

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	Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković
Project title	Hidden corners of Serbia - Preserve our freshwaters from oblivion
RSG reference	ID: 24565-1
Reporting period	Jun 2018. - Jun 2019.
Amount of grant	£4,999
Your email address	thedimitrija@gmail.com
Date of this report	23. Jun 2019.

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
Design of the visual identity of the project				Project logo and promotional material preparation was conducted by our team members. Our logo represents a droplet of water consisting of four parts: air, mountains, green fields and water, all of which our project seeks to protect and promote.
Social media, YouTube channel and a webpage creation				<p>Official website: http://hiddenserbia.bddsp.org.rs/ Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/hiddenserbia/ Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/hiddenserbia YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNEP_oEm47DexvbplCYuHbeg?view_as=subscriber (the promotional video for the project has 1,284 views at the moment) Many followers are sending us their own photos and videos and are starting to share their stories about hidden nature that they discovered! We will be posting their stories in the future!</p>
Establishing collaborations (with protected area managers, Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia and other experts, Movie making studios and Volunteer recruitment)				<p>We were able to cooperate smoothly with most of the protected area managers (seven out of 10), however some of the managers (three out of 10) were not open for collaboration or were unable to find time to meet us. However this did not present a huge problem for our project since the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia was more than open to work with us and support our research activities. Our team even extended the collaboration with the institute and discussed possible future mutual actions and work on finding funding for future projects. We were able to gather many volunteers</p>

				and collaborators, many of which are members of BDDSP and students of The Faculty of Science and Mathematics, University of Niš. We established connection with "MMD Studio Niš" that helped in video making, offered to do additional drone footage for the documentaries and did the final editing for our promotional video.
Getting in touch with the locals, NGOs and stakeholders				Because biological society "Dr Sava Petrović" has a long history of research in protected areas and has many connections with NGOs we were able to get in touch with many interested parties at the very beginning. In addition, good cooperation with the Institute provided us with more connections and we were announced properly and welcomed at most of the sites by the locals and stakeholders. Most of the locals were open to take part in our field activities, gave us invaluable information regarding the areas we visited and were happy to participate in our documentaries.
Field activities (SVAP and RHA protocols, GPS mapping and gathering Hydro-morphology and physical-chemical parameters in situ) resulting in database formation and volunteer education				<p>All of our research field activities went as planned, but due to technical difficulties (problems with the equipment) we had to visit our research sites more than once. Additional weather problems made us spend more days in the field than planned. We give a special thanks to the Faculty of Science and mathematics for providing us with expert advice and needed equipment for the field research. We would like to emphasise the importance of participation in Science Excursions organised by BDDSP, where we were able to educate many volunteers about SVAP and RHA protocols, about macroinvertebrate identification and Water Framework directive aims and goals. This enabled us to gather additional volunteers for our fieldwork activities. We were able to gain peoples interest by showing them that in a simple way very valuable scientific data can be gathered, and that conservation and monitoring actions require a network of people working together.</p> <p>The database, consisting of data gathered</p>

				in the field, has been established (it is constantly updated) and provided to the Faculty and members of BDDSP.
Photo safari organization				<p>We organised two photo safaris (one in the protected area of the river Jerma Gorge, and one in the largest national park in our country "Djerdap") that exceeded our expectations (we had more participants than expected and several locals joined our tours). Take a look at the post in our website: http://hiddenserbia.bddsp.org.rs/en/to-the-canyons/.</p> <p>The photos from our tours are constantly uploaded to our Instagram account which has had great response and visibility in the public. The participants were able to hear about our project aims and goals and every photo safari had an educational part: in the first we discussed bird and macroinvertebrate populations and their connection to water ecosystems; and in the second we discussed tortoise conservation and proper protected area management planning. We took the chance to photograph and film part of the research of Marko Nikolić on Hermanns' tortoise (within the project supported by RFSG 26448-B). We managed to the tortoises in their natural habitat as well as the part of the monitoring process and the interviews with the local inhabitants of the area. This was a very productive collaboration, and we were discussing possible future link up between our projects.</p>
Photo competition and photo exhibition				<p>At first, the photo competition was intended as a manner of attracting more people to participate in our project, but the number of people that has seen our documentaries and took part in photo safaris exceeded our expectations. In addition we had unplanned difficulties with the fieldwork and we spent more time in the field than expected. Therefore, we announced a photo competition fairly recently, since we decided to conduct it in collaboration with Wikimedia Serbia and</p>

