



# CASE STUDY WOP MONGOLIA 2007–2010



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## BACKGROUND



This document reflects on the collaboration that began in 2007 between USUG (Ulaanbaatar Water Supply and Sewerage Authority) and VEI. This first Water Operators' Partnership (WOP), which ran from 2007 to 2010, contributed significantly to strengthening USUG's financial and technical performance. Through interviews with USUG staff, this report revisits how they experienced the partnership and how it influenced their work and the organization as a whole.

In 2023, VEI launched a second WOP with USUG, funded by MCA Mongolia. This new collaboration provided an opportunity to look back on the lasting impact of the first WOP. During the initial missions of the new programme (2023–2025), many positive stories and memories emerged from USUG colleagues about the earlier partnership. The effects of that first WOP are still visible within the organization today – a testament to its enduring value and the focus of this report. Building on the successes and achievements of the 2007–2010 partnership, the second WOP aims to further strengthen USUG's capacity to deliver sustainable water and sanitation services to the people of Ulaanbaatar.

Mongolia is a country in Central Asia and is over 1.5 million square kilometers in size. With a little more than 3 million inhabitants, Mongolia is one of the least densely populated countries in the world. The country is located on the Mongolian plateau and has a continental climate with tundra and steppe areas in the north, mountainous areas in the middle, and a desert in the south. About 50% of the mostly Buddhist population lives in the capital Ulaanbaatar.

Ulaanbaatar, the capital of Mongolia, got its current name during the socialist revolution and means Red Hero. The city is located at an altitude of 1,350 meters above sea level in the valley of the Tuul, a tributary of the Selenga. Another

tributary of the Tuul, the Selbe, flows into the Tuul in Ulaanbaatar. Ulaanbaatar is the coldest capital in the world with an average annual temperature of -1.3 °C. In winter, temperatures can drop to -40 °C while in summer +35 °C is possible. The steppe climate has little precipitation, most of it in summer.

The population has grown rapidly since 2000. The vast majority of the population settled in the vast, unplanned ger areas. These so-called ger areas are informal peri-urban settlement areas where migrants of mostly poor people live and families from rural areas have settled in gers, the traditional Mongolian tent.

Ulaanbaatar is the center of Mongolia's road network and is connected to both the Chinese railway system and the Trans-Siberian Railway in Russia. Rapid urbanization and economic growth have resulted in an increasing demand for water and better delivery of services. The institutional reform of 2012, aimed at improving transparency and service delivery between the government and the Mongolian people also increased pressure on the water company to improve delivery, extend certain services to new residential and industrial areas and to provide safe, reliable and affordable water to the entire urban population, including those in ger areas.

