reading 2000).

Other threats to Mongolia include habitat degradation due to off-road vehicle use, mining operations, and possibly desertification due to global warming. Trophy hunting poses less of a threat, at least given the relatively low recent quotas, but could affect local populations if not well managed. Removal of all trophy sized males from a population or an excessive amount of activity associated with trophy hunting could negatively impact a hunted population, although this has not been well studied (Wegge 1997, Schuerholz 2001, Shackleton 2001). Alternatively, the presence of trophy hunters could deter poaching and, if funds generated from trophy hunting were used for conservation, the overall impact of well-managed trophy hunting to the harvested population could even be positive (Johnston 1997, Shackleton 2001).

The estimates of the last 3 surveys of argali during the last 26 years suggest that argali population rapidly decreasing mostly due to human influences. These factors are maybe hunting, habitat degradation, and competition with livestock for forage and water. All these factors are examples of the mismanagement of argali, which or later may cause complete extinction of this species (Amgalanbaatar S, Reading. R.P, Lkhagvasuren. B & Batsukh N. Mountain Ungulates Research 2002).

Finally, the traditional herding practices and nomadic way of lifestyle will not be changed for a long time in Mongolia therefore it need to be developed and introduced different appropriate adaptive managements, combination of solutions that could promote and improve living standards and livelihoods of a local people. It

is clear that any conservation activities will not have success if it will ignore the native people who are living in harmony with the nature in generation to generation.

The project purpose was to promote community based conservation and sustainable natural resource management approach in the mountain-steppe by establishing herder's community managed areas basing on protection of Argali wild sheep (Ovis ammon) as a key species.

The Argali are the most important game species for big horn trophy hunting but little material benefit to the impoverished local people.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the project were:

- Establish community managed conservation areas at the borders of Buren and Bayan-Unjuul soums of Tuv aimag
- Train also the stakeholders on wildlife and sustainable natural resource management and the promotion of the income generating activities, etc.
- Biological and socioeconomic data collection and analysis - mostly based on available information both at the national and local level and including collected information and data during the field activities.
- Design and identify boundaries of the planned community managed conservation areas and mapping involving local communities.
- Development of draft management plans for community managed areas.
- Prepare and submit herder's communities proposal to the Citizen's
- Representatives Meeting of two soums and aimag for final decision making and approval

METHODOLOGY

In order to make a sound analysis basing on the active participation of the local herders, herders' communities, local government officials and private sector representatives, we used the following main tools of the PRA methods such as:

- *Participatory Resource Mapping:* Pasture, natural resources and their usage,
- infrastructure and location of herding households, and their nomadic movements and patterns of pasture use;
- *Matrix Ranking & Scoring* ***:*** evaluation of the profitability of animal products, workloads of the man and women, types of the animals, and other means of income from the animals for the herders;
- *Time line and Seasonality diagram****:*** Income distribution, cash need, and work load of the man and women;

- *Vein Diagram:* Livelihood income and expense, herd structure and utilization of the wells and other resources;

- Semi Structured Interview*:* Problems of the herders and livestock production and ways to overcome the challenges

- Focused Group Discussion*:* meeting with herders and groups who are intending to get a NGO status and discussion with the representatives of the related local authorities to make an analysis on the situations;

PROJECT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

1. GENERAL INFORMATION COLLECTION ON THE SITE

PROJECT SITE: As a result of analysis of appropriate research data and information the South and North Unjuul, Bichigt, Argali mountain areas of Buren and Bayan-Unjuul soums (village) territory of Tuv aimag (province) that locate in the central steppe zone part of Mongolia were selected as a more suitable place for creation of community managed area. The site situates 185 km far from to the south west of Ulaanbaatar. Survey data says that Argali sheep distribution area covers 322 sq km or 2.03-5.08 percent of the Tuv aimag territory and there were observed trends to expand its range and increases in numbers during the last few years. 285 Argali sheep estimated in the selected area and the density is 3 individual animals in 1000 ha. This is the 1.9 percent from the total of country resources.

The selected site serves as a crossroad of moving and migrating point of the central steppe part's Argali sheep.

Latitude	47° 07' 52" N	46° 52' S
Longitude	105° 29' W	105° 30' E

BENEFICIARIES: 26 households with 140 from Bayan-Unjuul soum, 44 households with 223 family members from Buren soum and totally 70 households with 363 people and 94916.7 ha territory with 15474 livestock inhabiting in the area.

