



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Amendment #02 Issue Date:

May 5, 2024

Application Due Date:

May 27, 2024, IST 11:59 pm IST

Subject: **Amendment#02** Notice of Funding Opportunity Number: **72038624RFA00002**

Program Title: Strengthening Economic and Socio-Cultural Resilience of Tibetan Communities in South Asia

Federal Assistance Listing Number: 98.001

Ladies/Gentlemen:

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is seeking Draft Program Description from qualified entities to implement the Strengthening Economic and Socio-Cultural Resilience of Tibetan Communities in South Asia program by means of a Cooperative Agreement assistance award. Eligibility is open to all U.S., local, and international non-governmental organizations.

USAID intends to make an award to the applicant(s) who best meets the objectives of this funding opportunity based on the merit review criteria described in this NOFO subject to a risk assessment. Eligible parties interested in submitting an application are encouraged to read this NOFO thoroughly to understand the type of program sought, application submission requirements and selection process.

Subject to the availability of funds, USAID anticipates making not more than four direct awards to One Consortium Partner Arrangement (one award to a Lead Prime Implementing Partner and three direct (Prime) awards) to the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)) as a result of this NOFO to the applicants who best satisfies the NOFO requirements.

To be eligible for the award, the applicant(s) must provide all information as required in this NOFO and meet eligibility standards in Section C of this NOFO. This funding opportunity is posted on www.grants.gov, and may be amended. It is the responsibility of the applicant to regularly check the website to ensure they have the latest information pertaining to this notice of funding opportunity and to ensure that the NOFO has been received from the internet in its entirety.

USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion process. If you have difficulty registering on www.grants.gov or accessing the NOFO, please contact the Grants.gov Helpdesk at 1-800-518-4726 or via email at support@grants.gov for technical assistance.

USAID may not award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable unique entity identifier and System for Award Management (SAM) requirements detailed in Section D.5.5. The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin registration early in the process.

Please note: USAID email server cannot handle more than 25 MBs of attachments per email. The applicant must divide the submission into more than one email, if necessary, but please number the emails in the subject line (i.e. Email 1 of 3). In the event of technical difficulties, please contact USAID at the email address indiarco@usaid.gov.

Issuance of this notice of funding opportunity does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Government nor does it commit the Government to pay for any costs incurred in preparation or submission of comments/suggestions or an application. Applications are submitted at the risk of the applicant. All preparation and submission costs are at the applicant's expense.

Thank you for your interest in USAID programs.

Sincerely,

Cheryl Hodge-Snead
Supervisory Agreement Officer

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SECTION A: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Strengthening Economic and Socio-Cultural Resilience of Tibetan Communities in South Asia

A.1 Authorizing Legislation:

This funding opportunity is authorized under the Foreign Assistance Act (FAA) of 1961, as amended. The resulting award will be subject to 2 CFR 200 – Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, and USAID’s supplement, 2 CFR 700, as well as the additional requirements found in Section F.

A.2 Executive Summary:

The ‘*Strengthening Economic and Socio-Cultural Resilience of Tibetan Communities in South Asia*’ activity intends to (i) strengthen the economic resilience of the Tibetan communities in South Asia by improving access to economically secure careers and employment/livelihood opportunities, (ii) enhance the social resilience of the Tibetan communities by strengthening access to quality health care, elder care and other social services, and (iii) promote and preserve Tibetan language and culture. This five-year, \$35 million activity will work in partnership with the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), the private sector and other key stakeholders as further described below.

Consortium Arrangement: This includes four direct awards to One Consortium Partner Arrangement (one award to a Lead Prime Implementing Partner (LPIP) and three direct (Prime) awards to the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)) in the form of Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs). FAAs are restricted to a three year period. However, if additional time is required for implementation, then the FAA will be structured to include a “renewal award” of two additional years. This structure will be finalized during co-creation.

Transition Award. A transition award is an assistance award to a local entity or locally established partner (collectively referred to as local subrecipients) that is or has been a subrecipient under a USAID assistance award. The transition award process is designed to assist local subrecipients to enhance their capabilities to receive assistance awards from USAID. The LPIP is required to develop and/or strengthen the capacity of CTA to receive direct assistance awards from USAID or other donors through the issuance of subawards to the CTA to carry out a distinct portion of the work described in the program description. The LPIP is required to monitor the subrecipient and is ultimately responsible for the subrecipient’s work. It is USAID’s intent to make a transition award to a qualified local subrecipient, however, there is no guarantee that USAID will make a transition award and decisions related to issuing a transition award and the selection of transition award recipients are solely within USAID’s discretion.

Further, the LPIP of the Consortium will be required to provide mentoring and capacity-strengthening to the consortium partners and sub-recipients to help develop their capacity to directly receive and implement USAID awards.

A.3. PROGRAM FRAMEWORK

A.3.1 Purpose of the Proposed Activity:

Through the ‘*Strengthening Economic and Socio-Cultural Resilience of the Tibetan Communities in South Asia*’ activity, USAID/India will partner with the CTA to achieve the three following sustainable outcomes in South Asia, specifically in India and Nepal¹: (i) Economic growth and livelihood opportunities for Tibetan communities strengthened; (ii) Social resilience of Tibetan communities improved; and (iii) Cultural resilience of Tibetan communities enhanced.

A.3.2 Background:

Since 1959, Tibetans in exile, primarily in India and Nepal, have made remarkable strides to establish systems and networks to maintain cultural resilience and social connectivity for a widely dispersed diaspora across the world. Over 65 years in exile, the community has achieved transformations in education; founded a democratic government in exile – the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA); created settlements in India, Nepal, and Bhutan¹; and re-established world heritage religious and cultural institutions.

The CTA is a democratically elected body that represents and connects the Tibetan diaspora spread across 42 countries. The CTA currently operates under a policy framework known as the “Five-Fifty Vision”. This vision calls for maximizing the efforts to resolve the Tibet issue in five years while ensuring the CTA’s resilience to sustain the Tibetan freedom struggle and preserving Tibetan culture for the next fifty years if needed. The Five-Fifty Vision is concerned with sustaining Tibetan culture, strengthening Tibetan education, improving Tibetan public health, and improving the economic development of the Tibetan exile community. In short, it is about building the resilience of the Tibetan community.

Since 2003, USAID has worked with Tibetan communities throughout Asia. In India and Nepal, USAID programming supports livelihood development, cultural resilience, health and education initiatives, and capacity building of the CTA.

In 2023, the CTA, with USAID support, developed a Vision Paper (2021-2026) that elevates the importance of economically vibrant, socially cohesive Tibetan settlements, and a fine-tuned Tibetan education system to sustain cultural continuity.²

A.3.3 Challenges:

The Tibetan population in India, Nepal, and Bhutan³ currently number around 128,000. The demographics of the Tibetan communities in South Asia are changing. With a declining fertility rate, fewer refugee youth crossing the border from the PRC, and out-migration of youth from South Asia to Europe and North America, the Tibetan population in India and Nepal is aging, resulting in a larger proportion of elderly/dependents and fewer youth. Tibetan communities are also very diverse in their characteristics: urban vs. rural, remote/disconnected vs. close to markets, and varying employment opportunities and types of livelihood options.

Current Situation for Tibetans Inside Nepal⁴: From 1959 until 1995, Nepal was a secure destination or transit stop for thousands of Tibetan refugees fleeing Chinese repression. The Nepali government provided asylum to Tibetans seeking refuge and issued them Refugee Cards, enabling them to access basic amenities. According to a recent report the issuance of Refugee Cards ended in 1996

¹ While there is a small Tibetan population in Bhutan as well, USAID does not currently operate Tibet programming in Bhutan and at this point it is not envisaged that this activity will work in Bhutan.

² Securing Tibet’s Future: Vision Paper, The 16th Kashag 2021-2026, Central Tibetan Administration

³ The number of Tibetans in Bhutan is estimated at around 2,000. At this time it is not envisaged that this activity will work in Bhutan.

⁴ *Languishing in Limbo: Tibetan Refugees in Nepal*, Tibetan Centre for Human Rights and Democracy (TCHRD), 2023

at which point refugees no longer had any legal status and were denied rights such as freedom of movement, expression, and religion. They were further cut off from basic services such as travel permissions, access to financial institutions, formal employment, health care, and education. Since the Nepal government has embraced the “One China” policy - which acknowledges the fate of Tibet as an internal issue of the PRC, Tibetan communities in Nepal have been increasingly targeted by PRC-led surveillance and interference and government officials in Nepal have increasingly limited Tibetan cultural and religious public celebrations, particularly around special holidays and events such as Lhosar and the Dalai Lama’s birthday. Other expressions deemed to be political and/or anti-PRC in nature, such as displaying the Tibetan flag, have at times been met with repressive action by government actors.

While extradition to China of Tibetan refugees in Nepal has yet to occur, the 2019 Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters (MLAT), which facilitates deportation of Tibetans illegally crossing into Nepal dramatically increases the vulnerability of Tibetan refugees, even those who have lived in Nepal for many years.

Currently, the population of Tibetan refugees in Nepal falls between 8,000-10,000. An exact number is difficult to determine given the political climate, the remoteness of many of the 13 Tibetan settlement communities, and the high rate of out-migration due to the lack of legal status and socioeconomic opportunities in Nepal.

Current Situation for Tibetans Inside India⁵: There are approximately 100,000 Tibetans residing in India, living in almost 40 settlements spread across the country. The settlements are diverse in their locations, ease of access, connections with markets, and types of livelihood options. In 2014, the Government of India (GoI) passed the Tibetan Rehabilitation Policy, permitting Tibetan refugees to undertake any economic activity for which they are professionally qualified. The rehabilitation agenda includes three important programs: a) promoting education among the exile population; b) building a firm culture of democracy; and c) paving the way for self-reliance. Despite the support provided by India to the Tibetan refugee population, the Tibetan community in India faces numerous challenges. These include (i) the succession of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the uncertainty of their long-term status in India; (ii) decreased inflow of Tibetans from the plateau and an increased outmigration from the settlements, including migration of Tibetan youth to the West and to urban centers within India; (iii) declining fertility rate in the community leading to a shift in demographics towards an aging population; and (iv) a severe lack of economic opportunities - many of the Tibetans rely on small scale agriculture (on land which they do not own) or seasonal, transitory trading work, both of which are precarious livelihoods. All these factors are threats to the cultural continuity and sustainability of the Tibetan community.

In both India and Nepal, increasing out-migration has led to contracted settlement economies, reducing opportunities for livelihoods and employment, especially for the new generation of educated youth who have competitive employment skills. The on-going viability of the Tibetan cooperative model, a mainstay of the early settlement economies, is uncertain due to its traditional approach and limited markets. Considering these existential challenges, enhancing the ability of the Tibetan exile population to pursue more productive livelihood strategies and sustain the vitality of their communities has become a critical priority of the CTA.

The social and cultural resilience of the Tibetan communities is also being threatened by out-migration to the West and the increasingly dispersed nature of the communities. How to address the social needs of the communities (such as education, healthcare, and elder care) and promote and preserve Tibetan language and culture is an important question that the CTA is trying to

⁵ See Attachment 2: THE TIBETAN COMMUNITY IN INDIA & NEPAL: CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES SCOPING STUDY

address.

The CTA has made efforts to improve livelihood opportunities, enhance social resilience, and preserve the culture of the Tibetan community. Establishment of the Tibetan Entrepreneurship Development (TED) Initiative, Tibetan Chamber of Commerce, Tibet Museum, the sprawling monasteries of South India, the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts in Dharamsala, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives and Tibetan schools are a few such examples. Going forward, it will be important for donor partners and non-CTA institutions to work closely with the CTA to align with CTA's Vision Paper for the next five years.

Tibetan society, like many other traditional societies, has long-standing gender norms that shape the experiences of women and men. These norms are informed by the cultural beliefs, religious values, and historical practices influencing traditional views on the status of women in Tibetan society. Cultural traditions and religious beliefs underpinning gender biases continue to influence the experiences of Tibetan women and men both in India and diaspora. Despite the progress in some areas, significant challenges remain in achieving equal rights and opportunities for women and girls.

A.4. THEORY OF CHANGE:

USAID's illustrative theory of change for the activity holds that:

IF the Tibetans in South Asia, particularly the youth, are able to engage in careers or livelihood opportunities that provide economic security;

IF the Tibetan diaspora community in South Asia has enhanced, equitable and affordable access to health and elder care services;

AND IF an enabling environment is created for Tibetan culture, language, values, and practices to thrive, to be shared, and to be preserved for future generations;

THEN the Tibetan community in South Asia will be more economically, socially and culturally resilient and self-reliant.

A.5. KEY COMPONENTS:

The objective of this activity is to strengthen the economic, social, and cultural resilience of the Tibetan communities in South Asia, specifically in India and Nepal through the following components.

Component 1: Economic Growth and Career / Livelihood Opportunities Strengthened

Addressing the economic sustainability of Tibetan communities in South Asia emerged as one of the highest priority areas in consultations undertaken for this design effort. There are numerous challenges that Tibetans in South Asia face related to livelihoods, employment options and the overall economic growth and resilience of the communities.

Small-holder farming is still a major source of livelihoods, especially in the southern parts of India and in the more remote settlements. However, there are a number of challenges to agriculture as a sustainable livelihood. Land is not owned but leased which creates uncertainty about future land status and is a disincentive to invest in improvements. The remoteness of some

settlements create difficulties for market linkages for both inputs and outputs and for extension services. Traditionally, the focus has been mostly on grains as opposed to cash crops - cash crops are riskier and require more investment but yield higher incomes. Access to finance is also problematic. Finally, Tibetan youth are increasingly disinterested in traditional farming as a livelihood.

Small scale retail business and trading (“sweater sellers”) has been another major source of livelihoods. Challenges include access to finance (including a lack of documentation or seasonality of income which makes it difficult to get loans) and an often-precarious existence as traders need to make enough income for the entire year from just 4 to 5 months.

Employment opportunities in other sectors such as manufacturing, information and communication technology, and services are impacted by a variety of factors such as appropriate levels and types of education/skills, geographic location of the job opportunities, and awareness of such opportunities.

Tibetans in Nepal face additional challenges. While settlements in Nepal were once more robust, outmigration to Kathmandu and outside of Nepal has had a distinct impact, diminishing settlement populations and undermining the robustness of any profit making settlement based businesses. Small scale settlement-based businesses (restaurants, tailoring, souvenir shops) are largely run by middle to older generation refugees who may lack higher education opportunities and are seeking small scale livelihood solutions close to their homes. Lack of legal documentation limits Tibetan refugee access to financial resources (banking and loans) and the registration of businesses, further increasing financial insecurity and deterring larger investments and growth.

Youth looking for other opportunities are severely constrained by lack of legal documentation that often prevents them from seeking employment in the broader job market. Even when youth obtain college or specialized degrees, lack of documentation prevents them from working in those fields in Nepal and/or obtaining licenses (ie: doctors, nurses, lawyers).

One area that cuts across both the economic and social resilience aspects is access to housing. There are many Tibetan refugee families currently in India and Nepal that lack basic housing or live in insecure situations. This lack of housing/land negatively impacts their ability to engage in secure livelihood activities, access health and education services, and participate fully in the Tibetan community. While constructing housing is outside the scope of this activity there are ways that this activity can help address this issue. The activity should look at innovative ideas that link economic opportunities to housing incentive programs and engage potential employers in providing housing. Other ideas and approaches to housing should be considered, including those mentioned in the social resilience section below.

This component of the activity will need to consider all of these challenges faced by the Tibetan community in engaging in careers / sustainable livelihoods that provide economic security. The proposed initiative is intended to enhance the ability of the Tibetan exile population to pursue more productive and economically secure careers / livelihood strategies. Targeted interventions will need to focus on making transformative changes in the traditional livelihoods of the settlements as well as promoting new employment and career opportunities, particularly for youth. This will need to include, but is not limited to:

- addressing the insecurity and low income potential that characterizes much of the current livelihoods;
- improving access to secondary/higher education and/or vocational training and workforce development opportunities as well as platforms or resources that can link youth to job-markets after obtaining their degrees or training certificates;
- improving access to finance;
- improving market linkages and private sector partnerships;
- promoting alternative sources of employment and economic growth in communities such as cultural tourism.

Any other critical factors related to developing thriving settlement economies as well as employment and livelihood options for Tibetans outside of the settlements must be considered. Since the Tibetan settlements are scattered over multiple different geographies in India and Nepal that have different strengths and face distinctive challenges, the activity will need to explore customized innovative solutions for different areas.

Given the additional constraints faced by Tibetan youth in Nepal when accessing higher education and employment opportunities, the activity will need to explore a different set of creative solutions to increase access to higher education and career/employment opportunities (inside as well as outside of Nepal) for Tibetans in Nepal.

Illustrative results of this component include:

- Increased number of Tibetan youth (equal number of men and women) accessing secondary/higher education or vocational training as a result of USG support;
- Improved access to finance for Tibetan entrepreneurs in India and Nepal;
- Increased number of Tibetan youth, men and women parity, linked to employment opportunities as a result of USG supported career counseling platforms;
- Financial literacy enhanced for Tibetan entrepreneurs / small businesses;
- Public-private partnerships strengthened for quick access to expertise, market insights, and specialized training in line with market demands;
- Transitioning from traditional to modern agricultural systems (including moving to higher value crops or value addition agri-business);
- Improve ICT and STEM in education for stronger teaching and learning outcomes that would open up livelihood opportunities;
- Community driven entrepreneurship, Tibetan cooperatives, or other forms of business such as cultural tourism fostered for creating livelihood opportunities and ensuring financial sustainability.

Component 2: Social Resilience of Tibetan Communities Enhanced

Since its inception in 1959, the CTA has played a pivotal role in connecting the Tibetan diaspora community and delivering services across South Asia. This has included support for a broad based Tibetan school system, a health system that serves more than 75,000 Tibetans annually and a network of elder homes and welfare services that provide a safety net for the most vulnerable. However, changing demographics and out-migration have created new challenges for the CTA's

ability to continue providing these types of services.

Tibetans in India and Nepal face unique public health challenges. Certain health conditions and diseases such as Hepatitis B, TB, hypertension, and diabetes are common. Mental health issues are one of the major problems emerging across all sub-population groups. Almost 18 percent of the youth in one study conducted by CTA reported mild to high levels of depression, and substance abuse among the male youth is as high as 36 percent, but there is no intervention to address the problems. Issues related to reproductive and sexual health, sexually transmitted infections, and reproductive tract infections are also not receiving adequate prioritization.

The current Tibetan health care delivery system, which includes both allopathic and traditional Tibetan medicine, is facing new challenges with new health priorities and an aging population. In addition, Tibetan communities in India have varying degrees of access to the Indian health care system and varying degrees of quality in that system in different geographies. The Tibetan population in Nepal is even more vulnerable in terms of health issues due to the lack of official refugee status which prevents access to health services in the public health system. It is also more challenging to plan and implement health programs and schemes in Nepal due to the absence of political support from the government of Nepal. The isolation of geographically remote settlements presents additional challenges, in particular the elderly, to receiving health services.

While the rate of exodus of Tibetans from the PRC has been substantially diminished in recent years, increased repression of Tibetans in the PRC could lead to increased numbers of Tibetans fleeing from the PRC. The health system will need to be ready to handle the trauma-induced care that this would require.

With increasing healthcare costs, a changing demographic and competing needs for scarce resources, this component of the activity will need to work closely with the CTA in considering new and innovative solutions tailored to specific contexts. These may include telehealth, new insurance models, and increasing the use of the host country systems when available. The activity will need to consider the increasingly important areas of mental health services and elder care.

As mentioned above, there are a large number of Tibetan refugee households already in India and Nepal that lack basic housing or live in very precarious situations. Additionally, new refugees continue to arrive from Tibet each year and need places to live. This vulnerability impacts the social resilience of Tibetan refugees and communities. This activity should consider ways to help address this problem. Some examples could include but are not limited to: (i) conduct a landscape assessment of donors who can support housing initiatives; (ii) help the CTA develop a forward-looking strategy to share with possible donors/funders and other stakeholders related to housing needs; and (iii) build the capacity of CTA staff to advocate and work with the GOI and potential donors on housing for vulnerable Tibetan families.

As mentioned below under “guiding principles” gender and social inclusion is a critical aspect for this activity. As such, the activity is expected to assess and address issues including but not limited to gender based violence and discrimination or marginalization based on gender or sexual orientation.

Illustrative results of this component could include:

- Access to quality, cost-effective healthcare improved;
- Access to mental health and elder care services improved;
- Improved health education and awareness on prevention and control of various diseases like Hepatitis B, tuberculosis, lifestyle related non-communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health, etc.

- Strengthened community health insurance to provide extended coverage of Tibetans under various health schemes.
- Health Management and Information System (HMIS) strengthened

Component 3: Cultural Resilience of Tibetan Communities Strengthened

The sustainability of the Tibetan community lies in the survival, protection and preservation of Tibet's unique cultural heritage. However, Tibetan language and culture stands threatened by the actions of the PRC. Today, 292 monasteries and 17 nunneries in India and Nepal, along with institutes such as TIPA and Norbulingka Institute, and the Tibetan language schools constitute the key structural foundations of Tibetan language and cultural preservation. Concrete and coordinated efforts to preserve cultural artifacts and promote and preserve Tibetan language and culture more broadly must be made, not only for the benefit of the Tibetan population, but also for the benefit of the world.

Some of the issues that the activity will need to address include but are not limited to the sustainability of cultural institutions, promoting cultural linkages within and outside of the broader Tibetan diaspora community, promoting appropriate forms of culture based tourism, and coordinating with other efforts being undertaken to preserve Tibetan culture and cultural artifacts. Another aspect to consider is expanding the connectivity, community, and partnership building between Tibetans and other himalayan communities through the promotion of Tibetan culture and language training or other similar activities.

Promoting Tibetan language learning among children/youth is a critical part of maintaining, preserving and promoting Tibetan language and culture. The CTA has played a pivotal role in supporting a Tibetan education system. From the beginning, Tibetan schools were established to provide quality education to Tibetan children in the Tibetan language. Today's Tibetan education system in South Asia struggles to remain technically current and culturally relevant, while grappling with a structurally complex system delivering services to a shrinking student population.

The activity will need to work closely with the CTA and the Tibetan education system to explore innovative models and solutions for ensuring sustainable access to quality education, especially in the Tibetan language, given these constraints. Given the additional constraints faced by Tibetan students accessing quality education in Nepal, the activity will need to explore a different set of creative solutions to increase access to quality education at all levels for Tibetans living in Nepal.

Illustrative results of this component could include:

- Tibetan cultural tourism promoted;
- Tibetan performing and visual arts promoted and preserved (including building the sustainability of cultural institutions);
- Models (including public-private partnerships) explored to promote Tibetan handicrafts in India, Nepal, and the wider diaspora;
- Financially sustainable models of education (accessible for people with disability as well) in Tibetan language promoted;
- Sustainability of the Tibetan language ensured through continued investments in literary publications at all levels.
- Feasibility for enhanced school immersion programs explored for greater exposure of Tibetan diaspora to Tibetan language and culture.

A.6. GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS:

Geographically, the activity shall focus on all the Tibetan communities in India and Nepal by engaging with all the relevant stakeholders and ensuring that they coordinate and align with the

priorities of the Central Tibetan Administration. However, given the dramatically different characteristics and needs of the settlements across India and Nepal, the activity will have to work closely with the CTA and other stakeholders to determine the best solutions for the different situations.

A.7. LINK TO MISSION STRATEGY:

USAID/India has recently updated its results framework. This activity will directly address USAID/India's *Development Objective 2: Systems for Inclusive Social and Economic Prosperity Enhanced* under the *Intermediate Result: Economic Risks to Vulnerable Populations Mitigated*.

A.8. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

A 8.1. Youth

Youth are often the champions of social change and with access to the right opportunities and resources, can drive immense progress in their societies. Youth are a critical part of the Tibetan community and can be a driver for the social resilience of the community if they have the agency, rights, influence, and opportunities to not only pursue their own goals and ambitions but also contribute to the broader community. The activity should pursue a positive youth development approach that actively engages youth in the development and implementation of the programming. This should include but not be limited to increasing the advocacy skills and capacity of youth and youth led organizations to address issues that are important to them.

A.8.2. Gender and social inclusion:

As per USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment 2023 (GEWE 2023) policy, Agency's implementation guidance in ADS 205, and USAID/India's priorities, the proposed activity will intentionally and meaningfully include and engage all populations and their voices for a wider impact. This activity will also align its activity implementation with USAID's Policy Paper on Disability (being updated), Promoting the Rights of Indigenous Peoples 2020 Policy (PRO-IP Policy), LGBTQI+ Policy and Youth Policy 2022. The Policies reflect USAID's commitment to supporting inclusive and sustainable development and advancing human dignity by protecting and empowering every social segment of the society. These policies position USAID to strengthen and expand upon decades of support it has committed to marginalized and underrepresented groups around the world. This activity will (i) build capacity of Tibetan youth (both women and men), people with disabilities, and other stakeholders on vocational and entrepreneurial skills, thereby enhancing their scope of employability; (ii) ensure that both Tibetan men and women are able to equally access livelihood opportunities, ensure women leaders are empowered in the creation of innovative economic opportunities, and (iii) promote equal access across all genders to improved education and health facilities, ensuring no disparity in knowledge management and knowledge sharing. (Please refer to the attached detailed gender analysis)

A.8.3. Sustainability and self-reliance:

USAID defines sustainability as the activity's outputs and outcomes continuing after the activity and its associated donor funding have ended. This activity will create sustainable approaches that will contribute towards strengthening the resilience of the Tibetans aligned with the development agenda of the Tibetan administration and the vision of His Holiness. Analysis indicates that while self-reliance is achievable over time, full sustainability of the activity will be possible only if various stakeholders enter into multi-stakeholder partnerships, leverage other resources, and build upon existing best practices to demonstrate sustainable impact and progress beyond programs. The

applicant will need to consider innovative ways to build sustainability into the various aspects of the activity from its inception.