# THE WOP BETWEEN USUG AND VEI

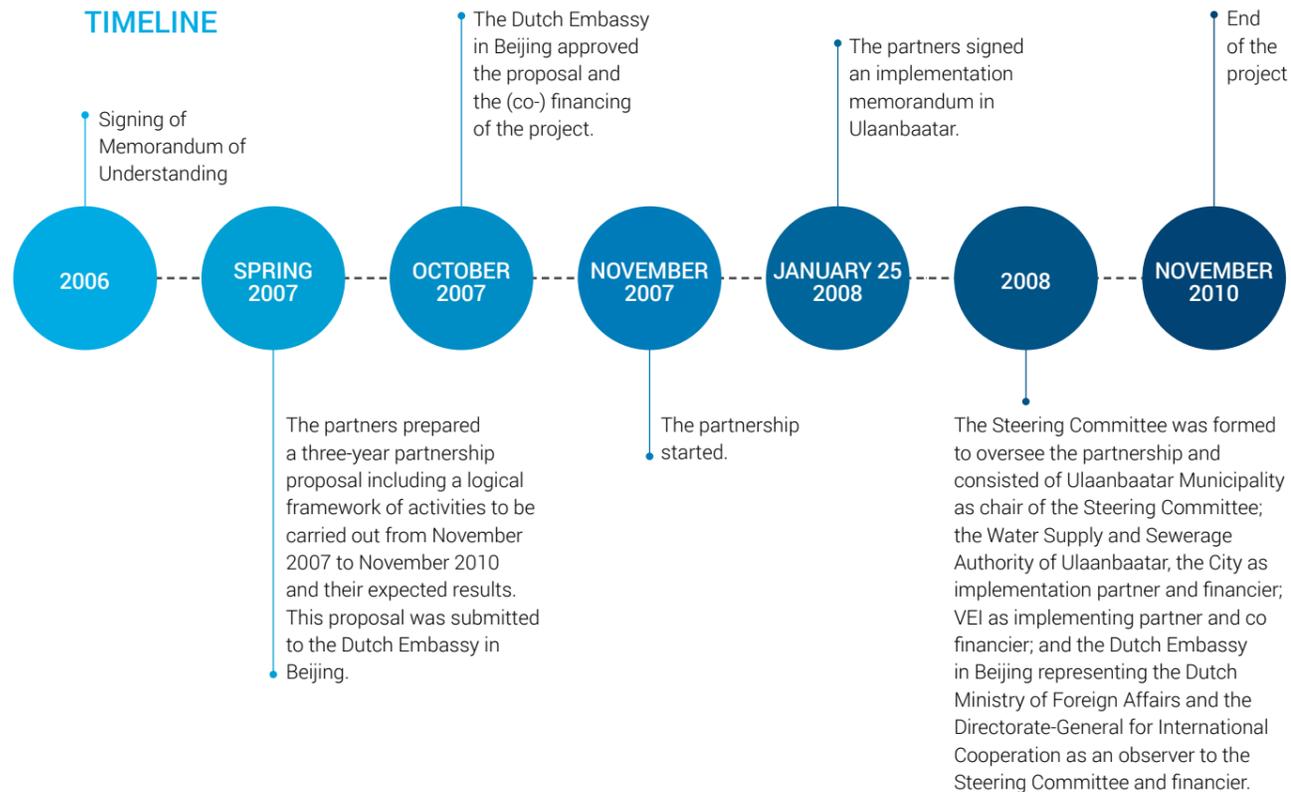
**A Water Operator Partnership (WOP) is a collaboration between water utilities with the aim to share knowledge and skills to make the partner water utilities stronger, financially sustainable and more (climate) resilient. These partnerships help to contribute to SDG6: water and sanitation for all.**

The WOP between USUG and VEI (formerly Vitens Evides International) was established in September 2006 when both companies signed a Memorandum of Understanding. As an expert partner, VEI introduced innovative management practices and technological solutions to the Water Supply and Sewerage Authority of Ulaanbaatar (USUG). Faced with rapid population growth and increasing pressure on its infrastructure, USUG was able to improve

efficiency, expand coverage, and strengthen the reliability of its services.

The partnership aligned with the Municipality of Ulaanbaatar's policy to improve public services by developing autonomous and financially sustainable utilities, laying the groundwork for lasting institutional and technical improvements in the city's water sector.

## TIMELINE



# THE WOP PARTNERS

**VEI B.V. (since 2018: formerly known as Vitens Evides International) is a joint-venture, not-for-profit company that facilitates the international collaboration of water companies in the Netherlands.**



Established in 2005 by Dutch water utilities, VEI is implementing WOPs with more than 50 water operators, aiming at sharing knowledge and skills to make the partner water operators stronger, financially sustainable and more (climate) resilient. VEI creates improved access to water and sanitation services, for hundreds of thousands of people every year, mostly in low-income areas in Africa, Asia and Latin-America. Standing side by side as water operators, VEI strives to create increase impact for people living in poverty, by systemically improving the performance of our WOP partners, by providing peer-to-peer collaboration, training, technical assistance and smart investments.

VEI is a full subsidiary of Vitens N.V. and Evides Waterbedrijf N.V. and implements the international Corporate Social Responsibility policy on behalf of six Dutch drinking water utilities: Vitens N.V., Evides Waterbedrijf N.V., WML, Waterbedrijf Groningen, Brabant Water, PWN and WMD. In addition, WLN, a water quality laboratory is part of the consortium.

USUG is responsible for drinking water supply and waste water treatment in Ulaanbaatar, the capital city of Mongolia. USUG is a municipal organization, founded in 1959, whose assets belong to the City Property Department of Ulaanbaatar Municipality. USUG extracts groundwater from pumping stations in well fields and chlorinates the water supply according to a specific distribution. In 2024, USUG serves approximately 90 percent of Ulaanbaatar's total population, approximately 1.5 million people.

