

‘DESTINATION YUSHU’

Development framework and recommendations
for the promotion of tourism in rural Qinghai Province,
with a focus on *Ecotourism* and *Community Tourism*
in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture

J Marc Foggin, PhD
Plateau Perspectives

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Developing responsible tourism in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province, China, in support of biodiversity conservation, poverty reduction, and cultural continuity

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of the Guidelines

The main purpose of these Guidelines is to assist protected area managers, tourism planners and other stakeholders in the planning and management of protected areas, visitor recreation and the tourism industry, so that tourism can be developed in a sustainable fashion, while respecting local conditions and communities.

Summary of the Guidelines

Tourism is a global business and leisure phenomenon that surpassed \$1 trillion USD in 2011. In China, tourism has grown from a negligible industry around three decades ago to a vast sector of the national economy in the 21st century. Today, travel and tourism contribute around 9 % of the country's GDP – a figure surpassing the automotive manufacturing industry – and this sector continues to grow at around 10 % per year. Nearly 30 million foreign visitors 'experience' China each year and domestic tourism exhibits a continuous rapid annual increase. Within the sector, ecological tourism (ecotourism) is an exciting sector that began to emerge in significant ways in the 1980s and now represents around 6 % of the global tourism and travel revenues. Especially when combined with cultural tourism and adventure tourism, it can provide an authentic and comprehensive experience for visitors.

'Ecotourism' can be defined as responsible travel to areas of natural beauty undertaken in ways that conserve the environment and that improve the well-being of local people and communities. Ecotourism includes 'nature tourism', but is also much more: It must equally be responsible and sustainable, it should contribute positively to conservation goals (not just 'do no harm'), and contribute directly to community development including felt need and aspirations. Many goals of nature reserves including conservation as well as public education and outreach may be strengthened as well, with judicious introduction and support for community-based ecotourism.

A 'destination marketing' approach may provide the best advantages to draw both national and international visitors to an area – an approach that can be developed either for a Nature Reserve or for an administrative area such as Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai Province. Several good examples are provided from Malaysia, Nepal and Norway. Destination marketing promotes an area through the lens of people's experience of a place or region; not only through specific sites or festivals, or the marketing of individual companies. With destination marketing, a whole region should benefit from enhanced tourism interest and new business opportunities.

The successful development of ecotourism can help generate new income, provide employment, revitalize and diversify local people's livelihoods, help protect the natural and cultural heritage of an area, and generally contribute to regional social development with investments in services and in education and vocational training programs. Ecotourism may also be developed as a high-end speciality tourism experience based on local cultural and natural assets of an area, and thus bring significant revenue to a community or a local company, with negligible environmental or socio-cultural impact. When planned and executed in a culturally sensitive way – ideally planned and owned by communities themselves – ecotourism equally can help to enhance people's sense of pride in their identity and to promote cultural continuity and ensuing development outcomes.

Major recommendations for development of tourism in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture include: (i) undertake adequate planning with key stakeholders including government bureaus, nature reserves, the tourism business sector, local communities and other key interest groups; (ii) develop tourism (incl. ecotourism) in culturally sensitive ways, and where possible support the development of community-based tourism; (iii) support the development of local cooperatives (which may engage in community tourism); (iv) promote the development of fair partnerships between local ventures and external (e.g., provincial) tour operators; (v) adopt a regional scale ‘destination marketing’ approach; and (vi) create community-based conservation partnerships.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 1. Report Background	Page 4
Section 2. What exactly is Ecotourism?	Page 5
Section 3. What is Community Tourism?	Page 6
Section 4. Stakeholders in Tourism Development	Page 8
Section 5. Benefits Arising from Community Ecotourism	Page 9
Section 6. Important Supporting Structures and Mechanisms	Page 15
Section 7. Recommendations for Ecotourism Development	Page 19
Section 8. The Way Forward	Page 20

BOXES

Box 1. Definitions of ecotourism-related terms	Page 6
Box 2. Potential benefits from ecotourism development	Page 10
Box 3. Example: The Great Himalayan Trail	Page 11
Box 4. Example: The Annapurna-Dhaulagiri Community Trail	Page 11
Box 5. Example: Destination marketing approach used in Malaysia	Page 12
Box 6. Example: Co-management with Parks Canada and communities	Page 13
Box 7. Example: Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) in Nepal	Page 13
Box 8. Example: The Langtang Ecotourism Project in Nepal	Page 15
Box 9. Sustainable Tourism in Norway	Page 17

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

	Page 21
Annex 1. Community Based Ecotourism in Sanjiangyuan Region	
Annex 2. “Good Practice Guide: Tourism for Nature & Development”	
Annex 3. “Sustainable Tourism in PAs: Guidelines for Planning and Management”	
Annex 4. Introduction of the “Annapurna-Dhaulagiri Community Trail” approach	
Annex 5. Visual model of a community ecotourism plan used by Plateau Perspectives	
Annex 6. Draft outline of Protected Area management plan, incorporating ecotourism	
Annex 7. Summary of the UNDP/GEF “Qinghai Biodiversity Conservation Project”	
Annex 8. Websites for ecotourism associations and good practice guidelines	

1. Report Background

This report about tourism development in Qinghai Province, with a focus on community tourism and ecotourism, is based on the experience of Plateau Perspectives' field staff from around 2004 to the present. Working closely with local community members and with leaders and staff of the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve in southwest Qinghai Province, Plateau Perspectives staff have had opportunities to learn about the conservation benefits as well as community (socio-economic) benefits of appropriate tourism development in a variety of ways. These included: joint conservation planning meetings (2005, 2007), multi-stakeholder academic workshops with a focus on tourism development (2009, 2010, 2012) and study tours to Mongolia (2008), Canada (2010), Norway (2011), Sichuan and Yunnan provinces, China (2011), and Nepal (2012). Additional insights and lessons about the potential benefits and challenges of ecotourism development have equally been gained through Plateau Perspectives' affiliated work in the development of rural herders cooperatives and community trust funds (in association with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences), the organization of an international symposium about the *Human Dimensions of Ecological Conservation in the Tibetan Plateau Region* (in association with the Qinghai Academy of Social Sciences), and also through its cooperation with a wide variety of donor agencies and partner organizations and colleagues over the last decade.

Two specific ecotourism activities took place in 2012, which have contributed substantially to this report: a 3-day workshop held in Xining entitled *Ecotourism and Community Development in the Sanjiangyuan region*, and a study tour to Nepal with participants from the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve, tourism enterprises, academics and community representatives. The aim of the study tour to Nepal was to learn about the current state of – and synergies between – community ecotourism, poverty alleviation, vocational training, and protected area management in the Nepali Himalayas.

The concepts of 'tourism for development' (incl. pro-poor tourism, cf. community development) and 'tourism for conservation' (i.e., leveraging tourism as a tool for conservation, e.g. through development of ecotourism following its internationally accepted definition) are both central to this report – leading to the recommendations outlined below. When considered integrally, the various facets outlined through this report for the successful development of ecotourism in an area such as Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture can contribute significantly to sustainable development, social stability and biodiversity conservation. Many stakeholders and multiple sectors all stand to gain.

This approach to tourism development is endorsed by the UN *Convention on Biological Diversity* (CBD), of which the People's Republic of China is a key member state.

Other supplemental information also is available within the annexes at end of the document, including excerpts from the CBD document *Good Practice Guide: Tourism for Nature and Development* and a comprehensive (albeit informal) 'background survey' of ecotourism in Qinghai province. In addition, a marketing and educational website has been developed.¹

¹ See <http://www.qinghaiecotourism.com/>

2. What exactly is Ecotourism?

The Definition

Ecotourism² is defined as “responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people.”

Principles of Ecotourism

Ecotourism unites *conservation*, *communities*, and *sustainable travel*. This understanding of ecotourism means that the people and agencies that implement and participate in ecotourism activities should follow the following ecotourism principles:

- Minimize impact.
- Build environmental and cultural awareness and respect.
- Provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts.
- Provide direct financial benefits for conservation.
- Provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people.
- Raise sensitivity to host country’s environmental and socio-cultural situation.

The UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)³ also describes ecotourism as a form of tourism which has the following basic characteristics:

- All nature-based forms of tourism in which the main motivation of the tourists is the observation and appreciation of nature, both landscapes and wildlife, as well as the traditional cultures prevailing in natural areas.
- Supports the maintenance of natural areas which are used as ecotourism attractions by:
 - generating economic benefits for host communities, organisations and authorities managing natural areas with conservation purposes,
 - providing alternative employment and income opportunities for local communities,
 - increasing awareness towards conservation of natural and cultural assets, both among local people and tourists.
- Minimises negative impacts upon the natural and socio-cultural environment.
- Contains educational and interpretation features.
- Generally (but not exclusively) organised by specialist tour operators for smaller groups. Service provider partners at destinations tend to be locally owned businesses.

² <http://www.ecotourism.org/what-is-ecotourism>

³ <http://sdt.unwto.org/en/content/ecotourism-and-protected-areas>

Box 1. Definitions of ecotourism-related terms

Sustainable Tourism	Tourism that does not degrade or destroy the natural or cultural resource base of the industry. However, it may not bring direct benefit to local communities or for environmental protection.
Responsible Tourism	Tourism that considers the need for environmental protection and for cultural sensitivity. However, it may not contribute directly to conservation initiatives or to community development. Rather, it focuses on doing no harm.
Ecotourism	Responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people. By its definition, this form of tourism is also sustainable.
Nature Tourism	Travel to areas of exceptional natural beauty. Unfortunately this form of tourism is commonly <i>confused</i> with ecotourism; the key difference is that, unlike ecotourism, nature tourism can occur <i>without</i> any benefit arising for local communities or for environmental conservation.
Community Ecotourism	Tourism that not only benefits local communities and supports conservation, but that also <i>directly involves local people and communities</i> in the direction and/or operation of tourism activities. This level of public participation in tourism can occur through direct business ownership as well as through trusted partnerships with external tour operators, associations, protected areas, non-government organizations, etc.

3. What is Community Tourism?

Community-based tourism or community-beneficial tourism (CBT) is a growing sector in the tourism industry which we believe deserves more attention and development. The main focal point for such tourism is the additional socio-economic benefit that arises from its development for local people and communities (as compared to other forms of tourism, which may simply pass through local areas but leave little if any direct benefit). More information about some of the key benefits arising from CBT is provided later in this document (see Section 5).

At least five categories of CBT are identified, ranging from limited to full involvement of local communities in the planning, operation, or gaining benefit from the tourism sector. The first two categories are tourism models whereby tourism happens in the community (but it is not operated *by the community* or by community members); the latter three models can more appropriately be recognized as proper 'community-based tourism' because of their *local ownership and direction*.

Through development of rural tourism, the following benefits or businesses may be developed for local people or communities when tourism (or tourists) comes to an area:

- 1) **Incidental benefits:** Tours are arranged to (or sometimes just through) ‘local areas’, generally organized by external tour operators, however there is no planned benefit-sharing mechanism in place, and the sole financial benefits arise through incidental (unplanned) purchases *en route*. Additionally, there is little or no local employment arising from this form of tourism.
- 2) **Local sales or employment:** Individual community members sometimes may benefit from increased market opportunities arising from the tourism industry (either through occasional employment, e.g. as local guide, pack animal handler, etc., or from the sale of local products including basic items as well as local handicrafts). These benefits may be gained on a more regular or planned basis, as compared to other ‘incidental benefits’ described above; however, these local beneficiaries generally still are not involved in the development or operation of tourism activities *per se*.

More significant, however, are the following three types of CBT models, which have been noted and identified from the global tourism industry. In the purest model, the whole community owns and manages the business, with all community members involved (or with authority delegated to some members to operate the enterprise on the community’s behalf). Sometimes a cooperative may be formed with a significant number of families; this also may be considered a ‘community’ tourism enterprise. In the second CBT model below, family initiatives or small group initiatives are developed within communities. The final CBT model represents joint ventures between a community or local family, on one hand, and an outside business partner, on the other hand.

- 3) **Community businesses:** The community as a whole, or a community cooperative, may choose to establish and manage a more comprehensive tourism enterprise – developing a full package to offer tourists (or to market through tour operators, or in various other ways). A community cooperative is a group of people who agree to pool their resources and expertise to form a business bloc, which will have greater leverage than if each individual or family operated separately, with the benefits to be shared equitably among cooperative members. According to a community or cooperative’s business plan, labour may be provided by a few people or by all members of the community (e.g., in rotation). New markets may be developed for the sale of local products including handicrafts. Some ancillary business opportunities may also arise including various forms of accommodation, restaurants, shops, etc. Business profits are generally returned as dividends to community co-owners, or may be allocated to community development projects or social needs as agreed by the group.
- 4) **Small local enterprises:** Small groups (e.g., one or more families working together) may also develop local businesses, such as in the service sector including homestays, restaurants, transportation and other tourism-related operations.
- 5) Finally, various forms of **joint ventures or partnerships** may be established between the community (whether individuals, families or groups, or the whole community) and an outside business partner. Such partnerships with external investors or business partners will sometimes be necessary for communities in terms of marketing, or in order to raise sufficient initial capital for implementing a community tourism plan.

Because of the remoteness of many community locations and the difficulties associated with local community efforts to market their tourism products or experiences successfully, the best ‘success stories’ generally involve outside partners working in close collaboration with local communities; each business partner focused on a different segment of the tourism product. In the case of Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, with its spectacular natural beauty and with many local communities’ unique, traditional way of life – the development of *Community Beneficial Tourism* (CBT) can readily be adapted and marketed as *Community Ecotourism*. Such development fits well within current prefectural, provincial and national tourism plans for the whole region, leading not only to economic but also to environmental and socio-cultural benefits.

Community ecotourism is thus a very important sector of the overall tourism industry in Yushu, and it should be encouraged and developed *pro-actively* within the area development framework – including subsidies and a good policy environment, as well as enhancing access to information, educational (vocational training) opportunities and dissemination of good practices guidelines.

4. Stakeholders in Tourism Development

There are many stakeholders or interest groups who are affected by development of the tourism industry, including ecotourism. These may include sub-groups of the public such as different genders (women vs men), economic status (e.g., poor people), occupation (e.g., small businesses, restaurant operators, etc.), etc. Stakeholders also include many government sectors, individual companies, business associations, non-profit sectors, the environment, etc.

General principles of stakeholder participation include inclusivity, accessibility, transparency and fairness, building of participants’ capacities, needs based involvement, coordination, and flexibility. Stakeholder participation can be achieved through different methods and platforms, e.g. needs assessments, surveys, focus groups, community meetings, trainings, mutually-agreed conduct and contracts, etc.

The concept of ‘consensus building’ is a useful guide when working with multiple stakeholders. Different stakeholders often have different – and possibly conflicting – interests. Despite these differences, the stakeholders still are expected to find ways to work together. Through consensus building, common ground is sought wherein multiple parties can reach agreed joint goals better through working together than by working separately. Achieving better mutual understanding also helps to create more viable options for sustainable community development.

Regarding the development and growth of tourism in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture, the key stakeholders to consider (and ideally to be directly involved in tourism planning, as well as implementation of – and deriving benefit from – tourism activities) include the following:

- Travel industry
 - Outbound operators market the products nationally and internationally, creating brand names and enhancing destination recognition, which helps sell the product.
 - Inbound tour operators usually are located in regional centers (such as Xining or Yushu) and handle both multi-day group tours as well as ‘walk-in’ business.

- Accommodation service providers, including eco-lodges, homestays, hostels and hotels (some of which may be community operated, cf. CBT local enterprises). Different industry standards may apply for each type of accommodation, such as environmental standards for eco-lodges, size of operations, codes of conduct, etc.
- The clients (tourism market)
 - National markets
 - International markets
 - Special interest groups (incl. nature, educational, research, cultural interest, etc.)
- Government
 - Tourism bureaus
 - Poverty alleviation bureaus
 - Environment protection and affiliated bureaus
 - Local government bureaus (cf. county, prefecture, etc.)
 - Protected areas such as the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve
- NGOs, non-profit organizations, and special interest associations
 - Organizations or groups that support biodiversity conservation
 - Organizations or groups that support local community development
 - Business associations targeting regions that are impacted by tourism
 - Tourism associations focused on marketing, quality assurance, etc.
- Communities
 - Communities are the main local resource users, for whom the tourism industry may be a significant livelihood option
 - Communities may also develop their own tours (or tourism product/experience), which they can sell to inbound tour operators

5. Benefits Arising from Community Tourism and Ecotourism

There are multiple reasons to support the development of community based tourism, including ecotourism (see Box 2, below).

Tourism is not only tourism — it can also be tourism *for development*, tourism *for conservation*, and it may be used to *empower women* as well as serve as a tool to strengthen local participation in *co-management of natural resources* and other mechanisms for sustainable rural development.

