

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Emmanuel Amoah
Project Title	Safeguarding the Last Stronghold of West African Slender-snouted Crocodile in Ghana.
Application ID	37045-B
Date of this Report	22 nd July 2023

1. 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 replant 10 hectares of degraded nesting areas using 2000 indigenous trees				Across a span of 10 ha in degraded nesting habitats for West African slender-snouted crocodiles, a grand total of 3,500 native trees have been successfully planted. Through diligent monitoring efforts, we have observed an impressive 92% survival rate for these trees during the initial 12-month period. This survival rate surpasses our targeted rate of 85%. The implementation of this rehabilitation initiative is projected to create suitable nesting environments for the species within the next 10 to 15 years. To ensure the achievement of our desired outcomes in enhancing nesting habitats, we are continuing to monitor the progress of the trees even beyond the completion of this project.
To reduce annual riparian vegetation losses across four communities by at least 40%				By conducting regular meetings with landowners, farmers, and traditional leaders and implementing widespread awareness campaigns prior to the major farming seasons, we were able to achieve a notable 52% decrease in annual losses of riparian vegetation across the four targeted communities. This reduction brought down the estimated annual loss from 12 to 5.8 ha. Although the existing degradation of 5.8 ha remains a concern, we consider this reduction to be a significant achievement, recognising that conservation progress is a gradual and steady process.
To train 12 additional local volunteers across four communities to support our conservation activities				A group of 14 local volunteers underwent comprehensive training in the field of crocodile conservation and general conservation practices. To equip them with the necessary skills, a 1-week workshop was conducted, focusing on topics such as communication in conservation, safety

				<p>measures, survey protocols, and the fundamental aspects of crocodile biology and ecology. Subsequently, the volunteers were provided with an additional week of field training, allowing them to apply the knowledge gained during the workshop. This training programme has successfully empowered the local volunteers, enabling them to make significant contributions to our conservation efforts across the four communities.</p>
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2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a). As part of this project, we have embarked on the restoration of an additional 10 ha of degraded nesting habitat for the West African slender-snouted crocodile along the Techiman-Tanoso stretch of the Tano River. The restoration of nesting habitat for this species is currently identified as a top conservation priority. Our extensive research conducted over 4 years at the site has indicated a scarcity of suitable nesting areas, mainly due to the conversion of riparian vegetation into agricultural fields. Additionally, many nests located in these agricultural fields have been unsuccessful due to the absence of appropriate nesting materials. Consequently, we consider the restoration of the ten hectares to be one of the most significant achievements resulting from this project.

b). Another important outcome of this project is the 52% reduction in annual riparian vegetation loss across the four targeted communities. The rapid depletion of a few remnant nesting areas across the project site is a matter of grave concern. Over the past 4 years, several ha of suitable nesting areas have been converted into agricultural fields. Through this project, we have successfully reduced the destruction and disturbance of nesting sites across four communities. Nesting habitat is already severely depleted, so being able to improve the protection of remaining habitats through awareness and stakeholder engagement is an important outcome.

c). Furthermore, as a final point, this project has facilitated the training of 14 new volunteers from four communities. We view the development of local capacity as a lasting conservation legacy. The presence of these 14 well trained individuals within their respective communities is a significant outcome of this initiative. They will not only assist us in our conservation endeavours but also serve as advocates for the protection of the species, even in the absence of our project team. Their involvement ensures the sustainability and continuity of conservation efforts beyond the project's duration.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

Fortunately, the implementation of this project proceeded smoothly without any significant hurdles or notable setbacks. However, we did encounter a minor challenge regarding disruptions caused by cattle at specific tree planting sites. To

overcome this issue, we organised meetings with the herdsmen from the respective communities, where we provided them with a comprehensive explanation of the objectives and aims of the rehabilitation initiative. Through these engagements, we effectively resolved this challenge.

4. Describe the involvement of local communities and how they have benefitted from the project.

The involvement of local communities is an essential component of the overall conservation effort. We engaged in a series of discussions with various community members, including traditional leaders, landowners, herdsmen, chainsaw operators, and farmers, to explore ways of enhancing the protection of the Tano River. Collaborating closely with assembly members from these communities, we organised a range of awareness campaigns both within the communities and schools. Thanks to the support of traditional leaders and assembly members, we successfully recruited and trained 14 volunteers from four communities. These local volunteers played a vital role in project activities such as planting and monitoring trees, conducting awareness campaigns, and participating in stakeholder meetings. By participating in tree planting and monitoring, residents had the opportunity to earn income through this project. Additionally, selected local food vendors were chosen to provide meals for the volunteers during training, thereby benefiting financially from their involvement. Lastly, we purchased 3,500 seedlings from local suppliers, providing them with income from the project.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes.

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

Plans are underway to publish the results of this project in the Conservation Evidence journal for the wider conservation community to benefit from our experience.

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

To accomplish our overarching objective of safeguarding and potentially augmenting the population of West African slender-snouted crocodiles in the Tano River, we highlight the following as vital and immediate measures:

- Sustain ongoing efforts in raising awareness and engaging stakeholders to foster a collective understanding and commitment to conservation.
- Maintain a robust monitoring system for the planted trees while extending the restoration initiative to additional degraded area.
- Persevere in building local capacity, enabling long-term protection of the species by empowering and equipping community members with the necessary knowledge and skills.

By prioritising these actions, we aim to secure the long-term preservation and potential growth of the West African slender-snouted crocodile population within the Tano River ecosystem.

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

Yes, the Rufford Foundation logo was boldly embossed on our promotional material, including flyers, t-shirts, and training manuals. We also acknowledged the support of The Rufford Foundation during stakeholder meetings, awareness campaigns, and volunteer trainings.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

Emmanuel Amoah (Team Leader) led the full execution of the project. Emmanuel was responsible for handling the funds, coordinating project activities, and writing the interim and final reports.

Miss. Lydia Obeng Senior was instrumental in creating local conservation awareness and training local volunteers.

Mr. Moses Elleason was responsible for conducting pre- and post-awareness impact assessments and analysing questionnaires. He played a key role in the general project impact assessment.

10. Any other comments?

I would like to extend my sincere appreciation to The Rufford Foundation on behalf of our team. We are deeply grateful for the substantial support we have received from you throughout the years. Your assistance has been instrumental in safeguarding the environment and making a meaningful difference in the lives of rural communities in the areas under study. Thank you very much.