

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.

Thank you for your help.

Josh Cole, Grants Director

Grant Recipient Details

Your name	Gustavo D. Danemann
Project title	Community development and biodiversity conservation of the Sierra de San Francisco (World Heritage Site and Biosphere Reserve) through ecotourism.
RSG reference	9180-1
Reporting period	January 2011 – December 2011
Amount of grant	£6,000
Your email address	gdanemann@pronatura-noroeste.org , tromero@pronatura-noroeste.org
Date of this report	February 2 nd 2012

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
<p>Improved capacity of a minimum of 25 individuals in the Sierra de San Francisco WHS to offer ecotourism services in their communities, satisfying basic international standards</p>				<p>Although we committed to train a minimum of 25 local inhabitants, we were able to reach with our training activities a total of 45 people (women, men, and children). Capacity building to provide ecotourism services included basic English, environmental interpretation (landscapes, flora, fauna, cave paintings and awareness of the natural resources conservation), basic first aids, food handling and hygiene, and technical advice to integrate a rural tourism business, while conserving local traditions (ranching and leather handmade crafts).</p>
<p>Design and implementation of three ecotourism tours focused on ranches, hiking and flora and fauna monitoring trips</p>				<p>We designed and implemented three new ecotourism products for the Sierra de San Francisco. Before this project, the local guides only offered cave painting tours. This project supported the design and implementation of a new tour package projected to be all-inclusive in the short term, involving: (a) an interpretative hiking tour (or mule riding tour, as tourist prefers) to visit a ranch and participate in ranch activities; (b) an interpretative flora hiking trail; and (c) observation of cave art nearby the main Sierra town. Instead of the originally planned flora and fauna monitoring trip, we designed and established a new interpretive trail hosted by local guides in the visitor reception area, with a photo exhibit and a documentary video as new interpretative tools. We decided to change the monitoring trip plan in benefit of this interpretative trail because the first one required the advice and permit of the National Protected Area Commission, which negotiation may take several months to be completed.</p>

Objective	Not achieved	Partially achieved	Fully achieved	Comments
Design of an interpretative trail which include information on traditional use of local plants				We designed three interpretative trails proposed by the local community. The trails were traced after a diagnosis of the local flora, which helped to determine the best and floristically diverse routes. In May 2012 the National Institute for Social Development (INDESOL), assigned economic support to this project, allowing us to complete the installation of one of the designed interpretative trails. This 600 m trail was equipped with 20 wood signals (hand made by Kumiai indigenous women from northern Baja California), that provide interpretative information on the traditional uses of 16 different local plants, on the historic trail that was formerly used by elder inhabitants of that region to cross to the Gulf of California to collect sea food and sea salt, use the red soil to build adobe houses, and distilled a traditional dessert agave tequila (a technique that is on the verge of extinction).
With the RSGF funds we were also able to print 1,000 promotional brochures on the Sierra de San Francisco, which are now being distributed in key tourist points throughout the Baja California Peninsula. These brochures include information about the site and the activities created in this project, in order to promote these new tourism products and services.				

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

We did not find any relevant difficulty. Since the beginning of the project the local community was totally receptive, participating with remarkable commitment. They hope this project will bring more opportunities for development, education and health. Also, they are aware of the importance to preserve the archaeological site and natural landscape, and they know that ecotourism is a great tool to reach that. However, the low education level of locals and their isolation limit their capacity to retain information in the immediate term, making it critical to maintain the external support until they became able to deal with the standard requirements of the international ecotourism business. The main road to the Sierra de San Francisco community is planned to be paved by early 2013, which combined with our efforts to promote the site through websites and brochures, will hopefully bring more visitors to the area. This conservation project must be fully implemented before it occurs, in order to protect the site as well as the traditions and culture of the local community.

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

I.- *Improved capacity of the local community regarding ecotourism services:* For the first time the inhabitants of the Sierra de San Francisco received a complete and dedicated training package, which allowed them to integrate their traditional knowledge on the site with the kind of information and serviced expected by international visitors. Particular attention was given to safety issues, including emergency response capacity and food handling hygiene.

II.- *Creation of new ecotourism services to create economic incentives for conservation.* Despite being a World Heritage Site and being included within one of the largest Biosphere Reserves in the world, this site was practically abandoned regarding tourism activities and social development. Tourism was offered through the last 20 years with almost no preparation or formalism, due to visitor's demand but without organisation. The creation of these new basic and simple tourism services will help to show a new face of the site and also create new experiences for visitors as well as the local community.