Box 2. Potential benefits from ecotourism development

A variety of socio-economic and environmental benefits may accrue, both locally and nationally, from the development of community tourism, if it is developed according to sound development practices. A non-exhaustive list of benefits is presented below, divided between the *Four Pillars of Sustainability*.⁴

<u>Economy</u>	<u>Environment</u>	<u>Society</u>	<u>Culture</u>
<i>Direct sales</i>	<i>Public awareness</i>	<i>Employment</i>	<i>Sense of identity</i>
<i>Employment</i>	<i>Conserv. projects</i>	<i>Diversification</i>	<i>Cultural continuity</i>
<i>Core enterprises</i>	<i>Environ. monitoring</i>	<i>Globalisation</i>	<i>Educational opps.</i>
<i>Service sector</i>	<i>Eco-compensations</i>	<i>Mobilisation</i>	<i>Tradition. knowledge</i>

Tourism for Development

The development of ecotourism, as defined above, is encouraged not because it increases tourist numbers or tourism-based revenue in a region (which it does), but particularly because this form of tourism can be developed as a mechanism to promote a broad distribution of benefits amongst the whole population (cf. rural development) and it also can serve as a catalyst for environmental awareness, community based conservation action, and co-financing environmental management such as through the provincial protected area system. (See Annexes 2 and 3 for more detail.)

Community tourism can be planned by government and developed in a way that sometimes is called ‘pro-poor tourism’ or ‘community beneficial tourism’. An excellent example is found in Nepal, specifically in the development of the *Great Himalayan Trail* scheme (see Box 3). One section of the Trail has been developed as an association of community tourism ventures (Box 4), a model that could potentially be adapted successfully to the Qinghai Province context.

This community-focused approach to tourism development in Nepal’s Himalayas also is suitable for international promotion through ‘destination marketing’, which brings benefit to the entire tourism sector (not only one company or community) including local employment as well as encouraging tourism investment and a general enhancement of basic services. This approach is well developed in Malaysia (Box 5), where tourism accounts for 7 % of national GDP.



⁴ See <http://www.marcofoggin.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/Policy-Analysis-rev-16-June-2011.pdf>

Box 3: The Great Himalayan Trail

The Great Himalaya Trail (GHT) is one of the longest and highest walking trails in the world. Winding beneath the world's highest peaks and visiting some of the most remote communities on earth, it passes through lush green valleys, arid high plateaus and incredible landscapes.

A Pathway to Development: If planned and managed well, tourism has the ability to attract foreign and domestic visitors to under-developed and impoverished areas where only few alternative development opportunities exist. Tourism can transform geographical remoteness and rugged landscape – normally obstacles to development in Nepal's rural districts – into real economic assets and help to create jobs for local people. It is also the only industry where the consumers come to the producers.

GHT for pro-poor development: The GHT has a huge potential in providing a significant boost to Nepal's tourism industry and associated support sectors and can help channel tourist and pro-poor tourism investments to less visited and under-developed districts, thereby spreading tourism benefits more widely and inclusively among impoverished mountain communities. Through the GHT Development Programme, the Government of Nepal is working closely with the tourism industry, NGOs and host communities to ensure that the GHT is developed into a globally significant new tourism product for Nepal and managed in line with responsible tourism best practices, generating vital jobs and income for local communities and contributing to the conservation of the country's natural and cultural heritage.

(Source: <http://thegreathimalayatrail.org/>)

Box 4. The Annapurna-Dhaulagiri Community Trail

Message from the local communities: The Annapurna-Dhaulagiri Community Trail is one of the most special options for tourism in Nepal. On one hand, this off-the-beaten trail crosses sacred forests of Rhododendron with hidden temples around lakes that come and go with the monsoon, extends up to points where clouds and planes are below your feet, brings unique stunning views of the Annapurnas where mountains beyond mountains sprawl with no end in sight, and offers the opportunity of engaging with Magar culture and traditions through its festivals, yak farms, cheese mongers, local paper makers, forest nurseries or bhangra tailors. On the other hand, this alternative to mass tourism is a community-managed one – and with the support of UNDP and other donors, community lodges have been built and local villagers trained to help you enjoy a unique experience, with profits invested in increasing local access to education and community health.

This trail is the joint effort of six Magar villages spread in Myagdi and Parbat districts around the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri areas. We want to share our land and heritage with you and whether you are looking for pure trekking, relaxed community-engagement or a combination of the two, we want to know you. We want you to know us.

(See Annex 4 for more information)

Box 5. Destination marketing

Destination marketing facilitates the achievement of tourism policy, which should be coordinated with the regional development strategic plan. Destinations are amalgams of tourism products and services, offering an integrated experience to consumers, consumed under the brand name of the destination. Destinations are places towards which people travel and where they choose to *stay for a while* in order to *experience* certain features or characteristics.

Most tourism destinations are comprised of the following core elements, which together may be regarded as a ‘brand’ – including all the products, services and experiences provided locally for visitors:

- Attractions (natural, man-made, artificial, purpose built, heritage, special events)
- Accessibility (entire transportation system comprising of routes, terminals and vehicles)
- Amenities (accommodation and catering facilities, retailing, other tourist services)
- Available packages (pre-arranged packages by intermediaries and principals)
- Activities (all activities available at destination and what consumers will do during their visit)
- Ancillary services (services such as banks, telecommunications, hospitals, etc)

Tourism Malaysia (<http://www.tourism.gov.my/en/uk>) provides an excellent example of how a regional or national tourism bureau can implement the use of *destination marketing* as strategic approach to promote a region, focusing on *place* and *experience* (rather than sites and hotels).

(Adapted from <http://epubs.surrey.ac.uk/1087/1/fulltext.pdf>)

Tourism for Conservation

Tourism also can serve as an excellent tool for the conservation of biodiversity. This approach is well developed in the scientific literature and is widely applied by nature conservation authorities (also see Annexes 2 and 3).

The main benefit of ‘tourism for conservation’ is that it monetizes environmental resources; that is, tourism can be used to bring economic benefit to local communities and to nature reserves or other administrative regions in exchange for the protection and maintenance (sustainable use) of the natural heritage of a place, including maintenance of ecological functions and services. The broad educational value of tourism for local people and government as well as the traveling public also is significant and should be promoted.

In the context of co-management of natural resources in protected areas – as is currently being trialed by the Qinghai Forestry Department, with co-financing from the provincial government and UNDP – the development of community beneficial tourism (e.g., genuine ecotourism) can serve both conservation and development goals in a region. An example of the use of community co-management by Parks Canada is provided in Box 6, and development of community-oriented tourism as a core strategy for regional conservation in the Nepali Himalayas is detailed in Box 7.

Box 6. Co-management with Parks Canada and local communities

Parks Canada has changed its overall management approach for protected areas over the past several decades as it came to realize the long-term value of working cooperatively with local people, especially with aboriginal people (ethnic minorities). Now, community co-management is often adopted as preferred approach: for monitoring and conserving wildlife populations, for deriving community benefit from socio-economic activities such as tourism, and in other ways.

Three main ingredients to enhancing collaborative relationships between Aboriginal people and parks agencies have been highlighted:

- Community leadership in articulating a vision for the sustainable use and protection of traditional lands;
- Time, patience, trust and dedication in developing and nurturing a meaningful partnership between the park agency and the Aboriginal community or communities; and
- Recognition of the importance of cultural resources and traditional knowledge as an expression of Aboriginal peoples' history and relationship to the land.

Park agencies have come to recognize the special contributions that Aboriginal people and communities can make to Canada's parks and protected areas, and in particular the traditional knowledge that Aboriginal people have of landscapes, ecosystems, wildlife populations and stocks, and cultural heritage.

(Source: <http://www.parks-parcs.ca/english/pdf/aboriginal/intro%20and%20preface%20ENG.pdf>)

Box 7. The Annapurna Conservation Area Project

The Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) began in 1986 as an innovative concept in the protected area management system of the country. It is the first and largest conservation area in Nepal, covering 7,629 km² in total. The ACAP's objectives are: (1) to conserve the natural resources for the benefit of present and future generations; (2) to bring sustainable social and economic development to the local people; and (3) to develop tourism in such a way that it will have minimum negative impact on the natural, socio-cultural and economic environments.

The biological diversity of the Annapurna Region is equally rivaled by its rich cultural diversity. Since the first trekker came to the Annapurna area in 1957, the natural and cultural features of ACAP have made it the most popular tourist destination in Nepal, drawing more than 60 % of the country's total trekkers. ACAP follows the triple grassroots philosophy of maximum local participation, sustainability, and serving as a catalyst (facilitator) whereby the local people are involved in all aspects of the conservation and development processes, both as principal actors and prime beneficiaries.

The conservation area embraces a multiple land use principle of natural resource management that combines conservation with sustainable community development. Trekking is a core pillar of tourism development, with traditional subsistence activities woven into a framework of sound resource management supplemented by local conservation and alternative energy programmes to minimize the negative impacts of tourism and enhance the living standards of the local people.

Tree species diversity and wildlife populations have increased as a result of the project. Such community-based management has thus been successful in delivering conservation benefits in ACAP, attributable to changing patterns of resource use and behaviour among communities, increased control of local communities over local resources, increased conservation awareness resulting from environmental education, and development and strengthening of local institutions such as Conservation Area Management Committees (CAMC).

(Adapted from <http://www.forestrynepal.org/project/2923>
and <http://www.forestrynepal.org/biblio/1502>)

Women and Community Development

Finally, the value and role played by women in rural development may also be promoted through tourism. Women always play a central role in family matters in all cultures, and generally also in socio-economic matters at the community level. Therefore not only should both men and women be involved in the planning and development of community tourism, including opportunities for vocational and skills training, but women should also be prioritized where possible. An example of benefits derived from the inclusion of women in a community ecotourism project in Nepal is provided in Box 8.

The key point of this section is that tourism development should be considered from multiple perspectives, and the potential synergies between different sectors and departments should be considered. Especially in rural areas of the province where conservation and development are both recognized as critically important, tourism may be developed as a mechanism to reach several goals simultaneously. For this, multi-stakeholder coordination will be essential.



The benefits can be far-reaching – with environmental protection, poverty alleviation and social stability all enhanced through strategic and innovative development in the tourism sector.

The development of community-beneficial (pro-poor) ecotourism, in close coordination with provincial protected area management authorities, will be particularly valuable for achieving the strategic goals set out in the 13th Five Year provincial development plan.

Box 8.**Langtang Ecotourism Project –A Case Study from Nepal**

Women in Nepal have lower literacy rates, educational opportunities, access to resources, control of assets and decision-making powers than men. For many women the tasks of caring for tourists adds considerably to their daily household duties, especially when husbands are away working as trekking porters and guides. They are never idle, however – whatever time they have to sit down is spent knitting woolen caps, mittens and socks, weaving bags, or making handicrafts for sale. Much attention is paid in Nepal to gender issues, but real progress has been rare.

The Langtang Ecotourism Project was established in 1996 to build local capacity for tourism management. Women embraced the program and played a vital role in the transition from trying to meet tourism demand to proactively developing sustainably managed tourist services. Through a special participatory planning approach, they developed a collective dream of how community-based tourism could look and function in the future. For example, by participating in the assessment of different cooking fuels, they elected to use kerosene instead of wood. A kerosene depot was established and the profits are now allocated to conservation initiatives, such as the planting of 17,500 tree seedlings. Independent of becoming local environmental managers, the women also have coordinated a cultural revival. Craft cooperatives, traditional dancing and singing are now generating income for the women of the community and promoting pride in their local culture.

Adapted from Brewer-Lama, *Cultural Survival Quarterly*, 1999

(Source: <http://www.pnuma.org/eficienciarecursos/documentos/ecotourism2.pdf>)

6. Important Supporting Mechanisms and Structures

In order to sustainably develop ecotourism in the province – and through tourism, to strengthen nature conservation and community development – several ancillary development structures or mechanisms also may be beneficial. These structures may be seen as ‘tools’ to help develop and promote sustainable tourism, and are based on experiences noted elsewhere in China and around the world. Each will require more detailed analysis in the future; here they are introduced only.

- **Special interest associations**, including business associations. For example, associations of ecotourism service providers, tour guides, hotels, restaurants, etc. The development of handicraft associations, and possibly a regional yak herders association,⁵ should equally be considered. Each of these may strengthen local development, and hence local people’s commitment and contributions to tourism ventures. An innovative example from Røros, Norway, is described in Box 9, illustrating the value of business associations together with destination marketing.

⁵ The *Qinghai Biodiversity Conservation Project* co-financed by the provincial government and UNDP/GEF is supportive of the establishment of a yak herders association, which may enable herding communities to organize themselves more effectively and to build capacity for the development of “ecological (or green) animal husbandry.” [continued] According to the UNDP project document, there is in fact “scope to explore options with community-based herder cooperatives and associations, social enterprises and businesses.” In addition, “to further enhance the effectiveness of PA management and promote conservation in Qinghai, as well as to support co-management... the establishment of an *International Centre for Yak Husbandry* is recommended (along the lines of the International Centre for Reindeer Husbandry, or ICR; <http://reindeerherding.org/>)... Such a Centre has proven to be a valuable initiative, supporting the sustainable development (sustainability) of livestock herding as livelihood and researching as appropriate natural resource conservation issues.”

- **Destination marketing** of the region with development of ‘brand name’ – this could be undertaken either by the tourism bureau (government) or by a private sector business in cooperation with prefecture, provincial and/or national government authorities.
- **Certification systems** could be developed, or existing schemes promoted. For example, the environmental and social performance of businesses in the tourism industry may be monitored independently, and satisfactory performance compensated with additional exposure and promotion. Many certification systems already exist, such as those developed by Responsible Tourism, The International Ecotourism Society, etc.
- **Formal recognition**, by international advisory bodies and the non-profit sector, of the value of the area (e.g. recognition as a UNESCO World Heritage Site) and support for tourism product development may also be elicited (e.g., see the Convention on Biological Diversity and IUCN guidelines, Annexes 2 and 3).
- **Community trust funds**, herders cooperatives and other community-oriented financing mechanisms can equally encourage local initiative and involvement in rural development, including ecotourism development. Community trust funds can strengthen and diversify local incomes by providing availability of start-up finances; and, at least in the case of herding economies, economies-of-scale can be achieved through more cooperative business approaches, which consolidate availability of livestock resources such as milk and wool. In the case of ecotourism products, cooperatives equally can provide start-up funding and facilitate economies-of-scale that allow creation of quality tourism products and provision of basic services by the community. In addition, such community-based financing and coordination mechanisms lend themselves to supporting protected areas’ *community co-management* approaches as well as supporting further development of *ecological animal husbandry*, which in turn may increase the value of the area as an ecotourism destination.
- **Training workshops, courses and programs** – either in-house training provided from within the industry itself (e.g., through tourism associations), or vocational training (e.g., adult education supported by government) – provide additional support for individuals and groups that want to enter this new tourism business arena or upgrade their abilities. New methods and technologies should also be considered, such as distance learning, so that people engaged in animal husbandry (for example) do not need to become full-time students in order to learn new vocations; but may continue to practise their livelihood at the same time as learning for diversifying their economic basis.⁶

⁶ See ‘New avenues for education’, at http://www.icde.org/New+avenues+to+education.b7C_wBfUZp.ips

Box 9. Sustainable Tourism in Norway

As part of a national program to promote innovation and sustainability in tourism, a pilot project has been developed and expanded in the Røros area since 2009. This tourism development model, Destination Røros (See <http://www.roros.no/>) simultaneously markets the geographic area and promotes *sustainable* local businesses only (as assessed by businesses' participation in at least one recognized certification systems, e.g. in relation to their environmental impact, local employment, carbon footprint, etc.). Destination Røros has received many international awards, including the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) *Tourism for Tomorrow* award.

The strategy for increasing sustainability in tourism in Norway *by involving the tourism industry* has incorporated the following key processes:

- Defining the framework for development, with agreement on definitions and goals, together with the tourism and hospitality sector and with related special interest associations.
- Building competence and involvement by inviting important stakeholders in the tourism sector: transport, accommodation, adventure, cuisine, speciality, sales and marketing, etc.
- Increasing the number of environmental certified businesses, which helps the industry to systemize and increase their environmental performance and social responsibility.
- Meeting the need for more knowledge about sustainable practices in tourism, with workshops and courses related to sustainable tourism.

Destination Røros operates as a for-profit intermediary, promoting local businesses and the Røros area to a broad national and international public *in exchange for* a nominal membership fee by participating businesses.

(Adapted from <http://en.roros.no/2013/05/13/sustainable-tourism-in-norway/>)

The development of community tourism ventures also require some basic steps to be taken at the community level (and not just at policy level). In Plateau Perspectives' field experience, starting from the premise that tourism is one possible option for community development, below are *key steps* important for the promotion and operationalization of community tourism by/with herding communities in the high grasslands near the source of the Yangtze River:

- (1) To define the community tourism product or experience, based on the availability of tourism resources (opportunities) as well as local community preferences; to be further refined with input from tour operators and other main stakeholders, and community selection of the desired level of service and comfort to be provided on the basis of the target markets and desired pricing scheme.
- (2) According to the desired market and pricing scheme, there may be need for more investment than a community itself can afford. Such shortfall may be provided through government grants, or with development of strategic partnerships within the tourism industry (such as with tour operators, which may choose to purchase community tourism products or 'experiences' but

require a higher standard to meet their market demands). Such investment could be provided, if long-term vision for the place is seen by the (potential) investor and a suitable/fair agreement is reached. Clarity in roles and responsibilities, levels of transparency, and sharing of profits must be agreed early in the process; trust between the partners is essential.

