



MINISTRY OF ROAD,
TRANSPORT AND
TOURISM MONGOLIA

INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR

“FREIGHT TRANSPORT IN LANDLOCKED DEVELOPING AND IN TRANSITION COUNTRIES”

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ULAANBAATAR – MONGOLIA

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON MONGOLIA

PIARC PROGRAMME OF INTERNATIONAL SEMINARS ON
ROAD, TRANSPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

ROAD SUPERVISION AND RESEARCH CENTRE
OF MONGOLIA

MONGOLIA

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mongolia is a land-locked country in the North-East Asia bordering with Russia and China. The total territory of the country is 1.566 million square kilometres making approximately 1 square kilometre per 1.6 persons. The average altitude is 1,580 meters above the sea level and at 993 - 7,000 kilometres distance from the nearest access to seas. For that reason, the climate here is characterized by strong continental weather with four distinctive seasons.

Mongolia has very diverse and distinctive flora and fauna, which represent a mixture of species from the northern taiga of Siberia, the steppe, and the deserts of Central Asia. Many of them are unique to Mongolia and largely unknown to the rest of the world. Numerous globally threatened and endangered species inhabit Mongolia. Combination of diverse landscapes, unspoiled habitat, and rare wild plant and animal species has become a subject of growing international attention and conservation efforts. The country is rich in mineral resources: coal, copper, molybdenum, uranium, gold, iron, phosphates, tin, nickel, zinc, wolfram and fluorspar and crude oil.

The population of Mongolia is estimated at 2.5 million, almost 2.13 million of which is under 30. Over 1 million people live in the rural areas and are mainly engaged in traditional livestock herding and certain extent in crop production. Mongolia has over 30 million heads of livestock, thus ranking first in per capita ownership, including 13.8 million sheep, 10.2 million goats, 3.1 million cattle, 2.6 million horse and 322.3 thousand Bactrian camels which provide a high-quality agro-processing raw materials.

The ethnic composition of Mongolia is fairly homogeneous: there are two national majorities and 15 national minorities. In 1989, Khalkha Mongols constituted 86 percent of the population, Kazaks 6 percent and the other groups constituted the rest. At present, there are 15 national minorities in Mongolia representing different ethnic groups.

The two distinctive features of the Mongolian culture are nomadic way of life and Tibetan Buddhism that widespread as a major religion in Mongolia. The nomadic lifestyle, which has little changed through the passage of time, coupled with the vast expanses of steppes, absolute magnitude, beauty and breathtaking view of the Mongolian scenery, and renowned hospitality have been major attractions for outsiders.

STATUS OF TOURISM SECTOR

Prior to 1990, there were arrivals mainly from the Russian Federation and Eastern and Central Europe. "Juilchin Corporation", the only state-owned tourist agency, exclusively handled leisure tourists. After 1990, the number of leisure tourist arrivals has grown due to increase of tourists predominantly from Japan, France, UK, South Korea, Germany and USA. Their number is steadily increasing by 20% over the years.

At the same time, Mongolia's transition to the market economy has resulted in emergence of private sectors that started to operate in the tourism industry. The number of private tourist companies has mushroomed and are currently estimated at 534 private entities.

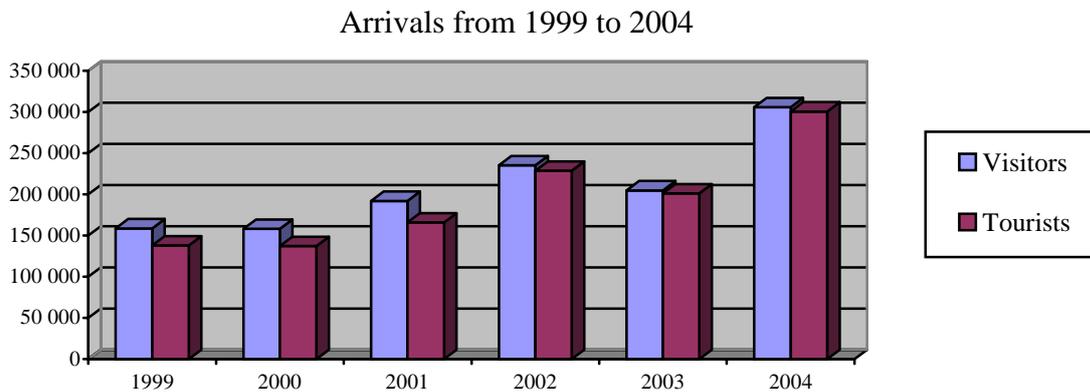
According to December 2004 300,537 leisure tourists visited Mongolia out of total of 305,617 visitors and, compared to the previous year, the number of arrivals increased by 49.4%.

