

Project Update: April 2023

Project plan:

October 2022 to May 2023 – laboratory work on plant material identification and sediment diaspore bank processing in terms of seeds and oospore identification/categorization (detailed photographing and measurements) followed by viability estimation using TTC test. Compiling of datasets on recorded plants, oospores morphometry and viability and water chemistry in selected localities. Preparation of the local identification key i.e., field guide for identification of stoneworts in project area. Preparation of presentation of project results to interested parties – protected area managers, local authorities, NGOs and interested parties. Public lectures to students and school children.

Achievements:

During previous period, we continued to work on sediment diaspore bank processing in terms of seeds and oospore identification/categorisation (detailed photography and measurements) followed by viability estimation using TTC test and crush test. A few amazing findings arose from these analyses, when we coupled those with additional Scanning Electron Microscope analyses – two new species were detected at the locality where they have never been found in vegetation (or close nearby). This data is already processed and submitted for consideration in a prestigious scientific journal. We are proud to announce that in November 2022 we published one more paper supported by our previous Rufford Small Grant no. 25789-1. It can be reached at the following link <https://sciencepress.mnhn.fr/en/periodiques/algologie/43/12>.

We were also active in the field of project promotion. Our project and related activities were presented in the Science Fair organised for the Faculty of Biology students – “Biologist for a Day”, where Vanja Milovanović presented our project idea and stoneworts to our curious visitors (photos below). Also, I had been invited as guest for a radio show at Radio Belgrade 2, where besides other topics I was speaking about The Rufford Foundation and our Small Rufford Grants, promoting our successful collaboration and importance of nature conservation. Podcast is available at this link (conversation is in Serbian) <https://www.rts.rs/lat/radio/radio-beograd-2/5162024/alge-u-biotehnologiji.html>

Preparations of the local identification key i.e., field guide for identification of stoneworts in project area are started and in the phase of development, PDF and printed version will be provided at the final presentation of project results planned for end of May/beginning of June 2023.

During the next month we will work on the preparation of the final report and presentation of project results. Location of this event will be Botanical Garden “Jevremovac” in Belgrade, and as our dear and respected guests' management of the Botanical Garden and protected area managers will be invited, as well as students of the Faculty of Biology, University of Belgrade. Next update will and final report will follow soon.