There are large differences in water consumption between residents; people in apartments consume an average of 262 liters per person per day while the average consumption in ger areas (mainly through water kiosks) is around 10 liters per person per day. USUG has approximately 3,600 customers (2012 figures), mostly in the form of connections to water kiosks and apartments associations.

# THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WOP (2007–2010)

The aim of the partnership was to help USUG to become a financially sustainable and autonomous water company. VEI provided support (1) to improve USUG's operational performance, (2) to strengthen its financial autonomy, and (3) to continue to provide affordable and reliable water services.

All three objectives had to be achieved within the constraints of good water management and environmental protection. To achieve and implement these objectives, we worked on five themes, namely:

1. Operational performance in water supply
2. Financial autonomy
3. Sustainable water resources management
4. Waste water and sanitation
5. Training and capacity building



VEI also agreed to support USUG in donor coordination and in implementing the sector reforms outlined in Decree 182, approved by the Mongolian Parliament on 14 May 2008. These activities were considered essential for achieving the objectives of the partnership.

This partnership was implemented over a period of three years, from November 1, 2007 to November 1, 2010. The total cost of implementing the activities, according to the partnership agreement, amounted to approximately EUR 1.7 million, shared between VEI, USUG and the Dutch embassy in Beijing. In addition, the Water for Life Foundation contributed € 454,300 to partnership activities in increasing improved access to water in the ger areas.

# OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

In order to establish a baseline, VEI experts conducted an assessment of USUG's performance in 2006. The recommendations for the WOP program included, among other things, to procure equipment and software, development of new systems and procedures, training in Mongolia and exposure visits of USUG employees to the Netherlands. The implementation aimed to cover all important aspects: technical, financial, institutional and organizational aspects of running an efficient water company. Training and capacity building was in place across all clusters to ensure results are sustainable.

The baseline study and later data collection revealed a number of key areas for improvement:

- **Unsafe and unreliable water** – More than 30 percent of customers received water via water kiosks supplied by trucks. In 2009, it turned out that about 18 percent of water samples from trucks that deliver water were contaminated, while services were often unreliable. In addition, the operating costs of the water kiosks turned out to be very high.
- **Waste water** – The consumption of customers in apartments in Ulaanbaatar turned out to be very high. In 2007, on average 285 liters per day per person. Water rates were low and water meters were missing at household level. Residents of Ulaanbaatar housing association (OSNAAG) apartment buildings paid a very low fixed rate which had a detrimental effect on the financial position of USUG.
- **Inefficient supply systems** – The operation of the central water supply system in the core apartment area of Ulaanbaatar was complex and inefficient, with high energy consumption and fluctuating pressure levels.
- **Non-Revenue Water** – USUG's unpaid water amounted to 23.8 percent of production in 2007.

To address these issues, the partners designed an improvement strategy for USUG. The key was optimizing the pumping operations and the distribution network. In 2009 and 2010, the partners modernized and standardized the operational control equipment at two of the six pumping stations. Nowadays, these stations are operated automatically and monitored in real time. A database with operational data from the pumping stations was designed and installed. Monthly data were and are used

for management information, modeling and designing improvements. A calibrated hydraulic model from a hydraulic modeling software package for free water distribution (EPANET) was used twice to analyze options for improving the water distribution network.

To cope with the poor water quality, high operating costs and unreliable services of truck-delivered kiosks in the ger areas, USUG developed a proposal for the privatization or outsourcing of kiosk operations. With financial support of the Water for Life Foundation, it also connected 26 of the authority's 281 truck-delivered kiosks to the network, serving approximately 29,550 residents, to the central distribution network. VEI helped USUG develop a Balanced Scorecard, a widely accepted tool for monitoring, assessing and evaluating a utility's performance. This provided the water board's management team with better operational performance information for prioritizing and making decisions. The partners prepared an Operational Master Plan for 2010–2020, including recommendations for the development of water services in Ulaanbaatar, prioritizing investments, improving planning and operations, and continuing capacity building. Domestic water meters were installed in 288 households in apartments in a pilot neighborhood in Ulaanbaatar. Monthly meter readings from July 2010 showed a decline in consumption to an average of 100 liters per day per person in the pilot area, prompting the government, housing association and municipality to launch a metering program for both domestic and industrial customers. The partners organized local training on-the-job, plus courses and exposure visits for water board staff in the Netherlands. Visiting experts from Dutch water companies Vitens and Evides provided the majority of the training in Ulaanbaatar and accompanied water board staff during training and visits to the Netherlands.

