

The Rufford Conference Report



39 conservationists from 5 countries in one place

Ethiopia, 2019

RUFFORD SMALL GRANTS CONFERENCE IN ETHIOPIA

"Connect for Nature Conservation"

From 27th – 28th April, 2019

*At the Beshale Hotel
Addis Ababa, Ethiopia*



Organized by

Sustaining Africa Youth Organization



Fully funded by



Contents

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	3
I. BACKGROUND.....	4
II. THE ORGANISERS' TESTIMONIES.....	4
III. THE CONFERENCE THEME AND MAIN OBJECTIVES.....	5
IV. THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS.....	5
V. THE CONFERENCE BRIEF NARRATIVE.....	6
<i>DAY ONE</i>	6
<i>DAY TWO</i>	19
VI. THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS.....	21
<i>THE IMPACT OF THE RSGs</i>	21
<i>CHALLENGES FACED AND ISSUES RAISED</i>	22
<i>RECOMMENDATIONS</i>	23
VII. ANNEX.....	24
<i>LIST OF PARTICIPANTS</i>	24
<i>CONFERENCE SCHEDULE</i>	26
<i>GROUP DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS REPORT</i>	27

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I want to take this opportunity to thank some special people who made this conference a success. Special thanks to: ***The Rufford Foundation*** for fully funding this conference; ***Mr. Josh Cole***, the director of the Rufford Small Grants, for guiding the organization of this conference and actively participating in the conference; ***Dr. Bikila Warkineh***, the Head of Plants Biology and Biodiversity Department at Addis Ababa University, for officially opening the conference and representing his university and Ethiopian Officials who could not make it due to busyness of the Easter holiday; and The organizing team especially ***Mehari Girmay (PhD Candidate)*** and ***Gebremicael Fisaha (PhD Candidate)*** who helped me in all the ground preparations.

I want to thank also all the participants especially the fellow RSG Recipients who helped chair and take notes of different conference sessions namely:

Talemos Seta (PhD)

Mehari Girmay (PhD Can.)

Gebremicael Fisaha (PhD Can.)

Ms. Mutoni Mable

Habte Telila (PhD)

Tesfay Gidey (MSc)

Dereje Yazezew (PhD)

Mr. Iregi Mwenja

Mr. Cosmas Nzilili

Once Again Thank You!

Alphonse Karenzi

The RSG Conference Organizer

I. BACKGROUND

In 2012, Rufford Foundation had its first conference in Nepal. And due to the success of this, the trustees felt that there was a need for more direct communication between the grant recipients. They recognised that very often researchers work in isolation but these conferences provide a forum to discuss ideas, problems, solutions, issues at hand and create invaluable networking opportunities. It is in that respect that the Rufford Foundation funded this East African Regional Conference of the RSG Recipients which held at the Beshale Hotel, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, from 27th to 28th April 2019.

II. THE ORGANISERS' TESTIMONIES

I, Karenzi Alphonse, am a very grateful RSG Alumni who has successfully completed all the five RSG projects and organised five Rufford Conferences: the first conference in Rwanda in 2014, the second in Ghana in 2016, the third in Uganda in January 2018, fourth in Kenya 2018 and this last one in April 2019 in Ethiopia.

“Achieved my persistent goal”

From the beginning, it has been my desire to successfully implement all the five Rufford Small Grants – a dream that I have achieved in 2018. I have very much enjoyed my ten years journey with the Rufford Foundation and the five RSG enabled me get several other opportunities and bigger grants including the UNDP Global Environment Facility of USD50,000 in 2012 and international recognitions including; officially representing my country in different international meetings and winning the 2nd price of the World Bank Connect4Climate Competition 2011 in South Africa.

“More conferences please!!”

Though I have achieved my goal of implementing all the 5 RSGs, I still want to be part of the Rufford Foundation experience, yet I'm no longer able to apply for more grants. So, for me and other fellow Alumni to be able to continue being part of the Rufford Foundation success and give back to younger generation of conservationists, **we need more conferences**. Also for the early stage RSG Recipients/ applicants to learn, share experience, and have useful contacts, **they need more conferences**.

