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Emergency Plan of Action (EPoA) Mongolia: Severe Winter

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

DREF Operation n° MDRMN006	
Date of issue: 4 January 2017	Date of disaster: 23 December 2016
Operation manager (responsible for this EPoA): Gwendolyn Pang, Head of East Asia Country Cluster Team, IFRC	Point of contact: Bolormaa Nordov, Secretary General of Mongolian Red Cross Society
Operation start date: 2 January 2017	Operation end date: 2 April 2017 (3 months)
Operation budget: CHF 177,349	
Number of people assisted: 5,000 (1,000 households)	
Host National Society(ies) present (n° of volunteers, staff, branches): Mongolian Red Cross Society: (MRCS) has 33 midlevel branches and over 800 primary level branches working all over Mongolia, it has 12,500 volunteers and 70,000 youth members. MRCS has 7 established regional disaster preparedness centers.	
Red Cross Red Crescent Movement partners actively involved in the operation: The National Society works with International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in this operation.	
Other partner organizations actively involved in the operation: Mongolia National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), G-mobile LLC, USAID, local government units (LGUs): social welfare offices, Khan Bank and World Animal Protection Organization.	

A. Situation analysis

Description of the disaster

Dzud is a slow onset disaster which continues for several months as a result of many inter-linked factors.

Recent severe winter conditions worsened the situation with average temperature continuously being lower than normal and precipitation forming thicker layer of snow and ice over the grassland. The effect of Dzud is magnified due to the worsening socio-economic situation in the country. Mongolian animal husbandry is totally based on open grazing. In winter season, the open grazing exposes livestock and herders to harsher survival condition. Livestock lose their access to the grass buried under the snow or ice. Extreme snow limits the herders and their families' access to town centres for medical, social, and other services. Many are also at risk of life-threatening health problems if not treated in timely manner, including depression and stress. Many of the affected families lose their sole income source and are forced to move to urban areas especially ger districts in Ulaanbaatar, capital city of Mongolia.



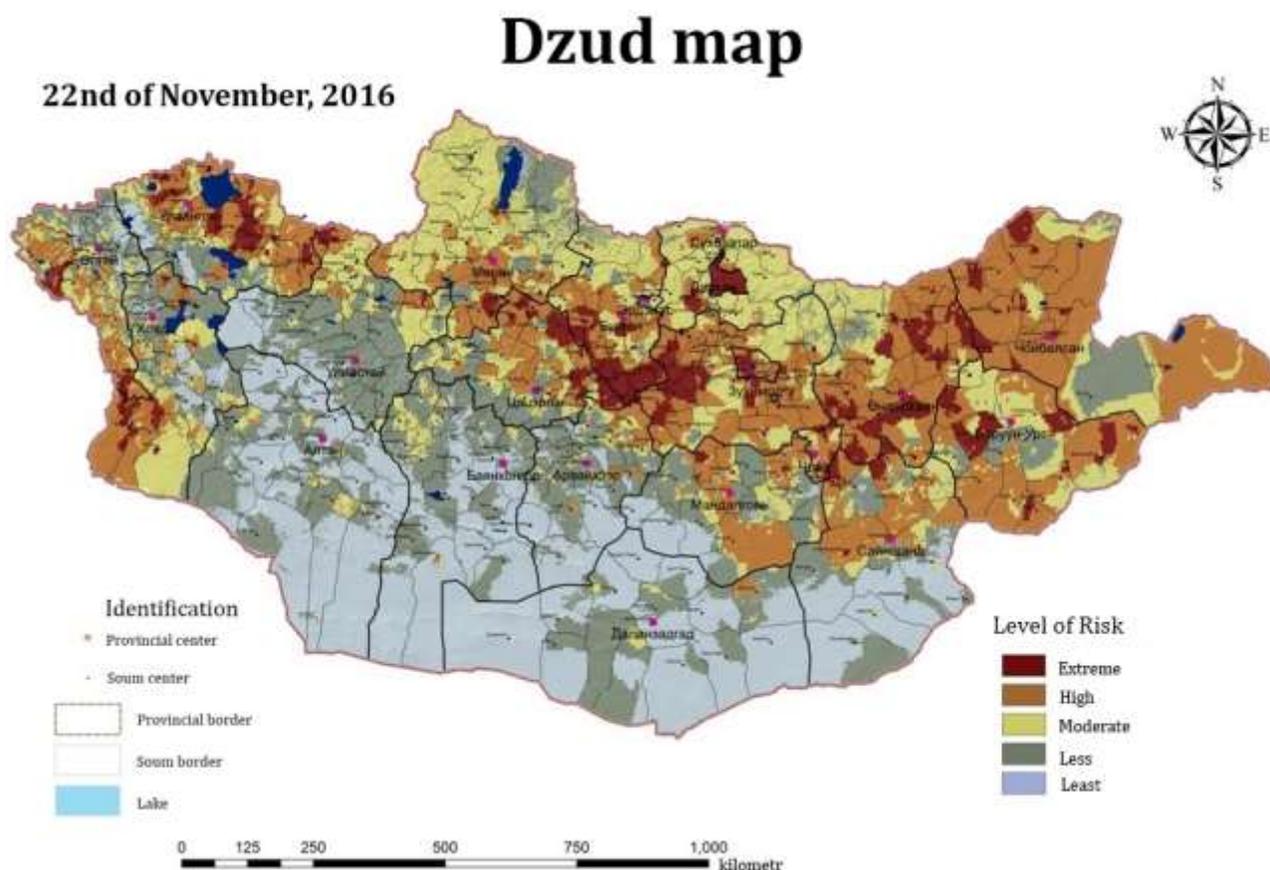
Joint MRCS/IFRC/NEMA assessment team is looking at pile of sheep and goats' carcasses in Uvs, one of Mongolia's Northern provinces. **Photo: IFRC**

