

## 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

| Grant Recipient Details |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Your name               | Kakhaber Sukhitashvili  |
| Project title           | The Ecological Assessment and Conservation planning of the Alazani River Basin riparian forests vegetation-Georgia (South Caucasus) |
| RSG reference           | 10383-1   |
| Reporting period        | 9/01/2011-9/30/2012   |
| Amount of grant         | £3633   |
| Your email address      | <a href="mailto:ksukhitashvili@yahoo.com">ksukhitashvili@yahoo.com</a>  |
| Date of this report     | 12/12/2012  |

**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 implement preparing works:   |              |                    | ×              | Within the bounds of the project all needed equipment as purchased, which is necessary for successful implementation of field activities. We did not purchase backpack bags and canopy tent, which was donated by friends of our organisation.  |
| Meeting with stakeholders to share our objectives and expected results                      |              |                    | ×              | Two meetings were held in Civic Engagement Center of Telavi (managed by USAID) with stakeholders to discuss the current problems and challenges of the Alazani Riparian Forest and take into account legitimate interests of the local people on the sustainable use of Alazani riparian forests natural resources. We also delivered information to the audience about short and long-term consequences which was planned to reach after the end of the project. We listened to the comments and ideas of the audience about the main topics. 100 people attended to the meetings. |
| Selection of the target plots with the assistance of national experts.                      |              |                    | ×              | After the gained information by us and consultations of experts, 10 more vulnerable sites were selected on the territory of Alazani riparian forest while implementing of the project, where field activities took place.   |
| Collect scientific information from Georgian and foreign experts about plant diversity      |              |                    | ×              | Information was collected in various scientific and public institutions by the students of Ilia State University and group of people working on the project. Materials were acquired about Alazani riparian forest: biodiversity, ecology. Also materials about research and protection of the target species were taken from the archives of protected areas. United database was created.   |
| To start field activities on plots, gain information about age structure of the main forest |              |                    | ×              | It was the biggest and the most interesting part of our project. Three species were selected: <i>Gymnispermus smirnowii</i> ; <i>Pterocarya pterocarpa</i> and <i>Quercus longipes</i> . Field research was arranged. Seven locations were recorded   |

|   |  |   |   |  |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| species   |  |   |   | of <i>Gymnispermius smirnowii</i> , four of them are newly discovered. Total numbers of individuals are not more than 5000. There are 27 points for <i>Pterocarya pterocarpa</i> mainly in tributaries of the Alazani river. And 16 points were for <i>Quercus longipes</i> , mainly along the river Alazani. Coordinates of the points were taken and schematic mapping was done. Also report was prepared for Babaneuri Reserve riparian forest about its phytopathological condition, which was delivered to administration of the appropriate reserve.   |
| To create software data base (MS Access) to document the data                             |  | × |   | Work out and analysing of data is being processed, which is not completed yet because it was hard to get some important information because of natural disaster  |
| “Save the Alazani Riparian forests” media presentations                                   |  |   | × | In Telavi office of Civic Engagement Center (USAID project) we organised educational meeting “Save the Alazani Riparian forests” for stakeholders. Local media representatives also attended. Importance of Alazani riparian and improvement of protection mechanisms was discussed at the presentation. 100 people attended the meeting.  |
| To create conservation plan for Alazani riparian forests and for some endangered species. |  |   | X | We were working on the action plan of Alazani riparian forests protection. There were the following principles: conservation evaluation of the plant species which were widespread in Alazani riparian forests and accordingly creation of micro-reserves. To make inventory of invasive species spread in the area and create mechanisms of management. Identification of concrete problematic packages and processing mechanism to solve them gradually. Three-year project „ Sustainable Forest Governance in Georgia” of Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN) (funded by ADA) which is focused on identification of Georgian forests hot spots and processing of protection mechanisms at both local and national levels, gave us a chance to carry out the long-term work. Our organisation is |

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  | involved in this project and continues working on conservation of the Alazani riparian forests. We also presented information to the Biodiversity Department in the Ministry of Environmental Protection of Georgia about necessity of protection for <i>Gymnospermus smirmowii</i> . We sent a letter to IUCN to entry this plant into the World Red List and We are waiting their response |
|--|--|--|--|--|

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

The main problem was several natural disasters occurred in the target area which postponed our activities to a certain time in the field as well as in the office. This natural disaster delayed implementation of the activities provided in the project as well as working of the organisation for 3 weeks.

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

1. Information about three endangered plant species is gathered and processed at the associated community level. Coordinates were taken and current threat assessments were done.
2. New spread points of two species were marked.
3. As a result of a problem popularization, Alazani riparian protection issue became one of the main direction of above mentioned project of the organisation working at the level of Caucasus Region. This activity will be carried out by Georgian Society of Nature Friends, which means sustainable development of the work we started.
4. Representatives of the local community were informed about ecological and economic importance of Alazani riparian forests.
5. During the course of the project some issues arose, which did not seem as an actual problem of the invasive species, approaches of micro-reserves.

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

Involvement of the local population in this project was passive enough, because they did not have enough knowledge about Alazani riparian forests and in general environmental issues. In the case of this project local communities were more attendees than active participants of the project.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

This project had a great role in the popularization of the problem and find rational ways to solve it. Accordingly one of the biggest organisations is interested and the project is already being processed. We managed to do it according to 3-year project Sustainable Forest Governance in Georgia of Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN), which is focused on identification of forests in Georgia in certain hot spots and processing of protection mechanisms at both local and national

levels. Our organisation is involved in this project and continues conservation works of Alazani riparian forests.

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

During the course of the project we were actively using social networks to disseminate of information, as well as local and national printing and electronic media. We also arranged meeting and contacted to the organizations such as WWF Caucasus; IUCN South Caucasus Program Office, Caucasus Environmental NGO Network (CENN); REC Caucasus and others.

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

Grant provided by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation was used in period from August 2011 till the end of October 2012. Most of activities have been implemented in accordance with the original work plan. After October we conducted presentations and published brochures in November.

#### 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   |
|-----------------------|-----------------|---------------|------------|--|
| Digital camera        | 570             | 686           | -116       | Camera, which was selected and recommended by the specialists turned out to be more expensive, than it was provided in the budget. |
| Backpack bags         | 48              | 0             | 48         | Contributed by the friend of the organisation.   |
| Stationary            | 40              | 40            | 0          |  |
| Transportation        | 1100            | 1160          | -60        | We had to go to the two sections more than twice because of poor natural conditions.   |
| Per diems for experts | 700             | 850           | -150       | The field research took more time than it was planned.   |
| Cost for Leaflets     | 740             | 500           | 240        | Quality of leaflets was decreased because of high cost of equipments.  |
| Caliper               | 40              | 75            | -35        | Price was increased by that moment.  |
| Canopy Tent           | 200             | 00            |            | Contributed by a friend of the organisation.   |
| Clinometer            | 100             | 89            | 11         | Price was decreased by that moment.  |
| Increment borer       | 95              | 233           | -138       | Price was increased by that moment.  |
| <b>TOTAL</b>          | <b>3633</b>     | <b>3633</b>   | <b>0</b>   |  |

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

Next step for us goes in two directions: 1. Create real protection mechanisms of Alazani riparian forests; and 2. Increase awareness of local people about ecological importance of Alazani riparian forests. We presented our ideas about above mentioned directions to CENN, which was fully taken into account and we'll start working on it from November 1, 2012.



**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?**

Logo was used for presentations and brochures.

**11. Any other comments?**

I want to say that we very thankful to Rufford Small Grant Programmes for assistance and I hope our cooperation will continue in the future.