

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. 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. 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	Suman Sharma
Project title	Potential Impacts and Opportunities for Ecotourism in Annapurna Conservation Area
RSG reference	32.06.09
Reporting period	
Amount of grant	£ 4915
Your email address	suman_sharma999@yahoo.com , info@biocosnepal.org.np
Date of this report	April 2011

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
To examine the existing tourism level				Tourism data were collected from ACAP
Research into trekking route modelling				Research was conducted as a first phase of sustainable tourism planning
Conservation awareness to local people on tourism				During the field local people were made aware about the project and how it benefited them and how can they get involved in tourism planning
Report preparation				Report was made and was presented in international conference
Manuscript preparation				Manuscript preparation is underway
Report publication				Report has been prepared but it's unpublished due to budget deficit.

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

Seasonal variation during the field visit, budget, time and academic calendar were the main unforeseen difficulties that arose during the implementation of the project. The seasonal moment of tourist for trekking starts in Nepal from mostly from September to December and March to May but due to my study I was unable to come to the field to collect the data as the academic calendar holidays did not fit at that point of time. So I had to rely on data collected by Annapurna Conservation Area Project office.

To actually know opinion of tourist on ecotourism of Annapurna Conservation Area and to know their seasonal pattern and perception on ecotourism, a 1-year field study has to be carried out with data collected for each months of tourist perception but this was not possible due to budget limitation. This was the reason why the project was shifted towards modelling of ecotourism trails, where the physical data were collected during the field visit which had little effect of seasonal tourist flow. This experience tells me that to actually study the impacts of tourism on people, 1-year field study has to be carried out to have better outcomes of the project.

Other minor difficulties include the weather conditions during the field trip where we experienced the snowfall during the trip and technical difficulties during the analysis of the data but this was overcome by consulting the various scientist and professors at University of South Australia.

Similarly, literature search and software availability which was not a great difficulty for me as the University of South Australia has provided me well equipped GIS lab and free access to the library database where university pays for the subscription of various electronic journals but if we imagine someone who is studying at University in Nepal, one will lack both well equipped GIS lab and access to those electronic databases of journals, which will ultimately hinder in gaining knowledge and

quality of report preparation. So in my opinion if students studying in Nepal can get access to this database and GIS lab, I think it will greatly improve the quality of research done in Nepal and also the knowledge of students.

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

The first outcome of the project was this study provided a benchmark on establishment of sustainable tourism planning in Annapurna Conservation Area. As the study was mainly focused on research modelling of trekking trails, this is the very first type of study been done in Annapurna Conservation Area, which is world famous destination for trekking. Now we know what are the tourist preferences and tourist hotspots in the area and which route will get more tourists and which area are affected.

To mention the second outcome, this project was selected as a talk presentation on 5th international Galliformes Symposium which was organised by World Pheasant Association in Chiang Mai, Thailand 2010. The paper was presented on that occasion and a half-hour discussion was also made on this project. So this project got international attention among more than 150 participants from different countries. To attend this conference World Pheasant Association fully sponsored the researcher.

Third main outcome of this project is the research report which will be published and distributed to the concerned stakeholders. Apart from this a manuscript will also be published in the relevant national/international journal.

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

Local people were made aware about the project aims and objectives. How they can be involved in project and benefit from the tourism planning and their involvement. Apart from this they were hired during the project field period.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

As this project has established a benchmark for sustainable tourism in Annapurna Conservation Area, there is still lot more to do in future. This project is like a first phase which involved mainly the research work to find out where is the high density of tourist flow in different trekking route. Now the second phase may be to implement the outcomes and recommendation given by this current project.

Future work may include full involvement of local people in tourism planning for each different route. For example, from this research we came to know that certain routes have high density of tourist flow but what about the local people who settle along this route? Has the livelihood of people settling in these routes changed? Are these people aware of sustainable tourism planning? Are there social and cultural effects due to tourism? If yes, how can they be preserved for future? Apart from these social issues, what would be the effect on forest and wildlife on those trekking routes where trekking pressure is high and how can we overcome these issues. So, this study opens the door for programmes and projects that can be launched in future.

