

Plan Vivo Validation Report

Name of Reviewers:

Batbuyan Batjav,

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Date of Review:

Field visit: November 5-12, 2015

Project Name:

‘Pastures, Conservation and Climate Action, Mongolia’

Project Description:

This project designed to sequester carbon in grasslands through improved grazing management practices as well as contributing to livelihoods and wellbeing of herders coupled with the conservation of important biodiversity heritage.

The specific project objectives are as follows:

- To make measurable, positive impacts on participating herder groups’ livelihoods, through facilitating access to carbon finance and through support of locally developed strategies for livelihood diversification, economies of scale, restoration of seasonal mobility and collaborative practices in herding.
- To promote wider awareness of Plan Vivo and voluntary carbon markets, amongst local herding communities and government policy makers, thus supporting the wider uptake of this approach in the future.
- Through participatory analysis and valuation of ES, to facilitate the implementation of a sustainable, locally relevant PES scheme (the first rangeland PES scheme in Mongolia).

The project is collaborating with more than 140 herder households and conducted at three different sites in Mongolia that represents mountain, steppe and desert steppe environments.

In total the territories of these groups cover an area of approximately 78,500 ha.

The project is coordinated and administrated by Mongolian Society for Range Management (MSRM), a nationally recognized NGO with a substantial track record in community/ herder group support.

The project is timely and innovative in a number of ways. As indicated above, it is to our knowledge the first pilot rangeland PES scheme in Mongolia, linked to the voluntary carbon market. It comes at a time of growing national policy interest in and attempts to deploy ES thinking and planning in natural resource governance in Mongolia, including through development of a national REDD-iness strategy, and in line with wider government commitments to the ‘Green Economy’.

List of Principal documents reviewed: (including list of sites visited and individuals/groups interviewed)

Visited sites:

1. Bayankhongoraimag, Bogdsoum
2. Arkhangaiimag , IkhTamirusoum
3. Tov aimga, Undurshireersoum

List of individuals interviewed:

MSRMS central staff:

- Mr.Dorligsuren-executive director of the MSRMS
- Mrs.Dulmaa –interpreter, has skill in organizing training and experience in natural resource management.
- Mr.Gantsogt –specialist of grassland management
- Mrs.Bolormaa- environment specialist

Local officials:

- Mr.Ganaa-soum governor of Bogdsoum
- Mrs.Uranchimeg- land officer of Bogdsoum
- Mr.Ganzorig- environment officer of Bogdsoum
- Mr.Erdenbileg -soum governor of Ikhtamirsoum
- Mrs.Munkhbzaya-land officer of Ikhtamirsoum
- Mr.MunkhbErdene- environment officer of IkhTamirsoum
- Mr.Batkhoo–soum governor of Undershireetsoum
- Mr. Sugar –land officer of Undershireetsoum
- Mrs.Oyun-local NGO leader

Herder groups and leaders

- Mr.Amarsanaa-leader of herder group “Dert” in Bogdsoum
- Togookhuu-member of herder group
- Mrs.Tuya-member of herder group
- Mr.Tgogbadrakh-member of herder group

- Mr.Batnasan-leader of herder group “Hongorovoo”inIkhTamirsoum
- Mr.Khurelkhoo-member of herder group
- Mr.Naranbaatar-member of herder group

- Mr.Dogsom –leader of herder group “Ikh Am” in Undershireetsoum
- Mr.Tumenjargal –member of herder group
- Mr.Erdenbat-members of herder group

The validator was able to meet national experts on climate changes from the Ministry of Environment and Green Development. The meeting that we held with Dr D. Dagvadorj, Special Envoy on Climate Change and leader of climate change policy in Mongolia was most valuable as the discussion involved current climate change issues, related policies and strategies in Mongolia and, in this framework, the importance of the project.

Description of field visit

The validator interviewed local officials in all three pilot sites. During the field visit, the validator had discussions with herders that representing 30% of the herder groups. The semi-structure questions helped the validator to understand project activities, herders monitoring responsibilities in relation to the technical specification of the project. In each one of the three sites, a group discussion was organized to allow the opinions about project of vulnerable social groups to be expressed. Two female household heads were amongst the participants. The local official and environment officers were interviewed to better understand the roles and responsibilities in the implementation of project. The validator visited protected project area sites (area with saxaul forest, medicinal plants, key fauna in Bogd-soum) and fenced sites for vegetable production or fodder crops (in Ikhtamit-soum). Overall, a very close correlation between the PDD/database and the project activities currently being developed on the ground was confirmed. Observations and discussions in the field also provided opportunities to assess numerous aspects of the project, including staff knowledge, herders understanding of the project and so on.

