

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	Sonam Norbu
Project title	Distribution, Habitat assessment and understanding threats to Red Panda in buffer
RSG reference	Our ref: 20563-1
Reporting period	June 2017
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	snorbu@paro.gov.bt
Date of this report	9/11/2017

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 determine the conservation status of red panda in study area.				Although red panda is placed in Vulnerable status by IUCN, no importance was given to conserving this species in the proposed study area. With support from RSG, local people, institutions and park officials were sensitised on importance of conserving globally threatened red panda in their area. With this, both government institutions and local people have started giving more conservation importance to this particular species comparing to earlier days.
To raise conservation awareness among the local people, Institutional and schools.				Community education regarding the needs of protecting the sound environment for red panda in the localities have been conducted using different means. 300 households residing near red panda habitat sensitised on panda conservation. Two schools were selected for awareness programme.
To assess habitat threats.				The main anthropogenic threats in the areas were logging, overgrazing, firewood collection and road construction activities.
To quantify habitat use and distribution pattern of Red Panda (Habitat Suitability Analysis) using GIS technique.				All red panda sighting site coordinates were recorded and distributional map was produced. Study found that red panda mostly prefer to stay in live bamboo dominated areas.

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

The first problem that I came across was logistics – organising the project team for the fieldwork. Involvement of local partners was not as easy as I expected. There were less conservation organisers in the area than I initially thought.

Surveying in monsoon season due to road blocks was yet another difficulty faced causing difficulties of the execution of fieldwork as per schedule, but this fieldwork was compensated for in the following period. Moreover such incidents have incurred high expenditure.

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

- The first outcome is that the study provided important baseline information on red panda in Bhutan in terms of conservation status, distribution, and habitat type and conservation threats
- With fund support from RSG, we are able to reach wider audience and could influence government agencies, institutions and local communities on the immediate need of the conservation. Due to such influence, the species has been identified as one of top conservation priorities in Bhutan. Moreover, most of the people were aware and willing to support conservation programme, which indicates that peoples' prospective had changed mainly due to this initiative.
- The population was not monitored in study area. With the support from the project, the population was monitored again. This has provided a ground to study population trend before and after the road construction started in study area.

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

Some of the data on red panda feeding areas were got from local people. Data from local people was collected via inquiries and direct conversation with them. Questions were designed in order to grasp the extent of knowledge of local people of red panda. Interviewed villagers showed, on average, poor knowledge of red panda ecology and conservation.

All possible areas of red panda occurrence in the study area were identified through consultation with local people. During such consultation and interview people were provided with incentive and daily subsistence allowances.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, I have a plan to continue with the similar project in future, as I have gained good knowledge and experiences from the current project. The current project was first of its kind in the district. We still have vast areas to be explored.

This project is only the beginning of large serious activity for the conservation of red panda in Bhutan. If it stops, all positive effects that were reached will be jeopardised and there will be no further progress. After the successful completion of this research, the implementation of necessary direct conservation measures should be the aim of follow-up activities for red panda conservation in Bhutan.

Therefore, I look forward for another grant from RSG. The grant will be utilised for the field work and payment for field staff and local people involved in conservation. The project will be carried out to determine population status and feeding behaviour of red panda.

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

I have plan to prepare a detailed report of this project, which will be published on the website Ministry of Agriculture and Forest (www.moaf.gov.bt), Bhutan

Broadcasting Service (www.bbs.bt) and Royal Society of Conservation (www.rspcnbhd.org). The data collected will be available to all relevant authorities and other decision makers. Information collected during this project will enable the more accurate application and implementation of adequate conservation measures and the implementation of conservation obligations stipulated by international conventions.

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

The period of validity of my project was 12 months, from November 2016 to November 2017. The activities of the project began and ended according to the projected schedule and the grant was used based on the timeframe originally envisaged.

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
Purchase/arrangement of field equipment's (GPS, Tents, Pen and pencil etc.), of survey forms printing.	400	400		
Field staff training on data sheet, survey protocol, research objectives and presentation.	550	560	-10	Cost incurred in printing of data sheet and note book during the training programme
Designing, production and printing of posters for Advocacy program.	450	430	+20	The poster printing charge was increase by production house to meet their annual expenses
Food and refreshment for local communities during interview.	500	490	+10	Some participants could not attend for interview due to their personal works.
Daily substance allowances for staff for social interview survey and conservation awareness program.	900	930	-30	The Daily Allowance of the civil servants has increased as per the government directives and the labours demand more than the actual daily wages as field work is in the forest.
Potential habitat field survey and transportation of materials and survey team, food and lodging, daily substance allowances.	1050	1050	00	

Presentation expenses	250	250	00	www.rufford.org
Refreshment during awareness program for the local communities, project staffs, local institutions and schools.	500	490	+10	Some project staffs and local community could not attend for the awareness program
Erection of signboard to serve as advocacy for all the people passing through project sites.	400	400		
TOTAL	5000	5000	00	

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

The next important step that I feel is the protection of red panda feeding areas and strengthening public understanding through participatory approach. Accordingly awareness on its importance and conservation should be created in other parts of the country. Sensitisation activities through publication of scientific paper in journals and other scientific forum, developing monitoring guidelines and seminars regarding the importance of these ecologically important insects could be another important programme to be prioritised.

To estimate the population status and assess habitat threats in Bhutan is another important step to be continued.

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

At each performance, conversation with stakeholders and locals, presentation, posters, brochures and printed materials, I reported that this project was carried out with the support of the Rufford Small Grants Foundation and RF logo was used always where possible. Many of my friends and contributors heard about RF for the first time during this project. Some of them have decided to use possibilities of funding and apply with different proposals to RSG.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Sonam Norbu: Overall project coordinator and resource person for awareness campaign.

Sherab Jamtsho: Resource person for vegetation survey and GIS related works

Sonam Phuntso: Vegetation survey team and resource person during awareness campaign for school and institutions

Tshering Dorji: Resource person for field staff training on data sheet, survey protocol, research objectives.

Phub Dorji: Vegetation survey team and social interviewer with local people.

Sonam Dorji: Vegetation survey team and social interviewer with local people.

Tashi Dorji: Transporter of survey materials and food items at survey sites

Dawa: Transporter of survey materials and food items at survey sites

Chimmi Dorji: procurements of project related items.

Tshewang Norbu: Overall food and transportation organizer

12. Any other comments?

The current conservation trend of red panda in Bhutan is very scary. The local people and conservation agencies are still not aware of its declining population trends and habitat threats are facing globally. The government or some organisation should come up with strategic plan to save this beautiful mammal from getting into critically endangered status.



Left: Photo of Red Panda at study site. Right: Photo of vegetation survey at site.



Conservation Training to local community