

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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Emma Gibbons
Project title	Fano project
RSG reference	10761-2
Reporting period	12 months
Amount of grant	£6,000
Your email address	Gibbons.e.l@gmail.com
Date of this report	21 st October 2013

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
Implementation of community participation programme through the development of a turtle management committee			x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transition of the marine turtle committee into a legal association FI.MPA.MI.FA recognised by the Malagasy government - FI.MPA.MI.FA is the first grassroots marine turtle management association in Madagascar - FI.MPA.MI.FA's 120 members' represent the 13 communities in the Bay of Ranobe with an estimated population of over 200,000 people - Democratic elections were held for the 13 communities to elect the governing board of the association - Elections are scheduled to take place every 2-3 years (funding dependant) - Provides a platform for marine turtle conservation in the region
Implementation of community management strategies/dina's (indigenous laws)			x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legalisation of the dina by the association to prevent the hunting and slaughtering of juvenile marine turtles in 2013 - Dedication and hard work of the association resulted in the successful implementation of the dina throughout the 13 communities of the BRB
Reinforcement of stakeholder participatory management strategies			x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Marine turtle education day; attended the whole community including chiefs, elders and community leaders - Formation of community marine turtles protection teams in each of the 13 communities of the BRB - Collaboration with national institution IHSM marine university, Toliara - Partnership with the international institution Kelonia marine turtle observatory based in Reunion, implementing the first community tagging program in Madagascar
Gear exchange programme for the proposed turtles		x		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Closed season dina developed by the communities of the BRB was submitted to the Malagasy court of law. However,

closed season				the Malagasy government advised that the closed season dina is in conflict with international/national decrees that protect marine turtles from harvesting and thus cannot proceed with legislative action.
Assessment of the harvesting of marine turtles			x	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased area of biological data collection providing a comprehensive evaluation of the marine turtle fishery throughout the BRB - Results from the data collected on the turtle fishery were presented at stakeholder meetings in each of the 13 communities of the BRB - Compiling research on harvest levels of marine turtle in the BRB, to be utilised by the association, in order to make informed management decisions regarding the exploitation of marine turtles by the Vezo community - Recruiting community members to collect biological information on the turtle fishery, strengthened the project and assisted in the disseminating information throughout the BRB

2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

Madagascar's fisheries management strategies normally take the form of seasonal closures, for example the octopus, sardine, and lobster fisheries. Vezo leaders, when discussing the conservation measures for the protection of marine turtles decided that the logical step was to simply transfer this conventional management strategy to the turtle fishery. Thus, all 13 communities of the BRB signed an agreement to implement a 3 month closed season for the marine turtle fishery from 1st December to 1st March. However, the Malagasy Government is reluctant to agree to this request as the turtle fishery is an illegal fishery under local, national and international decree and this agreement will be in conflict with these rarely enforced decrees.

- 1975 decree 75-014; *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) of Wild Fauna and Flora*
- 1988 decree 88-243; *Prohibiting the exploitation and sale of the marine turtle throughout Madagascar*

Enforcement issues: decrees provide protection at a national level, yet a shortage of trained personnel; insufficient capacity and funding to implement policies; political unrest and language barriers (18 officially recognised Malagasy tribes with unique dialects/taboo) all contribute to

derisory nationwide enforcement. At the local level, implementation of the decrees is extremely problematic as stakeholders have not been consulted during the development of these agreements. Through the development of ReefDoctor's local national and international marine turtle network ReefDoctor has received strong support to proceed with this conservation approach and is confident of future attainment.

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

Since 2008, ReefDoctor with sponsorship from The Rufford Foundation has pioneered an innovative conservation approach to protect marine turtles of the BRB region. Integrating fisheries management strategies into grassroots community-based conservation (CBC) initiatives provides a foundation for the Vezo community to develop their own approach towards the sustainable exploitation of marine turtles.

Project achievements for the funding period 2012 - 2013

a) Development of the first marine turtle management association whose core members are Vezo turtle hunters

CBC efforts transitioned into a grassroots movement by turtle hunters to protect their identity and livelihood through the sustainable exploitation of marine turtles. This resulted in the creation of the first grassroots marine turtle management association in Madagascar, referred to as the Fikambanana MPaniriky Miaro ny Fano (FI.MPA.MI.FA).

b) Formation the first fisheries management strategy in Madagascar aimed at sustainable exploitation of marine turtle in the BRB

Legalisation of the first dina (traditional law) preventing the hunting and slaughtering of turtles under 70 cm for the thirteen communities of the Bay of Ranobe. The dina was implemented by the community turtle association FI.MPA.MI.FA. Each of the thirteen community of the BRB have formed turtle protection teams composed of elders and fishermen who are responsible for the administration of the dina, largely reducing conflict and providing a platform for marine turtle protection in the region – In October 2013, the first juvenile turtle was tagged and released by FI.MPA.MI.FA association members.