All the RSG Recipients need more conferences, no wonder all Ethiopian participants recommended the Rufford Foundation to organise more conferences. I personally and professionally benefited a lot from the RSG conferences. For instance; the Rwanda RSG Conference 2014 enabled me to connect with fellow Recipients: Dr. Steven Bagambe and Mr. David Nkwanga who later became handy for my organization work to expand to Uganda. The Uganda Conference 2018 put me in touch with Dr. Margret Awuor Owuor who later became my primary contact person and helped me organize a very successful conference in Kenya.

“More 30 minutes for further sharing please!!”

Such a strong hunger, for sharing experience and contacts, was evident among the Ethiopian participants throughout the conference. The majority of Ethiopian RSG Recipients are PhD Holders or Candidates and this was the first Rufford conference they attended. Due to this fact of much conservation skills plus such a friendly Ethiopian culture, the conference experienced a strong passion for sharing experience and asking challenging questions through high quality discussions and presentations. This has been my first Rufford conference where participants didn't

want to end the conference but kept asking the additional minutes for further discussions and group sharing.

Rufford reconnected us after 14 years of isolation

One of the participants, **Iregi Mwenja from Kenya**, wrote the below testimony of how the RSG conference made him meet again his friend with whom he had lost touch for 14 years:

When I arrived at Beshale Hotel for the conference, I was pleasantly surprised to see a familiar face. At first, I thought he must be a grantee that I probably met in a previous conference. As I went to say hello, he called out my name in a loud excited voice “Iregi”. It was at that moment that I remembered where I met Hayal Desta. It was in Kibale Forest’s Makerere University Field Training school (MUBS) in Uganda 14 years ago!

Both of us were part of an international team of Fellows undergoing field research training under the Cambridge based Tropical Biology Association (TBA). We spent a great deal of our social time in Addis discussing the Memorable moments of Kibale and during the field excursion to Queen Elizabeth National Park. Hayal has not forgotten that I almost got a wife from this field excursion!!

It was so nice connecting again with a good friend whom I had lost with after his email was hacked. We also reconnected professionally with him thanks to this Rufford Conference. We agreed to start networking and collaborating in our activities.

I have attended Rufford conferences five times now and every conference I find a pleasant surprise waiting for me. I have expanded my professional network and joined hands with my Kenya colleagues to form the Rufford Conservation Initiatives Networks. Whoever conceived this idea of conferences was a very smart person. I plan to attend more in the future.

III. THE CONFERENCE THEME AND MAIN OBJECTIVES

This conference had “Connect for Nature Conservation” as its theme and two main objectives which were achieved through group discussions and presentations, entertainment, and national park excursion. The following are the two conference objectives:

1. To enhance the direct communication and partnership between the regional RSG recipients by providing a forum for them to know each other, discuss ideas and issues; share the best practices and strengthen the regional RSG network;
2. To promote and celebrate the role that the Rufford Foundation plays in supporting conservation at local, national and international level.

IV. THE CONFERENCE PARTICIPANTS

This conference brought together 39 people from 5 countries namely: Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, Ethiopia and United Kingdom. More details of the participants are in the Annex Section of this report.

V. THE CONFERENCE BRIEF NARRATIVE

DAY ONE

This was the first day of the conference. And this was the first conference for the Ethiopian RSG Recipients, so they seemed very enthusiastic and curious. The day started with the registration of the participants guided by the conference organisers.

Introduction of Participants, a session chaired by Gebremicael Fisaha (PhD Can.)

Mr. Fisaha was very creative. He had every participant introduced by a fellow participant on his/her left. So the two neighbour participants first shared important information about themselves including; names, where they come from, organization or project they work on, their interest and expectations, their RSG stage, etc. This session guided the participants for the rest of their interactions and networking as it was the first time for the majority of the participants to meet yet working in the same research areas and living in the same country.



neighbouring participants' self-introduction before general introduction

After the introduction, Alphonse Karenzi as the organiser welcomed the participants and recognised the people who helped organise the conference especially the two fellow RSG Recipients **Mehari Girmay** and **Gebremicael Fisaha**. He also briefly shared his experience and appreciation to the Rufford Foundation for not only funding conservation projects but also for connecting the conservationists and researchers through the conferences.

