



Mongolia – Tackling REDD+ in Boreal Forest Ecosystems: Development of a National Strategy

Oyunsanaa Byambasuren
Department of Forest Policy and Coordination
Ministry of Environment and Tourism, Mongolia

Mongolia's boreal forest

- 14.2 million hectares of boreal forest constitute about 87% total forest cover (dominated by *Larix sibirica*)
- 13% covered by dryland woodlands, the saxaul forests
- The boreal forest average growing stock is estimated 114 m³/ha
- Forestry sector contribution to GDP 0.5 percent (2017)
- The value of timber and fuelwood harvested annually is estimated at \$US 142 million
- Collection of non-timber forest products – pine nuts, berries, and medicinal plants – is estimated to be worth \$US 12 million annually.



Mongolia's commitment to REDD+

- Committed to a green development path
- Signatory to the UNFCCC (1992), the Kyoto Protocol (1997) and Paris Agreement (2015)
- State Policy on Forest (2016-2030) aims to reduce GHG emissions from deforestation and forest degradation by 2% by 2020 and 5% by 2030. Also referred to in Mongolia's NDC
- REDD+ Vision: Building climate resilient forest ecosystems, livelihoods and a sustainable economy for a greener future
- In Phase 1 (readiness) for REDD+: Developing capacities and preparing a REDD+ National Program to address drivers of deforestation and forest degradation

Key drivers

Forest fires



Insect infestations



Unsustainable logging



Average annual temperatures increase: 2.1 degrees since 1940 – more than twice the global average

➡ Increased frequency of forest fires and the intensities of pest infestations

Mongolia's Proposed REDD+ Natl. Program

COMPONENT A: REDD+ MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS AND ENABLING CAPACITY

COMPONENT B: MITIGATION OF GHG EMISSIONS THROUGH REDUCED FOREST DEGRADATION

PAM 4.0: SFM AND IMPROVED FOREST FIRE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES AND AWARENESS RAISING

PAM 5.0: IMPROVED PEST CONTROL REGIMES AND INCREASE THE RESILIENCE OF FORESTS THROUGH IMPROVED ECOSYSTEM HEALTH

COMPONENT C: CARBON STOCK ENHANCEMENT AND SFM

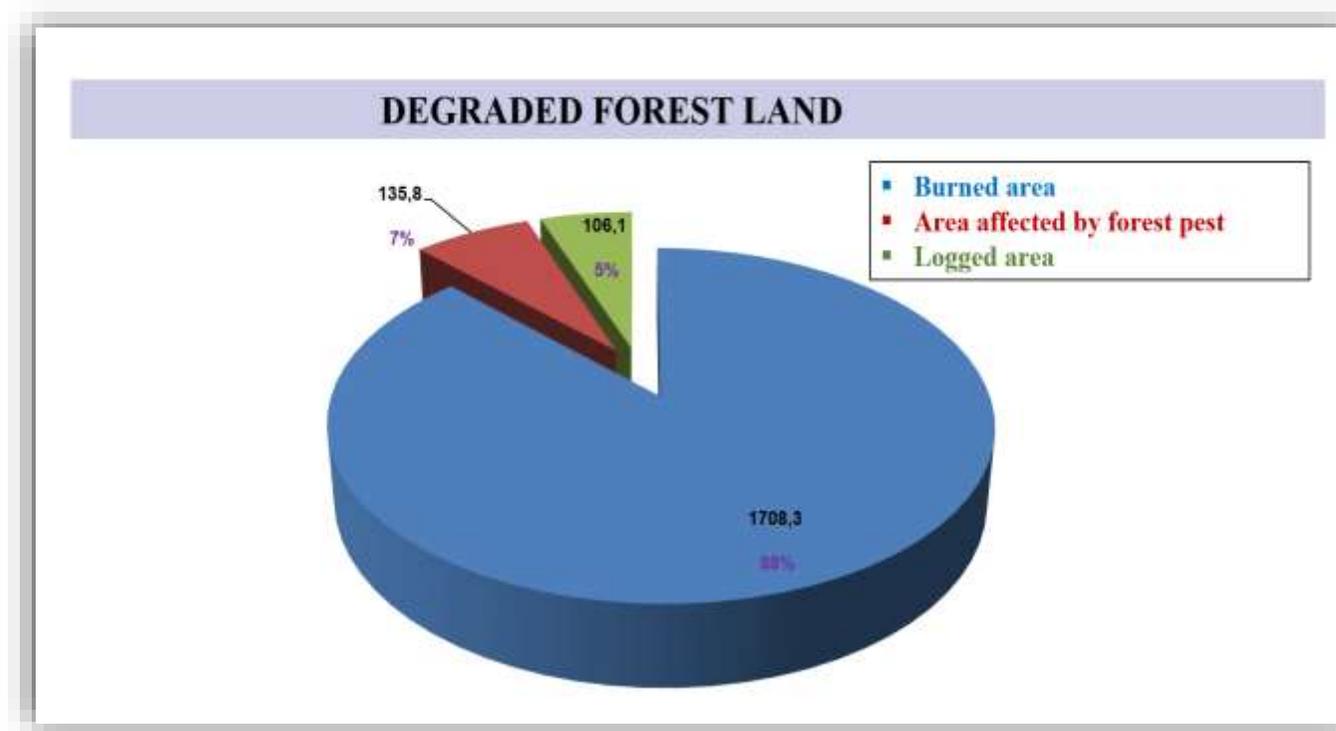
PAM 9.0: SUPPORT SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT OF FORESTS THROUGH DEVELOPMENT OF THE WOOD-PROCESSING INDUSTRIES

