

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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details	
Your name	Arsen Gasparyan
Project title	Research and conservation of epiphytic lichens in the several Important Plant Areas of Armenia
RSG reference	23669-B
Reporting period	19 March 2018 – 23 March 2019
Amount of grant	9863 £ (10972 EUR)
Your email address	gasparyan.arsen@yahoo.com
Date of this report	19/05/2019

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
Study diversity and distribution of epiphytic lichens in the 7 IPA				All planned field visits and lab work have been properly implemented. The specimens have been collected and identified. The necessary equipment and materials have also been purchased. The results for the "Khosrov" IPA have already been provided for inclusion to the management plan of the "Khosrov Forest" State Reserve.
Assess main threats for plant and lichen diversity of the 7 IPA				The assessment has been done through questionnaire surveys in 17 communities of the IPAs surroundings. In addition, wildfire hazard potential has been assessed by using ArcGIS. The results are evaluated and will be published as a scientific article, as well as recommendations will be provided to the Ministry of Nature Protection of RA.
Establish monitoring sites in the 7 IPA to monitor qualitative changes (ecological continuity and ecosystem health) in the area via indicator epiphytic lichen species				In each target IPA monitoring sites have been established. The lichen diversity has been studied and documented for further monitoring purpose. The results require further evaluation and databasing.
Organize educational seminars and small competitions about lichens and plants for local youth and schoolchildren from the target IPA's surrounding communities				Instead of six, we have organised nine educational seminars and competitions among schoolchildren in the target communities. During the various events, 1000 brochures about lichens have been distributed among locals and other stakeholders of the project.
Install informational headboards presenting basic information about				Seven informational headboards, which provide information about lichens and plants, as well as

plant and lichen diversity of the 7 IPA				Important Plant Area have been installed in the all target IPAs.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

During April-June 2018, the "Velvet" revolution took place in Armenia. During the period of political instability, most of the roads in the country have periodically been blocked and mass protests have been taken place. This created difficulties for project implementation. However, this delay didn't affect overall on the implementation of the project.

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

- First time in Armenia, epiphytic lichen diversity has been studied in some of the Important Plant Areas of Armenia and the sites for further monitoring of the ecological continuity and ecosystem health in the IPAs have been established.
- The main threats for the target Important Plant Areas have been assessed and recommendations for effective conservation management of the sites will be provided to the management bodies of the IPAs.
- Informational resources and educational activities raised awareness about various stakeholders, including local communities about the Important Plant Areas.

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

The local communities have been involved through educational seminars, questionnaire surveys, installation of informational boards and meetings. More than 180 schoolchildren participated in the educational activities and about 30% of local residents of each 17 communities participated in the surveys. In addition, 1000 informational brochures have been disseminated among local people. Therefore, educational level and environmental awareness of the local communities have been raised.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The work is continuation of the previous projects supported by the Rufford Foundation. I am very grateful to the Rufford Foundation for significant contribution to the lichen diversity conservation in Armenia. Being the only lichenologist in Armenia makes me feel responsibility to continue conservation work, to attract attention and raise awareness about lichens of different stakeholders, including general public, scientists, conservationists and decision makers.

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

The information about the project activities has been shared via social media (Fungi and Lichens of Armenia Facebook page), printed brochures, with local people and partners during the meetings. The publications about the project results are under preparation. The materials and information will also be available on the www.lichenology.am

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 project funds have been used during 12 months. However, two more months were required for finalization of the project results, because of political instability in the country (see above).

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
Design and installation of 7 informational headboards	1250	1330	+80	
Implementation of surveys	1440	1532	+92	
Design and print of 500 copies of brochure	1450	1342	-108	Instead of 500, we have printed 1000 brochures.
Travel costs of the field work	4843	4671	-172	
Organization of 6 educational seminars	600	639	+39	Instead of 6 educational seminars, we have implemented 9 seminars
Purchase of equipment	280	301	+21	
Transaction bank fee		48	+48	
TOTALS	9863	9863		The local currency is Armenian Dram (AMD). 1 GBP = 620 AMD

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

We are going to integrate the results of our project within the conservation management of the target sites. In particular, we have already included section about epiphytic lichens in the management plan of the "Khosrov Forest" State Reserve, which coincides to the "Khosrov" IPA. I would also like to emphasize further identification of Important Areas for Lichens within/outside of the IPAs, protected

areas and other biodiversity hotspots. In addition, further studies and conservation of the threatened and rare species of epiphytic lichens are also important.

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

Yes, we have used the logo of the Rufford Foundation on the brochure and cups prepared within the project and on the informational headboards.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Ms. Sona Galstyan conducted the surveys in the local communities, supported implementation of the field work and educational seminars.

Mr. Razmik Sargsyan has supported us during the field work. He also made a design of materials and organized installation of the informational headboards.

Ms. Hripsime Atoyán was responsible for the technical assistance, including preparation of the project activities, logistics of seminars, etc.

Mr. Arman Kandaryan has worked in the project as a GIS specialist.

Ms. Sona Margaryan was responsible for the editing of the project materials and publications.

Surveys





Seminars



Dissemination of brochure



Fieldwork





Erection of information board

