MOBILITY MONITORING FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS IN MONGOLIA

BASELINE ASSESSMENT REPORT: GOBI-ALTAI AIMAG

Round 1 2018

GOBI-ALTAI AIMAG BASELINE ASSESSMENT
JANUARY - MARCH 2018

INTRODUCTION

Short and long term internal migration has a long-standing tradition in Mongolia. However, data on short term movements (< 3 months) is not systematically collected. In addition, recent trends indicate that rural to urban migration, particularly towards Ulaanbaatar, has been fostered by a number of factors principally related to better employment opportunities, healthcare, education and climate change[1].

Mongolia's unique geographical location, as well as the rural population's dependence on animal husbandry, make the country particularly vulnerable to environmental changes and severe weather events. The increasing trend of rural to urban migration in Mongolia has been linked to factors resulting from climate change, such as declining livelihood opportunities in rural areas that have been amplified by increasing incidences of severe droughts and winter storms (*dzuds*[2]).

If the trends continue, the increasing incidences of disasters will drive higher rates of rural to urban migration into Ulaanbaatar where government officials are already facing significant challenges to accommodate new arrivals. In order to prepare for coming disasters and respond accordingly, the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA) will need to have precise information on population mobility and the number of people at different sites.

In response to the increased occurrence of severe weather events in the country, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) began implementing its Mobility Monitoring for Disaster Preparedness in Mongolia through the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) with the objective to support the Government of Mongolia in establishing a comprehensive system to collect data on displacement caused by climate change and in the event of a natural disaster in the country. DTM will also provide a unique set of data, as for the first time information on short term movements will be collected and analyzed.

METHODOLOGY

The data collection tools and strategy implemented by NEMA are based on the DTM global methodology and have been adapted to the context and the displacement patterns in the country. The information collected will contribute to the creation of a comprehensive profile of the population in Mongolia.

For this baseline assessment, IOM distinguishes between two types of populations: residents (any person living at the given location/site) and mobile population (individuals who moved in/out of the soum within 1-3 months).

NEMA and IOM define population mobility as the movement of people from one place to another, temporarily, seasonally or permanently for either voluntary or involuntary reasons. It describes the full range of mobility from short term movement (e.g. herders) to longer term or permanent relocation.

The location assessment was conducted at the secondary subdivision of the administrative level (soum) outside of Ulaanbaatar. Information was collected through interviews with key informants, identified by NEMA, in consultation with IOM. The collected data includes basic information about the residents and the displaced population (number of individuals, time of arrival, origin, reason for mobility, etc.).

While the assessment was be carried out in all 330 soums across the country (except in Ulaanbaatar city), this report presents analysis of just the population movements of the Gobi-Altai aimag.

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1 National University of Mongolia (NUM), United Nations University – Merit, and International Organization for Migration (IOM) (2018). Understanding and Managing Internal Migration in Mongolia.

2 A dzud is a cyclical, slow onset disaster unique to Mongolia. It consists of a summer drought followed by a deterioration of the weather conditions in winter and spring during which the shortage of pasture and water leads to the large-scale death of livestock.

OVERVIEW

Gobi-Altai is one of the 21 aimags (provinces) of Mongolia. The aimag is located in the west of the country, approximately 1,012 kilometers west of Ulaanbaatar. The capital is Yesonbulag soum. Altai mountain range crosses its territory from north-west to south-east. It is surrounded by high mountains in the North and West, and the Gobi desert in the South. The total area of the aimag is 141,448 km2, and the highest elevation is 3,802m. At the administrative level the aimag is further divided into 18 soums. The weather is mostly harsh in winter, and dry and hot in summer.

