The Network for University Co-operation Tibet – Norway
Research Program Guidelines
2011 – 2014

1.   Background

The Network for University Co-operation Tibet - Norway (the Network) addresses bilateral academic collaboration on research and education between Norway and the Tibet Autonomous Region (TAR). The Network was established in October 1994, and in 2011 a new three-year agreement of co-operation was signed between Tibet University in TAR and four universities in Norway (the University of Oslo, the University of Bergen, the University of Tromsø and the Norwegian University of Science and Technology, NTNU). Co-operation with the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences in TAR is included in the agreement.

The Network co-operate on a Research and Stipend Program, funded by the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The Research Program is closely linked to capacity building in education (the Network's Stipend Program) and institutional development.A new four-year funding contract was signed in 2011 for the program period 2011 - 2014. The contract includes up to eight new three-year PhD scholarships, additional funding for Supportive Scholarships and English training for Tibetan academics (all part of the Stipend Program), and funding for new research projects in 2012 and 2013.

2.   Network Development Goals

The primary goal of the Network's Research and Stipend Program is:

- Enhanced scientific competence and self-associated reliance in Tibet.

The purpose of the program is to obtain:
- Stronger competence and higher professional quality in the educational and research sector in Tibet.
- Tibetan academics qualified for research at international level.
- Tibetan academics qualified to carry out independent research projects.
- New research-based insight into the environment, culture and society of Tibet.

In order to attain the primary goal the following activities will be supported by the Network:

Education and research:
- Education of Tibetans at PhD level in Norway and offer qualified candidates opportunities for shorter research stays in Norway.
- Research and education that enhance the knowledge of Tibetan environment, culture, and society.
- Development and implementation of research projects in dialogue with co-operating researchers and institutions in the TAR.
- Strengthening of the quality and relevance of teaching and research related to Tibetan environment, culture, and society in the co-operating institutions.
- Publishing of research results of international quality.

Capacity building in research and education:
- Establishing sustainable environments for education, applied research, and research-based teaching in the co-operating institutions.
- Development of Master and PhD programs at co-operating institutions in the TAR, in the prioritized research program areas.
- Capacity building in studies on Tibet and Tibetan language in Norway.
- Contribution to the exchange of Tibetan and Norwegian students and researchers.

The Network adheres to the following measures in all aspects of co-operation:
- Promotion of gender equity in education and research co-operation, including the career advancement of qualified women in the co-operating institutions.
- Support of primarily Tibetan and Norwegian partners, as the Network is a Tibet - Norway collaboration.
- Ethical and transparent project management and implementation.

3. Special nature of the Network for University Co-operation Tibet–Norway

3.1 Nature and history of co-operation
It is important to recognize the special nature and role of the Network for University Co-operation Tibet–Norway. The mutually beneficial co-operation in research between the TAR and Norway, linked closely to the Stipend Program for Tibetans, is built on the recognition of Tibetan environmental, cultural, and societal values as well as on a complex social reality. The P.R. of China and the TAR government are committed to the maintenance of cultural values and the diversity of an increasingly pluralistic society,[i] and to the preservation of the environment. [ii]

The co-operation started in 1994, and since then it has grown and been strengthened through strong commitments from partner institutions in Norway and Tibet. The co-operation is currently embedded in a bilateral agreement between Tibet University (TU) and the four Norwegian universities in Oslo, Bergen, Trondheim and Tromsø. The current agreement was signed in April 2011 for the three-year period 2011 – 2014. The agreement includes co-operation with the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences (TASS) in two specified areas (cf. Section 4.2, Prioritized areas of research). On the Norwegian side, the secretariat of the Network, located at the Department of Culture Studies and Oriental Languages, the University of Oslo, has had important coordinating, caretaking, and reporting roles, both for the Stipend and the Research Programs.

The co-operation is based on a threefold perspective: *(i) To contribute to capacity and capability development of human resources; (ii) to provide applicable knowledge about the Tibetan environment, culture, and society and (iii) to contribute to long-term institutional development.* The co-operation is mainly bilateral between one or more institutions in Tibet and one or more institutions in Norway.

3.2 Basic principles of project initiation, implementation, monitoring, and reporting
The needs and priorities of Tibetan researchers and institutions form the basis for building relationships of co-operation between partners in the TAR and in Norway. However, it should also be recognized that Norway has specific areas of competence relevant for the TAR, in which Norwegian universities and researchers find it relevant to contribute. The co-operation is based on the principles of equality between all partners and transparency at all levels. These aspects are of importance during all phases of project co-operation.

