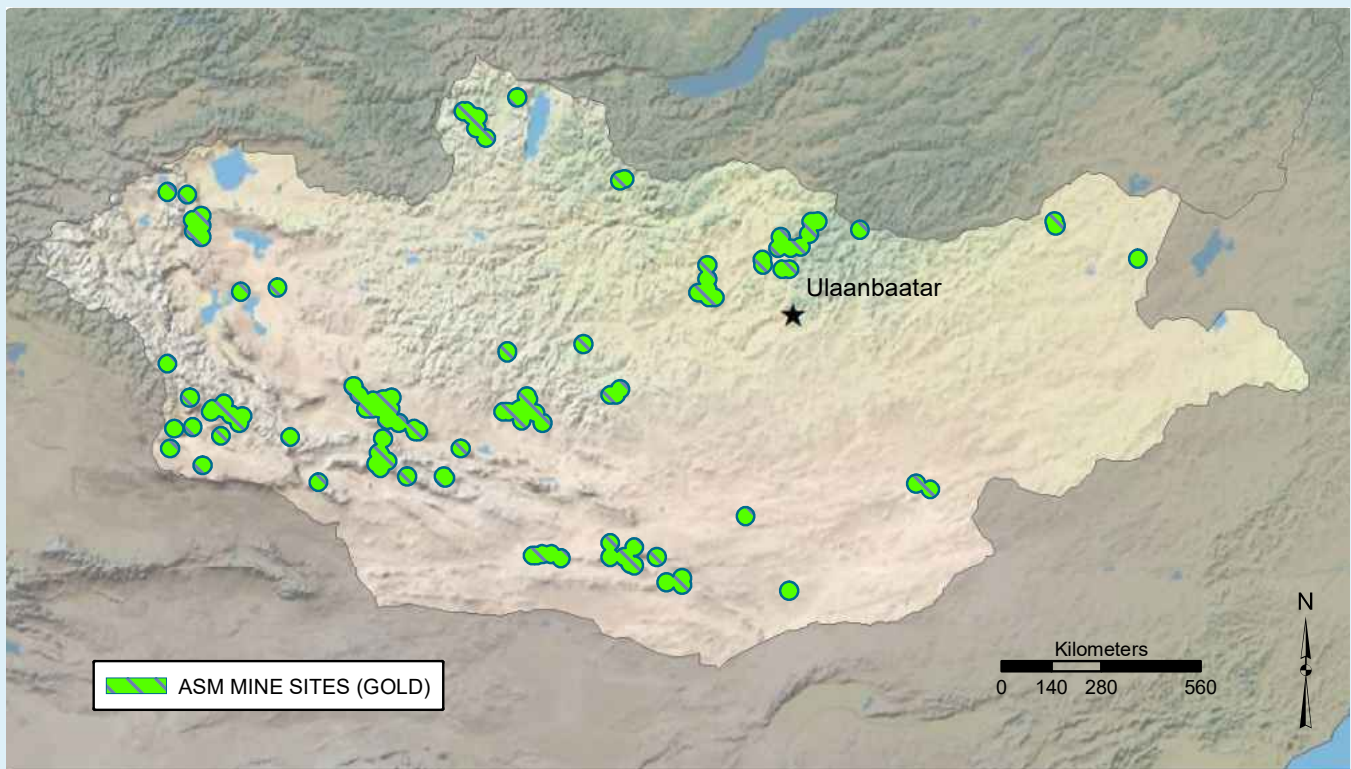


Mongolia

Author: Patience Singo

Artisanal and Small-Scale Gold Mining Sites¹²⁵



Materials mined by ASM

- Gold: 12.7 tons (2017)¹²⁶
- Coal, fluorite, limestone, gemstones, and wolfram

¹²⁵Map created by Daniel Stapper. Map data sources: Base map: US National Parks Service, 2017; NSO, 2017.

¹²⁶Sustainable Artisanal Mining Project, 2018.

