

## The Rufford Small Grants Foundation

### Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford Small Grants 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](mailto:jane@rufford.org).

Thank you for your help.

**Josh Cole, Grants Director**

#### Grant Recipient Details

<b>Your name</b>	Douanla-Meli, Clovis
<b>Project title</b>	Preserving dead wood over forest management practices and conservation of wood-inhabiting fungi in the Mbalmayo Forest Reserve
<b>RSG reference</b>	64.09.09
<b>Reporting period</b>	Final report
<b>Amount of grant</b>	£5750
<b>Your email address</b>	<a href="mailto:douanla-meli@uni-kassel.de">douanla-meli@uni-kassel.de</a>
<b>Date of this report</b>	26 September 2011

**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
Build awareness on: - Importance of Wood-Inhabiting Fungi in forest ecosystems for nutrients recycling. - Importance of fungi as Non-Timber Forest Product for populations			X	See text below
Build awareness on ecological and economical consequences of Coarse Wood Debris incineration in forest ecosystems.			X	See text below
Foster preservation of increasing quantity of CWD after forest clear-cutting		X		See text below

The aim of this project was to sensitise all stakeholders on the necessity of including fungal diversity into the ecosystem management strategy in the Mbalmayo Forest Reserve (MFR) where intensive forest degradation with coarse wood debris (CWD) destruction negatively affects fungal community. The project appeals to both the authorities as well as local community to sustainable management of CWD for the conservation of wood-inhabiting fungi (WIF).

The project conducted capacity building of stakeholders on the effect of current forest management practices on fungal diversity of MFR through following activities:

1. Raise the awareness of the authorities and local populations on the importance of fungi as NTFPs and in nutrients recycling in forest ecosystem.
2. Capacity building on fungi conservation
  - Build awareness on ecological and economical consequences of CWD incineration in forest ecosystem
  - Foster preservation of increasing quantity of CWD after forest clear-cutting.

With explanatory phase to the authorities of the Nyong and So'o subdivision where the MFR is located, the project's philosophy was explained and legal framework was acquired for starting up. These authorities which include the local administrative authority, the delegate for the subdivision of the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife (MINFOF) and the National Forest Regeneration Agency (ONAREF) are all involved in the management of the MFR and their involvement in the project facilitated the implementation and guaranteed successful issue.

The introductory workshop deserved credit to group administrative and traditional, school and higher education authorities to address the aftermath of the ongoing management of the MFR. Many of these stakeholders spoke about the difficulties to sensitise and get the populations participating in conservation of the ecosystem of MFR. Informative presentations were held to draw the attention of participants on the importance of WIF as food source for local community and as irreplaceable component of forest ecosystem. Awareness was raised on the increasing negative impact of forest environment degradation on fungal diversity.

During a further workshop, participants were asked at a round table to suggest strategies aiming at promoting WIF conservation in the context of extensive deforestation within the MFR. Discussions consensually led to the sustainable management of CWD as mean for conserving WIF. Thereafter presentations were held showing ecological and economical effects of CWD incineration in forest ecosystem.

For large-scale information dissemination, contents of workshops were compiled on flyers and posters. Flyers were distributed and posters displayed in nine schools in the vicinity of the MFR, in different villages within and around the MFR. Posters were also displayed and flyers deposited available to public in offices of above authorities.

Delegates working in concert and in collaboration with traditional authorities held in local language several meetings in different villages to carry out education and awareness of populations by repeating Information from workshops and using posters displayed at focal points of villages. After this programme, a 1-day field trip was organised for each village during which different land use patches were visited to explain or have positive impact on local community in understanding the aims of the project. Prior to practical phases of the project (campaign and field inventories), training courses were organized for Delegates and Students of National School of Water and Forestry of Mbalmayo (NSWFM) on methodologies to be used.

Promoting sustainable management of CWD was achieved by intensive field campaigns conducted by delegates and students of NSWFM during farming period from January to February, where populations spend more time in forest creating new farmland, thus extensive forest clear-cutting. The goal of sensitisation was the increase of CWD volume/hectare. After the campaign, CWD inventories have been conducted on different sites comparing the volume/hectare of CWD on newly created farmlands and neighbouring old ones. Subsequent fungal surveys were useful in enabling the appraisal of the strategy and CWD preservation on fungal assemblages. However, both activities the field campaign and fungal survey need to be extended and repeated in time.

**2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).**

During the project phase for raising awareness of local populations, community members initially showed reluctance to attend village meetings organised by delegates. Around the MFR rumour has it that the project may trickily aim to forbid and decry any agricultural activity within the MFR. To overcome this difficulty Delegates in concert with traditional authorities conducted series of meetings with leaders of women associations and cocoa farmers, which in turn spoke to populations to clear up the misunderstanding.