Validation Opinion:

The evidence presented in project documents and during the field visit indicated that MSRM have the capacity to manage the project in accordance with the Plan Vivo Standard. Based on the responses provided by the MSRM staff and field visit the “New Approaches to Conservation in Mongolia” project has met all of the requirements of the Plan Vivo Standards and the project is qualified to be registered with the Plan Vivo Foundation. If there are questions about this result, please contact BatbuyanBatjav (b_batbyuan@yahoo.com)

Table 1. Summary of major and minor Corrective Actions

Theme	Major CARs	Minor CARs	Observations
Governance	0	0	0
Carbon	0	0	2
Ecosystem	0	0	0
Livelihoods	0	0	0

Theme	Conformance of Draft Report	Conformance of Final Report
Governance	Yes	Yes
Carbon	Yes	Yes
Ecosystem	Yes	Yes
Livelihoods	Yes	Yes

Theme	1. Effective and Transparent Project Governance
<i>Ensuring that the project meets requirements 3.1-3.16 of the Plan Vivo Standard (2013)</i>	
A. Requirement	<p>1.1 Administrative capabilities</p> <p>Is there a legal and organisational framework in place that has the sufficient capacity and a range of skills to implement all the administrative requirements of the project? Aspects of this framework may include:</p> <p>1.1.1 A legal entity (project coordinator) that is able to enter into sale agreements with multiple producers or producer groups for carbon services</p> <p>1.1.2 Standard sale agreement templates for the provision of carbon services</p> <p>1.1.3 Systems for maintaining transparent and audited financial accounts able to the secure receipt, holding and disbursement of payments to producers</p> <p>1.1.4 All necessary legal permissions to carry out the intended project activities</p> <p>1.1.5 Mechanisms for participants to discuss issues associated with the design and running of the project</p> <p>1.1.6 Procedures for addressing any conflicts that may arise</p> <p>1.1.7 Ability to produce reports required by Plan Vivo on a regular basis and communicate regularly with Plan Vivo</p>
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Organizational and administrative capacity may be demonstrated through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A record of managing other projects - especially those involving the receipt, safeguarding and management of funds and disbursement of these to smallholders/community groups • Project staff who can explain the legal status of the organisation and its management and financial structure i.e. how funds will be held and transferred – backed up by evidence of setting up bank accounts and record-keeping systems etc. • The views of others who have worked with the organisation in the past (such as government, other project partners or other NGOs) • A visibly efficient and functioning office with all necessary staff
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The review indicates that institutional arrangements and legal agreements are in place. MSRM has the capacity to manage all the administrative requirements of the project. MSRM is nationally recognized NGO, it satisfies all the requirements of the Plan Vivo Standard and it conduct all its activities within framework of the Constitution Of Mongolia and its related laws.</p> <p>MSRM was established in 2007 and the objective of the organization is promotes sustainable pasture management in Mongolia through the creation and the strengthening of herders’ self-governing institutions. MSRM has been implemented the second phase of the Green Gold Program the “Pasture Ecosystem Management Project ” (2009-2012) on the basis of a contract established with Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The main objective was to enable communities of herders to preserve, protect and nurture pasture ecosystems to underpin sustainable livelihoods. The other major objective was the</p>

	<p>implementation of the “Coping with Desertification” project where MSRMs were mandated to coordinate the implementation of improved pastureland management practices in 10 soums of the Khovdaimag/province. Also MSRMs were selected by the Asian Development Bank to be project partner on the “Strengthening Carbon Financing for Regional Grassland Management in Northeast Asia” project(2011-2012).</p> <p>MSRM follows the International Finance accounting system for its finance and accounting reports. MSRMs have financial systems where allocated transferred funds and budget from sponsor and project are used in their official bank accounts and for approved projects.</p> <p>MSRM will store funds received from the sales of Plan Vivo Certificates in separate bank accounts, which will then be transferred to the herder groups after receiving and approving the project monitoring reports.</p> <p>MSRM has a legal cooperation agreement document for solving any future problems with the communities. The cooperation agreement and the Triple Contract Agreement were signed by the local governor and the local community authority and they state the responsibilities and the rights of all participants as far as the implementation of grassland management activities and protection of biodiversity are concerned.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	<p>1.2 Technical capabilities</p> <p>Is the project through its staff or partners able to provide timely and good quality technical assistance to producers and/or communities in planning and implementing the productive, sustainable and economically viable forest management, silvicultural and agroforestry actions proposed for the project and for any additional livelihoods activities that are also planned?</p>		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Technical capabilities may be determined through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions with project staff who should be able to define clearly who is responsible for the provision of technical support • Interviews with project staff to demonstrate that they are familiar with the content of project technical specifications e.g. species to be planted, spacing requirements, management systems and any potential issues • Feedback from farmers/communities who have been supported in the past • On-site evidence of project activities (possibly from other projects) that have benefited from technical support 		

<p>C. Findings (describe)</p>	<p>The MSRM team has staff with project management experience and professional backgrounds on agriculture, grassland research, technology and community development. They also possess the capacity to report on project implementation activities on a regular basis. In addition, they have local trainers in two Mongolian sites that can provide training on pasture use. .</p> <p>There are clear defined responsibilities among the MSRM headquarters staff, where Mr. Dorligsuren and Mrs. Dulmaa, will lead delivery of technical, administrative and social tasks for Plan Vivo, while other members of staff will support the conduction of trainings and the collection of data.</p> <p>Moreover, the project is working closely with Dr. Caroline Upton from the Leicester University who is the project’s External Coordinator and with whom MSRM keeps direct contact regarding the project documentation and implementation.</p> <p>MSRM has already conducted extensive trainings with participating herder groups, both under the activities of the Darwin project and in light of the preparation for Plan Vivo certification. These trainings have addressed various issues such as pasture management, rotational pasture use, the processing and the marketing of livestock products, accounts/ financial management and the growing of vegetables. Interviews of local officials (environment and land officers) as well as herders indicates that those trainings were useful up to the point where these groups expressed interest to have more training on the aforementioned topics.</p> <p>A review of the Green Gold Projects (SDC) documents together with meetings by the validator with herder groups in pilot sites where MSRM will assist with technical support suggests the trainings have been successful and beneficiaries were supportive of the project activities that took place under guidance of MSRM.</p>		
<p>D. Conformance</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>E. Corrective Actions (describe)</p>	<p>None</p>		
<p>A. Requirement</p>	<p>1.3 Social capabilities Is the project, through its staff or partners able to demonstrate an understanding of the social conditions of the target groups/communities and likely implications of the project for these? This might include: 1.3.1 A demonstrated ability to select appropriate target groupsthrough stakeholder analysis and to understand the implications of the project for specific groups e.g. poor, women, socially disadvantaged etc. 1.3.2 Groups/communities that are well-informed about the Plan Vivo</p>		

	<p>System and the nature of carbon and ecosystem services</p> <p>1.3.3 Local groups/communities that can demonstrate effective self-governance and decision-making</p> <p>1.3.4 Well-established and effective participatory relationships between producers and the project coordinator</p> <p>1.3.5 Demonstrated ability to establish land-tenure rights through engaging with producers/communities and other relevant organisations</p> <p>1.3.6 Ability to consult with and interact with producers/communities on a sustained basis through participatory ‘tools’ and methods</p> <p>1.3.7 Established system for conflict resolution</p>
<p>B. Guidance Notes for Validators</p>	<p>Social capabilities may be determined through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Records/minutes/photographs of community meetings and training workshops etc. • Project staff able to explain (in line with PDD) how land tenure is checked by the project • Project staff and communities able to explain how communities/target groups were selected and involved in the development of the project and in the choice of activities • Project staff able to demonstrate that they are familiar with the communities/target groups and able to interact with them easily through meetings facilitated during the validation • Meetings held with specific target groups e.g. women, socially disadvantaged etc.
<p>C. Findings (describe)</p>	<p>The three herder groups were selected for the pilot phase by the project team, following the advice of local NGOs and on the basis of the following criteria: the desire expressed by all members to be involved in the Plan Vivo project, each one of them was a well-established and active herder group, the herder’s chief displayed strong leadership, there was a willingness to include poor households in the decision-making process, they demonstrated a good organizational structure e.g. leader and herder advisor (senior herder experienced in traditional herding activity) and they had already established a revolving fund providing low cost loans to herder group members.</p> <p>Each herder groups are formal group that are based on traditional kinship affiliations and on a geographical proximity in seasonal pastures. The participating herders have recognized land tenure rights and agreements with local administration in accordance with traditional land use rights, traditional practices and the 2002 Land Law.</p> <p>The review of available records indicates that those selected herders groups have a long history as some of them have been together since 2004 and they demonstrated effective self-governance as well as effective decision-making.</p> <p>Over the preparation period, the project team visited the pilot sites several times, during which they organized several trainings and workshops as well as having individual meetings with herder households. During these meetings, project staff provided comprehensive information about project.</p>