Table 1: Dzud affected areas in Mongolia as of 26 December 2016

No.	Province	Name of the soum ¹	Number of affected soums
1	Arkhangai	Battsengel, Jargalant, Ulziit, Ugiinuur, Tsetserleg, Tariat, Tuvshruuleh, Khangai, Khashaat, Khotont, Erdenemandal	11
2	Bayan-Ulgii	Bulgan, Sagsai	2
3	Bayankhongor	Bayanbulag	1
4	Bulgan	Bulgan, Bugat, Gurvanbulag, Selenge, teshig, Khangal, Bayan-Agt, Mogod, Khutag-Undur	9
5	Dornod	Bayandun, Bayan-Uul, Bayantymen, Bulgan, Dashbalbar, Tsagaan-Ovoo, Sergelen, Khalkhgo, Khulunbuir, Choiblasan, Gurvanzagal	11
6	Darkhan-Uul	Darkhan, Shariingol	2
7	Zavkhan	Aldarkhaan, Bayankhairkhan, Bayantes, Ikh-Uul, Numrug, otgon, Songino, Tosantsengel, Tudevtei, Telmen, tes	11
8	Orkhon	Bayan-Undur	1
9	Uvurkhangai	Bayan-Undur, Burd, Kharkhorin	3
10	Selenge	Bayangol, Yeruu, Zyybyren, Orkhontuul, Tushig, Tsagaannuur, Khushaat, Khuder	8
11	Uvs	Baruunturuun, Davst, Tsagaankhairkhan, zuungovi, Zuunkhangai, Undurkhangai, Malchin, naranbulag, Sagil, Turgen, tes, Ulaangom, Hyargas	13
12	Tuv	Bayan-Unjyyl, Batsumber, Bornuur, Jargalant, Mungunmorit, Ughtaalsaidam, Tseel, Erdene, Erdenesant	9
13	Khovd	Altai, Bulgan, Uyench	3
14	Khuvsgul	Arbulag, Bayanzurkh, Jargalant, Murun, Tsetserleg, Khatgal, Ulaan-Uul, Tsagaannuur, Tsagaan-Uul, Tsagaan-Yyr, Chandmani-Undur, Shine-Ider, Rashaant, Renchinikhumbe, Tarialan, Tosontsengel, Tunel, Khankh, Erdenebulgan	19
15	Khentii	Bayan-Adarga, Batshireet, Batnorov, binder, Dadal, Darkhan, Jargaltkhaan, Undurkhaan, Umnudelger, Murun, norovlin, Tsenhermandal	12
16	Ulaanbaatar	Baganuur district	1
Total			115 soums and 1 district²

