

## 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>	Ruth Leeney
<b>Project title</b>	MarWise – A Marine Wildlife Safe course for marine tourism operators in Namibia
<b>RSG reference</b>	10821-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	February 2012 (after completion of project)
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£2699
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:ruleeney@yahoo.co.uk">ruleeney@yahoo.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	28 February 2012

**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
Run sustainable tourism course			x	Course run four times over a month period (three times in Walvis Bay and once in Luderitz). A total of 27 people certified.
Collection of feedback from tour operators on the new Code of Conduct			x	Two meetings and three one-on-one informal interviews/ discussions resulted in feedback from all tour companies. Up-to-date information on the state of the marine tourism industry in Namibia was also collected via simple questionnaire surveys. This has been compiled into a report (will be finalised shortly and provided to Rufford Foundation).

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

Some of the tour operators in Walvis Bay, where feeding of seals and sea birds is a common practice, objected to the new Code of Conduct regulation to ban this activity. Several of the tour companies felt very strongly about this, which led to some heated discussion during the first course. The discussion was sidelined in favour of completing the course materials, and a meeting was held the following week to tackle the issue and to collect feedback from operators on the Code of Conduct.

It was hoped that the Namibian Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources would sponsor the travel costs for those operators (two companies) based in Lüderitz, to attend the course, but no support was provided from MFMR, nor did an MFMR representative attend the course as had been previously arranged. Jean-Paul Roux, who I had identified as the local person who would be trained and could then continue the scheme in the future, was helpful in discussions relating to the course and the CoC, but MFMR did not facilitate his attendance at the course. RHL has acted and will continue to act as a moderator, and to this end has collected feedback to provide directly to MFMR. It will be important, in the future, to continue to encourage MFMR's involvement with the issue of marine tourism and coastal conservation, and with the marine tourism industry.

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

(1) 27 MarWiSe-certified people who now have a strong foundation in marine animal behaviour and the principles of sustainable marine tourism, within the bigger picture of marine ecosystem functioning.

(2) Links between the marine tourism industry and other stakeholders in sustainable tourism and the environment. As well as marine tour guides and skippers, one representative from Eco Awards Namibia, one representative from International Knowledge Management (Working closely with the Benguela Current Commission) and two representatives from the Coastal Environment Trust Namibia (CETN) attended the course. Course attendees were thus able to discuss sustainable

tourism issues in Namibia in general and to hear about the move towards more eco-friendly practices in many tourism sectors; they also received input from CETN representatives on the wider environmental concerns for Namibia's coastal and marine environments.

(3) Progress towards developing a Code of Conduct which is approved by government and can be accepted and implemented by the tour operators. This CoC is still in the consultative phase but further work will be done to refine it, based on feedback from operators, in the coming months and a finalised version should be available by June/July 2012.

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

Several community members and non-tour operator individuals attended the MarWiSe course, thus interest in the topic and the audience it reached was certainly broader than the target audience. NATH (Namibian Academy for Tourism and Hospitality; provides training to those in the tourism industry) has already expressed interest in the course content and I have made contact with other organisations, with a view to incorporating elements of the course into national-level training courses for students of tourism and making this information more widely available (e.g. via the Distance Learning and Information Sharing Tool, [www.dlist.org](http://www.dlist.org)). The local press (the Namib Times and a radio station) also featured information on the course.

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

Yes. I would like to move the project forward into a second phase, whereby MarWiSe becomes a more permanent presence on the coast and especially in Walvis Bay, where most of the marine tourism activities are concentrated. This would involve making MarWiSe training available several times a year, thus facilitating the training of freelance skippers and other people not permanently involved in the industry. It would also greatly increase the awareness of MarWiSe in the local community.

In the longer term, it will also be essential to have a locally-based person involved in the MarWiSe Scheme, to provide ongoing training and advice. By liaising with local organisations in Namibia such as Eco Awards Namibia (<http://www.ecoawards-namibia.org/marwise.php>), NATH and Tour & Safari Association of Namibia (TASA), as was initiated on the February field trip, it will be possible to train local education providers and potentially, in the future, to make the MarWiSe course an official part of their training curriculum. The assessors of my initial proposal raised the issue of the course reaching enough people and being available to people of various literacy levels. I have made contact with the leader of an environmental education programme based at Gobabeb Training and Research centre (<http://www.gobabebtrc.org/>), who works from one of the townships in the Walvis Bay area and we intend to incorporate some elements of the MarWiSe course and marine education into their ongoing education programmes with secondary school and university students. I also held a meeting with the course coordinator from the Polytechnic of Namibia (<http://www.polytechnic.edu.na/>), who is interested in incorporating elements of the MarWiSe course into the Polytechnic's courses on natural resources and tourism. Discussions will continue on how best to facilitate this.

The feedback from tour operators indicates that they believe that tourists expect animals to be fed on their trips, and also that they would not have so many repeat customers or satisfied clients, if they did not offer the up-close encounter that feeding seals provides. I would therefore like to carry out interview surveys during the peak tourist season (June – August) to ascertain whether these

assertions are in fact true. A questionnaire survey of tourists could also facilitate an assessment of whether skippers and guides are following the Code of Conduct, several months after its introduction. The information regarding tourist expectations (as well as basic information on origin of tourists and how they came to book the trip) would also be of interest to the tour companies and thus several companies (in Walvis Bay) have already supported the idea of this proposed work. The feedback the tour companies would gain would hopefully encourage them to maintain responsible behaviours on their tours, given the likely favourable commentary from environmentally aware tourists regarding responsible behaviours. This is an important next step to the MarWiSe course, and on review of my proposal I was in fact asked by the proposal assessors whether follow-up monitoring would be undertaken to assess the effect of the course on tour operator behaviour and on tourists. I therefore intend to design a questionnaire study which addresses this issue. I have proposed the idea to NACOMA, the Namibian coastal conservation authority, and will be seeking funds locally but also intend to request further support from the Rufford Foundation via a second Small Grant.

