



CHINA

The Nature Conservancy – Helping rural livestock herders restore their grasslands



More information on un.org

In Inner Mongolia, livestock herders are faced with harsh climate change, overgrazed land and often fall into debt due to lack of forage.

With the support of the Julius Baer Foundation, The Nature Conservancy (TNC) trains poor and wealthy herders in Grassland Smart Management (GSM), restoring the soil. In exchange for applying GSM, TNC provides forage support for poor herders during winter months, helping to alleviate debt and the need for overgrazing.

Furthermore, TNC builds cooperatives including poor and wealthy herder families. Sharing the economic benefits of GSM incentivises both parties to restore their grasslands.

Training over 13,000 herders via local authorities and community coordinators, TNC aims to turn the vicious cycle of overgrazing and debt into a virtuous cycle of recovering grasslands and wealth equity.

Quick facts

- China, Inner Mongolia, Hulunbuir
- Project support: 2022–2024
- Grant amount: CHF 100,000 per year
- Bringing poor and wealthy herding families into cooperatives to pursue Grassland Smart Management together.
- Goal: To decrease debt of poor herders, allowing for sustainable grazing, restoration of grasslands and common wealth building.

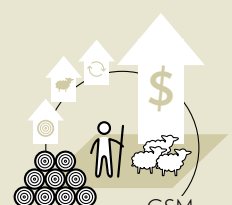
From a vicious cycle ...

Overgrazed grasslands cause forage shortage for small herder families. To maintain their livestock, they must buy forage from the wealthy herders. Indebted, they need to rent out their lands and overgraze their remaining fields even further.



... to a virtuous cycle.

By adhering to GSM, herders can borrow TNC forage at reduced rates and return 50%, steadily finding their way out of debt. Cooperatives amongst herding families incentivise the restoration of their grasslands through shared profit increases.





“I never imagined that being a herder’s child would benefit my work and be TNC’s important tie to the herding communities.”

Sargai Sha, TNC Conservation Officer and member of a local herder family

OUTPUT



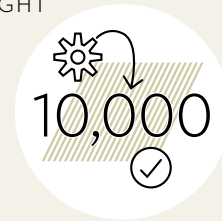
Over 13,000 participants have received training in GSM through local coordinators who are trusted by the close-knit community.

OUTCOME



TNC aims to form up to **6 cooperatives** involving poor and rich herding families to mitigate herding risks and equitably share economic benefits of GSM.

HIGHLIGHT



GSM has already been implemented on **over 10,000 hectares of grassland** in spring and summer of 2022 (167% of yearly target).

Restoring the grasslands for livestock herders

- With a national GINI-coefficient of 0.502 (2022), China’s wealth gap is often described in terms of urban versus rural.
- Inner Mongolia is a rural autonomous region where herding families depend on the country’s grasslands for their livelihoods.
- 90% of Inner Mongolia’s grasslands are degraded due to climate change and overgrazing.
- With the Julius Baer Foundation’s support, TNC aims to implement GSM on 10,000 ha of grassland, restoring its health and resilience.
- The goal is to train 4,000 herders from disadvantaged and wealthy families in GSM.
- Three cooperatives consisting of fourteen small and established herder families are already exploring the cooperative mechanisms. The goal is to establish five more cooperatives throughout the region.
- To gain the trust of herding communities, TNC is training one to two lead coordinators per region, who in turn train 10–15 local herders to become GSM coordinators. Their demonstration of GSM’s benefits to their community has been key to a strong rollout.

About TNC

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) operates in over 79 countries and territories. Its mission is to conserve the lands and waters on which all life depends. TNC is committed to inclusive and equitable conservation that benefits the local and indigenous communities whose wellbeing and livelihoods are disproportionately affected by climate change and degraded natural resources.



More information about The Nature Conservancy and their project in Inner Mongolia: nature.org

Do you feel inspired by The Nature Conservancy project and would like to support it? Please do not hesitate to get in touch with us! We would love an exchange.



Find out more about us and our projects online or write us at foundation@juliusbaer.com

Julius Baer Foundation

Established in 1965 by Walter J. Bär (1895–1970), the grant Foundation of Bank Julius Baer is focused on reducing wealth inequality. It convenes leading thinkers and actors on the topic and supports projects around the globe where the privileged and disadvantaged work together towards a world of equal opportunities.

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