(3) Within the scope of locally available tourism resources or opportunities, and of options that are deemed acceptable or preferred by the community, market research is the next critical step. In fact, if at this stage it is determined that the market is inadequate to warrant the development of a particular tourism product or experience, then the overall development process should be restarted, moving to the next acceptable tourism option. When it is broadly agreed by the local community, tour operators, tourism bureau, etc. that a product has potential, then a longer-term marketing strategy also should be developed; potentially to include community affiliation with relevant associations that can assist with marketing in national and international arenas.

(4) Complementary development activities can include the establishment of community-based financing mechanisms such as trust funds, cooperative business models, training for handicraft production for sale to tourists, and other forms of income diversification. Additionally, as trust funds are established, these may become financial channels that are suitable for the receipt and management of national ecological compensation funds; that is, if a community can demonstrate that its economic livelihood is environmentally sustainable (which would require that a suitable environmental monitoring scheme be developed), then such a group may be eligible to receive compensation for lost income (e.g., by not grazing more livestock, instead choosing alternative development options such as community ecotourism). Such compensation funds may provide the start-up investment needed to develop or to strengthen a new industry, or may be used in other ways as determined suitable by the recipient community.

(5) In the development of ecotourism – which by definition requires both conservation action and community benefit sharing – it is also important that communities be adequately supported in the selection and operationalization of specific and measurable conservation action. This could take the form of environmental education, anti-poaching patrols, monitoring of wildlife populations or grassland conditions, or other aspects environmental protection. Integrating such action with community-beneficial tourism developments remains a fundamental aspect of ecotourism.

(6) Finally, in support of the above elements, it is helpful to bring these matters (and specifically to highlight demonstration projects, locally and internationally) to the attention of government, policy researchers and other decision makers for their understanding and support. (The present document is a part of this process).

As an example of the specific application of the above steps, an initial outline of a *Community Ecotourism Plan* for one herding community in Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture is given in Annex 5. The potential role of ecotourism within protected areas is introduced in a draft outline of a protected area management plan presented in Annex 6.

Finally, a summary of the UNDP/GEF-supported *Qinghai Biodiversity Conservation Project*, which integrates many of the elements described in this document, is provided in Annex 7.

7. Recommendations for Ecotourism Development

- ***All tourism should be responsible tourism***
 - Economically viable, socially acceptable, environmentally sustainable.
- ***Ecotourism should be leveraged as a tool for conservation***
 - Education and awareness, conservation action, alternative livelihood option.
- ***Community-based ecotourism should be integrated in co-management frameworks***
 - Collaborations between local communities and the government (including nature reserve management authorities) to jointly manage natural and cultural resources may be achieved through a community co-management approach to conservation and sustainable development, as currently being trialed by the provincial Forestry Department with co-financing from the UNDP and Global Environment Facility; community tourism could serve as a focus for development of co-management.
- ***Stakeholder representation in tourism planning and development should be ensured***
 - It is critical that a full suite of stakeholders be included in development planning.
- ***Specialist training and other forms of capacity building should be encouraged***
 - Capacity building is necessary to prepare stakeholders in many different sectors for the complexities of integrated conservation and community development.
- ***An 'ecotourism association' should be established at the provincial or regional level***
 - An association or network of industry partners can promote networking, learning, mutual support, and definition and enforcement of common vision for ecotourism.
- ***Destination marketing should be adopted as primary strategy in Qinghai Province***
 - Appropriate marketing strategies can help educate the public and attract guests that will appreciate and contribute to sustainable development of the target area.
- ***Development of new products and experiences that contribute to community well being***
 - A broad network of travel itineraries (e.g., trekking routes) can help distribute the benefits of tourism, through support of community tourism development projects; the model of the Great Himalayan Trail in Nepal should be considered regionally.

Community ecotourism clearly is a very important sector of the tourism industry (and more generally, of regional development) and should be encouraged. It should also be developed *pro-actively* within an area’s development framework – including provision of subsidies as well as a good development policy environment. In addition, access to practical information, relevant educational opportunities (vocational training) and dissemination of “good practice” guidelines will be extremely beneficial for regional development and conservation planning and practice.

8. The Way Forward

Far from comprehensive, this document has sought simply to provide a broad synthesis of some key themes and several important recommendations for the development of ‘community tourism’ and ‘ecotourism’ in the Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture of Qinghai Province, China.

On top of the suggestions recommended by this document and its annexes, there are many other specific, practical steps that could be adopted from the framework presented. However, the two most important contributions to the development of ecotourism in the province could be

- (i) the establishment of a ***Qinghai Ecotourism Network*** (as a formal association) – with representation from multiple stakeholder groups including businesses, local communities, and the government; and
- (ii) the development of a committed partnership between tourism authorities and nature reserve authorities, with creation of a ***common vision*** for the future of the province’s vast grasslands, wetlands, mountains and other natural and human landscapes; a ***common vision*** that will integrate development and conservation in a single ***sustainability plan***.

With the political will, expert knowledge, planning and cultural sensitivity that already are present, Qinghai Province could create an iconic destination of national and global significance.

Document prepared by Dr J Marc Foggin
with other Plateau Perspectives staff



Annex 1. Community Based Ecotourism in the Sanjiangyuan Region

See below, end of document (p.29)

Annex 2. Excerpts from CBD's *Good Practice Guide: Tourism for Nature & Development*

Sustainable tourism can result “in significant positive impacts for biodiversity conservation, while also delivering social and economic benefits to host communities.”

“Revenue raising for local communities: Tourism is an opportunity for business development and job creation, as well as for stimulation of investment and support for local services, even in remote communities.

“Education / awareness raising: Tourism can help promote conservation by raising awareness amongst visitors through well designed interpretation programmes. It can raise the profile of biodiversity conservation at national and local levels.

“Sustainable land management: Tourism can become a force for more sustainable land management in all parts of the world by providing additional or alternative forms of livelihood for farmers and rural communities that are dependent on well maintained natural resources.

“Strengthening cultural appreciation: Sustainable tourism can provide self-esteem and incentives for maintaining traditional arts and crafts, traditional knowledge, and practices that contribute to the sustainable use of biological diversity. Yet, interactions between tourism and local cultural values can be complex, and tourism development can lead to the loss of access by indigenous and local communities to their land and resources as well as sacred sites.

“Economic incentives for habitat protection: Tourism can bring tangible economic value to natural and cultural resources. This can result in direct income from visitor spending for their conservation, and an increase in support for conservation from local communities. Tourism already makes a major direct contribution to income for protected areas and other attractions, through entry fees, permits, concessions, etc., which can be invested in capacity building programmes for local communities to manage protected areas.”

Checklist of Good Practices: Tourism for Nature and Development

“Consulting the questions below will allow you to assess the degree to which the recommendations of the guide have been adopted in a specific destination, region, or country. The goal is to ensure that none of the key tools presented in this publication are overlooked in the development of sustainable tourism initiatives.

“Planning process

- In your sustainable tourism planning process, do you utilize the CBD Guidelines on Biodiversity and Tourism Development and its User’s Manual as references? Do you use other regional/global standards, guidelines and principles such as the UNWTO’s Global Code of Ethics (UNWTO 2001) or the Global Sustainable Tourism Criteria (GSTC n.d.)?

“Policies and Strategies

- Do you have specific policies, strategies or plans on tourism, nature and development/poverty reduction? If so, do your plans, policies and strategies on biodiversity, tourism and poverty reduction overlap/reinforce each other (i.e. do policies in one segment consider policies in the other two)?
- Is there a federal-level institutional framework that brings together all relevant Ministries and government agencies (tourism promotion/marketing boards, park agencies, investment promotion offices, etc.) in governing/implementing the plans and strategies?
- Do you have sustainable tourism destination/site plans (or a series of them) that consider biodiversity and poverty reduction, developed and governed by site-specific multi-stakeholder working groups?
- Do you have a portfolio of projects/proposals supporting your sustainable tourism policies, strategies and destination plans?
- Are your tourism laws, codes and norms supportive of your sustainable tourism policies and destination plans?
- Are public-private partnerships objectively supported/encouraged for sustainable tourism in your destination, including through capacity-building and special attention to local trade associations and SMEs?

“Measurement/baseline information

- Is there a monitoring and evaluation system in place for sustainable tourism, with a set of indicators, supporting policies and destinations plans? Are there appropriate reporting mechanisms, which communicate information to all relevant stakeholders and the public in general?

“Economics/finances/markets

- Are you using certification systems or eco-labels (through self-assessment or third-party auditing) for sustainable tourism? Are they compatible with policies and plans on biodiversity and poverty reduction/development?
- Are there clearly defined and monitored concession policies and norms for sustainable tourism operators in protected areas and sensitive ecosystems?
- Are there economic incentives in place that promote biodiversity-friendly and pro-poor tourism, such as tax exemptions, awards for best practices, special credit lines, investment promotion strategies, business incubators, or other tools?
- Have visitor impact management systems (e.g. technologies, management procedures) been put in place for protected areas or natural areas in your country / region / destination?

“Capacity building

- Do you have regular/ongoing capacity building initiatives (e.g. training programmes, networks, web-based platforms) for key stakeholder groups in your destination, on the links between tourism, nature and development?
- Is sustainable tourism included in tourism-related curricula and training programmes (formal and informal), in educational institutions, trade associations and local NGOs? If so, are biodiversity and poverty reduction considered in the content and evaluation methods?

“Communication/awareness

- Has sustainable tourism (including messages on biodiversity and local development) been incorporated in communication/promotional materials on the destination targeted to visitors, residents and tourism professionals?
- Are there support systems (e.g. clearinghouses, databases, collaborative platforms) in place to encourage/assist the private sector in including sustainability issues in their communication activities and materials?”

Citation: Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, World Tourism Organization and the United Nations Environment Programme. 2009. *Tourism for Nature and Development: A Good Practice Guide*. Montreal, 48 + iii pages

<http://www.cbd.int/development/doc/cbd-good-practice-guide-tourism-booklet-web-en.pdf>

Annex 3. Excerpts from IUCN’s “Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management”

“Purpose of the Guidelines

“The main purpose of these Guidelines is to assist protected area managers and other stakeholders in the planning and management of protected areas, visitor recreation and the tourism industry, so that tourism can develop in a sustainable fashion, while respecting local conditions and local communities. A key message is the importance of managing resources and visitors today, so that tomorrow’s visitors can also experience quality sites, and the conservation values that these places represent.

“The Guidelines also have a number of more detailed objectives:

- To discuss the role of visitor management, including techniques that control and limit impacts of use, while allowing maximum enjoyment of as many visitors as can be accommodated within the limits set by environmental and social conditions;
- To outline approaches to the planning and development of tourism infrastructure and services in protected areas;
- To provide guidance on the definition, measurement, management and use of park tourism data;
- To outline ways of enhancing the quality of the tourism experience;
- To describe positive examples, through a variety of case studies, of how tourism can effectively contribute to the conservation of natural and cultural diversity; and
- To give positive examples, again through the use of case studies, of how tourism can contribute to the development of local communities.

“This is a handbook, not a cookbook.

“The major questions and issues involved in managing tourism in protected areas are developed for the reader, but the publication does not set out to provide all the detailed answers. Thus a framework is provided to establish principles and guide decisions. There is no “one-size-fits-all” answer to the challenge of tourism in protected areas – indeed an attraction of visiting protected areas is to see how each park manager has developed his or her local situation in a way that projects its uniqueness, while contributing to the common endeavour of conservation. To a large extent, management must be responsive to local conditions.”

[Numerous specific guidelines and recommendations are provided throughout this document].

Citation: Eagles, Paul F.J., McCool, Stephen F. and Haynes, Christopher D.A. (2002). *Sustainable Tourism in Protected Areas: Guidelines for Planning and Management*. IUCN Gland, Switzerland and Cambridge, UK. xv + 183pp.

<http://data.iucn.org/dbtw-wpd/edocs/PAG-008.pdf>

Annex 4. The Annapurna-Dhaulagiri Community Trail

See below, end of document (p.53)

Annex 5. Visual outline of a village community ecotourism plan

Pre-Tour Preparation

Community Investment

- funding mechanism (coop, maybe as biz partnership)
- capital purchases

Marketing

- website, flyers, partnerships
- contact phone number & email
- selected tour plan (1 or 2 per community), estimated cost and suggested price asked

Tour Information

- Guest Itinerary
- Info about place

Conservation Efforts

Grassland Conservation

- Decide monitoring activities
- Develop monitoring checklist (Tibetan/Chinese/English)

Wildlife Monitoring

- Camera traps
- GPS data-logger
- Database description

Base Camp

Accommodations

- 2 Black Tents (other tents?)
- 8 beds, pillows, sheets, comforters, extra blankets
- 2 tables, 8 chairs, storage bins
- Lighting (candles?)
- Fire Pit Area

Dining Area

- 1 Black Tent
- Dining set: long tables, seats
- Cook wear: stove, plates, glasses, silverware/chopsticks, pots and pans

Bathroom/Washing Facilities

- pit toilets
- wash basins
- toilet paper, towels, handmade soap

Tour Logistical Needs

Community 'staff'

- 1 or 2 local guides, 1 or more host families
- Tour operator staff
- 1-2 guides, 2 drivers, 1 cook, other?

Vehicle (tour operator)

- 2x 4WD vehicles, safety equipment, first aid kit

Supplies

- Purchase needed food, beverages & equipment
- What foods supplies by local community, what by tour operator

Activities

Horseback Riding

- 6 horses, saddles, etc.
- established route

Wildlife Viewing

- binoculars
- viewing areas
- note-taking?

Tibetan Lifestyle

- milking yaks, sheering sheep, blanket making, tsampa preparation, making cheese, herding

Trekking

- established route

Annex 6. Draft outline of protected area management plan, incorporating ecotourism

Outline of a Management Plan for a Nature Reserve involving Community Participation

Part I. Background information

1. **Introduction:** location, area, date of declaration, legal status, general facts
2. **Regional analysis:** geography of region, climate, demography, settlements, economy, communications (roads, railways, airports), map of region
3. **Resources of the reserve:**
 - 3.1. **Physical resources:** topography, drainage (rivers, lakes), geology, soils, minerals
 - 3.2. **Wild living resources:** flora, vegetation types (map), rare plant species or communities; fauna (major animal species and their distribution – map); recent extinctions – reasons, if known
 - 3.3. **Human resources:** history of humans in region, present ethnic/cultural groups, socio-economy (cultivation, pastoralism, hunting, seasonal activity patterns, attitudes to wildlife, trading), education/vocational training
4. **Statement of Significance:** simple statement as to why the area should be conserved i.e. landscape, floral, faunal and cultural values of the reserve area

Part II. Management design

1. **Management objectives:** conservation objectives first (habitat & wildlife population restoration), followed by socio-economic, research & education.
2. **Boundaries and zonation:** description of boundaries & management zones, with map and set of objectives for each zone.
3. **Work programme:** (on 5-year basis, with bar charts etc where applicable):
 - 3.1. **Protection:**
 - 3.1.1. Boundary demarcation (if needed)
 - 3.1.2. Education re rules for each zone (listed in appendix)
 - 3.1.3. Training in law enforcement, e.g. grazing regulations
 - 3.1.4. Anti-pollution measures
 - 3.2. **Research and monitoring:** (involving reserve staff and selected locals)
 - 3.2.1. Aims: support management; ecology of habitat and key species
 - 3.2.2. Training in research methodologies
 - 3.2.3. Habitat monitoring S vegetation, erosion, water quality
 - 3.2.4. Distribution, abundance, ecological requirements, mortality factors of key wildlife species
 - 3.2.5. Monitoring of wildlife populations to show trends
 - 3.3. **Education:** (for locals and visitors to the reserve)

- 3.3.1 Aims: understanding of conservation values of the reserve and how to enhance/maintain them while increasing economic benefits to local people
- 3.3.2 Grassland ecology and management
- 3.3.3 Improved livestock management (health, breeding)
- 3.3.4 Development of environmental education programmes for schools & training of teachers

3.4. Socio-economic activities:

- 3.4.1 Improved livestock marketing
- 3.4.2 Development of local crafts & their marketing
- 3.4.3 Introduction of eco-tourism (accommodation, transport, guides, information centre, etc.)

4. Resources required: (for implementation of the above programme)

- 4.1. **Infrastructure:** buildings, roads, bridges etc
- 4.2. **Staffing:** law enforcement, research/monitoring, education
- 4.3. **Transport:** vehicles (jeeps, trucks, motor cycles)
- 4.4. **Finance:** year-by-year budget for each of the above categories; summary budget. Clear indications of sources of each type of funding, including contributions by relevant NGOs.

NOTES:

1. *Plan must be drawn up in full consultation with all stakeholders.*
2. *When completed it should be approved by the highest relevant authority and used as the authorised basis for all future actions affecting the reserve*
3. *Annual work plans based on the Management Plan should be drawn up by the reserve authority*
4. *The plan should not be set in concrete but should be updated as necessary in full consultation with all stakeholders*

Citation: Appendix 10 (developed by Dr J Sale), in Foggin, J.M. 2005. Promoting Biodiversity Conservation and Community Development in the Sanjiangyuan Region. Plateau Perspectives: Xining, China. 44 pp.