Officially opening the conference

Dr. Bikila Workneh, the head of the plant biology and biodiversity department at Addis Ababa University, officially opened the conference. He shared his experience as a conservationist and university professor and nature conservation challenges in Ethiopia. He thanked the Rufford Foundation for such a great impact the RSG projects have made on the nature conservation in Ethiopia and for such a significant contribution the Rufford Funding has made towards his university and department through funding the university conservation researchers.



Dr. Bikila Workneh sharing his experience with the participants

He mentioned, and it was also observed by the conference organizers, that the majority of the attendees were PhD Holders or PhD Students whose researches were generally funded by the Rufford Foundation. *“On behalf of the Addis Ababa University and fellow Ethiopians, I very much thank the Rufford Foundation for the great work and request that they may continue funding and organizing these conferences, the conference is officially launched”* Dr. Bikila said.

RSG Networking Success Story Presentation by Mr. Iregi Mwenja from Kenya



Mr. Iregi giving presentation

Mr. Iregi shared with the participants on the new Rufford Conservation Initiatives Network of Kenya (RCIN). This RCIN is one of the outcomes of the previous Rufford Conference in Kenya, December 2018. He shared “during the Kenya conference the Participants indentified the common challenges the RSG applicants face including; lack of mentorship and proposal writing skills, failure to get institutional bank accounts or charges and beauracracy by the institutions who receive the RSG funding on their behalf, and lack of mutual accountability”.

He explained how He then led a team of fellow RSG Recipients to establish this RCIN organization wich, in just a few months, has been legally registered and has a working leadership structure and official website. He also talked about the objectives and activities of the RCIN where he emphasised that it is time for we Senior RSG Recipients to start giving back to younger conservationist especially through mentorship, trainings and leadership. The ethiopians showed much interest in doing something similar and get in touch with Mr. Iregi for guidance.

Coffee Break / Networking



The participants used the time of networking very effectively. With passion they share experience, got to know each other and share business cards and project materials.

Experience Sharing Presentation Sessions

This session involved two rounds of presentations from eight selected RSG grantees (4 each). The first round was moderated by **Mehari Girmay (PhD Can.)** and **Habte Telila (PhD)** while the second was moderated by **Tesfay Gidey (MSc)** and **Dereje Yazezew (PhD)**. Each presenter was given the ten minutes for presentation and five minutes for questions and Answers. They shared their experience in conducting research projects funded by the Rufford Foundation in ten minutes. Whoever, the five minutes for Q&A wasn't enough due to the fact that the discussions were too much interesting to end. The powerpoint presentations are enclosed for more information.



Mr. Fisaha receiving questions from the audience after presenting

Round One

The first presenter was **Haimanot Reta Terefe (PhD)**, a **Recipient of one RSG**. He presented on “Ethnobotanical Study of Wild edible plants along Temcha River Watershed: Contribution to Watershed Management”. He mentioned also that without Rufford I wouldn’t be a PhD holder. I thank the Rufford for the support. The second presenter was **Tesfay Gidey Bezabeh (PhD)**, a **Recipient of two RSGs**. He presented on “Population status of *Boswellia papyrifera* woodland and prioritizing its conservation interventions using multi-criteria decision model in northern Ethiopia”. The third presenter: **Dereje Yazezew (PhD)**, a **Recipient of two RSGs**. He presented on “Feeding ecology of Omo River guereza (*Colobus guereza guereza*) from Wof-Washa Natural and plantation forest, central highland Ethiopia”. And the fourth presenter: **Gebremicael Fisaha (PhD Candidate)**, a **Recipient of two RSGs**. He presented on “Plant diversity and ethnobotanical study of medicinal plants in the general environs of Guassa Mountain, in Menz Gera District, Central Ethiopia”.

