

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Marcellinus Essah
Project Title	Conserving Evolutionary Distinct and Globally Endangered West African Manatee (<i>Trichechus senegalensis</i>) in Ghana
Application ID	29873-1
Grant Amount	£6000
Email Address	messah@inecgh.org
Date of this Report	April, 2021

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
Estimate the current population of manatees in Ghana.				The project used survey questionnaires to ascertain population levels of manatees in their breeding sites. However, the project team could not sight any individual of the species in the wild.
Determine the current threats to manatees in Ghana.				Through focus group discussions and interviews with stakeholders, this project successfully mapped all the key threats that militate against the conservation of manatees in Ghana.
Create conservation awareness and education on manatees in Ghana.				This project has undertaken extensive community education in key areas where the species was previously sighted. The project also undertook targeted conservation education and awareness creation for the local fishermen and community members in about 10 local communities.

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

This project was affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. About 5 months into the project, the first case of COVID-19 was recorded. Subsequently, COVID-19 cases increased, and movement restrictions and lockdown were imposed on some parts of Ghana. This affected partly the movement of the project team and delayed the implementation of aspects of the project. Fortunately for the project team, most of the community engagements were carried out before the COVID-19 cases were recorded in Ghana. Following the outbreak, the project team ensured that, all the safety protocols were strictly followed.

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

This project successfully mapped all the current threats West African manatees are facing in Ghana. This was achieved through focus group discussions and stakeholder consultations with the fisheries commission of Ghana and the Wildlife Division. Among other things, the stakeholders found increasing numbers of fishermen, decreasing suitable feeding and breeding sites for the species, increasing

demand of the species part for traditional medicine and plastic waste disposal as key threats to the species.

This project did not sight a single individual of the species. This result is consistent with previous surveys in the same river system. This reveals a very worrying population trend, and hints of the severity of the threats manatees face in Ghana. However, local fishermen have exceptions to this result and maintain that the species is overly elusive, which makes it difficult to be sighted during surveys. They are of the view that there is very stable population of manatees as there are obvious signs of feeding.

This project has increased the awareness of key stakeholders on the current plight and conservation status of the manatees in Ghana. Through community conservation education and stakeholder engagements, many more people are aware of the plight of manatees in Ghana. This has ultimately built a network of people who are interested in manatee conservation.

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

Local communities were involved throughout this work. Firstly, local communities were involved in focus group discussions and stakeholder workshops to ascertain the threats to manatees in Ghana. These included representatives from the various communities, as well as leadership of the fishing community, teachers and assembly members.

Again, about 5000 community members received education on manatees and their conservation status. Local community leaders played crucial roles in organising such meetings.

Furthermore, local fishermen played crucial roles in surveying potential habitats for manatees. They did not only provide canoe but also offered their local traditional knowledge on manatees and their habitats.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. This project plans to survey other estuaries for manatees in Ghana. The project aims to increase awareness and education to many more communities.

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

The results of this work will be published in a peer reviewed journal. Preliminary results of the work have already been submitted to important stakeholders of the project.

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

The project grant was used between December 2019 and April 2021.

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
Hiring of motorised canoes for surveys in river communities @£30/day	1000	750	-250	The project team was lucky to receive community subsidy for this component of the project.
Hiring of vehicle for fieldworks @ £50/day for 50 field days	1500	2000	+500	The increase fuel cost coupled with general increases in items due to inflation accounted for this difference
Cost of organizing meetings in at least 10 communities @ lump sum of £500	500	500		
Cost of subsistence for 3 team members @ £10/person per day for 50 days	1500	1500		
Cost of communication (internet + telephone bills) for the project period @ £300	300	350	+50	The COVID-19 pandemic substantially increased the need for online communication
Cost project monitoring and evaluation @ £300	300	300		
Printing and administration of questionnaire @ £100	100	95	-5	
Cost of branded project T-shirts @ £5/shirt for 100 shirts	500	500		
TOTAL	5700	5995	+295	

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

- Expand research on the species: There is the urgent need to expand and increase research on the West African manatee in Ghana. This is crucial as there is very little ecological research on the species.
- Increase conservation awareness on the species: The project needs to create further conservation awareness on the species in many more communities and areas where they are exploited.

- Find alternative livelihoods for the growing fishing community: There is the urgent need to reduce the dependency of the growing fishing community on the depleting aquatic resources. This can be achieved by initiating nature-based green jobs for local community members.

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?

Yes. The logo of the Rufford Foundation was prominently featured on all education materials. The logo was also used on the branded project t-shirts.

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

Maame Kisiwaa: Maame was responsible for leading the ecological component of the project. She led the fieldwork on the manatee survey on the Volta river system and historical sites. She was also instrumental in designing project questionnaire and supported in questionnaire administration and focus group discussions.

Berthy Kpiebaya: Berthy was responsible for designing and supervising our conservation education programmes. She was also responsible for the project monitoring and evaluation whilst assisting with interviews, community education and stakeholder fora.

Marcellinus Essah: Mr. Essah was responsible for the overall implementation of the project. He led all community engagements, including stakeholder meetings, focused group discussions and community education components of the project. He ensured all the necessary arrangements were made for the efficient implementation of the project objectives.

12. Any other comments?

The project team are grateful to the Rufford Foundation and the Institute of Nature and Environmental Conservation (INEC Ghana) for supporting this project financially. We are also to all the various stakeholders for their support and participation. Special thanks go to the Fisheries Commission for the support it provided for the successful implementation of the project.