<http://plateauperspectives.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Promoting-biodiversity-conservation-Foggin-2005-English.pdf>

<http://plateauperspectives.org/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Promoting-biodiversity-conservation-Foggin-2005-Chinese.pdf>

Annex 7. Summary of UNDP/GEF-supported Qinghai Biodiversity Conservation Project

See below, end of document (p.57)

Annex 8. List of websites for ecotourism associations and good practice guidelines

The International Ecotourism Society (TIES): <http://www.ecotourism.org/>

TIES - Your Travel Choice: <http://www.ecotourism.org/your-travel-choice>

Planeterra | Community Based Tourism: <http://www.planeterra.org/partners-pages-7.php>

Center for Sustainable Destinations: <http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/sustainable/>

World Tourism Organization: <http://unwto.org/>

China National Tourist Office: <http://www.cnto.org/aboutchina.asp>

China Ecotourism Society: <http://www.ecotourism.org.cn/>

Hong Kong Ecotourism Society: <http://www.ecotourism.org.hk/>

China Hospitality News: <http://www.chinahospitalitynews.com/cn/category/english/>

Sustainable Tourism: <http://www.sustainabletourism.net/>

Responsible Travel: <http://www.responsibletravel.com/>

Qinghai Ecotourism: <http://qinghaiecotourism.com/>

Compiled and edited by:

Dr J Marc Foggin, Plateau Perspectives

At Tiger Mountain Pokhara Lodge, Nepal
Xining, Qinghai Province, China
and Ardgay, Scotland

Community Based Ecotourism in Sanjiangyuan Region

By Fabian Moser and Cecile Moser (Plateau Perspectives volunteers, April - July 2012)

Table of contents

1. Community based ecotourism (CBET)

- a) Definition
- b) Principles
- c) Goals
- d) CBET stakeholders and responsibilities
- e) Potential and limiting factors.

2. Stakeholders

- a) Who's concerned?
- b) Present tourism industry in QTP & SNNR: economic actors and their understanding of CBET
- c) Expected growth and challenges for local communities & environment

3. Sanjiangyuan NNR

- a) Geography, natural resources, biodiversity, climate
- b) Environmental & social threats
- c) Management of the SNNR (political levels)
- d) Communities location & description

4. CBET in SNNR: on-going CBET PP projects in SNNR and perspective.

- a) Muqu village
- b) Lari village
- c) Dangqu village

5. Conclusion

6. Annexes

1. Community Based EcoTourism (CBET)

a) Definition

According to the International Ecotourism Society, ecotourism is defined as «responsible travel to natural areas that conserves the environment and improves the well-being of local people» (TIES, 1990). It is different from nature tourism which simply means traveling to natural areas, but without necessarily including any form of benefit for local communities or of help to protect the environment.

Community-based ecotourism (CBET) is about uniting environmental and cultural conservation, local communities well-being through their strong implication in ecotourism business and sustainable travel.

1. **Conservation** : linked to the beauty of preserved natural areas, CBET tries to find long-term solutions for conserving and enhancing bio-cultural diversity and to minimize the potential negative impact of tourism on the nature.
2. **Community** : local communities have a substantial control over the CBET development and management. A major proportion of the economic benefit remains in the communities and CBET attempts to increase local capacity building and employment opportunities.
3. **Interpretation**: ecotourism has also a role in raising awareness and respect for both cultural and environmental value among the visitors. It allows people to discover fauna and flora of a region and its value to the environment.

b) Principles

Hereafter are a few guidelines to help a CBET project to be successful on a long-term period of time

1. **Involve the local communities** from the very beginning of a project and generate awareness of and support for environmental conservation among the community. It will be much easier to achieve a conservation goal if the community itself is convinced of its importance.
2. **Consult all the other stakeholders** (tourism industry, tour operators involved in the region, institutions, research partners, governments). Tour operator in particular are important partners as they will promote the ecotourism in the region. Working with them to agree on what ecotourism is, what the goals in the region are, which kind of tourists the region wishes to attract etc. is essential to obtain good results. The decisions will lead to a specific marketing with a clear target.
3. **Provide a supply-oriented management.** It means balancing environmental, economic and social goals. The resources (protected area, biodiversity, energetic resources, local culture, community) come before the tourists demands. It means that the acceptable amount of change in the area to allow it to keep his value and attractiveness has to be well-defined. Evaluating the carrying capacity is then crucial. Ecotourism does not get on well with mass tourism which tends to degrade irreversibly the environment, to damage the tourist feeling about his journey and to disrupt badly the inhabitants. Therefore, means to control the possible growth before it happens need to be found. Setting tools to be able to limit the development and monitoring will be necessary to ensure that this goals are achieved.
4. **Diversity is a need.** As tourism is, on one hand subject to seasonal fluctuations, and on the other hand subject to economic tendencies and current trends, too much reliance on tourism is dangerous. It should not replace completely other economic and traditional activities, but only be a complementary domain.

c) Goals

Implementing CBET in a region means achieving specific goals which are different from the goals of a classical tourism project. CBET should focus on the following goals :

1. **Minimize negative impact on the environment (conservation goal).** A non responsible tourism may have strong negative impacts on the environment like degrading habitats and landscape, depleting of natural resources, generating waste and pollution, producing carbon dioxide emissions. Limiting this negative effects won't happen by itself. It needs to be carefully thought about to take appropriate decisions supporting this goal. Different options, depending on the region, may be taken :

◆ To preserve biodiversity :

- Establish strict protected area (no tourism) and allow tourism in the area where it won't imperil local species.
- Limit visitors number to an amount endurable for the environment.
- Support scientific projects in this domain.

◆ To limit pollution damage :

- Waste sorting and recycling.
- Set program of energy/water saving and devices to purify water.
- Guideline for travelers during hiking or trekking in the nature.

◆ To limit greenhouse effect (impact on the climate) :

- Develop and privilege renewable energies.
- Use green and/or local products (construction, food, cleaning...) and promote them.
- Promote national and local tourism.
- Encourage carbon-offset, even better, develop an offset project in the region.
- Encourage green transport (trek, horses, mountain bikes, kayak).

2. **Ensure the well-being of the local people involved on the long-term (community goal).** Communities have to be involved at each level of the project and CBET has to be able to ensure that they will keep an equitable share in the benefits.

◆ Encourage small owned locally and specialized business in this communities is a good way to achieve this goal.

◆ Train local staff in each domain concerned (accommodation, guides, food, hygiene) is a key point to obtain good results.

◆ Generate benefits (fees, spendings...) that can partly support the protected area and their management by local people.

◆ Local communities must decide what they want (or not) to share with tourists to allow them to appreciate not only the nature, but also the indigenous cultures prevailing in a region.

3. **Raise awareness and respect for both environment and culture (interpretation goal).** First, it is important that communities themselves not only have an economic interest in CBET but are also willing to protect environment. At this condition only they will be able to raise respect and awareness concerning environmental issues and stakes to the tourists visiting their region, and this through several ways :

◆ Guidelines to travel in a responsible and sustainable way.

◆ Pedagogic paths, on different themes (water, medicinal plants, ...).

◆ Training local guides to increase their knowledge concerning fauna and flora of the region.

◆ Concrete conservation program : create the opportunity for tourists to take part in such program.

d) CBET stakeholders and responsibilities

Those previous criteria have to be taken into account in the frame of the 3 stakeholders groups, according:

1. Tours operators have to fulfill the following criteria:

- ◆ Guarantee a fair share of benefits with local communities and protected area.
- ◆ Limit pollution damage.
- ◆ Optimize CO2 footprint.
- ◆ Value local indigenous culture according local people sensibility.
- ◆ Raise awareness among guest and local communities.

2. Academic stakeholders has to fulfill the following criteria:

- ◆ Support scientific projects (conservation, biodiversity).

3. Administrative stakeholders has to fulfill the following criteria:

- ◆ Train local staff (management, accommodation, food, hygiene, guides, management of waste, prevention of degrading habitats and landscape, use of renewable energies, knowledge of local fauna/flora).
- ◆ Ensure ecotourism activity as a complementary economic income.
- ◆ Define the acceptable amount of change in the area to allow the region to keep its value and attractiveness (evaluating the carrying capacity is crucial).
- ◆ Monitor CBET objectives on both socio-economic and environmental domain.

e) Potential and limiting factors.

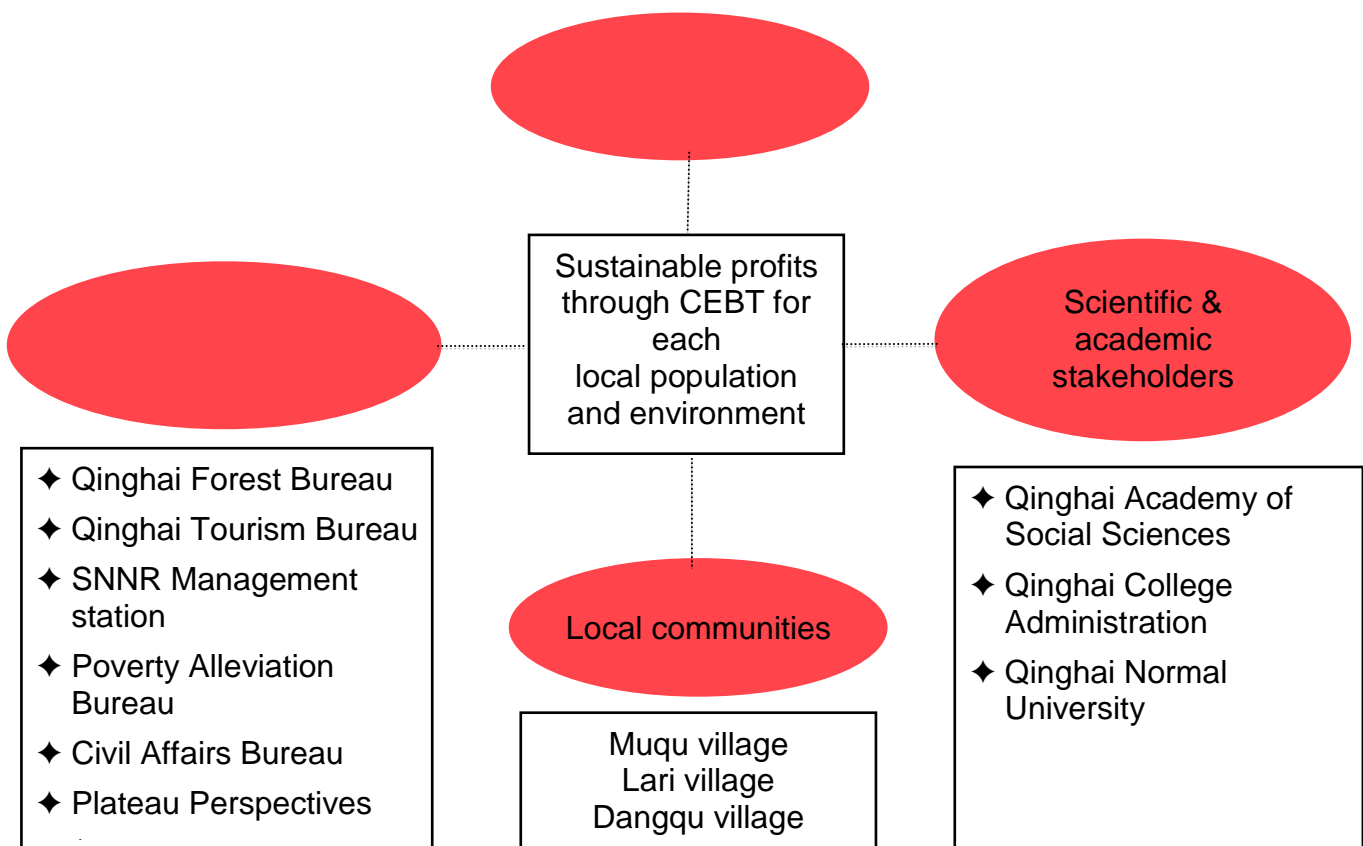
The ideal goal of CBET is to allow poverty alleviation and nature preservation, which means, in one hand, sustainable social and economic development and, on the other hand, global environment care (against disturbance, degradation and CO2 footprint); environmental care is therefore the limiting factor. Based on experience, limiting factors could also come from the community itself and express themselves as social disorders:

- ◆ Emerging of local business men may provoke conflict with local power.
- ◆ Female gender ratio. More women on working place means more income per family but also tension in frame of the group in term of leadership.
- ◆ Intergenerational conflicts have to be anticipate.
- ◆ A feeling of culture lost can also appear if there is no direct and symmetric interaction between tourists and local people. But, some CBET experience report that opposite effects can also turn up if culture is not presented as a "tourism product" or "cultural show", but as an occasion to link tourists and local people in one to one relationship. It could even provide a feeling of pride for local people and a feeling of authenticity for tourists.

2. Stakeholders

a) Who's concerned ?

Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR) population is over 210,000 Tibetan people, with animal husbandry as main economical activity. For different reasons, listed in 3.b part, population has to diversify their livelihood, i.e. sources of income. Beside this ancestral economical model, local nomad population could develop community-based ecotourism (CBET) in order to prevent a shift into poverty.



Economical, administrative, scientific & academic stakeholders could play a significant role in this challenge in order to turn the current situation into an opportunity of sustainable profits for each partner as well as for environment.

Others potential stakeholders could have a role to play :

1) Administrative:

SEPA = State Environment Protection Agency, QWCB = Qinghai Water Conservancy Bureau, QRB = Qinghai Railways Bureau, EPPC = Environment Protection Promotion, CGRHA = Council of Great Rivers Headwaters Areas, QEPB = Qinghai Environment Protection Bureau, QAHB = Qinghai Animal Husbandry Bureau, QLRB = Qinghai Land Resource Bureau, QPC = Qinghai Planning Committee, QMB = Qinghai Mining Bureau.

2) Local NGO's:

- Shan Shui
- Upper Yangtze Organization (UYO)
- Qinghai Environment Protection Promotion Council of Great Rivers Headwater Areas (EPPC)

3) International NGO's:

For example

- Fauna and Flora International (FFI)
- Bridge Foundation
- Save the Children Fund

b) Present tourism industry in QTP & SNNR: economic actors and their understanding of CBET

15 so-called "ecotour" operators (non-exhaustive list), working in the region of Qinghai-Tibet Plateau (QTP) and/or SNNR, were screened according ecotourism criteria :

Conservation (A)

- ◆ Preserve biodiversity (A1)
- ◆ Limit pollution damage (A2)
- ◆ Limit green house effect (A3)

Community (B)

- ◆ Encourage small owned locally business (B1)
- ◆ Train local staff (B2)
- ◆ Generate benefits for protected area and/or local people. (B3)
- ◆ Include local communities self decision (B4)

Interpretation (C)

- ◆ Give guidelines flyers to travel in a responsible way, (C1)
- ◆ Pedagogic paths (C2)
- ◆ Trained local guides (knowledge of flora and fauna) (C3)
- ◆ Set conservation program including tourist participation (C4)

An «X» indicates that the operator explicitly declares that he meets this goal. An «/» indicates that the operator is sensitive to this aspect but through the website information it is not possible to know if they make something specific to achieve the goal.

Some specific information (more relevant pages), from the travel agency websites, have been listed below in annex 1 (1):

	Type of activities /remarks	Office Location	A 1	A 2	A 3	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4
Tibetan Connections (1)* info@tibetanconnections.com tel:8618997200974 www.tibetanconnections.com/	Photography workshop, trekking, nomad trips. Encourage to buy locally and minimize waste.	Xining, China		/	/	X		X		X		/	
High Adventure Tours (2)* tel:66080471245 www.highadventuretours.com/	Kegawa ecotour, worked with PP (same Tibetan guides as Tibetan Connections) use local products	Chiang Mai, Thailand		X		/		X	X			/	
Travel wild Tibet (3)* travelwildtibet@gmail.com tel:+869716313188 travelwildtibet.com/	Home-stay, trekking	Xining, China						X				/	
Tibet Culture Tour (4)* mailto:tashi@tibetculturetour.com tel:0086-15897141336 www.tibetculturetour.com/	Trekking, riding, camping with nomads	Xining, China						X					
Tibetan Ecology (5)* www.tibetanecology.org/	Wild life tours(snow leopard with PP support in SNNR) trekking, birding, biking, river tours, promote green living. a) project	Santa Fe, USA						X					/ a
Windhorse Tours (6)* tel:+1(612)8694949 www.windhorsetours.com/	Trekking, mountain bike (try to minimize pollution) small groups	Minneapolis, USA Thimphu, Bhutan Dehli, India	X	X								/	
Responsible Travel (7)* rosy@responsibletravel.com tel:+44(0)1273600030 www.responsibletravel.com/	Trekking, biking Focus on Lhasa region, not in the tibetan area	Brighton, UK			X	X	X			X			
Jimpa Travel (8)* tel:+86-13195759602 www.iimntravel.com/	Trekking, camping, horsing, biking, traditional family visit also works for travelwildtibet	Not mentioned			/			/				/	

¹ Warning:

1. Special attention must be paid on the screening method. First, no audit was made in the different travel agencies. Thus, this survey is not based on certification but only on websites information. The limit of this procedure is clear: some travel agency might not respond to the declared commitments, whereas some could meet some criteria without mentioning them.
2. Some companies have been listed although they didn't give direct information regarding criteria (no mention in the website) but could be apparently close to them if taking in consideration the proposed activity (trekking, etc.).
3. Regarding the second column "Type of activity / remarks", some proposed activities were mentioned, but this is not an exhaustive list; respective website have to be consulted for whole information.
4. Most of this agencies have well-trained guides concerning cultural aspects but none of them specifies if they have a good knowledge concerning flora and fauna. Therefore we indicate it with a « / » in the column C3.