Round Two

The fifth presenter was **Talemos Seta (PhD)** the Deputy Director of Research and Development at Gulele Botanic Garden, one of the national benchmarking conservation initiatives in Ethiopia. Dr. Talemos is also a **Recipient of one RSG**. He presented on “*Forest Structure and Carbon Stock of Biteyu Forest in the Gurage Mountain Chain, Ethiopia*”. Dr. Talemos later on the next day, we guided the participants during their field visit to Gulele Botanic.

The sixth presenter was **Anagaw Atickem Meshesha (PhD)**, a **Recipient of all five RSGs**. **This Anagaw is considered by many to be one of the most respected conservation researchers in Ethiopia**. He presented on different projects and publications he has made using the RSG funding. He wholeheartedly thanked the RSG Director Josh Cole and the Rufford Foundation as a whole to fund his work.



Dr. Anagaw Atickem Meshesha sharing his experience with participants

The seventh presenter was **Dessalegn Obsi Gameda**, a **Recipient of four RSGs**. He presented on “Strengthening Public Education on Black Crowned Cranes and its Habitat Conservation in Jimma Zone, Ethiopia”. The eighth presenter was **Abebe Getahun (Professor)**, a **Recipient of all five RSGs** who was presented by Mr. Shewit. His presentation was on “Conservation challenges of the fish and fisheries of Lake Tana, Ethiopia”.

Lunch & Networking

Lunch and coffee breaks were also important times for participants to share and relax after intensive presentations and discussions. The meals prepared were special as they were part of the Easter Celebrations for the participants.



Lunch time memories



Discussions and experience sharing within three groups, a session chaired by Mr. Alphonse Karenzi and Mr. Nzilili Cosmas



Such a strong hunger, for sharing experience and discussions, was evident among the Ethiopian participants throughout the conference. The majority of Ethiopian RSG Recipients are PhD Holders or Candidates and this was their first Rufford conference they attended. Due to this fact of much conservation PhD skills plus such a friendly Ethiopian culture, the conference atmosphere was very energetic with a strong passion for sharing experience and asking challenging questions through high quality ideas discussions and high submission presentations. They didn't want to end the conference but kept asking the additional minutes for further discussions and group sharing.





The outcomes reports of the group discussions can be found in the annex section of this report.

Tea break and networking

These coffee breaks were one of the most intimate sessions and the participants seemed to have enjoyed one-on-one discussions and contacts exchange.



Participants discussing during the coffee break



Vote of thanks and closing remark, moderated by Mr. Nzilili Cosmas

The first day was ended by vote of thanks from different RSG Recipients.



Mr. Cosmas collecting the closing remarks from the participants

Common message was to thank the Rufford Foundation for the funding their projects and also for organizing the conference. and thanking the organizers for organizing such a successful meeting and the participants for attending and sharing their experience with fellows. The request for more regional conferences at least once a year was expressed by many. Creation of a in-country network was also a topic at the closing of the conference.

Easter Dinner Celebration at Yod Traditional Hotel



The second day of the conference was the Ethiopian Easter, the most celebrated day in Ethiopia. So the conference organizers considered this and organized a wonderful celebration for the participants on Saturday night at Yod Abyssinia Traditional Restaurant. The Yod Abyssinia is the most unique and one of the best restaurants and bars in Addiss Ababa.

The participants enjoyed different foods and drinks and activities including; networking, music, traditional dances and entertainment performance, cutting RSG easter cake, and receiving of gifts and certificates from **the RSG Director Mr. Josh Cole.**

Some of memories below:



Participants seated on round tables as the waiters serve them with different roasts





Certificates and gifts

Every participant received a certificate and a gift (a Rufford Conference branded note book).



Cutting cake



The waiter serving the cake



DAY TWO

The second day, 28th April, was a beautiful morning of excursion in Gulele Botanic Garden.



The Recipients enjoyed this interactive field visit. They enjoyed the excursion of such a beautiful scenery and learnt from different botanic conservation activities taking place in Gulele. They shared meals and last talks.



One-on-one discussion kept on in botanic too and later the recipients shared a big lunch.



