# Social Protection in Action: uilding Social Protection Floors

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# A one-stop shop for accessible, transparent and efficient public service delivery



## Mongolia

International Labour Office

The One-Stop-Shop (OSS): A response to the challenge of providing quality social services in Mongolia, the most sparsely populated country in the world.

Starting in 2007 and implemented nation-wide since 2013, the One-Stop-Shops (OSSs) deliver social protection and employment counseling services, as well as notary and banking services at *aimag* (provincial) and *soum* (district) levels.

Gathering representatives from different government agencies (including social insurance, social welfare, and employment departments), the OSS has offered the Government an opportunity to enhance the legal framework of public service provision and improve accessibility, awareness, and transparency of services provided.

Now commonly used by the population, the OSS provides an opportunity for local administrations to improve coordination and the quality of public services provided to their population.

National social protection floors (SPFs) guarantee access to essential health care and basic income security for children, persons of working-age, and older persons.

185 countries have adopted the Social Protection Floors Recommendation, 2012 (No. 202), an approach to achieve universal social protection.

This brief presents a successful country experience of expanding social protection.



### Main lessons learned

- Even the most sparsely populated country in the world can guarantee universal access to social protection to its population.
- The OSS is a single delivery point that enables people to access information on existing programmes and avail social services and transfers. It therefore contributes to the extension of social protection coverage.
- In addition, mobile OSSs deliver services at the doorsteps of those who cannot travel to an OSS facility, such as older people or herders who cannot leave their livestock.
- With a common delivery point for all programmes, the OSS enhances coordination between institutions in social protection charge of employment promotion while reducing duplication and inefficiencies. It also diminishes the dichotomy between social welfare and social insurance and fosters the creation of a comprehensive social protection system.
- The OSS could be used to establish a common monitoring and evaluation system of the social protection system and local development plans.

# 1. The challenge of delivering quality services in remote areas of the most sparsely populated country in the world

With a population of 2.8 million inhabitants and a density of less than two people per square kilometre, Mongolia is the most sparsely populated country in the world. Driven mainly by the mining sector, Mongolia's economy has grown rapidly in recent years.

Mongolia has a well-developed social protection system (social insurance, social welfare, and active labour market policies), providing social benefits and employment services to people at each stage of life. In 2012, 97.8 per cent of the population was covered by the Social Health Insurance Fund (mandatory insurance subsidized for specific and vulnerable groups).

However, delivering social services and transfers across a very sparsely populated country is challenging. In many cases obtaining a public administrative service in Mongolia requires visiting several service-providing departments, which can be located at considerable distances from each other. Therefore, applying for services can be time-consuming, entail transportation costs and, in the case of citizens traveling from remote *soums* (rural districts) to *aimag* (provincial) centres, additional costs, such as boarding and lodging. Moreover, information is sometimes inaccurate, insufficient, and/or difficult to obtain.

Launched in 2007 with support from the Swiss Development Cooperation and implemented by the Human Security Policy Study Centre, a non-governmental organization (NGO), the One-Stop-Shop (OSS) Project established facilities where citizens can receive several kinds of public services and a number of privately delivered notary and banking services. These accessible and customer-oriented "one-stop shops" aimed to increase accessibility, transparency, and efficiency of public service delivery, as well as reduce corruption and transaction costs.

Based on this initial pilot project, the OSS was extended to the whole country in 2013 by adoption of Government Decree No. 153 and its related Regulation on One-Stop-Shop activities.

# 2. Officers from different schemes and programmes gather in a single room at the local government office

The main feature of the OSS in Mongolia is that it brings together, in one unique room, officers from different social protection schemes, employment programmes, and other public and private services. As stated by Decree No. 153 of 2013 on the establishment of OSSs, such facilities are to be implemented in all administrative sub-divisions of Mongolia: Ulaanbaatar districts, *khoroos* (sub-divisions of Ulaanbaatar districts), *aimags* (provinces), and *soums* (rural districts). In each location, the OSS is placed under the responsibility of the Head of the Governor's Office.

All following schemes, programmes, and services need to be represented in the OSS facility:

- social insurance;
- social welfare;
- employment promotion;
- land management;
- civil registration; and
- bank and notary services.

To answer specific local needs, additional services can also be included in the OSS (e.g. veterinary and livestock services).

Officers working in the OSS are civil servants and salaried workers of the schemes, programmes, and services they represent. They report directly to their institutions of origin and there is no reporting line between them and the Head of the Governor's Office. The latter is responsible for ensuring the smooth functioning of the OSS facility.



To increase access to services and deliver services at the doorsteps of those beneficiaries who cannot travel (e.g. older persons, herders), a mobile OSS facility (a van) was piloted in 2011 in Bagakhangai district of Ulaanbaatar.

Mobile OSSs are now being extended to two additional *aimags*, with the objective to scale-up the initiative and provide government services to all the most remote areas of the country.

# 3. Thanks to the OSS, public services are more accessible

Over 60 per cent of Mongolia's population uses the OSS on a regular basis. In 2011, 31 established OSSs served more than 1.8 million customers, including over 600,000 customers in Ulaanbaatar City and over 1.2 million customers in rural areas. Based on an internal survey conducted in 2011, the satisfaction rate with OSS services was 85 per cent.

The concentration of many administrative services in one location has enabled customers to save time and money in accessing services. Regarding the social protection sector, the implementation of the OSS has resulted in the clarification and simplification of application and claim processes. The description of the different steps to avail benefits is detailed in guides for citizens that are available at the OSS. Additionally, many local administrations have installed a telephone hotline that allows citizens to access accurate information about services and the necessary documents needed when visiting the OSS.



Illustration of a citizen guide providing information on the enrolment process to access social welfare benefits

The proximity between the different officers within the OSS facility has also led to better coordination between the social welfare agency, the social insurance scheme, and employment promotion services. In some localities, memorandums of understanding (MOUs) have been signed between these different organizations in order to offer combined benefit packages that better address the needs of households and reduce poverty more effectively.

### 4. Next Steps

The implementation of OSSs is not yet complete in each *khoroo* (sub-district of Ulanbaatar) and *soum* (rural district). Hence, there is room for the Government to further enforce Regulation No. 153 of 2013, building on the successes already achieved and accumulated experience.

Vertical coordination between OSSs that exist at administrative different layers and horizontal coordination with pre-existing line divisions from centralized schemes would also benefit from being further clarified. At present, OSSs and local divisions of schemes are competing to attract recipients. A list of services available in the OSSs at different layers within the administration could be introduced in order to ensure consistency across the OSSs and their complementarity with services provided by other existing divisions.

Today each OSS officer manages its own registry of beneficiaries without sharing it with other officers from other schemes and programmes. The development of a single beneficiary database with a unique identification system would further simplify administrative processes, enhance possible synergies between programmes, and give way to a common monitoring and evaluation system that could be used for national reporting and the improvement of local development plans.

Finally, despite important efforts and encouraging results, processes for enrolling in programmes and claiming benefits remain quite complex compared to other countries. There might be a need to further simplify the administrative procedures from a user's point of view, thus promoting more cooperation between the different components of the administration.



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