A.8.4. Collaboration and Coordination:

USAID envisions a multi-stakeholder partnership approach to implement the proposed activity. The implementing partner will need to work closely with the Central Tibetan Administration, the settlement offices across India and Nepal, and Tibetan institutions to ensure that development programming aligns with the priorities outlined in the CTA's Vision Paper. The activity will also need to leverage the expertise of local actors through close coordination with Tibetan and other NGOs, private sector entities and CSOs. The selected Prime Implementing Partner will be expected to coordinate and work closely with the CTA on all aspects of the activity under this cooperative agreement. Partnerships with other organizations having expertise in any of the three components is highly encouraged.

A.8.5. Localization:

USAID has a renewed commitment to localization with a focus on shifting leadership, decision-making, and implementation to local people and institutions who possess the capability, connectedness, and credibility to drive change in their own countries and communities. To the greatest extent possible this activity should look to leverage the expertise of Tibetans and Tibetan institutions in the design and implementation of the work that will benefit their communities.

In addition, recognizing that the bar for qualifying for direct awards with USAID can be quite high for many new or local actors, the Lead Prime Implementing Partner of the Consortium award will be required to provide mentoring and capacity-strengthening to the other consortium partners and sub-recipients to help develop their capacity to directly receive and implement USAID awards.

A.8.6. Systemic change:

The activity will need to address systemic issues to transform structures, mindsets, power dynamics, and promote the long-term resilience and self-reliance of the Tibetan community in South Asia with a diverse group of actors; civil society, government, and the private sector. Where possible, activity interventions should look to incorporate aspects of capacity building of the CTA with a goal to transfer the approach to CTA and other institutions for scale up.

A.8.7. Innovation:

The activity should foster ecosystems and relationships to design and develop new alternative solutions, approaches and strategies across all aspects of the programming that will expand program reach, improve cost-effectiveness, and increase sustainability.

A.8.8 Illustrative Indicators:

- Increased number of Tibetan youth accessing higher education or vocational training as a result of USG support;
- Improved access to finance for Tibetan entrepreneurs in India and Nepal;
- Increased number of Tibetan youth linked to employment opportunities as a result of USG supported career counseling platforms;
- Financial literacy enhanced for Tibetan entrepreneurs / small businesses;
- Public-private partnerships strengthened for quick access to expertise, market insights, and specialized training in line with market demands;
- Modern scientific and technological innovations adapted for transitioning from traditional to modern agricultural systems (including moving to higher value crops or value addition

- agri-business);
- Community driven entrepreneurship, Tibetan cooperatives, or other forms of business such as cultural tourism fostered for creating livelihood opportunities and ensuring financial sustainability;
 - Access to quality, cost-effective healthcare improved;
 - Access to mental health and elder care services improved;
 - Improved health education and awareness on prevention and control of various diseases like Hepatitis B, tuberculosis, lifestyle related non-communicable diseases, sexual and reproductive health, etc.;
 - Strengthened community health insurance to provide extended coverage of Tibetans under various health schemes;
 - Health Management and Information System (HMIS) strengthened;
 - Tibetan cultural tourism promoted;
 - Tibetan performing and visual arts promoted and preserved (including building the sustainability of cultural institutions);
 - Models (including public-private partnerships) explored to promote Tibetan handicrafts in India, Nepal, and the wider diaspora;
 - Financially sustainable models of education in Tibetan language promoted;
 - Sustainability of the Tibetan language ensured through continued investments in literary publications at all levels.
 - Feasibility for enhanced school immersion programs explored for greater exposure of Tibetan diaspora to Tibetan language and culture.
 - Gender 2: Percentage of female participants in USG-assisted programs designed to increase access to productive economic resources (assets, credit, income or employment)

[END OF SECTION A]

SECTION B: FEDERAL AWARD INFORMATION

B.1. Estimate of Funds Available and Number of Awards Contemplated

USAID intends to making not more than four direct awards to **One Consortium Partner Arrangement (one award to a Lead Prime Implementing Partner and three direct (Prime) awards** to the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)) to the consortium that clearly demonstrate an arrangement that can deliver all the expected results as a whole and as per the objectives outlined in Section A and the requirements further described in Section D. Subject to funding availability and at the discretion of the Agency, USAID intends to provide US\$35,000,000 in total USAID funding over a five-year period. USAID reserves the right to change funding amounts and terms of the resulting Cooperative Agreement as a result of availability of funds and U.S. Government requirements.

Consortium Arrangement: This includes four direct awards to One Consortium Partner Arrangement (one award to a Lead Prime Implementing Partner (LPIP) and three direct (Prime) awards to the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA)) in the form of Fixed Amount Awards (FAAs). FAAs are restricted to a three year period. However, if additional time is required for implementation, then the FAA will be structured to include a “renewal award” of two additional years. This structure will be finalized during co-creation.

B.2. Expected Performance Indicators, Targets, Baseline Data, and Data Collection

USAID/India intends for the activity to be subject to rigorous monitoring and evaluation, to (a) ensure the intended results and impact are being generated, and (b) inform the activity management if, and when, course corrections may be necessary. The recipient should also conduct several periodic analyses to better understand certain aspects and issues within the award’s domain.

Performance monitoring and evaluation will be included by the Applicant while designing their technical approach. USAID may conduct additional monitoring and evaluation through external contract(s). A detailed Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) design will be developed upon completion of the design and will include appropriate Standard Foreign Assistance Indicators (F indicators).

USAID/India recognizes that development efforts yield positive change more quickly if they are coordinated and collaborative, test promising new approaches in a continuous search for improvement, and build on what works, while eliminating what does not. The recipient must therefore implement a Collaborating, Learning and Adaptation (CLA) approach to continuously assess the activity’s causal pathways, target outcomes, and adjust the interventions and approach as necessary to yield the most effective course of action.

Please refer to the illustrative indicators listed in Section A.8.8.

B.3. Start Date and Period of Performance for Federal Awards

The anticipated period of performance is for Five Years **for the Lead Prime Implementing Partner and Fixed-Amount Awards with an initial three year period and a renewal period of up to two years for the other three consortium partners.** The estimated start date will be upon the issuance of the awards by the Agreement Officer.

B.4. Substantial Involvement

In accordance with ADS 303.3.11, USAID will remain substantially involved over the life of the Cooperative Agreement to assist the Recipient in achieving the expected outcomes and results of the program. Some examples of potential areas of substantial involvement during performance include the following:

- Approval of recipient's implementation plans during performance.
- Approval of key recipient personnel ; and
- Joint participation will be necessary to ensure achievement of key objectives during the performance of the activity.
- Direction or redirection of work of consortium members

NOTE: This Substantial Involvement section is subject to change following the Co-Creation Workshop and submission of the Final Application Phase.

B.5. Authorized Geographic Code

The authorized geographic code for the procurement of services and commodities is 937. Code 937 is defined as the United States, the recipient country, and developing countries, but excluding any country that is a prohibited source. There are currently no prohibited source countries, but the list is updated regularly and can be found here:

<http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1864/310mac.pdf>.

B.6. Nature of the Relationship between USAID and the Recipient

The principal purpose of the relationship with the Recipient and under the subject program is to transfer funds to accomplish a public purpose of support or stimulation of the Strengthening Economic and Socio-Cultural Resilience of Tibetan Communities in South Asia program which is authorized by Federal statute. The successful Recipient(s) will be responsible for ensuring the achievement of the program objectives and the efficient and effective administration of the award through the application of sound management practices. The Recipient(s) will assume responsibility for administering Federal funds in a manner consistent with underlying agreements, program objectives, and the terms and conditions of the Federal award.

[END OF SECTION B]

SECTION C: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

C.1. Eligible Applicants

Eligibility for this NOFO is open to all eligible and qualified U.S., local and international non-governmental entities. An organization may submit only one (1) application under this notice of funding opportunity. Applicants are encouraged to seek partnerships with the CTA in implementing and delivering on the components listed in Section A.5. Organizations may consider consortiums of no more than four partners and the applications must clearly demonstrate the activities that would be taken up, management and role of all the consortium partners. However, organizations participating as a member of a consortium may elect to participate in another consortium for a different Organization/Firm in response to this NOFO.

For direct awards to proposed local consortium partners, USAID reserves the right to determine the type of assistance instrument, for example, Cost reimbursement or Fixed Amount Award.

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. While for-profit organizations may participate, pursuant to 2 CFR 700.13(a)(1), Prohibition against Profit, no profit/fee will be paid to any entity/organization receiving or administering Federal financial assistance as a recipient or subrecipient (consortium partner). Applicant/recipient is responsible for complying with all applicable U.S. and Government of India laws and regulations.

USAID welcomes organizations that have not previously received financial assistance from USAID. Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply for federal financial assistance on the same basis as any other organization and are subject to the protections and requirements of Federal law.

C.2. Other

C.2.1. SAM REGISTRATION

Applicants must have successfully registered and/or contain an active registration in SAM (System for Award Management) prior to submitting a full application. Applicants must also provide a valid UEI number in the SF424 form to be submitted along with a full application. Applicants are advised to start the process now.

C.2.2 PRE-AWARD RISK ASSESSMENT

The Apparently Successful Applicant (ASA) will be responsible for achievement of the objectives outlined in the key components described in the NOFO. Thus, an ASA must be a responsible entity. Prior to making an award under this NOFO, USAID may perform a pre-award survey for organizations that are new to working with USAID or for organizations with outstanding audit findings to include those consortium partners requesting direct awards. Accounting systems, audit issues and management capability questions may be reviewed as part of this process. Depending on the result of the risk assessment, USAID may determine to execute the award, not execute the award, or award with “specific conditions” (2 CFR 200.207). If notified by USAID that a pre-award survey is necessary, applicants and/or consortium partners requesting direct awards must prepare in advance to

provide the required information and documents. A pre-award survey does not commit USAID to make an award to any organization.

The Agreement Officer (AO) will decide on whether to subject the ASA to a pre-award survey, and based on the results, will make a determination if the prospective recipient is a responsible entity, whether the prospective recipient has the necessary organization, experience, accounting, and operational controls, financial resources, and technical skills – or ability to obtain them – in order to achieve the objectives of the program and comply with the terms and conditions of the award. The Agreement Officer reserves the right to perform a pre-award survey for any entity.

[END OF SECTION C]

SECTION D: APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

D.1. Agency Points of Contact

Name: **Cheryl Hodge-Snead**
Title: **Agreement Officer**
Email: indiarco@usaid.gov

Name: **Charushila Lal**
Title: **Acquisition and Assistance Specialist**
Email: clal@usaid.gov

D.2. Questions and Answers

Questions regarding this NOFO should be submitted indiarco@usaid.gov, with a copy to clal@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Unless otherwise notified by an amendment to the NOFO, **no questions will be accepted after the due date.** Any information given to a prospective applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective applicants as an amendment to this NOFO, if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if the lack of it would be prejudicial to any other prospective applicant.

Applicants must not submit questions to any other USAID staff. All the submission of questions application files submitted must be compatible with Microsoft (MS) Office in a MS Windows environment and/or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf). The subject of each e-mail must read as follows: **NOFO # 72038624RFA00002**

D.3. General Content and Form of Application

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. This subsection addresses content requirements applying to this NOFO. Full Applications must be submitted by email to indiarco@usaid.gov with a copy to clal@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended.

Applicants are to review, understand and comply with all aspects of this NOFO and ensure all necessary documents are complete and received at USAID on time. **Failure to do so will result in the submission being considered non-responsive and will not be reviewed.** All submissions received by the stated deadlines in the NOFO and determined responsive will be reviewed in accordance with the review criteria contained in Section E of this NOFO.

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO for each phase and must be submitted in accordance with the instructions provided under Section D. Any erasures or other changes to the application must be initiated by the person signing the application. Applications signed by an agent on behalf of the applicant must be accompanied by evidence of that agent's authority unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the merit

review criteria. USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations.

Submissions must be in electronic format. Applicants' authorized representatives are to sign their names (manually or digitally) on the cover pages of their submissions, as well as in required certifications. For a submission to be considered timely, the electronic transmission must be submitted by email to indiarco@usaid.gov with a copy to clal@usaid.gov and received by USAID/India no later than the date and time indicated on the coversheet of the NOFO. USAID bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes associated with electronic submissions.

Applicants not selected for the consecutive phase will be notified at the end of each phase. Depending on the number of applicants, the AO may or may not respond to requests for additional information from unsuccessful applicants.

D.3.1. Overall Selection Process

Under this NOFO, there will be a **three-phased process** that is described below:

D.3.1.1 Phase 1 – Submission of Draft Program Description (DPD)

Acceptance/Conditional Acceptance of DPD: Applicants will be required to submit a DPD for initial review. All DPDs received in response to this NOFO will be evaluated by a USAID Merit Review Committee (MRC) utilizing the merit review criteria outlined in Section E. After all DPDs are evaluated, applicants whose DPD is **accepted (based on the Merit Review Criteria)** will proceed directly to Phase 2 – Co-creation. If the DPD is accepted, attendance at co-creation workshop will be approximately two-weeks after being notified that the applicant's DPD was accepted.

USAID reserves the right to **conditionally accept** DPDs in accordance with the criteria outlined in Section E and/or request the applicant/s to provide responses to the clarifying questions, and if required request the applicant to orally present DPD in-person/virtually. Afterwards, the applicant's DPD will be reviewed for acceptability and rated in accordance with the merit review criteria in Section E and the applicant will be invited for co-creation meeting.

The process ends for all applicants whose DPD was not accepted/conditionally accepted and no further consideration will be given to their application.

NOTE: No funding will be made to any applicant prior to the award of the Cooperative Agreement. The Applicants are responsible for all costs incurred prior to the award of the Cooperative Agreement, including costs incurred during all the phases. **Please note that USAID reserves the right to make no award under this NOFO at any stage of the process.**

D.3.1.2 Phase 2- Co-creation Meeting

Approximately two (2) weeks after notification of acceptable DPD, the applicant will be invited to attend an in-person co-creation meeting of 2-3 days with USAID and Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The purpose of the co-creation workshop is to fine tune a mutually sustainable Program Description using a participatory process that assumes some degree of shared power and decision

making and to define the relationships of the implementing and consortium partners and CTA to ensure a mutually agreeable relationship is incorporated into the award that will help to ensure successful implementation and obtaining the objectives outlined in the components in Section A of the NOFO. Participants in this co-creation workshop will include the applicant, USAID, and potentially other stakeholders such as representatives from CTA Departments. Specific details will be included in the invitational letter.

D.3.1.3 Phase 3 – Full Technical and Cost Applications

At the end of the co-creation workshop, the applicant will be requested to submit a full technical and detailed cost application. The full application will elaborate the project's theory of change and proposed key results and indicators. The full application also requires the applicant to complete specific USG forms and to provide additional information that USAID/India will need to move forward with an appropriate implementing instrument. The full application will be reviewed to ensure that all information clearly describes how the applicant will achieve the objectives as outlined in the components, the co-created Program Description, and as discussed during co-creation in determining to accept your application for award. USAID will continue to work with the applicant(s) to strengthen the Full Application, if additional information is required, prior to making an award.

D.4. Application Submission Procedures

Each applicant must furnish the information required by this NOFO. This subsection addresses content requirements applying to this NOFO. Please see subsections D.5 and D.6, below, for information on the content specific to the application.

Application must be submitted by email to indiarco@usaid.gov, with a copy to clal@usaid.gov no later than the date and time indicated on the cover letter, as amended. Email submissions must include **the NOFO number and applicant's name in the subject line heading**.

After sending the Application electronically, applicants should immediately check their own email to confirm that the attachments were indeed sent. If an applicant discovers an error in transmission, please send the material again and note in the subject line of the email that it is a "corrected" submission. Do not send the same email more than once unless there has been a change, and if so, please note that it is a "corrected" email.

Applicant(s) are reminded that e-mail is NOT instantaneous, and in some cases delays of several hours occur from transmission to receipt. Therefore, applicants are requested to send the application in sufficient time ahead of the deadline. For this NOFO, the initial point of entry to the government infrastructure is the USAID mail server.

There may be a problem with the receipt of *.zip files due to anti-virus software. Therefore, applicants are discouraged from sending files in this format as USAID/India cannot guarantee their acceptance by the internet server.

D.4.1 Application must comply with the following:

- USAID will not review any pages in excess of the page limits noted in the subsequent sections. Please ensure that applications comply with the page limitations;

- Application must be written in English;
- Use standard 8 ½” x 11”, single sided, single-spaced, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1” margins, left justification and headers and/or footers on each page including consecutive page numbers, date of submission, and applicant’s name;
- A 10-point font can be used for graphs and charts. Tables, however, must comply with the 12-point Times New Roman requirement;
- Submitted via Microsoft Word or PDF formats, except budget files which must be submitted in Microsoft Excel; and
- Applicants must review, understand, and comply with all aspects of this NOFO. Failure to do so may be considered as being non-responsive and may be evaluated accordingly. Applicants should retain a copy of the application and all enclosures for their records.

DO NOT SUBMIT: Promotional literature and materials regarding the Applicant or other unsolicited material.

D.4.2 Application Format

This section provides the Applicant(s) detail of the submission format. The Application must address the comments and instructions provided by USAID in this NOFO.

Applicants should also ensure that their application contains the following aspects:

- List of Acronyms (*does not count towards page limitation*)
- Table of Contents (*does not count towards page limitation*)

The Application can be no more than a maximum of **30 pages**, where the applicant provides a detailed response to the NOFO. Applicants must submit a Technical Application by the deadline specified in this NOFO. USAID will review Applications against merit review criteria detailed in Section E of this NOFO. The Application must include a cover page containing the following information:

D.4.2.1 Cover Page (*does not count towards page limitation*):

The application must include a cover page containing the following information:

- Proposed Activity Name/Title;
- Period of Performance (i.e. start date and end date);
- Total Amount of Funding Requested from USAID;
- Applicant Organization Name;
- Applicant Contact Person (name, phone, e-mail);
- Full Address for Applicant Organization;
- Type of Organization [please include certification of incorporation] (e.g., US. Non-US, multilateral, private, for-profit, nonprofit, etc) date of incorporation;
- Notice of Funding Opportunity number;
- (if Applicable) Name(s) of Partner(s) Organization(s)

Applicants may choose to submit a cover letter in addition to the cover pages, but it will serve only as a transmittal letter to the Agreement Officer. The cover letter will not be reviewed as part of the merit review criteria.

Include major sections and page numbering to easily cross-reference and identify the information below.

D.4.2.2. Draft Program Description (DPD): (18 pages)

The attached Program Description template is to be utilized to describe your organization's approach for tackling the challenges and objectives described in Section A of the NOFO. Collectively, these interventions are to achieve sustainable outcomes in; (i) Economic growth and livelihood opportunities for Tibetan communities strengthened; (ii) Social resilience of Tibetan communities improved; and (iii) Cultural resilience of Tibetan communities enhanced in South Asia, specifically in India and Nepal.

DPD must also address the following:

- Provide a broad framing and describe the organization's approach to addressing the challenges detailed in Section A of the NOFO.
- Describe the interventions the organization will take to meet the stated objectives in Section A of the NOFO and describe the anticipated results and/or impact of the proposed intervention.
- Provide a high-level narrative Theory of Change (ToC) that describes the logic behind how the proposed interventions will lead to the stated results and articulates underlying assumptions.
- Demonstrate an adaptable and flexible management approach based on a sound strategy to work with the CTA and other partners for leveraging synergies.

NOTE: CTA consortium partners are to submit a copy of their proposed program description per instructions included in Section D.4. - Application Submission Procedures.

Partnership and Coordination

- Describe your organization's relevant previous experiences, from the past five years, working on projects similar to the work described in Section A. As applicable, provide information on institutional capacity and strengths of consortium members.
- Demonstrate the expertise of your organization in working with the Tibetan communities and Central Tibetan Administration (CTA), and how you intend to leverage and build upon your lessons learned for the successful execution of the proposed activity.
- Describe how your proposed technical approach will partner with and leverage experience(s) from local Indian organizations including the private sector and Tibetan CSOs.
- Please elucidate a robust partnership model with relevant Departments of the Central Tibetan Administration and the settlement offices for ensuring seamless coordination and productive implementation of the activity.
- Clearly describe how you intend to coordinate and collaborate with the Tibetan CSOs and youth for reflecting their unique perspectives in the activity implementation.

D.4.2.3. Organizational Structure and Management Approach: (7 pages)

- Clearly describe the Organization Structure for this activity that shows the relationship within the team and between partners/consortium. The applicant is to list partner organizations, individual titles and roles. Those applicants seeking to serve as the Lead Prime Implementing Partner are to contact Mr. Thupten Rinzin, Senior Programme Manager, Social And Resource Development Fund (SARD) Department of Finance, Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) at pc@tibet.net to obtain the required information for the CTA's consortium awards.
- As stated in Section A.8.5, in line with USAID's commitment to localization, the

Consortium Lead for this award will be expected to provide mentoring and capacity-strengthening to the consortium partners and sub-recipients to help develop their capacity to directly receive and implement USAID awards.

- Provide a description of the management approach for this activity that shows the relationship within the team, subrecipients, and between the consortium partners. Applicants are encouraged to seek partnerships with the CTA in implementing and delivering on the objectives listed in Section A of this NOFO. As such, the applicant is to articulate the role of each member of the consortium and their respective contributions.
- Identify four to five positions that would be critical to accomplishing the outcomes outlined in the DPD and describe the qualifications for each role and why the role is critical to successful implementation of the project.
- Describe the innovative partnership strategies that you will undertake to achieve the results outlined in Section A of the NOFO.
- Demonstrate how you propose to engage integrated multi stakeholder partnerships to address the challenges outlined under each component in the NOFO.
- Clearly describe how you will leverage lessons learned and incorporate best practices from successful initiatives in similar fields.

D.4.2.4. Institutional Capacity (3 pages)

- Describe the institutional capacity – technical, managerial, and financial – to carry out the proposed intervention.
- Describe your organization’s relevant past experience related to improving the economic, social and cultural resilience of Tibetan refugee communities.
- Describe your experience with any successful examples from your experience that will demonstrate your capabilities in leading sustainable development efforts.

D.4.2.5 History of Performance: (2 pages)

The applicant must provide information regarding its recent history of performance for experience described for Institutional Capacity, for the past 5-years as follows:

- Name of the Awarding Organization;
- Award Number;
- Activity Title;
- A brief description of the activity;
- Period of Performance;
- Award Amount; and
- Name of at least two (2) updated professional contacts who most directly observed the work at the organization for which the service was performed with complete current contact information including telephone number, and e-mail address for each proposed individual.

If the applicant encountered problems on any of the referenced Awards, it may provide a short explanation and the corrective action taken. The applicant should not provide general information on its performance. USAID reserves the right to obtain relevant information concerning an applicant’s history of performance from any sources and may consider such information in its review of the applicant’s risk.

D.4.2.6 Name and Signature of authorized individual (*does not count towards page limitation*):

Any erasures or other changes to the concept paper must be initialed by the person signing. A concept paper signed by an agent on behalf of the applicant must be accompanied by evidence of that agent’s authority unless that evidence has been previously furnished to the issuing office.

D.5. PHASE 3 - REQUIREMENTS FOR A FULL APPLICATION (For Information Purpose Only)

NOTE: ONLY THOSE APPLICANT(S) WHO ARE SUCCESSFUL AT PHASE 2 WILL BE REQUESTED TO SUBMIT A FULL APPLICATION. NO FULL APPLICATION IS REQUIRED AT THIS TIME.

Please note additional requirements below that must be met prior to award and as part of the Full Application evaluation stage:

D.5.1 Business (cost) Application Format

NO Business (Cost) Application is Required at Phase 1 or 2. The following information is provided for **information purposes only** for the applicant(s) that will be required to submit a full application after successful co-creation at Phase 2.

D.5.2. Required Certifications and Assurances

The applicant must complete the following documents and submit a signed copy along with the application:

- (1) “Certifications, Assurances, Representations, and Other Statements of the Recipient” ADS 303mav document found at <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303mav>
- (2) Assurances for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424B)
- (3) Certificate of Compliance: Please submit a copy of your Certificate of Compliance if your organization’s systems have been certified by USAID/Washington’s Office of Acquisition and Assistance (M/OAA).

D.5.3. Prior Approvals in accordance with 2 CFR 200.407

Inclusion of an item of cost in the detailed application budget does not satisfy any requirements for prior approval by the Agency. If the applicant would like the award to reflect approval of any cost elements for which prior written approval is specifically required for allowability, the applicant must specify and justify that cost. See 2 CFR 200.407 for information regarding which cost elements require prior written approval.

