

## **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>	Hussein Zahir
<b>Project title</b>	Capacity building of Maldives in-country management and monitoring of threatened coral reefs
<b>RSG reference</b>	15775-1
<b>Reporting period</b>	24 July 2014 – 24 July 2015
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5,000
<b>Your email address</b>	hzahir@lamer.com.mv
<b>Date of this report</b>	July 2015

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

Objective	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Training four Maldivians in Reef Check techniques	x		During the annual Biosphere Expeditions research expedition in September 2014, three of the four Maldivians funded by the Rufford Foundation were trained and certified in Reef Check survey techniques. They were Rafil Mohamed, board member of the Maldives Dive Association; Shaha Hashim from GEMANA NGO, Ibrahim Shameel from the Maldives Whale Shark Research Programme. All three have or are in the process of establishing community-based reef monitoring programmes. The fourth Maldivian will be trained during the September 2015 survey.
Surveillance of bleaching recovery 16 years after the 1998 bleaching event in the most populous part of the Maldives		x	In September 2014 bleaching sites in North Male' atoll were visited and surveyed (see <a href="http://goo.gl/maps/Lq3Hp">http://goo.gl/maps/Lq3Hp</a> for sites surveyed) using a liveaboard vessel as the research platform and Reef Check teaching centre. The <u>full research report</u> including conservation recommendations was published in July and fully acknowledged the support by the Rufford Foundation.

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

None. The project is fully on target as expected.

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

1. Following the training of three Maldivians in Reef Check survey techniques in September 2014, the first-ever all-Maldivian Reef Check survey was performed by them and other community members recruited by them in November 2014 (see press release, which fully acknowledges the Rufford Foundation).

2. Since then two of the trainees, Shaha Hashim & Rafil Mohamed, have founded a local art/conservation NGO called GEMANA. This NGO has so far: (a) conducted a pilot community climate watch project in South Ari Atoll Dhigurah, including a project for community

monitoring of reef health, and (b) conducted further Reef Check training sessions, qualifying another 16 Maldivians as Reef Check EcoDivers, forming the nucleus of a truly community-based reef monitoring programme. There are now also plans for Shaha Hashim and Rafil Mohamed and other qualified Reef Check EcoDivers to take part in a private cruise around remote parts of the Maldives from January to March 2016 in order to survey seldom-visited reefs.

3. The 2014 annual research expeditions conducted surveys in the northern part of North Male atoll in areas that were initially surveyed in 1997, prior to the 1998 mass-bleaching event. Surveys showed that reefs on the seaward-facing sides of atolls were in better condition than those on the inner sides of atolls. One reef had completely collapsed from a coral state in 1997 to one dominated entirely by corallimorphs (sea-anemone like creatures). Another inner reef suffered from a destructive Crown-of-Thorns outbreak. Full research results are in the expedition report.

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

A large part of this project is about training local communities to monitor the health of their own reefs. This has worked very well and we are proud to have selected the right people to kick-start this process in a very short time. Their success has been remarkable and we would like to thank the first three trainees for their commitment and drive.

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

Yes, absolutely. Once the first Rufford Foundation grant has been all used up in September 2015, when the fourth Maldivian is trained, we will apply for a second Rufford Foundation grant of another £ 5,000 to continue our training and research work, building on the success of the first grant. For example, there are plans within GEMANA NGO to train up the community of Dhigurah Island that lies within the Mamigili MPA (well-known for whale sharks and home to the Whale Shark Research Programme). Developing capacity within this community will engender support for the MPA, and provide the local community with monitoring skills to enact their own protection measures (in the longer term).

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

Internet and social media: Reports of projects work have been published on the internet / social media, for example as a press release or announcements of local training events (example 1, example 2), or on the Biosphere Expeditions and GEMANA and Marine Conservation Society Facebook pages.

Research reports: These initially published online and also distributed to in-country partners (the Maldives Marine Research Centre), and via internet for such as the Maldives Marine

Science web forum. There are plans for other publications too in collaboration with external scientists.

In all publications, the Rufford Foundation is acknowledged whenever applicable.

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

The grant was awarded in July 2014 and will be all used up by September 2015, fully in line with the schedule of the original request.

**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
Staff - local & inter-national salaries, travel and expenses	£400	£400	£0	Staff costs were rounded pro rata calculations for the extra work, travel and expenses required for training locals. This was used to supplement a total budget of £2,500 and was used up in 2014 and receipts can be provided on request.
Placements	£4,600	£3,450	£1,150	Placements were costed at £1,150 each as a pro rata calculation for food, fuel, dive and other services aboard the research vessel. Three placements were used up in September 2014. The final placement will be used up in September 2015. Receipts can be provided on request.
<b>Total</b>	£5,000	£3,850	£1,150	