			<p>the project "In touch with nature" by Marko Nikolić.</p> <p>The competition is available at the following websites:</p> <p>http://hiddenserbia.bddsp.org.rs/, http://wildbalkans.com/en/home/, http://bddsp.org.rs/, and https://rs.wikimedia.org/wiki/Главна_страница</p> <p>In this way we will be able to upload all photos from the contest to Wikipedia platform where the photos will have much broader public and could be used for educational articles about nature protected areas in Serbia. We already purchased the reward for the best photo of the competition, and Wikimedia will provide the funds for the exhibition itself which will be held in September 2019. This enabled us to transfer some of our funds to additional unplanned fieldwork expenses.</p>
Video material filming and preparation in 1920 x 1080 resolution			<p>We were able to gather a very interesting group of people that was both ecologically and artistically educated. We established connection with a movie making studio "MMD studio" that joined us in the field providing drone footage for the promotional trailer of the project and educating our volunteers and team members on nature documentary making. However, we realised that, in order to properly represent one specific natural area, much more time is needed for filming. We were not able to incorporate all needed elements into our videos (interviews with local attitudes towards researched areas, shots of representative flora, fauna and threatened habitat and research activities) because at some sites there were no locals at the moment (note that some of our research areas are in very poorly inhabited areas) or we were not able to find all representatives of flora and fauna in that period of the year, or the protected area managers were unable to join us in the field or did not want to collaborate with us.</p> <p>Nevertheless, during the course of the</p>

			<p>project some very talented people appeared in our ranks, and many were eager to learn, so we obtained very valuable video material (filmed in 1920 x 1080 resolution or higher). This video material will be divided into 10 episodes of the first session of the "Hidden corners of Serbia" series by the name „Preserve our freshwaters from oblivion“.</p>
<p>Montage of final video material, Uploading to YouTube channel and distribution to institutions and local media,</p>			<p>As mentioned before, we were overoptimistic with the planning of our filming activities therefore we ended up lacking some crucial elements for some of our videos. Adding to that the fact that protected area managers at three of our research sites did not return our call for collaboration made our video montaging difficult. Nevertheless we compensated that with visiting several unplanned areas (Vlasina, Stara Planina, Uvac and Rtanj) in cooperation with the Institute for Nature Conservation of Serbia which led to making new video material. Our team, in collaboration with biological society "Dr Sava Petrović" made the video for the Institute which is available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HbD98ZyR6rc&list=PLqCRdZP6DrsVeZXYWNnuihKPtIA-WQ2qI&index=3 , You can read more about it at our website: http://hiddenserbia.bddsp.org.rs/proslava-jubileja-uz-budenje-prirode/ . The institute was thrilled with the response of the scientific and common public to our videos and decided to collaborate with us in the future. In addition, The Faculty of Science and Mathematics was of tremendous help to our research and we decided to provide the Faculty with a promotional video of the Department of Biology and Ecology in turn, which is available at the faculty website: https://www.pmf.ni.ac.rs/departman/biologija-i-ekologija/ and their YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gplx7mJ2HiA</p>

			<p>Our YouTube channel has 38 subscribers at the moment, and we uploaded five of our videos to itb https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNEPoEm47DexvbplCYuHbeg?) Out of which the video "Hidden Serbia promotional trailer " already has over 1200 views! Seven more episodes have been montaged and sent to the Institute and to the protected area managers for examination. The institutions insisted on inspecting all the material before we can post it publicly and we were advised to wait before we upload the rest of the documentaries. This is because the Institutions representatives are present in the videos, the experts need to check the accuracy of the information that we provide through narration and also, the Institutions are planning on sending our documentaries to several festivals and TV stations.</p>
Promotion and dissemination of the project results:			<p>At "Nisville festival" (largest festival in South Serbia) we presented our promotional video at the movie stage where it was seen by a broader public. This broadcast triggered vast interest in our project and we already agreed on broadcasting our documentaries in the year 2019. We give a special thanks to Slobodan Marković who was one of the most active volunteers in our project and organised many promotions and educational activities (at Science and Ecology festivals "Nauk nije bauk", "Biology Night", "WWF earth hour" and at primary and secondary schools in the city of Niš and Babušnica). We were able to take part in RSG conference in Serbia, at Silver lake, which was invaluable for sharing information with other RSG holders and exchanging experiences. We are invited to talk about our project at two future scientific conferences and at one outdoor and ecotourism festival. Our project was promoted at the Universities of Niš, Belgrade, Kragujevac and Novi Sad where we organized discussion panels with other researchers.</p>

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

One of the biggest problems was getting in touch with protected area managers at three research sites. This caused problems in filming and in field research schedule. As we stated in the project proposal, the areas that we chose, even though protected by law, were neglected by researchers and by the public. After this project we realise that this might be due to inadequate management of the areas and not enough investment in education of the locals and collaboration with researches. This represents a huge problem in the protection of nature in Serbia and we believe that more efforts have to be put in improving communication and openness to collaboration within protected areas.