D.5.4. Approval of Subawards

The applicant must submit information for all subawards that it wishes to have approved at the time of award. For each proposed subaward the applicant must provide the following:

- Name of organization
- Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not appear on the Treasury Department’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) list

- Confirmation that the subrecipient does not have active exclusions in the System for Award Management (SAM)
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not listed in the United Nations Security designation list
- Confirmation that the subrecipient is not suspended or debarred
- Confirmation that the applicant has completed a risk assessment of the subrecipient, in accordance with 2 CFR 200.332(b)
- Any negative findings as a result of the risk assessment and the applicant's plan for mitigation.

D.5.5. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and SAM Registration

Applicants must obtain a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and register in the System for Award Management (SAM) (<https://sam.gov/>) in order to be eligible to receive federal assistance, such as grants and cooperative agreements. Unless an exemption applies (see ADS 303maz), applicants must be registered in SAM prior to submitting an application for award for USAID's consideration. Recipients must maintain an active SAM registration while they have an active award. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or entity that is exempted from UEI/SAM requirements under 2 CFR 25.110) is required to:

1. Provide a valid UEI for the applicant and all proposed sub-recipients;
2. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application.
3. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency.

The registration process may take many weeks to complete. Therefore, applicants are encouraged to begin the process early. If an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements above by the time USAID is ready to make an award, USAID may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive an award and use that determination as a basis for making an award to another applicant.

Applicants can find additional resources for registering in SAM, including a Quick Start Guide and a video, on <https://sam.gov/>.

D.5.6. Funding Restrictions

Profit is not allowable for recipients or subrecipients under this award. See 2 CFR 200.331 for assistance in determining whether a sub-tier entity is a subrecipient or contractor.

Construction **will not be** authorized under this award.

USAID will not allow the reimbursement of pre-award costs under this award without the explicit written approval of the Agreement Officer.

Except as may be specifically approved in advance by the AO, all commodities and services that will be reimbursed by USAID under this award must be from the authorized geographic code specified in Section B.5 of this NOFO and must meet the source and nationality requirements set forth in 22 CFR 228.

D.5.7. Consortium arrangements

If the Applicant has established a consortium or another legal relationship among its partners, the Cost/Business application must include a copy of the legal relationship between the parties. The agreement should include a full discussion of the relationship between the Applicant and Sub-Applicant(s) including identification of the Applicant with whom USAID will work with for purposes of Agreement administration, identity of the Applicant which will have accounting responsibility, how Agreement effort will be allocated and the express agreement of the principals thereto to be held jointly and severally liable for the acts or omissions of the other.

For direct awards to proposed local consortium partners, USAID reserves the right to determine the type of assistance instrument, for example, Cost reimbursement or Fixed Amount Award.

D.5.8. Negotiation

Upon consideration of award or during the negotiations leading to an award, Applicants may be required to submit additional documentation deemed necessary for the Agreement Officer to make an affirmative determination of responsibility. Applicants should not submit the information below with their applications. The information in this section is provided so that Applicant may become familiar with additional documentation that may be requested by the Agreement Officer:

- Bylaws, constitution, and articles of incorporation, if applicable.
- Whether the organizational travel, procurement, financial management, accounting manual and personnel policies and procedures, especially regarding salary, promotion, leave, differentials, etc., submitted under this section have been reviewed and approved by any agency of the Federal Government, and if so, provide the name, address, and phone number of the cognizant reviewing official. The Applicant should provide copies of the same.

D.5.9. Branding Strategy & Marking Plan

The apparently successful applicant will be asked to provide a Branding Strategy and Marking Plan to be evaluated and approved by the Agreement Officer and incorporated into any resulting award.

D.5.10. Pre-Award Terms

D.5.10.1. Branding Strategy – Assistance (June 2012)

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a "Branding Strategy," describing how the program, project, or activity is named and positioned, and how it is promoted and communicated to beneficiaries and host country citizens.
- b. The request for a Branding Strategy, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.

- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Branding Strategy within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.
- e. The Branding Strategy must include, at a minimum, all of the following:
 - 1. All estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth.
 - 2. The intended name of the program, project, or activity.
 - i. USAID requires the applicant to use the “USAID Identity,” comprised of the USAID logo and brand mark, with the tagline “from the American people” as found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>, unless Section VI of the RFA or APS states that the USAID Administrator has approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
 - ii. USAID prefers local language translations of the phrase “made possible by (or with) the generous support of the American People” next to the USAID Identity when acknowledging contributions.
 - iii. It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
 - iv. If branding in the above manner is inappropriate or not possible, the applicant must explain how USAID's involvement will be showcased during publicity for the program or project.
 - v. USAID prefers to fund projects that do not have a separate logo or identity that competes with the USAID Identity. If there is a plan to develop a separate logo to consistently identify this program, the applicant must attach a copy of the proposed logos. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
 - 3. The intended primary and secondary audiences for this project or program, including direct beneficiaries and any special target segments.
 - 4. Planned communication or program materials used to explain or market the program to beneficiaries.
 - i. Describe the main program message.

- ii. Provide plans for training materials, posters, pamphlets, public service announcements, billboards, Web sites, and so forth, as appropriate.
 - iii. Provide any plans to announce and promote publicly this program or project to host country citizens, such as media releases, press conferences, public events, and so forth. Applicant must incorporate the USAID Identity and the message, “USAID is from the American People.”
 - iv. Provide any additional ideas to increase awareness that the American people support this project or program.
5. Information on any direct involvement from the host-country government or ministry, including any planned acknowledgement of the host-country government.
6. Any other groups whose logo or identity the applicant will use on program materials and related materials. Indicate if they are a donor or why they will be visibly acknowledged, and if they will receive the same prominence as USAID.
7. The Agreement Officer will review the Branding Strategy to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.
8. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Branding Strategy will be 4 included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement.

D.5.10.2. Marking Plan – Assistance (June 2012)

- a. Applicants recommended for an assistance award must submit and negotiate a “Marking Plan,” detailing the public communications, commodities, and program materials, and other items that will visibly bear the “USAID Identity,” which comprises of the USAID logo and brandmark, with the tagline “from the American people.” The USAID Identity is the official marking for the Agency, and is found on the USAID Web site at <http://www.usaid.gov/branding>. Section VI of the RFA or APS will state if an Administrator approved the use of an additional or substitute logo, seal, or tagline.
- b. The request for a Marking Plan, by the Agreement Officer from the applicant, confers no rights to the applicant and constitutes no USAID commitment to an award.
- c. Failure to submit and negotiate a Marking Plan within the time frame specified by the Agreement Officer will make the applicant ineligible for an award.
- d. The applicant must include all estimated costs associated with branding and marking USAID programs, such as plaques, stickers, banners, press events, materials, and so forth, in the budget portion of the application. These costs are subject to the revision and negotiation with the Agreement Officer and will be incorporated into the Total Estimated Amount of the grant, cooperative agreement or other assistance instrument.

- e. The Marking Plan must include all of the following:
1. A description of the public communications, commodities, and program materials that the applicant plans to produce, and which will bear the USAID Identity as part of the award, including:
 - i. Program, project, or activity sites funded by USAID, including visible infrastructure projects or other sites physical in nature;
 - ii. Technical assistance, studies, reports, papers, publications, audiovisual productions, public service announcements, Web sites/Internet activities, promotional, informational, media, or communications products funded by USAID;
 - iii. Commodities, equipment, supplies, and other materials funded by USAID, including commodities or equipment provided under humanitarian assistance or disaster relief programs;
 - iv. It is acceptable to cobrand the title with the USAID Identity and the applicant's identity.
 - v. Events financed by USAID, such as training courses, conferences, seminars, exhibitions, fairs, workshops, press conferences and other public activities. If the USAID Identity cannot be displayed, the recipient is encouraged to otherwise acknowledge USAID and the support of the American people.
 2. A table on the program deliverables with the following details:
 - i. The program deliverables that the applicant plans to mark with the USAID Identity;
 - ii. The type of marking and what materials the applicant will use to mark the program deliverables;
 - iii. When in the performance period the applicant will mark the program deliverables, and where the applicant will place the marking;
 - iv. What program deliverables the applicant does not plan to mark with the USAID Identity; and
 - v. The rationale for not marking program deliverables.
 3. Any requests for an exemption from USAID marking requirements, and an explanation of why the exemption would apply. The applicant may request an exemption if USAID marking requirements would:
 - i. Compromise the intrinsic independence or neutrality of a program or materials where independence or neutrality is an inherent aspect of the program and materials. The applicant must identify the USAID Development Objective, Interim Result, or program goal furthered by an appearance of neutrality, or state why an aspect of the award is presumptively neutral. Identify by category or deliverable item, examples of material for which an exemption is sought.
 - ii. Diminish the credibility of audits, reports, analyses, studies, or policy recommendations whose data or findings must be seen as independent. The applicant must explain why each particular deliverable must be seen as credible.
 - iii. Undercut host-country government "ownership" of constitutions, laws, regulations, policies, studies, assessments, reports, publications, surveys or audits, public service announcements, or other communications. The applicant must explain why each

- particular item or product is better positioned as a host-country government item or product.
- iv. Impair the functionality of an item. The applicant must explain how marking the item or commodity would impair its functionality.
 - v. Incur substantial costs or be impractical. The applicant must explain why marking would not be cost beneficial or practical.
 - vi. Offend local cultural or social norms or be considered inappropriate. The applicant must identify the relevant norm and explain why marking would violate that norm or otherwise be inappropriate.
 - vii. Conflict with international law. The applicant must identify the applicable international law violated by the marking.

f. The Agreement Officer will consider the Marking Plan's adequacy and reasonableness and will approve or disapprove any exemption requests. The Marking Plan will be reviewed to ensure the above information is adequately included and consistent with the stated objectives of the award, the applicant's cost data submissions, and the performance plan.

g. If the applicant receives an assistance award, the Marking Plan, including any approved exemptions, will be included in and made part of the resulting grant or cooperative agreement, and will apply for the term of the award unless provided otherwise.

a) Conflict of Interest Pre-Award Term

a. Personal Conflict of Interest

1. An actual or appearance of a conflict of interest exists when an applicant organization or an employee of the organization has a relationship with an Agency official involved in the competitive award decision-making process that could affect that Agency official's impartiality. The term "conflict of interest" includes situations in which financial or other personal considerations may compromise, or have the appearance of compromising, the obligations and duties of a USAID employee or recipient employee.

2. The applicant must provide conflict of interest disclosures when it submits an SF-424. Should the applicant discover a previously undisclosed conflict of interest after submitting the application, the applicant must disclose the conflict of interest to the AO no later than ten (10) calendar days following discovery.

b. Organizational Conflict of Interest

The applicant must notify USAID of any actual or potential conflict of interest that they are aware of that may provide the applicant with an unfair competitive advantage in competing for this financial assistance award. Examples of an unfair competitive advantage include but are not limited to situations in which an applicant or the applicant's employee gained access to non- public information regarding a federal assistance funding opportunity, or an applicant or applicant's employee was substantially involved in the preparation of a federal assistance funding

opportunity. USAID will promptly take appropriate action upon receiving any such notification from the applicant.

(END OF PRE-AWARD TERM)

[END OF SECTION D]

SECTION E: APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

E.1. Criteria

All applications will be reviewed in accordance with the review criteria set forth below. The purpose of the merit process is to identify an applicant with the best approach to achieve the objectives of the proposed ‘*Strengthening Economic and Socio-Cultural Resilience of Tibetan Communities in South Asia*’, as described in the Section A of this NOFO. These criteria will form the basis on which the applications will be reviewed and evaluated for the award determination.

Applicants should note that these criteria serve to: a) identify the critical areas that the applicant should address in their application, and b) set the standards against which the applications will be evaluated. The criteria listed below are presented so that the applicants will know which areas require emphasis in the preparation of their applications during the appropriate phase.

E.2. Review and Selection Process

As also provided in Section D, the NOFO will follow a three-phased selection process that is described below:

E.2.1. Phase 1 – Submission of Draft Program Description (DPD)

Acceptance/Conditional Acceptance of DPD: Applicants will be required to submit a DPD for initial review. All DPDs received in response to this NOFO will be evaluated by a USAID Merit Review Committee (MRC) utilizing the merit review criteria outlined in Section E. After all DPDs are evaluated, applicants whose DPD is **accepted (based on the Merit Review Criteria)** will proceed directly to Phase 2 – Co-creation. If the DPD is accepted, attendance at co-creation workshop will be approximately two-weeks after being notified that the applicant’s DPD was accepted.

USAID reserves the right to **conditionally accept** DPDs in accordance with the criteria outlined in Section E and/or request the applicant/s to provide responses to the clarifying questions, and if required request the applicant to orally present DPD in-person/virtually. Afterwards, the applicant's DPD will be reviewed for acceptability and rated in accordance with the merit review criteria in Section E and the applicant will be invited for co-creation meeting.

The process ends for all applicants whose DPD was not accepted/conditionally accepted and no further consideration will be given to their application.

NOTE: No funding will be made to any applicant prior to the award of the Cooperative Agreement. The Applicants are responsible for all costs incurred prior to the award of the Cooperative Agreement, including costs incurred during all the phases.. **Please note that USAID reserves the right to make no award under this NOFO at any stage of the process.**

E.2.2 Phase 2- Co-creation Meeting

Approximately two (2) weeks after notification of acceptable DPD, the applicant will be invited to attend an in-person co-creation meeting of 2-3 days with USAID and Central Tibetan Administration (CTA). The purpose of the co-creation workshop is to fine tune a mutually sustainable Program Description using a participatory process that assumes some degree of shared power and decision making and to define the relationships of the implementing and consortium partners and CTA to ensure a mutually agreeable relationship is incorporated into the award that will help to ensure successful implementation and obtaining the objectives outlined in the components in Section A of the NOFO. Participants in this co-creation workshop will include the applicant, USAID, and potentially other stakeholders such as representatives from CTA Departments, Specific details will be included in the invitational letter.

E.2.3 Phase 3 – Full Technical and Cost Applications

At the end of the co-creation workshop, the applicant will be requested to submit a full technical and detailed cost application. The full application will elaborate the project's theory of change and proposed key results and indicators. The full application also requires the applicant to complete specific USG forms and to provide additional information that USAID/India will need to move forward with an appropriate implementing instrument. The full application will be reviewed to ensure that all information clearly describes how the applicant will achieve the objectives as outlined in the components, the co-created Program Description, and as discussed during co-creation in determining to accept your application for award. USAID will continue to work with the applicant(s) to strengthen the Full Application, if additional information is required, prior to making an award.

E.3. MERIT REVIEW

Applications will be reviewed and evaluated in accordance with the criteria listed below and are presented in descending order of importance, to inform the applicants of the areas which require emphasis in the preparation of application. The applicants should note that the **Draft Program Description (DPD) will constitute the most important area of consideration** in the evaluation of the applications. It is to be noted that the **DPD must** be contextualized to address the unique challenges faced by the Tibetan communities residing in India and Nepal. Please refer to the Merit Review Criteria followed by their precise specifications below.

E.3.1. Criteria 1 - DPD

E.3.1.1. Relevance:

The extent to which the applicant's proposed DPD clearly:

- Describes interventions, results, and a narrative Theory of Change that demonstrate an understanding of the context, a feasible means to achieve the activity goals, and an innovative and sustainable approach.
- Demonstrates a clear roadmap for achieving the anticipated results of the three components listed in Section A of the NOFO.
- Demonstrates a strong linkage with the Vision Paper of the CTA.
- Describes how the approaches are designed to address sustainability issues.

E.3.1.2. Impact:

- The extent to which the proposed DPD defines the intended impact on the Tibetan communities in India and Nepal.

E.3.1.3. Innovation:

The extent to which the application demonstrates evidence-based innovative models in enhancing economic, social, and cultural resilience of the Tibetan community, and represents strategic shifts in existing practices that may not be sustainable. (Note: Please refer to *The Tibetan Community in India and Nepal: Challenges & Opportunities - Scoping Study, 2023* for information).

E.3.1.4. Diversity lens: The extent to which the DPD demonstrates clear understanding and integration of gender and inclusive development approaches in achieving the anticipated outcomes and results of the activity in a realistic fashion.

E.3.1.5. Partnerships and Coordination

1. The extent to which the applicant clearly demonstrates the experience of your organization in working with the Tibetan communities and Central Tibetan Administration (CTA).
2. The extent to which the DPD clearly demonstrates how you propose to engage integrated multi stakeholder partnerships to address the challenges outlined under each component in the NOFO.
3. The extent to which the DPD elucidates a robust, result-oriented and impactful partnership model with Departments of the Central Tibetan Administration and the settlement offices for ensuring seamless coordination and productive implementation of the activity.
4. The extent to which you clearly describe how you will coordinate and collaborate with Tibetan CSOs and youth in a way that reflects their unique perspectives in the activity implementation.

E.3.2. Criteria 2 - Organization Structure and Management Approach

1. The extent to which the application clearly describes the organization structure that will be utilized in implementing the objectives of the NOFO.
2. The extent to which the management approach clearly demonstrates an adaptable and flexible approach based on a sound strategy to work with the CTA for leveraging synergies;
3. The extent to which management approach clearly depicts the relationship/**strengthening the capacity** within the team and between partners/consortium.
4. The extent to which the management approach clearly describes how you will partner with and leverage experience(s) from local Indian organizations including the private sector and Tibetan CSOs.
5. The extent to which you clearly describe qualification of your proposed key personnel and other pertinent staff who will be pertinent for the successful implementation of the activity. Inclusion of Tibetan staff will be an added advantage for contextual understanding of the current situation.
6. The extent to which your management approach describes how you will leverage the lessons learned and incorporate best practices in the activity, from successful initiatives in similar fields.

E.3.3. Criteria 3 - Institutional Capacity

1. The extent to which the applicant describes the institutional strength and capacity – technical, managerial, and financial – to effectively implement the proposed intervention.
2. The extent to which your experience demonstrates your capabilities in leading sustainable development efforts.

E.3.4. Criteria 4 - History of Performance

The extent to which your history of performance is relevant and similar to the work described in Section A for projects that improve the economic, social, and cultural resilience of Tibetan communities.

USAID reserves the right to pose clarifying questions and conduct discussions with any applicant but may not opt to do so if it believes it has sufficient information in the technical application itself. Posing clarifying questions and conducting discussions with one applicant does not obligate USAID to do so with all applicants.

USAID anticipates three (3) possible results from the Application merit review process:

1. **CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE** – Technical application is evaluated and based on the merit review criteria the applicant is found to propose a **good approach** and USAID has **Good Confidence** that the applicant understands the requirement and will be successful in performing the interventions. Applicant(s) whose technical application is conditionally accepted are required to respond to the clarification questions posed by USAID’s MRC to receive further consideration.
2. **ACCEPTABLE** – Technical Application is **ACCEPTABLE** when the applicant proposes a **sound approach** and USAID has **Strong Confidence** that the applicant understands the requirements and will be successful in performing the proposed intervention. Applicants can only be rated as **ACCEPTABLE** after the applicant(s) technical application is evaluated (**based on the Merit Review Criteria**) and is accepted to proceed to Phase 2 - Co-creation.
3. **UNACCEPTABLE**: Application is **UNACCEPTABLE** when evaluated against the merit review criteria and is found to propose an **unsound approach** and USAID has **Low Confidence** that the applicant understands the requirements. The applicant(s) will be unsuccessful in implementing the program. If **UNACCEPTABLE**, USAID declines the application. Depending on the number of technical applications received, USAID may not be able to provide details on why the application was not selected.

After the application review, USAID will determine whether or not the application addresses the strategic objectives outlined in Section A of the NOFO. Only applications that are acceptable will move forward to the Co-Creation Workshop.

[END OF SECTION E]

SECTION F - IS PERTINENT AT PHASE 3.

SECTION F: FEDERAL AWARD ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

F.1. Federal Award Notices

Notice of award signed by the Agreement Officer is the authorized document, which will be transmitted to the successful Applicant following the selection. This will be sent to the authorized agent of the successful Applicant electronically. The notice may be determined by the Agreement Officer, identify clarifying questions and request for a revised application by a specified date prior to finalization of the Cooperative Agreement. USAID reserves the right to award without requesting clarification or additional detail on the application. Once all outstanding issues have been resolved, the Agreement Officer will send the draft Cooperative Agreement to the Apparent recipient for review, comments and or acceptance to be followed by full execution of the Cooperative Agreement.

Award of the agreement contemplated under this NOFO cannot be made until funds are appropriated, allocated and committed through internal USAID procedures. While USAID anticipates that these procedures will be successfully completed, potential applicants are hereby notified of these requirements and conditions of the award. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds.

Applicants are advised that costs incurred prior to receipt of either a fully executed Agreement (in electronic or print form) or a specific, written authorization from the Agreement Officer are not allowable and therefore are ineligible for reimbursement under the Agreement.

The Agreement Officer will also provide written notification electronically to the unsuccessful Applicants' Points of Contact. Requests for additional information from unsuccessful Applicants will not be considered.

F.2. Administrative & National Policy Requirements

The resulting award from this NOFO will be administered in accordance with the following policies and regulations.

For US organizations: [ADS 303](#), [2 CFR 700](#), [2 CFR 200](#), and [Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental organizations](#).

For Non US organizations: [ADS 303](#), [Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations](#).

USAID/India Office of Acquisition and Assistance will administer this award. The Agreement Officer will designate an Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) to review, concur and/or approve on items outlined in the Substantial Involvement (Section B.4 of this NOFO).

F.3 REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The Recipient will adhere to all reporting requirements listed below; further, US Non-governmental organizations need to be in compliance with 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 (specifically 2 CFR 200.327-329).

The Recipient in conjunction with its consortium partners, will submit all reports by the due date for approval from the Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR). The Recipient will consult with the AOR on the format and content prior to submission. In addition to the reports below, the AOR may request additional information to contribute to the internal USAID project reviews.

F.3.1. Performance Reporting

Reports and Deliverables	Due Dates
Activity Start-up Plan	Within 30 calendar days after the award. The plan should outline the Recipients plan for staffing, start-up workshop and work plan and MEL plan preparation.
Start-up workshop	Within 75 calendar days after award to inform activity theory of change, work plan and MEL plan
Annual Work Plan	A draft first year work plan – 30 calendar days after the start-up workshop. Subsequent annual work plans – October 1st of each calendar year
Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan	30 calendar days after finalization of the first year work plan
Quarterly Progress Report	30 calendar days after the end of the quarter
Gender and Social Inclusion Plan	60 calendar days from the date of the award

Annual Pause and Reflect OR Programmatic Review	Starting at the end of year one, each year at least 30 days prior to the due date of the annual work plan
Annual Performance Report	October 15th of each year
Final Report	30 calendar days prior to the end of the award

- Start-up Workshop** - Within seventy-five days post-award the Recipient will hold a workshop that includes USAID staff and relevant partners to guide development of the first year work plan, activity theory of change and anticipated outcomes, and Monitoring and Evaluation (MEL) plan. The workshop will also serve to define requirements and format for deliverables and reporting. The objective of the workshop is to provide a dedicated forum for the activity consortium, USAID staff and other relevant partners to collaborate to refine the submitted technical approach, theory of change and anticipated outcomes, and MEL Plan. The cost of this 3–5-day workshop should be included in the applicant's cost proposal. Note, at the discretion of the AOR, this workshop may include or be done collectively with other mission implementing partners working on Tibet issues.
- Annual Work Plan** - The annual work plan details how the Recipient will use the work plan year effectively to achieve the activity’s objective. The work plan serves as a guide to program implementation and, once approved, represents an agreement as to the objectives and timing of specific tasks and interventions. The work plan is intended to be an annual roadmap for USAID and the Recipient. It should be closely aligned to the theory of change agreed upon during the start-up workshop, and clearly explain how the actions and outputs will lead to the expected outcomes identified in the theory of change. More details on the format of the implementation plan will be provided after the award.
- Activity Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (MEL) Plan** - The Applicant must prepare a clear MEL Plan for this activity that facilitates adaptive learning and management. The MEL plan must provide an overview of the project’s objectives, theory of change and strategic approaches; indicate the custom and standard indicators that will be used to monitor progress towards achieving the stated objectives; and define the processes to monitor, analyze and evaluate progress. The plan should outline opportunities for learning and adaptive management throughout all stages of the project and include in its learning agenda evaluations or studies to assess and inform the roll out of interventions. More details on the format of the MEL plan will be provided after the award.
- Quarterly Performance Reports** - The Recipient will submit brief quarterly performance reports to reflect progress, the activities of the preceding three months and lessons learned. The report must describe the tasks completed in the last three months relative to what was anticipated in the approved work plan and will assess the overall activity impact to date relative to the performance indicator targets and results defined in the activity theory of change. More details

on the format of the quarterly performance reports will be provided after the award.

- **Gender Consideration:** To the greatest extent possible, the Recipient should seek to include both men and women in all aspects of this program including participation and leadership in e.g., meetings, training, etc. The Recipient must collect, analyze and submit to USAID sex-disaggregated data and proposed actions that will address any identified gender-related issues.