# FINANCIAL ASSESSMENT AND IMPROVEMENTS

**Investigation and analysis of the financial position, accounting systems and procedures of USUG revealed that revenues were insufficient to cover operating costs and depreciation in 2009 and 2010.**

VEI helped USUG develop a financial forecast model to make financial projections, design improvements and calculate the effects. VEI advised USUG to aim for full cost recovery and increase rates annually until USUG costs were covered; that they find a solution to deal with debt; explore ways to increase efficiency by reducing water waste and energy consumption, improving billing and collection, and reorganizing the utility accordingly. VEI also recommended addressing the issue of the housing association's debts to USUG. The partners reviewed the billing and collection procedures of the water board's customer department and suggested possible improvements. Over time, outstanding payments had built up at USUG because the low, fixed rates collected from apartment residents were insufficient to cover the charges imposed by USUG.

The WOP helped improve the appreciation of the need to pay outstanding payments and in 2008 both parties designed a repayment schedule for these outstanding accounts. Options included household meters, billing based on actual consumption and USUG taking over responsibility for billing and collection from all consumers. In the spring of 2010, Vitens' marketing department participated in the first customer satisfaction survey in Ulaanbaatar including 2,270 customers from ger areas, apartment buildings, individually metered connections, institutions and industries. To address the issues raised by the research, an action plan was drawn up and implemented in 2010. Since 2007, a financial expert from VEI has visited USUG every six months to review the financial figures, income statements and balance sheets for the previous six-month period. The staff of the authority's financial department has now received sufficient training, both in Mongolia and in the Netherlands, to make the financial analyzes themselves.



# EMPLOYEES OF USUG SHARE THEIR STORIES AND EXPERIENCES



**MUNKHTESETSEG DONDOV**  
HEAD OF ADMINISTRATION AND  
MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

**In 2024, the Administration and Human Management department includes 11 people: a department head, 4 HR specialists, 2 archivists, 1 assistant of the director, 1 PR officer, 1 social media specialist and 1 general specialist. Ms Munkhtesetseg, Head of the Administration and Management Department is working with USUG since 1990. She started out as a contract engineer and subsequently held 7 different positions, including 3 years as an HR Specialist. She is the Head of the Department since 1997.**

“During the WOP 2007–2010, my department was helped with many things. VEI helped with development of job descriptions of employees – and onboarding training for new employees, which was not there at the time. We still use this for new employees. I also visited the Netherlands and learned a lot. Every employee now receives a performance sheet twice a year. We are currently working on the 2040 strategy plan for USUG – part of it is HR and we would like to implement that plan. To realize this, we would like to achieve an international ISO standard for

Human Resources. We started this process last year. We want to achieve the ISO standard by the end of 2026. We would like to learn more about this in the second WOP.

If we want to reach employees, we now use external media such as the USUG Facebook members group. We want to learn to use internal media (Sharepoint) for internal communication. We need to clarify our information channels. Many responsibilities of the PR officer are not yet clear, which requires a clear job description with policy.”



**GANZORIG SHONKHOR**  
HEAD OF CENTRAL WASTE WATER  
TREATMENT PLANT



**MUNGUNTSOOJ GONGOR**  
PROJECT ENGINEER OF THE PROJECT  
IMPLEMENTATION UNIT

**Boldbaatar is since 2004 Head of the Central Waste Water Treatment Plant and 4 other plants, in total 149 employees.**

“During the WOP project from 2007–2010, a lot of work was done on the technical specifications for our lab equipment. Even until today, the procurement of the lab equipment in USUG is done according to those technical specifications. And there was also an amount of restructuring that happened because of the input of the WOP. A lot of equipment was procured during that time, some equipment is still working but some is unfortunately not functional anymore, such as the waste water flow meters. From 2007–2010, we were able to automate some of the smart kiosks we have, which was very helpful. A lot of the technical improvements and innovations we are still working with today. Unfortunately, I have not visited the Netherlands at that time, only staff members visited the Netherlands and had study tours. Young Dutch engineers were working on solutions in Ulaanbaatar and that was a fruitful cooperation. I was head of the Engineering Policy Department at that time, in another office. Afterwards, I moved to the Industrial and Technical Department. I mostly worked with Adriaan Mels, Folkert de Jager, Johan Duifhuizen and Gerhard van den Top. We had a good cooperation together. The WOP met my expectations and I was very happy with the results. There were a lot of projects at that time at USUG, the Dutch project but also a Korean and Japanese project. So at the office, we really had to manage the amount of office space.”