Additional problems arose due to high prices of accommodation at some research areas, as well as bad weather conditions. Due to these difficulties we had to visit several of our research sites more than once, or stay longer than 5 days.

We consulted several filmmakers and experts in this art field during this entire project, as well as expert researchers in order to properly film the documentaries. Nevertheless, third biggest problem was filming of all elements needed in such a short period of time. Since we are not experienced enough in making nature documentaries our planning was not properly structured and we realised that more time is required for this part of the project. Nevertheless, the data that we obtained and the videos that we captured represent the nature of Serbia never seen before and we believe that it will make a tremendous impact on the connection between researchers and the bond between man and nature in our country!

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

First most important outcome was the **creation of the first ever nature documentary series** in Serbia that combines the experience and knowledge of scientist and creativity of artists. With this we managed to draw attention to small protected areas and emphasise the importance of freshwater conservation. This is a very important outcome considering that most of the protected areas do not get enough funding for promotional and educational activities. This documentary series helped us explain to the common people how they too can be a part of environmental solution. Second important outcome is the **established network of people** consisting of locals, stakeholders, NGOs and experts that were actively participating in all the stages of our project. This team will work together in the future to tell the stories that will drive awareness, education and action on many environmental topics

Education of future researchers and formation of database is the third major outcome of our project. This database provides important hydro-morphological data needed for sustainable management strategy development and is available for protected area managers and other institutions, but also to young scientists that were trained for fieldwork within our project. With this combined approach we identified several sites where there is additional need for more accurate in-depth assessment as well as more inclusion of citizens and citizens' groups.

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

First and foremost all the Nature protected area managers were contacted at all 10 research sites and were aware of our project activities. At most of the research areas managers were helping us with the fieldwork, with accommodation and equipment procurement. In return we provided them with our database and all our video material from our "Hidden corners of Serbia" series.

Local inhabitants were more than happy to answer our questions and gave us invaluable information that helped us both in research and video filming. Many of them took part in gathering the data for the protocols, and many more took part in video creation. Most of the locals were open to our lectures about ecosystem services that these areas provide for them and the role of scientists in conserving those areas. We believe we were able to reduce the gap between the locals and scientists and to establish a firm ground for mutual cooperation in the future.

At the moment there is a huge problem with mini hydropower plant illegal building in Serbia, the rivers are getting dry and the ecosystems are getting devastated by illegal construction sites. The locals are realising that the environment is getting devastated and are able to see the consequences in their surroundings. This situation was in the favour of locals accepting us as allies in fighting this problem. We took part in several protests and we educated the locals about the threats that this illegal hydropower plants are posing to the environment. We believe that knowledge is power and that the locals could better defend their rivers with proper arguments and could understand why nature conservation and protection of certain areas by law is important. We have to make people understand and incorporate in conservation of biodiversity, only then we can truly make a change!

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. The database that was established needs to be constantly updated and we now have a network of volunteers and future scientists that are working on it. Since this database is being incorporated into the databases of The Faculty of Science and Mathematics, University of Niš, it is being updated constantly with new data from other researchers within other areas.

The work on "Hidden corners of Serbia" documentary series has just begun. We are thrilled with the response of the public to our videos and are very happy to say that we have moved many people with it. In our promotional video we invited the public to "pay attention and listen" to the surrounding nature because "the most beautiful place in the world is hidden right in front of their eyes" and we believe that we drew their attention. After this project we realise what changes and adjustments need to be made to our videos and we have gathered a team of people that is enthusiastic about making more documentaries for the promotion of biodiversity and nature conservation.