Mineral governance framework

Government priorities

- Review Law on Minerals and classify mining into artisanal, small, medium, and large-scale
- Improve ASGM contribution to the economy through Gold 2 Program till 2020
- One-stop-shop for ASGM trading in ASM dense areas
- Implementation of the Minamata Convention on Mercury

Laws and policy

- Law on Minerals 2006 (updated 2009,2010, 2014)
- Law on Land, clause 16.1.11
- Regulation on Extraction of Minerals from Small-Scale Mines, 2010 (amended 2017 to Government Resolution No. 151 of 2017)
- The State Policy on Mineral Resources Sector (2014–2025)
- The Government Action plan 2016–2020

Government institutions

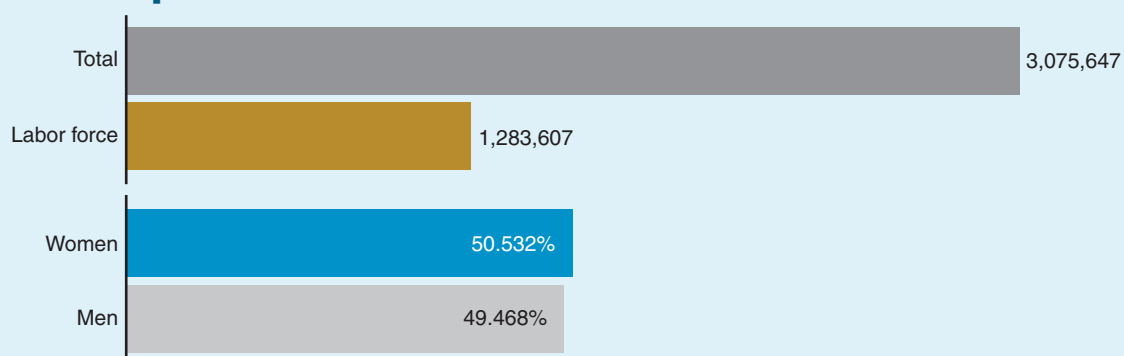
- Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry
- Minerals Resources and Petroleum Authority (MRPAM)
- Assay Office
- Local Governments
- Bank of Mongolia

Associations and member organizations

- Mongolia National Federation of Artisanal Miners (MNFA)
- Regional ASM Federations
- Various local ASM associations and NGOs such as the Mongolian National Mining Association

Economic and development data

2017 Population¹²⁷



2017 Classification (GNI per capita)¹²⁸

- Lower-middle-income: USD 3,290

2017 Gross Domestic Product¹²⁹

- USD 11.488 Billion

2016 Poverty headcount ratio (2011 purchasing power parity)¹³⁰

- Population on/below national poverty line (2014): 21.6%
- Population living on <USD 1.90 per day: 0.5%
- Population living on <USD 5.50 per day: 8.1%

Livelihoods

Employment (2016)¹³¹

- ASM: 60,000 directly, 240,000 indirectly
- LSM: 38,200 directly
- ASM permits granted: 113
- ASM informality estimate: 80% informal

Gender participation in ASM (2016)¹³²

- Women: 24%
- Men: 76%

¹²⁷World Bank, 2017b.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰Ibid.

¹³¹SDC, 2015; NSO, 2016, 2017.

¹³²NSO, 2016, 2017.