	<p>Discussions with members of herders group demonstrated the project staff has managed to establish an effective working relationship.</p> <p>In addition, the validator was able to directly observe the local land officers in all three project sites while providing information and consultation to herders on pasture condition. Interviews the officers also demonstrated technical knowledge in pasture management, forestry techniques and the capability to assist to herder groups.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	<p>1.4 Monitoring and Reporting capabilities</p> <p>Does the project have an effective monitoring and reporting system in place that can regularly monitor progress and provide annual reports to the Plan Vivo Foundation according to the reporting schedule outlined in the PDD?</p> <p>1.4.1 Accurately report progress, achievements and problems experienced</p> <p>1.4.2 Transparently report sales figures and demonstrate resource allocation in the interest of target groups</p>		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Monitoring and reporting systems and capabilities may be determined through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff and participating communities able to explain the monitoring system (how each of the indicators in the PDD will be monitored) • Records of any monitoring already undertaken e.g. baselines or other information • Project staff showing an understanding of the importance of annual reporting to Plan Vivo as a requirement for issuance of certificates • Demonstrated ability to produce simple reports (e.g. for other projects) 		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The review indicates that project has an effective monitoring and reporting system in place.</p> <p>Member of the MSRM staff and participating institution (local administration, environment officers, land officers) demonstrated that they possess the capacity to build a database and to update it regularly. They also demonstrated that they are capable of maintaining accurate and transparent reporting procedures as well as producing simple reports to the Plan Vivo Foundation.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None
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Theme	2. Carbon Benefits		
<i>Ensuring that the project meets requirements 5.1-5.20 of the Plan Vivo Standard (2013)</i>			
A. Requirement	2.1 Accounting methodology Have the carbon benefits been calculated using recognised carbon accounting methodologies and/or approved approaches and are the estimates of carbon uptake/storage conservative enough to take into account risks of leakage and reversibility?		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	Check the carbon accounting methodology used including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The level of understanding of the methodology used amongst technical project staff • Whether all references and sources of information are available (include copies with the validation report if possible) • Whether the carbon accounting models are clear and transparent i.e. are the spreadsheets available and readily understandable? Can project staff answer and explain any technical questions about these? • Are local experts able to comment on the accounting methodology and on the sources of information used? 		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The project staff are sufficiently knowledgeable of technical aspects of carbon accounting model. At the same time, the project has external consultant who provides input on methodology and greenhouse gas emissions calculations from the activities in project area.</p> <p>The accounting methodology meets the applicability conditions for the quantification of climate benefits with respect to grazing and forage management described in the “Plan Vivo Climate Benefit Quantification Methodology Carbon Sequestration Through Improved Grassland and Natural Resources Management in Extensively Managed Grasslands Version 0.3” prepared by Values for Development Ltd.</p> <p>This methodology is used to estimate the climate benefits of the following types of natural resources management activities in extensively managed grasslands: (1) Improved management of grasslands, including: improved grazing management and forage management (e.g. perennial forage cultivation, hay harvesting); (2) Vegetation of grassland, shrubland or forest, by afforestation or reforestation and assisted natural regeneration of degraded shrub communities.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	2.2 Baseline Are the carbon benefits of the project measured against a clear and credible carbon baseline (for each project intervention)?		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	Check the baseline scenario in the technical specifications of the PDD: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Check that baseline measurements have been carried out and information properly recorded • Check that the information from the baseline matches that in the PDD/Technical specifications and corresponds to the situation on the ground (by discussing with local experts and others) 		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The carbon benefits assessment methods were clearly described in the project document. The project followed the requirement of the PV Standard for the preparation and the documentation of land management plans. Those baseline records include technical specifications such as grass densities, grazing intensities, livestock number, and size of intervention area.</p> <p>The baseline values have been determined for all sites through households surveys conducted during the preparatory Darwin Initiative-funded project.</p> <p>The methodology has 3 modules for the quantification of climate benefits. Module1: Quantification of climate benefits of grazing and forage management activities; Module 2: quantification of climate benefits of re-vegetation activities; Module 3: estimation of leakage from displacement of livestock grazing.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	2.3 Additionality Are the carbon benefits additional? Would they be generated in the absence of the project? Will activities supported by the project happen without the availability of carbon finance?		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	Assess whether the project simply owes its existence to legislative decrees or to commercial land-use initiatives that are likely to be economically viable in their own right i.e. without payments for ecosystem services.		