¹ Soum is Mongolia's subdivision of inhabited areas. It is a smallest administrative unit with population usually varying from several thousand to up-to 20,000 inhabitants.

² There are 21 provinces with 331 soums in the country.



Map: Dzud risk: Mongolian Information and Research Institute of Meteorology, Hydrology and Environment forecasts some 50% of territory of Mongolia is in high risk of Dzud. Provinces like Uvs, Bayan-Ulgii, Tuv, Bayan-Ulgii, Darkhan-Uul, Khentii, Sukhbaatar, Dornod, Khovd, Zavkhan, Arkhakai, Khuvsgul, Bulgan, Dundgovi and Dornogivi will be worst affected by the Dzud. The heavy snowfalls during mid-December rapidly worsened the situation in Khuvsgul, Selenge, Zavkhan, Bulgan, Tuv, Khentii provinces³.

The above table shows that as of end December 2016, about 35% of soums in the whole country is affected by dzud. According to the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, an estimated 37,000 herder households (157,000 people) may be directly affected by the extreme weather conditions, as a result of their nomadic and pastoralist lifestyle.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has supported Mongolian Red Cross Society (MRCS) in delivering humanitarian aid to affected population in [2009/2010](#) and [2015/2016](#) through the Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREFs) and Emergency Appeals. The affected areas, during this winter however, are mainly in the northern parts of the country. The weather forecast predicts that temperatures in some areas could fall to as low as minus 40. NEMA estimates that overall preparedness of hay and fodder at aimag level is at 82 per cent; however, the preparedness level in soums is much lesser (70 per cent) due to the budgetary constraints at the local level.

200 cases of animal infectious diseases have been registered in 118 soums in Mongolia. So far, there are 17 active quarantines in 16 soums in 10 provinces, by 25th November 2016 which restricted herders access for basic services. Such restrictions on migrating from one place to another affects many herders who do not have opportunities to reach better winter pastures with their herds.

Because of overproduction of meat, the prices for most animal products have fallen by 50 to 75 per cent which resulted in lower income of many herders and limiting their purchasing power for food, basic necessities (including winterized clothing and heating), medicines, and animal feed.

³ Source: <http://www.icc.mn/index.php?&lang=en>

While the severe winter is a slow onset disaster, Mongolian herders are anticipated to endure another two to three months of heavy snow and extreme cold. Therefore, the delivery of relief assistance for the most vulnerable herders and families is crucial in order to alleviate the extreme deprivation and suffering during the Dzud period.

In coordination with NEMA and HCT, IFRC will support MRCS through DREF operation in four provinces, assigned by NEMA: **Uvs, Zavkhan, Khuvsgul** and **Selenge**. Other humanitarian organizations will respond in other provinces to avoid duplication of efforts. Upon gathering more information and analyzing the potential impact of the Dzud on the population, IFRC and MRCS will consider launching an Emergency Appeal in the coming weeks to address any emerging needs.

Summary of the current response

Overview of Host National Society

The Mongolian Red Cross (MRCS) is a member of the National Emergency Commission and is actively involved in the planning and design of the national response to the emerging crisis. MRCS is working closely with NEMA, which has been assigned by the Mongolian government to coordinate overall response efforts in the country.

The MRCS National Disaster Response Team members (NDRT) have been alerted and are on standby to provide assistance to affected communities. Mid-level branches of MRCS are collecting information from their local soum authorities and participating in their respective local emergency commission meetings. The response plan of MRCS is being drafted with support of IFRC.