FIGURE 3 ANNUAL GOLD SOLD IN TONS TO BANK OF MONGOLIA FROM ENTITIES VERSUS INDIVIDUALS (ASM) 2006-2017¹³³

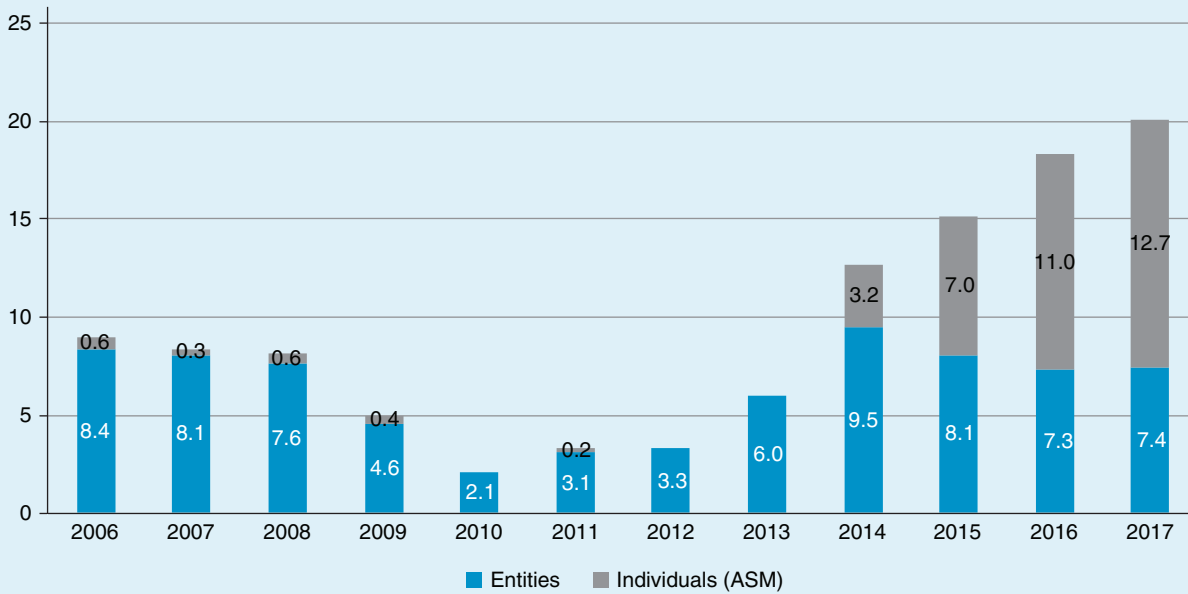
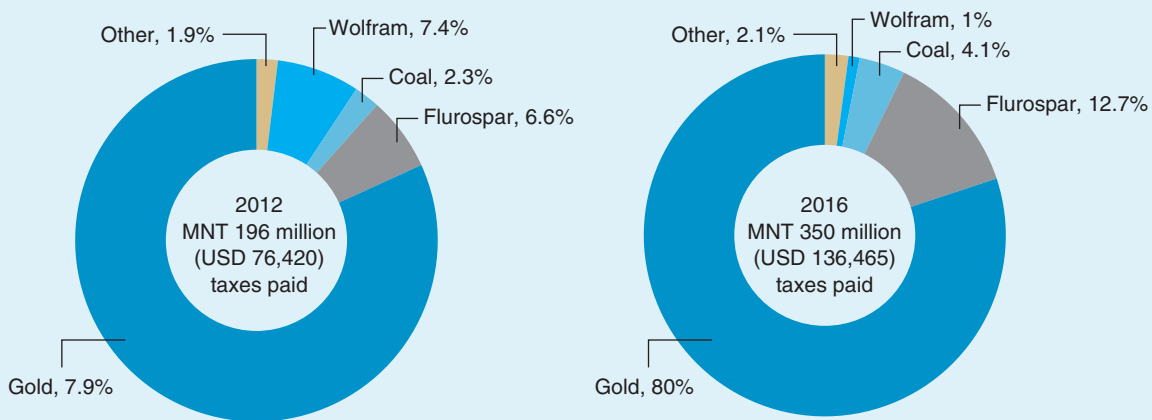


FIGURE 4 TAX PAID BY SMALL-SCALE MINERS IN MONGOLIA, 2012 VS. 2016 (MNT)¹³⁴



¹³³Bank of Mongolia, 2018.

¹³⁴Reproduced from the original source. Note that in the original source there are no units given for the 196 and 350 million figures. However, these are confirmed to be reported in Mongolian Tugrik (MNT 1 = USD 0.0003899). This highlights issues of data quality being reported. Furthermore, the tax figures are based on a survey, as opposed to data from official state institutions, again effecting reliability. Source: NSO, 2016.

