Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Mohammed Armani
Project Title	Synthesizing Knowledge to Enhance the Management of the Coastal Savanna
Application ID	33686-1
Date of this Report	2 May 2024

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
Compile species composition on dry forest, thicket, and savanna vegetation in the coastal savanna of Ghana			X	The project performed an extensive desk study and compiled records of all species (flora; n=650) known to occur in the coastal savanna of Ghana. Further, the project re-surveyed 24 plots across six sites and engaged six communities to obtain information on economic and traditional importance of species, rate of harvesting and perception of drivers of vegetation change. Further, a WhatsApp Group has been created for sharing information about the project.
Dissemination of Project Results to Stakeholders			X	A stakeholder workshop was held on 24th January 2024 at the Conference Room of the Faculty of Agriculture, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi. The workshop brought together 33 stakeholders from 12 institutions working in the Ghanaian savanna landscapes. The meeting included representatives from local communities (eight), civil society (eight), government agencies (eight), and education and research (nine). At the workshop, the project outcome was presented, and stakeholders discussed sustainable pathways for managing savanna ecosystems in the context of

				climate change adaptation and mitigation.
Data analysis and manuscript preparation				Preparation of a manuscript covering the project has been completed. However, the initial project scope has been expanded to include all the savanna types of Ghana (i.e., Guinea and Sudan savanna). Data collection is ongoing for the other sites. The new data will be added to the project data and the resulting manuscript will be submitted to a journal for publication before the end of 2024.

2. Describe the three most important outcomes of your project.

a). Complete species (flora) list of the coastal savanna of Ghana including information on their conservation status, economic and traditional uses, and extraction pressure. This information will be essential for researchers and conservation practitioners.

b). Formation of the Plant Ecology and Nature Conservation Platform (PENC) – This is a WhatsApp Group created during the project. The group draws membership from students, researchers, civil society organisations who have interest in plant ecology and nature conservation across the savanna landscape of Ghana.

c). First Savanna Stakeholders Workshop in Ghana – The project supported and kick-started the first stakeholders meeting for those working on savanna ecology and conservation in Ghana. Currently, we are working on sustaining this initiative by looking for alternative source of funding.

3. Explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled.

No significant difficulty arose during the project implementation. However, the Rufford Small Grant has been extremely helpful to the Principal Investigator and created several other collaborations. The new and expanding collaboration meant project activities could not be implemented as initially planned. Therefore, the project implementation took much longer time than previously anticipated.

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

Local communities were involved in the project from the onset up until the completion. More than 20 individuals from local communities supported the identification and siting of project plots and data collection. More than 50 community members were part of the interviews conducted to obtain information on species use, extraction pressure and drivers of savanna landscape changes. Further, eight local community members participated in the final workshop. Over 20 members of local communities are active members of the PENC WhatsApp Group. Through these interactions, we have tried to improve the capacity of local community members to identify important species, gain insights on potential uses, and be aware of topical conservation issues in their landscapes.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

The project is currently being expanded to include the Guinea savanna and Sudan savanna zones of Ghana. We are currently re-surveying vegetation plots across the Ghanaian savanna landscapes, building new collaborations and exploring how existing plot-level information can be leveraged to support climate change adaptation in Ghana.

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

We first shared the results of the project during the savanna stakeholders workshop. Further engagement with more communities and stakeholders in the target landscape is being planned. We will start publishing highlights of project results on www.mohammedarmani.com as well as on other social media platforms.

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

During the implementation of the project, it become abundantly clear that there is very limited understanding of savanna ecology and conservation among the project stakeholders. Our conversation with stakeholders showed clearly that there is very little understanding or agreement on the role of fire and tree cover in these landscapes. Also, we recognised that climate change is strongly impacting the livelihoods of savanna dwelling communities in Ghana. We believe the next steps are to improve understanding of how savanna ecosystems work and how to build climate resilience in livelihoods activities (agriculture, charcoal production, etc).

8. 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, we used the Rufford logo in all communications with stakeholders.

9. Provide a full list of all the members of your team and their role in the project.

The project team comprised of the following individuals

Dr. Mohammed Armani –   Principal Investigator
Ms. Berlinda Birago Owusu –   Field Assistant
Ms. Efua Dei -   Field Assistant
Ms. Lillian Emefa Akpabli –   Field Assistant
Ms. Alhassan Samira-   Field Assistant
Ms. Abena Fosuaa Acheampong   Desk study
Mr. Delali Glakpe   Field Assistant and Desk Study

10. Any other comments?