

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	Kamal Thapa
Project title	Assessment of Benefits and Evaluation of Ecosystem Services in Langtang National Park, Nepal
RSG reference	15714-2
Reporting period	1 year
Amount of grant	£ 4,950
Your email address	thekamal@gmail.com
Date of this report	17 July, 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
To identify and assess various ecosystem services (provisioning, regulating, supporting and cultural/spiritual services) offered by LNP.			√√	Five major ecosystem services as recommended by TESSA toolkit was assessed.
To carry out total economic valuation (TEV) of Langtang National Park and its associated ecosystem services, including ecotourism and cultural values.			√√	TEV approach was applied but mostly to the ecosystem services recommended by TESSA toolkit.
To assess protected area benefit provided by LNP to local people			√√	
To provide background information for the future design of PES.		√√		This project has provided information on the ecosystem services and its value provided by LNP. Policy makers and appropriate governing body of park/government can use this report to design PES project to secure conservation finance.

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

During the questionnaire survey with yak herders and household survey, I encountered some problems such as language. The study region is resided by Tamangs, ethnic mountain community who have their own language and customs. To tackle the language barrier, local educated Tamangs were hired to carry out questionnaire survey and discussion, under my direct supervision.

Yak herders were reluctant to answer the questions and to participate in discussion since they were looking for monetary compensation. They were aggressive to government authority as the government do not provide veterinary services and animal health facilities to their livestock and in turn livestock dies and loss of their property/living. This aggression was put on me because they thought I am the government employee. I clarified them that I am an independent person undertaking research on park management and ecosystem services.

The last phase of the project could not be accomplished as planned due to the effect of recent mega-earthquake in Nepal. I was planning to carry out questionnaire survey in northern Briddhim VDC and Langtang VDC in the spring season. Langtang region was highly affected and the Langtang Valley village was swept away by earthquake triggered avalanches and many locals and tourists alike

were lost/dead due to avalanche. Injured people was airlifted from Langtang village and the village no more exist. Outsiders are not allowed, even to date, to visit the reason owing to security issues and landslides, mudslides, rock falls etc. However, sufficient number of questionnaire survey have been done in the winter season in four VDCs of Rasuwa district thus not hampering the research work by this earthquake.

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

- *Ecotourism and park recreation value of the Langtang National Park derived.*

Recreational economic value of the Langtang National Park was derived using the market expenditure method. Visitors daily spending and average stay during the trip to Langtang National Park was explored which was then computed later to find the total economic value of park tourism.

- *Five key ecosystem services (carbon storage/sequestration, water provision, harvested wild goods, cultivated good, and recreation/ecotourism) of Langtang National Park assessed.*

For the first time, key ecosystem services of Langtang National Park was assessed and its relation to human wellbeing and livelihood opportunities to locals and global community is documented. Costs and benefits of park management could be easily understood by the assessment of ecosystem services. TESSA toolkit is used independently for this purpose.

- *Willingness to pay, in the form of entry fee, of international tourists for the conservation of nature and associate ecosystem services assessed.*

Sustainable financing of protected areas is a major challenges for protected area management in developing world. Nepal too, experience financial lack for the sustainable management of protected areas. Timely exploration of visitors' willingness to pay for the park entrance fee reveals market demand and scenario of park tourism. Increase in the entry fee, brings financial surpluses to the park management authority to invest for park management and buffer zone development contributing to dual objectives of conservation and development.

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

There was involvement of local people during the project period in various form. In every step of the research project, local people were consulted and interviewed for primary data collection. Individual household survey, focus group discussion, key informant survey etc. was done with local people who have spent their whole life in the Langtang National Park region. The management policy which may changes based on this findings also have implications for local people. Therefore the main beneficiaries of the project are local people, not the outsiders.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Due to funding limitations, I do not have any plan at the moment to continue this work. However, should there be funding opportunities available from Rufford Foundation or from other donor, there is more work to do. During the last phase of the work Nepal was rocked by mega earthquake in 80 years. Langtang National Park region is one of the most affected region due to recent mega earthquake in Nepal. It would be wise to assess ecosystem services again to evaluate the changes in the delivery of ecosystem services after the big disaster (mega earthquake). Comparison of delivery

of ecosystem services between pre-earthquake and post-earthquake period helps to document the changes.

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

I intend to share the study findings among the colleagues in Nepal and sharing the report with libraries. Conservation organisations are particularly interested on ecosystem services therefore report will be made available to them as well. Apart from technical report, international peer reviewed journal article is to be prepared to share the result at the regional and international level.

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 for the whole period of 12 months that lasted from July 2014 to June 2015 for which the project was designed and approved.

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 (£ sterling)	Actual Amount (£ sterling)	Difference	Comments
Communication Expenses	150	225	-75	Internet charge is expensive in the field district than in the city areas.
Stationery: Printing, Copying, Reporting and reference material purchase	500	310	190	Reference material was not purchased.
Workshop Expenses and Research findings dissemination	800	618	182	Managed with little expenditure.
Food and Accommodation for principal researcher and assistants	1200	1115	85	Little discount was received despite touristic season/tourist region and remoteness.
Daily Subsistence Allowance for principal researcher and assistants	1200	1500	-300	Research assistant was difficult to hire at low wages.
Local Travel for Research Team	150	250	-100	Vehicle was hired and proved to be expensive than planned.
International Flight and related travel (Austria-Nepal-Austria)	850	805	45	Low cost (economy class) air ticket was secured.
Account Maintenance Fee, Banking Transaction and Project Administration	100	125	-25	Banking, Transaction cost.
TOTAL	£ 4,950	£ 4948	£ 2	

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

Local people as well as government staff and policy makers need to be made aware about the role of national park and other protected areas in the delivery of ecosystem services. Training courses on the importance of ecosystem services and park management need to be given to local people, park staff and future park rangers/conservation officers so that the ecosystem services concept will be in the mainstream of protected area management strategy.

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?

I did not use the RSGF logo/information in the questionnaire but in most of the formal/informal talks and discussions with local people, park visitors/tourists, park personnel etc. the publicity of the Rufford Foundation was done orally, informing them that the funding support was provided by the Rufford Foundation. The technical report will bear the RSGF logo and acknowledgement for financial support. All the future contributions that arise from this work for e.g. journal articles, conference proceedings/talks will bear the name and logo of RSGF for funding support.