In order to ensure that USAID assistance makes the maximum optimal contribution to gender equality, performance management systems and evaluations must include gender-sensitive indicators and sex-disaggregated data when the technical analyses supporting the Agreement demonstrates that:

- The different roles and status of women and men affect the activities to be undertaken, and
 - The anticipated results of the work would affect women and men differently.
-
- **Annual Pause and Reflect OR Programmatic Review:** While the details will be finalized during co-creation, the Applicant should include a cost of an annual 3-day pause and reflect workshop in the cost proposal.
 - **Annual Performance Report** - Annual performance reports will summarize actions, progress and results during the year in relation to the approved work plan and the activity theory of change it supports. The report should include lessons learned, proposed adaptive management shifts, and proposed updates to the theory of change. The annual performance report will be used by USAID to assess the status of activity implementation. Each annual performance report will include an assessment as to whether the activity strategic approaches and actions are leading to the activity purpose. The annual performance report will cover all of the items included in the bi-annual performance report, with a focus on the Activity results over the entire year. More details on the format of the annual performance report will be provided after the award.
 - **Close-out Plan** - No later than six (6) months prior to the completion date of the agreement, the Recipient will submit a close-out plan for the Agreement Officer (AO) approval. The close-out plan shall include:
 - Draft property disposition plan
 - Plan for the phase-out of in-country operations
 - Delivery schedule for all reports or other deliverables required under the agreement
 - Timetable for completing all required actions in the close-out plan, including submission date of the final property disposition plan to the AO.
 - **Final Report** - The Final Report must discuss all strategic approaches and results from the

start of the award through its completion. More details on the format of the final report will be provided after the award.

F.3.2 Financial Reporting:

(1) Quarterly Financial Report

The Recipient must submit the Federal Financial Form (SF-425) quarterly, no later than 30 days after the end of the quarter, via electronic format to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (<http://www.dpm.psc.gov>). The Recipient must submit a copy of SF-425 at the same time to the Agreement Officer Representative (AOR) and the Controller.

Electronic copies of SF-425 and instructions for using it can be found at:

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/standard_forms/ff_report.pdf

<http://www.forms.gov/bgfPortal/docDetails.do?dId=15149>

http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/grants/standard_forms/ffr_instructions.pdf

(2) Final Financial Report

Within 90 days following the estimated completion date of this award, the Recipient must submit to the: (a) USAID/Washington, M/CFO/CMP-LOC Unit; (b) Agreement Officer (manila-roaa-admin@usaid.gov); (c) Controller (aidmnlrfsc@usaid.gov); and (c) Agreement Officer Representative (AOR), the final Federal Financial Form (SF-425).

(3) Foreign Tax Reports

Reporting of foreign taxes under this agreement shall follow the standard provision entitled “Reporting Host Government Taxes (December 2014)” of this award document.

Host government taxes are not allowable where the Agreement Officer provides the necessary means to the recipient to obtain an exemption or refund of such taxes, and the recipient fails to take reasonable steps to obtain such exemption or refund. Otherwise, taxes are allowable in accordance with the Standard Provision, “Applicability of 2 CFR 200 and 2 CFR 700 (December 2014),” and must be reported as required in this provision.

The Recipient must include this reporting requirement in all applicable sub-agreements, including subawards and contracts.

F.4 Program Income

If the successful applicant is a non-profit organization, any program income generated under the award will be added to USAID funding (and any cost-sharing that may be provided, if applicable), and used for program purposes. However, pursuant to 2 CFR 200.307 Program Income, if the successful Applicant is a for-profit or commercial organization, any program

income generated under the award will be deducted from the U.S. Government share of this award to determine the amount of USAID funding.

Program income will be subject to 2 CFR 200.307 for U.S. NGOs or the standard provision entitled Program Income for non-U.S. NGOs. If the successful Applicant is/are a PIO, any program income generated under the award will be added to USAID funding (and any non- USAID funding that may be provided) and used for program purposes.

F.5 Environmental Compliance

1a). The Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, Section 117 requires that the impact of USAID's activities on the environment be considered and that USAID include environmental sustainability as a central consideration in designing and carrying out its development programs. This mandate is codified in Federal Regulations (22 CFR 216) and in USAID's Automated Directives System (ADS) Parts 201.5.10g and 204 (<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ADS/200/>), which, in part, require that the potential environmental impacts of USAID-financed activities are identified prior to a final decision to proceed and that appropriate environmental safeguards are adopted for all activities. Offeror environmental compliance obligations under these regulations and procedures are specified in the following paragraphs of this Notice for Funding Opportunity (NOFO).

1b). In addition, the recipient must comply with host country environmental regulations unless otherwise directed in writing by USAID. In case of conflict between host country and USAID regulations, the latter shall govern.

1c) No activity funded under this NOFO will be implemented unless an environmental threshold determination, as defined by 22 CFR 216, has been reached for that activity, as documented in a Request for Categorical Exclusion (RCE), Initial Environmental Examination (IEE), or Environmental Assessment (EA) duly signed by the Bureau Environmental Officer (BEO). (Hereinafter, such documents are described as "approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.")

2) An Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) has to be undertaken for this activity funding for NOFO. The offeror shall be responsible for implementing all IEE conditions pertaining to activities to be funded under this solicitation.

3a) As part of its initial Work Plan, and all Annual Work Plans thereafter, the recipient, in collaboration with the USAID Assistance Office Representation (AOR) and Mission Environmental Officer or Bureau Environmental Officer, as appropriate, shall review all ongoing and planned activities under this NOFO to determine if they are within the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation.

3b) If the recipient plans any new activities outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation, it shall prepare an amendment to the documentation for USAID review and approval. No such new activities shall be undertaken prior to receiving written

USAID approval of environmental documentation amendments.

3c) Any ongoing activities found to be outside the scope of the approved Regulation 216 environmental documentation shall be halted until an amendment to the documentation is submitted and written approval is received from USAID.

4a) If a provision for sub-grants is included under this award; the recipient will be required to use an Environmental Review Form (ERF) or Environmental Review (ER) checklist using impact assessment tools to screen grant proposals to ensure the funded proposals will result in no adverse environmental impact, to develop mitigation measures, as necessary, and to specify monitoring and reporting. Use of the ERF or ER checklist is called for when the nature of the grant proposals to be funded is not well enough known to make an informed decision about their potential environmental impacts, yet due to the type and extent of activities to be funded, any adverse impacts are expected to be easily mitigated. Implementation of sub-grant activities cannot go forward until the ERF or ER checklist is completed and approved by USAID.

Recipient is responsible for ensuring that mitigation measures specified by the ERF or ER a checklist process is implemented.

5a) USAID anticipates that environmental compliance and achieving optimal development outcomes for the proposed activities will require environmental management expertise.

Respondents to the NOFO should therefore include as part of their application their approach to achieving environmental compliance and management, to include:

5b) The respondent's approach to developing and implementing an environmental review process for a grant fund and an EMMP.

5c) The respondent's approach to providing necessary environmental management expertise, including examples of past experience of environmental management of similar activities.

5d) The respondent's illustrative budget for implementing the environmental compliance activities. For the purposes of this solicitation, offerors should reflect illustrative costs for environmental compliance implementation and monitoring in their cost proposal.

F.6 Branding & Marking

It is a federal statutory and regulatory requirement that all USAID programs, projects, activities, public communications, and commodities that USAID partially or fully funded under a USAID grant or cooperative agreement or other assistance award or sub-award, must be marked appropriately overseas with the USAID identity. See Section 641, Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended and 2 CFR 700.16.

Under the regulation, USAID requires the submission of a Branding Strategy and a Marking Plan by the Apparently Successful Applicant, as defined in the regulation. A Branding Implementation Strategy and Marking Plan must be in accordance with USAID Branding and Marking Plan as required per ADS 320 at the following link:
<https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1868/320.pdf>

The Branding and Marking Plan may include a request for a waiver or exceptions to marking requirements established in 2 CFR 700.16. The Agreement Officer is responsible for evaluating and approving the Branding Strategy and Marking Plan (including any request for exceptions and waiver) of the ASA, consistent with the provisions” Branding Strategy”, “Marking Plan”, and “Marking of USAID-funded Assistance Awards” contained in AAPD 05-11 and in 2 CFR 700.16. Please note that in contrast to “exception” to marking requirements, waivers based on circumstances in the host country must be approved by the Mission Director or other USAID Principal Officers, see 1 CFR 700.16(j).

[END OF SECTION F]

SECTION G: FEDERAL AWARDING AGENCY CONTACT(S)

1. NOFO Points of Contact

Point of Contact

Name: Charushila Lal

Title: Acquisition and Assistance Specialist

Above is the Point of contact (POC) for questions while the funding opportunity is open.

All prospective Applicants must send their questions in writing by the due date and time specified on the cover page of this NOFO, so that a reply can reach all prospective Applicants before the submission of their Initial Concept Note. Oral explanations or instructions given before the award will not be binding. Any information given to a prospective Applicant concerning this NOFO will be furnished promptly to all other prospective Applicants as an amendment of this NOFO if that information is necessary in submitting applications or if a lack of the information would be prejudicial to any other prospective Applicants.

2. Acquisition and Assistance Ombudsman

The A&A Ombudsman helps ensure equitable treatment of all parties who participate in USAID's acquisition and assistance process. The A&A Ombudsman serves as a resource for all organizations who are doing or wish to do business with USAID. Please visit this page for additional information: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/acquisition-assistance-ombudsman>

[The A&A Ombudsman may be contacted via: Ombudsman@usaid.gov](mailto:Ombudsman@usaid.gov)

[END OF SECTION G]

SECTION H: OTHER INFORMATION

USAID reserves the right to fund any or none of the applications submitted. The Agreement Officer is the only individual who may legally commit the Government to the expenditure of public funds. Any award and subsequent incremental funding will be subject to the availability of funds and continued relevance to Agency programming.

Applications with Proprietary Data

Applicants who include data that they do not want disclosed to the public for any purpose or used by the U.S. Government except for evaluation purpose, should mark the cover page with the following:

“This application includes data that must not be disclosed, duplicated or used – in whole or in part – for any purpose other than to evaluate this application. If, however, an award is made as a result of – or in connection with – the submission of this data, the U.S. Government will have the right to duplicate, use, or disclose the data to the extent provided in the resulting award. This restriction does not limit the U.S. Government’s right to use information contained in this data if it is obtained from another source without restriction. The data subject to this restriction are contained in sheets {insert sheet numbers}.”

Additionally, the applicant must mark each sheet of data it wishes to restrict with the following:

“Use or disclosure of data contained on this sheet is subject to the restriction on the title page of this application.”

Additional information available to Applicants includes:

1. ADS 201.3.15.3; USAID’s Gender Equality and Female Empowerment Policy (http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pdact200.pdf)
2. USAID India’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy <https://www.usaid.gov/india/cdcs>
3. USAID’s Climate Change and Development Strategy 2012-2018 (2012). (<http://www.usaid.gov/climate/strategy>)
4. Tibet Assessment Report
5. USAID Standard Provisions:
 - (i) ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for Non-U.S. Non-governmental Organizations. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303mab.pdf>
 - (ii) ADS 303mab, Standard Provisions for U.S. Non-governmental Organizations. <https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/303maa.pdf>

[END OF SECTION H]

ATTACHMENT 1
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION TEMPLATE¹

1. INTRODUCTION OR STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

[This section must state the purpose of the program and provide information on the goals. The information should describe why the activity is being pursued.]

2. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

[This section must clearly establish goals and objectives that are realistic, measurable, and represent the highest objective that the recipient can expect to achieve and for which the recipient will be held accountable.]

3. BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

[Describe the need for the activity, the current context², the threats and a brief description/summary of the activities.] The use of references is strongly encouraged in this section.

- Development challenges
- Development Hypothesis/Theory of Change
- What is the problem that the activity will address
- What is the rationale for the activity, why is it important?
- Why this approach?
- What are the assumptions beyond your approach?

4. ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION³

- Management Principles and Guidance
 - contains a management plan that specifically identifies and outlines the coordination among the members of the consortium.
- Activity Component

¹ Note that the program description is the result of a three-stage process, including co-creation. The PD will be discussed and ideas are expected to be elaborated, shaped, and revised through co-creation.

² Context refers to the political environment of the geographic scope and the social and cultural factors that will also influence strategic approaches and the potential to achieve results.

³ The activity description should focus on the how you hope to achieve certain results or meet the objectives as opposed to the “why”

- What are the Objectives, Outcome(s) and Impact(s) of this activity?
- How does this activity support the United States Government and CTA's policies and strategies?
- What are the components of the activity, how will they intersect to address the development problem?
- How will you be engaging and partnering with the local communities during the activity's implementation?
- **Geographic focus**⁴: What are the selected geographic focus for the activity? Why have these locations been selected? What are the types of interventions that will happen in each area?

5. INTENDED RESULTS⁵:

What is the activity expected to achieve?

What are some critical assumptions based on which this activity is being developed or dependent for success?

To what degree - and how - is sustainability a key aspect of the activity's intended results?

What are the intended results on addressing gender gaps and promoting female empowerment?

6. ACTIVITY MONITORING, EVALUATING, AND LEARNING

- How will results registered under the activity be tracked to inform decision making and monitor the progress of the activity's interventions?
- What key learning and/or evaluation questions or lines of investigation will be pursued under this activity?
- How is it expected that the other knowledge gaps and lessons generated during the course of implementation of this activity are identified, shared and used to adapt implementation?

⁴ **Geographic Focus:** include here a description of where the activity will work and distinguish the key challenges in each geography. State which activities will take place in which geography. The applicant should also provide an approach to work collaboratively with other USAID, GoI, private sector, or donor activities in the same geographic areas. The applicant should also discuss how they plan to complement existing and future USAID activities.

⁵ Clearly and coherently express the specific understandings of both USAID and the Implementing Partner by having clearly established outcomes that are realistic, measurable, and represent the highest objective that the recipient can be expected to achieve and for which the recipient will be held accountable.

⁶ Please note that indicators for this activity will be co-developed during the co-creation workshop. Please refer to Section B for a list of standard indicators.

7. OTHER IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS:

a. Sustainability

[Depending upon the role that sustainability plays in the activity, it will likely merit discussion in Section 2. Activity Description and 3. Intended Results. In addition, this section should explicitly spell out expectations with respect to sustainability as it pertains to this activity.]

Commitment to sustainability is the ability or commitment to carry on the activities after USAID's involvement is completed, or otherwise ensure the results continue beyond the life of the activity. The fundamental thrust of USAID's programs, whether in democracy building, environment, economic growth, or population and health, will aim at building indigenous capacity, enhancing participation, and encouraging accountability, transparency, decentralization, and the empowerment of communities and individuals. This could include the financial and operational capacity, public-private partnerships, or anticipated GOI political commitment, including local government and local NGO interests to continue the service or activity after USAID's involvement is ended. program outcome.

b. Gender and Social Inclusion

[This section should highlight the specific gender issues that will be targeted and addressed, and how this will contribute to female empowerment and gender equality.]

Promoting gender equality and advancing the status of women and girls is vital to achieving USAID's development objectives. It is USAID policy that all applicants must mainstream and integrate gender into their interventions. Therefore, the applicant will be expected to demonstrate compliance with USAID Policy ADS 205, and should explicitly state how this activity supports the gender policies and strategies of the United States.

Relevant Annexes:

Annex 1: Situation Model

Annex 2: Theory of Change: a graphical representation of your Theory of Change

Annex 3: Organizational Management Chart: a pictorial representation of the organizational management plan and structure needed for the activity's implementation.

ATTACHMENT - 2

**The Tibetan Community in India and
Nepal: Challenges & Opportunities -
Scoping Study**



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

USAID/INDIA ADVANCING THE U.S.- INDIA PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM (APP)

THE TIBETAN COMMUNITY IN INDIA & NEPAL:
CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES – SCOPING STUDY

January 2024 (revised March 2024)

USAID/INDIA ADVANCING THE U.S.- INDIA PARTNERSHIP PLATFORM (APP)

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January 2024 (revised 2024)

Contract Number: 7200AA20D00014 / 72038623F00001

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ACRONYMS

APP	Advancing the U.S.-India Partnership Platform (Activity)
CMRF	Community-managed revolving fund
CD	Communicable disease
CSR	Corporate social responsibility
CTA	Central Tibetan Administration
DoE	Department of Education
DHIS2	District Health Information Software
DIIR	Department of Information and International Relations
DoH	Department of Home
DRC	Department of Religion and Culture
DLIHE	Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education
FCRA	Foreign Country Regulation Act
FGD	Focus group discussion
FTCI	Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives in India
GBV	Gender-based violence
ICMA	International City/Country Management Association
ICT	Information communication and technology
IDI	In-depth interview
IFMIS	Integrated financial management and information system
LTWA	Library of Tibetan Works and Archives
M&E	Monitoring and evaluation
NCD	Non-communicable disease
NDI	National Democratic Institute
NBFC	Non-banking finance company
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
PMJAY	Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana
PSC	Public Service Commission
SARD	Social and Resource Development Fund
SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
STEM	Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics
TCC	Tibetan Chamber of Commerce
TCV	Tibetan Children's Village
TED	Tibetan Entrepreneurship Development
TF	Tibet Fund
TFR	Total Fertility Rate
TIPA	Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts
TMS	Tibetan Medicare System
TPHC	Tibetan primary health centers
TSRR	Tibetan Self-Reliance and Resilience (Activity)
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WED	Women's Empowerment Desk

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This scoping study was undertaken by USAID India's Advancing the U.S.-India Partnership Platform (APP) to unpack various challenges faced by the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and make recommendations to improve USAID/India's funding effectiveness to a) strengthen economic growth and livelihoods, b) preserve Tibetan culture, and c) enhance social resilience. The study involved a qualitative approach with stakeholders in India and Nepal including CTA officials, entrepreneurs, officer bearers of chambers of commerce and cooperatives, and NGOs. The following are the main recommendations of the study, first in contextual and cross-cutting areas, and then in the three main areas of inquiry.

GENERAL CONTEXTUAL

Demographics: Approximately 100,000 Tibetans living in exile in India and Nepal. The population is rapidly decreasing due to a low total fertility rate (TFR) (1.18 in 2019) and significant emigration abroad, particularly to the USA and Europe. CTA anticipates that the elderly as a percentage of the settlement population will increase substantially in the next decades. These trends represent an existential threat to the Tibetan communities in India and Nepal. The lack of reliable data to understand the demographic compositions of the population impedes understanding current and future developmental needs.

Recommendations:

1. **Comprehensive census:** Support the conduct of a comprehensive census of Tibetan communities in both India and Nepal. Use the census data to compute vital rates (such as fertility, mortality, migration, and marriage rates), and conduct projections of the age and sex composition of the population, applying globally accepted methods such as United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA). The GIS-based mapping can be integrated with the census as a pilot before scaling up.
2. **Elderly care prioritization:** Examine the population shift toward the elderly and prioritize elderly care and support programs in both Nepal and India.

Funding: The CTA faces complex challenges in functioning as a government in exile while trying to address the development needs of Tibetans residing in settlements in India and Nepal. These include the lack of a tax base, dependence on donor funding, a mismatch between needs and the type of funding support available, a lack of a clear mechanism to enhance volunteer contributions, the Kashag's (Cabinet of the Tibetan government in exile) reluctance to prioritize private sector initiatives, and a lack of clarity regarding new opportunities such as support from corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. CTA officials and other stakeholders think USAID/India should increase funding support but suggest that more be provided directly rather than through implementing partners, which they say does not mismatch CTA priorities, and deprives them of money absorbed by partner overhead.

Recommendations:

1. **Green Book awareness campaign:** Raise awareness among Tibetans in exile, particularly among

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

the diaspora community, about the importance of the Green Book system (a receipt book

for 'voluntary' contributions) for the sustenance of the community, and support CTA to implement a progressive contribution system.

2. **Diaspora outreach and census:** Enhance international outreach to non-Tibetan to increase individual and institutional support. It is important that the size and employment status of the diaspora community be understood so that contributions can be estimated accurately.
3. **Direct funding to CTA:** Increase direct funding to CTA and prioritize the needs of Tibetan communities in exile by engaging CTA in financial planning.
4. **IT-enabled financial management system:** Provide support to design and implement an integrated financial management and information systems (IFMIS), which would enable the Department of Finance to track receipt and utilization of funds.
5. **Targeted funding:** Engage with Tibetan stakeholders, donors, and CSR actors on how funding can be better targeted to Tibetan priorities.
6. **Institutional capacity building:** Provide technical support to build the institutional capacity of the Department of Finance. This support should encompass planning, implementation, and monitoring activities, empowering the department to become a proficient nodal agency for fund management and monitoring within the Tibetan community.

Evidence base: CTA's lack of robust data systems and skilled personnel for data generation and use (such as statisticians and economists) means there is a dearth of evidence-based development inquiry and programming. CTA senior officials believe that they require a comprehensive data system to allow them to track progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), aligning with international practice.

Recommendations:

1. **Comprehensive M&E system:** Support CTA to develop a comprehensive M&E system to measure development progress, including the establishment of a statistics division within the Social and Resource Development Fund (SARD) of CTA to generate data and track SDG indicators.
2. **Track UN SDG goals:** Build the capacity of CTA to track the progress of UN SDG goals for Tibetans in exile and start comparing the level of human development with other democratic nations. Bring technical expertise for developing from renounce organizations such as the International Institute for Population Sciences, and the National Council for Applied Economic Research.

Gender: According to focus-group discussion (FGD) participants, the Women's Empowerment Desk (WED) faces several bottlenecks, including a) a lack of coordination between WED and CTA departments in designing and implementing gender-related programs, b) a shortage of staff, and c) a lack of data to understand the major gaps and formulate policy priorities.

Recommendations:

1. **WED as a separate office:** Support the transformation of WED as an office separate from the Department of Finance to enhance coordination and better integrate gender programming across all CTA offices.

2. **Capacity building of WED:** Support enhancing the capacity of WED both at headquarters and in the settlements to better design and implement program activities and promote women's leadership.
3. **Committee formation at settlements:** Support the formation of WED committees in every settlement to conduct activities on women's empowerment, prevention of gender-based violence (GBV), and workplace equality.
4. **Studies and surveys:** Conduct household-based surveys, and research studies to measure the important indicators of levels of women's empowerment, autonomy, and GBV.

Nepal: Due to Nepal's bilateral relationship with China, Tibetans in Nepal are not afforded formal identity or support, leaving them vulnerable to discrimination, and the risk of repatriation. The CTA has no direct access to the Tibetan community in Nepal and its role in donor programs is passive.

Recommendations:

1. **Diplomatic advocacy:** Use diplomatic channels to advocate with the government of Nepal and the Nepali Home Ministry's National Unit for Coordination of Refugee Affairs (NUCRA) to give official recognition to Tibetan refugees, and to ensure basic human rights support.
2. **Activate engagement of CTA:** Support and engage CTA in taking an active role in program implementation, planning, and monitoring for Nepal, by projecting CTA as a lead in all consortium and coordination committees.
3. **Conduct systematic need assessment:** Support CTA to conduct a comprehensive assessment to understand the situation of the Tibetan exile community in Nepal, and profile the population for evidence-based programming.

CTA Capacity: Capacity building of CTA staff is one of the major needs, as many of the necessary skills for program management such as proposal writing, fund management, evidence-based planning, and M&E are the major skill gaps, as informed by the respondents.

Recommendations:

1. **Implement skills matrix:** Support CTA's implementation of an existing skills matrix that was developed to guide the hiring and placement of staff.
2. **Support capacity-building:** Invest in CTA to build the capacity of staff in evidence-based decision-making, fund-raising and management, and M&E. In addition, support exposure visits to Indian state government departments.

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LIVELIHOODS

Primary sector: The agricultural sector is characterized by low youth interest and lack of irrigation, market access, loans, institutional support, and innovations such as farmer producer companies and solar panels.

1. **Support insurance coverage:** There is a critical need for agricultural insurance due to risks from floods and droughts, especially for maize and cash crop producers.

2. **Infrastructure support:** Financing is needed for infrastructure, including drip irrigation, trench construction, fencing, rainwater harvesting for groundwater replenishment, and installation of solar panels. Assistance could be provided to connect the CTA with firms specializing in these areas.
3. **Capacity building in modern agriculture technology:** Training in best practices through agricultural extension services, and engagement of technical experts (e.g. involving CTA's Organic Research & Training Centre). Additionally, content designed to attract youth can be designed for Tibet Television's program on agricultural activities.
4. **Encourage dairy farming:** Support locally-led dairy farming and animal husbandry initiatives. There is a need to conduct a needs assessment and prepare a business plan.
5. **Settlement-specific innovations:** Target approaches to specific settlements. For example in Miao and Tezu, there is a unique opportunity to empower women economically by establishing an industry creating utensils from areca-nut leaves. WED can manage the marketing, leveraging their expertise and networks.
6. **Promote organic certification and marketing training:** Streamlining business processes in organic farming is crucial to attracting younger farmers. Key to this is assisting farmers in obtaining organic produce certifications, a legal requirement and essential for market credibility. Additionally, training farmers in marketing, especially on digital platforms, is vital. This training can be effectively delivered through agricultural extension services by technical experts.
7. **Promote market linkages:** Connect farmers directly with buyers to help them achieve better prices for their products. Improve the transportation linkages between settlements and markets, improve storage facilities within the settlements, and create a web-based platform (e-commerce) for online marketing.
8. **Disseminate success stories:** These stories can be shared within the Tibetan community through both in-person events and digital platforms, offering real-life examples of successful organic farming ventures. This not only encourages new farmers to adopt organic practices but also fosters a sense of community and shared learning.

