



THE RIGHT TO MOVEMENT

**MEASURING PASTORALIST LAND TENURE
SECURITY IN MONGOLIA**

**INTERNATIONAL
LAND
COALITION**



IMPLEMENTING AGENCY OF THE GOVERNMENT OF MONGOLIA
**GENERAL AUTHORITY FOR LAND ADMINISTRATION,
GEODESY AND CARTOGRAPHY**





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Mongolia sustains one of the world's largest rangeland-based livestock systems, with pastoral communities using and stewarding rangelands covering approximately 70% of the national land area.

This brief presents the first Mongolian application of a new international framework for measuring pastoralist tenure security, jointly implemented by the International Land Coalition, Mongolia's General Authority for Land Administration, Geodesy and Cartography (GALAGC), and the National Land Coalition of Mongolia. Ten indicators — covering legal (de jure), practiced (de facto), and perceived tenure security — were assessed through expert review, interviews with nearly 900 pastoralists and land officers across all 21 *aimags* (provinces), and five focus group discussions in four *soums* (districts) across three *aimags*.

The results reveal a gap between law and lived experience. While Mongolian law provides a legal basis for pastoralists' access to and use of pastureland for livestock mobility (Land Law, Article 52), over half of surveyed pastoralists did not know that these rights exist. A third of local land officers were also unaware. Well-established laws calling for public consultation on legislation and participation by affected groups (Law on Legislation, General Administrative Law) provide broad mechanisms for public engagement in policy making, but they are not herder-specific and are largely used in commercial transactions, not directly with herders. In practice, an estimated 66% of pastoralists have effective access to all grazing areas and corridors they use at all relevant times, and, as made clear by the data, the local governance of pastoral land is under strain. Gaps in both formal rules, informal norms and customary systems are noted, while the most-cited drivers of tenure insecurity for pastoralists was inadequate local rules and the limited policy influence of pastoralists. Among focus group participants, 77% believe that pastoralists could lose their rights to use and access land in the future.

The 2024 Law on Herders was a fundamental piece of legislation in Mongolia, but its implementing regulations and effective operationalization are seen as pending tasks.

A path forward, built in joint reflections from government officials and members of the Mongolia National Land Coalition (NLC) includes finalization regulations under the 2024 Law on Herders, codifying herder-specific FPIC standards and extending compensation frameworks to communal grazing lands. The gaps in awareness of the legal framework point to a need to scale up herder land-literacy programs and embedding these indicators in national land monitoring programs. The data, providing first insights into pastoral tenure in Mongolia through a unique joint government-civil society data collection initiative, offer a promising model for the integration of pastoralist land data for use in global frameworks.

BACKGROUND

Mongolia sustains one of the largest rangeland-based livestock systems in the world. Pastoral communities manage around 70% of the national land area and mobile pastoralism remains central to rural livelihoods, the national economy, and Mongolian identity. As in comparable systems elsewhere, the future of this way of life depends not only on the health of rangelands but on a set of social and governance conditions, among them the tenure security of pastoralist communities: the assurance that their rights to access, use and manage land will be recognised and protected over time.

Yet tenure security is hard to safeguard when it cannot be measured. Around the world, including in Mongolia, a lack of consistent, comparable data has held back efforts to assess how secure pastoralists’ rights really are and, in turn, to design policies and programs that effectively protect them.

To help close this gap, the International Land Coalition (ILC) developed a proposed international framework for pastoralist tenure security indicators. Indicator development, supported by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and Supporting Pastoralism and Agriculture in Recurrent and Protracted Crises (SPARC), was carried out in a collaborative manner through a series of in-person and online consultations with ILC members and strategic partners. Online plenary sessions were attended by more than 40 participants, with more than 30 representatives from pastoralist organisations. Individual interviews were held with 16 representatives from pastoralist organisations.

The results of those collaborative sessions highlighted six primary characteristics of well-functioning pastoral tenure systems, aspects that would become the basis for the indicators developed:

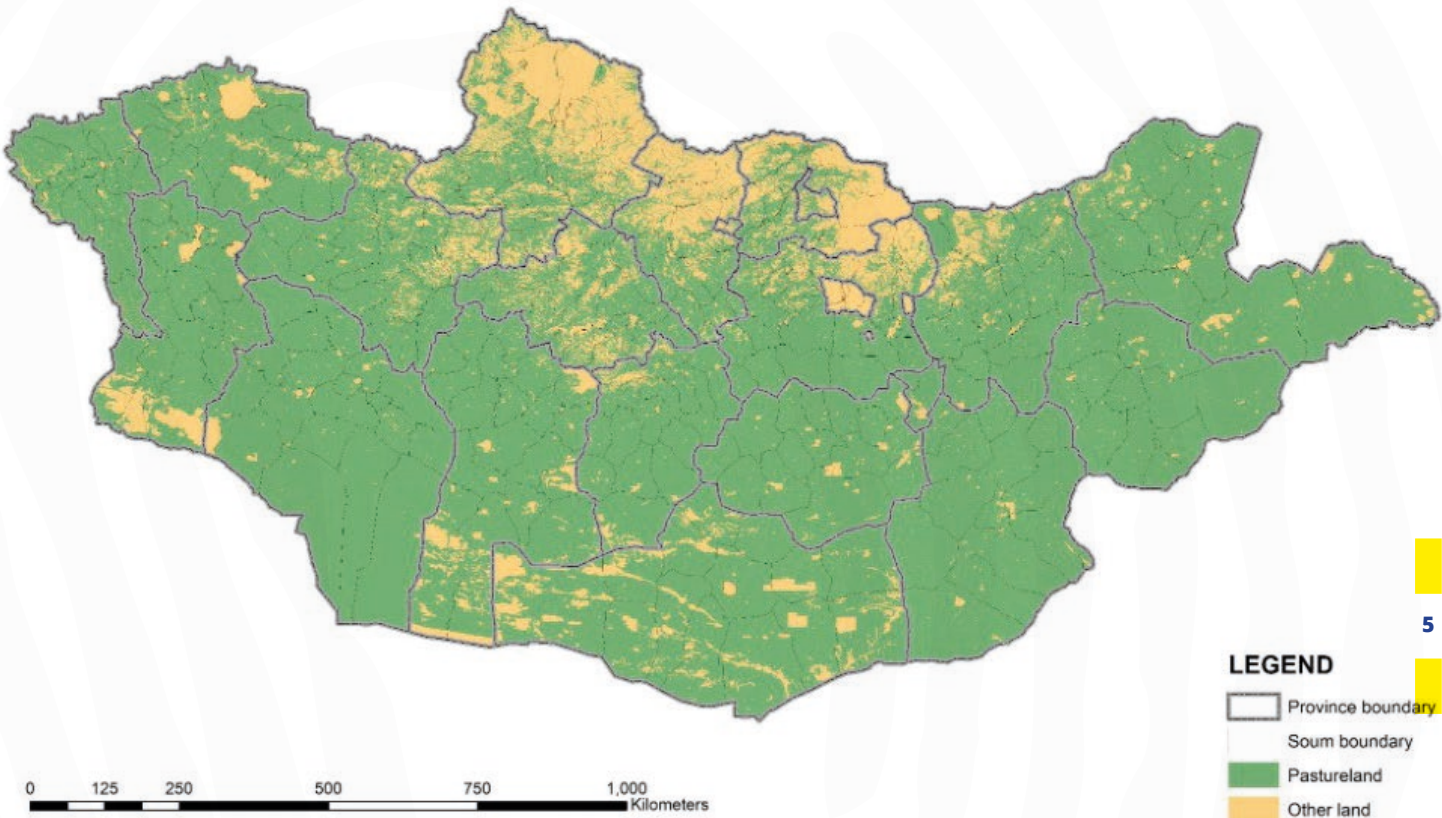
- ▶ Presence of formal rights
- ▶ Involvement of pastoralists in decision-making processes through FPIC
- ▶ Presence of local rules and norms to regulate pastoral land use
- ▶ Social cohesion and other elements of internal solidarity
- ▶ Relationships with other land users
- ▶ Perceived lack of threats to tenure security

