Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
Full Name	Lotanna Micah Nneji
Project Title	Enhancing studies and sustainable conservation actions for amphibians and reptiles in highly biodiverse and threatened Nigerian montane regions
Application ID	39045-B
Date of this Report	4th January 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
To provide comprehensive scientific data on the elevational distribution patterns of herpetofauna				Our study provided information on the richness and distribution patterns of herpetofauna across our study areas.
To examine the morphological and genetic adaptation patterns of herpetofauna across elevations				We examined the morphological adaptation patterns of herpetofauna across different elevations. We are currently conducting genetic studies to understand elevational adaptation patterns.
To understand the response of individual species to diseases, climate change, land use, and a host of other threats				We assembled geographic occurrences and swabs from amphibians. We are currently developing models and examining the amphibian swabs to understand the responses of the high-altitude herpetofauna to different threats.
To intensify conservation actions through widespread awareness programmes				We conducted conservation awareness in a secondary school as well as the surrounding communities.

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

a). Provision of a comprehensive inventory on the distribution patterns of herpetofauna in three poorly explored montane ecosystems in Nigeria: Our project provided a detailed information on the diversity and distribution patterns of amphibians and reptiles found in the three focal areas of study.

b). Discovery of several unknown herpetofauna species from Idanre hills, Nigeria: During our project, we recorded several unknown species that could be first country records or probable new species. We are currently working on ascertaining the taxonomic status of these species.

c). Increased conservation outreach programmes across communities and school surrounding several montane ecosystems in Nigeria: Our project included extensive

conservation outreach programmes that reached out to several schools and communities surrounding our study areas.

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

There is a high rate of insecurity and occurrences of kidnapping along the routes that lead to the locations where we are conducting our surveys. To combat this, we restricted our travel to solely during the day and adjusted our plans whenever there was an increase in the level of insecurity.

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

Throughout the period of our RSG project, we involved and worked with local communities. At first, we recruited the local people as field assistants for the herpetofaunal surveys. Also, we included local community members in our community-based conservation outreach in schools and local communities. Also, local community members including youths, women, farmers, etc., were engaged in the community outreach programmes. In a nutshell, we involved 15 local people as field assistants, and our outreach programmes involved over 70 local students and 50 community members.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We have plans to continue our RSG project. One of the key conservation issues identified during our project is lack of biodiversity literacy among the local community members. Thus, we plan to engage in biodiversity literacy programmes that will increase the biodiversity conservation awareness in the communities surrounding our study areas.

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

We are currently drafting a manuscript on the elevational distribution patterns of herpetofauna on three highly biodiverse montane regions in Nigeria. This manuscript will be published in an internationally peer reviewed journal and will be publicly available to scientists, non-scientists, NGOs and government agencies (e.g., Nigerian National Park) interested in understanding the distribution and conservation status of the herpetofauna in Nigeria.

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

The important next steps for the project are: (1) developing improved conservation literacy programmes in schools and communities surrounding our focal study areas; and (2) initiating alternative source of livelihood programmes for the local community members who depend on the montane regions.

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 Foundation logo in the following:

1. In the production of banners used during the community-based conservation programmes.
2. In the production of exercise books distributed in the schools/community during the community-based conservation programmes.
3. In the production of t-shirts used for field surveys and community-based conservation programmes.

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

Prof Abiodun Onadeko: He was involved in the field surveys of herpetofauna as well as in the identification of amphibian species.

Dr Mrs Adeola Oluwakemi Ayoola: She was involved in the genetic studies of the herpetofauna.

Engr Kelechi Precious Ilobi: He was involved in the community-based conservation awareness programmes and field surveys.

Engr Richard Oluchukwu: He was involved in documenting pictures and videos of herpetofauna and community-based activities.

Mr Patrick Ekpe: He was involved in coordinating the local team, and also, he was involved in the field surveys.

10. Any other comments?

Our RSG project on 'Enhancing studies and sustainable conservation actions for amphibians and reptiles in highly biodiverse and threatened Nigerian montane regions' was successful. We hope to continue working towards the conservation of the neglected and threatened amphibians and reptiles in Nigeria.

One of the conservation outreach programmes in Methodist Secondary School, Idanre, Nigeria.

Some of the montane endemic herps recorded during our field survey.