Secondary sector: The Tibetan communities manufacture carpets, traditional commodities, clothes, and ornaments. Challenges include lack of access to credit, scarcity of labor, and lack of capacity.

Recommendations:

1. **Skills needs assessment:** A needs assessment is required to understand the specific skill gaps and requirements of Tibetan youth so that training programs can be targeted and effective.
2. **Vocational training:** Based on the assessment, training programs should be developed that encompass not just technical skills but also cover planning, leadership, marketing, and promotional skills. Ensure that the training programs are directly linked to job opportunities.
3. **Mentorship:** Sustained support will help navigate the challenges of starting and maintaining a business. The insights and successful strategies from previous collaborations, like the Amazon Web Service training and Orbit Academy can provide valuable lessons for scaling up current initiatives.
4. **Link trainees with employers:** Collaborating with the Tibetan Chamber of Commerce (TCC) in

organizing placement drives after the training, and facilitating a smooth transition for trainees into the workforce can ensure maximum job placement.

5. **Career counseling:** The Dharamshala Tibetan Career Centre and the Tibetan-run Industrial Training Institute can be supported to develop course content and deploy career counselors starting from secondary school.
6. **Start-up loans:** There is a need to ease the provision of loans to Tibetans from banking and non-banking financial institutions. This can be done by simplifying the documentation processes for refugees, and by educating the community on various options available to them for accessing loans. In addition, focus should be given to exploring community-based revolving funds, for small and medium businesses. The Tibetan Entrepreneurship Development Program (TED) should be revived in collaboration with TCC, which will further empower Tibetan entrepreneurs.
7. **Promotion and market linkage of Tibetan products:** In collaboration with TCC, identify and scale up the use of e-commerce portals and social media to promote Tibetan products and culture. Given there is a market for handcraft products, reaching the customers, including setting up the delivery system, can play a critical role.
8. **Sharing of expertise and empowering the Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives in India (FTCI) as a knowledge hub:** A FTCI platform could be developed to be a comprehensive, searchable database enabling identification of expertise, market opportunities, labor shortages and needs, and training aligned with market requirements. By facilitating best practice exchange and fostering partnerships, the FTCI platform can help cooperatives increase revenue, skillsets, and strategic collaborations.
9. **Building a cooperative network:** While a degree of awareness exists among cooperatives about each other's expertise and practices, There is alack of effective collaboration among board members. CTA and the FTCI can be supported to unlock the full potential of the cooperative ecosystem by promoting resource sharing, joint production ventures, and cross-promotional efforts to optimize resource utilization, enhance operational efficiency, and broaden product offerings.
10. **Leveraging diaspora communities:** The Tibetan diaspora communities have valuable expertise and connections. Cooperatives and entrepreneurs can be supported by CTA to leverage their financial power, cultural influence, market knowledge, and business acumen to secure international investment, enhance brand recognition, access new markets, and nurture young entrepreneurs.
11. **Youth internships in cooperatives:** A youth internship program that emphasizes the economic benefits and cultural significance of working with cooperatives could leverage social media campaigns, testimonials, and events to inspire youth and counter negative stereotypes associated with traditional occupations. Implementing a profit-sharing model for each product they contribute to, or sell would be instrumental in attracting and retaining young talent. In turn, youth would bring innovation to create authentic Tibetan products, and utilize social media to attract their peers and enhance marketing.
12. **Alternative funding mechanisms:** Cooperatives have little knowledge of how to explore funding and investment opportunities from peer cooperatives, banks, and angel funders, and there is a hesitancy to engage individuals outside Tibetan communities, fearing that such involvement could dilute the essence of their cultural heritage. To address these issues, it is necessary to diversify

funding sources. CTA and the FTCl can play an active role in encouraging cooperatives

to consider joint ventures with peer cooperatives and adopting profit-sharing models, as well as promoting awareness of microfinance loans and facilitating connections with angel investors.

13. **CTA collaboration with India's One District One Product (ODOP)** initiative: Positioning Tibetan carpets as a distinguished ODOP product would unlock market exposure through wider domestic and international reach, support such as skill development and subsidies, and the potential for geographical indication to protect their unique heritage.

Tertiary Sector: The service sector is comprised mainly of tourism and hotels. CTA and other stakeholders are hopeful that cultural tourism in Tibetan settlements can be developed as a significant source of income.

Recommendations:

1. **Infrastructure investment:** Allocate resources towards developing settlement infrastructure essential for tourism, focusing on improving roads and urban amenities to enhance accessibility and comfort for visitors.
2. **Cultural collaboration:** Forge partnerships with esteemed cultural institutions such as the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), Norbulinga, Men Tsee Khang, and local monasteries. Collaborative efforts in planning and marketing will effectively promote Tibetan arts and cultures, enriching the tourism experience.
3. **Wellness tourism:** Highlight Buddhist meditation centers and wellness activities to attract a discerning group of travelers seeking relaxation, rejuvenation, and spiritual enrichment. Partnering with meditation and wellness experts will elevate the quality of offerings in this segment.
4. **Eco-tourism initiatives:** Prioritize eco-tourism initiatives by advocating responsible travel practices, preserving natural habitats, and offering eco-friendly tour packages. Emphasize the region's biodiversity and conservation efforts to appeal to environmentally conscious travellers.
5. **Heritage tours development:** Develop heritage tours that showcase Tibetan cultural heritage through immersive experiences such as cultural events, festivals, and workshops. This initiative not only preserves the rich heritage but also supports local artisans, performers, and cultural practitioners, enhancing the overall tourism appeal.

Nepal: Providing support to the livelihood opportunities of Tibetans in Nepal is extremely challenging because the Nepalese government does not support targeted assistance to Tibetans in exile. The Tibetans are no longer issued with refugee cards, and this lack of official status has drastic consequences for their welfare in Nepal.

Recommendations:

1. **Scale up the CMRF:** Increase the coverage of the CMRF and try to integrate the most vulnerable populations so that their basic human rights to food, shelter, health, and education can be assured.

2. **Engage with the government of Nepal:** to provide some opportunities such as provision for engaging in private jobs, bank loans, and business support that can be funded through CTA.

3. **Increase programming in Nepal:** Support initiatives that can reach Tibetan refugees in Nepal, including vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and access to microfinance and business development support.
4. **Strengthen TCC Nepal:** The TCC Nepal should be strengthened so that it can collaborate with TCC India and CTA. It can be a networking hub for businesses to explore opportunities for capital, market, and mentoring support.

PRESERVING CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

The preservation and promotion of Tibetan culture and language is at the core of the Tibetan cause and is a high priority of the Dalai Lama. Efforts have been remarkably successful to date; the greatest challenges are faced by the community in Nepal where Tibetan cultural programs and ceremonies are prohibited.

Recommendations:

- **Comprehensive cultural policy development:** Extend technical and financial assistance to the CTA to develop a comprehensive policy to preserve and promote culture. This policy will provide strategic guidance and support for cultural preservation efforts.
- **Techno-managerial support:** Provide technical support to traditional art and culture institutions to facilitate diversification and self-sustainability, focusing on helping organizations adapt to modern technology while preserving the authenticity of their processes.
- **Support Monlam AI:** Establish the 'Monlam Tech Hub' in Bangalore. This initiative aims to foster the thriving of traditional cultures through a combination of Buddhist studies and technological innovation. The hub can serve as a center for research, development, and collaboration between traditional cultural practitioners and tech experts.
- **Outreach to Indians:** Enhance outreach efforts to the Indian community, including school exchange programs and conferences to promote understanding and strengthen collaboration between Tibetan and Indian communities.
- **Advocate with the Nepalese government:** Create opportunities for Tibetan cultural expression and preservation within the country. This may involve policy discussions, cultural exchange programs, and collaborative initiatives between the Tibetan and Nepalese governments and communities.
- **Increase funding to the Department of Information:** Increase the level of funding support to CTA's Department of Information so it is more effectively able to promote Tibetan culture and counter Chinese misinformation and propaganda.

ENHANCING SOCIAL RESILIENCE (EDUCATION AND HEALTH)

Education: Only a small number of Tibetans are studying sciences and subjects that are economically marketable. There is a need to improve the education system so that Tibetan youth are integrated into the modern knowledge economy and can access the Indian market at their doorstep. Supporting

education in Nepal remains a challenge for CTA due to the current political situation and lack of support from the Nepal government.

Recommendations:

1. **Prioritize investment in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM):** Support coaching for competitive exams in STEM and business subjects so that more students become entrepreneurs or part of the knowledge economy. Increase the number of scholarships in STEM and business, at Indian universities and technical institutions.
2. **Consolidation of schools:** Provide technical support to CTA's school consolidation process to reduce the number of schools and enable opportunities for focused implementation which will improve the quality of teaching and learning.
3. **Update education policy:** Support the consolidation/revision of the Basic Education Policy of 2014 to match changing needs.
4. **Leverage the government of India's education system:** Project the number of children in each settlement, and leverage support from the government of India in educating them in Indian schools (with additional provision for learning the Tibetan language), rather than expanding CTA's functioning.
5. **Information communication and technology (ICT):** Strengthen use of ICT tools in primary and secondary education.
6. **Pilot school programs in India settlements for Tibetans from Nepal:** Leverage support from stakeholders to advocate with the government of Nepal and India, to bring children from Nepal to Indian settlements for education, starting with a pilot.
7. **Targeted short-term vocational training:** Support short-term vocational training in consultation with service sector employers, for jobs in computer programming, data science, machine learning/AI, international trade, banking, and finance at the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education (DLIHE).
8. **Improve career counseling:** Improve the quality of career counseling programs at the school at the secondary level, in colleges, and among other dropouts.
9. **Early childhood development:** Strengthen the newly initiated early childhood development education. There is a need for additional spending on early childhood development and education programs through voluntary organizations, such as Manjushree.
10. **Exposure to Indian schools:** Increase exposure for Tibetan students and teachers with high-performing government and private schools in India through cross-learning opportunities, such as web meetings, school exchange programs, and exposure visits.

Health: The Health Department of the CTA is responsible for providing primary, secondary, and referral services for tertiary care. There is a lack of a strong health information system to gauge disease burden. Communicable and non-communicable diseases (CDs and NCDs) are increasing, alongside mental health issues, and reproductive and sexual health issues are unaddressed among youth. The Tibetan Medicare System insurance scheme offers limited coverage and fails to protect vulnerable populations from financial risks. In Nepal, the CTA is unable to support the health needs of its constituents.

Recommendations based on discussions with Health Department officials:

1. **Public Health information system:** Provide technical support for strengthening the public health

information system and surveillance using the District Health Information Software (DHIS2) platform so that evidence-based planning for health services can be initiated in settlements.

2. **Financial risk protection for health:** Provide direct support to CTA to increase the coverage amount of the health insurance schemes, Tibetan Medicare System, for those who need high-cost tertiary care, the number of such population who need tertiary care is very small (<300) per year. Alternatively, the TMS can also be linked to the Indian Health Insurance Scheme (PMJAY) so that the community can access care in different public and private sector tertiary care hospitals across India, without incurring heavy out-of-pocket expenditure.
3. **Strengthen telemedicine:** Support ICT-based solutions, such as telemedicine for remote areas of India and Nepal, so that early diagnosis, triage, and referral can be done on a timely basis. At the same time integrate telemedicine with an effective referral mechanism.
4. **Special provision for Nepal:** Negotiate special arrangements for transporting patients from Nepal to Indian border towns for treatment, with coverage from Tibetan Medicare insurance.
5. **Linkages with Indian health system:** Provide support to referral linkages to the Indian public health system to focus on the growing burden of non-communicable diseases, mental health, youth reproductive and sexual health needs, and geriatric care for Tibetans in exile in Nepal and India.
6. **Integration of Buddhist psychology in mental health:** Pilot mental health programs using Buddhist philosophy and psychology.
7. **Set up health surveillance:** Support the improvement of an evidence-based health system to conduct population-based public health surveys and establish a surveillance system to estimate the disease burden and risk factors.
8. **Strengthen outreach program for communicable and non-communicable diseases (CDs and NCDs):** Strengthen outreach for identification of CDs/NCDs and link it with care provisions. Alternatively, the Government of India Ayushman Bharat Health and Wellness Centers can be extended to the settlement for improving coverage and quality.
9. **Review of Health Department data:** There is a need to identify gaps in the health system to determine what information is needed for better planning. This could be jointly conducted by the CTA Health Department and external public health expertise.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Since 2002, USAID/India has been supporting the self-reliance and resilience of the Tibetans in exile in India and Nepal. In FY 2022, funding stood at USD 8 million for community needs and an additional USD 3 million to strengthen the CTA. Cumulative funding totals USD 63 million, including:

- Tibetan Self Reliance and Resilience (TSRR) project (2016-2024): USD 39.5 million to improve livelihoods and strengthen Tibetan institutions and cultural resilience in India and Nepal.
- CTA-Capacity Building and Sustainability Initiative (CTA-CBSI) (2021-2026): USD 14.5 million to build the capacity of CTA staff, support strategic planning, and improve the management systems and policies of the CTA and Tibetan settlement institutions.
- The Mission recently awarded a new activity focusing on strengthening the preservation of Tibetan culture through digital libraries.
- In the past, USAID supported activities that strengthened access to resource materials and textbooks in the Tibetan language and enhanced financial literacy in the Tibetan communities across India through the SARD.

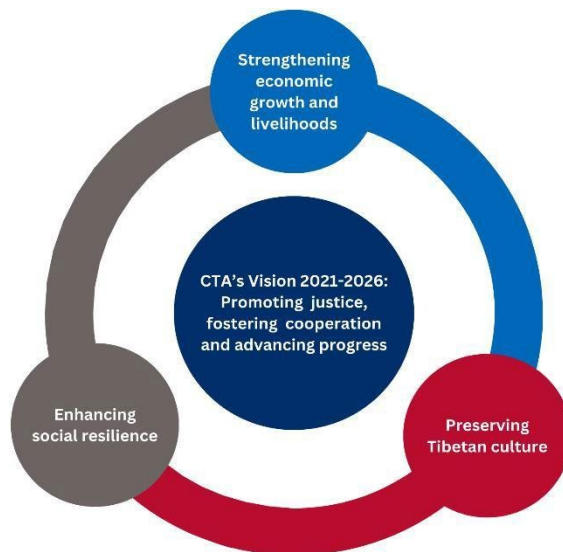
Considering the growing challenges facing the Tibetan community, there is a need for USAID/India to assess and identify the aspects of the existing portfolio that could be better aligned to ensure that the Mission is effectively supporting the needs of the Tibetan communities.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

USAID conducted a needs assessment in 2020 that explored the socio-economic, cultural, and structural problems faced by the Tibetan refugee population in India and Nepal. In a follow-up to that study, the Advancing the U.S.-India Partnership Platform (APP) has conducted the present scoping study to inform USAID/India of the current challenges and to provide recommendations that can inform the design of future projects.

Specifically, this study is designed to assist USAID/India to answer the following questions:

1. **How do CTA and other stakeholders view current USAID strategies** in terms of effectiveness?
2. **What are the main development challenges, and recommended strategic areas** for future



programming in the three priority areas that align with the U.S. Government priorities and CTA's

vision, in India and Nepal? The recommendations should be sustainable, locally viable, strengthening systems, and innovative. The three areas of inquiry are:

- **Strengthening economic growth and livelihoods:** It is necessary to support CTA to identify robust and innovative approaches, particularly involving youth, for fostering sustainable economies that would help create jobs, strengthen businesses, and leverage technologies to drive development initiatives. Creating trust funds or loan guarantee programs should also be explored, amongst other opportunities.
- **Preserving Tibetan culture:** A priority for His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the CTA. What are innovative mechanisms for preserving Tibetan culture, which may include identifying viable business plans/models focused on potential new revenue streams and long-term financial sustainability of Tibetan institutions?
- **Enhancing social resilience:** Providing social support to the scattered community is a growing challenge for CTA. In its vision paper, CTA outlines the need for the consolidation of Tibetan settlements and schools. What are some viable models that could help CTA strengthen the support for greater sustainability focusing on education and health among the Tibetan community in exile?

METHODOLOGY

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This scoping study is designed to explore the gaps and challenges in the current USAID/India funding strategies. It aims to provide actionable recommendations that align with the CTA vision of “Promoting justice, fostering cooperation, and advancing progress” through three primary goals: 1) resolving the Sino-Tibet conflict through the Middle-Way Policy, 2) enhancing the welfare of Tibetans in exile, and 3) boosting CTA’s administrative efficiency and capacity.

Against this backdrop, this study addresses a set of priority questions under each of the programming areas. The questions were developed after a review of the important literature, implementing partner progress reports, and evaluation reports. These and the subsequent interview questions (Annex I) were discussed and finalized in close consultations with the USAID/India team and formed the basis of the design of interview tools. Using discussions with respondents that were prompted by the questions, the team outlined challenges and recommendations, which form the Findings section of the report.

Strengthening economic growth and livelihood opportunities:

1. What are the challenges faced by the community for starting an occupation, either a job or a business?
2. How can involving youth in job creation contribute to fostering sustainable economies in Tibetan communities?
3. What are the sources of capital and finance, and what are the challenges in starting an entrepreneurial initiative?

4. What are the problems with labor, how can labor force participation be increased?

5. Can agriculture provide sustainable solutions? In what ways can fostering public-private partnerships impact the economic growth of Tibetan communities?
6. What are the solutions for preserving traditional entrepreneurship such as in the production of carpets, Tankha art, and other traditional handicrafts?
7. What is the role of the modern banking sector?
8. What are the gaps in the education system that prevent Tibetans in exile from engaging in high-value jobs?
9. What is the role of CTA in enabling effective vocational training programs - why has such training not been able to translate into job creation?

Preserving Tibetan culture:

1. In what ways can a flourishing cultural economy act as a driver of economic growth in Tibetan communities?
2. What are some viable business plans and models that can create new revenue streams for Tibetan institutions?
3. What role does promoting cultural tourism play in the economic growth of Tibetan regions?
4. What are the challenges and strategies in balancing cultural integrity and fidelity with economic viability for the long-term preservation of Tibetan culture?
5. How can institutions support the development of a cultural economy while maintaining the authenticity of Tibetan culture?

Enhancing social resilience: Issues related to health and education are linked to CTA's vision of securing the welfare of Tibetans in exile.

1. What are the major challenges in identifying the burden of disease in the community, and linking it to care?
2. What type of support is needed to improve access to care, quality of care, and reduction of out-of-pocket expenditure?
3. What are the major challenges in ensuring the dual need of education in the community-preservation of the Tibetan language, and values and promotion of the modern education system?
4. What are the major recommendations to improve the performance of STEM subjects in the education system of the Tibetan government in exile?

METHODS AND MATERIALS

This scoping study employed a qualitative study design that a) combines a review of existing program reports and assessment/evaluation reports, with b) a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs) with various types of stakeholders. The steps for both are outlined below:

Review of existing reports and documents: The primary aim of this review is to pinpoint critical questions that remain unanswered or validate prior assessments so that more relevant recommendations can be made for USAID/India's program initiatives. To achieve this, the team conducted an exhaustive analysis of

existing project documentation, including reports from the TSRR and its antecedent initiatives, as well as periodic program reports from USAID/India's implementing agencies. This analysis focused on

identifying challenges and recommendations highlighted in previous assessments. The team also undertook a comprehensive desk review of publicly accessible reports and documents. The insights gleaned from this review have been instrumental in developing and refining the questions for each of the study's objectives, ensuring a focused and informed approach to the research.

Study tools: Guidelines for conducting and coding IDIs and FGDs were developed in close collaboration with USAID. The tools were pre-tested in the Majnu Ka Tilla Tibetan settlement in Delhi.

Study team: A consultant study team comprising two subject matter and an analyst, was assembled and supported by two core members of the APP team. This five-person team conducted all the data collection synthesized the information, and prepared the report. The background of each team member is as follows:

1. Subject Matter Expert, Economic Growth: An economist from Oxford Policy Management, a sub-contractor of APP, experienced in conducting community-based studies on economic growth and livelihoods in India and other South Asian countries.
2. Subject Matter Expert, Preserving Culture: An international expert from Nepal, experienced in conducting studies and evaluations for the Tibetan community in exile in India and Nepal, ensuring a comprehensive and authentic understanding of the culture, society, and history of the Tibetan community in exile.
3. Analyst: A member of the Tibetan refugee community living in exile in India and founder of an NGO working for the Tibetan exile community. This individual's presence was invaluable, providing an insider's perspective and aiding in the validation of information.
4. Team Leader: APP senior staff expert trained in Areas Studies, and specialized in Tibet and Bhutan, from the Center of Himalayan Studies.
5. Analyst: APP staff member trained in management studies, who was raised in the proximity of the Tibetan community in Nepal.

A two-day training was conducted before starting the data collection to train the study team on the study objective, design, and study tools.

Respondent sample: In collaboration with representatives from USAID/India and CTA, the team compiled a list of potential respondents, including officers from various CTA departments, and representatives from other institutions who are major stakeholders for the Tibetan population in exile. In India, these respondents were in four key Indian states: Dharamsala, Delhi, Arunachal Pradesh, and Karnataka. The team conducted in-person interviews in Dharamshala and Delhi, while in the other states of India and Nepal, interviews were carried out virtually using Google Meet.

Table 1: List of respondents by institutions and type of engagement

Institution	Respondent	FGD/IDI (#)	In-person/ Virtual
Dharamshala, Himshal Pradesh, India			

President of CTA	Sikyong	IDI (1)	In-person
Department of Home	Secretary and project staff	FGD (2)	In-person

Department of Education	Secretary and project staff	FGD (2)	In-person
Department of Health	Secretary and project staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Department of Religion and Culture	Secretary and project staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Department of Finance	Secretary	FGD (1)	In-person
Department of International Relations and Information	Secretary and project staff	FGD (1)	In-person
SARD	Secretary and project staff	FGD (1)	In-person
WED	Project staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Library of Tibetan Work and Archives	Secretary, Deputy Secretary and staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Tibetan Medicine & Astrological Institute	Director and technical staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Public Service Commission (PSC)	Secretary and project staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts	Secretary and staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Norbulinga Institute	Secretary and staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Gang Jong Development Finance	Secretary	FGD (1)	In-person
NDI	Chief of Party and project staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Tibet Fund	President and Regional Field Director	FGD (1)	In-person
Settlement Office, Dharamshala	Settlement Officer and staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Tibetan Cooperative Society	Manager and staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Monlam AI	Founder	IDI (1)	In-person
Tibetan Children's Village	Education Director and secretaries	FGD (1)	In-person
Manjushiri Education Service	Director, Deputy Director and staff	FGD (1)	In-person
Local NGOs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students for a Free Tibet • Tibetan Women's Association • Lha Charitable Trust • Tibetan Career Center • Tibetan Center for Conflict Resolution 	Members	FGD (1)	In person
Tibetan youths (male)		FGD (2)	In person
Tibetan youths (female)		FGD (2)	In person
Tibetan entrepreneurs		FGD (2)	In person
Canara Bank		IDI (1)	In person
Settlement office, Mandi	Settlement Officer	IDI (1)	Virtual
Delhi, India			
Settlement Office, Majnu Ka Tilla	Settlement Officer	IDI (1)	In-person
Tibetan Chamber of Commerce	President, CEO, and secretary	IDI (3)	
Karnataka, India			
Settlement Office, Mundgod	Settlement Officer	IDI (1)	Virtual
Dickyi Larseo Cooperative Society, Bylakuppe	Secretary	FGD (1)	Virtual
Organic Research & Training Center (ORTC)	Director		Virtual
Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives in India	President		Virtual
Settlement Office, Bangalore	Chief Representative officer, southern settlements	IDI (1)	Virtual
Settlement Office, Bylakuppe	Settlement Officer	IDI (1)	Virtual
Arunachal Pradesh, India			
Settlement Office, Tezu	Settlement Officer – Tezu	IDI (1)	Virtual
Settlement Office, Miao	Settlement Officer – Miao	IDI (1)	Virtual
Uttarakhand, India			
Settlement Office, Dehradun	Settlement Officer – Dehradun	IDI (1)	Virtual
Nepal			
Office of Tibet, Kathmandu	President	FGD (1)	Virtual
Settlement Office, Lodrik	Settlement Officer		Virtual
Settlement Office, Pokhara	Settlement Officer		Virtual
Settlement Office, Choenjor	Settlement Officer		Virtual
SARD Nepal, Katmandu	Project officers		Virtual

Data collection period: The team collected data from Dec 5, 2023 through Jan 4, 2024, spending 15 working days to complete 43 qualitative interviews, 15 IDIs, and 28 FGDs.

Data analysis: The team transcribed all interview audio recordings into a Microsoft Word document using a web-based transcription tool. To guarantee data integrity, random cross-checks were performed between sections of the recordings and their corresponding transcripts. In instances where the transcription lacked clarity, the team diligently listened to the audio recordings again and made necessary corrections. After this verification process, each transcript was reviewed and the responses were categorized into thematic areas. This comprehensive approach culminated in a summarized synthesis of the responses from diverse interviews, which directly informed and addressed the objectives of our study.