This brief reports on the first application of the global pastoral indicator framework in Mongolia, whose leadership during the International Year of Pastoralists and Rangelands (IYRP) and in the leadup to the UNCCD COP17 has provided an important stage for pastoralists and the data that represents them. It presents key findings, reflections on their relevance to pastoralist policy, and presents joint commitments to advance pastoralist¹ tenure security in Mongolia. Likewise, the report underlines the relevance of pastoralist tenure data to global monitoring processes.

¹ This brief uses the term “pastoralist” to align with the methodology proposed in the global indicator framework, while recognizing that in Mongolia, more common and locally preferred terms are “herder” and “pasture user groups.”



Map 1: Pastureland in Mongolia with district (soum) and province (aimag) boundaries.



INDICATORS AND DATA COLLECTION

The data presented in this report was generated thanks to a joint initiative between the International Land Coalition (ILC), Mongolia’s General Authority for Land Administration, Geodesy and Cartography (GALAGC) and the National Land Coalition of Mongolia, including its members the Mongolian Land Management Association (MLMA), Mongolian National Federation of Pasture User Groups of Herders, Union (MNFUG), Center for Policy Research (CPR), JASIL Environment and Development Association and the National Association of Mongolian Agricultural Cooperatives (NAMAC).

The initiative aimed to assess the eight indicators proposed in the **global pastoralist land tenure indicator framework** developed by ILC, ODI and SPARC, in collaboration with pastoralist members of ILC and strategic partners. In Mongolia, two supplementary indicators were added (DJ1.1 and DJ2.1) to assess awareness of laws on pastoralists land rights through surveys administered to nearly 900 pastoralists and land officers. Together, the 10 indicators implemented in Mongolia span three dimensions of tenure security:

- ▶ De jure tenure security: how rights are formally defined and protected under law;
- ▶ De facto tenure security: how rights are practices, experiences and recognized by others on the ground; and
- ▶ Perceived tenure security: how rightsholders subjectively assess or feel about the security of their rights, which influences how they use and manage their land.

Table 1 includes an overview of each of the indicators. For further detail on the indicators, refer to the technical brief **Understanding and Monitoring the Tenure Security of Pastoralists.**

As per the global indicator methodology, and as a result of the global consultation process, **pastoralists** in this context are defined as individuals who derive their sustenance mainly from herd animals—whether fully or partially tamed—grazing on landscapes characterized by native or near-native vegetation. **Grazing areas** are defined as lands used by pastoralists for feeding their livestock, which may include rangelands, agricultural land left fallow or post-harvest, and forests. **Livestock corridors**, instead, are defined as routes used for the seasonal or regular movement of herds between grazing areas, water points, and settlements. They include subnational, national and international routes. See the original **technical brief** for a broader set of definitions.

In Mongolia, data was collected through expert reviews of existing data, key informant interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs) with pastoralists, government appointed land officers, and a range of other land experts and specialists. The key informant interviews were carried out with respondents from 302 *soums* (districts) across all 21 *aimags* (provinces) of Mongolia.

The five FGDs were carried out in four *soums* across three *aimags*. Table 2 contains details of the data collection, analysis methodologies and the number of respondents for each indicator.

Table 1: Pastoral land indicators implemented in Mongolia, including complementary indicators DJ1.1 and DJ2.1

DJ1	Formal recognition of the right of pastoralists to access and use grazing areas and livestock corridors
DJ1.1	Awareness of formal recognition of the right of pastoralists to access and use grazing areas and livestock corridors
DJ2	Legal requirement for Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before any laws, policies, or projects are approved that affect formally recognised pastoral grazing areas or livestock routes
DJ2.1	Awareness of legal requirement for Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before any laws, policies, or projects are approved that affect formally recognised pastoral grazing areas or livestock routes
DJ3	Extent of formal recognition of pastoral grazing areas and livestock corridors
DJ4	Presence, adequacy, compliance, enforcement and adaptability of local formal rules for access and use of pastoral grazing areas and livestock corridors
DF1	The status and trend of social cohesion within pastoralist groups or communities, assessed across ten dimensions
DF2	Status and trend of relationships between pastoralists and other land users, assessed across ten dimensions
DF3	Presence, adequacy, compliance, enforcement and adaptability of local informal norms and customary systems for access and use of pastoral grazing areas and livestock corridors
P1	Perceived tenure security of pastoral grazing areas and livestock corridors and reasons for insecurity

Table 2: Data collection and analysis methods

INDICATOR	DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHODOLOGY	NO. OF RESPONDENTS
DJ1, DJ2, DJ3 AND DJ4	Results were determined jointly by Mongolian government officials with expertise in land legislation, following the proposed indicator methodology.	6 experts
DJ1.1, DJ2.1	Data came from key informant interviews with purposely selected pastoralists and land officers (typically 2-3 pastoralists <i>per soum</i> and 1-4 land officers <i>per aimag</i>). Pastoralist results are weighted for equal representation across <i>soums</i> .	799 pastoralists 99 land officers
DF1, DF2 AND DF3	For these indicators, the pastoralist informants from DJ1.1 and DJ2.1 assessed community-wide conditions rather than personal experience, using the same weighting. The method used was a hybrid of those set out in the proposed indicator methodology.	799 pastoralists
P1	Data were collected in FGDs with purposely selected respondents and locations. This methodology is a trial alternative to the household survey approach in the proposed indicator methodology.	42 participants in 5 FGDs

The extensive coverage of *soums* and *aimags*, represented in Map 1 below, means that results for DJ.1.1 and DJ2.1 – on recognition and FPIC for pastoralists in law – and DF1, DF2 and DF3 – on social cohesion, relationships with land users and adequacy of local, informal rules, respectively – should be a good reflection of views from a geographical perspective.

Respondents for the data collection were purposely selected based on existing relationships, access to specific communities and ongoing collaborations, as well as priority geographies, however, the results should only be interpreted as representing the respondents, not the entire pastoralist population in Mongolia. The assessment of all indicators was limited to Mongolian pastoralists – those which consider Mongolia home – as there are not significant numbers of pastoralists hosted in Mongolia, i.e. those that come from other countries.