COMPONENT D: CLIMATE RESILIENT LIVELIHOODS AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICE PROVISION



Tackling fires

Burned areas account for about 88% of the degraded forest.



About 95% of fires are caused by human activities; set intentionally and unintentionally.

Burned forests are more susceptible to insect pests, higher grazing pressure and may ultimately become deforested.

FRDC identified 13% of the forest area as “burnt area”.

NDC target: Reducing forest fire affected area by 30% by 2030.

Tackling fires

- Implement awareness-raising campaign (Real Mongolians don't set fires!)
- Develop community-based fire management plans and develop capacity
- Develop early warning and fire detection system for forest and steppe fires
- Enhance cooperation with China and Russia (transboundary fires)
- Reduce vulnerability to fires and improve forest health through the removal of dead standing trees and thinning
- Reduce fuel loads (also through prescribed burning), construct permanent fire breaks and improve road infrastructure
- Develop forest fire research program on long-term impacts of forest fire management



Failure to reduce the frequencies and intensities of forest fires will lead to further *steppeization* in Mongolia



Dealing with insects today

According to FRDC, 1 percent of the forest area has been affected by pests and diseases. Pest control activities are conducted annually on between 110,000 to 150,000 hectares. From 2013 to 2017, pest control was the biggest annual budget expenditure of MET for forestry and forest conservation (43.2 percent of total budget). It reached as high as 70%. Insect infestations are a natural part of the boreal forest ecosystems. On occasions, the populations increase, which is misunderstood by the public and politicians.



