

**The Rufford Foundation
Final Evaluation Report**

Grant Recipient Details

Your name	Longtong Turshak
Project title	Delivering Better Ecological and Social Outcomes in a Nigeria's Foremost Game Reserve at the Brink of Losing its Conservation Value.
RSG reference	39003-D
Reporting period	2023/2024
Your email address	turshakl@unijos.edu.ng
Date of this report	29 th June, 2024.

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
1			√	
2			√	The workshops revealed a lot of information that could help preserve the reserve.
3			√	

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

The economic instability in Nigeria affected exact implementation of budget. As at the time of concluding this research, the rise in inflation is reported as over 26-40%. This inflation rate affected the stability of the exchange rate between the Nigeria Naira (NGN) and the Great British Pound Sterling (GBP). The major single cause of this is the removal of oil subsidy on assumption into office of the new president, Bola Ahmed Tinubu.

To cope the inflationary rate, some adjustments and modifications were made to the proposed budget in order to accommodate the differences in the original budgetary provision. For example, to accommodate change in prices, the number of Conservation Site Support Group (CSSG) was reduced from 15 to 10 individuals which did affect the outcome of the project.

To further cut down on cost, instead of inviting individuals for workshops and meetings, we drove to meet them in their localities. The initial proposal targeted visit to 18 communities, however, due to security concerns, the research team ended up visiting 16 communities as reported in the final report document. This helped to channel some funds to where there were more needs.

Another challenge encountered was the reluctance of women to fully participate in the focal group discussion workshops and the household questionnaire surveys. This was due to cultural and religious restriction predominant in the rural communities. This is in addition to high level of illiteracy in the communities visited where it was difficult and often impossible to find a literate individual who could facilitate the administration of

questionnaires. This made aspects of the data collection longer than was originally proposed. The challenge was overcome by allowing more time for questionnaire administration and the second workshop sessions with consequent additional spending. Overall, the challenges and difficulties were summoned leading to success of the project.

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

- i. With reference to the Yankari Game Reserve, crop raiding by wild animals, loss of livelihood due to community relocation outside of the reserve, and bias and lack of employment of local community members as well as lack of social amenities are the most important negative social impact of the Yankari Game Reserve as expressed by the adjoining communities visited.

To minimise the negative social impacts of Yankari Game Reserve on adjoining communities, employment including adhoc jobs to local community members adjoining the reserve, empowerment and provision of alternative source of livelihood, compensation for damaged crops and dead of livestock caused by wildlife mainly the hyaena, and establishment of a dispute resolution committee made up of staff and management of the reserve and selected community members were the unanimous submission of the communities as the most important remedies.

- ii. Provision of some social amenities and incentives, intrinsic value of the reserve, tourism and international linkage, employment opportunities to few local people though inadequate and collection of non-timber products such as herbal medicine, etc., are the most important positive social outcomes.
- iii. Evaluation workshop was optimistic about efforts at halting illegal activities in the reserve and the establishment of the Conservation Site Support Group (CSSG) was a novel positive idea to the reserve. Stakeholders expressed willingness to implement key aspects of the results from this study.

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

Community members received the research team with delight and excitement. They particularly welcomed the conservation education aspect of this study, as it afforded them the opportunity to learn about biodiversity conservation and to seek to further understand the need to conserve biodiversity. They applauded the team's effort and requested for more of biodiversity conservation outreaches. It should be noted that majority of the community members are illiterates.

The establishment of the Conservation Site Support Group (CSSG) was a welcome idea by the communities as this will accord them the opportunity for inclusive governance of the reserve.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes!

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

The finding will be published in journals, kept in the University of Jos Institutional Repository, Library and presented in conferences for wider dissemination. We will be seeking possible support to publish a book as case study for biodiversity conservation and community members in West Africa for others to learn from. So, we will be looking for more opportunity for collaboration.

7. Timescale: Over what period was The Rufford Foundation grant used?

A period of 13 months (May 2023 to June 2024) was used to generate data and write a final report

How does this compare to the anticipated or actual length of the project?

The period projected from the proposal of this study matched with the anticipated length of the research duration, although the approval of the project came a little behind what was proposed.

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

- i. Understudy the response of institutional stakeholders (the ministries of environment, justice, tourism, police, politicians, NGOs, paramilitary etc), staff and management of the Yankari Game Reserve, and rangers on their

perspective of the negative and positive social impacts while providing solution to minimise the negative social impacts has become necessary to find a meeting point between reserve managers, communities at the boundary of reserves and other critical stakeholders in the environment.

- ii. A need to understand the nexus or interplay between health, economics, and food to the Yankari Game Reserve could also boost protection.
- iii. Institutional stakeholder re-alignment and adjustment of misfit could also be carried out to enable synergistic partnership and mutual benefit sharing.
- iv. More conservation education advocacy to the adjoining communities to the Yankari Game Reserve to inspire further support for conservation of the reserve is also important.
- v. Assess pattern of illegal activities including poaching, grazing, trade in wildlife, and human-wildlife conflict, etc. for mitigation actions.
- vi. To effectively conserve the rich biodiversity resource of the Yankari Game Reserve, it is crucial to focus attention on support for positive social outcome and reducing the negative, this is in addition to reviewing the governance system of the reserve to be more inclusive.

9. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project?

Yes.

Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Yes

10. Any other comments?

I am extremely grateful to The Rufford Foundation for funding this project. This project as funded by The Rufford Foundation is so dear to our hearts, as it engages local people adjoining protected areas who are critical "partners" to effective conservation. I would like to commend The Rufford Foundation for their laudable initiative in funding biodiversity conservation around the world, they are indeed helping to preserve global ecosystem to the common good of all humanity. I have gained experience of more field work, relationships and leading a research team, this shows that Rufford is training professionals to protect the global biodiversity that is left. I am available to partner with Rufford Small Grant however possible to continue to advance their vision and mission. I thank you indeed.