

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Dol Raj Thanet
Project Title	Understanding human-tiger interactions: implication for human-tiger conflict mitigation in Chitwan National Park, Nepal
Application ID	24675-B
Grant Amount	£10,000
Email Address	dolrajthanet@gmail.com
Date of this Report	March 06, 2020

1. 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 assess the human-tiger interactions in the buffer zone of CNP.				Altogether more than 100 interviews were undertaken with tiger victims’ families and their surrounding households. A manuscript is under preparation which will be submitted in an international peer-reviewed journal.
To assess the adaptation and mitigation practices initiated at community level to cope with the problem of HTC.				
To strengthen the ability of key stakeholders to resolve HTC to ensure a win-win situation for both tiger and surrounding communities.				Very useful skill/tool for community-based conflict mitigation initiative. During the course of project implementation, we realised that the key stakeholders need more capacity building training such as advanced community-based negotiation and dialogue skills.
To pilot environmentally sustainable economic and NRM initiatives to enhance the sustainability of conflict mitigation process.				

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

Political issues (an election) and implementation of a new constitution in the newly reformed federal government structures created some unforeseen difficulties in Nepal this influenced the implementation of project activities directly and indirectly. Furthermore, the devastating flood that occurred in the study area, in July and August 2018, affecting wildlife and its habitat and also damaging roads and other infrastructure created difficulties in conducting fieldwork. For this reason, we had to postpone the scheduled activities by a few months and also the next season as well.

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

- Based on field observation and household survey, the project found that adaptation and mitigation practices initiated at the community level to cope with the problem of human-tiger conflict are promising. In most cases, communities have been using those practices themselves and also with the

support from national park authority through the buffer zone programme and local federal government.

- Capacity building training for key stakeholders on conflict analysis, interest-based community mediation and negotiation skills provided them with an ample platform to develop the collaborative relationships needed to negotiate a resolution of the existing conflict. This also gives them an opportunity to build their conflict resolution skills and accompany them to resolve the conflict for a long-run, which contribute for a win-win situation for both tiger and surrounding communities.
- The project had identified six conflict-affected households (two households had lost their family members and four households who lost their livestock) in close coordination with national park authority and Buffer Zone User Committee / Groups during the project period, and provided them with financial support as a relief fund. The project had also provided some financial support and technical skills for grassland and wetland management in such conflict affected areas, which helped to reduce competition for shared resources and build positive relationships between conflict-affected communities and the park authority at least in some extent. The project has also assisted them for making contact with government line agencies and other conservation partners to leverage these activities. This initiative seemed promising in the project period and might be beyond that.

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

Local people, mostly from conflict-affected areas, were involved in conflict management training, group meetings conducted for conservation awareness and supported for economic and environmental initiatives such wildlife habitat (grass land/wetland) management. The local people were made aware of the conservation importance of tigers, ways to minimise human-tiger conflict and the provisions of existing government compensation scheme. Five local youths were employed during questionnaire surveys and accompanied the researcher during field works. As such, local youths developed data collection skills.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. I have plans to continue the work on large carnivores (especially tigers and common leopards) in Chitwan National Park and also possibly in Bardiya National Park, where the incidences of human casualties are very high in recent times. The intended future project would include the study of the ecological response of large carnivores to anthropogenic disturbances, to investigate the human-large carnivore interactions in the fragmented landscapes, participatory local conflict management initiative through capacity building and sustainable village development initiative linking with homestay and eco-tourism opportunity and awareness campaigns among others.

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

The preliminary findings of the project were shared among the local communities and uploaded to the website of local host institution, i.e. Tribal Society for Biodiversity (www.tsbcnepal.org.np). One manuscript is under preparation and in the near future will be submitted to a peer-reviewed journal for publication. I have plans to share the research results (final project report) to Chitwan National Park and the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC) of the Ministry of Forests and Environment of Government of Nepal for official record. I will also catch up any relevant workshop/conference to share the research findings.

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

The funds were utilised from May 2018 to January 2020 to implement the proposed project activities. Compared to other projects, it had more activities and some of them are seasonal, so it took more time. Political issues (an election), implementation of a new constitution in a newly reformed federal government structures, etc., are the major seen and unseen issues in Nepal and all those incidences influenced the project directly and indirectly. Because of this it has influenced for the extension of proposed project time schedule.