Assessments will be complemented by the Trilogy Emergence Relief Application (TERA) in cooperation with G-Mobile LLC. With the TERA, the mobile network subscribers can receive and send messages related to their needs to MRCS.

As MRCS and IFRC are concluding experiences from response to the Dzud last year, MRCS's capacity to respond has shown to be strengthened through development and adopting new response mechanisms such as cash – based interventions, building stronger partnerships and establishing strong ties with service providers.

Overview of Red Cross Red Crescent Movement in country:

IFRC has an in – country program coordinator in Mongolia with the coordination and support from the Country Cluster Support Team (CCST) in Beijing. IFRC will support the MRCS in the implementation of activities through joint coordination, technical support, assessments, training and PMER.

Movement Coordination

IFRC Country Cluster Support Team (CCST) in Beijing has been working closely and maintains close communication with MRCS.

Meanwhile, IFRC had supported climate change adaptation pilot project which included scientific research and small – scale pilot interventions in targeted herder communities and British Red Cross conducted Dzud assessment in July 2016. Both research and assessment have laid solid foundations for the Dzud response planning.

Overview of non-RCRC actors in country

The Mongolian Deputy Prime Minister called for an Emergency Commission meeting in November 2016 and has instructed government agencies to be prepared for extreme winter conditions in the country. Mongolian government has met with HCT members on 22 December 2016 and issued a formal call for humanitarian aid to affected families. On 23 December, the Deputy Prime Minister of Mongolia issued a letter to the international community in Mongolia calling for financial and technical assistance.

NEMA as the main responder to disasters in the country holds limited stocks of hay as well as maintains reserve pastures to be used during emergencies. However, the preparedness supplies are insufficient to provide for all Dzud affected population.

Other in-country humanitarian actors include UN, Save the Children, Mercy Corps, World Vision, People-in-Need, and Caritas.

Needs analysis, beneficiary selection, risk assessment and scenario planning

Needs analysis

Initial findings from the previous Dzud operation reveal that cash is the most preferred way of assistance by affected population. Cash allows beneficiaries to prioritise their immediate needs to be addressed. Vulnerable herder families have insufficient cash to be able to meet their immediate needs and mitigate fast approaching crisis. Many herders are heavily indebted as they have taken loans with high interest rates, making their financial situation worse. The unconditional cash support of MNT 245,000 (approximately CHF 102) per family enable targeted families to utilize it based on their priorities. The size of the cash grant has been determined by the government and based on the minimum wage in Mongolia. It is standardized for HCT responders during this operation.

Cash transfer programming's feasibility study conducted in December 2015 is still relevant and applicable. IFRC/MRCS are working towards framework agreement with Khan Bank as service provider. Cooperation with Khan Bank was efficient and smooth for the past operation; partners do not anticipate any difficulties to work with the bank for reoccurring Dzud. MRCS's primary and mid-level branches have also enhanced their technical capacity and knowledge on cash transfer programming. The cash transfer service agreement with Khan Bank includes a provision ensuring that cash grants in this operation will not be seized in attempt to recover loans previously issued to herders.

Exposure to daily health risks faced by herders' labour work, coupled with difficulty in accessing health facilities under low temperature are also identified as priority needs of the affected people. First aid kits will be distributed to the targeted families which include items to treat wounds (sterile bandages, wraps, iodine) and body thermometers. However, it will not include any pharmaceuticals or medicine. Beneficiary will collect their first aid kits in bank outlets when they receive the cash grants. They will also be provided with a short orientation on how to use the kits, and psychosocial support (if needed) by MRCS volunteers.

Another risk in dzud conditions is frostbites. As MRCS has been disseminating the message to the affected herders how to prevent and treat the frostbites, such messages can be reinforced to beneficiary when they receive the cash and first aid kits from the bank.