NATURAL AND CLIMATE CONDITION

Geographical location. The selected project site or South, North Unjuul, Bichigt and Erdenekhairkhan mountain groups at the borders of Buren and Bayan-Unjuul soums (village) territory of Tuv aimag (province) locates 1300 m above sea level in the central steppe zone part of Mongolia. The area situates 25-30 km from both soum centres, 172 km from Tuv aimag center Zuunmod city and 185 km far from to the south west of Ulaanbaatar. The area is characterized by mid-low hills and higher mountains with deep breaks of steppe zone whose top - and north-facing slopes are rocky with cliffs and the rocky terrains often last 100-300 m. The area is 94916.7 ha or 11.0 percent from the total territories of Bayan-Unjuul (482762 ha) and Buren (377947) soums.

The south Unjuul (1820 m), north Unjuul (1735m) and Erdenekhangai (1698 m) mountain areas are untouched and have many specific natural features.

Climate. The climate is sharply continental with well-marked seasons of the year. It is characterized by large diurnal and annual variations in temperature. The temperature reaches +29ºC in July during the hottest month and -23ºC in January. The annual average precipitation is 273 mm. It is very usual that the dry weather lasts from mid of spring until mid of summer seasons in the area.

Fauna and flora. The area has a fauna that includes a number of globally and nationally threatened species such as Argali sheep (*Ovis ammon*), Siberian ibex (*Capra sibirica*), Black tailed gazelle (*Gazelle subgutturosa*), Mongolian gazelle (*Procapra gutturosa*), Grey wolf (*Canis lupus*), Eurasian lynx (*Felis linx*), Manul (*Felis manul*, or Pallas' cat) Corsac fox (*Vulpes corsac*), Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*), Cenereous vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), Steppe eagle (*Aquila rapax*), Saker falkon (*Falco cherrug*). And the site is also home to many other important species such as Red deer/Elk (*Cervus elaphus*), Roe deer (*Capreolus pygargus*), Badge (*Meles meles*), Hedgehog (*Erinaceus auritus*), Marmot (*Marmota sibirica*), etc.

Flora and vegetation of the site is represented and dominated by typical steppe region's plant species but the mid and alpine parts of the mountains attract attention with many native and rare trees, shrubs, grasses, flower and medicinal plant species that are characteristic of forest steppe zone vegetation.

The Argali sheep *(Ovis ammon)*

The argali sheep (Ovis ammon) is listed as threatened in the Mongolian Red Book (1997) of threatened and endangered species and included in Appendix II of CITES. A combination of intensive hunting, poaching, natural disasters such as severe winters and droughts and competition with livestock for pasture has greatly reduced argali numbers and these negative impacts obstacle to its natural growth, stable inhabiting and might drive to population decline, distribution area decreases and habitat fragmentation.

Currently 13000-15000 argali sheep inhabit 47815.0 km_2 territory of the country (Argali sheep population census in Mongolia -Report, 2001).

Argali sheep distribution areas in the project site by two soums

Soums/villages	Soum's total territory (km^2)	Distribution area of Argali sheep (km^2)	Argali sheep distribution area from the total territory (%)
Bayan-Unjuul	4827.62	245.31	5.08
Buren	3779.47	76.68	2.03

License hunting. Foreign hunter's camps exist at the Unjuul and Bichigt mountains of our selected site.

Business activities. The nomadic stock-breeding is the only business of local people at the selected project site and they are processing and using raw materials of cattle in own needs and are going to a market to sale some excessive outputs of livestock. Sometimes hunting on Marmots and Mongolian gazelle for a meat takes place in a small scale. Water supply is provided by hand operating wells and rain water for all of the area. A cattle duns or bio-fuels are the main energy source. The area has 15474 head of different domestic animals (horse, camel, caw, goat and sheep) and from this 84 percents are sheep and goat.

2. PROJECT MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS AND STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Made contracts and initial meetings took place with some experts and authorities from Institute of Biology and Ministry of Nature and the Environment for further cooperation on implementation of the project and support. Available basic data and information collections were started on two soums of the project site.

It has been undertaken the planned field trips to the project site. During the field trips organized an introduction meeting with herders and local authorities.

The team visited herders' families in their winter places or camps who are living in the planned community conservation area from both soums. More than 50 herders, local citizens and soums' governor administration representatives have been met in different places during the first field trip.