	Also, assess whether without project funding there are social, cultural, technical, ecological or institutional barriers that would prevent project activities from taking place.		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The target part of the activities undertaken by herder groups are additional and meet all of the requirements that are listed in the guideline above.</p> <p>The results indicate that without technical training, capacity building efforts and direct payments, herders in the project area lack the knowledge and financial capacity to implement the biodiversity conservation and grassland management activities described in the Project Design Document (PDD).</p> <p>This carbon finance project will help herders expand their effort to achieve socio-economic and climate change benefits that would not be possible in the absence of the project.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	2.4 Permanence Are potential risks to the permanence of carbon stocks identified in the project technical specifications and are effective and feasible mitigation measures included in the project design?		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Assess whether members of the community/producers are aware that they will enter into formal sale agreements with the project coordinator and that they therefore need to comply with the monitoring and mitigation requirements of the project.</p> <p>Check whether the risk buffer proposed in the PDD and technical specifications for each intervention (that will be deducted from the saleable carbon of each producer) conforms to the recommended percentages in the Plan Vivo Standard or other Plan Vivo documentation. Check with Plan Vivo if this is unclear.</p>		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>Based on discussions with local officials, herders groups and on the field visits conducted, participating herders groups are very much aware of the monitoring requirements that they have to meet in order to be eligible for payments and, subsequently, of the processes involved in the withholding of payments when the aforementioned monitoring targets are not met.</p> <p>The project clearly identifies permanence issues that may arise from human induced and management measures are summarized in project technical specification.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>

E. Corrective Actions (describe)	<p><u>Observation</u></p> <p>Additional training required on several topics according the specifics of the herder groups. For example, technical training on tree-planting among the herder group that represent desert steppe environments.</p>		
F. MRSM Response	<p>MSRM have planned training on tree seedling production and planting before the main planting season in 2016, for the relevant <i>heseg</i>. Further training will also be provided in activities planned by other <i>heseg</i> and in mapping and recording techniques for herder group leaders, to enable them to better train and support their own members.</p>		
G. Status	<p>Closed- the Project Coordinator has agreed on a timeframe for the conduction of the training sessions.</p>		
A. Requirement	<p>2.5 Leakage Have potential sources of leakage been identified and are effective and feasible mitigation measures in place for implementation</p>		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Check the sources of leakage and the effectiveness of mitigation measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By discussions with local experts, the project coordinator and others. • Assess whether there is a good understanding of the importance of addressing leakage amongst project participants • Assess whether the mitigation measures proposed are really effective and likely to be implemented. Have they already started? 		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The project developers had identified sufficiently well any potential sources of leakage and their corresponding mitigation measures. The agreements that have been developed with the participation of herders groups ensure that the planned activities will improve pasture conditions while also avoiding leakage/displacement into adjacent land areas.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	<p>None</p>		
A. Requirement	<p>2.6 Traceability and double-counting Are carbon sales from the project traceable and recorded in a database? Are the project intervention areas covered by any other projects or initiatives (including regional or national initiatives)? Are there formal mechanisms in place to avoid double counting?</p>		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Check the possibility of double counting and whether the carbon sales are traceable by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By discussions with local experts, the project coordinator and other projects (including any national or regional level GHG coordination unit) 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understanding the project system for maintaining records of carbon sales and keeping records and determining whether this is sufficiently robust and transparent (through discussions with project staff and local participants) 						
C. Findings (describe)	<p>MSRM has two agreements that can be used once the project has been registered with the Plan Vivo Foundation. The first agreement is the trilateral contact (between MSRM, herders groups and the local government) where local government is obligated to support herders groups and to provide advice as well as information about local specialists of animal breeding and pasture management. Also, in order to assist with the coordination of activities implemented in conjunction with other herders (none members of project herder groups) and in monitoring of protected area and pasture rotation schedule. In addition, project has a cooperation agreement between MSRSM and herders groups to provide a formal mechanism to avoid double counting. According to this agreement, herders groups that have signed up with the project, have undertake the obligation to refrain from entering into any ecosystem service/ carbon sale agreements with any other party for any other carbon project..</p> <p>Discussions in the field with the local goverement authorities and herders indicate that they are willing to implement any corrective actions that will be prescribed from specialists if it comes to avoid double counting.</p>						
D. Conformance	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Yes</td> <td><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></td> <td>No</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>N/A</td> <td><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>
Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	N/A	<input type="checkbox"/>		
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None						
A. Requirement	<p>2.7 Monitoring</p> <p>Does the project have a monitoring plan in place? Is it being implemented and does it seem to be an effective system for monitoring the continued delivery of the ecosystem services?</p> <p>Does the project coordinator prescribe and record corrective actions where monitoring targets are not met and are these effectively followed up in subsequent monitoring?</p>						
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Check whether the monitoring plan is effective and likely to be fully implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess the level of understanding of project staff and participating communities of the monitoring system and ensure that there are responsibilities for monitoring are matched by sufficient capacity Are the selected indicators (covering all aspects of monitoring) SMART? I.e. Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound? Do the selected indicators properly measure impacts of the project or are they only able to measure inputs/activities? Are communities effectively involved in monitoring and do they understand their role? 						