	Type of activities /remarks	Office Location	A 1	A 2	A 3	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4
Global Nomad Tibet (9)* contact@globalnomad-tibet.com www.globalnomad-tibet.com/	Warning: outsourcing travel operators: Oasis, Terres d'Aventure, Voyageur du Monde. Encourage to buy locally and minimize waste (label GN)	Lhasa, Chengdu, China		/	/	X		X		X			
Gesar Tour (10)* gesartour@gmail.com tel:869718015644 www.gesartour.com/	Xining, bird watching, trekking Encourage to buy locally and minimize waste.	Xining, China		/	/	X		X		X		/	
Tashistours (11)* tel:008613897499889 jomodhotsa@yahoo.com http://www.tashistours.com/	Camping with nomad, learn how to make Tibetan food, milk and herd yaks and how the traditional Tibetan lifestyle looks like	Xining, China				/							
Amazing tibet (12)* amazingtibet@gmail.com info@amazingtibet.com tel:(86)13997126728 amazingtibet.com/	Botanic tour, wild life, soft trekking tour, Tibetan medicin tour ... a. Seem to have some knowledge about flora and fauna in the region ...	Xining, China										/	a
Himalayan Footsteps (13)* holiday@himalayanfootsteps.com tel:01315100522 www.himalayanfootsteps.com	Trekking, canoing,paragliding, montain biking..., bird watching... Mainly in Nepal. Benefit for local com in Nepal, volunteering trip (Nepal). Present in Tibet, but Lhasa region only. a : offset programm (scotland)	Eastbourne, UK	X	X	/	X		X		/	a		
Qinghai Himalaya Travel Services Co. (14)* itourtibet@gmail.com neotibet.com	trekking, cycling. a :Says to be eco-friendly and desire to bring benefit to local community but it is not clear in which ways ?	Xining, China		/	/			/		a			
Snow Lion Tours (15)* info@snowliontours.com tel:+86-971-8163350 www.snowliontours.com	Trekking, cultural adventure, history, cycling, volunteering, Tibetan medicin, camping with nomads, railway tour, wildlife... Buy locally when possible	Xining, China		/	/	X		X		X			
Journey Wilderness Adventures inbound_61tours@hotmail.com tel:15210069706 http://jwatrips.com	Is working in XinJiang, not in the tibetan area. Designed trip for expat community in China. a : well trained guide, but not local guide		/	/	/						X	/	a

c) Expected growth and challenges for local communities & environment

Southwest of TAR was visited by 8.7 million tourists in 2011, up 26.9 percent year-on-year, according local authorities. International tourists number in this area represent about 270,000 people in 2011 and have an increase of 18% per year. National tourists represent about 32 times more, with 8.4 million of people, an increase of 27% per year for a total revenue of 9.7 billion yuan, up 35.5% year-on-year (http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/china/2012-02/13/content_14594660.htm).

The 2015 prospective statistic evaluate at 15 million of tourists, roughly double progression compared to 2011 (http://french.beijingreview.com.cn/zt/txt/2011-04/13/content_360034.htm).

This progression of tourism industry will result in a huge ecological challenge for this region. Therefore special attention has to be paid on:

- ◆ Tourist group size.
- ◆ Waste management (recycling).
- ◆ CO2 emission (encourage national tourism, promote train Xining-Germu and non CO2 emission activities).

3. Sanjiangyuan region and its SNNR

a) Geography, natural resources, climate, biodiversity

This project is focusing on the Sanjiangyuan National Nature Reserve (SNNR), located in Qinghai Province which includes most of the north eastern part of Tibetan Plateau. The SNNR is the 2nd Protected Area (PA) in China. It has a population of over 210,000 people and with its 152,300 km², covers more than 50 % of the Sanjiangyuan region (590,000 people). This region is the headwater of the three China's largest rivers: the Changjiang (Yangtze River), Huanghe (Yellow River) and Lancang (Mekong). Thus, it plays a large part in the livelihood of nearly 40 % of the world's population.

The climate in this region is typical of continental plateaus. It is extremely cold in winter, arid and windy. It is a mountainous area (between 3000 and 5000 m high) mainly covered by grassland, used for grazing, especially Yacks. The reserve and its ecosystem is of great importance for wildlife. If it is not rich in species, there is a high percentage of endemic species. The Wetland in particular are key habitats for several migratory birds as the Bar-headed Goose, the Black-necked Crane or the Tundra Swan whose large summer breeding population hinge upon such wetlands. The grassland and its ecosystem also provides habitat for several international endangered species as the Snow Leopard, the Tibetan Antelope, the Wild Yack or the Argali. Moreover, lots of plants of this region are endemic to China.

b) Environmental & social threats

This region is under several threats, on the environmental level, as well as on the social level.

- ◆ The region was recently hit by the destruction of Yushu, main town, due to an important earthquake in April 2010 (magnitude of 7.1 on the Richter scale). This had affected population of course, but also the SNNR development.
- ◆ Constructions (dams, roads and other infrastructure) are not always undertaken in coordination with PA authorities and possible negative environmental impacts are not always taken into account. It is also clear that excavations for construction and mining are an important threat to wildlife habitat. Furthermore, mining brings low benefit to local communities.
- ◆ Global climate change is fast on the Qinghai Plateau with temperature rising 2-4 times faster than elsewhere in China. The impact is high on the region as many glaciers are melting apace, already affecting local people as well as downstream populations.

Changes in distribution of grasslands, tundra and forest will probably happen and affect wildlife and local population who use grassland for grazing.

- ◆ Natural resources (wood for timber, wetland for farming, water, mining) are exploited in an unsustainable way as the population in the region is growing. Some species of economically importance (medicine) are over-extracted (for example the *Rhodiola Chrysanthemifolia*) when others provoke damage in the turf while being collected (Caterpillar Fungus). Finally, some species are still threatened by poaching (Tibetan Antelope).
- ◆ As the region is not very convenient for agriculture, herding is the primary source of income for the local populations (about 420,000 herding residents in and around the SNNR). But poor economic conditions in this rural areas still prevails and the mean income remains much lower than urban residents income (about one third).
Education and health services are still low compare to urban areas and human population, as well as human activities are widely disseminated. Furthermore, the pastures degradation which is evident threat for all communities, ecological services and biodiversity.
- ◆ The high value of the area through its ecological services as water catchment and regulation is not really profitable as it is not paid enough by downstream communities and sectors (hydro power, industry, irrigation, urban water use).
- ◆ The PA system is affected by underfunding and understaffing, which leads to a low level of management effectiveness in the SNNR. There is currently only 13 full-time and 18 temporary workers and the field operations budget is less than 500,000 RMB a year. Protection activities are largely delegated to county government offices (see reporting structure below).

c) Management of the SNNR (political levels)

Qinghai Province has set up a network of 11 PAs: five NNRs (of which the SNNR) and six PNRs (Provincial Nature Reserves). All the PA are controlled by the Regulations on Nature Reserves (1994) and administered by the Qinghai Forest Department (QFD), which gives account to the Qinghai Provincial Government and the State Forestry Administration (SFA) in Beijing.

The management bureau for the SNNR is based in Xining. The bureau must enter appropriate negotiations with local communities concerning the boundaries and zones of the NR and the land and resources uses. Two forms of Collaborative Management are present in Qinghai Province: Community Co-Management and Contract Conservation (see examples below) but most rights about conservation belong to the government. So local communities still lack authority to fully engage in conservation projects.

The reserve includes parts of 15 county level administrative units:

- ◆ 6 counties of Yushu Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture : Qumalai, Zhiduo, Zado, Nangqian, Yushu, Chengduo
- ◆ 4 of 6 counties in Guoluo Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture : Maduo, Maqin, Jiuzhi, Banma
- ◆ 2 of 4 counties in Huangnan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture : Zeku, Henan
- ◆ 2 of 4 counties in Hainan Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture : Xinghai, Tongde
- ◆ Haixi Mongolian and Tibetan Autonomous Prefecture : Geermu/Golmud.

The SNNR is divided into 18 management units, partly adjacent, and partly disconnected (6 blocks). There are plans to expand and joint this different parts. Each one of this units has three different zones :

- 1) **The core zone** with no use, no habitation and only limited observational scientific research permitted;
- 2) **The buffer zone**, where some scientific research are permitted;
- 3) **The experimental zone**, where scientific research, public education, tourism and raising of rare and endangered wild species are permitted.

All three zones are strict nature reserve according to IUCN's classification. They would not tolerate, even sustainable extraction of natural resources (firewood, medicinal plants, fishing or grazing). It is not coherent with the reality which allows some of this activities. Furthermore, regulations has several shortcomings concerning wildlife management, community involvement, ecotourism regulation or climate change.

d) Communities location & description in frame of global UNDP project

The initial set of communities selected (by UNDP)s to partner with the project to achieve environment and socio-economic goals through CBET are described hereafter. These six communities were selected based on their previous experience of working within a co-management framework, or proposed as candidate sites based on prior relationship with the project's main national implementing partner (Forestry Bureau). The six initial sites include a cluster of herding communities where co-management has been trialed in various forms over the past decade, as well as a site near the source of the Yellow River and a site in a forest area near the border with Sichuan province:

- ◆ **Duoxiu** Village Community : grassland, co- management begun 2011, grassland species.
- ◆ **Cuochi** Village Community : grassland, co- management experience since 2006, focus on wild yak
- ◆ **Junqu** Village Community : grassland, co-management experience since 2009, focus on wild ass.
- ◆ **Muqu** Village Community : grassland, co- management experience since 2006, focus on snow leopard.
- ◆ **Duoyong** Village Community : wetland, ecological significance, prior research, migratory birds, lakes.
- ◆ **Zhongzhi** Nomad Village Community: forest, Forest bureau with relations already well established.

4. CBET in SNNR: on-going PP CBET projects in SNNR and perspective

a) Muqu village

1. Snow Leopard observation

An on-going project is the cooperative management of Snow Leopard monitoring. Although this project is still at scientific research level (phase 1) in a close future this activity could turn into a central tourism hot spot. GPS tracking could enable the wild animal observation. Large poster presenting the Snow Leopard wild life should be edited in order to train local people about this animal habits and characteristic and also allow tourist to have a clear information about this animal before the trek.

2. Brown bear observation

For such similar activity development, brown bear expert has to be included in the project (outsourcing could be possible through the international brown bear experts, see <http://www.bearbiology.com/index.php?id=bsgmain> or for GPS trekking, contact CHARLESC.SCHWARTZ, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Soldotna, AK99669, USA or STEPHEN M.AARTHUR, Alaska Department of Fish and Game, Soldotna, AK99669, USA, email: SteveAr@fishgame.state.ak.us).

b) Lari village

1. Local tibetan culture discover (hosting, food, nature, festival)

Kegawa cooperative (about 48 families in 2012), has already run a specific ecotourism product consisting of home hosting (nomad tent), including local food, trek (Kegawa mountain climbing), horse riding and festival attending. 2 groups of about 5 tourists each have experienced this CBET product in the community in between 2010 and 2011.

According the PP team leader in charge of the organization of the trips, the most relevant points are:

	Positif (+)	Negatif (-)
From tourists point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discovering new landscape and experience genuine life with local people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Food - Altitude - Type of activity
From community point of view	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Working together as cooperative -Interest from tourists for local people (valuable feeling) - New information brought by tourists (learning from abroad people) - Income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - lack of knowledge concerning tourists habits (how to make them comfortable).

2. Local tibetan culture discover (tibetan pharmacopea)

Beside annual short-time activity, like Chongcao fungus harvest, a pedagogic path could be develop with large poster along a ring-path presenting this amazing worm colonized by fungus. Pharmaceutical, as well as historical aspects, could be a huge interesting focus about how nature can provide people in new products, i.e. new pharmaceutical active molecules. Special studies have been performed concerning the greenhouse culture of this fungus. Such greenhouse could be pitch in order to show on site this natural curiosity. If culture is managed in a steady-state production-consumption, we could also imagine to let tourist extract one fungus from dedicated area. Local Tibetan medicine could be presented in larger spectrum by local Tibetan medicine expert (doctor).

c) Dangqu village

Migratory birds could be the focus for this community. Again, multimedia supports could be promoted to present this kind of fauna, before running trek in the specific observation area. Ornithologists (from A Rocha International, <http://www.arocha.org/int-en/index.html>) could help in this project, i.e. enhance local people skills (tourist guide) and give advise about multimedia supports.

d) Jiongqu village

At the current stage of the project development, no specific project stated yet.

5. Conclusion

CBET might be one of the answer for ecological, economical & social challenges. But according impact studies of CEBT projects, it is stated that such economical activity is seasonal cycling dependent. This type of activity is also quite sensible to the economic chinese and worldwide situation because traveling is the first affected expenditure in case of global economy slowdown.

Therefore, incomes of a community has to be diversify. Thus, herding activity has to be kept/protected as subsidiary activity, as well as sustainable Chongcao Fungus harvest or local handcraft product manufacturing.

Furthermore, if CBET is run in this area, the stakeholders have to carefully think about the means needed to achieve its goals. Investments will be necessary and strong precautions will need to be taken to avoid negative impacts on the environment and the communities and their culture.

6. Annexes

Annex 1 (most relevant web pages concerning tour operators).

1. Tibetan Connections:

"Tibetan Connections is a small, grass roots tour company. Our local staff gives you the best Tibetan experience possible. We pride ourselves on customer service, and working very hard to make sure our customers are taken care of. We, at Tibetan Connections are not just in this for ourselves, but are committed to giving back to local communities. We strive to be a responsible tour company that benefits both the environment and local peoples. We also donate a portion of our profits to local NGO's that are working with children and the environment. We take a portion of our profit from every customer that goes to Lhasa, and use that money at the end of the year to purchase winter clothing for needy children in the TAR."

www.tibetanconnections.com/responsibletourism

2) High Adventure Tours:

"Eco tours are about bringing sustainable benefit to the local communities and land we travel too. High Adventure Tours is committed to making sure our eco tours measure up to a high standard..."

Our first tour offering is nomadic tent stay in the KeGaWa community in Yushu Autonomous Prefecture, Qinghai. We are setting up this tour with a NGO working in the area. A local cooperative in the KeGaWa nomadic community has been set up so that the whole community, not just a few individuals can benefit from our tours. 30 percent of the profit from our tours will be given to the cooperative, and they will decide how they want to benefit the community through these tours."

«All the products are made by herders in hope to generate income and to raise the employment rate for those herders who were immigrated to towns due to the ecological conservation and environmental protection policies.»

<http://www.highadventuretours.com/ecotours.html>

3) Travel wild Tibet:

"The staff members of Travel Wild Tibet are connected with various charity projects in Qinghai province. Among these are a scholarship program for economically disadvantaged students who have shown that they are both academically gifted and hard-working; a project to house, feed, and educate a group of orphans and underprivileged children; and a project to support women with cervical cancer, a disease which appears to have a high incidence in this area. In the future, we also hope to work towards the long-term support of those affected by the recent devastating earthquake in Yushu.

If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved or donate to these projects, please contact us. In addition, the staff of Travel Wild Tibet have many friends and acquaintances who have formed local non-profit organizations or who have started projects to aid local communities in a number of ways, from providing running water or clean energy to empowering women or creating sustainable livelihoods.

We are happy to help you get in contact with any of these organizations, or to help you look for additional volunteer or internship opportunities."

<http://travelwildtibet.com/opportunities-to-serve-local-commnities.html>

4) Tibet Culture Tour:

"Our Travel Agency cooperates with the Qinghai Tibetan Research Committee and we will give you the best experience in the Tibetan area. The Qinghai Tibetan Research Committee also has a Tibetan and English Language Training School in Xining. The school is helping the development of Tibetan nomadic people who don't have yak and sheep and try to have some changes to keep the live and to make their lives easier."

<http://tibetculturetour.com/>

"Our Travel agency is feeding parts of the income from the travel agency back into helping Tibetan local community; our 30% of the profits will go to our development projects in Amdo and Kham regions. Our projects are to helping and rebuild old and needy Tibetan Monasteries, Tibetan needy school, children, nomad and handicapped. Our first undertaking is conservation of Tibetan Religion and culture, as well as to keep its unique tradition alive.