VI. THE CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS

Through presentations and discussions, the participants communicated their gratitude for the Rufford Foundation due to the great impact the Rufford Small Grants have made towards: their personal development as conservationists, education and research, local and regional nature conservation, and the local community capacity building. They discussed also the challenges they face and made recommendations to especially the Rufford Foundation. The majority of the participants appreciated how the conference was organized and requested that more such conferences can be organised at least once a year in the region and thanked the Rufford Foundation to bring them together. Below are some of the key points discussed:

THE IMPACT OF THE RSGs

1. Rufford funding helped many conservationist develop approaches to solve local conservation problems and build the capacity of local community, especially the vulnerable people groups, for instance:

More than 50% of participants have had at least one project with a component of local community capacity building. And the majority directly involved the community in the planning and implementation of their projects. The fund played a great role in capacity building pertaining to conservation and local innovation for sustainable use of resources. Here **Alphonse from Rwanda** shared how his RSG projects worked with and empowered indigenous young people in Rwanda to use local clay and come up with an improved cook stove that saves more than 60% of daily household fuelwood.

2. Rufford funding helped train future conservationists:

The majority of the RSG Recipients contributed to training and mentorship of the future conservationists. For instance **Dr. Desalegn Obsi's** four RSGs contributed a lot in creating awareness and training hundreds of young students and community leaders in the ecosystem services of Wetlands.

The RSG work of **Dr. Anagaw Atickem** enabled his seven PhD students to apply for RSG and all of them have received the funds which helped them to complete their thesis. On the other hand, **Dr. Hial Desta** shared how his RSG project established a powerful high school Students conservation club at Ziway for conserving lake Ziway.

Some of RSG Recipients completed their PhD abroad and returned back to their home University. They are now training upcoming young researchers and biodiversity conservationists. "Having RSG Award we have been role model for other students to apply to RSG and contribute in the conservation of biodiversity of Ethiopia. Hence, RSG will have a long last effect not only for our personal carrier, but also for many other young upcoming students" group three concluded.

3. The Rufford funding has helped support work on species and ecosystems that are traditionally difficult to fundraise for:

Different participants expressed their gratitude to The Rufford Foundation for supporting the work on species that are traditionally and locally difficult to fundraise for yet very important. The Rufford funding has helped Ethiopian researchers to study the plant species which are traditionally considered as animal pests. For example, Childa and also the plant species such as

Eucalyptus believed to be not environmentally friendly. The outcome of the study resulted into national forest policy amendment and more funding opportunities for forest management.

4. Rufford support has enabled early career conservationists achieve their goals and expand their projects/ impact:

The majority of the participants were early career conservationists and shared that without the RSG they could neither complete their studies and PhD researches nor start their career conservationists successfully. This was also emphasized by the **Head of Plant Biology and Biodiversity Conservation Department at Addis Ababa University, Dr. Warkineh**, who recognised the role of the RSGs in enabling many of his unprivileged PhD students to conduct their researches and projects that launch them into this career of conservation.

Many participants shared how the RSG projects brought many other opportunities especially scholarships. **Dr. Hial Desta**, with emotions, shared how his RSG project made him **win the American presidential Scholarship**.

5. Rufford support has enabled conservationists publish their research findings and have different kinds of exposure and connections:

Dr. Dessalegn Obsi shared how his four RSGs have created opportunity for him to travel to many countries and attend several conferences where He has been able to network with many like-minded conservationists and researchers. Several participants also shared how the RSG projects have been their first opportunity for them to publish their works in **high impact journals**.

Dr. Hial Desta did his PhD research on the integrated land and water use management and conservation on the lake Ziway water shed at 2012 G.C. He stated that he produce three international paper on the conservation of Ziway and on his recommending Addis Ababa University, arrange international conference on conservation of lake Ziway. In addition, Majority talked about how this RSG conference has helped them to connect and discuss ideas that will create a long last impact in their career as conservationists.