“For the WOP from 2023–2025, I had a lot of expectations for improving the Central Waste Water Treatment Plant. After completing the first WOP project in 2010, from 2015 to 2018 we conducted a lot of technical assessment on this facility, for example in 2018, we had a consultant who was advising us on how to conduct a biological treatment at the Waste Water Treatment Plant. Perhaps there was an issue with the design or an issue with the implementation, but the biological treatment didn’t meet my expectations. And we decided to hire different consultants later on. I hope this WOP can contribute more to the technical solutions for the treatment plant.”

“At the moment, the waste water contamination is a challenge, much more contaminated water comes in than we can handle. Currently, the contamination levels are very high, also because there are many more companies than 10–20 years ago. There will be a new waste water treatment plant with hopefully better solutions, but I am concerned about the level of contamination. 50 years of accumulated sludge is also a major challenge. I am responsible for 149 employees spread over 5 treatment plants. The new treatment plant was originally planned for June 2024, but due to Covid-related delays, the delivery is now expected in 2025/2026.”

**Munguntsooj is working at USUG since 2004. Initially as a Training Engineer and, since 2008, as a Project (Supervision) Engineer. She is responsible for overseeing the connections of wells, pipelines, and pumping stations. In addition, she coordinates international projects, develops new initiatives, and manages communications with foreign partner organizations.**

#### Reflections on the 2007–2010 WOP

“During the 2007–2010 WOP, I primarily worked with Folkert de Jager. We visited the Netherlands, where we observed laboratory operations, practiced using new equipment, and gained hands-on experience. With funding from the WOP, we were able to connect several water kiosks to the city’s water supply network. At that time, there were two types of kiosks: connected and unconnected.

Since 2012, smart metered water kiosks have been introduced in collaboration with a Mongolian company. These kiosks enable 24/7 digital payments. In the ger areas (suburban Shanti towns), there are 654 water kiosks: 325 are piped, of which 141 are smart kiosks, while 313 are unpiped and supplied by water trucks.

Before 2010, USUG did not utilize an asset management system. Today, a basic system is in place to manage and maintain asset information. The first GIS engineer was trained at VEI during this period, and further development of GIS capabilities remains a priority.

Many recommendations from the 2019 Aquarating baseline assessment—related to GIS, asset management, waste water treatment, and non-revenue water (NRW) reduction—are still being implemented. The next Aquarating validation is scheduled for 2026, coinciding with the conclusion of the current WOP.”



**URNAA BAAKAA (AT THE LEFT)**  
HEAD OF CENTRAL WATER LABORATORY

**“We do everything we can to ensure that drinking water is safe. It is in everyone’s interest to have a good quality of drinking water.”**

**Urnaa Baakaa has been with the organization since 1992, holding various positions over the years. In 1997, he traveled to the Netherlands as part of an initiative to reduce pollution in the Tuul River, Ulaanbaatar’s main river. During that time, he worked at the waste water treatment plant lab and visited several water laboratories in the Netherlands and Belgium.**

A notable milestone in the laboratory’s development is the introduction of the LASA Spectrometer 20 during the 2007–2010 WOP. This portable German-made device allows chemical analysis of waste water, including heavy metals. It was used at USUG for 13 years, likely first seen by Mr. Nanzad in the Netherlands.

Today, the laboratory is responsible for monitoring both drinking and waste water quality across Ulaanbaatar. The central waste water treatment plant, along with smaller treatment facilities, monitors effluent water quality, including that from industrial users such as chemical and food factories, which operate under contracts with USUG.

The lab currently employs 24 staff members, mostly microbiologists. This staffing level meets current demand, but additional employees would be needed if monitoring requirements increase. Drinking water is monitored at 1,030 measuring points, while waste water is monitored at 430 points. Every day, two trucks with three employees each transport 30–40 water samples to the lab, with some samples collected daily and others less frequently.

