

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	Prakash Bhandari
Project title	Sustainable Utilisation based Conservation of NTFPs through Community Institutions in Chamba District, Himachal Pradesh, India
RSG reference	26.12.08
Reporting period	May 2009 to October 2010
Amount of grant	£4493
Your email address	bhandari.ps@gmail.com
Date of this report	October 2010

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
Building initial consensus within nearby villages through dialogue and awareness generation through field visits, meetings with focus groups and exposure visits. Selecting five new villages for initiating NTFP management.			Full	Five possible sites in Churah forest division were visited and of these, five villages of Guwadi Panchyat were selected for NTFP management and conservation related work. Several initial village meetings were held, and an exposure visit for the interested people was conducted to the site of our pilot initiative on the same lines. 42 people from five villages participated in the exposure visit.
Collection of baseline data on local status of NTFPs, current extraction patterns, dependence on NTFPs, demographic and economic status through participatory household and vegetation survey.			Full	The analysis of socio-economic data collected shows that the dependence on NTFPs collection from wild has drastically reduced due to depletion of the resource base during the last 5 years. This fact was corroborated by the results of vegetation survey.
Microplan formulation at village level involving mechanisms for functioning of village institution and the management (propagation, protection and harvesting) of NTFPs. To be undertaken through focus group, hamlet level and village level meetings.		Part		In three villages the microplans have been formulated, village level institutions formed and day to day functioning mechanisms put in place. Between two villages - Dabhu and Banyot there was a conflict regarding ownership over the area selected for NTFP conservation work. As a result, work could not progress much in these villages.
Implementation of microplans including capacity building for and establishment of community nurseries (for future supplies), propagation and protection of NTFPs by villagers.			Full	Plantation of <i>Valerian jatamansi</i> was done on 4.5 ha area in five villages (out of which we were already working with two villages) and one community managed NTFP nursery was established with 20,000 saplings of four different species of herbs.
Initiation of sustainable harvesting practices for plantation of NTFPs in Kut-Batoa village.	Not			Produce has still not been harvested due to the busy agriculture and grass harvest season. It is expected to be harvested in November 2010.
Advocacy for mainstreaming the approach into government's programmes		Part		This initiative has been selected for a collaborative project by the forest department. It shall be my endeavour to

				share the learnings and the approaches developed during the past two years with the Forest Department and the its collaborating partners in other areas.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

We faced a challenge in getting timely financial support to implement physical activities like plantation and development of NTFPs' nursery according to microplan prepared at village level. This activity had not been budgeted for the second season for the small grant. We tried to get funds for the activities through Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGS) but these plans required a consensus at the Gram Sabha (General Body of the smallest unit of local self governance) level. Due to postponement of the General Body meeting dates there was a delay and the plantation season had passed by then.

This difficulty has been overcome due to this initiative being now having been selected for collaboration by the State Forest Department where the department will provide financial support for the implementation of the micro plans prepared through our initiative.

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

1. Capacity building and formation of village level institutions with functional mechanisms for the management of NTFPs in five villages which are now successfully protecting and managing their forest resources for the last one year
2. Plantation of *Valeriana jatamansi* that was carried out in 4.5 ha of forest area in five villages and one community managed NTFP nursery was established with species like *Valeriana jatamansi*, *Picrorhiza kurroa*, *Aconitum heterophyllum* and *Jurinea macrophylla* having a capacity of 20,000 saplings. Both the plantation and nursery achieved more than 90% survival rate and the local villagers are protecting and managing these now on their own. We are providing continued monitoring and troubleshooting support.
3. Collaboration with the State Forest Department to get support for physical activities in the five selected villages and expanding the work to 10 more villages in the same area.

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

Since inception of project local communities were involved in each and every step of project activity. Demographic, socio-economic and vegetation related surveys were carried with their active involvement. To convince them regarding the possibility of community-based management of commercial herbs, exposure visit to the site of our pilot initiative (started 4 years back) and training programmes were conducted on micro-planning process and NTFPs nursery development. The area and the species for NTFPs plantation and nursery establishment were selected through consensus by local communities. They were remunerated in the form of labour wages for carrying out these activities. In future, these communities stand to benefit by selling the stock raised in the nurseries and from harvesting of the NTFPs planted in their forest areas.