We sponsoring this Travel charitable activity with the hope that people from all the nations would give their loving heart to those aged who standing alone on the highland of Tibetan area who felt they are ignored....Nomads do not have many cars or many trucks; if they want to go somewhere they ride a horse or yak. Most people drink tea, Nomads makes that tea with river water. In nomads areas there is almost no infrastructure, no bus connections to cities, no electricity and almost no shops. Life is extremely difficult. Our objective is to helping Tibetan local community and just wants to make Tibetan families who have little things to make their lives easier....Our most recent endeavor is to rebuild GaiJia nunnery (GaiXiongTeQingSongQue Ling) CBET in Sanjiangyuan, July 2012

the meaning is GaiXiong Mahayana...Any well wisher, donor and customers can help our project in Tibet both in cash and kind, so any customers can help and contribute your help through our Travel Agency. Any Customers come to Tibet and 70% of your Travel fee will go to helping the Tibetan community. And also we will give you the best Travel experience in Tibetan area."

<http://tibetculturetour.com/about-us.html>

5) Tibetan Ecology:

"10% of our payment goes directly to benefit the work of the Tibetan ecology foundation (TEF)"

<http://tibetanecology.org/Tibetan-Eco-Tours/Sanjiangyuan...>

"5% of your travel fee are tax deductible and directly supports the work of the Tibetan Ecology Foundation and the Galma Lishow Art School (GLAS) Foundation... both non-profit 501(c) (3) organization . The Tibetan Ecology Foundation produces educational. Maria in the Tibetan language about environmental issues. These material help Tibetans conserve and protect Their fragile high-elevate on habitat. The Gilma Lisho Art School Foundation in Lhoka, Tibet operates a school that protects and promotes Tibet 's rich cultural heritage of traditional fine arts and music. GLAS is working to become self-sustaining by marketing their crafts locally and abroad, ensuring a better future for the students, their family and the community."

http://tibetanecology.org/Tibetan-Eco-Tours/Tibet_Ecotourism.php

«Many of the Tibetan plateau mammals are on the Chinese national list, levels number 1 and 2, of protected and endangered species: Hanuman langur, snow leopard, Tibetan antelope, and Giant Panda, etc. Therefore, it is essential that these creatures be protected. And TEF believes that education is the foundation for the human specie to learn and be an active part of the ecosystem.»

<http://tibetanecology.org/Tibetan%20Ecology%20Index.html>

«TEF's modest wish is to spread education about the environment. Our focus is on the protection of the environment in the Tibet Autonomous Region and on the education of the people in the communities therein.»

<http://tibetanecology.org/Tibetan%20Ecology%20Mission.htm> see also posters on
<http://tibetanecology.org/Tibetan%20Ecology%20Posters.html>

«We want to host environmental holidays, such as International Earth Day, and Recovery Day, a day to collect trash, repair damage, garden, etc., as a community. We want to promote using bicycles and public transportation. We also want to create programming that focuses on tourists and supports continuing tourism.»

<http://tibetanecology.org/Tibetan%20Ecology%20Promotion.html>

6) Windhorse Tours:

"All Groups are escorted by highly qualified, seasoned local guides, whose years of experience and expertise contribute to your unbeatable adventure. They are well educated, have an in-depth knowledge of the area, its culture, traditions and are fluent in English among other languages. They are selected for their qualities of leadership, enthusiasm, initiative and the ability to relate to clients and the local people. They are flexible and always seek to accommodate your needs and any special interests you may have..."

We also believe strongly that our planet is beautiful and must remain that way and there is nothing we won't do to protect nature from the hands of evil doers. We seek to protect the environment and to minimize pollution when trekking, attaching great importance to respecting local traditions, religious sites and practices, and the preservation of the national heritage. This is just a small way we can give back to mother nature for all that she does for us. We believe our policy of restricting group numbers, is the best way of practicing low impact tourism and preserving the beautiful areas we visit and that local communities should gain some benefit from our visit."

http://windhorsetours.com/company/how_we_travel.php

7) Responsible travel:

"Since 2006, we have worked with NGO, Conservation International to launch an initiative which provides free marketing through our site for community based tourism ventures around the world in order to help promote them to consumers and tour operators. Many such local communities are too small or remote to be able to market themselves successfully.

This means that booking levels and occupancy are low and they have to rely on support from donors or go out of business. Through this partnership we hope to continue to promote such projects, many of which are based in areas of outstanding, and often vulnerable, natural and cultural heritage.

Back in the UK, where our office is based, we are active members of our community. Every six months, as a team, we spend a day volunteering for a local cause e.g. a local conservation project working in partnership with local people. Among others, we have worked with The Green Gym in Brighton, The National Trust near Hassocks, The Friends of Sheepcote Valley in Brighton and Lewes railway land local nature reserve. We encourage employees to volunteer their time in the community and offer them the chance to take half a day paid time per month during work hours in order to do so.

In addition, we regularly donate money to charity and in 2006 this equated to 13.75% of our profits, and the total we've paid to charities to date is over £12,600 with at least another £8000 on the way, which can make a significant difference to any charity. Organisations we've supported in this way include The Woodland Trust, Afrikids, ActionAid in Cambodia and a small community in Ethiopia.

We have a policy of always using local suppliers wherever we can, so as to bring as much income to the local area as possible. We work with a locally based web developer, cleaning company, design agency and usability / information architect.

Our impact on the environment

Within tourism destinations

We market holidays that are taking steps to actively reduce the negative impact of tourism on the local environment – this is integral to our business. Every holiday on the site has been screened for its environmental criteria. In this regard, we are leading the way in tourism by bringing together in one place thousands of holidays that are helping to create innovative environmentally-friendly business solutions.

Carbon reduction

As a business, we are encouraging people to take fewer flights each year and take fewer, longer breaks as part of their overall efforts to reduce their carbon emissions. As part of our ethos around reducing short haul flying, we have written to UK MPs with our recommendations on tackling increasing emissions from aviation. Justin Francis also speaks regularly at industry events on this issue. In addition, we publicise our views via the national media and meet with both travel and environmental journalists to discuss such issues.

We were among the first travel organisations to introduce carbon offsets in early 2002, and now we are one of the first to remove them for environmental reasons. You can read more about this decision on our carbon caution & advice page. Of course, carbon reduction does not stop with the flight. We are working with our members to encourage energy saving initiatives within destinations too.

Office environmental, recycling and waste policy:

We are committed to: continuous improvement in all areas within this policy; the education and training of all employees in environmental issues and the environmental effects of their activities; being a 'paperless' office as much as possible (no fax or photocopier machines, vast majority of communication by email not letter, no unnecessary printing). Our business is 100% web-based.

Recycling

Our actions are guided by the principles: reduce, reuse then recycle. 'Paperless' office except for essential documentation. Both sides of paper to be used and then all paper to be recycled. As many materials as possible should be recycled in the office bins provided, including: paper, envelopes and cardboard, printer cartridges, glass, cans, plastic and tetrapaks. The recycling is collected by local recycling company Magpie. Recycled products (e.g. bin bags, paper, toilet roll etc.) to be used wherever possible. All compostable matter (e.g. fruit peelings, food etc.) is disposed of via the office warmery. All sanitary waste is collected and disposed of by an environmentally licensed company. We keep all stamps and donate these to a charity.

Transport

Public transport rather than private vehicles should be used by staff whilst on company business. Employees are encouraged to use public transport or walk to work (currently 95% do so).

Energy

All staff must turn off PCs and electrical items and not leave them on standby over night / during holidays. We are currently in discussions with our landlord regarding a 'greener' energy provider.

Products

The use of biodegradable chemicals where possible and refilling of containers where possible. Our office cleaning company Green Mop also advocates this policy and was chosen for its green principles.

Fair trade coffee and tea.

When buying furniture, it should be made from sustainable (managed) forests or sourced from local charity shops where possible. Old furniture and equipment is donated to local charities where possible. We donate old computers to The Crew Club, a local charity

Suppliers

We expect similar environmental standards from our suppliers where possible.

Our relationship with our employees

We are passionate about creating a place to work which is supportive, empowering, friendly, fun and which rewards excellence and loyalty. We offer staff flexible full-time and part-time working arrangements and half of our employees work from home several days a week. We are committed to a good work/life balance for our staff."

<http://www.responsibletravel.com/Copy/our-responsible-tourism-policy>

"Our advice to tourists:

1. Low carbon travel: We are huge fans of train travel. It's a great way to see a destination and has a much lower carbon impact than flying. We encourage travellers to take the train when possible. You'll find a wide range of holiday options on the site that are based in Europe and reachable by train if you live in the UK. Book your Europe and worldwide train tickets or UK train tickets on our site. We've also created a special section dedicated to holidays whose organisers have gone that extra mile in helping you choose more environmentally friendly methods of transport. Check out our lower carbon travel holidays

2. Wherever you are in the world, think about holidaying closer to home. For those of you based in the UK you'll be pleased to hear that the UK is our number one, top selling destination on responsible travel.com. See over 200 UK holiday ideas

3. Try and avoid internal flights within a destination - use local public transport where possible or go on foot or by bike.

4. Think about taking fewer short breaks by air. Shorter flights and multiple stop-overs are more polluting per passenger mile than longer flights as take off and landings generate a significant part of the total emissions per flight.

5. Take fewer holidays and stay for longer - that way your holiday creates some real benefits to conservation and local communities in the tourism destination – ask your operator for their written responsible tourism policy to ensure this is the case.

6. When you do fly, make it count - take a responsible holiday that benefits local communities and the environment. Compare the carbon emissions of your flight using our carbon comparison flight search.

Read about flying and the responsible traveller in more detail."

<http://www.responsibletravel.com/copy/6-tips-for-the-responsible-traveller-on-flying>

8) Jimpa Travel:

«Because it is our goal to provide only the highest quality tours, rather than filling our calendar with as many groups as we can get to come, we prefer to host a smaller number of groups each year and ensure each one is treated like family.»

<http://www.jimpatravel.com/en/>

«Since these are our people and this is where we live, we put a portion of our proceeds to help poor Tibetan students with their education.»

<http://www.jimpatravel.com/en/about-us.html>

"One of the best ways to feel the magnificence of Tibet is to get out walking. These can be arduous two person adventures or they can be strolls through the grasslands with a few nomads who will gather wild vegetables for your meals as you go. Whether you prefer high or low altitude trekking, pilgrimages have been foundational in Tibetan culture, and we believe this is one of the best ways to experience the roof of the world. There is nothing quite like it."

<http://www.jimpatravel.com/en/trekking.html>

9) Global Nomad Tibet:

«La charte du voyageur:

Respect des coutumes tibétaines

Cette partie est un condensé des règles de conduite énoncées par nos partenaires tibétains. Cette charte n'est pas exhaustive mais résume, en quelques lignes, ce que les Tibétains attendent des voyageurs étrangers venant les visiter.

Si vous effectuez un voyage GN, votre accompagnateur vous expliquera le sens de ces codes culturels afin que vous puissiez comprendre ces usages dont l'observation signifie, aux yeux des Tibétains, un profond signe de respect envers leur culture.»

«Protection de l'environnement

Minimisation des déchets :

- Apportez une bouteille d'eau réutilisable; lors du trekking elle sera remplie avec de l'eau bouillie. En ville, vous pourrez stériliser l'eau du robinet avec des gouttes ou des pastilles de chlore/iode.

- Apportez un petit sac à dos ou un sac en toile pour faire des courses afin d'éviter les sacs en plastique (à la campagne, les déchets en plastique sont parfois ingérés par des animaux). Les sacs en toile reçus dans certains supermarchés sont réutilisables.

- Apportez des batteries rechargeables et un petit chargeur (solaire) si vous utilisez une lampe de poche ou d'autres appareils électroniques. Les batteries sont souvent enterrées avec les autres déchets, posant le risque de percolation des toxines dans la nappe phréatique.

- Achetez des produits peu emballés; en particulier essayez d'éviter les aliments et boissons en boîtes. La fabrication et le recyclage des boîtes utilisent de grandes quantités d'énergie.

Achat de produits locaux :

- Préférez des produits locaux aux marchandises importées: l'achat de pêches et pommes séchées, fromage tibétain, noix, orge soufflé, tsampa (farine d'orge grillée) etc. ne réduit pas seulement les distances de transport mais rend également service à l'économie locale.

L'achat de produits artisanaux tibétains aide à promouvoir le savoir-faire traditionnel qui s'appuie sur des ressources locales et des techniques de production écologiques. N'achetez jamais des produits ou objets provenant d'espèces menacées (faune et flore).

Trekking : Sans trace

- Rapportez tous les déchets en ville, y compris le papier toilette et vos mégots.
- Évitez d'aller aux toilettes, de laver votre vaisselle, vos vêtements ou vous-même à proximité des cours d'eau à moins de 50 mètres. Utilisez un seau, du savon et du shampoing biodégradable. Dispersez l'eau utilisée pour qu'elle puisse être filtrée par le sol.
- Utilisez une petite pelle pour enterrer les déchets humains dans un trou d'une profondeur d'au moins 20 cm. Les matières fécales contiennent de nombreux micro-organismes pathogènes qui sont responsables de maladies gastro-intestinales.
- Respectez les animaux sauvages (tenez-vous éloignés, ne les nourrissez pas, évitez de les effrayer en faisant du bruit) et ne cueillez pas de plantes ou de fleurs ; elles pourraient être des espèces protégées ou en voie de disparition ayant une fonction importante au sein de l'écosystème.
- Utilisez des sentiers et terrains de camping existants. Les plantes poussent très lentement sur le plateau tibétain. Une fois abîmée la végétation prend des années à se reformer.
- Ne faites pas de feu de bivouac (sauf si vous êtes dans une région boisée). Le bois est une ressource rare au Tibet ; couper des arbres ou déraciner des buissons augmente l'érosion et la désertification.

Voyage et transport :

- Afin de compenser l'impact négatif sur l'environnement causé par votre vol au Tibet, considérez d'acheter un billet de "myclimate" (www.myclimate.org). C'est une fondation à but non lucratif qui vise à contrebalancer les émissions de CO2 en soutenant les énergies renouvelables et l'efficacité énergétique. Le Tibet est particulièrement affecté par le réchauffement climatique ; essayez de ne pas y contribuer.

En ville, utilisez les transports en commun, les cyclo-pousses, louez un vélo, ou marchez plutôt que de prendre des taxis afin de réduire la pollution de l'air."

<http://www.globalnomad-tibet.com/voyages-charte-du-voyageur>

«Les particularités du label GN:

Le marché artisanal et des voyages touristiques sont encombrés de produits qui sont qualifiés « d'origine tibétaine » qui ne le sont pas. La plupart de l'artisanat tibétain, même ceux qui semblent traditionnels, sont fabriqués en Chine côtière, en Inde ou au Népal parfois à la main, parfois dans des usines. Notre label garantit, entre autres, que le produit est fabriqué localement, à la main, par des locaux, et avec des matières premières locales.

Tout secteur confondu, dans son processus de certification, Global Nomad fournit ses partenaires en conseils, expertises, stages et formations, et les aide à développer leur activité de façon responsable.

Les revenus de Global Nomad proviennent des services commerciaux offerts aux partenaires, qui sont payés indirectement par les clients finaux. La certification est gratuite et le prix de la commercialisation du produit ne pèse pas sur le producteur. Nos services sont donc 100% gratuits pour les producteurs.»

<http://www.globalnomad-tibet.com/label-gn>

"L'équipe de Global Nomad est heureuse de vous présenter la Sélection de voyages 2012.

Originaux, conçus et organisés par des partenaires locaux tibétains.

Proposés par des voyageurs français partenaires. Chaque voyage est pensé pour répondre à ses exigences propres et à sa philosophie du voyage.

Labellisés GN par Global Nomad, conçus pour bénéficier en priorité aux populations locales. bon voyage...,"

<http://www.globalnomad-tibet.com/voyages-organises>

10. Gesar Tour:

"Sustainability & Responsibility - to create a model business with an ongoing commitment to the principles of sustainable and responsible tourism. Through this model, we aim to make a positive and lasting contribution to the communities and environments in which we conduct our business activities."

The establishment of Gesar Tour is committed to serve and empower marginalized Tibetans in the efforts of creating capacity to develop constructively and competitively.

Specifically, by establishing Gesar Tour as sustainable source to create employment opportunities to local people, set up a model for starting business beneficial to local economy, build up confidence for local people to utilize their potential abilities in improving their living conditions, promote cultural preservation and environment protection through sustainable and responsible tourism.»

<http://www.gesartour.com/documents/aboutus.asp>

"Being a responsible tourist:

Tibet is a unique and special travel destination that needs your help. Ancient cultures and traditions, fragile mountain environments, rare and endangered flora and fauna are worth protecting for generations to come. As a traveler in Tibet you can make a difference and ensure that your journey has a positive impact on the places you go and the people you meet. Being a Responsible Traveler is not very hard, but it does require you to think about the way that you travel and the impact

your actions have. Will you accept the challenge of being a Responsible Traveler? There are a range of ways you can be a more Responsible Traveler.

Buy Locally: Use a travel company that employs local guides and staff. Eat in local restaurants, buy handicrafts that are authentic and locally made. Don't be shy to ask directly about the source of the products you purchase.

