



Newsletter
March 2020 | Issue 03

Welcome to the Gobi Framework Newsletter No. 3

The Gobi Framework project began its second year with a joint team meeting at Lake Issyk Kul, Kyrgyzstan. This provided an opportunity for the Mongolian and Kyrgyz teams to come together to discuss field work and research, compare analysis and to develop future plans. Both teams have been working with governments to improve mining legislation and community engagement (see page 2). Recognition has come from the Kyrgyzstan Office of the President and the Mongolian Cabinet Secretariat. In seeking to further collaboration between Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan on sustainable mining Ariell was awarded a £24,000 Open Fellowship to bring Mongolian and Kyrgyz officials to Oxford for a week of talks and intensive training. Given the ongoing pandemic this event, which was scheduled for late March and which will contribute to strengthening national governance as a key project legacy, will be postponed. The team has also been busy developing a project book proposal for an edited volume on *Mining lifecycles in Central Asia and Mongolia*, and continuing to develop content and design for the project's mobile app.

Nomondalai and Ariell of Gobi Framework and Bayarsaikhan of Steppes Without Borders before key meeting with Mongolian Cabinet, January 2020



UCA Rector Prof. Dr. S. Sohail H. Naqvi accepting award from Aida Kasymaliev, Vice Speaker of Kyrgyz Parliament, with B. Satybekov, National Forum for Open Government.

The **Gobi Framework** constitutes three research teams working in Mongolia, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan. Please see the website for more details: <https://gobiframework.ouce.ox.ac.uk/>





Mongolia team reunion

Mongolia Updates

Mining Compensation Workshop December 3, 2019. Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

“Mongolia is full of research opportunities. The workshop gave participants a step forward to successful research proposals”

– Nomondalai

This workshop, organised by Bayarsaikhan N. of Steppes without Borders and the Gobi Framework project aimed to find common ground between mining stakeholders. The workshop featured stakeholder presentations and round-table discussions. As a result of the event, participants achieved mutual understanding on compensation issues and were encouraged to collaborate further. Our team is working on a documentary based on the workshop discussions to raise awareness on mining compensation and resettlement and clarify public misconceptions.

Writing Research Grant Proposals Training Workshop



January 2020, National University of Mongolia
Over 130 people attended a workshop run by Ariell Ahearn that covered developing a research idea and current funding opportunities in the UK. 100+ streamed on Facebook.



Mongolian Government Working Group

The project team is working with the Mongolian Government to initiate a new Policy Impact Group. The group is led by S. Munkhsuren, Chief of Strategic Management and Coordination in the Cabinet Secretariat. Group members include the Chiefs of Mining and Geology Strategic Management, Natural Resource Management, Environment, Geology and Mining Inspection; advisor of Strategic Management and coordination. Bayarsaikhan, Head of Steppes Without Borders NGO and Nomomdalai are supporting from Gobi Framework team. The focus of the group’s activities will be to support developing and reflecting Social and Health Impact Assessment, compensation and resettlement issues in relevant regulations. Oxford’s School of Geography will serve as an advisor.



Kyrgyzstan Updates

Designing App Content in Central Asia

Team members from Oxford, Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan met for a project research retreat in Chon Sary-Oi, Kyrgyzstan in September 2019. The Mongolian and Kyrgyz team presented key findings from field research in six mining sites and the team pooled ideas to develop the content and format of our progressive app. This work has continued in the months since, with the teams working with designers to establish a user friendly format to share findings.

September 2019, Lake Issyk-Kul, KG



Whilst participating in University of Central Asia's 'Art of Neighborhoods: Border Dynamics, Natural Resources, and Mobility in Central Asia' conference (February 2020) Troy spoke on how positive experiences from Mongolia's mining sector could be applied to Kyrgyzstan. Additional engagement with the government's policy think tank provided new ideas for both conceptual and outreach efforts during 2020.

BBC Kyrgyz Service Documentary on Mine Reclamation- <https://youtu.be/eSEqZXhadu4>

The documentary focuses on reclamation issues in Chatkal and Ala-Buka including areas along the Kassan-Sai river. Almaz Tchoreov, researcher on the GF team, spoke to local residents, government officials and experts on what led to this post-mining management crisis.