The field officer, Khem Raj Khanna, working with me is from this area and during the project period he got exposed to and to trained on all aspects of implementation of the project. He shall prove an asset while replicating similar approach amongst other nearby communities.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes, this kind of initiative needs to be implemented for at least 15-20 years for the impact to be visible to the public outside the target area and to the policy makers. Expansion over a large geographic area is also a necessary strategy towards greater visibility and impact. We intend to continue the initiative in these five villages and expand the work in other villages where there are strong possibilities in terms of community need for such kind of initiative. To achieve goals related to developing basic processing and alternative marketing facilities, this work will need to be carried out at a much larger scale so that financially viable market surpluses are generated.

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

In its initiative on sustainable management of NTFPs the State Forest department has selected 'Lok Vigyan Kendra,' the organisation I am associated with as an implementation agency for Churah forest division of the Chamba district (where the current project was also situated). This shall provide us with a platform where we can share our learnings and approaches with other implementation agencies that are to carry out similar initiatives in other parts of state. We have already shared some of our strategies and experiences from this project with the other NGOs who had participated in the selection process of the state forest department. This had been done through a presentation prepared for the purpose which is being sent with this report.

- 1) We now plan to feed media and write articles for local news vernaculars and other print media to build awareness and acceptance for this idea amongst the communities at large.
- 2) Visited institutions like High Altitude Plant Physiology Research Center, Srinagar and Herbal Research and Development Institute, Gopeshwar, both from neighbouring Uttarakhand state and shared the experiences with them.
- 3) We intend to publish a booklet in Hindi for distribution to villagers on our experiences, especially those in the Kut Batoa village of Charada Panchayat, the site for our pilot initiative that started four years back.

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

The RSG was used for the actual length of the project i.e. 18 months, from May 2009 to October 2010.

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
Project Co-coordinator	2143	1820	-323	The budgeted amount was £4993 whereas £4593 was sanctioned. This cut was made to adjust the deficit of £500 in the amount received
Field officer	1179	980	-199	Above mentioned reason
Local conveyance	321	350	29	Increase in bus fare in the state
Communication Charges (Phone and internet charges)	214	200	-14	Service providers reduced mobile and internet charges
Printing and photocopying charges	107	108	1	
Stationery charges	100	100	0	
Office Rent	214	200	-14	Shifted to a place with lower rent charges
Accounts/office support expenses	107	107	0	
NTFP Nursery development and plantation support	381	468	87	Increase in daily labour charges in the state
Exposure visit to Kut Batoa	60	60	0	
Training on Nursery techniques	167	100	-67	Done in a local school building where we saved on the payment for the conference hall and for travel of participants.
TOTAL	4993	4493		*In GBP, at 1 GBP = 73 INR .

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

1. To consolidate the initiative in the villages we are already working with – both in the extent of physical works as well as institutional strengthening (collective planning, implementation, mutual transparency and accountability). We also plan to expand the initiative in more villages in the next 5 years time so that a viable amount of marketable surplus can be generated for the selected species and so that community management of commercial herbs gets accepted as a viable paradigm for the communities as well as planners.
2. In 10 years, time, we are looking at federating these small level village institutions to initiate and develop basic processing and alternative marketing mechanisms.
3. It will be important to carry to promote physical activities like nursery development and plantation of NTFPs on a large scale through Government sponsored schemes like Central Government's Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MNREGA) and different schemes implement by the State Forest Department. As the Forest Department has selected us as an implementation agency and assured to provide us limited

financial support for the implementation of the community generated micro-plans, we are expecting to up-scale the nursery development and regeneration work of NTFPs over a larger area in the coming few years.

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?

Yes, RSGF has been acknowledged in materials produced during this project like the manuals on NTFP nursery development, and Power Point Presentations. Locally, no facility was available to print RSGF logo on banners prepared during the exposure and training programmes, but we have certainly acknowledged RSGF as the supporting agency in the text of these banners.

11. Any other comments?

I would like to thank RSGF for their timely support and hope for its continued support to carry forward this initiative toward visible impacts.