In total, 877 individuals left Gobi-Altai between January and March 2018.
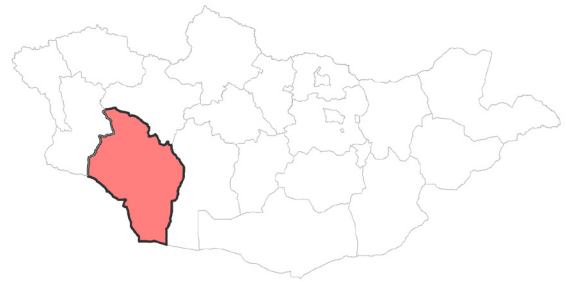
Out of all the individuals that left, the highest share (79%) left during January.

KEY FINDINGS

Population mobility patterns observed in Gobi-Altai demonstrate that this trend is ongoing and show increased movement from some soums to other that are linked to severe weather conditions.

The majority of individuals (accounting for approximately 80% of all individuals who left from Gobi-Altai) left from three soums: Bayan-Uul, Tsogt, and Esunbulag.

Analysis suggests that there are two main population movement types happening in the aimag:

(1) Within-aimag movement happening mostly in January and linked to harsh winter conditions. This type of movement was predominant in the Bayan-Uul soum.

All individuals who left Bazan-Uul left in January to different soums in Gobi-Altai, reportedly mostly because of severe winter conditions.

(2) Movement to Ulaanbatar in March in search of better economic conditions and employment opportunities. This type of movement mostly happened from the aimag capital Esunbulag.

## HOW MANY INDIVIDUALS MOVED AND FROM WHERE?

Between January and March 2018, a total of 877 individuals left Gobi-Altai.

The number of individuals who left varied significantly across soums. The majority of individuals (accounting for approximately 80% of all individuals who left from Gobi-Altai) left from three soums: Bayan-Uul, Tsogt, and Esunbulag.
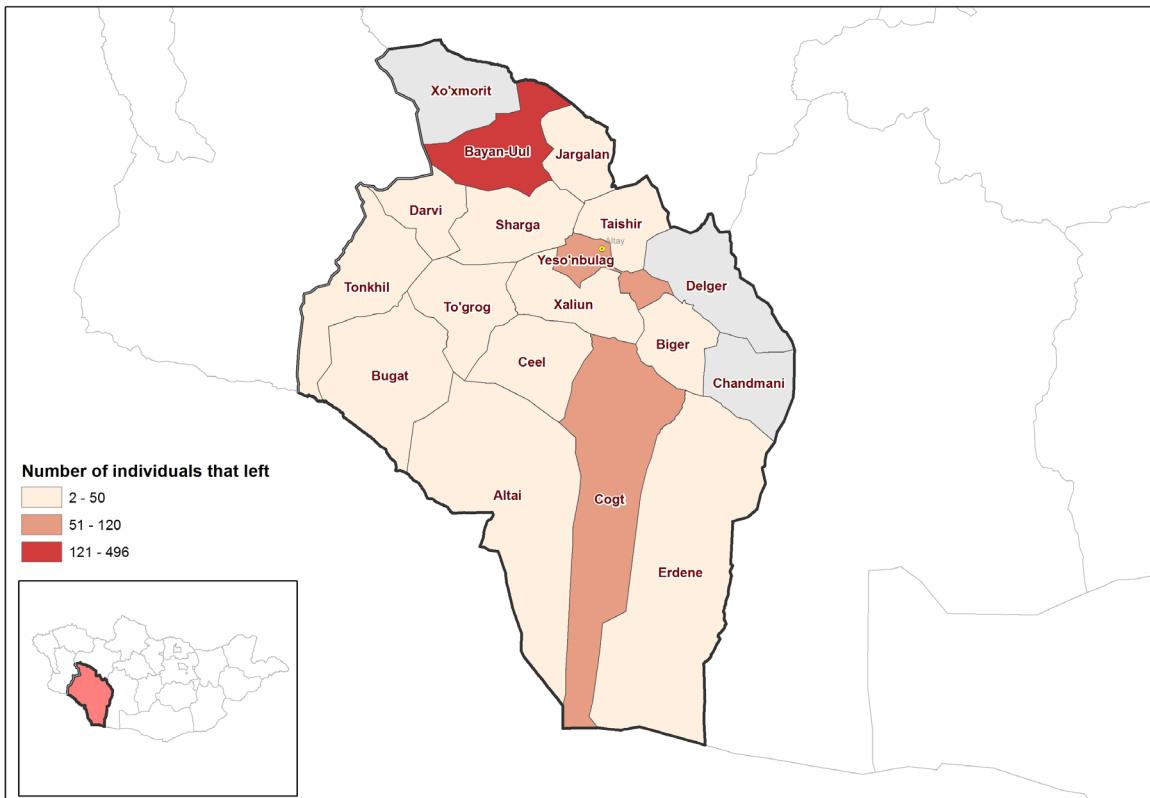
No individuals left from Delger, Khukhmorit or Chandmani soums.