The project objectives and importance introduced to the herders and local authorities. All of the local stakeholders supported the idea which were initiated by some herders of Buren soum and expressed their willingness to cooperate in the future.

Regular meetings and negotiations with two soums' authorities and herders groups were important for all planned activities' success. Therefore, a supporting group was established for regular communication, facilitation and monitoring of implementation of the project.

The project team when visiting herders' families and holding meetings with the locals provided necessary advice and new ideas for them to overcome their challenges and to use the available resources and opportunities in nature conservation and its sustainable use. We also advised them on the activities to improve livestock production and herders' living in the near future. In doing so, we shared with them the expertise and experience of the herders in other areas of Mongolia.

After the meetings, we met with active individual persons and advised them how to encourage others and empower herders, how to support the herders' initiatives in developing their collaboration.

Have been collected more detailed information on planned community conservation area from local stakeholders and visited several important Argali and other wildlife habitats.

3. THE TRAINING WORKSHOPS AND FIELD SURVEYS

The team has organized two training workshops in June and November.

The attendance of two soums governors and including representatives from environmental department of Tuv aimag (province) increased the significance of these training workshops.

The training workshops focused on the following topics:

- Discuss alternative development options for mobile livestock keeping under the present ecological and socio-economic circumstances
- Inform the participants about the advantages of a herders` community-based pastoral development approach and convince them that its implementation

offers the best possibilities to overcome the present problems of pastoral economy and pastoral management

- Inform about the present legal environment regarding the use of pastoral resources and discuss the new Land Law and its possible implications for pastoral management
- Ways to improve the pastureland management in the selected soums through introducing land use planning and land use agreements
- Ways to strengthen herders' groups and their implications for the pastureland management
- To provide full information on Argali wild sheep and other wildlife conservation issues, their ecology, main habitats and importance for the ecosystem as an indicator
- Give ideas and knowledge on conservation management
- To enable the herders in the area to be able to identify the problems they face in improving their livelihoods and nature conservation, and to define the ways to overcome those difficulties.
- To create common understanding among the herders to help themselves by exploring the locally available resources and potentials
- To assist them in identifying ways and possibilities of their collaboration and setting up their goals and plans for their livelihood improvement and conservation.
- To evaluate the social conditions and livelihoods of the herders and to bring new ideas to them how to overcome the difficulties which the herders are facing.
- To evaluate the current situation of the cooperation among herders and between governmental and non-governmental organizations and private sectors, thus to define possibilities to improve their relationships and cooperation.
- To assess the current pasture use and utilization, to explore the possibilities of cooperation and participation of the herders in improving pasture management and water supply, also to develop sustainable utilization of the wells and improve the co-ownership of them by the herders

The training workshops participants committed specific issues related to community group forming, supporting them and follow-up issues in near future.

The result of this training workshops was helpful to define the future follow-up activities, give the main ideas on how to form community group and establish

organizational structure of the groups, select Community Group Council and how to identify community leader, how to encourage group members initiative, how to support the start of community for their group formation process etc.

The team has made the following key observations during the workshops:

- The workshops audiences were supportive of the project's general approach while improving the pastureland management to promote the wildlife conservation

- The brochures and other materials circulated earlier had played an obvious awareness-building role in highlighting the issues important to wildlife conservation and sustainable pastureland management. Local people were supportive of the idea of circulating such information and materials because they are important for making local governments and herders better understand the importance improved pastureland management and ways for its implementation and its benefits

- The absolute majority of workshop participants were supportive of the introduction of land use agreements between soums governors and herders groups. The main argument they perceive was that agreements could provide self-incentives of herders to protect pastures from degradation.

- A few people expressed their concern that land use agreements may raise additional grazing conflicts and make their solution even more difficult. The team explained the intention of the land use agreements not to change the existing land use pattern and but strengthen or formalize it.

- Participant’s proposed 3 issues are looked at carefully in the area of herders' group development. These include (a) what the existing groups can do and what are the benefits; (b) What are potentials of these groups and benefits of improving them; (c) What are the areas the herders' groups need support from outside in order to become viable unit of running herding business. On the third issue an opinion that herders' groups/communities need to be supported materially/financially was quite common.