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

Established social media profiles and website of the project are constantly being updated with new information about our project. Our YouTube channel is updated with new documentaries to which we are going to add new educational videos and behind the scenes moments. In addition, the project has been promoted on several other websites (BDDSP: <http://bddsp.org.rs/skriveni-uglovi-srbije/> , Svet nauke: <https://www.svetnauke.org/19226-skriveni-uglovi-srbije-sacuvajmo-nase-vode-od-zaborava>, WildBalkans: <http://wildbalkans.com>, Institute for nature protection: <http://www.zzps.rs/novo/index.php?jezik=la&strana=vest&n=578>, Super radio <https://www.mixcloud.com/superradionis/coolminacija-2332019-najava-sata-za-planetu-biolo%C5%A1ko-dru%C5%A1tvo-dr-sava-petrovi%C4%87/> and others)

Our documentaries are to be broadcast at two upcoming scientific conferences, one international (13th Symposium on the flora of south-eastern Serbia and neighbouring regions) and one national (The XII Symposium of Serbian Entomologists), as well as within one festival of active tourism and ecotourism "Outdoor fest Jerma" (<http://neat-serbia.com/outdoor-fest/program-avantura/>) and at the Nisville Jazz fests movie stage. At all of the events we will be organising open discussion panels and communicating our results. In addition, we are sending our videos to several "green" movie festivals ("Green fest", "Vrmdža fest" and others) and to TV stations in the country.

In collaboration with Wikimedia Serbia and the project "In contact with nature" by Marko Nikolić, we will be uploading the photo material to Wikipedia platform and updating articles considering nature protected areas.

Finally the project results and the database are shared with several Institutions and are going to be sent in the form of a report to all protected area managers and to the Institute for Nature Protection of Serbia.

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 project lasted from Jun 2018 - Jun 2019. Most of the activities went as planned, with additional visits and longer stays at some research sites. The only activity we did not manage to complete was the photography competition. Nevertheless this was intentional since in the meanwhile we established deeper connections with Wikimedia Serbia and decided to prolong the competition till September in collaboration with this organisation. In addition, some of our videos are not uploaded to YouTube channel yet, since they are being examined by the experts from the Institute, and we are in the process of applying for several "green documentary" festivals and agreeing collaboration with local and national TV stations.

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.

	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Presentation and education in primary and secondary schools	440	440		This activity was organised in cooperation with Wikipedia and Wikimedia Serbia and the biological society "Dr Sava Pertović" as planned. The budget was provided through the project of the BDDSP and not through The Rufford foundation
Photo exhibition> photo competition award	37	37		The award is a voucher for purchasing photo equipment at the "Gigatron" electronics store
Photo exhibition>Printing and preparation of 40 best photos	72		-72	The exhibition is yet to be realised in cooperation with Wikimedia Serbia and this organization will cover the costs
Photo exhibition>Fuel costs for transportation and presentation (approx. 50 km)	45		-45	The exhibition is yet to be realised in cooperation with Wikimedia Serbia and this organization will cover the costs
Photo safari refreshment for the participants (approx. 30 people)	88	88		We organized 2 photo safaris with approximately 40 people in total
Photo safari Fuel costs, approx. 197 km (1 litre Euro Diesel fuel = approx. 0.9 GBP)	178	178		
Professional video editing and final cut	151	151		The video editing was conducted by "MMD studio Niš"
Audio equipment (VideoMic GO On Camera Microphone, Windshield and stereo extension cable)	76		-76	Since we made a deal with "MMD studio" that had all needed equipment, we decided not to purchase our own equipment at this stage and transferred the money to buying a better projector
Projector	303	380	+77	The prices of good projectors that could be used for outdoor lecturing were higher than

				planned.
Field boots and suits for 5 people	190	190		
Fieldwork> Fuel costs for approx. 1100 km (1 litre Euro Diesel fuel = approx. 0.9 GBP)	990	990		
Fieldwork> Food and drinks for the participants for 5 people * 50 days	1,327	1,327		
Fieldwork> Accommodation for 5 people * 50 days	947	1,097	+150	Money intended for the photo exhibition (total of 117£) we transferred to the accommodation costs due to higher prices than expected in some of our research areas and the fact that we had to stay longer than expected.
Creation and maintenance of the website	159	159		
Badges for promotion (50 pcs)	57	57		We printed out 50 more badges than expected, because they were donated to us by "Wibbly wobbly" printing store as a support to our project
T-shirts for team members (30 pcs)	227	227		
Printing and design of 2000 Brochures/Leaflets	152	152		
Totals	4,999	5,031	+32	The additional expenses were not high and we were able to provide the money personally. This was mostly due unexpected additional costs of accommodation and unpredicted difficulties in the fieldwork

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

First important step after this project is to analyse the gathered data and video material and to communicate our results with the Institute. This will help improve the knowledge about the current situation at some of the nature monuments from the monitoring point of view. We will discuss possible solutions for better monitoring and management strategies, after which we will try to establish connection with the area managers that were not open for collaboration in the beginning.

