

## The Rufford Foundation

### Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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>	Kakhaber Sukhitashvili
<b>Project title</b>	Mobilise communities living near the River Alazani Riparian Forests and prepare them to assist conservation of the target area
<b>RSG reference</b>	13163-2
<b>Reporting period</b>	15.05/2013-10/11/2013
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5660
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:ksukhitashvili@yahoo.com">ksukhitashvili@yahoo.com</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	28 <sup>th</sup> November 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
Preparatory works, purchase equipment provided by project and preparation for the project presentation.			x	The projector ViewSonic was purchased within the bounds of the project, which was used to make presentations while implementing of the project.
Presentation of the project in the Civic Engagement Center (Managed by USAID) and inform Stakeholders about the project – so that all the interested parties have full information about the project.			x	The project presentation held in the local office of USAID. Stakeholders, representatives of the local self-government, community organisations, forestry specialists and other citizens were attended of the presentation. Information about the results of the previous project achievements and planned activities and results of the current project was given at the presentation. We also listened to the comments and recommendations about the ecological problems of the River Alazani Riparian Forests and social-economic issues of the population live nearby. At the meeting some problematic cases were raised, which needs to be solved urgently. Above mentioned presentation was covered by local TV, "Tanamgzavri" and, "Gorda", article about the presentation was published in the local newspaper, "Voice of Kakheti" /Kakhetis Khma/ and also it was in news /Kakheti News/, in social networks like Facebook /official page of the organisation/.
Organise informational meetings with the authorities of Akhmeta, Telavi, Gurjaani, Kvareli, Lagodekhi, Signaghi and Dedoplistskaro municipalities.			x	As it was planned, workshops were arranged with seven municipality officials of the target area. SWOT analysis was done about social-economic conditions of the River Alazani riparian forests and population lives nearby. Each municipality presented problems which are the most important in their opinion and to be solved urgently. These problems are related to uncontrolled usage of natural resources by the local population on the one hand, and also to offering alternatives to the population on the other hand. Also there was raised an issue about the legal status of the River Alazani riparian forests. This information was placed in a database by us.
Organize two to three round tables with the		x		As the project presentation and workshops with the municipality officials were successful and

participation of the stakeholders about the River Alazani riparian forests				ended with concrete results, we arranged only one meeting with round table, which was dedicated to the summarise of the gained results and making an action plan.
Meetings with the community in the target area for their environmental education for community centers			×	Meetings with the representatives of the community organisations in the villages: Jugaani, Saniore, Pshaveli, Gulgula, Kisiskhevi, Leliani, Baisubani, Apheni, Heretiskari, Kartubani, Kabali, Phona and Tsnori. We discussed the results of the previous project and planned activities and goals of the current project and most importantly of those expected results which are planned after completing of the project. We talked about the problems and challenges local population face with the River Alazani riparian forests. This meeting was focused on settle of concrete issues, environmental education of the population and evaluation of the tourism potential of the River Alazani riparian forests.
Carry out trainings programme for community centers form to rise problems tree; SWOT analysis; project writing and fundraising skills			×	According to the plan we organised training course for the representatives of the community organisations. The training course was about the following issues: environmental priorities of Kakheti Region/practical work; Local self-government reform and conservation of the River Alazani riparian forests; Current environmental reform in Georgia and human rights and responsibilities in environmental field; Forms of the social activities to settle the environmental issues; Communication with the representatives of the self-government and public speeches; Protected areas and local communities; Ecological and economic values of the River Alazani riparian forests; Biodiversity of the River Alazani riparian forests; Management plan of the River Alazani riparian forests; Environmental projects writing and fundraising/practical work/; Local environmental planning/practical work, SWOT analysis; During the seminars participants gained the latest information and important knowledge about the River Alazani Basin and especially the River Alazani riparian forests. However, it should be noted that participation of the population is not satisfactory. It was first time for them when they got information about environmental protection, local biodiversity and protection of the natural resources. For the maximum involvement of the people we added 2 days of the seminars for practical work about project writing and management issues of the River Alazani riparian

				forests.
Print flyers with the depiction of <i>Gymnospermium smirnowii</i> ; <i>Pterocalya pterocarpa</i> and <i>Quercus longipes</i>		×		Electronic bulletin was created in Georgian and English languages and it was sent to all the stakeholder organisations, community centres, schools, libraries and so on, as well as environmental organisations, which were interested in working with people living near the riparian forests for ecological, educational and social issues.
Preparation of the document „ Local community and the River Alazani Riparian Forests conservation perspective”			×	The document is made in Georgian and now it’s being translated into English. This document includes all the issues which is important for conservation of the riparian forests. According to this document conservation of the riparian forests as a priority is included into the document of the Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021. Environmental protection and natural resources issues of the strategy were led by Kakhaber Sukhitashvili, leader of the project.
Arrange public meeting and presentation of adopted document to the national-level decision making bodies			×	A meeting was held with the representatives of the local and central government, where the conservation of the riparian forests as one of the priorities was included into the document of Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021, after we presented all the arguments about the necessity of the River Alazani riparian forests conservation. This document was signed by the Prime Minister of Georgia in November 19 of this year and it has become an officially valid document.
Preparation of press releases once in a month and send them to the electronic and printing media. Invitation of local television to prepare reports during the meetings			×	Local TV and newspapers were always invited for each activities, information was also spread by the means of local electronic media.