The map below shows the distribution of individuals who left Gobi-Altai by soums.

Figure 1: Number of individuals who left Gobi-Altai between January and March 2018, by soum.
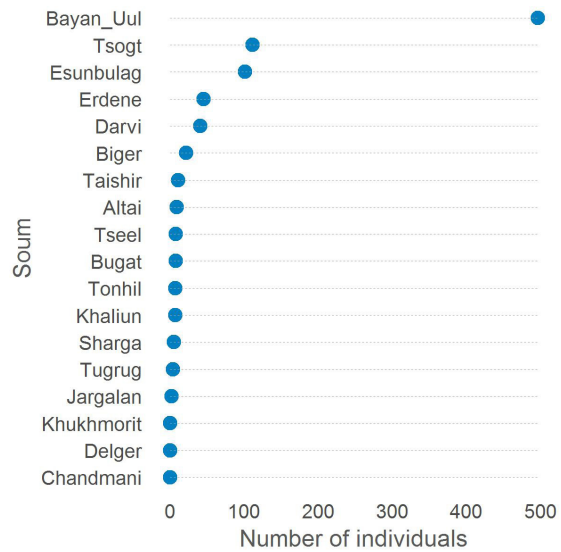
Map 1: Number of individuals who left Gobi-Altai between January and March 2018, by soum.

WHERE DID THE INDIVIDUALS GO?

The majority of individuals (82%) left from their soums of habitual residence to other soums in the Gobi-Altai aimag. All the individuals who left from the Bayan-Uul soum left to other soums in the aimag. Individuals who left from Tsogt also left to different soums in Gobi-Altai. However, individuals who left from the aimag capital Esunbulag left to Ulaanbaatar.

Destinations varied significantly between the three first months of 2018. While in January the predominant majority of individuals (93%) left to different soums within Gobi-Altai, in February there was a decrease by 47 percentage points, from 93% in January to 46%.

In March and February there was an increase in the share of individuals who left to Ulaanbaatar. The percentage of individuals who left to Ulaanbaatar in January constituted 7 per cent of all individuals who left in this month, while approximately half of all individuals who left in February and 62 per cent of all indiivduals who left in March left to the capital.

This increase is mostly attributed to the increasing number of individuals who went to Ulaanbaatar from Esunbulag and Erdene soums in February and March.