<p>C. Findings (describe)</p>	<p>The projects prepared a monitoring plan that specifies the following components: the parameters for which data will be collected; the methods to be used for data collection; the frequency of data collection; the procedures for data analysis; the roles and responsibilities in monitoring data collection, their analysis and reporting; and, finally, relevant the resources and inputs required for the monitoring activities.</p> <p>Interviews with local officials and herders indicated that they have a clear understanding of monitoring procedures. In each project site, participating groups have already their own established structures to monitor and deliver reports to local officials and project staff. Both the local officials and the herders will participate and will be responsible for monitoring activities. Moreover, the monitoring is linked to specific activities planned at each project site. For instance, herders in Bogd and Ikhtamir soums will be actively participating in biodiversity monitoring by reporting to official about illegal poaching activities and, at end of year, they will be providing reports to local official so that, based on these reports, local officials will be able to correct management action plans.</p> <p>Each year, a local environment officer collects data to assess the plant composition of the pastures. The data is entered into database and processed.</p> <p>The project has activity-based indicators to track the achievement of the management of pastures, biodiversity and livelihood benefits. Each indicator has an annual performance thresholds throughout the project period.</p>		
<p>D. Conformance</p>	<p>Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>N/A <input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>E. Corrective Actions (describe)</p>	<p><u>Observation</u></p> <p>MSRM need to provide continued training and ensure that herder and local officials are gaining knowledge from land management techniques.</p>		
<p>F. MSRSM Response</p>	<p>MSRM has planned further training in land management techniques for <i>heseg</i> members in summer 2016.</p>		
<p>G. Status</p>	<p>Closed- the Project Coordinator will carry out further training in the first year of the project implementation as described above.</p>		
<p>A. Requirement</p>	<p>2.8 Plan Vivos Are the <i>plan vivos</i>(or land management plans) clear, appropriate and consistent with approved technical specifications for the project? Will</p>		

	<p>implementation of the plans cause producers' overall agricultural production or revenue potential to become unsustainable or unviable?</p>		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Where small-holder farmers have prepared individual <i>plan vivos</i>, check a sample of these on the ground (in the company of the farmer) to determine whether they have really been prepared by the farmer and what the farmer expects to be the results of implementation.</p> <p>For community-projects managing a common (forest) resource, check the management plan for the forest area and assess the extent to which target groups within the community have been involved in preparing it (especially women and disadvantaged groups) and the extent to which its future impacts have been discussed and agreed.</p>		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The grassland management plans are clear and consistent with project technical specifications.</p> <p>MSRM conducted several trainings (herders group leaders, members of the groups, local government officials) on the management of grassland, monitoring plans and indicators for these activities. Additionally, the organization has conducted trainings on specific technical topics (e.g. tree planting and management measures) that helps complement each Plan Vivo.</p> <p>Interviews of herders group leaders indicated that they are able to manage the responsibilities on pasture management and biodiversity protection.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		