Map 2: Distribution of Key Informant Interviews with pastoral user group (PUG) boundaries

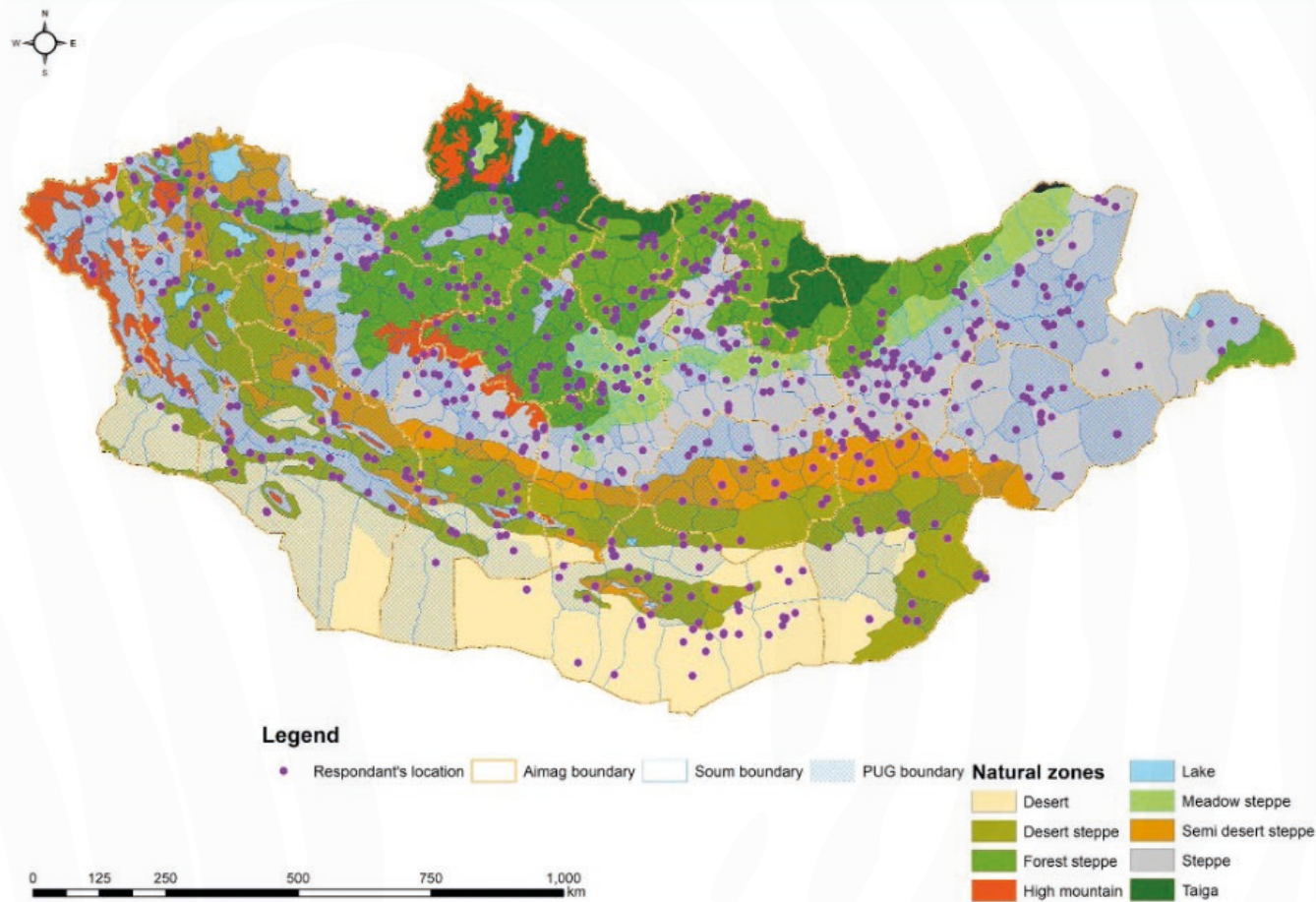




Photo: ©ILC/Rawpixel-Envato

RESULTS

This section will present headline results for each of the 10 indicators listed above, as well as a brief note on data interpretation and quality.

DJ1

FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHT OF PASTORALISTS TO ACCESS AND USE GRAZING AREAS AND LIVESTOCK CORRIDORS.

Do pastoralists in Mongolia have recognized access and use rights by law?

RESULT

The access and use rights of pastoralists are clearly defined in Mongolia. That's a critical starting point.

- ▶ The **Mongolian Land Law, Article 52** on Pasture, Its Proper Use and Protection, *is considered to provide a clear legal basis for pastoralists* to access and use grazing areas and livestock corridors. These rights are considered to be consistent across legislation.

Data interpretation and quality: The provision of these rights was determined by Mongolian government officials, as per the proposed indicator methodology.

DJ1.1

AWARENESS OF FORMAL RECOGNITION OF THE RIGHT OF PASTORALISTS TO ACCESS AND USE GRAZING AREAS AND LIVESTOCK CORRIDORS.

Are pastoralists and government officials in Mongolia aware that pastoralists have recognized access and use rights by law?

RESULT

More than half of pastoralists were not aware they had access and use rights. Many government officials didn't know either.

- ▶ 52% of surveyed pastoralists did not know that pastoralists have rights to access and use grazing areas. 53% did not know about rights to livestock corridors.
- ▶ 28% of surveyed land officers did not know that pastoralists have rights to access and use grazing areas. 36% did not know about rights to livestock corridors.
- ▶ The results are particularly notable given that DJ1 found that these rights are clearly defined and consistent across legislation.

Data interpretation and quality: The high number of 'don't know' responses for this indicator has a meaningful interpresentation, suggesting that respondents are unaware that the legislation exists, rather than a data quality problem. As this is a supplementary indicator, not one proposed in the global indicator framework, no specific methodology was proposed.

DJ2

LEGAL REQUIREMENT FOR FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC) BEFORE ANY LAWS, POLICIES, OR PROJECTS ARE APPROVED THAT AFFECT FORMALLY RECOGNIZED PASTORAL GRAZING AREAS OR LIVESTOCK ROUTES

Is there a legal requirement for FPIC in Mongolia before the approval of laws, policies or projects that would affect formally recognized pastoral grazing areas or livestock routes?

RESULT

Yes, there is a law providing the basis for FPIC in Mongolia. It is not specific to pastoralists.

- ▶ The **Mongolian Law on Legislation, Chapter 6 on Public Discussion and Comment on Draft Legislation** sets a general requirement for public consultation on all draft legislation.
- ▶ Likewise, the **Mongolian General Administrative Law**, from 2015, provides general principles of administrative action. It includes provisions for affected persons to participate in relevant processes and to submit comments and opinions through a hearing procedure.

Data interpretation and quality: The provision of these rights was determined by Mongolian government officials, as per the proposed indicator methodology.

DJ2.1

AWARENESS OF LEGAL REQUIREMENT FOR FREE, PRIOR AND INFORMED CONSENT (FPIC) BEFORE ANY LAWS, POLICIES OR PROJECTS ARE APPROVED THAT AFFECT FORMALLY RECOGNIZED PASTORAL GRAZING AREAS OR LIVESTOCK ROUTES.

