

Funding for environmental protection in Qinghai announced

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(Xinhua) Beijing plans to spend 1.567 billion Yuan (UK£108.8m; US\$214.7m EUR€145.6m) over the next decade on environmental protection projects around Qinghai Lake (Mong: Koko Nor; Tib: Tso Ngopo). Starting in 2008, the project area will include Kangsta (Chin: Gangcha) Dashi (Chin: Haiyan) Themchen (Chin: Tianjun) and Chabche (Chin:Gonghe) counties of the area traditionally known as Amdo, now part of Qinghai province. An official from the Agricultural and Animal Husbandry Economy Department of the Qinghai Provincial Development and Reform Commission said: *"The 10-year project aims to help conserve wetlands, restore grassland, control rats and pests, prevent land desertification, plant trees, resettle local residents, offer safe drinking water to rural people, [and] renovate river ways"*. Increased tourism is said to have put huge pressure on the environment in the area and in September 2007 a plan was announced where all permanent buildings including hotels, restaurants and tourism service facilities would be relocated to an *"accommodation zone"* at least three kilometres away from the southern bank of the lake.

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