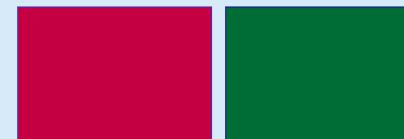


Health Impact Assessment for Mongolia's Largest Coal Mine

Clory Martin, Environmental Resources Management (ERM)

In 2009, field research was conducted to assess the health baseline and potential health impacts for a mine and railway project in the South Gobi region of Mongolia.



SCREENING – to determine need for HIA

Project Location: Gobi Desert of Mongolia

- High impact mine project - need for HIA due to Lender Requirements
- Pre-existing mining conditions in the area
- Risk of high impact to community health due to population influx

SCOPING – to conduct a “fit for purpose” HIA

Project Design

- Expansion of existing Ukhaa Khudag mine and worker accommodation facilities (peak of +2000 workers),
- Construction of coal handling & preparation plant, power generation facilities and coal export railway to China,
- Development of airstrip and ground water abstraction field.



Methodology

In-field research conducted for quantitative/qualitative data gathering

- gathered locally published health statistics from administrative centers
- conducted interviews with stakeholders in 3 soums (districts):
 - nomadic herders (live outside of soum centers)
 - residents in soum centers
 - health practitioners
 - police officers
 - governors
 - project employees

BASELINE – to assess current public health and safety conditions

- Dry climate, remote, less than 0.3 people/km²
- Windy conditions; high levels of ambient dust
- Located in area with pre-existing mining activity
- No paved roads, limited infrastructure

Community Health Profile

Significant health and safety risk factors:

- Low access to health care, limited medical services
- High levels of dust; access to potable water.
- High traffic levels and accidents; low vehicle safety culture.
- Limited emergency response resources, health care personnel and planning.



Health Care System

- Existing level of access to care - state owned hospitals located in each soum center provide free basic health care to residents
- Quality of care – limited health personnel and equipment



Stakeholder Perceptions Factored into the Assessment

- Positive: employment & increased incomes → livelihoods improvements; investment in soum centers → health infrastructure improvements
- Negative: increase in dust levels → degraded human/ livestock/environment health; reduction in the quantity and quality of water → degraded human/ livestock/ environment health



ASSESSMENT – to evaluate potential project impacts

- Increased pressure on health services/infrastructure
- Injuries from road traffic accidents
- Respiratory effects from degraded air quality
- Increased pressure on water resources
- Spread of food and water-borne diseases
- Spread of communicable diseases (including STIs)
- Limited emergency response resources

MITIGATIONS – to minimize potential project impacts

- Communicate project risks and grievance procedure; monitor/respond to complaints.
- Collaborate with local government to further invest in public health services/infrastructure.
- Keep project boundary intact and use signage.
- Implement communicable diseases prevention program for workers
- Support public health campaigns on prevention of STIs, food/water-borne diseases and other communicable illnesses.
- Support traffic police controls & road maintenance
- Provide traffic safety training to all project drivers
- Support upgrade of Tsogttsetii soum landfill
- Security personnel trained in Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights.
- On-going monitoring, evaluation and reporting by both internal and external evaluators.