c) Evaluation of marine turtle fishery through the collection of biological data on the capture and consumption of marine turtles in the BRB

Assessment of the marine turtle fishery- Since the conception of this project over 1500 marine turtles have been captured and slaughtered in the Ranobe region. *Chelonia mydas* (green turtle), significantly dominates the fishery (97%), although all five species of marine turtle present in Madagascan waters, are targeted, *Eretmochelys imbricata* (hawksbill), *Caretta caretta* (loggerhead), *Lepidochelys olivacea* (olive ridley) and *Dermochelys coriacea* (leatherback). Estimates of annual income indicate an increase from £3,000 in 2009 (£2.60 per kg) to £6,900 in 2012 (£3.60 per kg). Over the same time period, average length (straight carapace) decreased from 78 cm in 2009 to 69 cm in 2012; the capture of large individuals has become rare.

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

Involvement of the local community is an integral aspect of the ReefDoctor Fano project. CBC is essential for realistic, long-term conservation of shared resources. Empowering communities to take responsibility for the management of these shared resources is necessary for the survival of the coastal communities of this region. This has been highlighted in the recent publication by the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) in October 2013. The report describes Madagascar as featuring at the top of nearly every list of poverty projections and as 'high hazard vulnerability' and characterises Madagascar as the **top poverty hotspot in 2030**.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

ReefDoctor aims to continue promoting sustainable exploitation of marine turtles through CBC. ReefDoctor's role as CBC facilitator is vital as the marine turtle conservation association FI.MPA.MI.FA is in a sensitive period of growth, requiring training, resources, and capacity building. Furthermore, ReefDoctor is concerned that without continued support the project is at risk not only of misunderstandings and failure, but of long-term rejection of future conservation and development activities.

The challenge over the next few years for the ReefDoctor Fano project is to

- Provide capacity building for FI.MPA.MI.FA
- Training and workshops for FI.MPA.MI.FA members
- Deliver support for the expansion of the community-based conservation management plan developed by FI.MPA.MI.FA.
- Provide feedback to FI.MPA.MI.FA on the marine turtle fishery so the association can make informed management decisions. This will involve characterising the marine turtle population inhabiting the reef complex of Toliara.
 - Estimation of stage and population-specific partitioning of habitat use
 - Age at maturity
 - Seasonal and ontogenetic shifts in habitat occupation

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

- ReefDoctor has been invited to presented the Fano project at
 - Western Indian Ocean Marine Science Association (WIOMSA) symposium
 - Kenya 2011
 - Mozambique (28th October – 2nd November 2013)
 - Reef Conservation United Kingdom (RCUK)
 - Zoological Society London (7th December 2013)
- Publications
 - Indian Ocean Turtle Newsletter IOTN peer review journal (in-press)
 - IOSEA (multiple newsletter publications)

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

RSG funding was used over a 12 month period; for ReefDoctor's Fano project to achieve its ecological, economic, and social goals, ReefDoctor employs CBC strategies. However, CBC requires long-term commitment to develop a partnership of mutual respect and understanding with the community. Thus, ReefDoctor are committed to the role of CBC facilitators. However, ***the goal of true CBC facilitators is to work themselves out of a job*** (Frazier 1999 - IUCN/SSC Marine Turtle Specialist Group Publication No. 4.) ReefDoctor's Fano project aims to provide a platform for long-term community-based conservation directed by the coastal communities of the BRB.

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
Education day	1000	1086	-86	Funds transferred from project manager fund
Meeting	600	600	0	
Collectors	1080	1080	0	
Local supervisor	1200	1200	0	
Project manager	1200	1114	+86	Funds transferred to Education day fund
Travel	450	450	0	
Printing/T-shirts	600	600	0	
Total	6130	6130	0	130 GBP provided by the project manager

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

The next objective of ReefDoctor's FANO project is to develop culturally acceptable practices that protect turtles and their habitats, and at the same time benefit coastal communities.

This will be achieved by

- Providing education and training for FI.MPA.MI.FA association members.
- Capacity building so association members can use their newly acquired skills.
- Follow-up activities to promote the sustainable fishing techniques supported by the association.
- Initiating a search for, and implementing alternative livelihoods for turtle hunters.
- Development of conservation plans and actions.

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? Yes

- Materials (T-shirts/banners/posters) boldly displayed The Rufford Foundation logo

- Publications named The Rufford Foundation as principle funders
- Public presentations displayed named The Rufford Foundation as principle funders

11. Any other comments?

ReefDoctor Fano project would like to thank the Rufford Foundation team for their support throughout the duration of the project.