III.- *Creation of a new concept and understanding among inhabitants of the ecotourism potential of the site and its importance for conservation and support social development.* In two years of community-based work, local inhabitants develop a new understanding of their opportunities as traditional Baja Californian ranchers, and of the authenticity of the Sierra and its community as a valuable ecotourism destination. Now they have tangible products, and they want to keep developing them with the participation of woman and children, and not only men, as it was before.

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

At the beginning of 2010, the project coordinator worked closely with many of the Sierra de San Francisco inhabitants, who expressed their needs and expectations regarding ecotourism. That information based the diagnosis used to design the whole project. We chose the most viable of the proposed activities to be implemented in the short term, with the support and participation of more than 40 locals. They made the interpretative trail by hand, and are now working hard to organise their new tourism projects. The key of these efforts is to make the local community the leaders and defenders of the Sierra de San Francisco, and ensure that they will benefit from tourism as an opportunity of socio-economic development and conservation.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes: we expect to have a third and final year of community-based activities in the sierra, in order to consolidate our previous efforts. In the first 2 years, we made a diagnosis and the community received the tools and guidance to create a new ecotourism project; we trained them to become informed local guides who can convey information for visitors with the aim to protect the site and the community. In the following phase we only need to guide and provide advice to them, to establish and manage a formal ecotourism business. They need to be formally established, have enough and new materials, as well as more infrastructure (composting toilets, fences, signals, etc.), have a business plan that includes prices and an organisation scheme. They also need to practice all the information they got in the workshops and run a culture-traditions rescue programme linked to ecotourism.

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

The project achievements and products are shared through the website www.sierrasanfrancisco.com, designed as part of this project. Since this project is part of our Tourism for Conservation programme, we also share this project with our donors and public in our organisational Annual Report. We involved all governmental and non-governmental institutions in charge or nearby the Sierra to joint efforts in order to protect this unique site, and have their support. Pronatura, through its programmes, promotions and social networks, spreads this information and share with others the value of this initiative.

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

This project was developed from January to December, 2011. All goals were achieved exactly in the period of time proposed to RSGF. However, some activities did take longer than scheduled, because of the local volunteer's lack of time. Anyhow, they all enthusiastically participated in the installation of the trail infrastructure without receiving any payment.

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.

Item	Budget	Expenditures	Balance
SALARIES AND BENEFITS			
Project Coordinator	1,986.00	1,988.77	(2.77)
Administrator & Accountant	444.00	450.01	(6.01)
<i>Sub-total</i>	2,430.00	2,438.78	(8.78)
FIELDWORK			
Lodging	312.00	238.77	73.23
Per Diem	620.00	589.70	30.30
Fuel	938.00	1,030.73	(92.73)
<i>Sub-total</i>	1,870.00	1,859.20	10.80
CONTRACTS			
Training Workshops (Kuyima)	937.00	938.31	(1.31)
Ecotourism consultant	313.00	313.44	(0.44)
Materials and prints	156.00	156.22	(0.22)
<i>Sub-total</i>	1,406.00	1,407.96	(1.96)
OFFICE EXPENSES			
Office Rental	186.00	186.26	(0.26)
Phone, Internet	108.00	107.81	0.19
<i>Sub-total</i>	294.00	294.07	(0.07)
Total	6,000.00	6,000.00	(0.00)

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

1. Guidance and advice to establish a formal rural tourism business (managed by locals).

2. Installation of additional basic tourism infrastructure (composting toilets, signals, fences, etc.).
3. Additional training for local eco-guides (cave paintings interpretation, environmental interpretation, first aids, run conservation projects, etc.)

These steps will help to consolidate this project with the aim to strengthen sustainable community development.

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?

Yes. We used the RSGF logo in our Tourism Diagnosis digital file, in the 1,000 brochures we printed, in the Sierra de San Francisco's website and in the draft of the promotional video that we are currently editing.

11. Any other comments?

We deeply appreciate the support of RSGF. These funds not only helped to achieve these goals in Sierra de San Francisco, but also encouraged the Pronatura's Tourism for Conservation programme to continue implementing sustainable tourism projects in other priority sites of Northwest México. We will look forward and do our best to maintain the RSGF support during the following years. Thank you for your interest and support to our conservation efforts!