Research project reporting and financial accounting are shared by the Norwegian and Tibetan project managers. The institutions themselves, both in the TAR and Norway, cover basic salaries and infrastructure.[iii]

4. Strategic directions of the Network research program 2011-2014

4.1 Definition of strategy
The strategy for the period 2011 – 2014 is to build on research accomplishments to date, strengthen already initiated capacity-building programs, and provide opportunities for new areas of co-operation. The ability to create and maintain successful collaborative arrangements in Tibet's unique environment and within the Network's stated goals is an important priority.

4.2 Prioritized (program) areas of research
Each project will be assessed in accordance with its ability to "generate new insight into the environment, culture, and society of Tibet". The Network encourages interdisciplinary projects. The focus areas for research are reflected in the three following program areas of the overall research and institutional development co-operation:

- **Environment and ecology**
- **Culture, language, and society**
- **Medicine, health, and nutrition**

The areas of co-operation and possible fieldwork areas are further specified in the Network co-operation agreement, as follows:

(1) Natural science (including mathematics, physics, biology, geography, chemistry, environmental studies, and seismology. Fieldwork areas: open areas of Lhasa, Shigatse, Nagchu, Linchi prefecture.)
(2) Humanities and Social Sciences (including Tibetan studies, English language, and women and gender studies. Fieldwork areas: open areas of Lhasa, Shigatse.)
(3) Public health. (Fieldwork areas: open areas of Lhasa, Shigatse, Nagchu, Lhokha prefecture.)
(4) Tibetan architecture, housing, civil engineering and traditional settlements (including studies of land use change. Fieldwork areas: open areas of Lhasa, Shigatse prefecture.)
(5) Tibetan Art (including traditional and contemporary visual and performing arts, sculpture, and mural conservation and research. Fieldwork areas: open areas of Lhasa, Shigatse, Lhokha prefecture.)
(6) Research on the issue of Nomad settlements. (Fieldwork areas including Nyima, Tsonyi, Amdo, Nyangrong, Shentsa and Nakchu counties in the Nakchu prefecture and Gertse, Ruthok, Tsochen, Gar and Gajee counties in the Ngari prefecture.)
(7) Research on the common culture of Han and Tibetan ethnic groups (for example in the field of linguistics).

On the Tibetan side, the Tibet Academy of Social Sciences is responsible for areas of co-operation listed under items (6) and (7) above.

4.3 Capacity building and institutional development
One of the main aims of the Network co-operation is capacity and competence building within academic institutions in the TAR and gradual development of high quality research within prioritized areas. Educational activities, primarily PhD education, should be a significant component in all research programs, and a part of all project proposals. This could be focused on building components of new and current educational programs. Generally, the focus is to contribute to long-term establishment of educational programs relevant for environmental, cultural, and societal aspects in Tibet. PhD candidates should primarily be staff (or prospective staff in part-time positions) of the participating institutions.

4.4 Scientific quality and relevance

When implementing Network programs and individual projects, participating partners are to utilize recognized expertise from participating Tibetan and Norwegian universities and research institutions. The evaluation of project proposals submitted to the Network will be based on scientific quality of the proposed research, educational activities, and relevance for environmental, cultural, and societal aspects in Tibet. The Network may consult external, independent reviewers for evaluation of project proposals.

The Network program supports capacity and competence building in the TAR. Hence, a joint task of the partners is to work towards academic excellence in collaborating Tibetan university and research institutions. It is expected that the quality of the research will improve to the extent that research results from the projects will be disseminated and published in international journals.

4.5 Gender

The Network program will continue the focus on women and gender in the Tibetan environment, society and culture, and on gender mainstreaming. The Network will stimulate project leaders to increase the number of females taking part in research and educational programs. Gender balance among participants should be pursued. This applies in particular to PhD candidates, where a female candidate will be prioritized instead of a male candidate if they are approxiomately equally well qualified. The Network welcomes separate research projects on women and gender and encourages all applicants to integrate a gender perspective in their applications.

4.6 Synergies

Network research program applicants should explore possibilities for synergies with the Quota program, the NUFU-program, and the Norwegian Research Council programs. Co-ordination and synergy are also emphasized in relation to other national players in the fields of research and higher education.

4.7 Partner contribution

It is essential that the partner institutions find ways to build upon research completed during previous periods under Network Cooperation, and facilitate integration of Tibetan perspectives of environment, culture, and society into their regular curriculum and research programs. It is also necessary that partner institutions in the TAR allocate time for researchers and educators to allow active and long-term participation in the Network.