Limitations: The major limitations of the scoping study are:

- The study subjects are not representative of the Tibetan population in exile, in India and Nepal as a whole. The study design prioritized capturing input of CTA officials, and members of other institutions who work closely with CTA, with minimal participation from the general community.
- Remote regions of Northeast India and Nepal are underrepresented as per the scope of the work. Despite lacking direct access to Nepal, CTA officials facilitated a virtual meeting with the Office of Tibet in Nepal.
- Further access to respondents in Nepal was limited as the CTA does not have direct access to the Tibetan community in Nepal. Challenges are highlighted and recommendations provided related to contextual issues and livelihoods.
- A selection bias may have influenced responses, as respondents were chosen by the USAID/India office, and a list was shared with the APP team.
- CTA officials assisted in mobilizing respondents, and their representatives oversaw the fieldwork, potentially affecting the outcome.
- As a purely qualitative exercise, the scoping study may not fully depict the levels and trends of major development indicators, nor capture the heterogeneity in the development conditions of the Tibetan exile population in India and Nepal. Furthermore, the absence of recent data or development indicators limits the ability to verify the accuracy of respondents' statements in many instances.

FINDINGS

The Tibetan communities in India and Nepal present a unique and challenging context for development assistance. The CTA is simultaneously striving to ensure the welfare of its people in exile while maintaining its global advocacy for Tibetan autonomy and doing so without having the legitimacy to collect tax and without access to Tibetans in Nepal. The structural and capacity challenges alone are significant and therefore presented separately below, along with recommendations. Subsequently, findings and recommendations specific to the three programming areas, strengthening economic growth and livelihoods, preserving cultural preservation, and enhancing social resilience are presented.

STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES

Revenue generation: USAID/India funding supplemented by Green Book contributions from the Tibetans in exile make up most of CTA's development support. The Sikyong noted that efforts to broaden fiscal avenues, notably the establishment of a non-banking financial company (NBFC), had not yielded the anticipated results. He stressed that current Kashag's vision (Securing Tibet's Future, Vision Paper, The 16th Kashag, 2021-26, CTA) is not to pursue entrepreneurial activities but to fund all its developmental initiatives through international aid and donations. The Sikyong is confident that US support will continue, citing constructive dialogues with representatives from the US Embassy and USAID/India. Despite the overriding political focus on continued development assistance, the Tibetan community does have an active private sector that can be supported, including through the Tibetan Chamber of Commerce (TCC), and Tibetan cooperative societies for self-sustainability. This is explored under "Strengthening Economic Growth and Livelihoods."

Green Book contributions: Comprising 8 percent of total CTA revenue, this is a 'voluntary' contribution that the CTA asks from its constituents. For CTA officials, a fixed amount is deducted monthly from their salaries. Youths and entrepreneurs described the Green Book contributions as mandatory in practice. The CTA officers reported that, unlike a modern tax system, the contribution is not progressive, i.e., the contribution does not increase with the disposal income of an individual. Ninety percent of Green Book contributions come from Tibetans in India and Nepal giving INR 200 per year, and the remaining 10 percent comes from Tibetans in the diaspora (who provide USD 46 per year if unemployed and USD 96 if employed.)

Contributions from Tibetans in India and Nepal (INR 200 per year) make up about 12.5% of Green Book contributions, while the much less numerous diaspora Tibetans provide the balance (contributing USD 46 if unemployed and USD 96 if employed).

Demographic shifts: There has been a rapid population decline in the settlements, a 30 percent decrease from 2009 to 2019 in major settlements, mostly among the younger population (under 35 years) (Census 2009, 2019). This trend is attributed to rising out-migration and reduced fertility rates (TFR) (1.18 in 2019), to which reduced nuptiality rates and a sizeable monastic population contribute. However, without recent

census data, the relative impact of these factors on the population decrease remains unknown.

The visibly rapid decline in school enrolment serves as a reliable proxy indicator for the annual decrease in births. Officials have reported to the study team that several settlements have experienced consecutive years without any births. Drawing from global experience, a TFR of 1.18 means that the population is unlikely to sustain its current size, there will be a significant decline in the working-age population and an increase in the proportion of elderly.

Officials from the SARD fund express deep concern about these demographic trends. The Director explained that major population indicators are unknown as the last census was not successful because data quality was a major challenge. An interim census with less scope was conducted in 2022, but results have not been published. He recommends immediate planning for enhanced support structures for elderly care, promoting marriage through various means such as dating applications, and working to create opportunities within settlements to minimize out-migration.

Emerging critical concerns include diminished labor force participation, slowing economic growth and livelihood opportunities, and escalating demand for elderly care services.

Aligning donor and CTA priorities: A common concern of the Sikyong and CTA officials, is what is described as a mismatch between what the CTA needs, and what donors are willing to fund, particularly when it comes to infrastructure. One of CTA's main goals is to encourage dispersed Tibetans to return to their settlements. There are also homeless Tibetan populations from other areas that can be housed in the settlements that have space due to reduced populations. However, this requires investment in infrastructure, including the construction and repair of homes, schools, roads, and hospitals. Another goal of CTA is to improve tourism, but this requires investment in roads to remote settlements.

Challenges of indirect funding: The respondents from SARD and the Department of Finance reported that approximately one-quarter of donor funds are absorbed by the implementing partners as overhead charges. The mechanism of engaging implementing partners is intended to boost the CTA's operational effectiveness, however, CTA officials state that it would be more effective to fund CTA directly, through various CTA entities with Foreign Country Regulation Act (FCRA) accounts. CTA officials cite two initiatives in which USAID funding was provided directly, with positive outcomes: the Tibetan Resilience Program and the Strengthening Cultural Resilience in Tibetan Communities (preserving Buddhist manuscripts digitally in collaboration with Wadhvani AI).

Planning-implementation cycle challenges: The SARD Director and Sikyong pointed out that most activities planned by one the Kashag come to the execution stage only with the subsequent Kashag, which might have a different set of agendas and priorities. An example of this is the discontinuation of the non-banking financial company established under the previous government and discontinued by the current one. Additionally, a senior official noted that the lack of clear election manifestos tends to make these plans more unpredictable.

Lack of data and monitoring and evaluation (M&E): The absence of quality data, a cohesive M&E system, and evidence-based planning is a major challenge for CTA in its development planning. There is

no data on health, education or employment, and existing data is a challenge in terms of timeliness and quality. The SARD Director stated that they require a data system comparable to that of any democratic government or the UN system on SDGs and that they also need capacity support in generating data for planning and monitoring.

Gender programming challenges: Some officials raised the concern that gender programming is a donor priority, but does not reflect Tibetan priorities or needs.

“We are not saying that activities on gender issues are not needed, however, there are more important and urgent issues that need to be focused on so that we can continuously thrust for the larger cause of returning to our homeland.” (CTA official)

The Women’s Empower Desk (WED), a division under the Finance Department of CTA, runs the gender-related programs of USAID/India and other donors. Under the 2020 “Guideline for Prevention, prohibition, and Redressal of sexual and gender-based violence for Tibetan in Exile (2020),” the unit has been conducting awareness and capacity-building activities on gender sensitization, gender mainstreaming across project activities, women’s leadership, sexual and reproductive health issues, and prevention/responding to sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, the WED has also drafted an implementation guideline for CTA officials, which included India’s Prevention of Sexual Harassment Act. The main challenges reported by WED members are a) shortage of WED staff, b) lack of institutional independence, and 3) lack of data to formulate priorities or measure implementation.

Tibetans in Nepal: The challenges of supporting the approximately 13,000 Tibetans living in Nepal were explored in consultations with various departments of the CTA and the Tibetan Chamber of Commerce (TCC). Additionally, a virtual FGD was conducted with the Office of Tibet in Nepal, settlement officers from three settlements in Nepal, and SARD-Nepal.

A significant shift in the situation of Tibetans in Nepal occurred in 1995 when the Nepalese government ceased issuing refugee cards to Tibetans due to political pressure from China. Without official documentation, Tibetans in Nepal do not have access to essential services and rights afforded to residents. Their situation is precarious and there are reports of instances of Nepalese authorities forcing individuals from border regions into China. Key challenges faced by Tibetans in Nepal as highlighted by officials from the Office of Tibet in Nepal are:

- **Lack of official identity:** Tibetans are denied access to government services and employment opportunities. Even NGOs face constraints in delivering assistance and reaching out to the Tibetan refugees, as this might disclose their refugee status and make Tibetans vulnerable to harassment from Nepalese law enforcement agencies.
- **Cultural suppression:** Tibetans are prohibited from commemorating religious or cultural events, depriving them of essential cultural freedoms.
- **Economic constraints:** Tibetans face various constraints, including restrictions on travel, limitations on engaging in trade and business registration, and difficulties in opening bank

accounts. Highly educated individuals are therefore relegated to menial labor.

Evidence gap: There are no systematic assessments or data to understand and advocate for the plight of the community.

The human resource capacity of the CTA is managed by the Public Service Commission (PSC) and includes induction and administrative training provided by institutions including the Indian Institute of Public Administration, the Himachal Pradesh Institute of Public Administration, and the National Center for Good Governance. Senior staff receive leadership and decision-making training, funded by the National Democratic Institute (NDI) and International City/Country Management Association (ICMA) sub-grants. In addition, NDI has been collaborating with CTA since 2021 to build capacity, beginning with the Department of Finance and expanding to other departments, focusing on leadership, decision-making, and fund management. NDI conducts need assessments and offers training in areas such as strategic planning, proposal writing, grant management, and HR management. The Tibet Fund (TF) established a dedicated M&E team to ensure program effectiveness. During the discussion with implementing partners and the PSC, major gaps in the capacity of the CTA staff were discussed, including:

Funds management: Given that the funding comes through FCRA, it involves considerable paperwork. According to NDI and TF, the CTA staff cannot manage large grants that involve the utilization of the funds by several departments and under several programs, and there is limited capacity to manage the associated paperwork. However, according to the Secretary of the Department of Finance, CTA is confident in its ability to manage funds since it had capacity-building training from NDI. On a similar line, the SARD Director and project staff shared that they are able to manage funding by leveraging their past successes in projects with Wadhvani AI. However, the lack of an integrated IT-based financial system does present significant challenges to fund management, as pointed out officers of the Department of Finance.

Program design and proposal writing: CTA officials and Public Service Commission (PSC) officers explained that CTA staff lack skills in writing/presenting funding proposals, a considerable liability given the requirement of donors for well-presented proposals.

Skills: According to project officers, the assignment of CTA staff, particularly for transfers is often based on recommendations by a department secretary rather than qualifications or experience. Although the PCS has been developing a skill matrix, with collaboration with donors, the mechanism has not been implemented yet.

The Secretary of the PSC explained that recently, the number and quality of applicants for CTA vacancies has been decreasing. He also explained that while training is provided by NDI and ICMA, it is mainly based on the needs assessment conducted by NDI and is not always aligned with the priorities of the CTA. In contrast NDI maintains that they develop capacity-building training in collaboration with the CTA departments.

STRUCTURAL AND CAPACITY RECOMMENDATIONS

Revenue generation: The Sikyong reported that the Kashag has a clear understanding that the CTA will not engage in any resource-generation activities and will focus on the goal of the welfare of the Tibetan population in exile through development funding and donations. Given this lens, the team has the following broad recommendations:

- Provide technical support in developing a program to increase the base of existing voluntary contributions (Green Book) and expand coverage through increased awareness among the Tibetan population living in exile about CTA activities and challenges in India and Nepal.
- Create outreach to institutions in India and other countries to increase awareness of the Tibetan movement and support contributions of non-Tibetans (such as the Blue Book initiative, a mechanism for individual fundraising).
- Provide specialized technical support to CTA to find ways to improve the Green Book system of contribution. The system should be better appreciated and designed to 'ask' more of those who can afford it.
- Provide technical support to conduct an accurate census of the Tibetan population in exile and other population data. This will help estimate the funds that can be generated through Green Book contributions.
- Ensure USAID implementing partners' funding corresponds to CTA priorities and expectations, and rationalize funding support by increasing the share of direct funding to CTA.
- Support CTA to develop a strategy to access CSR funding, working with the Indian Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

Financial management:

- Provide support to design and implement an IT-based solution for integrated financial management and information systems (IFMIS), which would enable the Department of Finance to track receipt and utilization of funds.
- Provide technical support in planning, implementation, and monitoring to build the department's institutional capacity to become a nodal agency for fund management and monitoring.

Population projections for policy decisions: One of the foremost needs is to generate evidence using robust and scientific methods on the needs of the Tibetan community. The specific recommendations are:

- Provide technical support to conduct a technically sound census of the Tibetan population living in settlements of India, Nepal, and Bhutan, which should also include information on the availability and access to basic quality amenities. The NDI initiative of geographic information system (GIS) based mapping can be piloted before being scaled up. This will be helpful in the data-driven decision-making process, particularly in fund allocation and prioritizing fund utilization.
- Support a population projection for the Tibetan-in-exile to estimate future welfare needs, using methods of the UNDESA or Indian Department of Home. The projection parameters should

include age-sex composition, labor force participation, and projection of the elderly population in need of care.

- Build CTA capacity to develop an M&E plan to track UN SDGs. Support periodic surveys to monitor the SDG progress. Technical agencies with expertise in these areas include the International Institute for Population Science (IIPS), the National Council for Applied Economic Research (NCAER), and the Indian Statistical Institutes (ISIs). The Director of SARD emphasized that the CTA is a democratic institution for running a government in exile, so its performance should also be measured using the same indicators used for measuring the performance of other nation-states.

Capacity-building of CTA staff: Aligning with the CTA's vision for 2021-26,

- Build the capacity to develop evidence-based decision-making, including gap assessment through assessments and studies, prioritization and planning, implementation, and M&E.
- Build capacity to manage and raise funds, which includes, monitoring of utilization of funds, financial planning, and advocacy for fund generation, among others.
- Support exposure visits to Indian state government departments to showcase how different units of bureaucracy operate in democratic institutions and adopt some of the best practices.

Capacity building in gender issues: The key recommendations highlighted by the WED are:

- Activate new activities and strengthen ongoing activities of gender mainstreaming. There is a need for a continuous effort to address the basic concepts in schools, colleges, settlements, and CTA offices.
- Promote women's leadership by investing at the grassroots level in training and mentoring programs.
- Create resources to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) at the settlement level and workplace by constituting committees and creating guidelines and policies.
- Conduct research related to women's empowerment and equality in society and the CTA.

Recommendations for Nepal: There is a need for urgent action, including:

- Work with the Nepali Home Ministry's National Unit for Coordination of Refugee Affairs (NUCRA), to advocate and ensure basic humanitarian rights for Tibetan refugees.
- Use diplomatic channels to urge the Nepali government to reconsider its policies and provide necessary documentation and protections for Tibetan refugees.
- Support the involvement of the CTA in any programs for Tibetans in Nepal.
- Support the inclusion of the Office of Tibet in Nepal in all CTA forums so that CTA's program can be strengthened in Nepal.
- Support a comprehensive assessment of the situation of the Tibetan exile community in Nepal, to allow for evidence-based programming and advocacy.

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LIVELIHOODS: CHALLENGES

One of the determining factors of the long-term resilience of the Tibetan community is economic sustainability of the settlements. Challenges to this sustainability include demographic shifts, including the growing burden of the aged population against a decreasing proportion of youth, increasing migration, and movement to urban centers.

“Young people are moving out, and that’s only because [we] have not been able to create opportunities for livelihoods in the settlement.” (Sikyong)

Primary sector (agriculture and allied)

Like many other communities, the share of agriculture in the Tibetan economy and corresponding employment generation is decreasing over time. Agricultural activities are concentrated around the Tibetan settlement areas in Karnataka, southern India and very limited in other settlements. Maize is traditionally the primary agricultural product, however, new livelihood options are growing in popularity in the Tibetan community, including dairy farming, organic horticulture (honey), tea, medicinal plants, and cash crops (e.g. lemon grass, avocado, and dragon fruit).

The Department of Homes (DoH) provides small loans to farmers at low-interest rates and longer payment times and organizes training workshops in modern farming methods, including organic farming. It also conducts soil health testing, provides inputs in soil treatment, and trains agriculture extension officers.

Challenges to sustaining agricultural production include declining interest amongst youth in farming as an occupation; difficulties in owning agricultural land as refugees; constrained market access to agricultural produce; and complex procedures for organic produce certification hindering widespread adoption of organic farming.

The main reason for the declining interest in agriculture is that as refugees, Tibetans cannot purchase or own agricultural land. The land is leased to the CTA by the host countries and the CTA allocates land to farmers. During the FGDs, community participants explained that the system of reallocating land when people leave the settlement is slow. CTA officials explained that agricultural land already managed by CTA is also often distant from urban centers and lacks basic amenities.

Youths in FGDs identified the lack of Indian citizenship as the reason for their limited opportunities:

"Identity is a major problem, we do not have Indian citizenship...we cannot even buy land. If we want to expand our agricultural activity, we need to expand the agricultural land ... Even though my parents always said to stay here, we are forced to go as there is no security for our future."

While the CTA encourages and provides training in organic farming, farmers face complex and lengthy certification processes for organic products, and with no guarantee of receiving premium prices for organic produce. DoH officials explained that young farmers prefer using chemical fertilizer, which has a lower input cost, and often yields more attractive produce.

Tibetan agriculture is heavily dependent on rainfall, often resulting in crop loss due to drought or flood (Project officers, DoH). Youth explained that farmers face challenges of a limited market in which to purchase inputs or sell produce, and project officers shared that agriculture is simply no longer a profitable option given high input costs. Agricultural cooperatives are not able to support the farmers due to their limited capacity to procure and store produce. If a farmer wants to directly access the market, the transport cost is usually prohibitive as most of the settlements are far from the main markets.

In the past, farmer-producer organizations were piloted in southern Indian settlements, but did not prove successful, FGD respondents said that the capacity-building programs for the farmers were not effective, and even the experts were not able to facilitate the market linkages.

Secondary sector (manufacturing)

Tibetan manufacturing is a limited and decreasing cottage industry focused on carpets and handicrafts. There is growing, but limited interest in the retail of modern apparel/accessories and woolen garments (*Tibet Fund*). The contraction of this sector is due to lack of access to start-up finances and a shortage of skilled labor.

The NBFC representative shared that there are some community-based fund pooling systems (self-help groups) among the women sweater makers, though the penetration is low. The Tibet Fund shared that the Enterprise Resource Centre, a non-financial business development service that helps potential loan applicants by providing business development skills. Also, for entrepreneurship, existing efforts include supporting services/products with the Tibetan Chamber of Commerce (TCC) on two e-commerce portals: one for guest houses, homestays, and hotels, and the other for medicinal products.

Below are the key challenges that the entrepreneurs face:

1. **Lack of skilled labor:** Due to high out-migration, and the lack of motivation among and training of youth, the labor-intensive carpet and handicrafts sectors (the primary two industries in the Tibetan community) are unable to meet demand. While the Tibetan Chamber of Commerce and CTA provide skill development training, interest, and uptake is limited (Tibetan Chamber of Commerce).
2. **Access to credit:**
 - **Lack of access to large enough loans:** Mainstream financial institutions provide loans to salaried taxpayers and who can provide collateral as a guarantee. Tibetan refugees cannot meet these conditions. High-value loans by Gang Jong, NBFC, and CTA are reserved for joint ventures, and not available for individual entrepreneurs. The loans through NBFC and CTA are a maximum of INR 3 lakhs, which is often not sufficient to set up the business, particularly for the capital required for infrastructure. CTA project officers shared that while in the past there had been entrepreneurship programs (like training and mentorship) for Tibetans in exile that initially saw some success, the difficulties in accessing credit caused them to fail.
 - **Complex processes:** For the non-banking financial sectors, the process to get loans for Tibetans is lengthy and complex. In the opinion of the Tibetan entrepreneurs, these loans can only be

accessed by the highly educated who can write the proposal and complete the paperwork, and large businesses.

- **Societal biases:** Respondents reported a problem of bias because lending institution staff lack the contextual understanding of the Tibetan community. Additionally, in Tibetan society, small businesses are not seen as worthy of support.

“If a female entrepreneur selling tea and bread in the morning in a roadside street shop wants to establish a bigger store to sell momos, she will never get any financial or other assistance as it is looked down on by society and she will struggle to get a loan due to perceived informality of her businesses and the documentation requirements for formal banks. This type of small business is not appreciated in our society.” (female entrepreneur)

Tibetan youth reported that entrepreneurship is not considered an attractive undertaking in Tibetan refugee society because examples of entrepreneurial success are not common.

- **Micro-loans tied to credit ratings:** The NBFC representative shared that they are bound to the guidelines of the Reserve Bank of India, which require giving loans as per the credit rating of the applicant (like CIBIL score). Even though approval of loans is higher for NBFCs as compared to the formal banking sector, the interest rate is based on the credit profile (and often high).
 - **Short duration of loan:** Respondents explained that the time they need to get acceptance from customers to scale to sustain business often takes more time than the loan duration. This is particularly true of new ventures in the traditional Tibetan context.
 - **Lack of knowledge of modern financial loans:** The Tibetan community has limited awareness of how to tap available financing opportunities. Loans are offered by banks, NBFCs, and the Indian government (e.g., Mudra loans, which are offered under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) scheme and can be availed through any bank) Also, the recent offers from investments from the cooperatives right now are getting challenging due to a lack of clarity on profit-sharing arrangements among different cooperatives (*Tibetan Cooperative Society*).
3. **Uncertain future:** There is a feeling among the youth that their future in India is uncertain and that entrepreneurship is a risky livelihood option.
 4. **Capacity of entrepreneurs:** CTA officials explained that there is a lack of capacity among entrepreneurs in business planning, and the TCC echoed this: *“The overall business mindset within the Tibetan community is still underdeveloped.”* Most loan applications are rejected because they lack proper business plans. Other voices validate this observation.

“When the entrepreneurs apply, often there are 20-30 lines about the entire business plans. It is not clear what exactly they want to do and how they want to do it, with such planning the future of the business proposal looks compromised.” (CTA project officer)

“Despite possessing promising ideas, many young entrepreneurs face significant hurdles in navigating the complexities of business development, often due to gaps in essential skills, limited access to supportive mentorship, and the patience required for navigating early-stage challenges.” (entrepreneur)
 5. **E-commerce platforms:** Tibet Fund staff explained that the utilization of digital or e-commerce

platforms is largely limited to the Tibetan community, with little outreach.

Tertiary Sector (Service)

The service sector has recently grown as an employment option among Tibetans in exile. One FGD youth participant opined that almost 80% of youth aim to work in the service sector as they consider it more secure than agriculture or business. Tibetan nurses are now spread across India and other countries. Another growing area among youth is hospitality services: cafés, hostels and resorts, homestays, and spiritual tourism.

Most of the opportunities for Tibetans in services are in the private sector jobs, as they face challenges in finding public sector service jobs. There are, however, contradictory views on this: while CTA officials reported that public sector jobs are open to Tibetans in India, the youth FGD participants shared that they face rejections because of their refugee status.

Another limitation is a low uptake of skill development training for service jobs, respondents from CTA, TCC, and NGOs explained that the training is not linked to employment opportunities. Additionally, the Tibetan community lacks knowledge about e-commerce linkage for tourism services, cafés, hotels, or homestays. There is also a lack of experience in planning and implementation of retail/tourism businesses, which leads to high rejection of loans and failure. This necessitates the need for mentoring in retail/tourism work (Secretary, Dept of Home).

Spiritual tourism is recognized as having high potential for the local economy, but the CTA points out that it requires substantial investment.

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LIVELIHOODS: RECOMMENDATIONS

Primary (agriculture)

1. **Support insurance coverage:** There is a critical need for agricultural insurance due to risks from floods and droughts, especially for maize and cash crop producers.
2. **Infrastructure support:** Financing is needed for initiatives like drip irrigation, trench construction, fencing, rainwater harvesting for groundwater replenishment, and installing solar panels for sustainable, economical energy use, in line with the SDGs. Assistance could also be provided to connect the CTA with firms specializing in these areas.
3. **Capacity building in modern agriculture technology:** Training on modern agricultural methods, including best practices through agricultural extension services, and engagement of technical experts (e.g. involving CTA's Organic Research & Training Centre). Additionally, content designed to attract youth can be designed for Tibet Television's program on agricultural activities.
4. **Encourage dairy farming:** There is scope to encourage locally-led dairy farming and animal husbandry initiatives. There is a need for conducting a needs assessment, to understand the prospect and prepare a business plan.
5. **Settlement-specific innovations:** Target approaches to specific settlements. For example in Miao and Tezu, there is a unique opportunity to empower women economically by establishing an industry creating utensils from areca-nut leaves. WED can manage the marketing, leveraging their expertise and networks.

6. **Promote organic farming and certification:** Streamlining business processes in organic farming is crucial to attracting younger farmers. Key to this is assisting farmers in obtaining organic produce

certifications, a legal requirement and essential for market credibility and consumer trust. Additionally, training farmers in branding and marketing their organic products, including dairy, and cash crops like lemongrass, avocado, dragon fruits, and honey, is vital. This training can be effectively delivered through agricultural extension services. Technical experts and trainers who specialize in these areas should be engaged to provide farmers with the skills and knowledge to effectively market their products on e-commerce and digital platforms, expanding their reach and customer base.

7. **Promote market linkages:** Connect farmers directly with buyers to help them achieve better prices for their products. Improve the transportation linkages between settlements and markets, improve storage facilities within the settlements, and create a web-based platform (e-commerce) for online marketing.
8. **Disseminate success stories:** These stories can be shared within the Tibetan community through both in-person events and digital platforms, offering real-life examples of successful organic farming ventures. This not only encourages new farmers to adopt organic practices but also fosters a sense of community and shared learning.