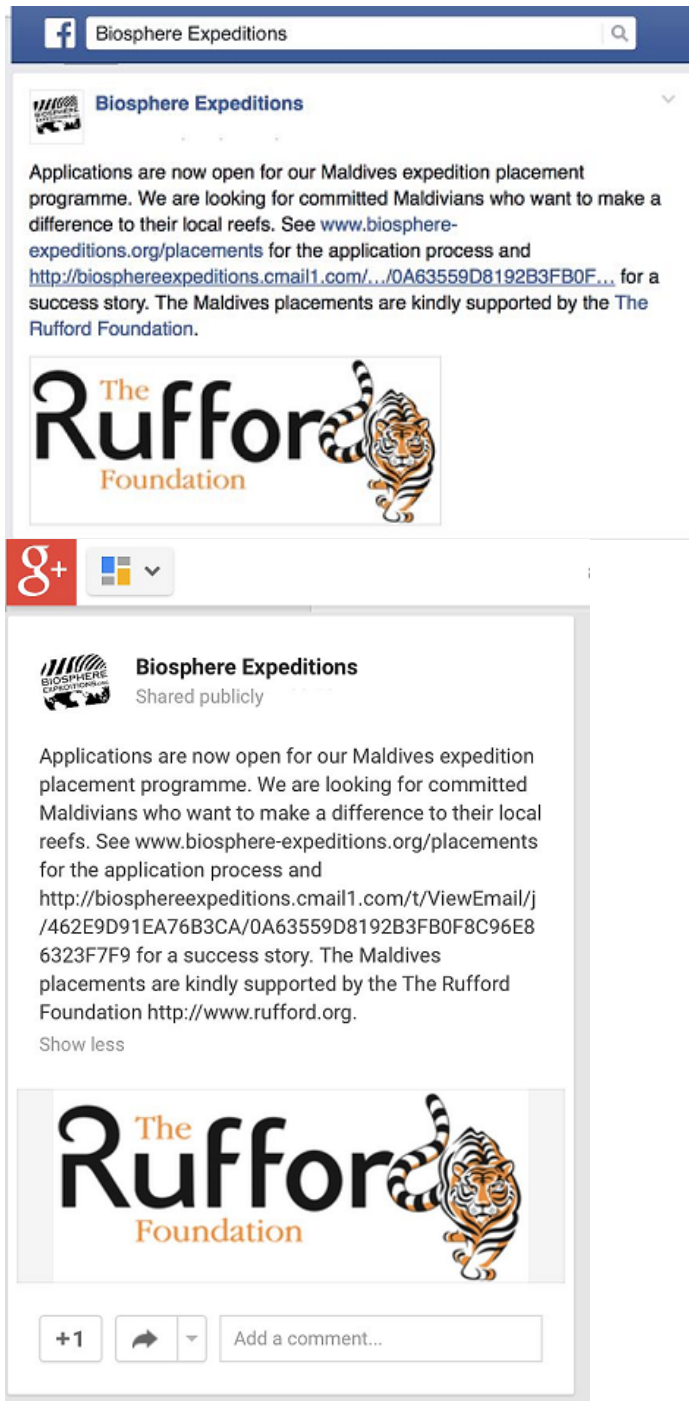
**9. Looking ahead, what do you feel are the important next steps?**

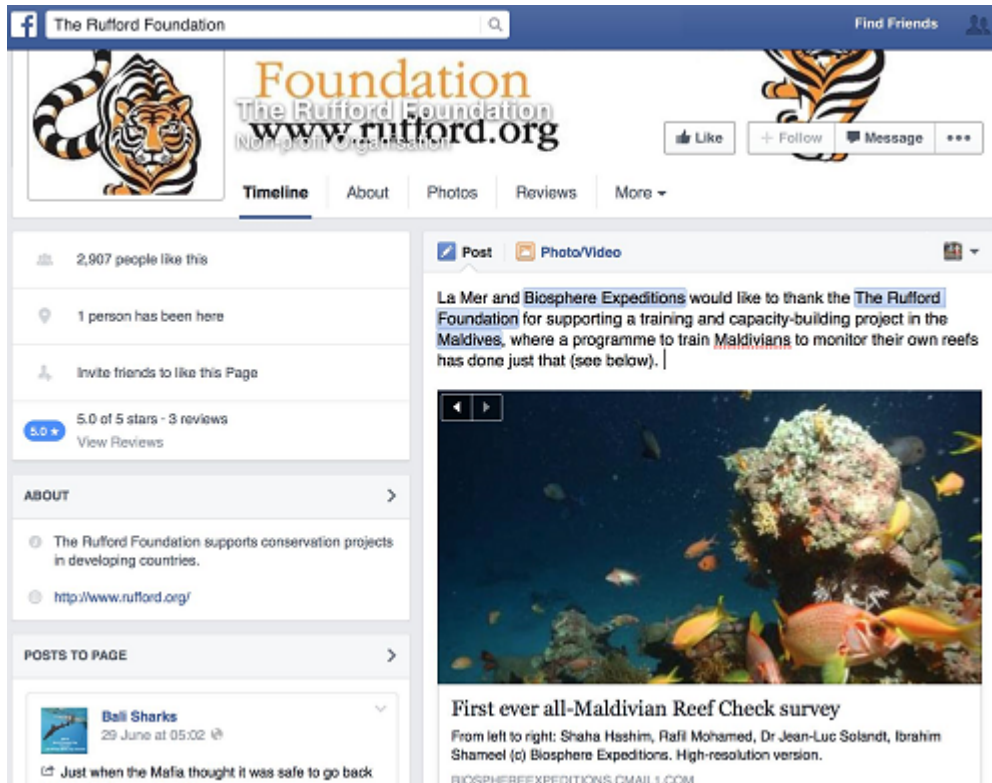
We will continue with the annual research expedition, publication of research results and influencing of local-decision makers to protect Maldivian reefs.

With will continue our local training and capacity-building programme in 2015 and hopefully beyond with a second Rufford Foundation grant.

**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?**

Yes, as detailed above. Other examples include [www.biosphere-expeditions.org/placements](http://www.biosphere-expeditions.org/placements) and social media postings such as the examples below. We have also posted on the Rufford Foundation Facebook page (see below).





## 11. Any other comments?

An update with photos and links was provided in September 2014, but we have not seen this go up on <http://www.rufford.org/projects/byCountry/mv>.