- People tended to frequently mention that the biggest problem is *dzud (heavy snow and cold)* and *drought (natural disasters)* the severity and frequency of the natural disasters are increasing. It is worth noting that people mostly blame the nature for severe *dzud.* However, people do acknowledge the contribution of low preparedness and pasture degradation caused by overstocking to *dzud* losses. In general both local government people and herders recognize the importance of proper pastureland management in minimizing *dzud* losses and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the industry. However, to be able to gain benefits of improved pastureland management they need the substantial improvement of their capacities.

The team has undertaken the field surveys on Argali wild sheep main habitats of the planned community managed area in the south and north Unjuul mountain and collected information on pasture land regulation, socio-economy and cultural heritages based on the available information for the sites.

The field survey collected the following data:

1. Name of household head

2. Location of 4 seasonal pastures and water points by name of place and topographic co-ordinates of 4 seasonal camps, water points, and recorded GPS measurement on the site

3. Duration of grazing by seasons

4. Number of livestock by species

5. Use of pastures by non-residents

GPS measurement was taken on winter camps locations of herder families and the number of livestock of each family including those of absentee owners was recorded. The survey material shall make basis for introducing improved pastureland management including the organization of herders' groups as natural resource management units, the establishment of land use contracts between herders' groups and soum Governors, the settlement of grazing conflicts and land use planning.

4. THE MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS

Two communities established in the planned area and two more communities formed outside of the area in the Bayan-Unjuul soum territory and they addressed to the project to help to get a non-governmental organization (NGO) status. The project team agreed with them to prepare related documents and submit to the legal authorities in Ulaanbaatar.

A small management plan developed with participation of community members and baseline data collected and available for the area.

A simple GIS data on the community managed area available for the herders group.

During the project implementation period the local authorities submitted proposal to the Ministry of Nature and the Environment (MNE) to take the Zorgol Khairkhan mountain area in Bayan-Unjuul soum territory (the area that bordering with the community managed area or situates in the most south eastern edge of the mountain system) under the State protection as well as National Park or Natural reserve and MNE passed the proposal with other areas proposal to the Parliament.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Reciprocal grazing rights in cases of natural disasters are crucial for minimizing animals losses so land use management activities have to make sure that these rights are clearly specified and enforced

- Estimates of carrying capacity of pastures should take into account the number of animals owned by absentee herders as well as global warming effect of drying up water sources and decline in grass yields

- Increasing cases of selling winter and spring shelters by herders who leave livestock is leading to accumulation of pasture resources in hands of rich

herders who buy those shelters and these needs to be regulated by the soum government because of equity considerations

- The project-initiated activities of identifying group boundaries is a timely measure to implement the important land law articles and need to be fully supported by the soum government and citizens.

CONCLUSIONS

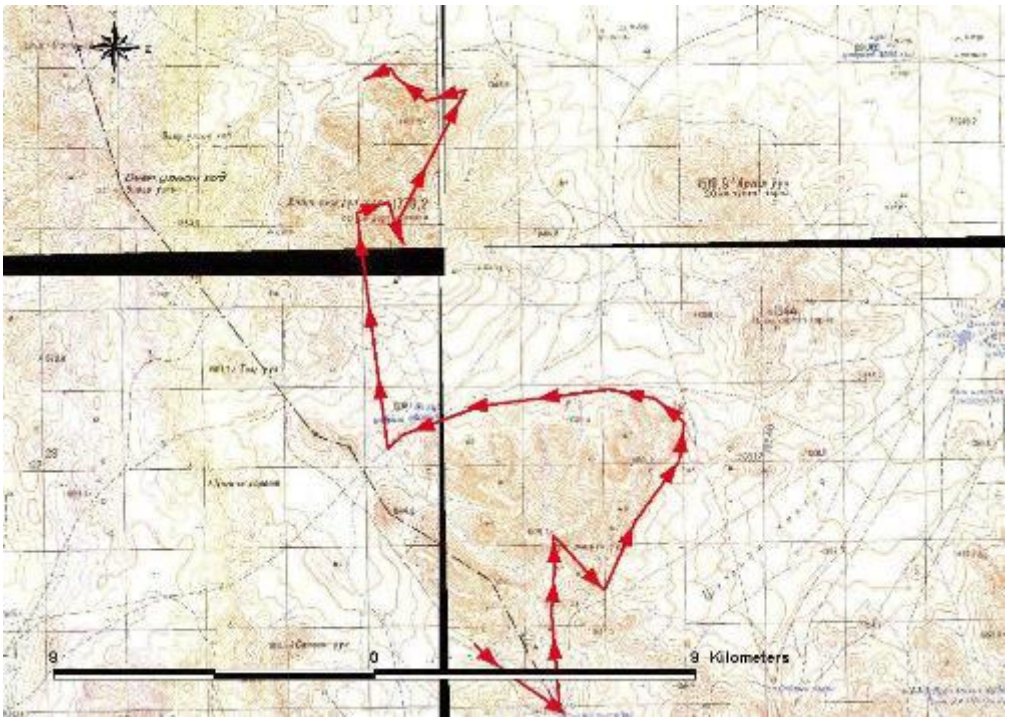
The communities need to be strengthened and supported in developing alternative income generation activities for sustainability of the conservation efforts and to improve livelihoods of the herders.