Beneficiary selection

MRCS branches select beneficiaries in collaboration with local authorities in the soums of targeted provinces that are worst affected by the extreme winter conditions. Beneficiary selection in the soum will be done by MRCS branches from registers of vulnerable people in the soum based on data on from local authorities. Beneficiary selection by MRCS branches will be validated by MRCS HQ staff during their missions to targeted provinces. For this operation focus will be on the most disadvantaged and poverty stricken families registered by local state social welfare systems.

According to NEMA, there are around 2,500 pregnant women, 26,000 children and 8,000 elderly persons living in the Dzud affected areas. This group, in the four targeted provinces, will be prioritized to receive the humanitarian support.

B. Operational strategy and plan

Overall objective

The overall objective is to meet the essential needs of 1,000 most vulnerable herder households in four provinces (Uvs, Zavkhan, Khuvsgul and Selenge) who are affected by severe winter through provision of unconditional cash grants and first aid kits.

Proposed strategy

MRCS will utilize its strong branch network in this operation. Branches will be supported by the MRCS technical and administration resources at its HQ. Other resources necessary, such as HR and volunteers will be determined based on the local needs and situation. MRCS will also establish an Operational Coordination Centre.

A total of 1,000 herder households (approximately 5,000 people) in four provinces (Uvs, Zavkhan, Khuvsgul and Selenge) will be assisted by MRCS through this DREF operation. The DREF operation will be implemented over three-month period, with an aim to become an Emergency Appeal when the impact of the low temperature becomes more visible in February – March 2017.

Table 2: Summary of Actions planned under this DREF operation

Type of assistance	Description	Target families	Target provinces	
1	Cash transfer	MNT 245,000 (approximately CHF 102) will be provided per herder household.	1,000 (250 per province)	Uvs, Zavkhan, Khuvsgul and Selenge
2	First aid (FA) kits with manual on their use.	First aid kits ⁴ will be provided to households.	1,000 (250 per province)	Uvs, Zavkhan, Khuvsgul and Selenge

Due to the distance in coverage for the response, it has been proposed that training on assessments, monitoring and first aid kits orientation will be carried out using the Training of Trainers approach and to be held in Ulaanbaator. The MRCS staff and volunteers will first receive the training and equip to do the same training at the provincial and county level. This training approach will maximize the existing capacity within MRCS as well as cost/time saving to train wider groups of staff and volunteers.

Operational support services

Human resources

MRCS will closely coordinate its actions with central and local governments through its headquarters in Ulaanbaatar and mid-level branches in affected areas. MRCS has 30 program staffs at headquarters and around 100 at branch level. There are more than 30,000 volunteers across the country.

The IFRC Country Cluster Support Team (CCST) in Beijing will support the National Society in the implementation of the DREF operation. IFRC CCST staff is providing technical support to the operation which includes a Disaster Management (DM)/Livelihoods delegate, PMER officer and the Mongolia – based National Program Coordinator and Finance and Administration Manager. CCST Beijing staff has the experience of responding to both large-scale (Wenchuan Earthquake of 2008 in China) and small-scale disasters, including the 2010 and 2016 Dzuds in Mongolia. Partnership agreement between MRCS and Government of Mongolia was signed in May 2016. Newly elected board members of MRCS include deputy foreign minister and head of NEMA.

The IFRC CCST (Beijing and Ulaanbaatar) will provide technical support to monitor the implementation of the emergency plan of action. PMER and finance units at all levels will follow up on regular reporting requirements. To provide peer to peer support to the operation, one RDRT member will be deployed to the country. The specialization of the RDRT will be determined later. MRCS Finance and logistics officers will provide support to the cash transfer programme.

Logistics and supply chain

Procurement of FA kits will be done locally in Ulaanbaatar by MRCS. Relief items will be transported from Ulaanbaatar to targeted provinces and soums by NEMA. FA kits, together with explanation of the content of those kits will be distributed by the MRCS volunteers at the Khan Bank's outlets at soums, where herders will come to open their bank account and/or collect cash grants.