Mining sector summary

Mongolia's mining sector is dominated by the large-scale extraction of coal, copper, fluorite, gold, and iron ore. The country has the world's second largest copper reserves¹³⁵ and was the sixth top fluorite producer in 2017.¹³⁶ Gold is the main commodity mined on an artisanal and small-scale, accounting for approximately 50% of annual national production and 75% of the sector's workforce, followed by fluorite and coal in almost equal shares (10% and 9.5% of ASM activities, respectively).¹³⁷ Smaller quantities of limestone, gemstones, and wolfram are also produced through ASM, engaging 5.5% of the sector's workforce, while the production of development minerals can be found near city and provincial centers.

With regard to the availability and reliability of detailed data on ASM, Mongolia has made what can be considered some of the greatest strides in recent years. For the purpose of this report and the wider Delve initiative, Mongolia serves as a "best case" example, having carried out a nationwide survey on ASM to establish a baseline in 2012, which was repeated again in 2016. This country profile demonstrates what can be achieved through a continued and concerted effort to undertake a rigorous countrywide baseline and gather detailed data on the sector and acts somewhat as a gold standard for other countries and programs to follow suit. Yet, it also illustrates the challenges with effectively using large amounts of data.

Mineral governance framework

The mineral governance framework for ASM in Mongolia is based on a number of key legal instruments and policies, many of which have been updated in recent years. These include:

- Law on Minerals, 2006, governs the exploration and mining relations of all types of mineral resources, except water, oil, natural gas, and radioactive and common minerals. Several clauses have since been updated in 2009, 2010, and 2014. The law includes a definition of small-scale mining; outlines requirements for license holders, mineral exploration, and mining operations; and explains the roles of the national government entities responsible for geology and mining. These are (1) Ministry of Mining and Heavy Industry, and (2) the Minerals Resources and Petroleum Authority of Mongolia (MRPAM). The law also outlines the role of "authorities of local administration and self-government bodies;" and prescribes royalties and penalties for violations.¹³⁸
- Law on Land, 2002, outlines different types of land that are considered "Land for State special needs." Clause 16.1.10, which was added in July 2010, includes "Land allocated for small-scale mining purposes." Land access is through permits granted by the local authority or through a tripartite agreement with a permit holder, the local government, and ASM partnerships.
- Regulation on Extraction of Minerals from Small-Scale Mines, 2010 (Government Resolution No. 308), outlines practical regulations with respect to ASM. Specifically, it outlines the roles and responsibilities of national and district level (*soum*) government with respect to processing small-scale mining permits and land allocation, maintaining a cartographic registry, supporting miners, and supervising and inspecting operations to ensure adherence to occupational, safety, and environmental standards and permits. The regulation also details legal requirements of license holders.
- Government Resolution No. 151 of 2017¹³⁹ replaces the 2010 Regulation on Extraction of Minerals from Small-Scale Mines (above) and improves the coordination of ASM interventions and formalization activities by establishing an intergovernmental ASM council and strengthening the roles and responsibilities of provincial (*aimag*) governments. It also increases equipment capacity limitations on mining activities and extends the term of ASM agreements until the resources are totally exhausted, and formalizes the Frugal Rehabilitation Methodology for miners to use in environmental rehabilitation.

¹³⁵SES Professionals, 2018.

¹³⁶World Atlas, 2017.

¹³⁷NSO, 2017.

¹³⁸Law of Mongolia, 2006.

¹³⁹Government of Mongolia, 2017.

- The State Policy on Mineral Resources Sector (2014-2025) articulates the medium-term strategy for ASM management and development and commits to improving the legal framework and upgrading of the sector.
- The Government Action Plan (2016-2020) aims to advance formalization efforts and increase gold production through regional assaying and buying centers, which are being established in areas of high ASM activity.¹⁴⁰
- Mongolia is also a signatory to the Minamata Convention on Mercury, which it ratified in 2016, and is currently developing a National Action Plan on ASM.

