

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	DIDOLANVI Gbénou Justin
Project Title	The threatened Kordofan Giraffe (<i>Giraffa camelopardalis ssp. antiquorum</i>) in Bouba Njidda National Park, Cameroon: Conservation challenges and perspectives
Application ID	39078-1
Date of this Report	April, 2024

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
Examine Local Ecological Knowledge (LEK) on the Critically Endangered Kordofan giraffe held by local communities bordering Bouba Ndjidda National Park			x	The aim was to study the cultural and ancestral links between the giraffe and local communities living around the park, to involve them in the monitoring of this species. The objective was achieved with this assessment, which provided information on the evolutionary trend of the giraffe in the landscape according to the local communities and the indigenous knowledge linked to the giraffe. The main output was the manuscript entitled "Local knowledge of Kordofan giraffe in the Bouba Ndjidda Conservation Landscape; Cameroon" submitted to African Journal of Wildlife Research for publication. With additional support from the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, awareness-raising campaigns were also organised in certain villages and schools to make local communities aware of the threat of extinction facing this subspecies of giraffe and to invite them to take part in their protection.
Train ecoguards and members from local communities in using novel technologies			x	Theoretical and practical sessions were combined to build the capacity of eight eco-guardians and seven members from local

(Solaris Trail Camera trap and drone) for wildlife in particular giraffe monitoring				communities in using Solaris trail camera trap and drone to monitor giraffe in the Bouba Ndjidda National Park. They were then involved in the giraffe counting using those technologies.
Assess the current status and distribution of the Kordofan giraffe population in the Bouba Ndjidda National Park using ground survey and novel technologies (Camera trap, Drone)		x		The data was collected using foot patrols, camera trap and the drone. These data give an overview of the status of the giraffe in the park. However, the camera traps are still in the field to record more data which will be combined with the foot patrol and drone data to give an accurate overview of the status of the giraffe in the park.
Establish an ecological monitoring program for Kordofan giraffe in the Bouba Ndjidda National Park		x		This giraffe monitoring programme is underway with camera traps deployed in the hotspots of giraffe identified in the park for long term monitoring. In partnership with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, we are planning to draft the first ever Cameroonian Giraffe Conservation Action Plan.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

- a) Eight eco-guards and seven members from local communities were trained and can use camera traps and drone to monitor giraffe in the park.
- b) Giraffe status and distribution in Bouba Ndjidda National Park are accurately assessed using novel techniques.
- c) A plan for giraffe monitoring with camera trap in their hotspots in Bouba Ndjidda National Park set up and the first ever Giraffe Conservation Action Plan of Cameroon in progress.

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

Any major difficulties didn't arise during the project implementation. The only minor concern was the problem of seasonality, which made it difficult to carry out the inventories during the project period. Indeed, after the first phase of the project on the study of local ecological knowledge to involve local communities in the project implementation, the rainy season followed in the region, which did not allow us to carry out the inventory missions within the required timeframe and submit the final project report in January 2024 as planned. To tackle this difficulty and achieve the project's objectives, we emailed The Rufford Foundation to request an extension of the project deadline to April 2024. With this agreement from The Rufford Foundation we were able to carry out the inventory work and deploy the camera traps in the dry season between January and March 2024 as well.

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

The local communities have been involved at every stage of the project, from training in the novel technologies (Solaris trail camera trap and drone) to giraffe inventory with foot patrols method, camera trap deployment and drone overflights. They were the main targets for survey of local ecological knowledge of the giraffe and awareness-raising missions in the villages and schools around the park.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

I will obviously continue this work, with the camera traps deployed in the giraffe hotspots in the park and overflights by drone from time to time to not only count the giraffe but also assess the trend in their habitats. The Cameroonian Giraffe Conservation Action Plan currently being planning with the collaboration of Giraffe Conservation Foundation will be a major turning point for giraffe in Cameroon. Funding will be sought to intensify giraffe monitoring throughout the Benoue Ecosystem including the three national parks of the northern Cameroon namely Bouba Ndjidda, Faro and Benoue National Parks and 32 surrounding hunting zones. Given that I hold a Masters' degree, I am considering enrolling for a PhD thesis as part of this giraffe conservation project, which will enable me to do more to save this endangered subspecies of giraffe in Cameroon and Africa.

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

The results will be shared, firstly through local workshops with communities, administrators and traditional leaders, secondly through national and international conferences. The database will be shared with the Garoua Wildlife School (EFG), the CITES Scientific Authority for fauna in Cameroon for decisions making, institution where the findings will also be presented to students (from various Africa countries)

and staff. I will also share the data with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation (GCF) to continue working effectively for the giraffe conservation and management throughout Africa and make them available to the scientific community through publication in peer reviewed journals with the first manuscript about the local knowledge of Kordofan giraffe by local communities around Bouba Ndjidda National Park already under review in the African Journal of Wildlife Research.

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

The important next steps are:

- Organize the National Workshop to draft the first ever Cameroonian Giraffe Conservation Action Plan.
- Extend the sensibilisations campaigns on giraffe in schools and villages around the park.
- Gather more data and analyse data from camera trap to produce manuscript for publication in peer review journal.
- Design monthly survey protocol (including gentic sampling aspect) across roads in protected areas of the landscape to settle a permanent monitoring program for giraffe in Cameroon.
- Strengthen the community-based approach conservation.
- Empower local lion guards, gender, ecoguards and traditional leaders to lead an inclusive and participative giraffe conservation strategy in Cameroon.

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?

The Rufford Foundation logo has been used in all the PowerPoint presentations, Terms of References and reports produced in the framework of this project. The Rufford Foundation logo was also used in the poster deigned for sensibilisations in villages. The Rufford Foundation was acknowledged in the paper under revision and will also be acknowledged in all others paper which will be published in the framework of this project. The Rufford Foundation is also acknowledged in all our publications on social medias (Facebook & LinkedIn)

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

Surname and first name	Role in the project
Dr Kamgang Serge Alexis	General Supervisor
Tadjo Serge Patrick	Administrative Officer, and Ecoguard Team Lead
Tegang Romaric	Field Assistant

Mongo Ferdinand	Ecoguard, field assistant
Nkel Armel	Ecoguard, field assistant
Clovis Eliyah	Ecoguard, Team Leader
Menwa Jean Prosper	Local Guide
Ahmadou Souhabibou	Local Giraffe Guard, field assistant
Boungang Theodore	Local Giraffe Guard, Team leader
Oben Johnson	Trainer Compass; GPS and map
Zoalang Vincent de Paul	Trainer Human right and controversies
Foe Loic	Ecoguard, field assistant
Mempong Maxime	Ecoguard, field assistant

10. Any other comments?

I am very grateful to The Rufford Foundation for the funding and having trusted on me. This is just the beginning of a long process to save this Critically Endangered Kordofan giraffe in Cameroon. This funding led to a partnership with the Giraffe Conservation Foundation, which today opens the way to a lot of prospects for giraffe in Cameroon, the most salient of which is the development of the first ever Cameroonian Giraffe Conservation Action Plan. We will greatly appreciate that The Rufford Foundation provide us with more support to save this endangered species from extinction, also by extending such research in Benoue, Faro and Waza national Parks in Cameroon.