Information technologies (IT)

The cost of communication will be low and mainly the use of mobile phones and mobile internet by assessment teams.

TERA has been made available to MRCS at no cost and has been used for needs surveys among beneficiaries. Special telephone line and email account will be activated at MRCS headquarters. The telephone number and email address will be activated and communicated to beneficiaries through the TERA and traditional means of community engagement.

Communications

The regional communications unit in Kuala Lumpur and the IFRC CCST supports the production of news stories to be published on the IFRC website. Partner National Societies will be provided with information on the response through Newswire and information bulletins. Local communication will be supported through MRCS communication manager and news will be published in local press.

⁴ Refer to Annex 1 for the content listing.

Planning, monitoring, evaluation, & reporting (PMER)

MRCS will establish a special monitoring team comprised of NDRT members who will monitor the implementation of the DREF operation in the field. Reporting on the operation will be carried out in accordance to the IFRC minimum reporting standards.

Administration and Finance

IFRC has a finance and administration officer who is based in Mongolia. IFRC teams at Asia Pacific Regional office and East Asia CCST have the capacity to provide a wide range of support services to the DREF operation, including finance, administration and logistics. MRCS has a logistics officer and there are three staff in its finance department who will be able to support the operation.

Cross-cutting issues

MRCS volunteers and staff will be alerted to identify cases of domestic violence; such cases will be reported to local social welfare officers and police force.

DREF operation will generate gender disaggregated data with breakdowns in respect to vulnerabilities such as elderly people, single parents, disabled and family with many children.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL PLAN

Quality programming / Areas common to all sectors

Outcome 1: Rapid and continuous assessment and analysis are used to inform the design and implementation of the operation															
Output 1.1 : Participation in assessments and continuous collection of information from local units															
Activities planned	Week														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
1.1.1 MRCS staff and volunteers Training of Trainers in Ulaanbaator (assessments, monitoring and FA kits orientation)															
1.1.2 Training of volunteers in FA kits orientation in provincial centers															
1.1.3 Volunteer induction in FA kits orientation in soums															
1.1.1 Conduct rapid field assessments by NDRT and local MRCS branches															
1.1.2 Revise the EPOA based on latest assessment information															

Health

Needs analysis: Exposure to health risks during daily herding and labour work, coupled with difficulty in accessing health facilities in extreme low temperature are also identified as priority needs of the affected people. First aid kits will be distributed to the targeted families which include items to treat wounds (sterile bandages, wraps, iodine) and body thermometers.

Another risk in dzud conditions is frostbites. Messages on prevention and treatment of frostbites and other emergency health can be disseminated to beneficiary when they receive the cash and first aid kits from the bank.

Population to be assisted: Up to 1,000 households in four provinces (Uvs, Zavkhan, Khuvsgul and Selenge) will receive first aid kits and orientation of the use of the kit.

Outcome 2: The immediate risks to the health of affected populations are reduced															
Output 2.1: First aid kits to the most vulnerable affected households have been provided (1,000 households)															
Activities planned	Week														
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
2.1.1 Identify relief distribution mechanism															
2.1.2 Procure and distribute first aid kits to herders in bank outlets															
2.1.3 Orientation of first aid kit for targeted households															
2.1.4 Dissemination on emergency health knowledge such as frostbites															
1.2.5 Monitoring and beneficiary satisfaction survey															

Budget

DREF OPERATION

30/12/2016

MDRMN006 : Mongolia Severe Winter

Budget Group	DREF Grant Budget (CHF)
Medical & First Aid	20,900
Cash Disbursements	100,000
Total RELIEF ITEMS, CONSTRUCTION AND SUPPLIES	120,900
Distribution & Monitoring	6,670
Transport & Vehicle Costs	4,800
Total LOGISTICS, TRANSPORT AND STORAGE	11,470
National Staff	1,600
National Society Staff	550
Volunteers	670
Total PERSONNEL	2,820
Workshops & Training	18,750
Total WORKSHOP & TRAINING	18,750
Travel	11,000
Office Costs	500
Communications	1,020
Financial Charges	65
Total GENERAL EXPENDITURES	12,585
TOTAL BUDGET	166,525
PSSR	10,824
TOTAL BUDGET	177,349

