



Controlling Sandstorms from Inner Mongolia

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2014-2015

Inner Mongolia



Researchers listen to concerns of Inner Mongolia locals who will maintain the sand barrier and plants – 2015 GEI

The grasslands of Inner Mongolia strike the viewer, leaving an imprint of vastness and opportunity on the eyes, as wind rushes across bare cheeks and hands.

The province's desert has intensified and expanded due to climate change-induced drought and poorly managed herding, causing sands to be whipped up and blown into urban areas, including Beijing.

GEI officers are no strangers to the Inner Mongolian scenery and harsh winds. Beginning in 2011, GEI's biodiversity project team, under the jurisdiction of Abaga county of in Xilinguole, introduced a grasslands protection and control mechanism that protected the grassland ecology and livelihood improvement for the local people.

In 2015, GEI covered a total 113 hectares for sand control and demonstration households. In fact, about 30km² of Gacha township were effectively protected and managed. As a result, the grassland degradation and desertification trends have slowed significantly.

NEW STRATEGY: In 2015, GEI innovated their Inner Mongolian project strategy by integrating applied physics concepts into their ecological work. This year they added a new **Sand Barrier Sediment Control** as well as planted sand-fixing grasses.

NEW BENEFITS: These two measures effectively prevent dust and sand storms and restore grassland vegetation while still creating suitable areas for animal foraging. Therefore the methods improve the economy and animal husbandry resources.

GEI expanded the agreements with grassland management and protection to include more demonstration households.

As per the agreement, GEI is responsible for securing funding for grassland desertification governance, which includes sand-fixing plants; establishing guidance for the sand protection barrier; providing relevant training; and allowing demonstration households to buy their own fencing and do their own maintenance of the sand region.

If the strategy is upheld, we expect that herders can start open grazing in three years.

During 2015, we also successfully secured **government cooperation and funding for this program:** Abaga county government agreed to donate 5000 yellow willow saplings, which greatly help manage desertification. This finance agreement is set for 3 years, for a total of 30 million yuan.

GEI's objectives in Inner Mongolia:

- [Protect the environment](#) with effective, innovative sand barrier mechanisms
- [Involve locals](#) throughout grassland desertification governance

Together, these activities guarantee project sustainability and environmental improvement; separately, they address immediate needs.