Special Protected Area Network and Effectiveness of Its Management

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Audit Topic & Main Message

Audit Topic

- Special Protected Area Network and Effectiveness of Its Management

Main Message

- The Special Protected Areas Are Not Specifically Protected

Audit Objectives

The audit has the following two objectives:

- Is natural environment in the Protected Areas is adequately protected?
- Is the Protected Area management and organization adequate?

Audit Scope

- Protected Area Management Division (PAMD) of the Ministry of Nature and Environment and 15 Protected Area Administrations (PAAs) and some related entities were audited.

Audit Methodology

- interviews, file review, reading of reports, on-site visits, observations, consultations with environmental experts

Audit Criteria

Related provisions of

- the Law on Special Protected Areas (1994) and
- the Law on Buffer Zones of Special Protected Areas (1997)

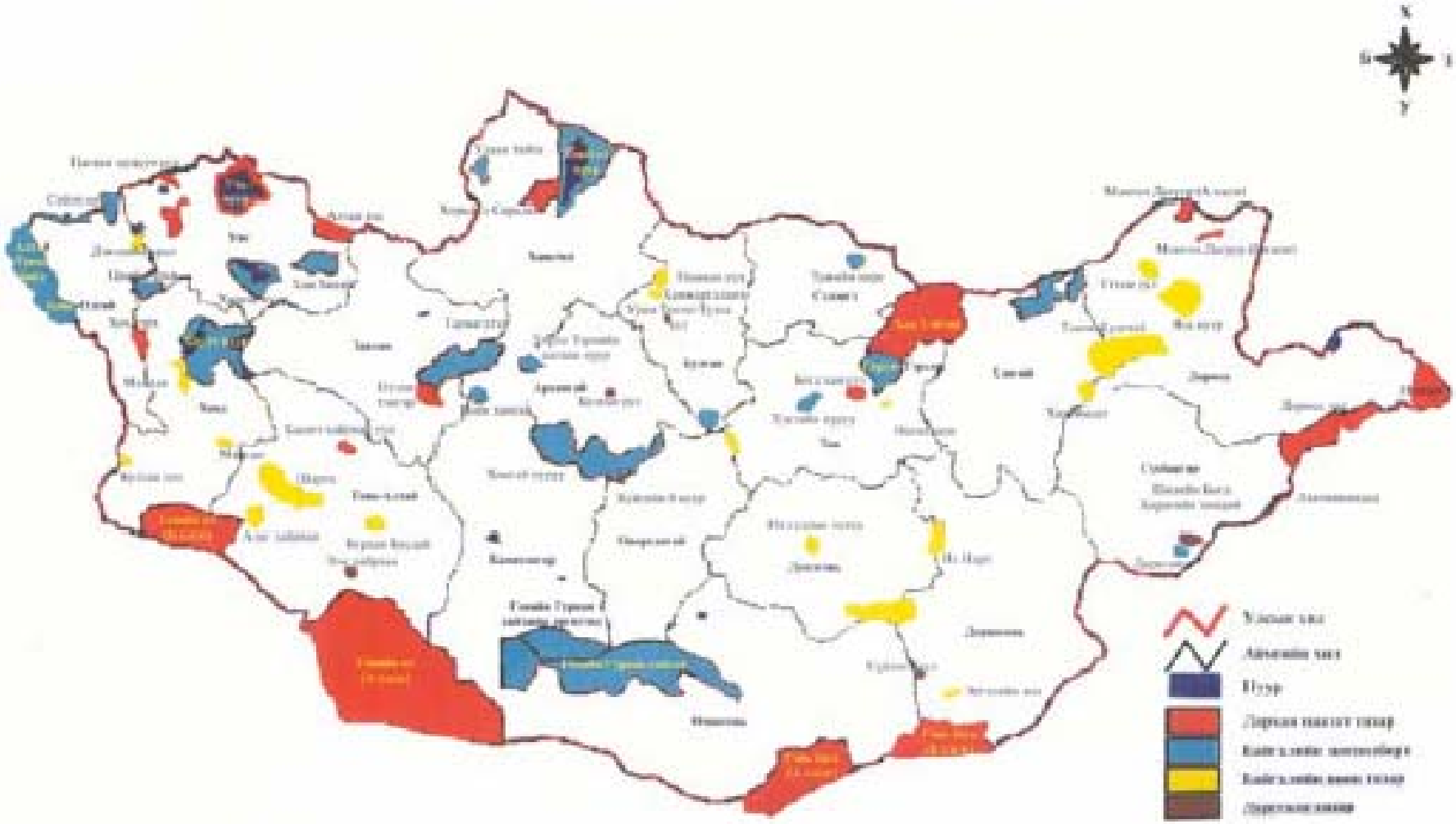
Background Information

- As of January 2004, 13.4 percent of Mongolian land or 20.9 million hectare land covering 54 areas is under a state special protection regime.

Categories of Protected Areas

- Strictly Protected Area (SPA) - 10.4 million hectare,
- National Park (NP) - 8,4 million hectare,
- Natural Reserve (NR) - 1,9 million hectare,
- Natural Historical Land (NML) - 0,07 million hectare.

Special Protected Areas of Mongolia



Composition of Protected Areas by regions

Natural regions	Percent in the natural region	Percent in the total PA
Mountains	14,0	12,7
Forest	6,5	12,5
Steppe	6,4	10,0
Seam-desert	18,6	26,5
Desert	23,5	38,5
Total:	13,4	100,0

Background Information (cont.)

- “National Program for Protected Area” has an objective to take up to 30 percent of total land of the country under the state special protection regime by 2030.
- Since the approval of the National Program in 1998 and till 2004, the NPs had been increased by 2.2 million hectare and NRs increased by 0.1 million hectare.

Background Information (cont.)

- The Protected Area Management Division (PAMD) at the Ministry of Nature and Environment is responsible for protected area issue.
- Under direct supervision of PAMD there are 16 Protected Area Administrations (PAAs).

Audit Findings

- Auditors identified several cases that the mining activities had been conducted in the protected areas (*Mining in the protected areas is prohibited by the Law on Special Protected Area*).

Audit Findings (cont.)

- Due to lack of coordination and environment impact assessment by the Ministry of Nature and Environment and other related organizations, too many tourist camps and resorts were built in the protected areas causing ecological imbalance. Currently about 80 tourist camps are operating inside the protected areas. Although the development of tourism in the protected areas has certain positive impacts, there are also negative impacts of tourism including pollution, soil degradation, escape of wildlife from the habitat and loss of key plant species.

Audit Findings (cont.)

- There is no systematic assessment and monitoring work for the biological diversity of Mongolia. The regular assessment of wildlife and natural plant distribution and resources is not fully implemented. The common difficulties such as unavailability of biological resource database and other necessary information, underdeveloped monitoring methodology and lack of human resource capacity are still in existence throughout the whole system of the protected areas.

Audit Findings (cont.)

- Actions against illegal hunting and improper use of natural resources are not adequate.
- 3009 cases were resolved out of 3066 cases detected in 2003 in relation to forest. This constitutes 78.8 percent of detected cases by rangers but the wrongful actions still continue to happen.

Some animals registered in Red List of Mongolia

	1986	2003-2004
Wild mountain sheep	60000	15000
Khulan (wild donkey)	25000	20000
Snow Leopard	3000	700-1200

Audit Findings (cont.)

- Statistics show the serious decrease of deer in last two decades. In 2003-2004 only 8000-9000 deer were been counted while in 1986 there were about 130000 deer. In a word the number of deer decreased 16.3-14.4 times.
- The main reason for the reduction of deer population is illegal hunting. In 1998-2003 only 172 cases were detected and reported. This means illegal hunting is not detected fully.
- The marmot population is also noticeably reduced in the past two decades. The price for marmot skin had been constantly increasing which caused illegal hunting on marmot.

Audit Findings (cont.)

- The PAMD used to consist of Division Director and 4 specialists. However in March 2004 the Division Director and 3 specialists were released from their duties. And as of November 2004 a new Director was not been appointed and experienced specialists were not recruited yet which resulted in stagnant operation of the PAMD.
- The operating budget for the PAMD is not sufficient for carrying out its duties effectively. Moreover, no budget is allocated for the preventive measures against illegal activities.

Audit Findings (cont.)

- Staffing of PAAs is also not sufficient. There are 348 people working in the PAAs in total and 214 of them are rangers. According to normative approved by the Government Resolution No.41 of 1997 one ranger is responsible for 60.0-80.0 thousand hectare in mountains, 40.0-60.0 thousand hectare in forest-steppe region, 80.0-100.0 thousand hectare in steppe, 150.0-300.0 thousand hectare in desert. However, the PAAs are understaffed for 60-134 people against this normative.
- In the Uvs lake area one ranger is responsible for 110.0 thousand hectare and this is almost 3 times high than the normative. In Khan Hentii PAA one ranger is responsible for 90.0-435.0 thousand hectare and this is 6 times high than the normative. Therefore the rangers could not cope with the coverage necessary to ensure safety of the protected area.

Audit Findings (cont.)

- The PAAs and their staff are not fully supplied with weapon, communication equipment, vehicle and horses as per standards.
- The rangers' knowledge and skills are not sufficient and human resource turnover is high. The salary of rangers is low and no additional bonuses and compensations are provided. Moreover, social issues for the rangers' families are not resolved as required. Therefore most rangers are people of above retirement age.

Conclusions

- Violations such as poaching, mining, cutting of trees, improper use of natural resources in the protected areas are still occurring.
- The rangers can not cover the protected areas regularly as required because of insufficient human, material and financial resources. This makes chances of detecting and preventing violations low.
- No fundamental research and analysis had been done on plants and animals in the protected areas and monitoring and protection of species is not sufficient.
- The decrease of number of specialists and rangers of the PAAs negatively affects the protection of the areas.

Recommendations

to the Minister of Nature and Environment:

- To establish information database on biological diversity of the protected areas and improve regular monitoring.
- To take step-by-step measures to provide the PAAs with qualified staff, necessary equipment and resources.
- To enhance public awareness and promotional activities on protection of nature and ecology.
- To inspect licenses, certificates and payment of fees for use of land of all legal entities that are operating on the protected areas and evaluate general and detailed environment impact assessments and take necessary actions against violations detected.