CHALLENGES FACED AND ISSUES RAISED

Apart from the impact of the Rufford Funding, the participants discussed also the challenges they face during the course of their projects planning and implementation. Below are some of the common challenges that the RSG Recipients continue facing:

- 1. Institutional Overhead cost and delay:** every group mentioned this challenge related to the mechanism that the fund from RSG is released i.e. through institution bank accounts. One of the inconveniences that participants emphasised on is the fact that the institutions require overhead charges which interfere with project intended objectives. Overhead cost is a serious problem as some Ethiopian institutions deduct up to 12% of the RSG grant. The institutional bureaucracy and delay in releasing the fund for the project activities was also the common challenge mentioned by all the groups.
- 2. One referee from abroad as requirement for application:** this was also a challenge declared by all groups. The early Ethiopian conservationists generally have no contacts outside who can professionally recommend them.

- 3. Use of institutional email during application:** two, out of the three groups, mentioned this challenge of many good referees who have no institutional web-based email yet it remains a requirement by the Rufford Foundation.
- 4. The insufficient budget:** the local community needs high incentive and the conservation projects usually have a wide scope. Example, the RSG project which covers the Ethiopian lakes, rivers and wetland in assessing the distribution of hippo.
- 5. Perception of local community on the project:** They need a short period outcome rather than a long lasting outcome. Yet, the Rufford Foundation seems to be more interested in the later.
- 6. Lack of budget for:** publication, international workshop travels, project team training and capacity building and advertisement of RSG contribution/outcomes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Use of personal bank accounts is important to reduce institutional bureaucracy: we recommend the RSG to keep releasing fund on individual bases as usual. It is better to have RSG budget in the personal account in order to reduce the 12% taxation and avoid the delay of the data collection from the schedule.
2. It would be good to use personal email, rather than institutional web-based email, at least for the 1st and 2nd round grant.
3. The RSGs have had such a great impact in our personal career development and national nature conservation. We recommend that more funding would be given to more applicants from Ethiopia.
4. We recommend the recipients to focus on projects involving farmers so that the implication and application of the research will be easily communicated.
5. Translation of the research findings into local languages is very important for the RSG Recipients if they are to involve local community in nature conservation.
6. It is better to have additional budget for publication, workshop and training.
7. It is good to have the rejected applicants to reapply at least within 6 month interval.
8. Finally the group members highly appreciated and thanked RSG and promised to accomplish their work effectively as they lead their country and communities to a more sustainable use of natural resources and conserving the nature.

VII. ANNEX

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

The table 1 below gives the details of the 39 Participants who attend the conference.

Table 1: RSG Conference Participants

No	Name	Email	country	RSGs
1	Abebe Getahun, represented by Mr. Shewit	abebe12002@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	5
2	Aemro Mekonnen Birhanu	aemromekonnen@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
3	Addisu Mekonnen by Amera	addisumekonnen@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
4	Anagaw Atickem Meshesha	anagawam@gmail.com	Ethiopia	5
5	Busha Teshome Tolera	bayush051@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	2
6	Dereje Yazezew Mammo	deredbu2003@gmail.com	Ethiopia	2
7	Dessaegn Obsi Gemedo	dessaegn.obsi@ju.edu.et	Ethiopia	4
8	Gebremicael Fisaha	gmicael29@gmail.com	Ethiopia	2
9	Gezahegn Nega Chekol	gezahegnnega@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
10	Habte Jebessa Debella by Berta	habte.jebessa@gmail.com	Ethiopia	2
11	Habte Telila	habtetelila@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	2
12	Haimanot Reta Terefe	rhaimanot@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
13	Hayal Desta Yimer	hayaldesta@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
14	Hussein Ibrahim Seid	husseineim99@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
15	Mehari Girmay	meharigrm@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
16	Misganaw Tamrat Gessese	misganawtamrat@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	2
17	Talemos Seta Shanka	talemos.seta@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	1
18	Tariku Mekonnen Gutema	tarikuaam@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
19	Tefera Belay Endalamaw	tefera10@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	1
20	Tesfay Gidey Bezabeh	tglove.gidey@gmail.com	Ethiopia	2
21	Tsigereda Dessaegn	tsrose2002@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1