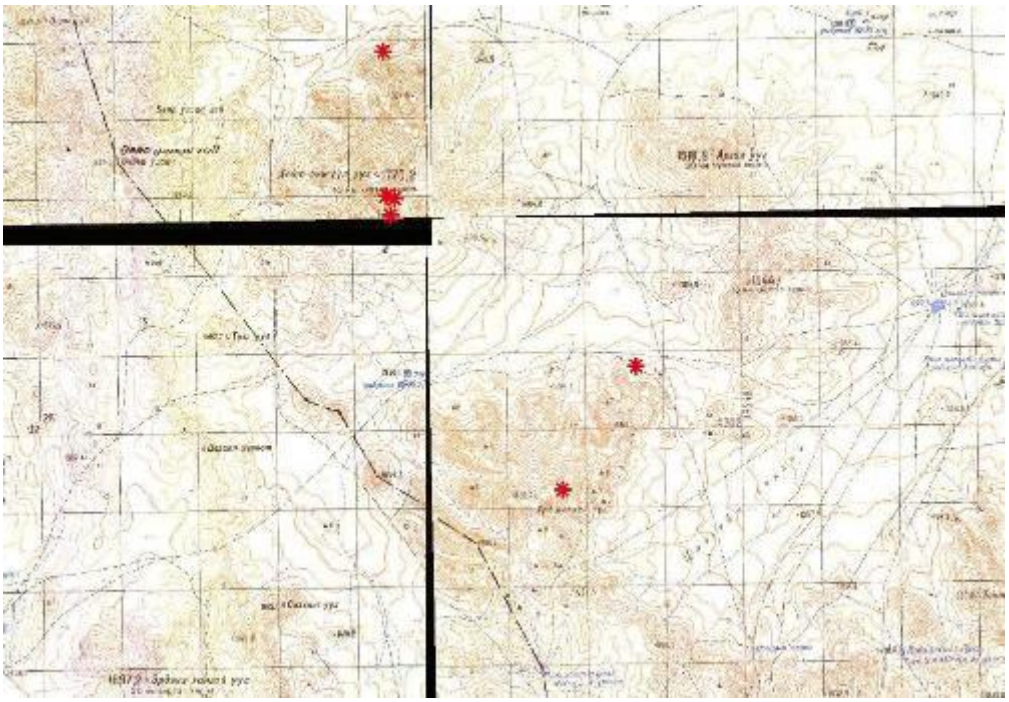
Besides the promotion of community based approach there are needs to develop scientifically based active management. We suggested a creation of Argali breeding and study centre at the site along with the community managed area during the project implementation. The Institute of Biology Academy of sciences agreed on cooperation and the Ministry of Nature and the Environment of Mongolia passed a resolution about to support the proposal at the Minister's board meeting in July 11, 2007. We need to seek funding.

If the Parliament confirm the proposal of the Bayan-Unjuul soum to get the Zorgol Khairkhan mountain area under the state protection it will be needed to conduct detailed field survey and again the local authorities need to seek funding for this field surveys and development of management plan.

The project team will continue to support the locals and local authorities on solution of the above mentioned issues.

APPENDIX A





The first map shows total route of transects and in the second map marked in red where Argali wild sheep were observed during the field survey in summer 2007.

APPENDIX B

The community managed areas at the borders of Buren and Bayan-Unjuul soums of Tuv aimag.

APPENDIX C

The north Unjuul mountain – Argali main habitat. The area has many archaeological sites.

The Mongolian ger Participants during the workshop

After the workshop in the herders' summer camp The storm before raining

Photos by Batsukh. N

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