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

The problems mainly were related to the political situation of the country, so called, “Cohabitation Process”, when different branches of the local government don’t cooperate with each other and accordingly it was hindering for implementation of our project. The problem was also unsatisfactory level of the population engagement.

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

1. More than 70 members of the community centres of 13 populated places gained information about biodiversity, ecological and economic importance of the River Alazani riparian forests. They received appropriate advice and recommendations from the trainers how to manage cooperation with the local authorities to solve target problems. They also learned how to develop local environmental plans and how to write environmental projects.

2. On the basis of the document which was prepared according to the gathered materials and implemented activities within the bounds of the both the first and second projects, we started cooperation with several environmental organizations, such as: Caucasus Environmental NGO Network; Open Environmental Civil Initiative; Centre of Strategic Research and Development of Georgia; Comity and Environment.

3. In addition to the general environmental challenges a number of specific problematic cases were revealed after cooperating with the local government authorities and public representatives that are particularly important and need urgent resolution. For example: Repeatedly waterlogging problems in the villages populated by eco-migrants, necessity to make wood energy in order to reduce uncontrolled usage of riparian forests; Problems of walnut and white acacia plantations that was planted in the depth of the riparian forests during the Soviet Union and management of invasive species in general –our organization is working actively within the bounds of Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) project „Sustainable Forest Governance in Georgia” that is being implemented by OECE.

4. During implementing of the project talking about the conservation of the riparian forests and necessity of sustainable management started at the central level.

5. Priority of the River Alazani riparian forests conservation necessity as well as the necessity of phytopathology researches in the forests of the whole region and Inventorise of forests and so on, were included in the state level document Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021.

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

Unfortunately, public engagement is still unsatisfactory, however today the progress is obvious from the first project, which is reflected in the successful implementation of the training course and information dissemination. Community centres have become more active. For example: community centre of the village Heretiskari, in partnership with our organisation has prepared a project, Promoting the Development of Sustainable Agriculture in the Village Heretiskari” (Municipality of Lagodekhi) according to the knowledge they gained from the training as well as by using the traditional knowledge. The goal of the project is to solve the problem of repeatedly waterlogging in the village and promote development of agriculture after all.

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

As far as the conservation of the river Alazani Riparian Forests is state obligation according to the Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021, our role has become more important in this field to the following directions:

1. All the information about the riparian forests should be disseminated among the representatives of the local self-government (new elections in Georgia will be held in May, 2014) and teachers of nature study at schools.
2. More scientific information should be gathered about ecological conditions of the riparian forests: The role of immigration for the animals and migratory birds; also examine problems of invasive species and research relationship issues between the riparian forests and local agriculture.
3. Evaluation of tourism and recreational potential should be done.
4. We are going monitoring the implementation of the priorities according to the document of Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021, that was undertaken by the government in relation to the riparian forests.

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

We were using actively social networks for spreading information while implementing of the project as well as the local and national electronic and printing media. We also arranged meeting and contacted the organizations such as: WWF Caucasus; IUCN - Programme Office for the Southern Caucasus, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN); REC Caucas and so on.

**7. Timescale: Over what period was The Rufford Foundation grant used? How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?**

Grant provided by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation was used in period from May 2013 till the end of November 2013. All activities have been implemented in accordance with the original work plan.

**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
Projector	1000	1000	0	
Transportation	3000	3200	200	we added 2 more days for seminars and accordingly more expenses was needed for transportation
Per Diem for experts	860	1000	140	we invited 2 trainers to conduct the trainings for 2 days we added
Costs for flyers	800	460	340	We made electronic journal about the river alazani riparian forests and just part of money is spent for printing to it and for translation from Georgian to English
<b>Total</b>	<b>5660</b>	<b>5660</b>		

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

In our opinion, the following steps should be:

1. Monitoring of set priorities to the for Alazani riparian forests -environmental and social-economic direction according to Kakheti Regional Development Strategy 2014-2021.
2. Evaluation of tourism/recreational potential of the target area are necessary.
3. In order to reduce social and economic dependence as much as possible on natural resources of the riparian forests, we should offer real alternatives to the population.

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

Logo was used for presentations and electronic journal

**11. Any other comments?**

I want to say that we very thankful to Rufford Small Grant Programs for assistance and I hope our cooperation will continue in the future.