8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Communication cost	100	100		
Office supplies/materials	150	200	+50	Cost is slightly higher than proposed budget due to inflation rate.
Joint monitoring visit	300	200	-100	Transfer to other budget heads
Exposure visit (1 event)	500	600	+100	Participants number was higher than expected slightly increased the costs
Economic and NRM initiatives support	2100	2100		Committed with line agencies so there is no difference
Conflict analysis and resolution training	1650	1600	-50	Transfer to other budget heads
Project inception workshop	250	250		

Food and subsistence for project team members	2640	2700	+60	Cost is slightly higher than proposed budget due to inflation rate.
Transportation cost for project team members	480	420	-60	Transfer to other budget heads
Personnel cost/motivational fees for project coordinator	750	750		
Personnel costs/motivational fees for project field team	1080	1080		Committed with field team members so there is no difference
TOTAL	10000	10000		1 £ Sterling= NRs. 144.25

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

Tiger (*Panthera tigris tigris*) is a globally endangered species and, despite deploying extensive conservation efforts in the ground, the tiger population continues to decline in most of its global distribution range. Common leopard has been listed as Vulnerable in the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species and its global population is decreasing. Fortunately, the large carnivore (tigers and common leopards) population in Nepal is reported to have increased in recent years mainly due to increasing forested area coverage (44.7% in 2015) in the country as well as effective species conservation efforts made by the Government of Nepal in collaboration with various conservation partners. This may be one of the major causes for increasing human-large carnivore conflict, one of the most critical issues in Nepal, resulting into loss of livestock and even human lives too.

Therefore, the next steps should be focus on conflict prevention and mitigation efforts through active community participation and awareness, reinforcing sustainable village development initiative linking with homestay and eco-tourism opportunity, studying the ecological response of large carnivores (tigers and leopards) to anthropogenic disturbances and thereby understand the human-large carnivore interactions in the fragmented landscapes. Similarly, grassland and wetland habitat management activities should also be conducted in the buffer zone forests in addition to the core areas of the national park to improve the prey base for large carnivores. These efforts should be reinforced by research on large carnivore ecology and conservation, enhanced coordination among national park authorities, local communities, and relevant stakeholders, and promotion of alternative livelihood options for conflict affected households.

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

I used The Rufford Foundation logo in the presentation slides used in presenting the research results among local communities and CNP officials. The Rufford Foundation logo will also be used in slides during presentation of research results in the workshop/conference as well.

Yes, the Rufford Foundation got publicity during the course of our work. The participants of the awareness programmes were informed about the Rufford Foundation and support received from the foundation. The government institutions were informed about Rufford Foundation while requesting for research permit.

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

Mr. **Dol Raj Thanet** – Principal Investigator: Managed overall project activities throughout the project period and reporting.

Mr. **Abiral Acharya** – Member: Assisted for field level activity implementation

Ms. **Rakshanda Sedhai** – Member: Assisted for field level activity implementation and data collection

Mr. **Dipesh Raj Pant** – Member: Assisted for field survey and data collection

Mr. **Arjun Bhusal** – Member: Assisted for field survey and data collection

Mr. **Pratik Ojha** – Member: Assisted for field survey and data collection

Ms. **Sunita Mahato** - Collaborator: Field level coordination and other necessary support

Mr. **Shanta Bahadur Magar** – Collaborator: Field level coordination and other necessary support

Mr. **Ramesh Kumar Yadav** – Collaborator: Research permission arrangement from Chitwan National Park office and field level coordination

12. Any other comments?

I would like to thank all stakeholders of the project; The Rufford Foundation for major funding, Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation and Chitwan National Park (for granting research permission), Tribal Society for Biodiversity Conservation (TSBC Nepal) for co-funding (voluntarily support), co-workers (RSG - Grantees), community-based organisations, Buffer Zone User Groups, Forest User Groups, students, local youth and national park staff for their unaffordable contribution towards the successful implementation of project at ground level.

Finally, I owe my gratitude to my referees for their incredible support during the project design, implementation and suggestion for next steps. I would also like to appeal everyone and concerned agencies to support biodiversity conservation endeavours whatever you can from your side.