Theme	3. Ecosystem benefits		
<i>Ensuring that the project meets requirements 2.1-2.4 of the Plan Vivo Standard (2013)</i>			
A. Requirement	3.1 Planting native and naturalised species Are the planting activities of the project restricted to native and naturalised species? If naturalised species are being used are they invasive and what effects will they have on biodiversity? Have the species been selected because they will have clear livelihoods benefits?		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	Check this using a number of sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual observations of local tree-growing practices • Discussions with communities and project staff • Discussions with local experts (forestry and biodiversity experts) • Published information (refer to this in the validation report if used) 		
C. Findings (describe)	During this validation site visit, the deep snow cover obstructed access to the ground so it was very difficult to assess the impact of the first few months of project activities in terms of fodder production practices. However, discussions with communities and local specialists revealed that there has been significant progress in the management of pastures within in the project area. Some herders expressed interest to continue the sustainable pasture management practices encouraged by the project and to follow the agreed action plan. Herders from Ikh Tamir soum indicated that there has been an improvement pasture conditions during winter over last two years. Illegal logging has declined and the incidence of forest fire has reduced. There also has been some recorded appearances of wild pigs. In Bogd soum, local environment officers have indicated that there has been an increase in the number of wild goats in area where the project is being implemented.		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	3.2 Ecological impacts Have the wider ecological impacts of the project been identified and considered including impacts on local and regional biodiversity and impacts on watersheds?		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	Check this using a number of sources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual observations of the environment in the project area • Discussions with communities and project staff • Discussions with local experts (environmental experts) • Published information (refer to this in the validation report if used) 		
C. Findings (describe)	The project engaged herder groups as well as local environment officers in the design of the project and in the identification of land use activities that now being implemented. Discussion with herders and local environment experts indicated illegal harvesting of saxaul forests area has stopped in		

	Bogdsoum while illegal timber harvesting has stopped in IkhTamirsoum. When the project began, the herders group in Bogdsoum indicated there there was an increase in the population of wild animals.		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		

Theme	4. Livelihood Benefits		
<i>Ensuring that the project meets requirements 4.1-4.14, 7.1-7.5 and 8.1-8.10 of the Plan Vivo Standard (2013)</i>			
A. Requirement	4.1 Community-led planning		
	Has the project has undergone a producer/community-led planning process aimed at identifying and defining sustainable land-use activities that serve the community's needs and priorities?		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	Assess this by discussions with project staff and communities and by looking at any records of the planning process. It may be useful to conduct a time-line exercise with communities to understand the planning process that has taken place.		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>Each herders group/community in the pilot sites has its own grassland management plan with very precise plans for seasonal movement schedules, resting of certain pasture areas and the allocation of hayfield.</p> <p>Leaders of the community compile all the recorded information into map and secure approval for any change in the planned activities from local government officials.</p> <p>The grassland management plans also are discussed at the meeting of the Citizens' Representative Parliament (<i>bag khural</i>).</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	4.2 Socio-economic impact assessment/monitoring plan		
	Is there a robust socio-economic impact assessment and monitoring plan in place that can measure changes against the baseline scenario?		

B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Discuss with project staff and communities to understand how the baseline assessment was conducted and how the socio-economic monitoring plan developed out of this. Assess in particular:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whether the livelihoods indicators can effectively monitoring socio-economic changes taking place • The extent to which women, disadvantaged people and other social groups have been involved project processes and whether the selected indicators will enable impacts on them to be determined • Whether any groups in the community are likely to be adversely affected by the project and whether there are any mitigation measures in place to address this 		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The indicators for socio-economic impacts of project activities on herders groups have then been clearly elaborated and are based on several socio-economic surveys, multiple meetings, discussions with members of herders groups and review of wider soum/ aimag trends. The project has six key indicators (Livelihood Diversification, Mobility, Financial Capital, Household Revenue, Mobility, Own Life Evaluation) that were selected to align the socio-economic monitoring plan with the national assessment criteria and poverty reports.</p> <p>Baseline information has been determined for all sites through household surveys conducted during the preparatory Darwin Initiative-funded project in year of 2013/14.</p> <p>According to the monitoring plan these indicators will be assessed at the end of the first three-year commitment period to check progress and to adjust them as necessary before any second commitment period.</p> <p>Interviews with herders and local officials have not revealed any indication that the groups in the community have been adversely affected by the project.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	<p>4.3 Sale agreements and payments</p> <p>Does the project have clear procedures for entering into sale agreements with producers/communities based on saleable carbon from <i>plan vivos</i>? Does the project have an effective and transparent process for the timely administration and recording of payments to producers?</p>		

