

The Rufford Foundation

Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Foundation.

We ask all grant recipients to complete a Final Report Form that helps us to gauge the success of our grant giving. The Final Report must be sent in **word format** and not PDF format or any other format. 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. Please note that the information may be edited for clarity. 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 | Heather Arrowood |
| Project title | Team capacity building at Tsam Tsam and development of a community-based ecotourism circuit in Gabon |
| RSG reference | 14355-2 |
| Reporting period | Feb 1 2014- Feb 18 2015 |
| Amount of grant | £6000 |
| Your email address | hcarrowood@yahoo.fr |
| Date of this report | Mar 18, 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 |
|---|--------------|--------------------|----------------|---|
| Increase capacity of Tsam Tsam through site exchange with PROGRAM | | | x | Four members of Tsam Tsam staff and five members of PROGRAM staff participated in site exchange, experienced team-building activities, and shared feedback. In 2014 Tsam Tsam doubled the number of tourists at the site and almost tripled tourism revenues from the previous year. |
| Create overland and over water circuits with partners | | | X | One overland circuit aimed at the budget traveller was created including two sites in Moukalaba Doudou National Park operated by PROGRAM and in the lake region at Tsam Tsam. An additional over water circuit geared towards adventure tourists was created down the Ogooué River to the Fernan Vaz Lagoon and Loango National Park. |
| Create partnerships with Tour Operators | | | x | The circuits were shared and partnerships were created with a birding ecotour operator in South Africa (who will offer the over water circuit in 2015 and 2016), an American adventure travel operator (offering the budget circuit), and a local Gabonese tour operator (also offering the budget circuit). All three operators organized scouting trips to Tsam Tsam during the project period. |
| Advertise circuits online | | x | | A website was launched for OELO (www.oelogabon.org) that outlines Tsam Tsam activities and OELO efforts. Online information about the circuits created in this project are still under development with website developers. |
| Reduce trade of bushmeat in the region by creating an alternative income source and creating revenue for outreach and environmental education | | x | | Early results from our market surveys are promising. Between 2012 and 2014 bushmeat for sale decreased by 70% in the local market. Local authorities passed local laws making the sale of protected species (in addition to hunting) illegal through OELO lobbying. Increased law enforcement efforts resulted in over 65% fewer protected |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| | | | | species observed for sale in markets and restaurants in 2014 compared to 2012. |
|--|--|--|--|--|

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

It was harder than anticipated to organise the partner exchange, as we had to coordinate our schedules. There were many last minute cancellations due to tourist bookings. However, we completed the exchange by December and requested a brief extension of the project period until the end of March to create some of the marketing materials that resulted from the circuits developed in the exchange.

A difficulty in building the site capacity and autonomy has been to identify local people who want to work full-time for the project. Residents of the lake region are used to fishing and hunting by following their own schedule. We have found many people willing to work on a part-time basis, when convenient, but who are reluctant to commit to full-time work. We therefore created a team of part-time workers and have begun to recruit full-time candidates from the nearest city, who can work with the local team. One part-time team member transitioned too full-time over the project period and we hope that additional team members will follow in the future.

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

1) We increased the capacity of our ecotourism site, Tsam Tsam, by training our team and adding new team members. During the project period we doubled the number of tourists to the site from the year before (to 120) and almost tripled income to our tourism program (to 20000 USD)

2) We improved our online presence by launching a website to advertise our site at Tsam Tsam and to outline OELO’s conservation efforts: www.oelogabon.org, updating our Facebook page www.facebook.com/TsamTsamGabon, and soliciting Trip Advisor reviews (http://www.tripadvisor.com/Hotel_Review-g480195-d5533494-Reviews-Tsam_Tsam-Lambarene_Moyen_Ogooue_Province.html)

3) We measured a 65% decrease in protected species observed for sale at the local bushmeat market and restaurants, compared to 2012 when our market surveys began and a decrease of 70% in overall bushmeat for sale.

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

Tsam Tsam is a community-run ecotourism site with 10 out of 12 team members from local communities on the lake. The site creates a source of income for community members that traditionally live off of income from fishing and hunting. Additionally, revenue generated by the project partially funds OELO, a local Gabonese environmental non-profit. In 2014, OELO led community outreach in markets and restaurants focused on protected species, expanded an environmental education program into 14 schools, created six nature clubs in secondary schools, facilitated biodiversity research in the lake region, and led a sustainable fishing initiative on Lake Oguemoué managed by a local committee.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Tsam Tsam is continuing to grow and we have doubled our reservations in 2015, including two end-of-the-year field trips with partner schools.

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

We launched our website www.oelogabon.org in early 2015, and continue to update our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/TsamTsamGabon. We will also share the results of this effort in our 2014 Annual report that will be published in the next month.

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

We began the activities on this grant in January 2014 and continued the project period through March 2015. The activities took longer than anticipated due to scheduling difficulties with our partner organisation PROGRAM and we therefore requested a 3-month extension.

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 |
|-----------------------|-----------------|----------------|-------------|---|
| Boat Motor | 2862 | 2743.52 | 118.71 | |
| Ground Transportation | 130 | 167.54 | -37.54 | |
| Lodging | 273 | 291.27 | -18.27 | |
| Fuel | 390 | 506.43 | -116.43 | |
| Site Exchange | 1565 | 1910.14 | -345.14 | The site exchange cost more than anticipated as prices increased with our partner organization due to logistical complications |
| Posters/brochures | 650 | 218.81 | -431.19 | We spent less on marketing than anticipated, due to the later completion of the exchange and circuits and to compensate for the increased cost of site exchange |
| Internet | 130 | 163.11 | -33.11 | |
| Total | 6000 | 6000.60 | -.60 | |

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

The next steps for the ecotourism site at Tsam Tsam are to continue to contact international operators to advertise our site to the international community. For the moment, 90% of our clients come from the expat community in Gabon via word of mouth and Libreville-based advertising. We also need to identify and train additional members for our Tsam Tsam team that can grow the capacity and independence of the project. Because the tourism industry is still very **much in its**

infancy in Gabon, we plan to continue to develop partnerships with other existing sites and organisations to promote ecotourism and share lessons learned.

At Tsam Tsam, we plan to create overnight viewing tree houses that will encourage tourists to stay additional nights at our site and increase income to for OELO's projects. These tree houses would overlook a savannah where animals including elephants, lowland gorillas, forest buffalo, and chimpanzees are commonly sighted.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

The RSGF logo is included on the partner page of our new website www.oelogabaon.org. We also linked to the RSGF project page on our Facebook pages for Tsam Tsam and OELO, and we will provide a copy of this report in our onsite library at the ecotourism site for visitors to read. Additionally, the Rufford Foundation will be included on our partner page of our 2014 Annual Report.

11. Any other comments?

We sincerely thank the Rufford Foundation for their help in getting Tsam Tsam up and running. We hope someday we can host members of the committee at our site and share with them the activities underway that have grown from a small feasibility study financed by the foundation in 2010.