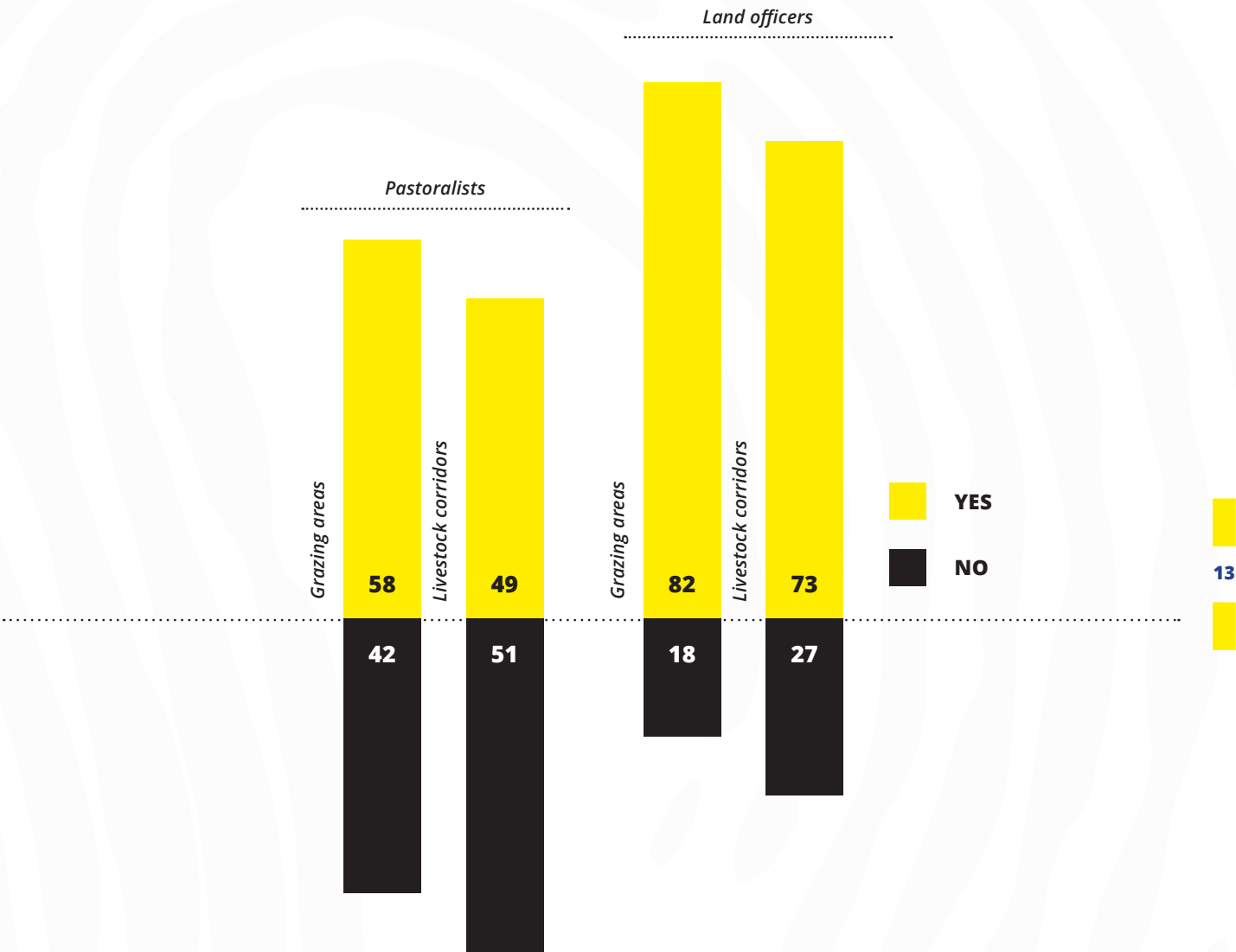
Are pastoralists and government officials in Mongolia aware that FPIC is legally required before the approval of laws, policies or projects that would affect formally recognized pastoral grazing areas or livestock routes?

RESULT

Many local officials and even more pastoralists said there is no FPIC requirement.

- ▶ 42% of surveyed pastoralists **thought there was no legal requirement** for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before any laws, policies or projects that affect formally recognized pastoral grazing areas. 51% thought the same for livestock corridors.
- ▶ 18% of surveyed land officers thought there was no legal requirement for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) before any laws, policies or projects that affect formally recognized pastoral grazing areas. 27% thought the same for livestock corridors.
- ▶ The results are particularly notable given that DJ2 found that these rights are clearly defined and consistent across legislation.

Figure 2 – DJ2.1: Knowledge and awareness of legal requirement for FPIC for formally recognised pastoral grazing areas or livestock corridors (% of surveyed pastoralists and land officers)



Data interpretation and quality: Like DJ1.1, as this is a supplementary indicator, not one proposed in the global indicator framework, no specific methodology was proposed.

DJ3

EXTENT OF FORMAL RECOGNITION OF PASTORAL GRAZING AREAS AND LIVESTOCK CORRIDORS

Do all pastoralists have formally recognized access and use rights to all relevant areas at all necessary times?

RESULT

No, not all pastoralists have formally recognised access and use rights, and these rights to all relevant areas are not formally recognised.

- ▶ An estimated 66% of adult pastoralists have formally recognized access and use rights for all grazing areas and livestock corridors they utilize at all necessary times.
- ▶ For 62.4% of grazing areas and livestock corridors, use and access rights are formally recognized at all necessary times for all pastoralists who utilize them.

Data interpretation and quality: Both indicators were assessed by Mongolian government officials using existing available data, as per the proposed indicator methodology. Reviewers reported they were ‘somewhat confident’ with the population-based result, where some data are available but with significant gaps or inconsistencies. Reviewers were ‘moderately confident’ in the area-based results, noting that required information is sufficient but there are some gaps and inconsistencies.

DJ4

PRESENCE, ADEQUACY, COMPLIANCE, ENFORCEMENT AND ADAPTABILITY OF LOCAL FORMAL RULES FOR ACCESS AND USE OF PASTORAL GRAZING AREAS AND LIVESTOCK CORRIDORS

Do local formal rules in Mongolia effectively govern access and use to grazing areas and livestock corridors for pastoralists?

RESULT

Most pastoralists live in a setting with local formal rules. It’s unclear if they are working.

- ▶ Approximately 70-80% of adult pastoralists use grazing areas and livestock corridors where local formal rules² exist.
- ▶ In all these locations, the formal rules can be changed if needed, showing agility.
- ▶ There is insufficient data to assess if the local formal rules meet the needs of pastoralists, are complied with, and if they are effectively enforced.

Data interpretation and quality: Both indicators were assessed by Mongolian government officials using existing available data, as per the proposed indicator methodology. The reviews were ‘moderately confident’ in the result, noting that required information is sufficient but there are some gaps and inconsistencies.

² Local formal rules are understood as legally enforceable rules, set and administered by local and customary institutions, including community leaders, which regulate day-to-day pastoral land use and influence tenure security.