Figure 2: Percentage of individuals who left Gobi-Altai to the capital/other aimag/other soums in Gobi-Altai between January and March 2018.
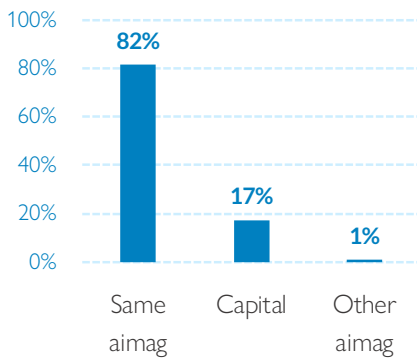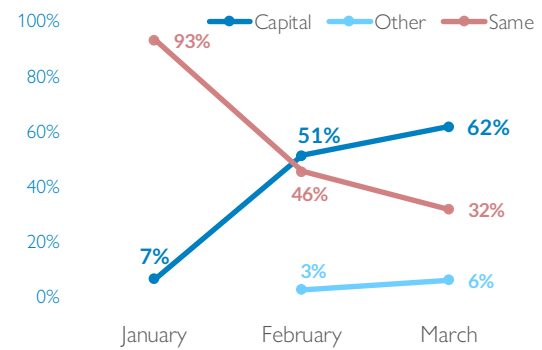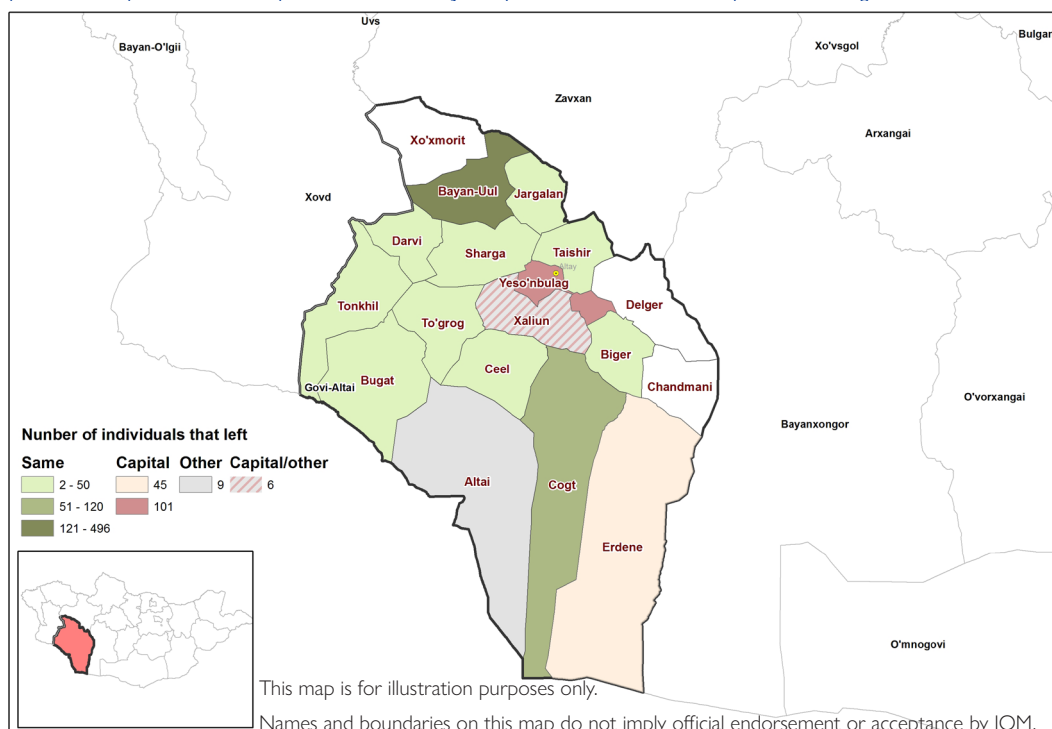

Figure 3: Percentage of individuals who left Gobi-Altai to the capital/other aimag/other soums in Gobi-Altai between January and March 2018, by month.

Map 2: Number of individuals who left Gobi-Altai between January and March 2018 to the capital/other aimag/other soums in Gobi-Altai.

This map is for illustration purposes only.
Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.

WHEN DID THE INDIVIDUALS LEAVE?

The predominant majority of individuals left in January. However, there were slight variations depending from which soum individuals left. While all individuals who left from Bayan-Uul and 93% of individuals who left from Tsogt left in January, half of individuals who departed from Esunbulag left in March.

Individuals who left Esunbulag soum mostly left because of economic reasons to Ulan-Baator, while one of the most frequent reason for leaving Bayan-Uul soum was harsh winter. This pattern could be reflective of the intensifying low temperatures and harsh wheather conditions in January in this soum.