Kyrgyz TV5 Interview

KYRGYZSTAN – Office of the President

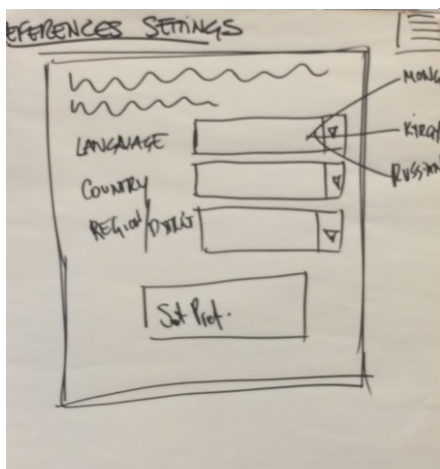
The University of Central Asia (UCA) was recognised by the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on December 20th 2019 for its significant contribution to the implementation of the Open Government Partnership in the Kyrgyzstan, specifically related to the disclosure of mining industry data. The project team's findings determined that local communities and employees of mining companies need more information on the volume of reserves, extraction, processing and exportation of minerals, employment opportunities, and environmental and health impacts. The team will continue to work closely with the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic on this initiative(<https://ucentralasia.org/Resources/Item/2499/EN>).

FUNDING ALERT: The UK's research funding body UKRI held a special workshop in Bishkek to encourage Central Asian institutions to apply for its new 'Conflict Intersections' call. Gobi Framework was identified by UKRI as a successful GCRF case study. Call information: ahrc.ukri.org/funding/apply-for-funding/current-opportunities/grcf-conflict-intersections/grcf-conflict-intersections-pre-call-v2docx/



Academic Conference Attendance

- ❖ CEASG Conference: Contemporary Mongolia: International Relations, Mining and Society Groningen, Netherlands, November, 2019; Byamba
- ❖ Roadwork Asia: The cultural, political and financial life of China-built infrastructure across Asia. In Zurich – Byamba, December 2019; in Bishkek –September, 2019; Kemel
- ❖ Central Eurasian Studies Society, Washington, DC, US. October, 2019; Kemel
- ❖ UNPO's China's BRI and its impact on minority rights. Berlin. November 2019; Ariell
- ❖ (Dis)integrations: Mining and State Legitimacy in the Gobi. IUAES Poland, 2019; Ariell
- ❖ Catapult UK: Space Enabled Applications for the Mining Sector. 11/2019; Ariell
- ❖ GCRF COMPASS Tajikistan and Cultural Diplomacy in Central Asia. 9/2019; Troy
- ❖ UCA: Neighborhoods: Border Dynamics and Natural Resources Central Asia. 2020; Troy
- ❖ Kleptocracy in Central Asia. Oxford, October 2019; Kemel, Troy



Mobile App Development for Information Sharing

The team is in the midst of planning and developing a mobile app. Local Mongolian and Kyrgyz residents who are affected by mining in their home regions will be the core audience of the app. It will include information on laws, how to make complaints, and e-training. We are working with our partner researchers and NGOs in Mongolia including People Centered Conservation and Steppes without Borders to produce content. App trialling is planned for the summer months. We are happy to hear from you with any ideas or suggestions!

Looking ahead: spring/ summer 2020

- **BOOK:** The team has developed a project book proposal for an edited volume on *Mining lifecycles in Central Asia and Mongolia* that will include 12 academic chapters, each matched with 'Notes from the Field' that gives voice to community experts and herders. The book sections will cover: 1) Exploring mining - initiating mining infrastructure 2) Extracting information - Community engagement with mining, and; 3) Rehabilitating land and society.



Kemel and Troy speaking on Citizen Science at UCA. Kyrgyz Ex-President Roza Otunbayeva (front) listens.

The current Coronavirus means that travel plans for the months ahead are on hold. We wish our team members, collaborators and friends well during this difficult time.

Ariell
Ahearn,
MNB World
Ulaanbaatar,
Mongolia

