

ACTIVITY BRIEF

6th International Workshop on Remote Sensing and Environmental Innovations in Mongolia

10-11 June 2013 | Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia

BACKGROUND

Mongolia is struggling with radical changes to both its cities and its rural areas as climate change and economic transformation reshapes the entire nation. Dealing with the scale and nature of that change is daunting, but it can be grasped in part from intelligent use of new technology. The challenge is to first of all understand which technology to use and how to fit it to a country still coming to terms with the opportunities a high-tech world has to offer.

Satellite data is becoming increasingly available and widely used in the natural, social and human sciences. Advances in Remote Sensing and Geospatial Information System (GIS) in particular offer a novel way of obtaining accurate data on land use and land cover change, both of which are essential if environmental problems are to be addressed effectively and in a timely way.

Mongolia's changing economic and social lifestyle patterns are intensifying environmental pressures, including overgrazing, pollution from industrial and urban growth, desertification, and forest and steppe fires. Mongolia is also prone to natural disasters driven by climate change, including both droughts and floods.

The 6th International Workshop on Remote Sensing and Environmental Innovations in Mongolia was co-organised by The Research Center for Climate Change Adaptation (RCCCA) of Keio University – the Asia Pacific Adaptation Network's (APAN) sub-regional node for Northeast Asia, along with the National University of Mongolia, Oxford University, and the Japan International Research Center for Agricultural Science.

The workshop drew 98 participants from 13 countries (Belgium, Canada, China, France, India, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, Pakistan, Russia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, and United States) and eight Mongolian provinces. They included leaders from NGOs, governmental agency representatives, as well as academics and local community leaders.

OBJECTIVE

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the complex challenges that are bringing about a considerable wave of change to Mongolia, with a special emphasis on the shared issue of climate change. Perhaps more than any other nation in Asia, Mongolia is working to creatively balance the dual challenges of economic growth and climate change.



Communities in Mongolia are increasingly feeling the effects of drought and water shortages due to climate change.

WORKSHOP PARTNERS



Keio University



ABOUT APAN

APAN is the leading climate change adaptation network in the Asia-Pacific region. Our primary goal is to assist countries to build climate change resilient and sustainable human systems, ecosystems, and economies. Our initiatives turn knowledge into policy action and trainings into tangible benefits.

APAN PARTNERS



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OUTCOMES

The workshop covered a broad spectrum of topics; from global climate change and the impact of human activities, to community based adaptation and from collaboration of rural communities with scientists and policy makers, to space engineering education and the integrated application of remote sensing and GIS technology.

A special interview session was organised by the RCCCA that brought together rural community leaders and local governmental agents from Mongolia's Ministry of Environment to discuss the needs of the communities as seen from the perspective of daily life.

Taken together the sessions painted a broad picture of the needs of the local communities and the nation as a whole, as it faces large scale upheaval as a result of climate change. Existing gaps in policy and capacity were also revealed most sharply, especially with regards to the ability of Mongolia's Ministry of Environment to measure and affect the territories it oversees as part of its mandate.

Importantly, the workshop provided an opportunity for participants to discover cutting-edge geo-information technology and applications. It allowed for the exchange of ideas, including research results, professional experiences, and future visions in the fields of environmental innovation and remote sensing and GIS applications.

CONCLUSION

The workshop strengthened international cooperation on environmental innovation, and promoted efficient scientific exchange and collaboration. The workshop also found that one of the most significant issues that need to be addressed is the immense pressure to capitalise on the discovery and exploitation of natural resources, especially in the Gobi region. Further research, as well as the development of capacity to carry out research, is needed in order to take on climate change issues directly.

For more information, visit:

<http://www.asiapacificadapt.net/apan-rcca-20130610>