DF1

STATUS AND TREND OF SOCIAL COHESION WITHIN PASTORALIST GROUPS OR COMMUNITIES

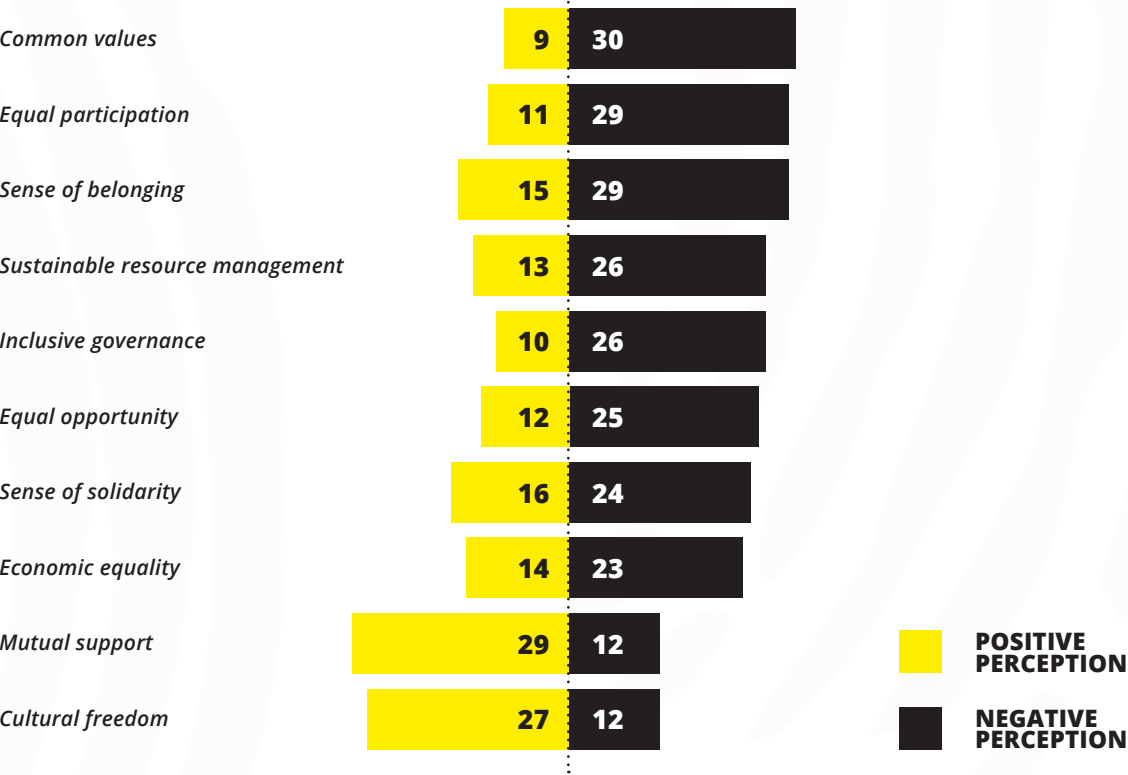
Is there a strong sense of social cohesion in Mongolian pastoralist communities, and is this getting better or worse?

RESULT, CURRENT STATUS

Most pastoralists have a neutral view of current levels of community cohesion. Among those who didn’t, negative perceptions outweighed the positive.

- ▶ Across the 10 defined dimensions of social cohesion,³ a neutral midpoint was the most common response, accounting for 40-48% of all responses.
- ▶ Among those who had a non-neutral view, negative perceptions of community cohesion outweighed positive perception for eight of the 10 dimensions. Exceptions were mutual support and cultural freedom, where positive perceptions prevailed.

Figure 3 – DF1: Negative and positive perceptions of status of community cohesion (% of surveyed pastoralists)



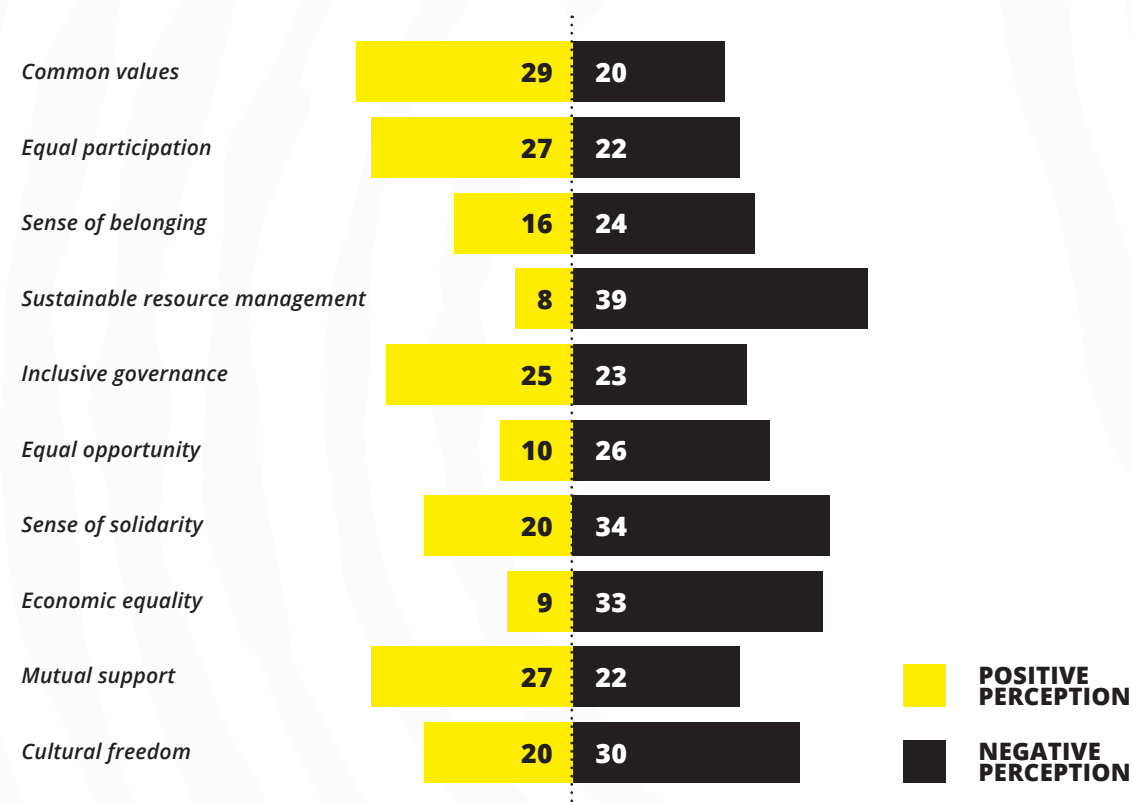
³ Social cohesion is defined as the internal solidarity and social support within pastoral groups, which allow communities to manage resources more effectively and resolve disputes, and negotiate with other land users and government with a common position. This cohesion is built and maintained through shared values and a sense of belonging to create a common identity, and different political and economic practices, such as reciprocity (Baylis et al., 2019).

