

Assessing Changes in Rural Communication Services for Nomadic Herders in Mongolia

Rico Lie^a, Oleg Nicetic^b, Elske van de Fliert^c

^a *Knowledge, Technology and Innovation, Wageningen University & Research, Wageningen, The Netherlands.* rico.lie@wur.nl

^b *School of Agriculture and Food Sciences, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane, Australia.* o.nicetic@uq.edu.au

^c *Centre for Communication and Social Change, School of Communication and Arts, The University of Queensland, St Lucia, Brisbane, Australia.* e.vandefliert@uq.edu.au

Abstract: This paper presents an analysis of the changed herders' information sharing activities in Mongolia. The structure that facilitated these changes was put in place by the Extension Component of the Green Gold Project (the GGC3-project), funded by the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). The project addressed information that relates to sustainable herd management, sustainable rangeland management, feed supply and feeding, animal health management, and sustainable business management. Taking this project as an entry point, the analysis focusses on the consequences of the project interventions in light of theories of collective/connective action and information and communication system analysis. In analyzing the interpretations of herders, local leaders and other facilitating stakeholders, it addresses the functioning and interrelation of two systems: the Collective Action System (CAS) and the Information Exchange System (IES). These two systems are the enacted systems of the structure that was put in place.

Data were collected from stakeholders during a qualitative field evaluation research. In addition the analysis builds upon knowledge available with the project coordinators. The results reveal the existing diversity in implementing the structure and in working within the realized structure through continuous enactment. Through collective action, herders, local leaders and other facilitating stakeholders established various dynamic forms of organization and communication. A second result is the importance of individual motivation on the one hand and collective identity on the other hand. Especially the key role of the herder advisors – who do their work on a voluntary basis – is a vital element in assuring the continued successful functioning of the systems, especially the IES.