**Current challenges include:**

- **Upgrading laboratory equipment** to keep pace with rapidly evolving technology. While current equipment is still functional, periodic investment is necessary.
- **Improving the Lab Information Management System (LIMS)**, developed by Mongolian IT engineers, and enhancing staff capacity through ongoing training and education.
- **Ensuring the quality of drinking water** remains a top priority, while monitoring and controlling expenses.

Water quality is published quarterly on USUG’s website, with weekly reports discussed every Tuesday at management meetings. Multiple assessments are conducted to guarantee quality, and currently there are no indications that climate change is affecting water quality. Drinking water is sourced from seven water resources; as the number of upper water sources increases, so does the potential risk of pollution.

USUG consistently meets—and often exceeds—the Mongolian water standards, which are reviewed every five years (last reviewed in 2018). Current priorities include the procurement of materials and training personnel for advanced equipment, which was last purchased in 2010. Training is conducted either in-house or abroad, depending on the complexity of the equipment.

The laboratory is organized into two departments: Biological and Chemical. Established in 2009, it combined the previously separate waste water (central waste water treatment plant) and drinking water (water supply division) labs into a single central laboratory. During this period, key international exchanges and training took place, including two chemists traveling to the Netherlands in 2008 to study laboratory operations, visits from specialized experts from Russia and the Netherlands in 2010, and two additional chemists undertaking further training in the Netherlands later that same year.

The goal of the laboratory is to operate a high-end, state-of-the-art facility that guarantees reliable and consistent water quality for the city of Ulaanbaatar.



**ARIUNAA CHULUUN**  
HEAD OF ECONOMICS, FINANCE AND  
ACCOUNTING DEPARTMENT

**Ariunaa works at USUG since 1988. During the first WOP she was a senior accountant. "Back then everything was paper based, now everything is digital. The focus is currently on policy and on planning perspective, from the operational side."**

Ariunaa has led the Accounting Department since 1990. The team consists of 12 staff members, including three economists, one senior accountant, and other accountants. The department is responsible for both short-term and long-term organizational planning, as well as strategic financial planning.

During the first Water Operators' Partnership (WOP), four employees visited the Netherlands to participate in presentations and workshops on expenditures, financial management, data input, and payment processes. These sessions were highly informative and led to several improvements at USUG, including coding for asset management and the structured categorization of information systems.

Following these developments, separate departments were established for Customer Relations and the Operations Control Center, which now function independently.

Current challenges include further development of investment policy and planning, as well as enhancing operational efficiency and achieving cost savings, including restrictions on equipment procurement.

**Focus Areas of the WOP 2023–2025:**

- **Investment Policy:** Develop a clear policy framework with defined parameters, return-on-investment assessments, and integration with overall financial planning. Conduct studies to evaluate ROI for major investments.
- **Asset Management:** Create a database of equipment and materials, including lifespan and replacement schedules.
- **In-House Software Development:** Strengthen organizational capacity for software development, particularly for financial, maintenance, and asset management systems.

Ariunaa wants to visit the Netherlands again to study best practices in financial policy, investment planning, asset management, and governance structures. She is particularly keen on comparative analyses of standards, norms, and regulations, as well as gaining insight into governance models, including Dutch boards of directors and their decision-making processes.



**Additional Priorities:**

- **Implement a strong cost-saving strategy** by integrating investment and asset policies into organizational processes.
- **Acquire maintenance management software** and establish an asset database.
- **Develop internal HR capacity for software development**, as the current market for ICT specialists is competitive and external hiring is challenging.
- **Collaboration:** The department works closely with the engineering policy department on investment planning.

**Lessons from the WOP of 2007–2010:**

Ariunaa was deeply impressed by the Netherlands' advanced digital accounting system, a stark contrast to Mongolia's paper-based approach at the time, as well as by the Operations Control Center's sophisticated online work order and reporting systems. Inspired by these innovations, USUG took significant steps to modernize its operations, establishing a financial database around 2000 and achieving a full transition to online financial accounting by 2013. The company also implemented an online repair and maintenance program for asset management, demonstrating a clear commitment to digital transformation, although the program's license expired last year.



