

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	Sergej Kolesnikov
Project title	Assessment of current structure, state and temporal dynamics of steppe vegetation of Donetsk region of Ukraine
RSG reference	11968-1
Reporting period	Apr 2014 - Oct 2015
Amount of grant	£5250
Your email address	kolesnikov-dn@ukr.net
Date of this report	30.12.2015

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
Holding a general reconnaissance survey of the territory in order to familiarise with the general landscape features and the distribution of vegetation			+	This stage was completed in May 2014. During this stage we identified the locations of steppe associations and have been selected points of geo-botanical descriptions.
Field studies (geo-botanical descriptions)		+		Instead of the planned volume (about 800 associations), we investigated only 267. The reason for this were the military actions.
Developing a method of searching the plant communities on the satellite images			+	The method has been developed on using the combination of NDVI, NDWI indices and topographic data obtained from remote sensing imagery.
Creation of the map showing the structure of steppe vegetation in the Donetsk region		+		Due to the not fully complete field studies this stage are only partially completed.
Investigation of the dynamics, identifying areas of degradation and recovery of steppe vegetation and estimation of the ecological state of steppe vegetation		+		Due to the not fully complete field studies this stage are only partially completed.

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

The main problem that prevented us in fully implementation of this project have been military actions in our region (which began in May 2015 and is still going on with varying intensity). Because of this, the field material was only partially collected (we collect data on 124 steppe communities only).

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

- Database of geo-botanical descriptions of steppe phytocenoses.
- A map of the distribution of steppe vegetation communities.
- Development of a technique of mapping of steppe plant communities by using satellite imagery, based on the results of geo-botanical studies.
- Identifying areas with degraded (where the measures to restore needed) and restored vegetation (which should be saved), as well as areas of steppe vegetation, which have not been studied and are not included in the environmental protection areas.

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

The results will be used in lectures at the Donetsk National University, during lessons in schools etc. This work will help to organise information about spatial distribution of rare species of plants, and distribution of information about this to the communities will greatly help in the matter of conservation of the landscapes in Donetsk region.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Of course, this project is the main part of my PhD work. First of all, we plan to complete the planned amount of geo-botanical descriptions. Then we plan to perform other points of our plan that we could not do due to war:

- creation of map of the distribution of all steppe vegetation communities;
- identifying areas with degraded (where the measures to restore needed) and restored vegetation (which should be saved).

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

We plan write some scientific publications in local botany scientific journals.

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

RSG was used in period Apr 2014 - Oct 2015

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
GPS navigator	250	250	0	
DSLR camera	400	400	0	
Materials for herbarium storage (paper and cardboard)	400	300	+100	
Transportation costs	2000	2500	-500	
Publishing the results	500	0	+500	We do not yet publish the results , because studies have not been fully completed
Office supplies	100	200	-100	
Laptop	400	400	0	
Scholarship	1200	1200	0	
TOTAL	5250	5250	5250	

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

After full implementation of this project we plan to use developed technology of herbaceous plant community's classification to investigate meadow communities of the Donetsk region.

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?

Since we have not yet published the results, we did not use the logo in printed materials, but we plan to do it.

11. Any other comments?

I want to thank the Rufford Foundation for financial support of my work. Without it, the implementation of this project would be impossible. And although circumstances beyond our control not allowed us doing a work in the planned amount, I hope that this can be done in the near future.