Secondary sector (manufacturing)

1. **Skills needs assessment:** A needs assessment is required to understand the specific skill gaps and requirements of Tibetan youth so that training programs can be targeted and effective.
2. **Vocational training:** Based on the assessment, training programs should be developed that encompass not just technical skills but also cover planning, leadership, marketing, and promotional skills. Ensure that the training programs are directly linked to job opportunities.
3. **Mentorship:** Sustained support will help navigate the challenges of starting and maintaining a business. The insights and successful strategies from previous collaborations, like the Amazon Web Service training and Orbit Academy will provide valuable lessons for scaling up current initiatives.
4. **Link trainees with employers:** Collaborating with the TCC in organizing placement drives after the training and facilitating a smooth transition for trainees into the workforce can ensure maximum job placement.
5. **Career counseling:** The Dharamshala Tibetan Career Centre and the Tibetan-run Industrial Training Institute can be supported to develop course content and deploy career counselors starting from secondary school.
6. **Start-up loans:** There is a need to ease the provision of loans from banking and non-banking financial institutions. This can be done by simplifying the documentation processes for the Tibetan community, considering their refugee status, and by educating the community on various options available to them for accessing loans. In addition, focus should be given to exploring community-based revolving funds, for small and medium businesses. The Tibetan Entrepreneurship Development Program (TED) should be revived in collaboration with TCC, which will further empower Tibetan entrepreneurs.
7. **Promotion and market linkage of Tibetan products:** In collaboration with TCC, identify and scale up the use of e-commerce portals and social media to promote Tibetan products and culture. Given there is a market for handicraft products, reaching the customers, including setting up the delivery system, can play a critical role.
8. **Sharing of expertise and empowering the Federation of Tibetan Cooperatives in India (FTCI) as a**

knowledge hub: A FTCI platform could be developed to be a comprehensive, searchable database enabling identification of expertise, market opportunities, labor shortages and

needs, and training aligned with market requirements. By facilitating best practice exchange and fostering partnerships, the FTCI platform can help cooperatives increase revenue, skillsets, and strategic collaborations.

9. **Building a cooperative network:** While a degree of awareness exists among cooperatives about each other's expertise and practices, and lack of effective collaboration among board members. For example, the Dharamshala Cooperative Society experienced a six-month wait for carpet sales in the international market, while the Dehradun Cooperative had to reduce its workforce due to limited market demand for its carpets. CTA and the FTCI can be supported to unlock the full potential of the cooperative ecosystem by promoting resource sharing, joint production ventures, and cross-promotional efforts to optimize resource utilization, enhance operational efficiency, and broaden product offerings.
10. **Leveraging diaspora communities:** The Tibetan diaspora communities have valuable expertise and connections. Cooperatives and entrepreneurs can be supported by CTA to leverage their financial power, cultural influence, market knowledge, and business acumen to secure international investment, enhance brand recognition, access new markets, and nurture young entrepreneurs.
11. **Create youth internships in cooperatives:** A youth internship program that emphasizes the economic benefits and cultural significance of working with cooperatives could leverage social media campaigns, testimonials, and events to inspire youth and counter negative stereotypes associated with traditional occupations. Implementing a profit-sharing model for each product they contribute to, or sell would be instrumental in attracting and retaining young talent. In turn, youth would bring innovation to create authentic Tibetan products, and utilize social media to attract their peers and enhance marketing.
12. **Explore alternative funding mechanisms:** Cooperatives have little knowledge of how to explore funding and investment opportunities from peer cooperatives, banks, and angel funders, and there is a hesitancy to engage individuals outside Tibetan communities, fearing that such involvement could dilute the essence of their cultural heritage. To address these issues, it is necessary to diversify funding sources. CTA and the FTCI can play an active role in encouraging cooperatives to consider joint ventures with peer cooperatives and adopting profit-sharing models, as well as promoting awareness of microfinance loans and facilitating connections with angel investors.
13. **Support CTA collaboration with India's One District One Product (ODOP) initiative:** Positioning Tibetan carpets as a distinguished ODOP product would unlock market exposure through wider domestic and international reach, support such as skill development and subsidies, and the potential for geographical indication to protect their unique heritage.

Tertiary (service)

The tertiary sector for the Tibetan community in exile comprises tourism, hotel business, and trade. Many respondents believe that there are significant opportunities to promote tourism in settlement areas, including eco-tourism, religious, cultural, and wellness tourism. The current Sikyong is keen on promoting tourism including the expansion of the wellness segment that caters to mental health needs (e.g., Buddhist meditation centers).

1. **Invest in infrastructure:** Allocate resources towards developing settlement infrastructure essential for tourism, focusing on improving roads and urban amenities to enhance accessibility and comfort for visitors
2. **Cultural collaboration:** Forge partnerships with esteemed cultural institutions such as the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA), Norbulinga, Men Tsee Khang, and local monasteries. Collaborative efforts in planning and marketing will effectively promote Tibetan arts and cultures, enriching the tourism experience
3. **Wellness tourism:** Highlight Buddhist meditation centers and wellness activities to attract a discerning group of travelers seeking relaxation, rejuvenation, and spiritual enrichment. Partnering with meditation and wellness experts will elevate the quality of offerings in this segment.
4. **Eco-tourism initiatives:** Prioritize eco-tourism initiatives by advocating responsible travel practices, preserving natural habitats, and offering eco-friendly tour packages. Emphasize the region's biodiversity and conservation efforts to appeal to environmentally conscious travellers.
5. **Heritage tours development:** Develop heritage tours that showcase Tibetan cultural heritage through immersive experiences such as cultural events, festivals, and workshops. This initiative not only preserves the rich heritage but also supports local artisans, performers, and cultural practitioners, enhancing the overall tourism appeal.

STRENGTHENING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND LIVELIHOODS: NEPAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The Tibetan community living in Nepal has been struggling since 1994 when the Nepali government stopped issuing refugee cards. Without the cards, Tibetans have no access to bank accounts, IDs, driver's licenses, or loans. Participants in an FGD with officials from the Office of Tibet in Kathmandu, settlement officers, and a representative from SARD Nepal, explained that having refugee cards only lets them stay in Nepal but does not help them find work. Some people, even if they are well-educated and trained, cannot find decent jobs.

“Even those who are highly qualified completed their education in India and Nepal, are not able to get jobs and as a result working as a manual labor or low paid job such as security card.”
(FGD participant)

Community Managed Revolving Fund (CMRF)

The one successful innovation for improving the livelihood condition of the Tibetans living in Nepal is the Community Managed Revolving Fund (CMRF). The project was collaboratively initiated by the Loadrik Welfare Fund and the Tibet Fund. Initiated as a pilot in 2019 in the Pokhara district of Nepal, CMRF empowers small-scale businesses by providing financial literacy training, and basic business coaching, and facilitates access to micro-loans at 4 percent interest. It also encourages Tibetans to save for future needs

and emergencies and offers a 3 percent interest on savings. The project has a 90 percent success rate in loan recovery. The project has been expanded to Kathmandu and a few other remote areas and aspires to cover all 12 Tibetan settlements in Nepal by 2024. The project has not only contributed to economic

empowerment but has also played a role in preserving and promoting Tibetan culture and identity through businesses rooted in heritage and traditions. SARD members reported that there is a discussion about implementing the same model in Indian settlements to increase livelihood opportunities for Tibetans living in Indian settlements.

Recommendations:

1. Increase the coverage of CMRF across Nepal, and try to integrate the most vulnerable populations so that their basic human rights can be assured.
2. Advocate with the Government of Nepal for access to private jobs, bank loans, and business support that can be funded through CTA.
3. Support initiatives aimed at improving the economic opportunities for Tibetan refugees in Nepal, including vocational training, entrepreneurship programs, and access to microfinance and business development support.
4. The capacity of the TCC Nepal should be built so that it can collaborate with TCC India and CTA to enable the business environment and economic and livelihood opportunities for Tibetans in Nepal. The TCC Nepal can become a networking hub for the business to explore opportunities for capital, market, and mentoring support.

PRESERVING CULTURE AND LANGUAGE - CHALLENGES

The preservation of Tibetan culture in exile is a critical and complex task involving resilience and community solidarity. The Dalai Lama's efforts, central to safeguarding Tibetan identity, culture, and language, have been pivotal in establishing institutions for cultural continuity, particularly in the face of challenges from the Chinese government. The CTA plays a key role in maintaining these institutions. This preservation is deemed essential by the exile community, reflecting a deep commitment to sustaining Tibetan heritage and values for future generations.

“Being a Tibetan means being resilient to whatever comes your way. In history itself, Tibetans have been attacked by Mongolians, and Chinese as well... but we can rebuild our own culture. Just like that when we came to India – so we're so resilient that we were able to rebuild our monasteries, we were able to rebuild our government, we were able to build our cultural institutions, we're able to teach Tibetan to Tibetans... so I think being a Tibetan means being resilient.” (CTA officer)

Resilience: CTA's Efforts

Preserving Tibetan culture, identity, and language has been essential work for the CTA. Religion and language form the bedrock of Tibetan identity.² The Tibetan culture in exile continues to thrive through concentrated efforts by the CTA to sustain important cultural institutions and continued financial support by development partners, individual donors and well-wishers, and self-sustaining monastic institutions.

Monastic Institutions

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² The 16th Kashag 2021-2026, "Securing Tibet's Future, Vision Paper", (Dharamshala, Central Tibetan Administration, 2023)

While the monastic institutions are considered “bastions of learning, places of worship, and important centers of social life for the Tibetan exile community.”³ It was beyond the scope of the current study to gain insights directly from these institutions. Concerning the declining monastic enrolment from the Tibetan community, the respondents mentioned that numbers from the Tibetan community are not a big concern as many of the monks and nuns are from the Himalayan region.⁴ This is understandable since promoting a monastic life in a community already facing a declining population due to low fertility rates contradicts the necessity for the community’s survival. The Vision Paper of the 14th Kashag outlines that sustaining monastic institutions would depend much on enrolment from the Himalayan regions and overseas students. Nevertheless, the Department of Religion and Culture, under which the 255 monasteries and 37 nunneries are affiliated, highlighted the need for infrastructural renovation and reconstruction.

The Department of Religion and Culture

The Department of Religion and Culture (DRC), a key division of the CTA, is responsible for the revival, preservation, and promotion of Tibetan religious and cultural heritage. It oversees 255 monasteries and 37 nunneries across India, Nepal, and Bhutan, and works with five major cultural institutions in India. Responding to the changing cultural needs of the younger Tibetan generation in exile, the DRC established a Cultural Section in 2021. This section focuses on reinforcing activities and programs to preserve Tibetan culture and language. The DRC supports monastic institutions financially, organizes religious conferences to promote intra-religious harmony, and has integrated modern technology, including developing digital apps for religious sites. Key initiatives like the Tibetan Arts and Cultural Fund, supported by USAID, aid in preserving contemporary arts and culture. Programs at the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts and other educational institutes engage the youth in Tibetan culture. Despite these efforts, the DRC faces challenges like staff shortages, resource limitations, and a decline in traditional art practitioners, with funding primarily reliant on donations. While financial incentives for artists are low, a high-level DRC respondent noted that incentives are not the only factor for participation and engagement in cultural preservation. According to the respondent, outreach and raising awareness are equally important, stating,

“What you say about incentive is your part, but we feel since we have reached out, more people are coming. If you know of it then they understand what is more important is your own [culture, identity].”

Additionally, the DRC respondents mentioned that while digital religious applications were widely lauded, the poor and intermittent network connectivity in settlements, especially remote ones, has significantly challenged uptake. Respondents from the different remote settlements concurred on this issue.

The five cultural institutions affiliated with the DRC, operating autonomously or semi-autonomously across India, play a crucial role in realizing the department’s vision and objectives and ensuring the cultural continuity of the rich Tibetan heritage (Annex III).

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³ USAID, "Tibet Needs Assessment Report: A qualitative study of the livelihood and cultural resilience and needs and opportunities for Tibetans in India and Nepal", (USAID/India, 2020).

⁴ The Vision Paper of the Kashag mentions 66 per cent of monks and nuns are from the Himalayan region.

Innovation – Cultural Continuity and Revitalization of the Tibetan Language

Propelled by a strong sense of cultural identity and resilience, the Tibetans in exile have done exceptional work in maintaining the cultural continuity of their language. The Tibetan education system and policies have played a significant role in preserving the Tibetan language, and the Department of Education (DOE) has continuously revitalized the language. The Tibetan Resilience Project (TRP), with SARD as a prime grant recipient and the DOE as the sub-grant recipient, focused on language revitalization among secondary school students and focused on translation and publishing children’s literature, production of animation and audiobooks, redesigning of a language learning portal, Tibetan language and culture immersion program, and Tibetan language and dialectics training.

Cultural centers and community initiatives have been established in different settlements to ensure that Tibetan children and youth receive education and have cultural transmission through their native language. During the team’s visit to one such initiative in Dharamshala, Manjushree Education Services, the focus was on promoting early childhood education and care practices that actively support mother tongue acquisition. Additionally, the organization engages in the publication of children’s literature. According to the information provided by the respondents, the broader availability of books has led to the establishment of community libraries and literacy development programs within the settlements. Moreover, they noted a growing interest in children’s interest in reading books in the library. The respondents emphasized the significance of fostering a reading culture within the community. Different settlement officers also highlighted the necessity and crucial role of libraries, reading corners, and access to literature in ensuring the cultural continuity of the language.

An exemplary initiative is the Monlam Tibetan IT Research Centre, spearheaded by the Geshye Monlam. This innovative project leverages modern technologies to preserve the Tibetan language and disseminate it globally. The IT research center has developed dictionary apps for children with illustrations, pioneered the first-ever Tibetan language spelling and grammar check application, and is working on a comprehensive Tibetan language artificial intelligence and machine learning system. Beyond language preservation, the project creates employment opportunities for numerous youth, both full-time and part-time. Addressing the challenges to preserving culture and language in the contemporary world, the respondent from Monlam IT stated, *“Modern challenges require modern solutions. The essence remains the same; only the vehicle has changed.”* Additionally, the respondent mentioned facing multiple hacking attempts on the Monlam IT system, all of which have been successfully thwarted.

While the CTA has made commendable efforts in language preservation, it predominantly promotes a standard or formal dialect. A concern was raised by Tezu’s settlement officer, highlighting that many Tibetans speak various dialects within their settlement, leading to communication challenges. The respondent noted that settlement officers are typically not from the settlement and may not be fluent in the local dialects. The communication issue persists in the settlement despite Hindi serving as the lingua franca between the settlement population and officers.

USAID and CTA Strategic Alignment for Preserving Culture

USAID/India's ongoing strategic approach to preserving Tibetan culture is rooted in the Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2020-2024. This strategy is primarily manifested at the programmatic

level through initiatives such as the Tibetan Self-Reliance and Resilience Project (TSRR), the Tibetan Resilience Project (TRP), and the recently launched Strengthening Cultural Resilience of the Tibetan Communities program. In addition to the overarching guidance from the Dalai Lama's vision, the CTA's present strategy is derived from the 16th Kashag's Vision Paper.

While the vision paper articulates the Kashag's current outlook, it has also benefitted from USAID's support through the CTA-Capacity Building and Sustainability Initiative. Examining both documents, programmatic activities, and interviews with CTA officials indicate that the strategies for culture and language preservation are primarily aligned, notwithstanding a few discernible differences and gaps.

Both parties emphasize strengthening key institutions and underscore preserving culture, traditions, and language as vital elements for sustaining the identity of Tibetan communities. Nevertheless, USAID/India has directed its programmatic efforts toward strengthening cultural institutions like TIPA, the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA), Norbulingka, and the Tibet Museum. In contrast, while also prioritizing the strengthening of cultural institutions, the CTA addresses the sustainability of religious institutions rooted in the Nalanda tradition of Buddhism. Notably, the CTA places a particular emphasis on fostering collaboration with state governments in this regard.

There is unanimous consensus on the critical role of education in preserving cultural identity. Implementing education policies prioritizing the Tibetan language and traditional values is deemed highly significant. The strategic use of modern technologies to conserve traditional knowledge and transform teaching and learning methods has become a shared approach at the programmatic level. Moreover, this approach has not only facilitated improved outreach to dispersed populations within the subcontinent but has also served to promote Tibetan culture globally.

All stakeholders recognize the significance of collaboration and exchange in supporting cultural institutions, coordinating conferences, or building relations with international entities. Nevertheless, there is a noticeable lack of programmatic activities that emphasize collaboration between Tibetan cultural institutions or between Tibetan and international counterparts. For instance, TIPA and the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) independently conduct summer camps with similar objectives and target groups. Furthermore, a cursory internet search reveals that various third parties have undertaken oral history documentation projects in the past with similar goals. However, institutions such as LTWA have concurrently been engaged in their oral history projects. Additionally, there seems to be a lack of intercultural exchange programs specifically targeting Indian and international populations. The promotion of culture is most effective when shared through intercultural exchanges. While there are programmatic activities aimed at supporting Tibetan artisans and writers, a noticeable gap exists at the settlement level. Many of the cultural institutions receiving support are situated in Dharamshala, relegating settlement-level activities mainly to documenting and archiving. Festivals and cultural events play an essential role in creating cultural vibrancy. Still, it is also important to realize that they represent only the high points of culture, moments of celebration and expression, and are sporadic.

The essence of culture extends beyond these peaks, encompassing everyday living, including routines,

traditions, social interactions, and the ordinary practices of a community. Investing in and supporting these aspects of culture contributes to a more enduring cultural continuity and the sustainability of cultural

heritage. This support may involve initiatives such as establishing or supporting libraries, performing arts clubs, sports activities, community workshops and classes, and traditional culinary activities.

“Culture is within the mindset. Leading one’s culture with pride and satisfaction is the first step to protecting and preserving it. If one is not able to live that culture, and culture becomes an object of study, a part of history, then there is no way to save it.” (Samdhong Rimpoche)

Demographic shifts, dispersed population, and globalization present significant challenges to preserving culture and language, a concern reiterated in this scoping study. All respondents were wary that the persistent trend of relocating outside the settlements exposes the Tibetans in exile to a higher risk of assimilation into the dominant culture both in India and globally. Emigration was acknowledged as potentially eroding one’s cultural identity, and the dispersal of populations raised concerns about the potential loss of social cohesion. Respondents also highlighted that globalization has been a challenge as spreading popular culture, media, and consumerism has led to waning interest in traditional practices among youths. The CTA maintains that once a compact community, settlements are at risk of further dispersion mainly due to the lack of livelihood opportunities within the settlement. One respondent encapsulated the fear, stating, “The main goal for creating a separate community of Tibetans, in the first place, was to preserve our language and identity. But I can see that, slowly, it’s getting away, it is losing its essence.”

Financial constraints and workforce shortages were invariably expressed as a significant challenge to cultural preservation activities. Tibetan cultural institutions are comparably more self-reliant than other institutions in exile, drawing revenue from visitor activities and the sale of cultural product offerings. Low pay scales and limited benefits hinder recruiting and retaining practitioners in traditional sectors. For this reason, conventional handicraft industries like carpet weaving cooperatives are facing worker shortages. Moreover, even self-sustaining institutions like Norbulingka have faced setbacks due to heightened competition in the hospitality sector and a decline in tourists since the COVID-19 pandemic.

Reluctance to commercialize and scale up production is a significant challenge for the self-reliance of cultural institutions like Norbulingka and the carpet industries. These institutions face the intricate task of preserving their unique cultural heritage, handed down through generations, while concurrently responding to the dynamics of the modern market. According to respondents from both institutions, the paramount focus remains safeguarding their craft’s essence. Expansion by including non-Tibetan workers, mechanization, or mass production might dilute the distinctive qualities that render their products unique. Balancing the preservation of cultural integrity with the demands of commercial viability presents a delicate challenge for these institutions.

Misinformation and propaganda by China is one of the biggest challenges faced by the Tibetans in exile and in Tibet. There have been concentrated attempts to erase and misappropriate Tibetan identity, including by repeated hacking of the CTA website. This poses a significant impediment as misinformation undermines global support for the Tibetan cause, including financial aid to monastic institutions and patronage to cultural entities, and it impedes efforts to foster intercultural understanding.

PRESERVING CULTURE AND LANGUAGE - RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Extend technical and financial assistance to the CTA and the Department of Religion and Culture in developing a comprehensive Preservation and Promotion of Culture Policy. This support will enable the CTA to articulate its cultural preservation vision and establish an action plan framework, incorporating indicators for achieving self-reliance and sustainability. The CTA can also utilize the policy to liaise with the relevant State Governments on multiple areas of cooperation.
2. Establish the 'Monlam Tech Hub' (Annex II) in Bangalore, as it envisions a future where traditional cultures thrive through a synergy of Buddhist studies and tech innovation.
3. Sustain support for cultural immersion programs while optimizing and eliminating duplicative efforts. Additionally, propose expanding the program to include Indian students and youths.
4. Continue support in enhancing crucial cultural institutions and offer technical assistance in formulating business plans for select entities, including the LTWA and the Tibet Museum.
5. Offer technical support to enhance vital cultural institutions' digital presence and activities. This assistance may encompass content creation and funded promotion on selected social media platforms.
6. Support the establishment and improvement of cultural spaces within the settlements. This support should encompass the creation of well-equipped libraries, community halls, sports clubs, and performing arts clubs, fostering environments that promote cultural engagement, learning, and community interaction.
7. Increase the level of funding support to the Department of Information to counter the propaganda and false information by China. While the team probed for specific suggestions from respondents, it was unable to document any.

ENHANCING SOCIAL RESILIENCE: EDUCATION - CHALLENGES

To understand the challenges faced by the CTA's Department of Education, the team interacted with the Secretary of the Education Department, and its supporting officers, project officers responsible for the implementation of the education programs, and board members of the Tibetan Children's Village (TCV) school (primary through secondary education) in Dharamshala. Our interviews with members of youth groups, entrepreneurs, SARD, the department of Finance, and the home department also covered the challenges of the education system. To understand the education program's situation in Nepal, we interviewed the Office of Tibet, in Nepal and two settlement officers.

The basic education policy of the CTA provides an overall framework focusing on an effort to integrate modern education with the Tibetan language and culture. As all schools follow the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) curriculum of the government of India, they are mandated to align with the new national education policy (NEP) implemented in 2020. The SARD has an important role in framing overall educational policy. According to its Director, the main vision is to improve the quality of basic education, focusing on early childhood education, strengthening educational information and

communications technology (EICT), and fostering science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) learning.

The major challenges that emerged during the discussion are:

1. **Consolidation of schools:** The project officers of the Education Department a substantial decline in the number of school-age children. There is a plan for closing the lower-grade classes in some of the schools where primary-level students are fewer and, reducing the number of secondary schools with enough teachers so that adequate attention can be given to improve the learning outcome. However, a lack of coordination among the various educational trusts is causing a major bottleneck.
2. **Teacher-student ratio:** Although the teacher-student ratio is reported to be in the range of 1:10 to 1:15, the project officers of the Education Department reported a shortage of teachers for subjects including math and science because Tibetan students are not pursuing degrees in these subjects.
3. **Promotion of Tibetan language in the diaspora:** Teaching the Tibetan language through weekend classes in the diaspora community has several limitations pointed out by the project officers of the Education Department, including a scarcity of teachers, a lack of permanent space for classrooms, and for the storage of materials, and supply of textbook materials. The USAID/India protocol does not allow the shipping of books from India printed using the USAID/India fund to other countries, as a result, the department is not able to send the books to foreign lands despite having additional books in the hand of the department.
4. **Primary and secondary education in Tibetan:** There is significant emphasis on publishing textbooks and supplementary materials in the Tibetan language through the primary level. However, there is less success when it comes to middle and secondary-level textbooks, mainly due to the lack of an implementation plan and resource constraints.
5. **Geo-political situation in Nepal:** The Nepal government does not officially support the cause of the Tibetan community in exile, and ensuring the educational rights of the children in Nepal remains a challenge. One of the startling observations that emerged during the interaction with the Office of Tibet was although there is no restriction in Nepal for basic and higher education, Tibetans cannot secure jobs in Nepal due to the lack of official national identity.
6. **Career counseling:** While all schools have career counseling, the members of a youth FGD explained that students are nevertheless usually not fully aware of novel and emerging subjects and professional opportunities. Only a few options are discussed during career counseling which results in a low level of participation in highly valued professions.
7. **Low uptake of STEM degrees:** Student scholarship is one of the major programs of CTA, according to the Department of Education (DoE), there are 535 students on scholarships as of 2023, of which 65 percent are female students. The highest number of students (174 or 33 percent) opted for nursing , followed by Tibetan medicine and astrology (78 or 15 percent). The other subjects with a higher number of scholarships are bachelor's in arts (37 or 7 percent), bachelor's in commerce (26 or 5 percent) and master's in arts (26 or 5 percent). One student received a scholarship to pursuing a master's in technology and one for a PhD.
8. **Resources:** The DoE raised concerns about the lack of adequate resources for infrastructure and the salaries of the teachers. Low teaching salaries is a main factor discouraging teaching in STEM subjects.