Since the creation of our documentaries, especially "Hidden corners of Serbia" promotional video, made the strongest impression on the public we think it is important to approach our video making more professionally. It is important to structure the videos in accordance to the activity of important animal and plant species in those areas (plan all the activities consulting the experts in specific fields), but also make video content the will bring our ideas closer to the common people (plan the scenarios consulting the artists and sociologists). We were discussing future cooperation with other RSG holders on making documentaries about their research, and we think that this could be a very interesting step that could gather the scientific youth of the region to collaborate together (we discussed this possibility at the RF conference in Serbia; at the Science camp "Crni Vrh" organized by BDDSP and at several discussion panels).

We are waiting for the approval from the Institute for nature conservation of Serbia for publicly presenting the rest of our video material (inspection of the accuracy of the presented data and visual quality of the seven videos that we already made). The reactions are extremely positive at the moment, and after we get the permission we will apply to several "green" festivals in the region, discuss broadcasting the series at TV stations. Meanwhile we will be adding short educational videos and "behind the scenes" moments from our project to our YouTube channel. The Institute for Nature protection as well as the Faculty of Science and Mathematics are supporting the idea of our project and we are discussing possible future collaborations on making new documentaries.

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?

The Rufford Foundation logo is present in all of the nature documentaries, with a special mention in "Hidden Serbia Promotional video" and "The Nature awakens" that we made for The Institute; in our website, on t-shirts and promotional material (leaflets, badges).

In our presentations and lectures we were always mentioning the foundation and informing young scientists in the discussion panels about the conservation grants the foundation provides. The foundation was mentioned in the interview we gave to the national television RTS. The foundation will be mentioned in every future documentary, conferences and festivals that we are to participate in.

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

The primary core team did the majority of the work:

Marko Nikolić was organizing photo safaris and providing amazing video material. He was educating our volunteers about nature photography and filming and was supervising our team in the field.

Djordje Vukojević created the visual identity of the project and was working on nature documentaries editing and filming.

Jelena Conić was organizing volunteers and communicating with the Faculty experts.

Jelena Stanković was organizing fieldwork and was teaching volunteers about hydrobiology research.

Dunja Ćirić was giving invaluable guidelines on the video editing and artistic side to the project.

Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković was coordinating the entire project and communicating between parties.

Our team was then broadened by additional members and I would like to take the chance to thank the following people:

Slobodan Marković was the most active volunteer organizing lectures, presentations and video broadcasts at festivals and conferences. He joined our filming crew and provided invaluable video material.

Msc **Danko Jović** and Dr **Miloš Popović** were supervising our fieldwork activities and helping us with any means possible, in addition my PhD supervisor **Dr Djuradj Milošević** was helping us with the advice on hydrobiology research and Professor **Bojan Zlatković** was helping in fieldtrip planning and botany.

Novak Jovanović made several short animations for our videos and was helping with the visual identity design during the entire project.

Jovana Cvetković was helping in botany (providing information about planning our fieldtrips in accordance to vegetation sessions) and with video filming.

I would like to mention the entire crew that was working on documentaries:

Video editing and drone footage: **Miroslav Mitić** - MMD Studio Niš (<https://www.facebook.com/mmdstudio>),
Music and sound:

Band "Mora" <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCWca3jUdF31mjwJITCvbaxg>
(**Nenad Tasić** and **Zorana Ignjatović**),

Narration: **Bratislav Prolović**,

Logo design and animation: **Djordje Vukojević** (<http://synezis.com>), **Novak Jovanović**,

Video material: **Marko Nikolić**, **Miloš Popović**, **Milan Marković**, **Jelena Živković**, **Dimitrija Savić-Zdravković**, **Miroslav Mitić**, **Nikola Spasić**, and **Miljan Stojanović**,

Project Volunteers and people who show up in our videos:

Aca Djurdjević, Ivan Medenica, Ivan Milosavljević, Branislav Dimitrov, Maja Jovanović, Katarina Matkić, Danilo Penić, Milan Ilić, Jelisaveta Mitić, and Marko Zdravković, several Institute employees and local people.

And additionally **Tijana Čubrić** provided us with some footage from her RFSG project and "ZOO Planet Niš" gave us the opportunity to film in their animal shelter.

12. Any other comments?

I would like to take the chance to thank The Rufford Foundation on doing such an amazing work on helping underdeveloped countries take care of their environment! Without your foundation, much less would have been done on nature protection in Serbia.

I believe that with this project we have opened the doors for many amazing actions that will contribute to the knowledge on hidden corners of Serbia and provoke environmental action with our stories and our research!

We are looking forward to future collaboration with your foundation.

Best regards from Serbia!