**BAYANZUL TSERENDORJ**  
ENGINEER OF CUSTOMER SERVICE  
DIVISION

**Bayanzul has worked at USUG since 2003, of which 17 years were in the Customer Service Division, where she began as a Senior Customer Service Engineer. During the previous Water Operators' Partnership (2007–2010), she completed an internship at Vitens in Utrecht and studied Water Management in Leeuwarden. Since February 1, 2015, Bayanzul has served as head of the Customer Service Division.**

At the start of her tenure as head, the department comprised 59 employees, of which only 13 were men. One of her initial priorities was to achieve a more balanced gender distribution. Today, the department consists of 80 employees: 43 women and 37 men. Bayanzul notes that retaining men remains challenging, as men often occupy technical positions while women more commonly fill administrative roles.

USUG serves nine districts in Ulaanbaatar, including six main districts. The utility operates four city offices and four service centers, each responsible for a specific district. Customers can reach USUG through multiple channels, including the Operations Control Center, the Call Center, phone, email, and the website. A customer app is currently in development, with planned installation for all users in 2024. Each customer also has an online account for invoices, receipts, requests, complaints, and water meter readings. The department manages contracts for both drinking water and waste water users.

Billing is conducted monthly across three regions using different cycles. Approximately 98% of revenue comes from private and business customers. The customer base consists of 70% households served through administrative organizations, such as OSNAAUG, representing 1,800 public connections, and 30% private entities, including schools, hospitals, and factories, totaling 7,300 customers.

Water distribution is approximately 35% to OSNAAUG, 35% to other apartment or service providers, and 30% to private entities and factories.

#### **Customer Satisfaction:**

During the WOP of 2007–2010, Bayanzul gained valuable experience with customer satisfaction surveys. Although a survey existed at USUG, it had not been systematically used. She introduced a more professional, internally managed survey for the general public. Today, the survey is more extensive and conducted by an external agency, providing a score on a scale of 1–10. Customer satisfaction has improved significantly, from a score of 6.8 in 2010 to 8.2 in 2022. Bayanzul emphasizes that continuous, incremental improvements are key to enhancing customer satisfaction.

#### **At the moment, the department focusses on a few aspects:**

1. Continuing and improving online processes of their online services – such as the processes of payments, requests, invoices and complaints. Bayanzul wants to improve the structure of her department and make it better aligned with the online processes, it has to be in line with the online services.
2. Installing the smart water meter. Currently, meter readings are recorded manually and employees physically visit the meter to record water meter readings. She would like smart meters to be installed – water meter calibration lab – to be expanded, renewed and up to date.

“In the future, we want to become a full digital services department, but that also means something for the department. People no longer have to go by to record meter readings. Ultimately, fewer employees will be needed and for them, we need to look for other opportunities within USUG. We are also investigating, in a preliminary stage, the smart meter transitions and wonder how that went in the Netherlands. We also want to look at the costs it entails and want to conduct a satisfaction survey through special agencies.”

A good experience was to automate invoices and implement online payment. USUG is the first organization in Mongolia to implement online payment.

#### **Reflections on Past Experiences**

“I remember a great deal from my experiences. When USUG selected staff to visit the Netherlands, I was fortunate to spend five months there. During that time, I worked extensively with Marcel Lips of Vitens on the Customer Satisfaction Survey and the online payment system. My work with the Dutch water companies provided significant support and valuable knowledge. I learned different collaborative methods, such as working sessions and team-based approaches, which I subsequently introduced in Mongolia. Previously, our work had been more one-directional, but now there is greater interaction. I also collaborate more with colleagues and encourage younger staff to do the same.”

She observed that Dutch workplaces offer more flexibility, such as working from home and productivity-focused approaches. In Mongolia, work schedules are more rigid, typically from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. with a one-hour lunch break. As she does not have authority over working hours within USUG, changes are limited due to decisions being made centrally within the organization.

The WOP of 2007–2010 was very successful, resulting in significant progress, and she has similar expectations for future partnerships. She sees opportunities for staff visits to the Netherlands to learn about customer complaints management, marketing strategies, management planning, and monitoring industrial water pollution. This would strengthen staff expertise in inspections and compliance.

Additional priorities include assessing whether customers can continue to pay for water on time amid rising prices, conducting customer willingness surveys, and increasing marketing efforts for online services. During her 2010 visit to Vitens, she noted that the call center and marketing functions were integrated into a single department. At USUG, these functions remain separate, creating additional steps, and she hopes future organizational improvements will optimize this structure.



This is a publication of VEI B.V. Look for more information at [www.vei.nl](http://www.vei.nl).

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