Asia 14-142

US Agency for International Development (USAID)
Asia Bureau Regional

AMENDMENT 1 TO INITIAL ENVIRONMENTAL EXAMINATION

PROGRAM/ACTIVITY DATA:

Cooperative Agreement:	Leader with Associates Award to the World Wildlife Fund
Countries:	Central Asian Republics, Mongolia, Nepal, India, China, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bhutan
Program:	Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities
Time Period:	September 2012-September 2017
Funding begins:	FY 2011
Funding ends:	FY 2014
LOP Amounts:	$8,000,000

IEE prepared by: Mary Melnyk, Environment Officer, Asia and Middle East Bureaus

Mary Melnyk Date 8/2/2014

Date: 09/02/2014

IEE Amendment (Y/N): Y **DCN of Original:** Asia and Middle East 12-168

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED: (Place X where applicable)

Categorical Exclusion:	X	Negative Determination:	X
Positive Determination:		Deferral:	

ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS: (Place X where applicable)

CONDITIONS	X	PVO/NGO:	

PURPOSE OF AMENDMENT

The purpose of this amendment is to extend the time period of the cooperative agreement to September 30, 2017 and to increase the life of project amount to $8,000,000. The nature of the activities as approved in the original IEE remains the same.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS & RECOMMENDED THRESHOLD DECISION

Pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(a), environmental analysis/evaluation is required for new projects, programs or activities authorized by USAID. This IEE evaluates activities planned under Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities.

A **Categorical Exclusion** pursuant to 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2), is recommended for:

1. all education, technical assistance, and training programs except to the extent such programs include activities directly affecting the environment 22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(i),
2. all controlled experimentation exclusively for the purpose of research and field evaluation which are confined to small areas and carefully monitored (22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(ii));
3. analyses, studies, academic or research workshops and meetings (22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(iii));
4. Projects in which USAID is a minor donor to a multi-donor project and there is no potential significant effects upon the environment of the United States, areas outside any nation's jurisdiction or endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat (22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(iv));
5. document and information transfers (22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(v));
6. studies, projects or programs intended to develop the capability of recipient countries to engage in development planning, except to the extent designed to result in activities directly affecting the environment (such as construction of facilities, etc) (22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(xiv));
7. activities which involve the application of design criteria or standards developed and approved by USAID (22 CFR 216.2(c)(2)(xv)).

A **Negative Determination with Conditions**, pursuant to 22 CFR 216.3(a)(3) is recommended for all activities not specifically included under the above identified "Categorical Exclusions". The conditions of the negative determination for Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities are:

1. For each Conservation and Adaptation project an initial environmental examination (IEE) or request for categorical exclusion (CE) will be required. Such IEEs or CEs will be prepared as amendments to this one.

2. 22 CFR 216 responsibilities will be that of the Assistance Officer's Representative (AOR) and Bureau Environment Officer (BEO). The AOR will be responsible for working with their procurement officer in assuring that appropriate language implementing threshold decisions is placed in task orders.

3. The Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities AOR:

    a. will assure that appropriate project staff are fully aware of this threshold decision;

    b. will not approve project proposals without confirmation that a threshold decision has been made; and

    c. will actively monitor activities for compliance, and will report any discovered compliance failures to the AO and BEO for immediate corrective action.

BACKGROUND

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) aims to catalyze an alliance that covers the majority of the Asia range of snow leopards from Afghanistan to Mongolia to build momentum for snow leopard conservation and to improve the adaptive capabilities and lives of some of the world's most remote communities in the high mountains of Asia. These communities are dependent on glaciers for water directly and their resource management supports the overall water quantity and quality for river basins. Critical to this integration is a focus on landscapes: landscapes that include the snow leopard's habitat and adjacent communities. Both people and wildlife are at risk to climate change. Glacier retreat impacts environmental flows that play a significant role in the health of high mountain ecosystems. Recognizing how this web of life is connected not only within the biological world, but also to the physical world will contribute to the development of holistic approaches that have at their heart the conservation of the region's water supplies. Therefore, this program aims to have the additional co-benefit of protecting the headwaters of Asia's major rivers in response to glacier melt.

Snow leopard landscapes include large and critical tracts of snow packs and glaciers and forests—some of the last forests in Asia—and store over three times the amount of carbon as non-snow leopard landscapes in Asia. A majority of the landscapes lie in the 25 biodiversity hotspots of the world. This program will build on past and on-going USAID-funded programs and projects in selected countries and will seek to foster consistent, coordinated and continuous efforts by various stakeholders to protect habitats and increase population of snow leopards as well as to provide benefits to local communities.

The program will focus on targeted, policies, transnational cooperation across the snow leopard range states with limited site-based efforts in key areas. The program will also foster linkages to the private sector who can assist with innovative enterprises and/or technologies for adaptation and conservation and as well as linkages among governmental and non-governmental organizations across the range states.

The planned **overall outcomes** of this program are:

- The beginnings of a regional alliance with governments, non-governmental organizations and communities for snow leopard conservation across the high mountains of Asia.
- The successful implementation of environmentally and economically-resilient development for high mountain communities.
- The conservation of critical headwater landscapes for Asia's important rivers.

APPROVAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION RECOMMENDED:
By signing below, you approve the Amended IEE for Conservation and Adaptation in Asia's High Mountain Landscapes and Communities.

CLEARANCES:

DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Asia/TS Director: Jerry Bisson date 9-02-2014
Jerry Bisson

DECISION OF THE ASIA BUREAU ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER:

Asia: _____ date Sept 2, 2014
William Gibson
Asia Bureau- Bureau Environment Officer

Approved: X

Disapproved: