

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. We understand that projects often do not follow the predicted course but knowledge of your experiences is valuable to us and others who may be undertaking similar work. Please be as honest as you can in answering the questions – remember that negative experiences are just as valuable as positive ones if they help others to learn from them.

Please complete the form in English and be as clear and concise as you can. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. We will ask for further information if required. If you have any other materials produced by the project, particularly a few relevant photographs, please send these to us separately.

Please submit your final report to [jane@rufford.org](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

#### Grant Recipient Details

<b>Your name</b>	Constanza Monterrubio Solis
<b>Project title</b>	Indigenous community, co-managed and private conserved areas: policy and practical implications for communities and biodiversity conservation in Mexico.
<b>RSG reference</b>	01.02.10
<b>Reporting period</b>	June 2010 - June 2011
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£3,040
<b>Your email address</b>	Cm411@kent.ac.uk
<b>Date of this report</b>	August 20 <sup>th</sup> 2011

**1. Please indicate the level of achievement of the project's original objectives and include any relevant comments on factors affecting this.**

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
To evaluate governance as a factor affecting conservation opportunities.		X		This project is embedded in a longer three-year PhD programme and thus, the analysis and final outcomes are still in progress. However, the field stage and the data-collection required for this analysis have been mostly finished thanks to the economic support of RSG. A final field work period is planned for the beginning of 2012 in order to update the information, receive feedback from informants and complete the data-collection stage. Along the way, the project has had to change in order to adapt to the conditions in the field and the time available. Nevertheless, its core objectives exploring the practical implications of participatory conservation governance remained.
To analyse the practical implications of the different categories of protected areas.		X		
To analyse the relationship between governance factors and reducing habitat loss through time.		X		
To analyse policy and institutional contingencies and contradictions regarding governance and conservation.			X	
To explore the implications of the conservation governance systems for local people through a case study		X		
To use Chiapas state as a case study exploring the points above			X	Chiapas and Oaxaca constitute now the same administrative region. In order to adapt to this new situation, the study expanded to cover also Oaxaca. Through a case study in an Oaxacan community-conserved area, this research explores many of the common issues present in participatory conservation in both states.
To contribute with local organisations working on the implementation of different conservation governance systems			X	The data-collection stage was an opportunity to strengthen the links with local conservation practitioners and local people. I was also able to participate and to contribute with local NGOs such as Pronatura-Sur and GADES in the development of workshops and community and private conservation experiences' exchanges.
To develop material that informs the current situation and potential of ICCAs in Southern Mexico.		X		As mentioned before, this is still in progress. However, a chapter for a book on community conservation has been produced with the early analysis of the information. Additionally, posters with the social-economic information have been developed and provided to the local NGO for delivery to

				the community. This information is aimed to inform the decision-making and development of conservation and economic alternatives projects in the locality. A second stage of the social-economic study is planned in order to track the effects of the early implementation of production alternatives in the localities where the case study took place.
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**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

**A. Extreme weather conditions.** The study area is within the rainiest region in the country, which delayed the data collection from August to October due to inaccessibility to the study site and bad condition of the roads. This time was used instead to interview conservation practitioners in the region regarding their experiences in the implementation of conservation efforts in the region which allowed the research to be known by the conservation agencies in the Chiapas-Oaxaca region and to strengthen links with implementation bodies, increasing the scope and the reach of the research.

**B. Lack of interest or availability of key informants to participate.** On the other hand, key informants within private reserve and the Biosphere Reserve who expressed their interest and were considered in the planning stages to be part of the case studies, did not show interest to participate once the research was ongoing. As a result, the case study structure had to be changed. However, this had a good impact on the research since San Miguel Chimalapa, Oaxaca (the case study that was chosen instead) represents an interesting case that requires to be analysed and which has provided very useful examples of the implementation of participatory conservation efforts at the regional level.

**C. Constant institutional changes.** During the development of the case study, one of the main obstacles was the constant institutional changes that there are at the local and regional level. The case study is so dynamic that new actors were introduced and some agencies representatives changed interrupting the information flow. The solution was a constant movement between localities and constant presence so new confidence links could be constantly developed and maintained. This situation added to the weather conditions and increased the costs for local transportation, so there was a need for re-structuring the budget as well. Thus, instead of buying spatial data for both states in three periods of time, the data acquired was reduced to the case study site area (eastern Oaxaca and Western Chiapas) and to two years. The money left was then used to pay the extra expenses in local transportation. This way, the time and budget needs were fulfilled.

**3. Briefly describe the three most important outcomes of your project.**

**A. Confidence and space for reflection at both, the local and the institutional levels.** The development of this project has involved the use of different research tools that have been useful not only for the data collection, but also as a space enhancing the reflection for informants. At the institutional level, the semi-structured interviews have represented a space for 40 different conservation practitioners to stop their routines and to think about the development and design of their projects. This, in many cases has brought up new ideas and realisation of gaps that they can

explore, reflect on and, in the case of decision-makers, be implemented. At the community level, the development of questionnaires and workshops regarding the creation and formal recognition of a community-conserved area enhanced local reflections and discussions about the different perceptions regarding the process. These reflections enriched the exchange of ideas during local assemblies which later developed into talks with internal authorities and recently, into new local agreements. Thus, the development of this research with the support of RSG has contributed by opening a space where local capacities can be strengthened through reflection and the exchange of ideas.

**B. Base-line socio-economic information.** Thanks to the funding of RSG and the support of local people and NGOs, this research has been able to develop base-line information in order to evaluate the socio-economic outcomes of productive alternatives in two of the localities where the case study took place. A second stage is planned in order to provide an early evaluation of the local effects such projects and to inform local and regional decision-making regarding this participatory conservation project. This information will also be an important component of further stages of this research.