In terms of licensing, prospective miners must be Mongolian nationals over age 18 years and be a resident in the province or city where the mineral deposits they seek to exploit are located. The process is decentralized through local government, and permits are awarded on a first come first served basis by the local authority. The MRPAM verifies all ASM permit requests against a database of existing mining and exploration areas and issues a mining permit valid for one year if there are no activities already under way in that location. Permits are renewable upon satisfaction of statutory obligations, such as rehabilitation, payment of local taxes, and evidence of the potential for further exploitation. There is no additional permission to access land above ground as ASM land is selected from local government “special use land.”

Crucially, the Mongolian mineral governance framework recognizes the wide variety of ASM operations and their degree of formality. This is beneficial to formalization efforts because it makes obtaining a permit, entry into the formal economy, and, therefore, subsequent access to support services far easier than in many other countries. The three main types of operations that are recognized include unregistered partnerships, cooperatives, and registered partnerships, the latter two of which are considered to be more developed, mechanized, and technologically advanced, and which are supported to access bank loans.

The MRPAM also fulfils a number of technical responsibilities, ranging from: providing training, assistance, and general support to miners, to undertaking surveys and geological mapping, to developing and maintaining a mining cadastre, and identifying and delineating areas suitable for ASM. However, to date, progress in this regard has been slow because the agency has limited resources to undertake such exercises. Perhaps the most important technical role that the MRPAM performs, especially in relation to Delve, is the collection of detailed data on the sector and the maintenance of an ASM database, which was created in 2013 through the Sustainable Artisanal Mining Project with the support of the SDC.¹⁴¹ As mandated by the Regulation on Extraction of Minerals from Small-Scale Mines, the database is populated annually by data that local government authorities must collect and report, including organizational data on location and numbers of miners, member details, and equipment; economic data on production, income, tax paid, exports, and sales; social data on health, livelihoods, communication tools, and safety and accidents; and environmental data on land degradation and rehabilitation. In 2012, the National Statistics Office of Mongolia (NSO) carried out the first nationwide survey to establish a baseline in this regard and populate the database and repeated the survey in 2016, enabling a comparison over the four-year period. Part of the survey is accessible online through the ASM Knowledge Hub platform, which allows a detailed view of the data by province and county. As a best practice, the 2012 survey data was translated into an ASM Atlas, and published in print and online in both Mongolian and English language, for monitoring and policy advocacy.

In addition to the significant improvements made in data collection, Mongolia has implemented a series of measures to mitigate adverse impacts of ASM operations on the environment. Statistics show a decrease of ASM-destroyed land and an increase in ASM-rehabilitated lands between 2012 and 2016. Also, the use of mercury in gold processing has been largely abandoned due to the establishment of mercury-free processing plants in five key provinces and since the introduction of the Frugal Rehabilitation Methodology, as per the 2017 regulation. However, despite the concerted effort in recent years to improve

¹⁴⁰MRPAM, 2016.

¹⁴¹ASM Knowledge Hub, 2018.

the mineral governance framework and data collection and availability on the sector, there is still a need to harness this information to translate it into effective policy making. Although more than 72 ASM associations and NGOs have been created in recent years, an estimated 80% of miners remain informal and lack technical support and investment. Furthermore, a major limitation of the nationwide surveys is that they covered only about 15-20% of miners in the country. Meanwhile, there is also significant variation in the quality, type, and methods used by different government agencies¹⁴² to collect the wide variety of ASM data on an ongoing basis, and there is no integrated platform to bring this information together. As such, there is still a need for a more comprehensive, sector-wide approach for collecting and collating ASM data in one place and for using it for effective policy making.

Economy

Mongolia's economy and foreign exchange earnings depend significantly on the mining sector, particularly coal, copper, fluorite, gold, and iron ore. In 2017, the Bank of Mongolia reported that merchandise exports were valued at USD 6,201 million. Of this total, mining contributed USD 5,519 million (89%), with gold making up USD 595 million and comprising 9.6% of overall exports.¹⁴³ Of the gold production sold to the Bank of Mongolia in 2017 (Figure 3), ASM produced 12.7 tons (63%).¹⁴⁴ While there is good data on mineral production and exports from the Customs Office and the NSO, aside from gold, none of the other commodities are disaggregated between ASM and large-scale operations, thus poorly accounting for ASM's contribution to annual mineral production. However, some of the artisanal and small-scale gold mining (ASGM) production is assumed to be declared by medium-sized companies to avoid paying high income tax (see Figure 4), demonstrating challenges with robust data collection.