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

This project has already got international attention as it was presented in 5th International Galliformes Symposium in Chaing Mai, Thailand 2010. Apart from this a manuscript will be produced in future which will be published in relevant national/international journal. A report will also be circulated to relevant stakeholders. I am still looking for the donor to publish the report in the book format so that it can be easy to read and get shared among different stakeholders.

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

Time	Activity	Support
Sept 2009 Dec 2010	Literature Review, Acquiring GIS data and maps and prepare for field visit, Consultation with different stakeholders, Visit to the areas of potential ecotourism, Analysis of the data, Final Report preparation.	Rufford Small Grant Foundation (Major Funding) & BioCOS Nepal (Co-funding)
Contd... After Dec 2010	Manuscript Preparation and Report publication	Will be requested for funding

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
Return ticket airfare from Adelaide to Kathmandu	1200	1400	-200	Had to pay high price for ticket then budgeted amount
Field insurance cover	0	110	-110	This was not included earlier but for safety it had to be included later
Local travel in Nepal	200	180	+20	I reduced the frequency of local travel
Phone/Email/ Internet	100	140	-40	Phone and internet was expensive than expected
Renting of tents, sleeping bag, Mattress for 45 days during the field.	270	270		As these items were booked, so they were fixed.
Purchase of GPS	250	270	-20	Had to pay more than scheduled
Purchase of digital camera	0	215	-215	Was not included earlier thinking I will borrow but it was felt later as its good to have one for field
Stationeries including printing and photocopying	50	105	-55	Had to do photocopy and printing more than expected.
Purchase of GIS data including digital and hard copy topographic maps	200	350		More data had to be purchased than expected
Food for 45 days for 3 people	405	495	-90	Cost was high due to rise in food prices than expected

Accommodation in Pokhara and Kathmandu for 20 days	240	200	+40	Cost was reduced by selecting a standard room
To hire 2 research assistants and cook for 45 days	900	1150	-250	Cost was high due to pay rise of assistant than expected
Report preparation	100	80	+20	Effort was made to put more money on field site
Publication and distribution of report as book format	1000	0	+1000	Budget was deficient for this purpose
Total	4915	4965	-50	(Remaining budget was managed from BioCOS Nepal)

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

The immediate next step would be publication and distribution of the report to the local people and relevant stakeholders in English and Nepali language. Continuation of the project is always vital for any project as all the objectives cannot be achieved by the first phase of the project. Therefore sustainable tourism planning is the aim of this project and as a first phase research work has been accomplished and the next step is looking at the livelihood status of people who are directly affected (positive and negative) by tourism and has this been changed or not. Similarly looking at mitigation measures of social and cultural affects of tourism and at the same time mitigation measures for the biophysical aspects like impacts forest and wildlife and how these can be minimised. This should be done by bringing local people participation in tourism planning i.e. participatory approach for sustainable tourism.

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, RSGF did receive publicity during the course of the project work. This project was presented in the international conference and RSGF logo was used. Apart from that various presentation were done within University of South Australia. Final report of the project was produced with RSGF logo.

11. Any other comments?

During this study at University of South Australia (UniSA), I enjoyed considerable support from many organisations and persons. To all of them, I wish to express my deep appreciation. Firstly, I am grateful to the Rufford Small Grant Foundation for providing funds for this project. Annapurna Conservation Area Project for granting permission to conduct the field survey. Similarly, my sincere thanks go to my supervisor, Mr David Bruce (Associate Professor at UniSA) and Dr Sekhar (Assistant Professor) who constantly helped me from proposal preparation to report writing. I would also like to thank Dr Peter Garson, Dr Philip McGowan and Natile Clark from World Pheasant Association, UK for guiding me throughout the project.

Deep appreciation for Mr Laxman Paudyal from Department of National Park and Wildlife Conservation, Nepal for providing habitat modelling data of the study area. Special thanks for my field assistant, Rinjin Sherpa and Man Bahadur Gurung.

Last but not the least my sincere thanks to Josh Cole and Board Committee from Rufford Small Grant Foundation for accepting my proposal, which was a major milestone in executing this project.