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

1-Because local populations strongly claim and make use of the usufruct rights on the products of the land in the MFR, the severe conversion of forest land is out of control. With the outreach programme conducted in this project local populations are more aware of the vulnerability and shrinkage of the forest resources and the urgent implementation of sustainable management of these resources in MFR.

2- Field campaigns raised awareness on the ecological damages of CWD incineration as common practice for clearing farmland after forest cutting. Local community is progressively accepting increasing preservation of CWD and is aware that CWD maintain and promote forest biodiversity and ensure lasting fertility of soil.

3- Implementing a strategy for conserving WIF is a major achievement of this project. With increasing volume/hectare of CWD and reduction of fire that destroys fungal mycelium, conservation of WIF assemblages in the MFR is boosted.

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

Since the management of the MFR has become a challenge that overwhelms local authorities, the project was well received, as education and awareness raising program liable to contributing to nature conservation in the MFR. For this reason these authorities gave an important impetus to the project and provided reliable facilities for the implementation. I am particularly grateful for the collaborative assistance by Dr. Linjouom Ibrahim and Dr. Tchouto Peguy of the NSWFM. The active participation of traditional authorities of all villages was a driving force to mobilisation of populations that actively participated to field campaigns and inventories of CWD and WIF.

Preliminary interviews indicated that villagers in and around the MFR are good familiarised with edible mushrooms but have most empiric knowledge on fungi. Information and knowledge on fungi as key factor for conservation strategy have been improved. Populations were then taught about an effortless strategy to promoting fungal biodiversity conservation in a context of soaring deforestation.

**5. Are there any plans to continue this work?**

I plan to continue this project. Local communities are now aware of the importance of sustainable management of CWD in the MFR but the sensitisation must continue and should be permanent. Training of more Delegates will enable increasing efficiency of the project. In this project, field campaign and fungal survey were conducted each only in two periods. However, many years of fungal survey are necessary to meet accurate conclusions.

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

Results from CWD inventories will be shared with authorities of the NSWFM who are interested in the biomass production inside the MFR. Students of NSWFM who participated to CWD inventory could also use data collected in this project in their thesis. Fungal samples are being identified and will be compiled as checklist to be published in mycological journals. Data on WIF assemblages under controlled management of CWD will be publishable after further fungal surveys and study of additional sites.

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

The anticipated timeline of 18 months from January 2010 to June 2011 has been largely exceeded (for 3 months) because some phases of the project such as field campaigns and fungal inventories

are season dependant. Field campaign was preferentially conducted from January to February during forest clearing in the MFR, following by fungal survey from March to June. Therefore analysis of data from CWD inventories and fungal surveys could be performed only after the second phase of CWD inventory of 2011 and the subsequent fungal survey. Also a huge amount of data was collected and the exploitation necessitated more time than expected.

**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.**

(Local exchange rate constant 1GBP = 746.454 FCFA BEAC)

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Computer, video projector and screen	300	300	0	The video projector and a screen have been hired for the workshops, training courses and meetings for the period of the project. We rather used a private laptop.
Posters, flyers, workshop documents	400	450	-50	The anticipated number of poster increased because many authorities wished to display one or more posters in their offices. Also some barkeepers and shopkeepers around the MFR claimed to have a poster in their shop.
Workshops and seminars and meetings	2700	2550	+150	Four training workshops / seminars were conducted. Two workshops as Educative Talk for each of the seven villages. Planning meetings were conducted quarterly. Also, four exchange visits were conducted grouping Delegates and team members of all villages.
CWD inventories	1050	1050	0	CWD inventories were conducted during 2 weeks in two periods. Team members included Students of NSWFM, trained villagers and guides.
Technical assistance to farmers	300	350	-50	Sawing machines were hired and personal recruited to help farmers to split up and delocalise big logs inside farmlands
Encouraging local communities which highly engaged in CWD conservation	300	300	0	Two villages actively engaged in CWD conservation by the high volume/hectare after the campaign were endowed with £150 each
Mycological trainings and fungal surveys	700	760	-60	Two persons from each village were trained (three trainings) to recognize, document and sampling fungi with preliminary determination. Surveys were

				conducted for 2 weeks during two periods. Evaluation meeting were held after each collecting period.
<b>Total</b>	5750	<b>5760</b>	-10	

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

Regarding the keen interest of local community within and around the MFR to fungi as food and medicine, conducting an ethnomycological study will be useful in providing local communities the information and data on mycological resources. Local community needs to be taught in improving the utilisation of these fungal resources. This will culminate by training people with the aim of creating a mycological association.

**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?**

The RSGF logo was used on posters, flyers and letters. We also used the RSGF logo in each power point presentation during workshops. Support of RSGF was always acknowledged at the end of each workshop and it was explained to participants the main objectives of RSGF.

**11. Any other comments?**

On behalf of all the team-members, I greatly acknowledge the funding of the Rufford Small Grants Foundation for the implement of this project, which contributes to nature conservation in the MFR.