There are a number of very useful statistics and data being collected in Mongolia that helps to paint a picture of its significant economic potential. In terms of gross revenue generated by ASM, the 2016 NSO survey reports that ASM generated 22 billion MNT (USD 9.2 million). This was a decrease compared to gross revenues of MNT 25.4 billion (USD 18.1 million) in 2012. However, these figures only include data from around 20% of the ASM population, thereby significantly underestimating the vast value and potential of the sector for economic growth and development. Another interesting statistic collected by the NSO is investment in things such as buildings, vehicles, equipment, and personal assets. In 2016, ASM invested a total of MNT 1.5 billion (USD 625,000), compared to MNT 2.1 billion (USD 1.5 million) in 2012.¹⁴⁵ A 2015 SDC study covering 10 counties estimated ASM's direct monthly contribution to the local economy to be MNT 8 billion (USD 4 million), indirect monthly contribution to be MNT 1.5 billion (USD 750,000), and the economic multiplier to be 1.189. Combined, these data provide a glimpse of enormous economic potential that the sector has in terms of its contribution to GDP, investment and taxation, and linkages to other economic activities. However, without data that cover the whole country or even a truly representative sample, desegregate between ASM and LSM, or are regularly shared and reported, knowledge on the exact contribution of ASM to the economy will remain limited.

Livelihoods

An estimated 60,000 people directly engage in ASM in Mongolia, and approximately 240,000 are dependent on the sector for their livelihood.¹⁴⁶ To compare and contextualize the livelihood contribution of ASM, in 2016 LSM employed 38,200 people, meaning that ASM directly employed almost twice the number of individuals, most of whom do not have professions or tertiary qualifications.¹⁴⁷ In terms of geographical spread, ASM activities occur in 19 of 21 provinces, making it an important livelihood activity across the country. According to the NSO 2016 data, ASM provides 11.1% of miners with permanent

¹⁴²Major ASM data providers include the local government, MRPAM, Ministry of Labour, General Social Insurance Office, Assay Office, Bank of Mongolia, ASM associations, and the National Federation of Artisanal Miners.

¹⁴³Bank of Mongolia, 2017.

¹⁴⁴Sustainable Artisanal Mining Project, 2018.

¹⁴⁵NSO, 2017.

¹⁴⁶SDC, 2015.

¹⁴⁷NSO, 2017.

employment and 68.3% with regular income. Yet, while surveys such as these have been carried out in an attempt to establish a baseline of the sector's livelihood dimensions, due to a lack of registration of miners and widespread informality, the true value and extent of the contribution of ASM to local wealth and job creation are not well quantified. Furthermore, the wide variety of ASM-supported activities means that the surveys carried out to date have not been able to fully capture the full extent of the sector's livelihood dimensions.

Key data needs

Rather than a lack of data, the challenge in Mongolia is ensuring that the large amount of data being generated by various national-, provincial-, and district-level government agencies is accurate, reliable, and comparable and that it is collated in one accessible place so it can be used in an effective and manageable way to inform policy making.

- Develop standardized methods of data collection and harmonize reporting across government agencies and institutions
- Enhance and harmonize the existing ASM Knowledge Hub and various mining databases into one platform to collate, consolidate, present, and allow side-by-side comparison of economic and social data sets, with reliable inputs authorized by government sources
- Extend the nationwide surveys to capture a greater proportion of ASM activities, which are currently based on research conducted with 13,000 of the 60,000 miners estimated to operate in the country
- Collect accurate data that are disaggregated by ASM and LSM, different commodities (especially coal and fluorite), gender, and direct and indirect employment
- Collect geological data that quantify the location and value of deposits for ASM activities and zones to enable small-scale operators

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