Figure 4: Percentage of individuals who left Gobi-Altai, by month.
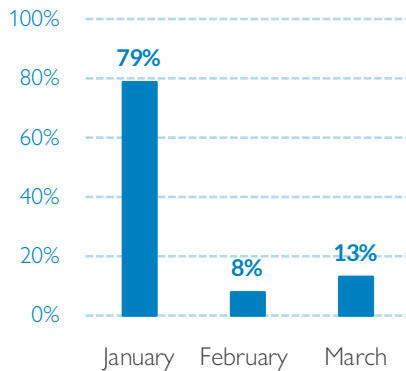

Figure 5: Percentage of individuals who left Bayan-Uul, Esenbulag, and Tsogt soums, by month.
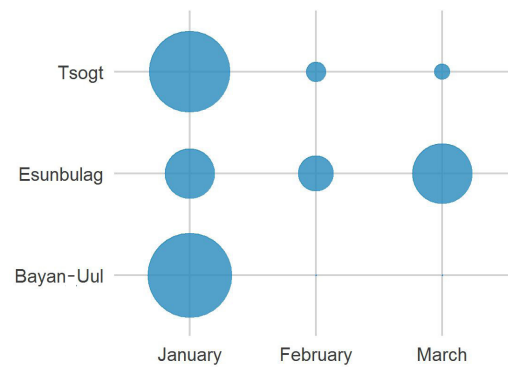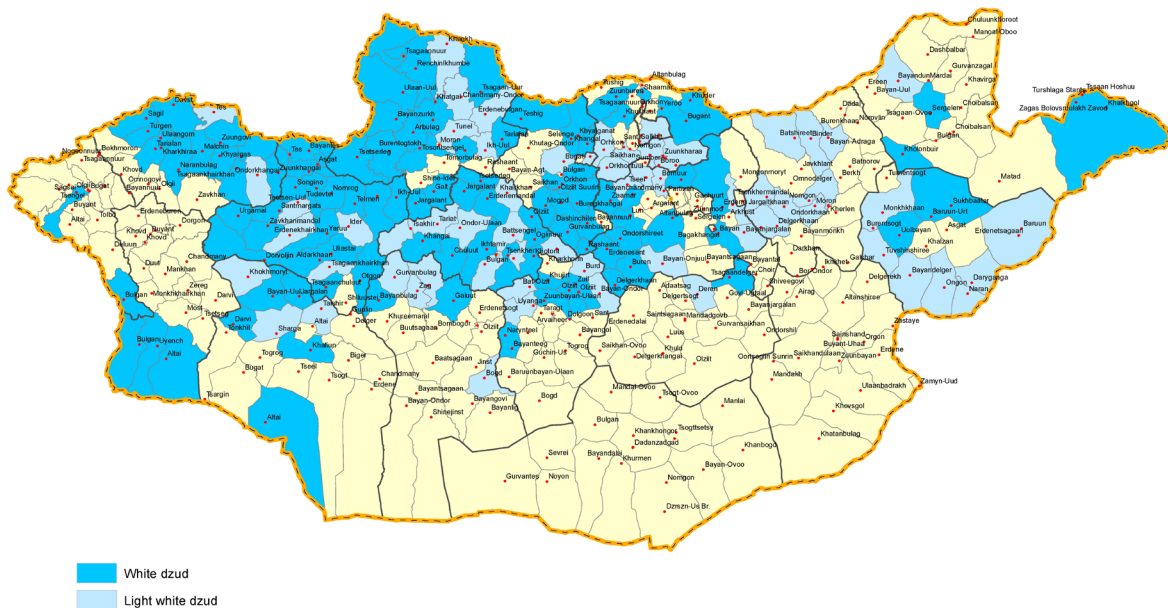

Figure 3: Dzud by soum between Deembe -2017 and March 2018.

White dzud
Light white dzud

Source: Spatial Information and Technology Division, NEMA