RESULT, TREND

Most pastoralists did not see cohesion changing over time. Among those who did, more believed cohesion was deteriorating.

- ▶ ‘No change’ in social cohesion was the most common response, accounting for 27-38% of responses across all dimensions.
- ▶ Among those with a non-neutral view, perceptions of deteriorating community cohesion outweighed perceptions of improvement in six of the 10 dimensions.
- ▶ Perceptions of deteriorating cohesion were most evident in sustainable resource management, sense of solidarity and economic equality.
- ▶ For common values, equal participation, mutual support and inclusive governance, improving perceptions were more common, although by narrower margins.

Figure 4 – DF1: -ve and +ve perceptions of community cohesion trend (% of surveyed pastoralists)



Data interpretation and quality: The level of respondents reporting ‘don’t know’ for these questions was quite high – around 20% for the majority of questions – and correlates with self-reported difficulty in answering the questions. This may reflect genuine uncertainty about community conditions, though it could also be a failure to understand the questions themselves. Results should be interpreted with this in mind.

We have not aggregated responses here into a single composite indicator at this stage. Further analysis is needed to determine the most robust aggregation method and to fully understand the implications of high ‘don’t know’ response levels.

DF2

STATUS AND TREND OF RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PASTORALISTS AND OTHER LAND USERS

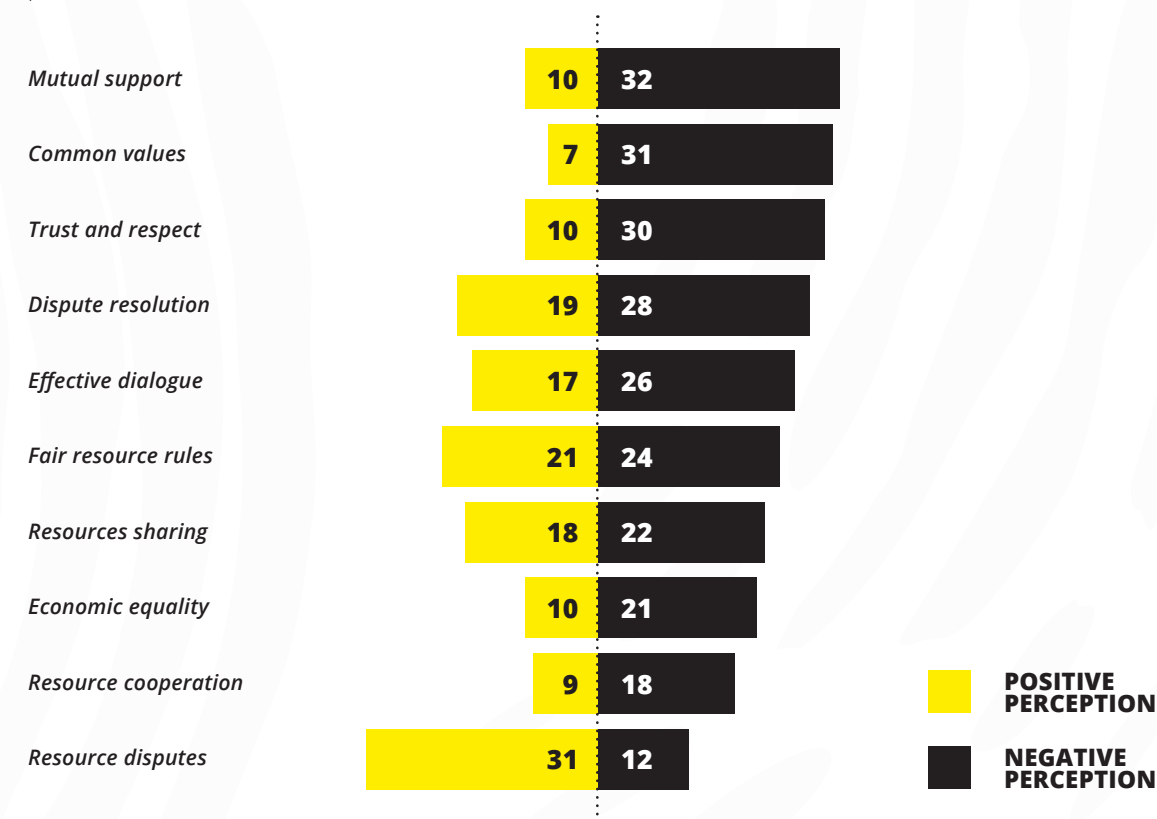
Do pastoralists have good relationships with other land users, and are these getting better or worse?

RESULT, CURRENT STATUS

Most pastoralists have a neutral view of their current relationships with other land users. Among those who didn’t, negative perceptions outweighed the positive.

- ▶ A neutral response was the most common across all 10 dimensions, accounting for 28-49% of responses.
- ▶ Among those with a non-neutral view, negative perceptions of relationships with other land users outweighed positive perceptions in nine of the 10 dimensions. This was notable for common values, mutual support, trust and respect.
- ▶ The one exception was resource disputes, where respondents reported that conflicts were infrequent rather than frequent.

Figure 5 – DF2: Positive and negative perceptions of status of relationships with other land users (% of surveyed pastoralists)

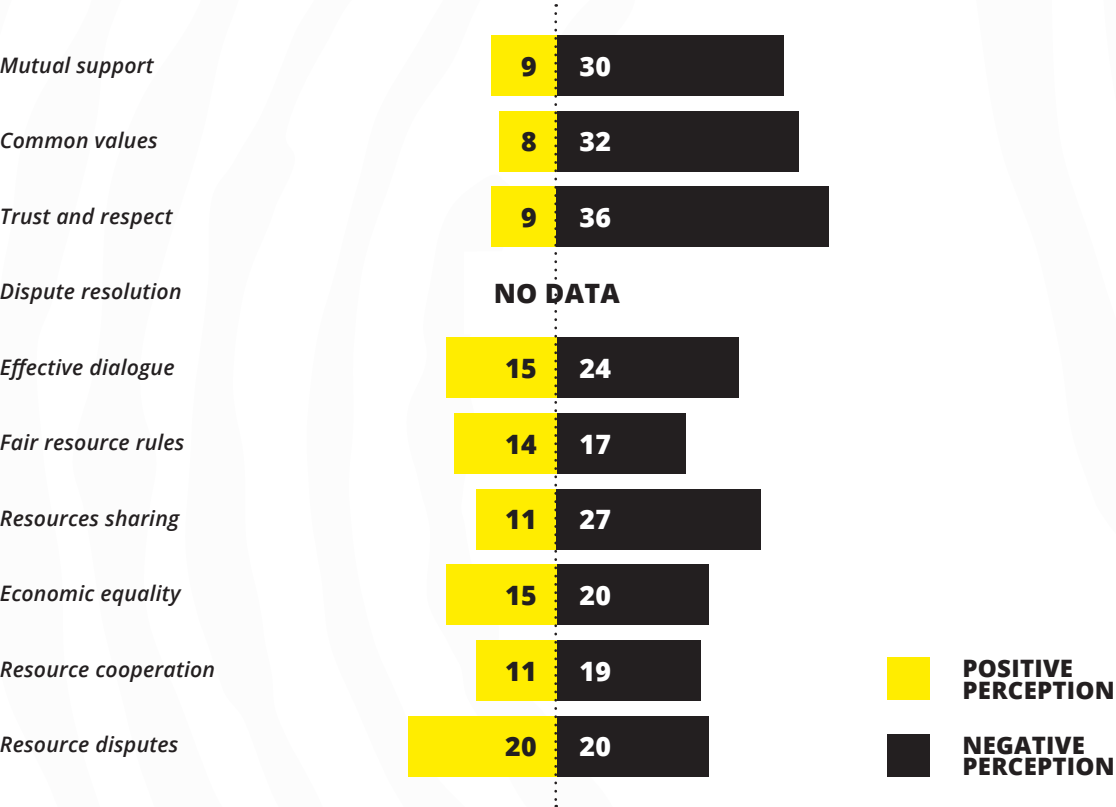


RESULT, TREND

Most pastoralists did not see relationships with other land users changing. Among those who did, perceptions of deteriorating relationships were more common.