Invitations, visas, and travel permits are essential for smooth project implementation. It is a main responsibility of the partner institution in the TAR to make such necessary arrangements in a timely fashion. However, it is also a task of each project manager to give the Network secretariat required documents and sufficient prior notice to enable coordinated planning and facilitation of travel permits to Tibet.

4.8 Duration, sustainability, and termination of projects

Research projects are of two primary categories:
- one-year pilot projects to explore possibilities, establish partnerships with researchers, educators, and institutions. Annual applications are welcome.
- long-term projects which are institutionally embedded with Memorandum of Understanding/Agreements facilitating research and educational co-operation. These projects will run for two years starting in 2012. These applications must be comprehensive and specific. Annual reporting is required on program operation and co-operation, and on financial accounting.

Each long-term project proposal must contain strategies for ensuring sustainability of the proposed activity, and reflect on plans for eventual termination of the project. In order for an existing project to obtain support for a second period from the Network, the application for renewed support must contain evidence to show sustainability of the capacity developed.

It is also essential that project sustainability is addressed and reported by the partner institution in the TAR. Here a special challenge for all involved parties is to support measures that encourage meaningful promotional opportunities and professional assignments as well as time to carry out research for institutional staff members involved in research and education projects, or trained in the Stipend Program.

5. Eligibility

5.1 Eligible institutions

All of the Network's co-operating institutions are eligible to apply for support (for co-operating partners, see section 1). The current and former host institutions for Tibetan students from TAR, the Norwegian University of Life Sciences (UMB) and the Oslo National Academy of the Arts (KHiO), are also welcome to apply.

5.2 Eligible academic fields

The eligible fields are within the prioritized areas of research (see section 4.2).

6. Application procedures

Project leaders at co-operating institutions should submit joint applications to the Network.

6.1 Necessary documentation

Applications should contain the following documents:
- project proposal (incl. development goal, research objectives, activities, work plan)
- budget
- institutional co-operation agreements
- application and budget templates will be available at www.hf.uio.no/tibetnorway

6.2 Application categories

Research applications can be of three different categories:
- long-term projects
- pilot projects
- supportive scholarships

Each long-term project will last three years. In addition, there will be allocation of support to pilot projects.

6.3 Eligible activities

Eligible activities are:
- joint research projects
- education and training of partner institution staff (also prospective staff);
- development of new educational programs in Tibet.
- supportive scholarships (institutional context visits, guest research visits to Norway, seminars for students and fellows).

7. Selection procedures

7.1 Submission and selection process

The submission and selection process will be as follows:
- project proposals with relevant additional documentation shall be submitted online
- external evaluators may be used to assess the scientific quality of the proposals (see section 7.2)
- the final selection of projects to be granted support will be made by the Network board
- in the final selection meeting, when an application from a particular institution is evaluated, board members from that institution shall not be present.

7.2 External evaluation

External evaluation of proposals may be deemed necessary. Such evaluators should have a strong academic background in the research topic of the proposal. In addition, they should, to the extent possible, have a general grasp of the Tibetan social and cultural context. The Network will draw up specific terms of reference for external evaluators.

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[i] This is in accordance with the World Commission on Culture and Development, 1995. This document expresses the need for keeping up diversity in all forms of intangible and tangible cultural expressions and resources, e.g. the diversity of languages is explicitly addressed. [UNESCO (1995 *"Our Creative Diversity"* Report of the World Commission on Culture and Development, Paris.] Furthermore, P.R. of China is a signatory of the World Heritage Convention, and nationally declared monuments like Potala has by initiative of the Chinese government, as a state party, been recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Monumental Site. [UNESCO (1977) (Revised 1992). "Operational Guidelines for the implementation of the World Heritage Convention", Paris.] Of importance is also the Nara Conference on authenticity where significant Asian values were included. [UNESCO; Agency of Cultural Affairs, Japan; ICCROM and ICOMOS (1995) "Nara Conference on Authenticity in relation to the World Heritage Convention", Paris, Tokyo, Rome.]

[ii] The concerns of the environment by the national Chinese authorities have been expressed in their Agenda 21 (the Environmental Agenda for the 21st century) and through their involvement in the Kyoto protocol on international measures to control climatic change. Here China is internationally recognised as being a developing country, and is granted concessions. However, TAR, with its marginal natural environment, is of international importance for the monitoring of climatic change.

[iii] See co-operation agreement for details.