Table 1: Number of Foreign Visitors to Mongolia (from 1999 to 2004)

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Visitors	158,743	158,205	192,051	235,165	204,845	305,617
Tourists*	137,961	137,374	165,899	228,719	201,153	300,537
Africa	114	183	236	143	209	263
America	6,069	7,217	7,700	7,973	6,900	12,198
East Asia and the Pacific	79,421	80,720	93,075	122,106	122,378	188,250
Europe	72,430	69,354	90,168	97,673	74,308	98,592
Middle East	115	106	140	155	229	260
South Asia	584	625	730	655	806	974

Note: *The tourist category excludes diplomatic and foreign residents in Mongolia

Figure 1. Number of Arrivals from 1999 to 2004.



Income from tourism is estimated at US\$ 253.4 million and increased by 69.9% compared to the previous year, which accounts as 10% of Gross Domestic Products (GDP).

MAJOR TOURIST ATTRACTIONS AND DESTINATIONS

The attractions and activities for tourists in Mongolia relate to the natural environment, historic features and cultural heritage. Mongolia has diverse and distinctive vegetation and fauna including some rare species such as the Argali Sheep, Przewalsky Horse, Asiatic wild ass, wild Bactrian camel, snow leopard and ibex. The remains of dinosaurs have been found in the Gobi desert. As for the main tourism regions, they include Ulaanbaatar, Kharkhorum Omnugobi (South Gobi) and Hubsugul provinces.

The historic heritage of Mongolia is mainly related to Chinggis Khan, the warrior-statesman, who, in the 13th century, united the Mongolian people into a strong nation that controlled much of Asia.

The traditional nomadic way of life, based on livestock raising and living in traditional *gers*, is of great interest to overseas tourists. The two major public holidays are the Naadam, a traditional festival celebrated each summer and displays three types of traditional games: horse racing, wrestling and archery, and the Tsagaan Sar, the Mongolian Lunar New Year, which marks the end of winter and the beginning of spring.

INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT

Current international air access to Mongolia from the developed sources markets of East Asia and the West is done through the only international airport in Mongolia - Buyant Ukhua – located 18 km to the southwest of Ulaanbaatar, which was expanded and upgraded with a US\$ 36 million loan and technical assistance from the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

Mongolian Airlines (MIAT), the national flag carrier of Mongolia, is responsible for 95% of all air transportation in Mongolia and operates scheduled flights to overseas destinations: Moscow, Beijing, Berlin, Seoul, Tokyo, Osaka.

The railway is the second main gateway for landlocked Mongolia to get connected with the countries of Europe, East Asia and South East Asia. The main railway route stretches from north to south for 1815 kilometers connecting Moscow and Beijing via Ulaanbaatar.

The major trunk roads for tourism such as a highway between Ulaanbaatar and the ancient city Kharakhorum (380 km) and a road from Ulaanbaatar to Umnugobi (580 km) are undergoing improvement. The number and quality of the rest facilities along the major trunk roads have been improved by private sector initiatives. However, these roads need improvements in terms of width, curves and pavements in the longer term. The traffic and road signs are developed in the smaller roads from Ulaanbaatar to other tourist destinations as Terelj, Zuunmod, Bulgan, Khuvsgul, Darkhan and Altanbulag along the major trunk roads.

There are currently about 160 tourist camps and about 300 hotels in Mongolia. The tourism sector provided employment for nearly to 12,000 people and it is likely to increase in the future. Nearly 54 state and private universities and colleges have been running classes on tourism management.

The Ministry of Road, Transport and Tourism is in charge of **road, transport, railway, marine, civil aviation, post service and tourism sector policy formulation and co-ordination**. The Ministry has 6 departments including Department of tourism policy and coordination, which is currently responsible for formulation and coordination of general tourism sector policy and strategy, formulation and updating of sector standards and regulations, marketing and promotion, development of road, transportation and tourism infrastructure.