- ▶ ‘No change’ in relationships with other land users⁴ was the most common response across all nine dimensions, accounting for 33-34% of the responses.
- ▶ Among those expressing a non-neutral view, perceptions of deteriorating relationships outweighed improvement in eight of the nine dimensions, most notably for trust and respect, common values and mutual support.
- ▶ Resource disputes was the only exceptions, where perceptions were equally split.

Figure 6 – DF2: Positive and negative perceptions of trend of relationships with other land users (% of surveyed pastoralists)



Data interpretation and quality: ‘Don’t know’ responses were generally higher for D2 (on relationships with others) than DF1 (on social cohesion). Responses correlate with self-reported difficulty in answering the questions. This may reflect genuine uncertainty about community conditions, though it could also be a failure to understand the questions themselves. Results should be interpreted with this in mind.

⁴ Relationship with other land users is defined as cordial relationships with other land users in overlapping and neighbouring areas supporting pastoralists’ access to and use of grazing areas and livestock corridors, and the backing they may receive if their rights are threatened. This relies on activities, such as continuous dialogue and reciprocal resource-sharing, to build trust, respect and acceptance.

One exception was the trend question on effective dialogue, where the ‘don’t know’ rate was notably low (6%), suggesting respondents found this dimension easier to assess than others. We have not aggregated the responses into a single composite indicator at this stage for the same reasons as DF1.

DF3

PRESENCE, ADEQUACY, COMPLIANCE, ENFORCEMENT AND ADAPTABILITY OF LOCAL INFORMAL NORMS AND CUSTOMARY SYSTEMS FOR ACCESS AND USE OF PASTORALIST GRAZING AREAS AND LIVESTOCK CORRIDORS.

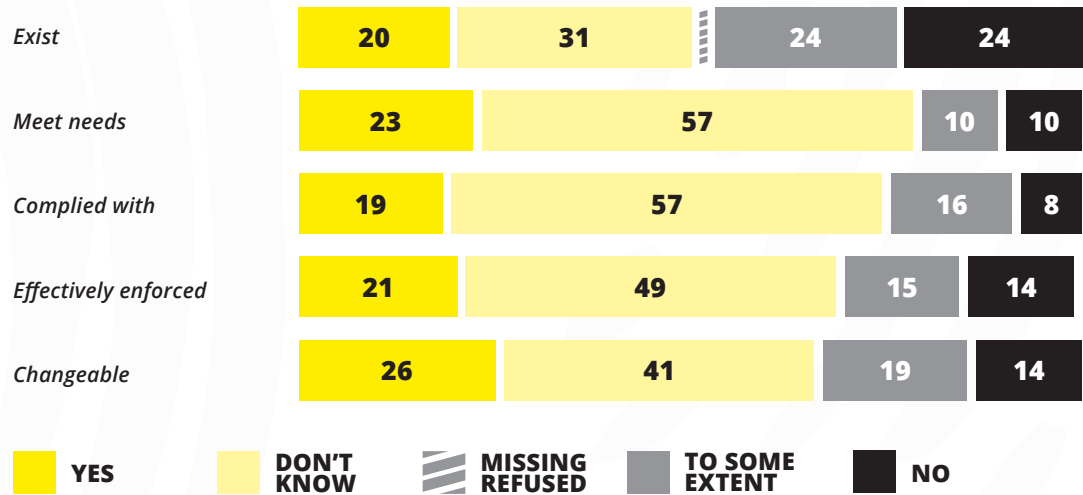
Do informal norms and customary systems in Mongolia effectively govern access and use to grazing areas and livestock corridors for pastoralists?

RESULT

Half of pastoralists live in a setting where local informal norms or customary systems exist. Less than a quarter say they meet their needs.

- ▶ 51% of surveyed pastoralists reported using grazing areas and livestock corridors where local informal norms or customary systems exist, at least to some extent.
- ▶ Of those reporting rules exist, 23% reported that they meet the needs of pastoralists, while 19% reported that they followed the rules. 21% reported that the rules were effectively enforced, while 26% reported that the rules could be changed if needed.

Figure 7 – DF3: Presence, adequacy, compliance, enforcement and adaptability of local informal norms and customary systems for access and use of pastoral grazing areas and livestock corridors (% of surveyed pastoralists)⁵



⁵ Totals may not sum to 100 due to rounding. Results for existence of local informal norms and customary systems are based on responses from 799 pastoralists. All other results are based on respondents who reported that local informal rules and customary systems exist to at least some extent.

As with DF1 and DF2, rates of ‘don’t know’ responses for DF3 questions was quite high, reaching 24% for the question of existence. The results should, therefore, be interpreted with this in mind.

P1

PERCEIVED TENURE SECURITY OF PASTORAL GRAZING AREAS AND LIVESTOCK CORRIDORS AND REASONS FOR INSECURITY

How secure are pastoralists in their land tenure and what is driving their insecurity?

RESULT

77% of focus group participants⁶ reported it was likely pastoralists could lose their rights in the future. Inadequate local-level rules was the most cited cause.

- ▶ A clear majority of focus group discussion participants reported it was either very or somewhat likely that pastoralists could lose rights to some or all of the grazing areas or livestock corridors they use in the future. The view held across every FGD.
- ▶ Across the five FGDs, inadequate local-level rules for land and resource use and permitting was the most cited reason for insecurity, raised in every FGD. Pastoralists’ limited ability to influence land laws and policy was second-most cited, raised in four of the five FGDs.
- ▶ In the Örgön soum (Dornogovi aimag), 80% of participants pointed to mining as a factor driving insecurity while in the Kherlen soum (Khentii aimag), a recurring concern was the inward migration of pastoralists settling and competing for grazing areas.
- ▶ Other reasons were cited in two or three FGDs: environmental change and degradation, deteriorating relationships with other land users, weakening community cohesion, and legal ambiguity over rights.