very high allocation of budget to deal with insects



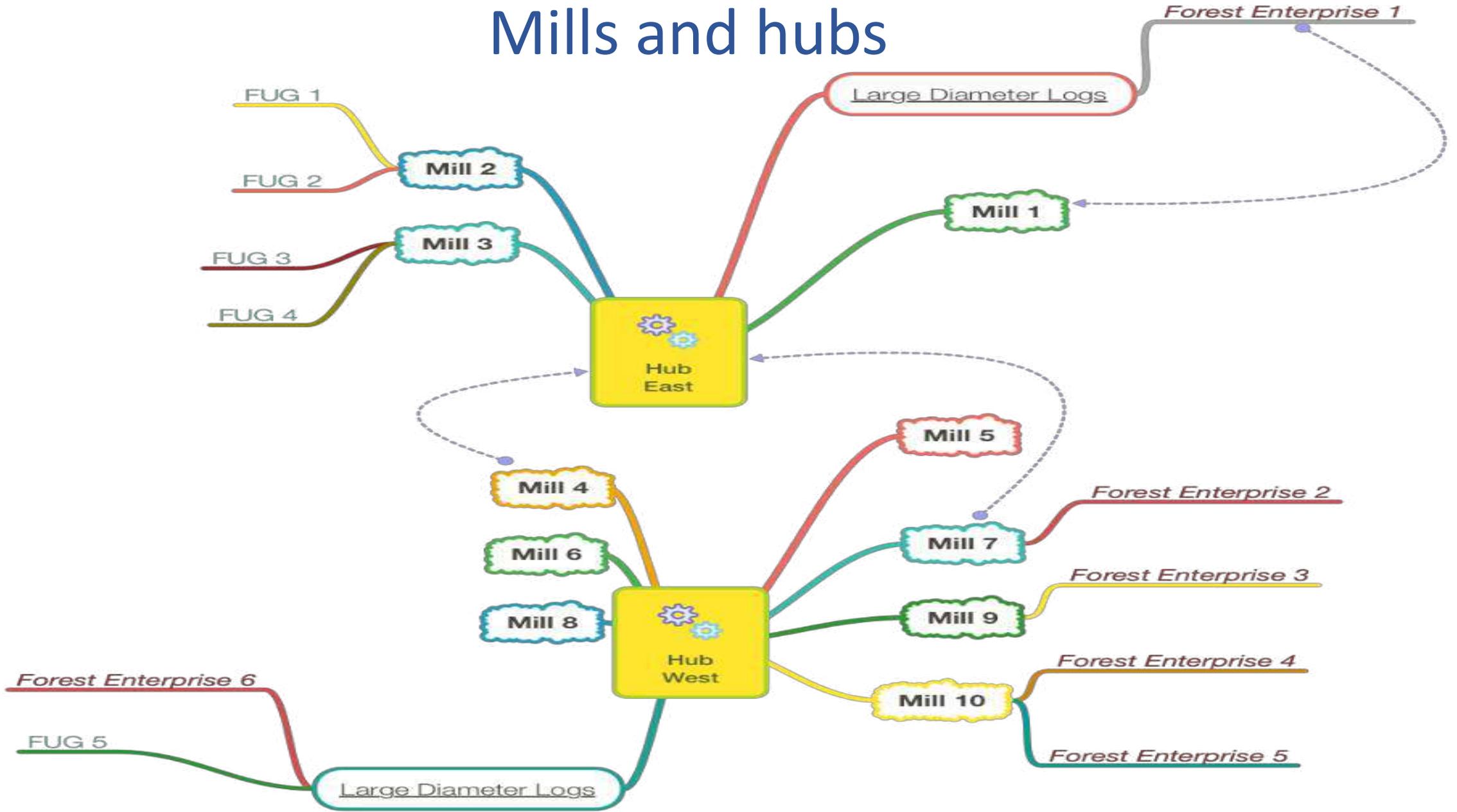
Dealing with insects in the future

- Reduce vulnerability to insect infestations and improve forest health through the removal of dead standing trees and thinnings
- Develop a long-term research capacity for monitoring and evaluating pest impacts and review effectiveness of past forest pest control measures
- Improve early detection systems and ability to understand factors influencing duration and intensity of local forest insect disturbances
- Prioritize economically valuable forests near harvesting age and forests of social importance for control measures
- Conduct pest control activities only when threshold limits are reached and early (late efforts are ineffective) and implement rigorous pest control monitoring guidelines and standards
- Monitor the occurrence of invasive alien species

Modernizing the wood-processing industry

- Guarantee raw material supply to provide confidence to industry stakeholders to invest in long-term positive change in the forest and the industries.
- Reintroduce procedures and guidelines for timber grading, pricing based on quality, and purchase preferences for locally produced goods. In parallel, provide soft loans to support the long-term nature of production forestry.
- Implement an innovative, yet feasible, approach, based on the development of sawmills close to the forests and downstream-processing hubs in the vicinity of major infrastructure (e.g. good accessibility and sizeable markets).
- In total, around 10 sawmills and 2 hubs (total annual intake of 1.4 million cbm) would be sufficient in the first 5-10 years. Total initial investment cost per mill, generating 30 to 50 jobs, is estimated to be between USD 5 and 8 million.
- This approach is expected to provide for a healthier forests, keeping carbon stocks constant while increasing off-site carbon stocks in harvested wood products

Mills and hubs



Final remarks

- In Mongolia, we are well aware that a healthy forest is critical for climate change mitigation as well as adaptation. It plays an important role in *Building climate resilient forest ecosystems, livelihoods and a sustainable economy for a greener future*
- We need to shift our focus on conservation and protection to SFM. SFM and a thriving wood-processing industry could contribute to covering the cost of tackling the main drivers of forest degradation, i.e. forest fires and insect infestation, and illegal and poor logging.
- A healthy forest also requires that we provide tangible and attractive forest rights to our forest user groups. After all, most FUG members are herders and as long as they do not benefit directly from forest management, they will remain stakeholders without a *stake and* view particularly degraded forests as future rangelands.

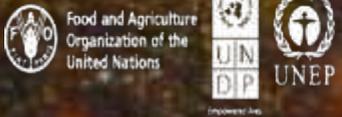


MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT
AND TOURISM



Thank you!

UN-REDD
PROGRAMME



+ 976-77117750
www.reddplus.mn

Room # 304, Government building II, United Nations Street 5/2,
Chingeltei District, Ulaanbaatar City 15160, Mongolia