**C. Insights for better practices at the regional and national level as well as to contribute to the international debate about participatory and community conservation.** Already at the early stages of the analysis of the data, new and powerful insights are being developed that are aimed to inform policy-makers and practitioners in order to improve the implementation of participatory conservation. Initial reports have been delivered to local NGOs and further divulgation articles are being prepared to distribute through the links made during the fieldwork stage with governmental agencies for conservation (CONANP) and various NGOs (Pronatura Sur, GADES, WWF). Local conservation practitioners and community members have shown very receptive to contributions that help them to improve their conservation practices and inform the decision they make in their different conserved areas.

#### **4. Briefly describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project (if relevant).**

The project has provided local NGOs in San Miguel Chimalapa Oaxaca with a socio-economic base-line in order to inform the design of productive alternatives that accomplish both income security and ecological sustainability. At the same time, this information has been presented to the localities and, along with the second stage of the survey, will be part of a report on the socio-economic outcomes of the current economic alternative projects. This report will be delivered to the local environmental agency, local NGOs, community authorities and members. It is important to outline that this survey was applied with the prior informed consent from the community and with the support of local members. This way, community members are aware of the content of the survey and have been part of the data-collection process. The survey has already enhanced the reflection and discussion of topics regarding the conservation projects within local assemblies. The information generated in its early stages has supported the dialogue between local community and the local authorities. This has led to the development of new local agreements and governance structures regarding benefit-sharing and the implementation of conservation and alternative productive projects.

Along with the information from the case study, this research will be providing useful insights regarding the implementation of participatory conservation projects in this region of the country.

This is potentially useful for communities in order for them to reflect on the needs and the strategies to fulfil them. Also, the research has opened a space to give voice to local experiences in different communities and to link these voices to the different agencies working in the field (Pronatura Sur, UNDP, CONANP, WWF and GADES).

#### **5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

Yes. In the short term there is further involvement with community members and local conservation NGOs in order to support their governance structures and to achieve a long-term community conservation process that also represents sustainable income alternatives for local people. However, local land tenure conflicts have to be solved first in order to accomplish the objectives mentioned above. Thus, I am currently engaged in a committee of professionals and civil society involved in the lobbying with State authorities and facilitating conflict management in order to contribute to a fair solution. Furthermore, in the long term there is a possibility to increase the scope of the projects as more neighbouring areas are also formally recognising their own community-conserved areas and building capacity becomes essential.

#### **6. How do you plan to share the results of your work with others?**

A written report with preliminary results has been delivered to the local NGOs, and communities were informed about the results during local meetings. Posters have been designed and sent to NGOs to be delivered to communities. These posters will be updated and delivered after the second stage of the survey is finished. The initial data analysis has led to the submission of the chapter: Monterrubio-Solís and Newing, Challenges in ICCA governance: the case of El Cordon del Reten in San Miguel Chimalapa, Oaxaca (In revision), for the book *Community action for conservation: Mexican experiences*, edited by Porter-Bolland, Ruiz-Mallen, Martin and Camacho-Benavides. Once the data collection and analysis are finished this information will be distributed among the informants for feedback and will be published in divulgation articles at the local level, presented in relevant conferences and submitted to scientific journals in order to ensure that the outcomes inform as wide audience.

#### **7. Timescale: Over what period was the RSG used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?**

The period of use of the funding was from June 2010 to June 2011. This project is part of a doctoral research intended to be finished by the end of 2012. The second stage of the survey is programmed for the first months of 2012, so the project has been extended beyond the initial period.

**8. Budget: Please provide a breakdown of budgeted versus actual expenditure and the reasons for any differences. All figures should be in £ sterling, indicating the local exchange rate used.**

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Land cover and vegetation maps for San Miguel Chimalapa vectorial data (1990-2000) (For GIS analysis)	608	364	+244	The area selected to develop the GIS analysis was reduced in order to increase precision and to reduce the cost, so the resources could be used for local transportation.
Return transportation UK-Mexico x2	1,600	1675	-75	The original budget did not consider the cost of commuting to and from airports, which increased the cost of the travel.
Transportation Mexico-Oaxaca-Chiapas-Mexico and transportation between study sites	700	989	-289	The characteristics of the study required constant travelling between the study sites, increasing significantly the costs of transportation.
<b>Total</b>	2,908	<b>3,028</b>		Twelve pounds were paid for transaction fees to the bank.

**9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?**

In terms of this research, the following steps consist in finishing the last data-collection stage in order to complete the data analysis. Once the analysis is ready, it is essential to share the results with the communities and conservation agencies first, in order to get feedback. Once the final reports are prepared, the lessons will be shared with local communities through oral presentations and didactic material (posters and leaflets). Written reports will be delivered to the collaborating NGOs and regional conservation agencies. Then, the results will be distributed at the central offices of the conservation agency (CONANP) in order to increase its impact and contribute to the development of policies and more effective mechanisms in participatory conservation. As an academic, I also have the commitment to share the lessons resulted from this process to the academic environment, so scientific papers will be submitted to the relevant publications throughout 2012.

In terms of the overall project, new branches of applied programmes for capacity building and enhancing governance resilience in the localities where this study takes place are needed and possible. Thus, after this stage of the project is finished, the actions are likely to work in this direction in which I hope we can continue to have the support of RSGF.

**10. Did you use the RSGF logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?**

The RSGF logo was printed in the posters and the written reports that were sent to the local NGOs and communities to inform the early results of the survey. The support was also acknowledged in the chapter of the book that has been submitted for revision.

**11. Any other comments?**

I only would like to express my deep gratitude for the support of RSGF. This project would not have been possible without it. If pertinent, I will continue to share the outcomes of this research as they are completed with RSG.