Be open-minded and aware that your cultural values may differ from locals. This may include different concepts of time, personal space and communication etc.

Make the effort to learn about local cultural sensitivities: For example - wear full length trousers or skirts and modest tops that are not revealing. Avoid wearing shorts or short skirts and tops which bare shoulders. - Point with an open palm and not your index finger. - Avoid patting or touching children on the head.

Be sensitive when taking photos: Ask permission before you photograph local people, and don't interfere during monastic ceremonies or private activities. Don't take photos of sky burial sites or in monasteries where photos are not allowed. Many monasteries request a fee for photography and it's always appropriate to make a donation.

Minimize your waste: Carry reusable cups, plates, cutlery or chopsticks. Try to purchase produce which is not wrapped in plastic. Avoid using disposable plastic shopping bags.

Dispose of waste appropriately: Most local villages don't have environmentally sound trash management systems. Pack your garbage out to larger towns or cities when it can be disposed of appropriately. If there is no toilet, dig a hole at least 25cm deep and bury human waste. Burn or bury toilet paper.

Make the effort to learn some local language. Learning even a few words will break down cultural barriers and demonstrate your interest in local language and culture. You'll gain respect from locals and it's fun too!

What NOT to Do:

Tibetans are generally very easy going and may not make it clear if you are behaving inappropriately. Here are a number of things you can easily avoid to ensure your presence is respectful and interaction with locals will have a positive long-term impact.

Never buy products made from endangered wildlife or endangered plants.

Don't intrude on local people's homes, tents, land or private activities (such as sky burials). Show respect for local's private property and personal space. Always ask for permission before entering private property or land.

Don't be disrespectful at religious sites or family homes by wearing shorts or revealing clothing or kissing or touching intimately in public. Remove your hat and shoes unless instructed otherwise and don't step over people or people's legs - feet are considered dirty. Don't relax by putting your feet up on tables or chairs.

Don't swim in holy lakes, sit on holy objects such as many stones or walk on or step over prayer flags.

Don't encourage inappropriate begging by giving large amounts of money to beggars, or sweets or pens to kids. Begging is accepted in Tibetan society and is part of Buddhist generosity practice so subtly giving a small amount is appropriate.

Don't create dependency on hand-outs: Encourage self-reliance, if you want to help, donate to a trustworthy non-profit organization or charity and make sure locals are involved in the decision-making processes and that they are indeed the beneficiaries of your donation.

Don't hand out medicines without detailed and proper explanations of usage. Often it is better to encourage the use of local medical care if available.

Avoid perceived political discussions or activities. You may get yourself or others in trouble.

Don't break local laws and regulations: Remember that you are a guest in Tibet. Make sure you have the correct travel permits your travel agency and tour guide or host could be fined or may even lose their license if you break the law.

Source: This Responsible Tourism Initiative was created by Tibetan Village Project and Chris Jones for the Tibet Ecotourism Project: an ongoing educational initiative through Columbia University, NYC. You can help by printing this brochure and help spread the word."

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<http://www.gesartour.com/tour/Being%20a%20responsible%20tourist.asp>

11. Tashistours:

"...Day 5: With nomad people

Area: Around Yushu

Potential dates: From June to September

Duration: 7 days/6 nights

Day 4: Arrive nomad area.

You will drive out to the Yushu Grasslands at 50 km and camp with a nomad Tibetan family for 3 nights. While with the nomads, you will learn how to make Tibetan food, milk and herd yaks and how to live the traditional Tibetan lifestyle.

Day 5: With nomad people

Experience firsthand the lifestyle of Tibetan nomads. Join nomads herding yaks and sheep and making cheese, yogurt, and butter. Try riding a yak. You might fall off, and the nomads might laugh at you, but then they will help you back on. In the afternoon you can learn how to sing Tibetan nomad songs and dance with nomad boys and girls.

Day 6: With nomad people

You will do a short trek for few hours around the nomad area, where you will get the first view of the mountain. Meet with the local horses and yaks at Paltang grassland."

12. Amazing Tibet:

"Amazing Tibet Tours offers a variety of trekking and day hike programs to suit a variety of interests and abilities. Walking offers one of the best ways to enjoy the splendor of Tibetan nature and cultural beauty. Our treks and day hikes take you through remote villages, and farms, pristine subtropical and temperate forest to alpine pastures with grand views of majestic mountains. Trekking and Day Hiking also gives you the opportunity to see the countryside and meet ordinary Tibetan people as you walk through villages and settlements.»

«Briefed Itinerary

D01: 00 Aug: Beijing
D02: 00 Aug: Beijing / Lanzhou/ Ama Zhoktso 160km (Alt: 2100m)
D03: 00 Aug: Trekking 12km Camp (Alt: 2100m)
D04: 00 Aug: Trekking 13km Camp (Alt: 2230m)
D05: 00 Aug: Trekking 15km Camp (Alt: 2590m)
D06: 00 Aug: Trekking 15km Camp (Alt: 3380m)
D07: 00 Aug: Trekking 13km Camp (Alt: 3290m)
D08: 00 Aug: Gar Nyang / Labrang Trekking 3km+93km (bus)
D09: 00 Aug: Labrang(Alt: 2890m)
D10: 00 Aug: Labrang / Repkong 140km (bus)
D11: 00 Aug: Repkong(Alt: 2600m)
D12: 00 Aug: Repkong / Kunbom / Xining 240km (Alt: 2300m)
D13: 00 Aug: Xining / Beijing
D14: 00 Aug: Beijing (Alt: 50m)
D15: 00 Aug: Beijing / home"

<http://amazingtibet.com/soft-trekking.html>

"Tibetan medicine is an ancient healing system nearly 3,000 years old. During the third century BC, a primitive medical system had existed on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau, comprising theories on daily life, food and drink, and health care. Although a complete medical theory had not yet formed, simple therapies were used such as blood-letting, massage, using butter to stop bleeding, and using distillers' grains from highland barley to treat wounds. Over time, this originally primitive medical system evolved into a renowned and complex system with impressive results in treating disease."

<http://amazingtibet.com/medicine.html>

"The Tibetan Plateau offers a wide variety of natural diversity - snow-covered highlands, arid deserts, lush meadows full of blossoming flowers, dense forests, dark swamps, rushing rivers, and deep canyons. Here on the roof of the world resides piercing sunlight, bringing warmth to the crisp winter air. Experience the rich intensity of colors, light, and the diverse plant life of the remote reaches of the Tibetan Plateau. Here, the botanical landscape is uniquely adapted to the climate of Tibet, and much of the foliage is endemic to this region alone.»

<http://amazingtibet.com/botanictour.html>

«Let us take you on an exhilarating adventure to the wilderness of Tibet, where you may chance upon exotic bird and animal species, many seen nowhere else in the world.

Observe snow leopards, brown bears, wolves, Tibetan foxes, monkeys, musk deer, and wild yaks. Watch Tibetan antelope, blue sheep, mountain goats, and wild donkeys in their natural habitat. The vast Tibetan plateau offers much unique wildlife for the eye to behold.»

«Trip Highlights:

- Kekexili Nature Reserve
A wide variety of wildlife in their natural habitat
One of the four most holy mountains in Tibet- Mt Amny Machen
Rolling Grassland and nomadic culture in Kham
Breathtaking views at the Gula Dadong and Dangla passes
Camping & picnic lunch in wild Tibet
Meet Tibetan nomads in remote area»

<http://amazingtibet.com/wildlife.html>

13. : Himalayan consensus footsteps:

"We choose to support social and environmental projects instead of making the maximum profit, we operate sustainably and are rewarded knowing that tourism benefits local communities at our destinations. Here some of the schemes we support:

Carbon Balancing

We've partnered with Trees4Scotland to provide a genuine carbon offset service, a woodland regeneration project at Balmuck Farm, Perthshire, Scotland. Only one and a half hours away from our Edinburgh office, we encourage customers to visit their trees being planted and see what a wonderful and sustainable project this is.

Nepal Clothes Appeal

Launched in January 2010, it has been an overwhelming success, collecting unwanted second hand clothing and delivering them to poor families in rural areas of Nepal.

Sunglasses for Porters

Our latest project aims to collect old, unwanted sunglasses to give them to Himalayan porters. With insufficient equipment many of them are threatened by, amongst other dangers, snow blindness. This can easily be prevented by wearing adequate sunglasses. We collect old sunglasses that have been donated to our partners all over Edinburgh and take them to Nepal, where our staff gives them to Himalayan porters.»

<http://www.himalayanfootsteps.com/ethical-tourism/campaigns-projects/>

«We agree to and follow the guiding principles for Responsible Tourism as identified in the **Cape Town Declaration** in 2002:

Guiding Principles for Economic Responsibility

- Assess economic impacts before developing tourism and exercise preference for those forms of development that benefit local communities and minimise negative impacts on local livelihoods (for example through loss of access to resources), recognising that tourism may not always be the most appropriate form of local economic development
- Maximise local economic benefits by increasing linkages and reducing leakages, by ensuring that communities are involved in, and benefit from, tourism. Wherever possible use tourism to assist in poverty reduction by adopting pro-poor strategies
- Develop quality products that reflect, complement, and enhance the destination
- Market tourism in ways which reflect the natural, cultural and social integrity of the destination, and which encourage appropriate forms of tourism
- Adopt equitable business practises, pay and charge fair prices, and build partnerships in ways in which risk is minimised and shared, and recruit and employ staff recognising international labour standards
- Provide appropriate and sufficient support to small, medium and micro enterprises to ensure tourism-related enterprises thrive and are sustainable
-

Guiding Principles for Social Responsibility

- Actively involve the local community in planning and decision-making and provide capacity building to make this a reality
- Assess social impacts throughout the life cycle of the operation – including the planning and design phases of projects – in order to minimise negative impacts and maximise positive ones
- Endeavour to make tourism an inclusive social experience and to ensure that there is access for all, in particular vulnerable and disadvantaged communities and individuals
- Combat the sexual exploitation of human beings, particularly the exploitation of children
- Be sensitive to the host culture, maintaining and encouraging social and cultural diversity
- Endeavour to ensure that tourism contributes to improvements in health and education

Guiding Principles for Environmental Responsibility

- Assess environmental impacts throughout the life cycle of tourist establishments and operations – including the planning and design phase – and ensure that negative impacts are reduced to the minimum and maximising positive ones
- Use resources sustainably, and reduce waste and over-consumption
- Manage natural diversity sustainably, and where appropriate restore it; and consider the volume and type of tourism that the environment can support, and respect the integrity of vulnerable ecosystems and protected areas
- Promote education and awareness for sustainable development – for all stakeholders
- Raise the capacity of all stakeholders and ensure that best practice is followed, for this purpose consult with environmental and conservation experts»

<http://www.himalayanfootsteps.com/ethical-tourism/>

14. Qinghai Himalaya Travel Services Co.

«Himalaya Travel offers unique cultural tours and soft adventures on the Tibetan Plateau and western China. We organize trekking tours to the remote corners of the plateau, mainly the isolated places with rich culture and untouched nature. Since our establishment in 2007, we have offered hiking and camping tours, cycling and other outdoor activities. Now we provide tours beyond the plateau, targeting the areas along the Silk Road, reaching Inner Mongolia and Yunnan.

What makes us different is that we make every effort to address the expectations of our clients with an eye on detail. Each of our tours is meticulously designed to introduce our clients to experience the cultural highlights of the areas and best scenery, with a balance between comfort and adventure. Our shared passion for active and eco-friendly ways of travel and desire to bring our clients close to the local people and culture, at the same time make locals benefits from tourism. We love wilderness and cherish the cultural diversity of our home, and at the end of tour our clients would love our place as much as we do.»

<http://www.geotibet.com/sample-page/>

«Eco-Tour

Badain Jaran, the world's fourth largest desert that is dotted with over 100 lakes. Trekking with a caravan of camels in Badain Jaran desert will be a memorable experience. Being in the desert is thrilling, once you walk past emerald lakes and oases in the middle of the desert, you will hardly be able to tell what is real and what is your imagination. Badain Jaran is like no other desert or Gobi. It stretches endlessly and is filled with sand hills. Birutu is the highest stationary dune in Badain Jaran, up to 500 meters high, thus it is one of the tallest dunes on Earth. At the end after passing by many lakes, we will come to the shore of Sumi Jiring Lake, which in Mongolian means "the lake with a temple": a Tibetan Buddhist temple built in 1755, testament to the Mongolians' strong Buddhist faith. From here we will return by jeep. Surely, this will be an exciting travel experience»

«Itinerary at a glance:

- Day 01 Alex Zuoqi, visit the Tomb of Tangu, the head to Alx Zuoqi, explore stone market, Hotel
- Day 02 Badain Jaran, traverse endless desert to BabanJaran Desert, meet camel team, Camping
- Day 03 Badain Jaran, Start a week trekking in Badain Jaran desert, Camping
- Day 10 Alex Youqi, take jeep to Alx Zuoqi, rest an afternoon, Hotel
- Day 11 Zhangye, Head to Zhangye and visit greatest indoor Bhuda Nervana statue, Hotel
- Day 12 Xining (Tb.Ziling), visit Baimasi grotto complex, trans Qilian Mountain to Amdo, Hotel
- Day 13 Kokonor (Qinghai Lake), excursion to emerald blue lake Kokonor, Hotel
- Day 14 Rebgong, driver through Yellow River bank to Rebgong, on the way visit Khamra geo-park, Hotel
- Day 15 Labrang(Ch.Xiahe), visit monasteries and traditional Tibet painting villages, Hotel
- Day 16 Labrang(Ch.Xiahe), Visit Labrang monastery and hiking in the afternoon, Hotel
- Day 17 Lashou, take boat to Binlinsi Grotto complex and drive to Lanzhou in the afternoon,»

<http://www.geotibet.com/mysterious-lakes-in-deep-badain-jaran-desert-geo-park/>

«Experience nomadic Tibet at the tempo of the summer grassland. Let yourself be pulled in by the wonder of endless grassy fields and high still air. Stop only to let yak herds and flocks of sheep clear your path. Or mingle with nomads wearing sheep skin robes and communicate eye to eye. Bike over flat pasture grassland all the way to Machu, where the expansive scenery stretches to the foot of distant, inscrutable snow mountains. Take detours stopping at quaint, active Tibetan Buddhist monasteries that wait for you off the beaten trail. At night our local Tibetan staff will set up tent camps from which we will stargaze under a chandelier of stars. And they will be with us all the way opening all doors to you to this exquisite land. To fill your canteen with butter tea from the freshest, most flavorful milk you will ever taste, or with salty black tea. To prepare feasts of parched barley meal or succulent mutton in a yak-hair nomad tent. Journey with us on this seven day cycling adventure from one edge of Amdo Tibet to the other.»

<http://www.geotibet.com/cycling-on-the-deep-grasslands-of-tibetan-nomads/>

15: Snow Lion Tours

"Serving Communities

As part of the mission of SnowLion Tours, we aim to improve the welfare of Tibetans by supporting local communities in meaningful ways. Through creating jobs, buying directly from local farmers and small businessmen, passing on daily necessities to nomad families, and donating to a nearby orphanage, we strive to integrate our social engagement into our business practices. While we welcome individuals who are interested in participating in some of these endeavors, we take care not to impose any obligations on them. Our community work is private in nature and remains separate from our pricing.»

«Kumbum Shambaling Orphanage School

Established in 2004 by Samdrip Tsering, a Tibetan scholar and artist, the Kumbum Shambaling Orphanage School is home to 75 Tibetan orphans. The mission of the orphanage is not only to support orphans but also to preserve traditional Tibetan culture by educating children in traditional thangka painting, embroidery, and stone carving. Additionally, students may take classes in Tibetan, Chinese, English, basic computer, and other subjects. Already 120 have graduated from the school and now live independently. However, despite the school's success, it is severely lacking in facilities and financial support. At SnowLion Tours, we work to help raise money for the school, donate winter clothing, introduce homeless children to the school, and assist in getting the young artists' paintings on the market. We regularly visit the students and visitors to Xining are welcome to join us on a trip there.»

«Working with Nomad Families

On our trips we frequently visit nomad families in order to share our local culture with visitors to Tibet. Nomads are known for their generous hospitality and do not ask anything in return for our visits. Nonetheless, as a way of practicing responsible tourism, we pass on to them daily necessities for life on the harsh Tibetan plateau. Fresh fruits and vegetables are welcome gifts to those who live far from town, thick clothes and blankets provide warmth in winter, and sunglasses help nomads protect their eyes against damage from sun exposure. We also donate cooking stoves after camping trips, as the nomads find these small stoves immensely helpful.»

«Buying Locally

Whenever possible, we buy our goods directly from farmers, nomads, and local businessmen. Through the practice of buying locally, we help preserve the environment, bolster the local economy, and strengthen our community. We encourage visitors to Tibet to join us in this endeavor by patronizing local Tibetan businesses.»

