Winrock International is a nonprofit organization that works with people in the United States and around the world to empower the disadvantaged, increase economic opportunity and sustain natural resources. By linking local individuals and communities with new ideas and technology, Winrock is increasing long-term productivity, equity and responsible resource management to benefit the poor and disadvantaged of the world. Winrock staff implements projects all around the world.

Winrock International has been registered as a U.S. non-governmental organization (NGO) in China since 1985 and has implemented USAID-funded projects to support Tibetan communities and institutions since 2004. Winrock will lead implementation of the Support to Ethnic Tibetans in China program with partner Sanjiangyuan, a nonprofit organization based in Yushu, Qinghai Province, which is dedicated to biodiversity conservation.

Support to Ethnic Tibetans in China

The USAID Support to Ethnic Tibetans in China (SET) program is designed to build upon the success of the Tibetan Sustainable Environmental Resources for Increased Economic Growth (TSERING) project to promote development of sustainable livelihoods, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation in Tibetan communities in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and other Tibetan regions of China.

Many complex, inter-related factors affect the environment and natural resource-dependent livelihoods of Tibetan populations, including not only the causes of a changing world, but also Tibetans’ exposure to new ideas and the information and strategies they choose to adapt to change. The Tibetan Plateau already reveals signs of vulnerability to climate change. Water stored in glaciers is released more rapidly due to higher melt rates, which will likely lead to conditions that exacerbate grassland and forest degradation. Climate-related impacts will further destabilize the natural resource-based livelihoods of rural Tibetan populations. Loss of water resources is especially threatening to herder communities and could accelerate urban migration.

Meanwhile rural herder households that have lost land and access to resources through resettlement or reallocation have significantly diminished livelihoods opportunities. The resulting impoverishment affects women and youth disproportionately, and Tibetan women are more constrained by traditional attitudes and day-to-day household tasks and less able to take advantage of training and business opportunities that may arise.

The SET program will promote development of sustainable livelihoods, environmental conservation, and cultural preservation in Tibetan communities in the Tibetan Autonomous Region (TAR) and in other Tibetan regions of China. Winrock will contribute to this goal through two program objectives.

Program Objectives

- Environmental conservation, based on the application of the latest scientific knowledge.
- Improved local involvement, capacity building, accumulation of scientific knowledge, and institutional learning and change.
Our approach will build on USAID’s investments in selected regions, fully engage stakeholders and build their capacity, and create incentives for their active involvement. Winrock will demonstrate innovative solutions, scale up tested models, foster gender equality, and forge partnerships for long-term sustainable outcomes.

Program Focus

- Leverage and build on TSERING’s partnerships with government, NGOs and community associations to address environmental challenges.
- Build local capacity to assess potential natural resource management activities, determine economically and environmentally viable land use options, and sustain natural resource-based livelihoods.
- Implement environmental management activities and field work in partnership with government agencies and local organizations.
- Work with partner Sanjiangyuan to develop land-use and management plans with communities.
- Coordinate with local government and resource organizations to replicate successful approaches carried out under TSERING as part of rangeland rehabilitation activities.
- Work with Government Animal Husbandry Bureaus to expand services provided by community-based livestock health workers (field vets) in a broader range of topics, using consultant services to provide additional training as needed.
- Replicate and expand on community-based environmental activities in the Mt. Nyenpo Yurtse area that were successful under TSERING. The lessons learned from the TSERING activity will be applied to a wider range of environmental issues, including threats to water resources as a result of climate-change impacts and associated glacier melt.
- Replicate successful TSERING co-management approaches, demonstrated with the Yeri community in the Baima Nature Reserve in Yunnan, to improve Non-Timber Forest Products harvesting and habitat co-management.
- Improve household energy efficiency to reduce deforestation and wood demand.

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