B. Guidance Notes for Validators	Check the systems that are being proposed by the project and make an assessment of whether these are fully functional already or whether they can be made functional when required? Are communities/producers aware of the system and do they understand it? Are documents and materials readily available to producers/communities?		
C. Findings (describe)	<p>The project has clear procedures/scheme for entering into sale agreements with producers/communities based on saleable carbon derived by the project activities. However, it not yet in place.</p> <p>According the MSRM project preparation document, the specific tripartite Plan Vivo contracts will be signed for each participating herders group. The contract will include a specific reference to share of revenue perceived by MSRM and to the rights of herders groups to the financial benefits accruing from the project.</p> <p>According the project coordinator, the payments for the sales of certificates will be received initially by the project coordinator, MSRM, who has set up a dedicated bank account. Full records will be kept a) by MSRM regarding the amounts and the number of disbursements to the specific herders group and b) by each herders group through their existing accounting system, to ensure transparency and fairness of disbursements in accordance with agreed benefit sharing procedures.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)	None		
A. Requirement	<p>4.4 Benefit sharing and equity</p> <p>Will the project have livelihoods benefits for the local community? Are these benefits likely to accrue to all community members and/or are benefits targeted at particular groups within the community? What other actions is the project taking to ensure that disadvantaged groups e.g. women, landless households, poor people will benefit from sales of Plan Vivo certificates?</p>		
B. Guidance Notes for Validators	<p>Whilst there may be livelihoods benefits resulting from the project aspects of benefit sharing are critical to ensure that benefits are equitably shared. This can be assessed by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Checking whether a local stakeholder/well-being analysis has been conducted to identify socio-economic groupings in the communities • Assessing the level of governance of local groups (are issues of equity and benefit sharing discussed during meetings?) • Discuss with a small sample of households from different socio-economic groups to determine their level of understanding of the benefits they are likely to get from the project. 		

C. Findings (describe)	<p>Overall the benefit sharing mechanism will allocate 70% of income from sale of certificates or other sources to participating communities. 30% will be retained by MSRM to cover organizational, coordination, monitoring and administration costs. The benefit sharing mechanism described above was developed with participating herder groups through a series of meetings. Therefore, the communities are aware of the system and understand of the scheme. Participating herder groups will be kept fully informed by the project coordinator of sales and income accrued.</p> <p>Additionally, herder groups already have their own established structures and procedures for management and disbursement of funds to members, which are designed to ensure an equitable and fair sharing of benefits. All participating households indicated agreed that a higher percentage of payments need to be made to poor or female headed households as specified in the relevant PES agreement.</p>		
D. Conformance	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>	N/A <input type="checkbox"/>
E. Corrective Actions (describe)			

Table 1. Activities taken during the field visit.

sites	Date (travel hour)	Activities
1	November 5 (13h)	Travel to Bod soum (Bayankhongor province)
	Nov 6	Met local official -Soum governor Interviewed Land officer Met environment officer Interview 2 members of pasture user group (PUG)
	Nov 7 (1,5h)	Travel to meet the PUG member herders Interview of leader of PUG Group discussion (6 households) Visited protected area with saxaul Visited reserve grazing area
2	Nov 8 (10 h)	Departure from Bog soum Travel to Ikh tamir soum (Arkhangai province) Arrival to Ikh tamir soum Met with PUG leader
	Nov 9	Met local officials -Soum governor Land officer and environment officer were interviewed Travel to meet herders of PUG Interview of 4 members of PUG
3	Nov 10 (8h)	Travel to Undershireet soum (Tuv province) Soum governor- Soum governor Met Land officer Interview of head of PUG Association and cooperative who was at same time the local trainer of MSRM
	Nov 11 (2h)	Travel to meet herders of PUG Met PUG leader Group discussion (5 households)
	Nov 12 (8 h)	Travel back to Ulaanbaatar

The Validator: Bathuyan Batjav

Signature: _____

Date: _____

March 18, 2016