

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	Cheryl D. Nath
Project title	Farming native timber on private fallow lands : a potential conservation strategy for the Western Ghats
RSG reference	10703-1
Reporting period	14 February 2012 – 13 August 2013
Amount of grant	£6000
Your email address	cheryl.nath@ifpindia.org
Date of this report	15 August 2013

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
Characterisation of species traits and development of age-size trajectories				We have developed age-size trajectories for 27 of the proposed 30 species. Characterisation of species traits is underway, which may require additional field work.
Interviews with farmers				We have interviewed 100 farmers each at Kodagu and Chikmagalur districts. This allowed us to determine their preferences, capabilities and limitations for growing native trees.
Interactions with Government representatives				During initial interactions some high level Forest Department officers appeared unconvinced by the idea of farming native trees. Currently we are trying to coordinate with an interested NGO working on similar issues, and this agenda will be pursued further in the next phase.
Interactions related to seedling supply and timber demand				This objective generated much interest among stakeholders, and several public and private sector nurseries and timber merchants expressed interest in promoting native trees, given the right Governmental support.
Publications				A report and publications are under preparation for dissemination to stakeholders.

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

Nil

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

1. Approximately 30% of farmers in Kodagu and 70% of farmers in Chikmagalur agreed to grow native trees within their fallow lands and other available areas, with the expectation that seedlings will be provided at a reasonable cost, and that laws governing native tree ownership soon will be amended to allow the harvest of mature native trees that were planted by farmers. Additional farmers also expressed

interest in growing native trees, if ownership over the trees planted by them is guaranteed at the time of planting.

2. Several local nurseries and other organisations have shown strong interest in being involved with propagating native tree seedlings, and are willing to collaborate with this Rufford project to identify and promote good quality local seedling provenances in the coming years.

3. We have identified several fast growing and valuable native species, of which the following five species had growth rates comparable to those of currently preferred exotic species: *Persea macrantha*, *Chukrasia tabularis*, *Michelia champaca*, *Toona ciliata* and *Mangifera indica*. It is likely that farmers would be happy to propagate these native species within their fallow lands or coffee plantations for timber and non-timber benefits such as bonafide use and fruit yield. This result underscores the potential for practical conservation options in the Western Ghats.

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

The project improved farmers' knowledge of potential fast-growing native trees as well as increased their interest in conserving native species rather than replacing them with exotics. In many cases, and especially in the dry zones, farmers were extremely interested in obtaining trees that would survive locally and grow fast. Local communities expressed interest in planting trees in order to provide income from timber and other tree products, as well as for other economic and non-economic reasons such as reduced inputs required (compared to annual crops) and the potential for improvement of the local water table. Farming communities in the Western Ghats have clearly revealed their interest and preparedness to carry out tree planting on a large scale, provided the government recognises their strengths and limitations by providing appropriate support and stable long-term benefits.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, this work will be followed up by disseminating the information collected via project reports and other media, to farmers, Government officers and other stakeholders. We will continue monitoring tree growth and promoting the cause of native tree conservation and biodiversity benefit sharing with the active participation of local organisations and individuals who have a permanent interest and stake in local issues, in order to promote integrated conservation initiatives on private lands in the Western Ghats.

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

Technical reports, scientific publications and other media will be used to share the results of this project with local stakeholders as well as the general public.

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

The RSG was utilised over a period of 18 months. This time period was adequate for achieving most of the proposed objectives, although dissemination of information will require a few more months.

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
Personnel	467*	504	37	Excess of funds from other budget heads were used with the permission of RSGF to support the Master's thesis of Ritwika Basu, within the framework of this project.
Field Expenses	3967	4170	203	Field expenses were higher than budgeted due to inflation of fuel and other commodity rates during the project period, and an increase in the total number of field days.
Equipment	1067	874	-193	Additional funds were obtained from an alternate source to purchase some of the equipment. Excess funds were reallocated to field expenses.
Office supplies and services	434	403	-31	Some office supplies were purchased during field work and are included under that budget head.
Communications	39	39	0	
Miscellaneous expenses	26	10	-16	There were fewer than anticipated miscellaneous expenses. Excess funds were reallocated to field expenses.
TOTAL	6000	6000	0	

*Exchange rate: 1 UKP (£ sterling) = 78.33 INR (Rs.)

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

1. Capitalise on farmers' interest in native species by promoting native seedling propagation and dissemination to farmers at subsidised rates, through the involvement of local government bodies or the Horticulture Department.

2. Organise interactions between farmers and relevant Government officials in order to popularise the idea of participatory conservation through benefit-sharing of biodiversity values.

3. Continue scientific studies of native trees in the Western Ghats to improve our understanding of growth potential and limitations.

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?

The RSG logo will be used on all reports, and RSG will be acknowledged in all scientific publications that result from this project.

11. Any other comments?

The aim of this project was widely appreciated by local stakeholders in the Western Ghats. It is hoped that this project will be continued in this region, in order to capitalise on the interest and momentum generated during the first phase of work.