22	Zewdu Kifle Aweke	zewdu96@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	1
23	MESERET CHANE ALEMU	meseret.chane2009@gmail.com	Ethiopia	1
24	Gidey Yirga -	gidey.yirga@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	1
25	Goytom Abraha Kahsay	goytom@ifro.ku.dk	Ethiopia	3
26	Emmanuel Bugingo	Emmanuel@notrebio.org	Rwanda	1
27	Alphonse Karenzi	karenzilife@gmail.com	Rwanda	5
28	Mable Mutoni on behalf of UNDF	Mmutoni02@gmail.com	Uganda	1
29	Cosmas Nzilili	sikizanatrust@gmail.com	Kenya	1
30	Iregi Mwenja	iregim@gmail.com	Kenya	3
RSG RECIPIENTS' REPRESENTATIVES AND OFFICIALS				
31	Abreham Berta	abresh1240gmail.com	Ethiopia	
32	Shewit Gimedhir	shewitlove@gmail.com	Ethiopia	
33	Shambel Alemu, PhD stud	shambelal@gmail.com	Ethiopia	
34	Kflay Gihiwof	Kflay77@gmail.com	Ethiopia	
35	Waaqshum Sliferaw	Waaqsh@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	
36	Seminigus Giegzibhe	Seminus02@yahoo.com	Ethiopia	
37	Birhanu Bezay	Birhanubezay79@gmail.com	Ethiopia	
38	Bikila Workneh , Guest of Honour	kooket@gmail.com	Ethiopia	
39	Josh Cole, RSG Director		UK	

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

On the page below there is a two day conference schedule.

	Time	Activity	Facilitator
Saturday	7:00-8:30	Hotel Break-fast for accommodated participants	Mutoni Mable
	8:30-9:00	Registration of all participants at the Erta-ale Conference Hall, Beshale Hotel	Mutoni Mable
	9:00-9:30	Peer-Introduction of every Participant and welcoming the Guests of honour	Gebremicael Fisaha (PhD Can.)
	9:30-10:10	Official Opening - Conference Introduction by Alphonse Karenzi - Keynote address by The Ethiopian official	Gebremicael Fisaha (PhD Can.)
	10:10-10:30	Networking Success Story by Iregi Mwenja from Kenya	Gebremicael Fisaha (PhD Can.)
	10:30-10:50	Coffee Break / Networking/ group photo	Gebremicael & Mehari
	10:50-11:50	Experience Sharing Presentations by four selected RSG Recipients (10 min for presentation + 5 min for Q&A each)	Mehari Girmay (PhD Can.) Habte Telila (PhD)
	11:50-12:00	Ice-breaker by any volunteer	Alphonse Karenzi
	12:00-13:00	Experience Sharing Presentations by other four selected RSG Recipients (10 min for presentation + 5 min for Q&A each)	Tesfay Gidey (MSc) Dereje Yazezew (PhD)
	13:00-14:00	Lunch & Networking	
	14:00-15:20	Discussions and experience sharing within three groups.	Alphonse Karenzi Mr. Nzilili
	15:20-16:20	Group presentations based on shared experiences by the three groups (15 min for presentation + 5 min for Q&A each)	Iregi Mwenja
	16:20-16:40	Coffee break/ networking	Mutoni Mable
	16:40-17:00	Vote of thanks and closing remarks	Mr. Nzilili
	17:00	Departure of the participants and self-organized hang-outs	
	7:00-10:00	Dinner at Yod Traditional Restaurant, Easter celebration and Awarding the gift and certificate to every participant	Gebremicael Fisaha (PhD Can.) Mehari Girmay (PhD Can.)

Sunday	7:00-8:30	Hotel Break-fast and check-out	Mutoni Mable
	8:30-9:00	Registration of the RSG recipients at the Reception	Mutoni Mable
	9:00-9:30	Bus driving to the Botanic Garden , Addis Ababa	Mehari Girmay (PhD Can.)
	9:30-10:50	EXCURSION in the Botanic Garden and individual interactions	Talemos Seta (PhD)
	10:50-12:00	- Discuss the way forward; - Lunch at the Botanic Departure of the participants	Gebre-micael Fisaha (PhD Can.) Mr. Nzilili