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

The Namibian Dolphin Project website ([www.namibiandolphinproject.com](http://www.namibiandolphinproject.com)) has a page providing information on MarWiSe which will also soon list all certified individuals and their affiliation (<http://www.namibiandolphinproject.com/education/marwise/>).

Eco Awards Namibia (<http://www.ecoawards-namibia.org/marwise.php>) has also listed all MarWiSe-certified people on their website.

The Namib Times already featured an article on the course (see attached), and the story was also picked up by local radio stations.

A report is being produced which will summarise the activities carried out (course preparation, provision of training, collection of feedback and discussions with MFMR) and the data collected on the current state of the marine tourism industry in Namibia. If possible, this report will be submitted for publication in a suitable scientific journal (e.g. *Tourism in Marine Environments*).

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

The RSG was used over a 6-week period. This was longer than the anticipated period for the project as stated in the proposal (2 weeks) because each course was run over two afternoon sessions to facilitate those working in the tourism industry who might be working on morning boat trips. After two courses had been completed, there was further demand and thus a third course was scheduled for the following week. The first week of the field period was used to organise the venue, publicise the course, generate a press release and organise the production of course materials. Also, due to the amount of debate surrounding some elements of the Code of Conduct, I consulted with the Namibian Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources (MFMR) who encouraged me to collect as much feedback as possible from the industry. I therefore spent a further two weeks speaking with individuals within the industry, and several days communicating with other key stakeholders involved in coastal and marine conservation. I used the additional time in Namibia to collect up-to-date information on the state of the industry, to provide a solid background for the report I am preparing. I also used the time in Namibia to communicate with education providers locally and assess interest in providing greater education opportunities on the coast.

**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
Airline ticket	1000	1142.33	-142.33	
Accommodation	400	400	0	
Room hire	400	0	+400.00	Not requested from RSG. Room provided free of charge
Printing costs	1000	882.95	+117.05	
Car hire	78	none	+78.00	Travel was facilitated by local contacts, or meetings took place in Walvis Bay
Petrol costs for car	Not budgeted	16.76	-16.76	In one case, a local contact provided car transport to Swakopmund for a meeting, and I provided petrol for the trip
Train fare	100	28.50 + 46.50 + 38.00 (Heathrow express) = 113.00	-13.00	
Other transport (taxi to and from train station)	Not budgeted	37.60	-37.60	
Boat hire	121	0	+121.00	Boat training was not included in the course
Visa extension charge (to stay over 1 month) and flight change	Not budgeted	126.56	-126.56	I extended my trip in order to facilitate the collection of feedback data and to network with local people involved in educational programmes
Phone sim card & credit	Not budgeted	67.66	-67.66	To contact operators to arrange meetings and for course organisation
<b>Total</b>	3099 (2699 requested from Rufford)	<b>2786.86</b>	-87.86	

*Based on exchange of 1 GBP = N\$12.22 (23 Mar 2012)*

*The funds provided by the Rufford Small Grant were exhausted and a small amount of remaining funding from a previous grant to R. Leeney was used to cover the remaining costs. Please note that the full amount of the grant was not actually received as N\$ 186.04 bank commission was charged.*

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

I feel it is most important to follow up the course with an assessment of tourist expectations. The marine tour operators feel they are simply providing what their customers want, but many of their practices (such as the feeding of seals and sea birds) or not considered to be in line with 'responsible' tourism. It will be useful to see whether further education relating to such issues needs to focus on the tour operators or in fact on the tourists themselves. In addition, the new Code of Conduct requires skippers and guides to be far more aware of the distance to which they approach whales and dolphins, and the amount of time they spend with groups of these animals. It is, I believe, essential to do some follow-up work on this element, to ensure that these guidelines are being followed and to identify any ways in which they may present difficulties to the industry. It is only through continuing to engage with the marine tourism community that such guidelines will be followed in the longer term and a standard will be upheld. A presence on the water of someone who is upholding the Code of Conduct will be necessary, as well as further work to encourage a sense of stewardship of the marine environment amongst the skippers and tour guides themselves.

**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, the Rufford logo has appeared on my blog ([www.westafricacetaceans.blogspot.com](http://www.westafricacetaceans.blogspot.com)), on the Namibian Dolphin Project website ([www.namibiandolphinproject.com](http://www.namibiandolphinproject.com)) and in the MarWiSe manual which was provided to all course participants.

**11. Any other comments?**

I am grateful to the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for making it possible to run this course. The feedback on the course suggested that participants found it useful and novel, and that the course materials provide a solid foundation of information for anyone interested in sustainable tourism and conservation issues within the marine environment. I believe that there is great potential to expand this initial work and create greater awareness, locally and internationally, of the biodiversity of the Namibian coast and the need to protect it. This course is the first of its kind on the African continent and provides a wonderful opportunity to set an example for sustainable marine wildlife-watching schemes in developing countries.