Data interpretation and quality: Typical measures of perceived tenure security, such as those used by Prindex and in the proposed global indicator framework, classify rights-holders on their own assessment of the likelihood of losing rights over a specified period of time. This pilot assessment took a different approach: it asked a range of actors, including pastoralists, government officials and other specialists to judge the likelihood that any Mongolian pastoralist could lose rights to grazing areas or livestock corridors at any time. The results should therefore be read as a broad, stakeholder-based indication of risk, rather than a directly comparable measure of perceived tenure security.

The FGDs were conducted in areas where local officials and participants were readily available while attempting to reflect some diversity across pastoral contexts.

6 42 participants were engaged through five focus group discussions (FGDs) spanning five districts in three provinces.

DISCUSSION

Results of indicator implementation in Mongolia were presented to initiative partners on two occasions. First, in an online discussion attended by an estimated 30 government officials and five members of the Mongolia National Land Coalition. A second discussion was held by the National Land Coalition (NLC) with a broader group of members to discuss findings and reflect on gaps, needs and possible recommendations.

The results for indicator DJ.2, indicating that Mongolian law contains a clear legal requirement for Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) prompted considerable discussion. While government officials confirmed through the assessment process that broad, inclusive consultation requirements exist in law, as do laws calling for affected populations to participate and provide input into processes relevant to them, members with direct knowledge of legislative practice raised concerns that such an affirmation may overstate the protection pastoralists receive in practice.

Members of the NLC noted that the precise terminology of “Free, Prior and Informed Consent” does not appear in Mongolian legislation and that where consultation requirements do exist, they typically apply to engagement with commercial entities, such as mining or tourism companies and local government – not directly with herders, who may hold no formal user rights over grazing areas and livestock corridors. The land use rights of pastoralists, they reflected, remain largely limited to winter and spring camp areas certified through possession certificates. The broader communal grazing areas on which mobile pastoralism depends fall outside this protection.

The divergence between the legal review findings and community and technical perspectives should not be read as contradictory, so much as complementary. A requirement for consultation may exist in a general sense while falling short on the specificity, direct applicability to pastoralists and enforceability that FPIC, as an international standard, would imply. Members agreed that this distinction – between the presence of a legal provision and its practical adequacy for pastoralist communities – merits transparent presentation, alongside a clear articulation of where the current framework falls short.

Beyond FPIC, members highlighted what they saw as a significant gap between legislative recognition and lived experience. Despite the 2024 Law on Herders introducing a formal land tenure system for pastoralists, its implementing regulations remain unapproved, leaving the law effectively dormant at the community level. This helps explain the striking finding that a majority of pastoralists and many land officers were unaware that recognized access and use rights exist in law (DJ1.1). Members noted that this reflect an awareness and implementation gap, rather than a flaw in data collection.

Members of the NLC also pointed to an apparent tension between the relatively high proportion of pastoralists reporting recognized access rights (DJ3: 66%) and the finding that 77% of focus group discussion participants believe it was likely pastoralists could lose their rights in the future (P1). Rather than viewing this as inconsistent, members suggested it illustrates how formal recognition alone does not translate into a lived sense of security, particularly where enforcement, awareness

and customary systems are all under strain. Likewise, the erosion of customary tenure – attributed to rising livestock numbers and pressure on resources – was seen as compounding this insecurity, even as the formal system meant to replace it remains unimplemented.

GAPS AND FINDINGS

The results described above emerged from a data collection cycle jointly designed and implemented by Mongolian government officials – including local and national officers with GALAGC and its Pastureland Monitoring Division – as well as members of the Mongolia National Land Coalitions, facilitated by ILC. The gaps presented below are shared findings, acknowledged by both partners.

- ▶ Incomplete secondary regulations. The 2024 Law on Herders lacks the secondary regulations needed to define grazing boundaries, entry and exit protocols, and reciprocal grazing agreements during climate emergencies.
- ▶ No statutory FPIC standard. While existing laws provide for public consultation and the participation of affected populations in relevant administrative actions, the legislation lacks a precise definition of Free, Prior and Informed Consent or a requirement specific to pastoralist communities before development licenses are granted.
- ▶ Compensation frameworks are too narrow. Provisions for compensation cover private camp structures, while there is no standardized methodology for valuing or compensating communal pastureland loss.
- ▶ Legal literacy remains a challenge. Awareness of the legal framework varies among land officers and pastoralists, particularly youth, regarding rights to access and use grazing areas and livestock corridors.
- ▶ Missing pastoralist indicators. Indicators on tenure security, social cohesion and mobility are not yet integrated into national land monitoring processes, a reality that limits tracking of vulnerability and progress towards formalization for pastoralists.

FORWARD-LOOKING CONSIDERATIONS

Looking beyond this first cycle, the following steps are proposed to sustain this momentum:

- ▶ In Mongolia, conduct an independent or joint legal assessment of secondary regulations once they are put into place.
- ▶ Refine indicator scoring and response options based on this first cycle.
- ▶ Consider a supplementary indicator tracking FPIC implementation in practice.
- ▶ Support additional implementation of indicators in other national contexts, most immediately as part of the PLACE Programme and in other relevant National Land Coalitions.

GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS

This first application of the global pastoral indicator framework in Mongolia carries relevance beyond the national context. The findings point to a data gap that commonly renders pastoralists invisible, not only in national datasets and policy but in the global frameworks meant to track progress on land degradation, biodiversity and climate.

Pastoral rangelands sit at the intersection of land degradation, biodiversity conservation and climate adaptation. Yet conventional land tenure indicators do not sufficiently capture the features that define functioning pastoralism: mobility, overlapping and shifting rights, social cohesion and perceived tenure security. The pastoral indicator framework applied in this study was designed to close that gap and, in doing so, directly informs indicators, goals and commitments established across multiple global frameworks.

Land tenure functions as a common interface across the three Rio Conventions, and this data speaks to each in turn. Under the CBD’s Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (KM-GBF), it informs the traditional knowledge indicator on land tenure and land-use change – Headline Indicator 22.1. In the context of UNFCCC, the data can inform adaptation planning for mobile and rangeland-dependent communities, given the tenure security and mobility rights are foundational to pastoralist adaptation. Under the UNCCD, where recent decisions have increasingly recognized tenure security as central to Land Degradation Neutrality (LDN) outcomes, this data offers a means of operationalizing that recognition, supporting the establishment of land tenure-based indicators within the PRAIS monitoring system.

The framework’s relevance extends to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where it speaks directly to SDG 15.3.1 on land degradation and SDG 1.4.2 on secure tenure rights. More broadly, it speaks to SDG 2 on food security, SDG 5 on gender, SDG 16 on conflict resolution and SDG 17 on partnerships. It also operationalizes the Voluntary Guidelines on the Responsible Governance of Tenure (VGGT), which call for recognition of legitimate customary and communal tenure systems – a principle this data puts into place.

This report presents the first set of pastoralist tenure security data collected in Mongolia, but the gaps it documents reflect a broader pattern that has historically marginalized pastoralists in land monitoring, governance and policy processes globally. By closing this gap through a joint government-National Land Coalition initiative, Mongolia has tested a replicable model for integrating pastoralist land data into global monitoring frameworks, inclusive decision-making spaces and action-oriented policy, one that other countries and National Land Coalitions, including through the PLACE Programme, can now draw on.

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