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this plan of action, please contact:

In Mongolian Red Cross Society:

- Nordov Bolormaa, secretary general; mobile: +976 99119395; email: nordovbolormaa@yahoo.com

In IFRC East Asia Country Cluster Support Team, Beijing:

- Gwendolyn Pang, head of CCST; mobile: +86 135 11075162; email: gwendolyn.pang@ifrc.org
- Baktiar Mambetov, disaster management and livelihoods coordinator; mobile: +86 135 11065152; email: baktiar.mambetov@ifrc.org

In IFRC Asia Pacific regional office, Kuala Lumpur:

- Martin Faller, deputy director; email: martin.faller@ifrc.org
- Nelson Castano, head of disaster and crisis unit (DCU); email: nelson.castano@ifrc.org
- Timothy Lam, operations coordinator; mobile: +60 13 3600366; email: timothy.lam@ifrc.org
- Patrick Fuller, communications manager; email: patrick.fuller@ifrc.org
- Peter Ophoff, head of PMER; email: peter.ophoff@ifrc.org

In IFRC Geneva:

- Cristina Estrada, response and recovery lead; phone: +412 2730 4260; email: cristina.estrada@ifrc.org
- Susil Perera, senior officer, response and recovery; phone: +412 2730 4947; email: susil.perera@ifrc.org



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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. The IFRC's vision is to **inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities** by National Societies, with a view to **preventing and alleviating human suffering**, and thereby contributing to the **maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world**.

The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:



Save lives.
protect livelihoods,
and strengthen recovery
from disaster and crises.



Enable **healthy**
and **safe** living.