ENHANCING SOCIAL RESILIENCE: EDUCATION - RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Prioritize STEM** starting in primary and middle school, set up coaching classes for Tibetan students starting in Grade 8 for competitive examinations such as the Joint Entry Exam, so that more students can join premier academic institutions in India such as IITs, IIMs, IIS, and PhDs. This will raise Tibetan employment in high-value jobs such as technocrats, scientists, and entrepreneurs of modern service sectors.
2. **Increase the number of scholarships** for engineering, science, MBAs, and PhDs at Indian universities and technical institutions so that students are motivated to pursue these courses and degree levels.
3. **Conduct short-term vocational training** in consultation with service sector employers, for modern service sector jobs in computer programming, data science, machine learning/AI, international trade, banking, and finance, at the Dalai Lama Institute for Higher Education (DLIHE), Bangalore, and enhance partnerships with Amazon Web Services and Orbit Academy for digital skills development and job opportunities.
4. **Improve the quality of career counseling** programs at the school level, through gap identification and design implementation with professional agencies, to enable students to obtain information, exposure, and concurrent mentoring on a wide variety of career options.
5. **Increase the level of exposure for students and teachers** through increased interactions with high-performing government and private schools of India, by creating cross-learning opportunities, such as web-meet, school exchange programs, and exposure visits. This will also be an opportunity to increase awareness about the Tibetan population in exile, among Indian school-going children.
6. **Integrate Information Communication and Technology (ICT)** in the curriculum. The Education Department and other stakeholders such as youth and entrepreneurs have highlighted the need to improve the quality of teaching-learning experiences using ICT in classroom teaching to improve the learning outcome and competency.
7. **Strengthen early childhood development education** in education institutions. There is a need for additional spending on early childhood development and education programs through voluntary organizations, such as Manjushree.
8. **Consolidate and update the Basic Education Policy, 2014** to the changing scenario of reduction of school-aged children. There is a need for rigorous planning to ensure basic education for children in exile. The education department should be able to project the number of children in the next 15-20 years, in each state and settlement, and plan to leverage support from the government of India in educating the children, rather than expanding CTA-supported schools.
9. **Consolidation of schools:** There is an urgent need to speed up school consolidation for effective utilization of human and financial resources, and to improve the quality of teaching and learning outcomes, more particularly for secondary and higher secondary classes.

ENHANCING SOCIAL RESILIENCE: HEALTH - CHALLENGES

The Health Department of the CTA is responsible for providing primary, secondary, and referral services for tertiary care. To understand the functions and challenges of the Health Department the team conducted focus group discussions with the 10-12 members of the Health Department responsible for

various components of health service delivery. In addition, during the interaction with other stakeholders, we came across various issues related to health.

The health system under the CTA is a three-tier system, focusing on several vertical health programs such as non-communicable diseases, Reproductive Maternal and child Health + Adolescent (RMNCH+A,) tuberculosis, and HIV/AIDS, in India, Nepal, and Bhutan.

Tier 1: Five hospitals with 15-20 beds providing primary, secondary, and referral services.

Tier 2: Seven Tibetan Primary Health Centers (TPHC) serving all 45 settlements with 5-10 beds (some respondents said that there are a few TPHCs without beds).

Tier 3: Thirty-six mostly outreach clinics for the community-level health programs, which are supported by bachelor's in science (BSC) nurses. There are also health committees located at the settlement level, headed by the settlement officer, responsible for planning, implementing, and monitoring various health programs and issues within the settlement.

To reduce the out-of-pocket expenditure on hospitalization, the Health Department has introduced the Tibetan Medicare System (TMS) which provides in-patient benefits of Rs 75,000 (individual) and Rs 150,000 (family). At present, 24,000 individuals (8,000 families) are enrolled in the program.

In 2023, the Kashag reorganized the settlements under the CTA into north, south and central zones for improved planning and monitoring. Each zone is supported by a team of five responsible for two or three settlements.

The Tibetan health system leverages support from the Government of India in child health and referral linkage tertiary care in public and private hospitals. However, it does not have the benefit of various Indian health schemes to improve access to health services and reduce out-of-pocket expenditures such as Jannay Surakshya Yojna (JSY), Janani Shishu Suraksha Karyakram (JSSK), and Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY).

Major challenges discussed during the interaction with the Health Department officials are:

1. **Adverse political situation:** The Tibetan population in exile living in Nepal is the most vulnerable in terms of health needs. Lack of refugee status in Nepal, and stateless identity prevent access to health services in the public health system. The Health Department officials reported that it is challenging to plan and implement health programs and schemes in Nepal due to the absence of political support from the government of Nepal.
2. **Financial risk protection:** The TMS provides some basic coverage of in-patient care. The project officer responsible for TMS reported that the scheme is not able to protect individuals from catastrophic health expenditure from critical chronic illnesses such as cancer, while the community is experiencing certain types of cancers with high fatality rates.
3. **Public health information system:** The public health expert of the Health Department informed

us that one of the major challenges with the health system is the lack of evidence-based

planning. There have been very few systematic assessments conducted to understand the health needs of the people or the epidemiological profile of the Tibetans living in exile.

4. **Communicable (CD) and non-communicable diseases (NCD):** During the discussion, the health department officer explained that there is a need for prioritizing some of the health issues across settlements including dental health and NCDs. Hepatitis B is a major public health burden primarily due to the food consumption pattern among Tibetans. Mental health issues are one of the major problems emerging across all sub-population groups. Almost 18 percent of the youth in one study conducted by CTA reported mild to high levels of depression and substance abuse among the male youth is as high as 36 percent, but there is no intervention to address the problems. The health department officer also refers to a study conducted in 2018 by the Health Department that shows the high burden of hypertension (36 percent) and diabetes (11 percent) and highlights the risk factors such as high salt intake in the Tibetan community. Among CDs, tuberculosis remains one of the major diseases with case fatality rates remaining at a 3 percent level in the last 10 years.
5. **Reproductive and sexual health:** Health Department officials reported issues related to sexual and reproductive health, sexually transmitted infections, and reproductive tract infections, are not receiving adequate prioritization and the need for specialized programs.

ENHANCING SOCIAL RESILIENCE: HEALTH - RECOMMENDATIONS

The team facilitated a discussion with Health Department officials to identify recommendations to help CTA prioritize its investments and improve the quality of life of people living in exile in both India and Nepal. The main recommendations that emerged were:

1. **Strengthen the public health information system and surveillance:** There is general consent among the health department officials of CTA that there is a need to strengthen the database for the decision support system using DHIS2. At the same time, create surveillance systems and need-based studies to understand emerging health issues such as CD, NCD, geriatric problems, mental health, hepatitis B, and high fatality cancer. It is also highlighted that there is a need for funding support to promote documentation and sharing of learning through peer-reviewed journals for India and Nepal.
2. **Increase the coverage of health insurance schemes:** The existing TMS is not able to ensure financial risk protection for several diseases, most importantly cancer. Every year a very small number of people (< 300) need such high-cost care. There is a need for additional funding support to prevent families from suffering financial distress and falling below the poverty line, in Nepal and India. At the same time work with the government of India to leverage PMJAY insurance benefits.
3. **Strengthen the referral network with the Indian health system:** An information technology-based mechanism for forward and backward referral tracking is needed for follow-up care and treatment adherence.
4. **Implement telemedicine for remote & scattered locations:** Implement telemedicine in remote areas of Northeastern states, and Nepal to expand outpatient services, and link with

tertiary care.

5. **Prioritize mental health and develop a model using Buddhist psychology:** Implement a mental health program at the zonal level, using a combination of teleconsultation and physical

services. A vertical program on mental health is a recommendation that emerged from the study conducted by CTA.

6. **Integrate Buddhist psychology in mental health issues:** Pilot proven solutions emerging from Buddhist psychology in the mental health program, both in the prevention and treatment of mental health issues, in some of the TPHCs with high burden if reported mental health issues.
7. **Prioritize health issues of youth:** To avoid traditional denial of sexual and reproductive issues, there is a need for focused prevention, care, and referral linkages for young males and females. The focus should also be given to gender, mental health, and other youth issues such as alcohol and drug use.
8. **Strengthen outreach program for CDs and NCDs:** There is a need to strengthen the outreach program for identification of CDs/NCDs and linking with care provisions. Alternatively, the government of India PM-HWC can be extended to the settlement for improving coverage and quality.
9. **Review of existing data/evidence:** There is a need for a systematic review of the existing data evidence, and studies conducted by the health department of CTA to identify the existing gaps in the health system, and additional information needed for better planning. This could be jointly conducted by the CTA health department and any external public health expert organization.

ANNEX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE

	Stakeholders	Thematic Area	Respondents
Strengthening economic growth and livelihoods (Finance, Home, SARD)			
1	What programs or initiatives are in place to strengthen economic growth and livelihood opportunities in the settlements? (If the department is not directly engaged in economic activities, probe for indirect engagements or collaboration with relevant departments. Probe home department about agricultural initiatives/ cooperatives, skill development, microfinance, DBT)	Program and initiative	Secretary level and Kalon
2	Which programs worked well? How can they be sustained and scaled up? What did not work well? What were the challenges? How do you think those challenges can be overcome?	Learning and Challenges	Officer level, secretary, and Kalon
3	What type of program interventions should be designed to be aligned with CTA goals? To what extent, the funding support is aligned with the mission and vision statement of CTA, please elaborate.	Strategic alignment	Secretary level and Kalon
4	What is your experience with the Community Managed Revolving Fund (CMRF) program in Nepal in FY 2022?	Learning and challenges	Secretary (top level) – SARD office
5	What role CSR can play in improving the quality of life of people living in the settlement? Did you ever interact with any CSR? What was the experience?	Opportunities	Overall level
6	During the parliamentary sessions, in the last 2-3 years, what are the major points discussed on the economic life of the Tibetan community? What major resolutions are passed? Is there an increase in the provision of budgeting for the livelihoods or economic well-being? What are those? What is the role of the speaker/ deputy speaker in facilitating the discussion on the economic well-being of Tibetans in exile? Can you please share with me the list of items discussed in the last 2-3 years? – this will help identify the issues that are important for the CTA.	Strategic Investment Alignment	Standing committee member
7	How do you measure the performance of the program? The impact, and scalability, among others?	Planning and M&E/Data	SARD office, M&E officer. TSRR- All department
8	How has CTA engaged the private sector in improving the economic opportunities of the community?	Opportunities	All depts. (Specially for Finance / home)
9	What is the role of NBFCs? Of the current NBFC, Gung Jong? What are the challenges faced by the entity? How do you think this can be improved? Do you think USAID/India can play any major role in this direction?	Program and Initiatives	SARD office, Gung Jong senior person and finance dept -Kalon
10	What are the problems faced by Tibetan entrepreneurs in generating capital?	Learning and Challenges	Overall
11	What is the CTA's thinking about PPP? Can you suggest models for PPP with the Government of India?	Opportunities/ Learning, Challenges	Overall
12	What is the role of agribusiness in improving livelihood and development? What type of support and capacity is needed to make it more competitive?	Program and Initiative/Learning and challenges	Settlement offices – secretary – home & finance
13	What type of challenges is CTA facing in the effective utilization of various funding and what kind of support is needed to increase effectiveness? [Finance, Home]	Strategic alignment	Top level, secretary of all the dept, Sikyong
14	How does your department engage with stakeholders? Probe including government bodies, local communities (inside and outside the settlement), and other relevant entities? Probe for inter-departmental coordination and collaboration.	Coordination, Communication and Stakeholder engagement	All departments

15	Who are your partners? What programs are they supporting? Probe including The Tibet Fund; NDI and their activities.	Coordination, Communication and Stakeholder engagement	All departments
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16	Challenges faced by member/CTA for communication, coordination of stakeholder engagement or management.	Coordination, Communication and Stakeholder engagement	All department
17	How does your department work towards preserving and promoting Tibetan culture? Probe for programs and projects related to cultural preservation, probe for direct and indirect linkages.	Culture Preservation	All departments
18	What gaps and challenges exist in preserving and promoting Tibetan culture?	Culture Preservation	All departments
19	What are the kind of support CTA needs in future?	Future Collaborative Strategy	Secretary – Kalon – any top-level dept.
20	Are there programs and initiatives addressing social challenges and vulnerabilities? Probe for emerging challenges especially post-COVID? 2. What holds the Tibetan population in exile together?	Programs and initiatives	Secretary – Kalon – any top-level dept.
Preserving Tibetan culture (DoRC, Home, Education, Finance)			
1	What is your role in the department of X/CTA? Current Strategies and Programs of the Department. How would you describe the current overarching strategies of the department? Probe on focus areas and strategic response to COVID pandemic. What are the current programs/projects or initiatives of the department? (Probe on the effects of pandemic on implementation?)	Program initiative/ Cultural Preservation	All departments
2	What are the major challenges in preserving Tibetan culture? (Probe in term of reduction in population size)	Strategic Alignment	Secretary/ Minister/Sikyong
3	What measures are adopted by CTA to address the concern? Probes are there any policies to increase fertility what are those policies? Probe are there any measure taken to prevent emigration within settlement area?	Strategic Alignment	Secretary/ Minister/Sikyong/ Settlement officers
4	How does your department/CTA work towards preserving and promoting Tibetan culture (language, religion, art and craft, medicine, among others)? (Probe for programs and projects related to cultural preservation, and probe for direct and indirect linkages.)	Program and Initiatives	All departments/ Settlement officers/ Tibetan institution
5	What gaps and challenges exist in preserving and promoting Tibetan culture?	Challenges	All Departments/ Settlement officers/ Tibetan institution
Enhancing resilience. Education: primary and higher (DoRC, Home, Education, Finance)			
1	What are the reasons for the reduction in enrolment of students in the Tibetan education system? What are the measures adopted to revive the enrolment? What type of investment is needed in the education system that improves the education system, and overall teaching and learning outcomes?	Challenges	Overall
2	What needs to be done to improve the quality of learning, and improve career opportunities in modern sectors such as IT, service, banking, and entrepreneurship, among others?	Opportunities / Future collaborative strategy	Overall
3	What are the initiatives you have adopted to ensure improvement in the learning outcome of the Tibetan language? Can you please highlight some of the measures which are needed to improve the conditions?	Learning and Challenges	Top level of Education Dept.
4	In your opinion, what measures should be adopted to encourage higher education among the Tibetan community in exile, in India and in Nepal? What is the current situation? What is the strategy of the government? What support is needed to improve the level of higher education in the community?	Opportunities/ Future Collaborative Strategy	Top level of Education Dept.
Enhancing resilience. Health: primary, secondary, and tertiary (Health, Finance)			
1	In the current public health system of CTA, what are the mechanisms to understand the disease burden in the Tibetan population in exile, from India and Nepal? What are the major health problems in the community?	Program and Initiatives	Top officials of Health and Finance

2	What are the health systems gaps in the health department? HR, infrastructure, diagnostics? – How are these gaps identified and resolved?	Learning and Challenges	Top officials of Health and Finance /Settlement officers
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3	What are the major areas of investment that you recommend for improving the health system under CTA?	Opportunities and M& E	Top officials of Health and Finance /Settlement officers
4	One of the major concerns in the community is the reduction in fertility, what are the reasons that the average number of children in the community is declining? What are the measures adopted for fertility reversal initiatives? What type of support is needed to strengthen the fertility reversal?	M&E / Data / Program Initiatives	Top officials of Health and Finance /Settlement officers
Information: Misinformation and propaganda (Home, DIIR)			
1	What are the measures adopted by the CTA to ensure that misinformation is not spread, and the community is not misled by any propaganda?	Communication and Collaboration/ stakeholder engagement	DIIR
2	What type of investment is needed to strengthen the surveillance and anti-propaganda mechanism to protect the interest of the Tibetan population in exile?		DIIR/ Top level management

ANNEX II: MONLAM TECH HUB

The Monlam Tech Hub, strategically located in Bangalore near the Dalai Lama Institute of Higher Education, will represent a groundbreaking initiative. Positioned as a nexus for technology, innovation, and Buddhist philosophy, it will be uniquely situated in the heart of India's burgeoning tech capital and amidst the largest Tibetan community in exile. This center will host 200 experts, blending technology with Buddhist principles, and will aim to be a beacon for Buddhist startups, entrepreneurs, and innovators.

Objectives

1. Enhancing Livelihood Options:

- Career Paths for Diverse Groups:
 - Monks interested in Buddhism and science.
 - Students in STEM and philosophy.
 - Specialists in AI, Neurosciences, Buddhist Philosophy, and Psychology.
- Integration of Technology and Philosophy: Bridging traditional Buddhist teachings with modern scientific approaches.

2. Preserving and Strengthening Tibetan Culture:

- Innovative Educational Tools: Enhancing Tibetan youths' understanding of their culture and making Buddhism more accessible and relevant in the modern context.
- AI in Cultural Preservation: Leading the largest Tibetan-led initiative to digitize Tibetan works, making cultural resources widely accessible.
- Cultural and Technological Synergy: Utilizing AI to preserve Tibetan culture where human effort alone is insufficient.

3. Building Resilience in the Tibetan Diaspora:

- Empowering Tibetan Youth: Training in quality research and AI, combining technology with Tibetan culture and Buddhist values.
- Outreach and Education: Sending scholars to schools and universities for outreach programs.
- Creating New Opportunities: Leveraging Tibetan and Buddhist cultures to create job opportunities, especially in the mental health sector.

Strategic Location

- **Bangalore, the Silicon Valley of India:** Offers an unparalleled environment for tech innovation and collaboration.
- **Proximity to Tibetan communities:** Ensures cultural relevance and direct impact on the Tibetan diaspora.

Vision for the Future

The Monlam Tech Hub is not just a center for research and innovation; it is a visionary project aimed at empowering Tibetan youth to carry their rich cultural heritage into the future through technology. By fostering excellence in both Buddhist studies and cutting-edge tech innovation, the Hub will become a global model for how traditional cultures can thrive in the modern world.

ANNEX III: MAJOR TIBETAN CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The five cultural institutions affiliated with the DRC, operating autonomously or semi-autonomously are

1. The Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA)
2. The Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA)
3. Norbulingka Institute
4. Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies (CIHTS)
5. The Tibet House

While the first three institutions are situated in Dharamshala, the CIHTS is located in Varanasi, and the Tibet House is in Delhi. As part of the fieldwork in Dharamshala, the IDG team visited the TIPA, the LTWA and the Norbulingka Institute to gather information on their current activities.

1. Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts (TIPA):

TIPA is one of the first institutes established by the Dalai Lama and is a leading institute committed to preserving and promoting the rich musical heritage of Tibet.⁵ It is a unique Tibetan institution providing courses and training for aspiring performers. It offers an international platform for Tibetan, regional and international artists. To date, it has trained more than 500 artists. The artists associated with TIPA serve as cultural ambassadors, sharing Tibet's vibrant performing heritage with the world and have performed in more than 35 countries. It regularly hosts the Yarki and Shoton festivals, showcasing traditional and contemporary art forms. The research wing at the institute plays a crucial role in archiving and documenting traditional artistic practices, including the oral history tradition. TIPA also houses a folk museum that spotlights the different regional aspects of Tibetan culture. TIPA also houses multiple facilities, including a banquet hall, a newly built auditorium, a recording studio, a souvenir shop selling musical instruments, and a carpentry section. These facilities are often rented to individuals and organizations, generating revenue for the institute and providing an excellent space for cultural exchanges. During the IDG team's visit, the Indo-Tibetan Friendship Association utilized TIPA's auditorium to celebrate the Himalayan Festival, aiming to promote cultural exchange among the diverse Himalayan populations.

Since 2017, USAID Tibetan Self Reliance and Resilience has supported the TIPA in multiple ways. The support encompasses financial aid to young performance artists, organizing workshops for trainees and existing TIPA artists, developing a business plan focused on potential new revenue streams and assisting TIPA staff in enhancing their visibility in the digital realm.⁶ The TSRR Mid-term evaluation (2020) highlighted TIPA's impressive self-sufficiency, generating up to 92 per cent of its own revenue.

A few highlights of the newly formulated business plan for TIPA include initiatives such as training tailors for traditional performance costumes and accessories to meet the growing demand and conducting a month-long cultural summer immersion program for Tibetans living outside the Indian Subcontinent.

⁵ Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, About us. <https://tipa.asia/about-us/>

⁶ TSRR Annual Report 2022 and TSRR Annual Report 2023

Despite the participation of eight individuals in the cultural immersion program, TIPA respondents expressed a sense of dissatisfaction, feeling that the program could accomplish more.

Respondents also drew attention to TIPA's research wing's limited human and financial resources, emphasizing the importance of continued support for the new digital library. The library focuses on researching, recording, and digitizing traditional performing arts for reference and study by scholars and artists. The research wing is actively collecting traditional folk performances from settlement-based artists.

2. Library of Tibetan Works and Archives (LTWA):

The LTWA was established in 1970 and is one of the premier institutes in the world, specializing in Buddhist and Tibetan studies and is a hub for comprehensive Tibetan cultural resources and promotes an environment that encourages research and knowledge exchange between scholars and students. The CTA accorded the institute the combined status of National Library, National Museum and National Archives and has been recognized as the Centre for Tibetan Studies by Himachal Pradesh University.⁷ Moreover, in 2006, the National Manuscripts Mission, an initiative of the Government of India, appointed the institute as one of the National Manuscripts Resources Centers. The LTWA also has a publication wing and bookshop on its premises and houses a museum. Both are sources of revenue for the institution.

LTWA respondents shared that the primary mission of the LTWA is to preserve and conserve ancient manuscripts, totaling around 400,000 in its archive, encompassing historical, cultural and literary documents. Currently, the institute focuses on scanning, digitizing and disseminating the extensive collection of documents it houses. Additionally, a significant undertaking of the institute involves capturing oral history through its dedicated oral history project. The initiative recently recorded the stories of eighty individuals from the southern settlements. The respondents from LTWA conveyed that the assistance from USAID has played a crucial role in their initiatives, highlighting their appreciation for the scanners acquired with their support. Nevertheless, they emphasized the urgency of completing the oral history project, noting that delay could be detrimental given the advanced age of the targeted elder groups.

Besides the digital infrastructure support, the TSRR program also supported the LTWA in organizing an eight-day workshop on conserving and preserving heritage materials.⁸

3. Norbulingka Institute

The Norbulingka Institute officially opened in 1995 and comprises nine workshops preserving traditional arts. It aims to pass on the artistic knowledge from the pinnacle of Tibetan Buddhist civilization. Norbulingka operates with a sustaining business model, providing jobs and training to Tibetans in exile. As a self-sustaining community, it contributes to preserving Tibetan culture, with income reinvested for staff and future generations. The institute is committed to continuing Tibetan art, imparting ancestral knowledge under the guidance of skilled masters, and employing over 300 Tibetans. It is an emissary of Tibetan culture, blending modern tastes with traditional design to meet the global demand for crafted art

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⁷ Library of Tibetan Works and Archives, History of LTWA. <https://tibetanlibrary.org/history-of-ltwa/>

⁸ TSRR Annual Report 2023

objects. Norbulingka runs hospitality operations and allocates income to support social programs, apprenticeships and academic projects. The institute also established the Academy of Tibetan Culture in 1997, providing Tibetan education in religion, grammar, history, poetry, literature, and medicine.⁹ Norbulingka also hosts the Norbulingka Literary and Cultural Research Centre, which has recently published an official biography of the Dalai Lama, a digital archive of his teachings and rare historic photos, and an online encyclopedia of Tibetan arts, culture and history.¹⁰

Although the Norbulingka Institute maintained the self-sufficient model for nearly 25 years, recent discussions with the study team indicate that Norbulingka started receiving support from the TSRR project in 2020, which is primarily focused towards nurturing Tibetan artists and writers. The respondent highlighted a diminishing interest among the younger generation in pursuing traditional art forms as a career. Furthermore, the institute has suffered a decline in revenue from the hospitality sector primarily due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly dropped the number of tourists. While the institute's vision was to maintain a self-sustaining model without burdening the artist with mass production, the respondent mentioned that certain areas within the institute could profit from increased production, particularly incense making, handbags, and trinkets. The institute remains opposed to mechanizing or mass-producing traditional art forms as they believe it would compromise the product's high value, quality and authenticity.

The Tibet Museum

The Information Division of the Department of Information and International Relations (DIIR) established the Tibet Museum in 1998 with a mission to actively document, preserve, research, exhibit, and educate both Tibetans and non-Tibetans on matters about Tibet's history, culture and current situation.¹¹ The museum was previously located in the Main Temple Complex and shifted to a new location near the CTA complex in 2022. The new museum was established and curated mainly with the support from USAID. The museum has multiple sections, 'Tibet: Our Culture' displays Tibet's rich culture through dress, religion, food and literature and introduces the idea of Tibetan culture as an act of resistance. Likewise, the section 'Being Tibetan' introduces a new generation of Tibetans redefining and re-imagining what it is to be Tibetan.¹²

Respondents from the DIIR noted that the Tibet Museum also serves as a means for the CTA to counter misinformation about Tibet. The museum plays a crucial role by displaying and informing the Tibetan narrative of historical events. Additionally, respondents emphasized the significant contributions of the Translation and Publication Section and Tibet TV to ensure that the Tibetan narrative prevails.

⁹ Norbulingka Institute, Vision. <https://india.norbulingka.org/pages/vision>

¹⁰ The Tibet Fund Annual Fund Report 2022

¹¹ The Tibet Museum, About us. <https://tibetmuseum.org/about-us/>

¹² Ibid.