

Copper-bottomed

Mongolia seeks better terms for its vast mining project

Oyu Tolgoi, the world's third-largest copper mine, runs into more trouble

**Business**

Nov 26th 2019

IT IS HARD to overstate the importance to Mongolia of the Oyu Tolgoi mine. By the time it is completed it will be the world's third-largest copper mine, with an expected life of 50 years. It

will also yield gold. The biggest foreign investment ever made in the country, it has already cost \$11.9bn, and will cost billions more before it is finished, in an economy with an expected GDP this year of just \$13.5bn. So it is not surprising that, in the decade since construction started, Oyu Tolgoi has been subject to ferocious political scrapping. But it is also a telling example of the strains that appear when a poor but resource-rich country opens itself to the global market and the might of big multinationals.

The project passed a new milestone on November 21st when Mongolia's parliament wrapped up a two-year investigation with a resolution demanding "comprehensive measures" to improve the terms of the two most important contracts governing the project: the one on its first, surface-mine phase, signed in 2009; and one signed in Dubai in 2015 covering the much bigger second, underground, phase.

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