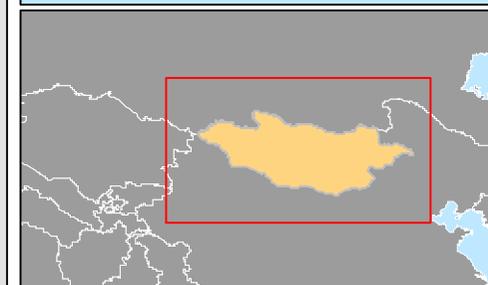
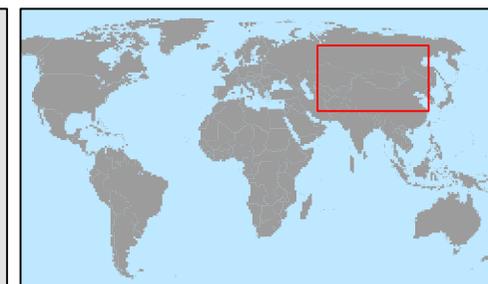
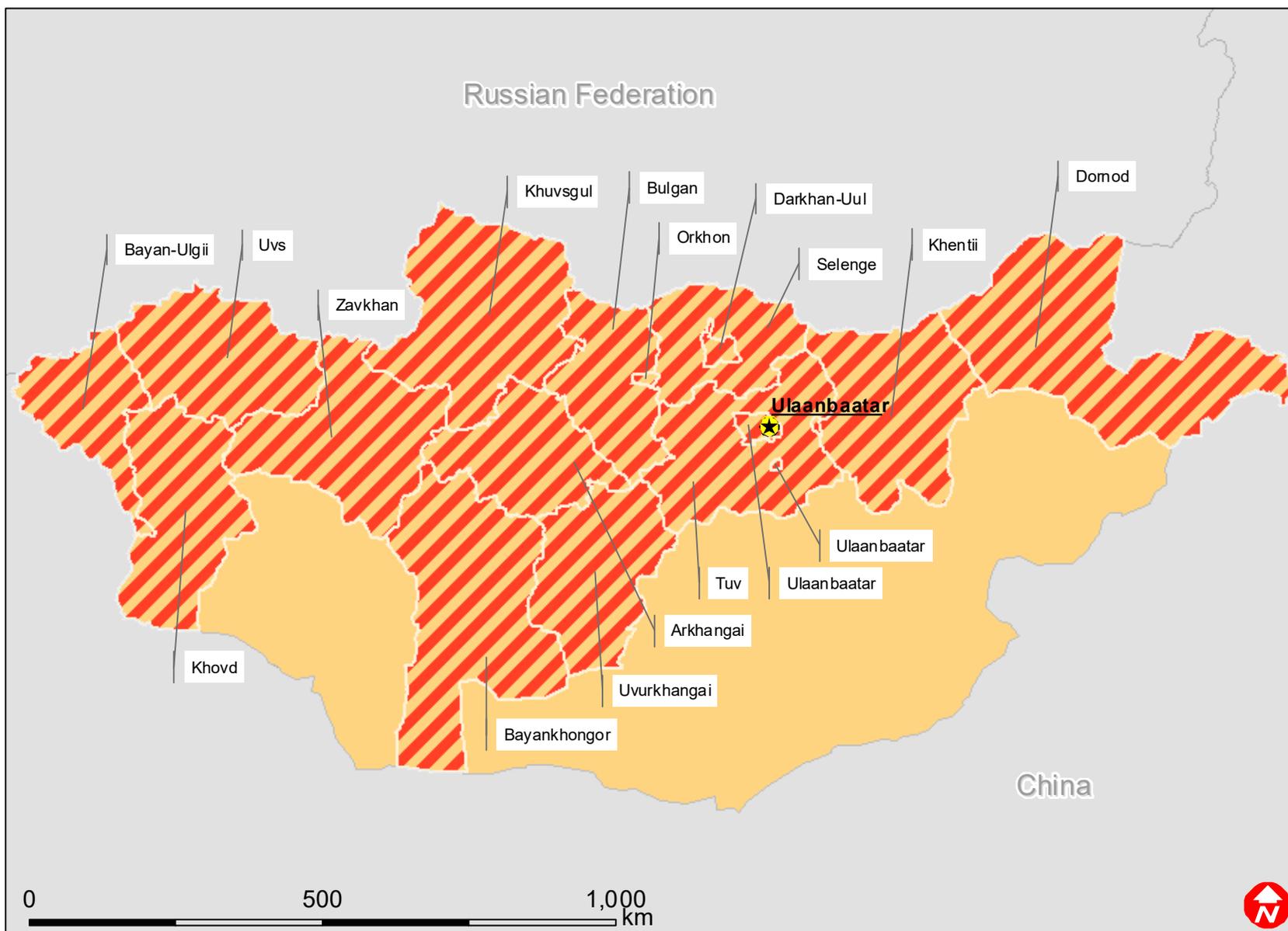
Promote social inclusion
and a culture of
non-violence and peace.

Annex 1**First aid kit content:**

Items	Quantity
single-use gloves	5 pair
sewing needle	10 pieces
scissor	1 piece
adhesive tape	1 piece
elastic bandage (6 cm width)	3 pieces
elastic bandage (8 cm width)	3 pieces
elastic bandage (12 cm width)	3 pieces
sterile wrap (7#14)	1 piece
cotton (50 gram)	2 pieces
sterile dressing (5#5)	3 pieces
sterile dressing (10#10)	3 pieces
sterile dressing (20#20)	3 pieces
triangular bandages (80#120#180)	1 piece
wound cleaner liquid	1 bottle
iodine 1 piece	1 piece
oral dehydration solution- ORS / dry powder	1 packet
body temperature thermometer	1 piece
hand soap	1 piece
bag	1 piece
hot water container	1 piece
finger stickers	10 pieces
mouth mask	5 pieces
cotton cleaning swabs	1 piece
solar energy hand light	1 piece
pencil	1 piece
notebook / paper	1 piece



Mongolia: Severe Winter



 Affected Districts