GROUP DISCUSSION HIGHLIGHTS REPORT

Group One

1. What was the impact of the RSG?

- Important in capacity building
- Important in creating linking with communities (Dr. Desalegn experience in creating awareness in the ecosystem services of Wetlands around them... students, childrens, community leaders have been participated in the project).
- Most reliable funding sources for applicants of developing countries (Example from the work of Dr. Anagaw, his seven PhD students applied for RSG and all of them have received the funds which would help them for Thesis completions).
- Created great opportunities in learning how to publish the work supported by RSG in high impact jounals esp. for beginners.
- Created great oppportunity for PhD students to alleviate the financial problem for their PhD Thesis.
- Created opportunity for networking among different recipients(for example Dr.Dessalegn has travelled many countries for conference participation after having got four phases

2. Challenges

- Overhead institutional cost
- Use of institutional email during application
- One referee from abroad as requirement for application

3. Recommendation

- It would be good to use personal email than institutional atleast in the 1st and 2nd round grant.
- Use of personal bank acct is important to reduce institutional beaurocracy
- Would appreciate to continue funding which would create

Group Two

1. The impacts of RSG

- The fund helped many of the recipients to complete their academic studies
- The fund played a great role in capacity building pertaining to conservation
- The fund helped to study those plant species traditionally considered as animal pests. For example, Childa and also the plant species such as *Eucalyptus* believed to be not environmentally friendly
- The output of the study resulted in forest policy amendment
- The RSG helped to connect people to discuss on nature conservation

2. The challenges

- The challenges are related to the mechanism that the fund from RSG is released i.e. through institution. For example, the institutions may ask for overhead deduction that might interfere with intended objectives
- The number of referees out of the country where the research is done

3. Recommendations

- Better to keep on releasing fund on individual bases as usual
- Maybe two of referees from the country of origin to encourage the local researchers
- We recommend the recipients to focus on projects involving farmers so that the implication of the research will be easier
- Translation of the research findings to local languages which is important in the process of biodiversity conservation

Group Three

Group discussion on the three selected question of RSG

1. What was the Impact of RSG

- A. From the six participant of the groups, five of the recipients were award only first stage and they are in the start of their work and all of them agree that without the RSG they cannot perform their PhD data collection successfully
- B. One of the participant's (HialDesta) (PhD) he was doing his PhD on the Integrated land and water use management and conservation on the lake Ziway water shied at 2012 G.C
 - ✓ He stated that he produce three international paper on the conservation of Ziway and on his recommending Addis Ababa University, arrange international conference on conservation of lake Ziway
 - ✓ It leads also the establishment of high school Students conservation club at Ziway for conserving lakeZiway.
 - ✓ He also discuss that the RSG project lead to have other scholar opportunity in his case he was win the American presidential Scholarship
- C. After completing ourPhD, wehave supposed to return back to our home University and train upcoming young researchers and biodiversity conservationist. Hence, RSG will have a long last effect not only for our personal carrier, but also for many other young upcoming students.
- D. Having RSG Award we have been role model for other students to apply to RSG and contribute in the conservation of biodiversity of Ethiopia.

2. What were the Challenges facing to you

- A. The local community needs high incentive. It is challenge always if the project area is wide it is true in case of my project which covers the Ethiopian lakes, rivers and wetland to assess the distribution of hippo.
- B. Overhead cost. It is serious problem as it tax 12% of the RSG grant for the institution and also always delay the data collection period
- C. Perception of local community on the project. They need a short period outcome rather for long lasting outcome.
- D. Lack of legal framework in the governmental case
- E. Lack of budget for publication, for international workshop and training for completing our work effectively and advertise RSG contribution on our project

3. What is your recommendation

- ✓ It is better to have RSG budget in the personal account in order to reduce the 12% taxation and avoid the delay of the data collection from the schedule
 - ✓ It is better to have additional budget for publication, workshop and training
 - ✓ It is good to have the unsuccessfully applicant to reapply at least with 6 month interval
- Finally the group members were highly appreciate and thankful for RSG and promising to accomplish their work effectively and add their part on the sustainable usage of the biodiversity and conservation of nature.

N.B: the financial report and scanned receipts are attached separately!

The End!