«Creating Jobs

All guides, drivers, porters, yak handlers, and cooks we hire are local Tibetans. Working as a guide offers young Tibetans an opportunity to earn a living while sharing their intimate knowledge of local culture. Nomads who serve as our porters and yak handlers have a chance to supplement their incomes while providing essential services for our hiking trips. We ensure that all of our staff are treated well and paid fairly. In the instances that we hire non-locals, we select them on the basis of their expertise and long experience in Tibetan regions.»

«Protecting the Environment

The ecosystem on the Tibetan plateau is extremely fragile. We desire to see our Tibetan culture and traditions last for generations to come, so we do our utmost to arrange travel in the most ecologically friendly way possible. We teach Leave-No-Trace principles and conduct site clean-ups after camping. Please join us in minimizing the environmental and cultural impact we have when traveling.»

Are you interested in learning about more ways of serving Tibetan communities? See our blog posts on Responsible Tourism in Tibet in addition to Volunteering in Tibet."

http://snowlions.com/index.php/tibet/about/serving_communities

Here are some helpful guidelines for ecotourists and responsible travelers to Tibet:

- **Choose a local Tibetan travel agency**
- There are many agencies that offer Tibet tours. Try to choose an agency based on the Tibetan plateau (in Xining, Chengdu, or Lhasa) that is owned, managed, and staffed by Tibetans. These agencies have far more expertise in arranging Tibet tours than do Chinese tour operators based in other regions of the country. In addition, if you use a Tibetan-owned travel agency, you can be sure that more of your tourist dollars are going to be put into the local Tibetan economy.
- **Patronize local Tibetan businesses**
- Tourism makes up a large part of the Tibetan economy. If you want to see your tourist dollars go to Tibetans, try and use as many Tibetan owned hotels, shops and restaurants as possible. Through strengthening the local economy, you will be improving the lives of Tibetans and helping preserve their cultural heritage.
- **Hire local Tibetan guides and drivers**
- If you want to better understand Tibet, travel with locals, who can provide expert advice on all the best locations and inform you on local perspectives and opinions. Chinese guides in Tibet invariably know very little about the local culture, religion, and language that make Tibet such a beautiful place. Having a local guide will give you a more meaningful connection to the place you are visiting. At the end of your trip, if you believe your guide and driver did a good job, tip them.
- **Respect Tibetan cultural and religious customs**
- When entering monasteries and temples, dress appropriately. Take off your hat (and shoes if required) and wear long pants instead of shorts. Ask first before taking pictures — many larger monasteries require that individuals pay a small fee to photograph the inside of temples and prayer halls. Do not step on or over any religious items or pictures, and if seated, do not point your feet towards religious images or monks and nuns. Be aware that some chapels forbid women to enter. If you're a woman, do not touch a monk; and if you are a man, do not touch a nun. Walk counter-clockwise in and around Buddhist temples, but walk clockwise in and around Bon temples. Some travelers have reported that wearing a Buddhist rosary puts Tibetans at greater ease by showing them that they respect the local culture and religion.
- **Follow leave-no-trace principles while trekking**
- While trekking, ask permission from local nomads if you plan to camp near them (so that they can call off their ferocious dogs). Make sure you do site cleanups before you leave an area and pack out all trash. Use environmentally friendly soaps and detergents. Carry reusable tableware. Don't go to the bathroom near water sources. Stay on existing paths and don't make new ones to avoid contributing to soil erosion.»

<http://blog.snowlions.com/2010/04/eco-travelresponsible-tourism-in-tibet/>

16 : Journey wilderness adventure

«Journey Wilderness Adventures is a backpacking company that operates multi-day wilderness hiking and camping trips in some of China's most beautiful, remote, and unexplored wilderness areas.

We began offering trips in the summer of 2010 in Xinjiang Province's remote Tian Shan Mountain range. Knowing first hand the struggles Expats face in Asia we offer extended wilderness trips primarily to Expats and Third Culture Kids living overseas. Journey trips are designed to remove our participants from the distraction and commotion of everyday life in order to quiet the mind and revive the spirit. We focus on providing exciting and safe experiences that take place in remote areas of jaw-dropping natural beauty where our participants can enjoy solitude, develop friendships, and leave feeling renewed.»

<http://jwatrips.com/about>

«As a company we believe we're setting the standard for professionalism, environmental protection, and safety in China's newly emerging wilderness backpacking industry. Not only do our guides carry emergency satellite communication equipment and hold industry leading first-aid certifications, but they also have training in wilderness travel, outdoor education, and environmental ethics. Because of this, Journey offers our participants the unique opportunity to responsibly travel into some of China's most remote and beautiful wilderness environments. «

<http://jwatrips.com/adultbackpacking>

«The Leave No Trace Seven Principles are also available for various environments and activities.

PLAN AHEAD AND PREPARE

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

TRAVEL AND CAMP ON DURABLE SURFACES

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
 - In popular areas: Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
 - In pristine areas: Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

DISPOSE OF WASTE PROPERLY

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

LEAVE WHAT YOU FIND

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch, cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

MINIMIZE CAMPFIRE IMPACTS

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

RESPECT WILDLIFE

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

BE CONSIDERATE OF OTHER VISITORS

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.»

<http://lnt.org/learn/7-principles>

THE ANNAPURNA-DHAULAGIRI COMMUNITY TRAIL



INTRODUCTION



THE ANNAPURNA-DHAULAGIRI COMMUNITY TRAIL is one of the most special options for tourism in Nepal. On one hand, this off the beaten trail crosses sacred forests of Rhododendron with hidden Hindu temples around lakes that come and go with the monsoon, extends up to points where clouds and planes are below your feet, brings unique stunning views of the Annapurnas where mountains beyond mountains sprawl with no end in sight, and offers the opportunity of engaging with Magar culture and traditions through its festivals, yak farms, cheese mongers, local paper makers, forest nurseries or bhanga tailors. On the other, this alternative to mass tourism is a community-managed one – with the support of UNDP-MEDEP, NTB and TAAN community lodges have been built and local villagers trained to help you enjoy a unique experience whose proceeds are invested in increasing local access to education and health through Himanchal Education Foundation.

This is only a tiny part of our story – the rest is in Nepal.

THE ROUTES: OUR LAND

This trail is the joint effort of six Magar villages spread in Myagdi and Parbat districts around the Annapurna and Dhaulagiri areas. We want to share our land and heritage with you and whether you are looking for pure trekking, relaxed community-engagement or a combination of the two, we want to know you. We want you to know us.

We have designed two main trails that nevertheless can be tailored to your preferences.

 SHORT TRAIL (6 DAYS)
 LONG TRAIL (8 DAYS)

BANSKHARKA

Banskharka is the first stop of the trail if coming from Beni. A beautiful Magar village in the middle of a Rhododendron forest crossed by streams, Banskharka has lived for hundreds of years on the production of mandarins, oranges and honey, which you might learn about and taste in your visit. Mitho chha!

NANGI

Nangi is situated at 2330 mts. in a valley surrounded by sacred forests that host several centenarian Hindu temples and is home to our retired Gurkha neighbour Moti, who manages with extreme care the forest nursery and the local fishery; Kumari and Harimaya, who make paper from the lokhta tree bark in Spring; and Raman, who runs a traditional Magar bakery.

MOHARE

Mohare stands above deep gorges and valleys on the verge of a steep ridge at 3360 mts. Here, our spacious comfortable lodge built by the dzo farm (yak-cow cross-bred) offers an exclusive and pristine view of the Annapurnas, Dhaulagiri, Machhapuchhare and even Phewa Lake.

DANDA KHARKA

In the middle of a stunning Rhododendron forest crossed by spring streams, Danda Kharka is one of the quietest spot of the trail – yet just a short walk-far from local buffalo farms that are worth to pay a visit.

TIKOT

Perhaps one of the most beautiful villages in Nepal, Tikot rests on one side of a smooth ridge in front of the Annapurnas and right above the Kali Gandaki, the deepest gorge in the world. Small beautiful temples, bhanga weaving shops and local honey production are some of the main attractions of Tikot.

SWANTA

Standing at the bottom of the Annapurna South and along a green valley, Swanta is the perfect place to rest before trekking up to Khopra. Also, the community-managed lodge offers some of the best food you might find in your visit to Nepal.

KHOPRA

With no doubt, one of the most impressive views anyone can experience of the Himalayas. Khopra is an isolated spot that literally stands on one side of Annapurna South at 3660 mts, above tree-line, higher than clouds and the planes that pass by between Pokhara and Jomson. Khopra is also house to our communities' 150 yaks, who roam along the ridge led by Suk Bahadur Pun, their shepherd. For whoever fancies, there is also a ritual yak-blood drinking festival in Summer!

PAUDWAR

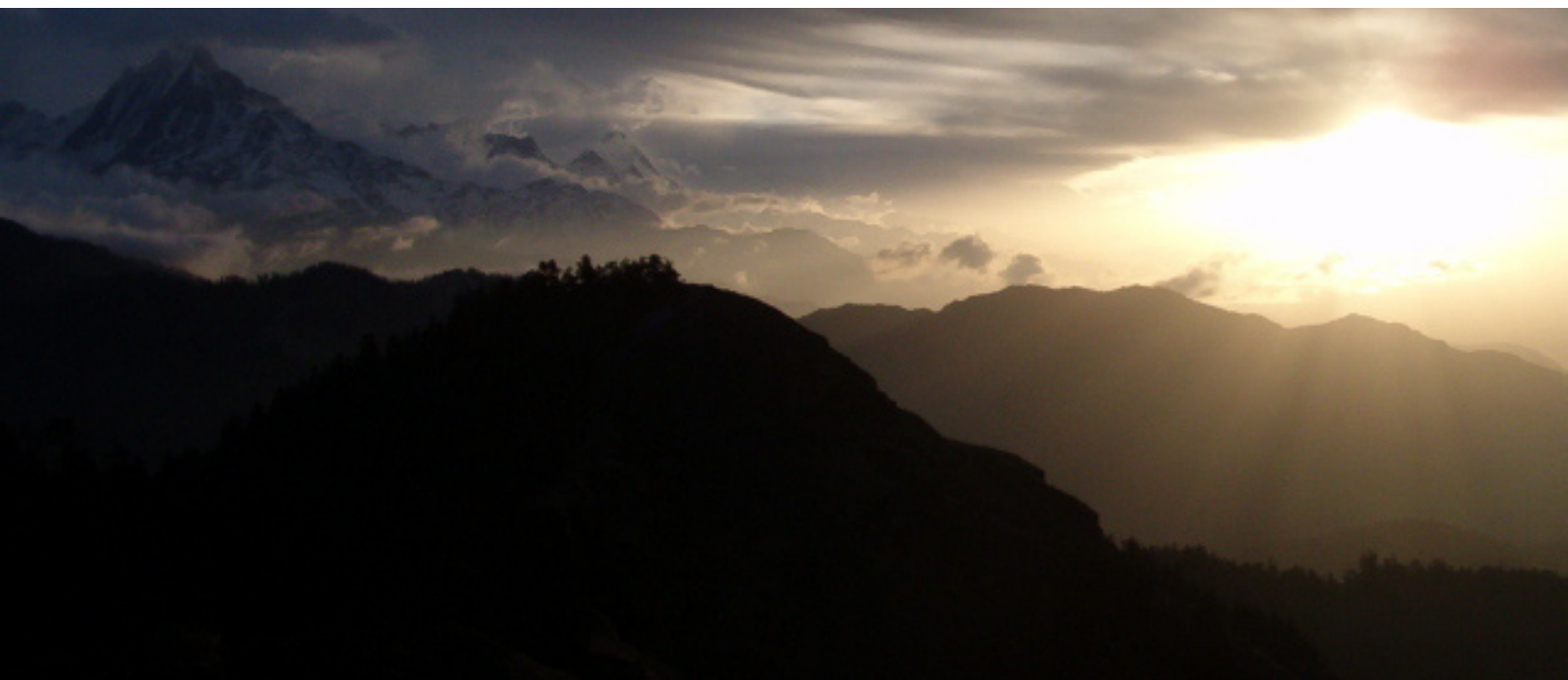
A beautiful lively Magar village, Paudwar houses the first and only cheese monger in this side of the Himalayas. Visit the factory, learn about the process and enjoy a cheese tasting evening with local honey after a long trek.

NARCHYANG

Another beautiful village that looks right by on side of Kali Gandaki, Narchyang houses one of the most famous local Raksi breweries in Annapurna-Dhaulagiri area. Also, in Narchyang there is a natural hot spring which has been used for hundreds of years for its medical value and that might be enjoyed all year round.

Landscape and activity diversity are the two core values of this trail. So, if you are looking for an alternative to mass trekking in Annapurna and Dhaulagiri area with stunning views of the Annapurnas, Machhapuchhare, Dhaulagiri and another 25 peaks, Mohare, Swanta and Khopra should be in your itinerary. Whereas if you prefer a Magar culture engaging experience, the beautiful villages of Banskharka, Nangi, Paudwar or Tikot are easily connected and offer a combination of homestay and community-lodges where you may attend to and participate of our everyday life. Or perhaps you are looking for a combination of both? Let us know.

Contact Chitra Pun (chitra@himanchal.org), our communities' trekking coordinator, to learn more about our business partners and the offers.



TRIP SEASON

The ideal time to come is from Autumn to early Winter and from early Spring to Summer. In Summer, the monsoon, arrives by the middle of May. In Spring, the weather is generally mild yet it can be still icy cold sometimes, especially at the highest points of Khopra and Mohare.

ACCOMMODATION

Banskharka, Nangi, Mohare, Danda Kharka, Swanta and Khopra offer community lodges whose cooks and maintenance staff are our trained neighbours.

The villages of Tikot, Paudwar and Narchyang offer homestay options where our families will host you in traditional Magar houses.

HIMANCHAL EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Local access to education and health remain as big challenges in the mountain regions of Nepal. HEF aims to address this gap by helping on the funding of teachers' and nurses' salaries as well as by improving local infrastructure. Over the last ten years, a library, a computer lab, a health clinic, and new classrooms for additional grades have been built. Still there are many problems ahead, but with the effort of our communities and the support of new income generating projects as this trail, they might be overcome.



+Learn more at www.himanchal.org

+For all enquiries, contact Chitra Pun, our communities' trail coordinator: chitra@himanchal.org

+This trail is part of The Great Himalaya Trail cultural route. Learn more at thegreathimalayatrail.org

Design: Pedro Oyarbide // Photos: Mike Nyff (mikenyff.com) & Miguel Angel Oyarbide



Project Summary

Strengthening the effectiveness of the protected area system in Qinghai Province, China to conserve globally important biodiversity



The Challenge

From its extensive alpine grasslands and wetlands to its forests and deserts, Qinghai encompasses a wide variety of globally significant but fragile ecosystems. Several major rivers also have their origin in the province's highlands; rivers that cumulatively affect much of China and over a quarter of the world's population. However the constituent flora and fauna of the province's ecosystems are under increasing threat from a number of factors, including a disconnect between the protected area system (planning and management) and other provincial development and sectoral planning processes; inadequate financial and human resources; weak institutional and staff capacities for conservation planning and Protected Area (PA) management; and limited participation of local communities in decision-making, environmental monitoring and sustainable land management.

The Response

The project will strengthen the provincial PA system, helping it fulfil its mandate to safeguard its globally significant biodiversity. With enhanced management effectiveness, the PA system will better protect internationally rare and endangered species including snow leopard, Tibetan antelope, wild yak, black-necked crane and other native wildlife, as well as maintain healthy grasslands and wetlands that are important both for local resource users and climate change mitigation through carbon sequestration. Central to the project are three primary approaches: (i) mainstreaming the PA system and its objectives into development and sector planning frameworks; (ii) strengthening critical institutional and human capacities; and (iii) promoting and extending models of co-management in PAs.

Achievements

The global environmental benefits of the project are represented by the following indicative achievements: (i) significant reduction in the number or extent of threats to global biodiversity from incompatible development projects; (ii) addition of an anticipated 250,000 ha of terrestrial landscapes under formal protection, including corridors and new PA territory; (iii) increased management effectiveness at the level of individual PAs; (iv) improvement of overall institutional capacities; and (v) increased financial sustainability of the PA system.

Institutionalization and increased support within the PA system for community-based environmental stewardship programs extend both the reach of environmental awareness campaigns and the human resources necessary to achieve widespread conservation. Developing or enhancing partnerships with local resource user communities also provides increased opportunity to learn from traditional knowledge and to integrate modern scientific approaches with local worldviews. Through such collaborative work, and with mainstreaming and capacity building at multiple levels, the project will increase regional and global environmental security – incorporating the protection of biodiversity, sustainable use of environmental resources, community partnerships, and adaptation in the face climate change.

At a Glance

Project ID:	80635	Status:	On-going
Start Date:	14 Sept 2012	Estimated End Date:	13 Sept 2017
Location(s):	Qinghai, China		
Focus Area:	Environment and Climate Change		
Goal(s):	To strengthen environmental management in protected areas through capacity building and policy development, with special attention to vulnerable groups and the application of co-management principles		
Total Budget:	US\$ 23,854,545	UNDP:	US\$ 5,354,545
Government:	US\$ 5,350,000 (cash) US\$ 13,150,000 (in-kind)		
Partners:	Global Environment Facility People's Government of Qinghai Province, PRC		