

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	A.Z.M. Manzoor Rashid
Project title	Assessing co-management approach to protected areas management of Bangladesh in regards to conservation, livelihoods and institutional sustainability : a case study of Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary
RSG reference	12.02.10
Reporting period	July 2010- June 2011.
Amount of grant	£ 5800
Your email address	Pollen_forest@yahoo.com
Date of this report	1.07.2011

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
1. To assess the role of community participation in formulating sustainable co-management approach in the protected areas of Bangladesh.		√		The Co-management concept is relatively a new one which was introduced in 2004. It will take time to evaluate its full potential. A continuation of the project will help to explore in detail the scenario.
2. To determine the role of protected area in fostering livelihood of the forest dependent community		√		A marked change has been noticed with the attitude and perception of the local community regarding PA management for conservation and development.
3. To assess the institutional sustainability of the co-management in the protected area management – the role of CMCs		√		Co-management Committees (CMCs) as local institution is still in a developing phase, taking shape gradually through constant capacity building process. It will take some more time to evaluate its full potential as an organisation to harness the goals and objectives of co-management.
4. To explore existing policy support to achieve sustainable conservation and development through co-management approach	√			Formulation of policy and providing legal support to the management of PAs are dynamic processes that have evolved with time and with demand of the situation. However, the present study succeeded to get insights into the relevant legal and policy instruments available to implement co-management as an approach of PA governance.

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

The study was conducted in a wildlife sanctuary which is the habitat and corridor of Asian elephants. In recent years the frequency of elephant induced incidents has increased significantly and it has influenced the study quite noticeably. During the study period several incidents of human-elephant conflict took place especially during the harvesting period of paddy cultivated within and nearby villages of the sanctuary. As the study involved a significant number of survey work with local people of various stake, hence a mutually agreed schedule was developed to conduct the survey. But due to some occurrence of the conflict, it was difficult to maintain the schedule by the study team and in many instances were compelled to reduce the number and timing of the interview session to cope

up with situation .In some instances we had to change the sample units of the interview as the selected people were unavailable at the later stage.

At the beginning of the study, the study team faced problem of accommodation since there was no such provision. So the team has to move from the main city frequently which significantly influenced the time and budget of the study. Although there was facility within the sanctuary area but due to security problem we could not avail that facility. However, at later stage a temporary arrangement was made in a village near to the wildlife sanctuary.

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

The study was a pioneer of this kind in Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary after the initiation of the co-management approach for the management of the PAs. Within the study period it managed to create a significant impact on the community regarding the importance of conservation through a series of consultation in the form of inception workshop, focused group discussions (FGDs) and face to face interviews. Furthermore the ongoing project of the Bangladesh Forest Department in the name of Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC) also exerts significant influence in changing the community perceptions to a certain extent. The role of protected areas in general and Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary in specific for the biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihood is now well perceived by a greater quarter of the community and the visible outcome of this is the reduction of illegal felling of forest trees from the sanctuary area. According to the statistics of the local range office and by the Co-management Committee (CMC), there were no incidents of tree felling (except for one incident) after the initiation of the co-management programme in the study area except for one. The three major outcomes that the project has been able to achieve can be summarised as follows:

1. The project has been able to establish strong and dependable linkages with the community through repeated consultation, discussion and information sharing events including workshop, interview, FGD, personal contact and informal sharing. Such network /platform can further be used to get more insights in any issues of natural resource management (NRM) and social development.
2. The project managed to create a position to bring confidence of the community regarding the role and performance of the CMC as an institution to look after the conservation and sustainable livelihood issues holistically.
3. The top most outcome of the project has been the creation of awareness about the importance of wildlife for the benefit of the conservation as well as for community living in and around the sanctuary. The flora and fauna if well managed and protected will ultimately influence the livelihoods of the forest dependant community considerably. However, the success of this approach will only be possible if a shared governance mechanism is in place through a consensus.

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

Before manifesting the community involvement and the benefits derived out of the present study it is worthwhile to give a brief description of the study site for better understanding and clarification of the context.

Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary, located in south-eastern region (comprising Reserved Forest area of 7,763.94 ha, covering 7 forest blocks), was gazetted in 1986. The Sanctuary falling within Banskhal and Lohagara Upzilas of Chittagong District and Chakoria Upzila of Cox's Bazar District covers seven union councils (Chunati, Adhunagar, Herbang, Puichari, Banskhal, Borohatia and Toitong).

Human settlements and cultivation by the settlers and the people living beside the sanctuary are playing important role in the conservation and management of the *Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary* (CWS). Development pressures on forest land, the subsistence dependence of local communities on neighbouring forests have been important aspects of forest management. As a result, the biodiversity conservation priorities in CWS cannot be set in isolation from local forest resource use and development. Furthermore, the human-elephant conflict in the recent years poses significant concern to rethink the whole scenario of management deeply. The Management Plan for CWS has developed keeping in mind: the i) protection and conservation of all remaining ecosystems including natural forests and constituent biodiversity in the sanctuary, ii) rehabilitation of degraded forest ecosystem, iii) identification and restoration of interface landscape and development of co-management agreements (by linking PA conservation with benefit sharing arrangements) with key stakeholders to reduce ongoing habitat damage by helping them achieve sustainable livelihoods through participatory forest use and alternative income generation activities, and iv) provision of support to better administration and management of the sanctuary including capacity development, infrastructure, training, and wider extension and communication.

The present study mainly dealt with the community people directly or indirectly involved with the PA management through co-management approach. Two CMCs were initially selected to reach the vast section of the community living in and around the wildlife sanctuary. Several monthly meetings of the CMCs were attended and follow-up were made to determine the operational attributes of the institutions. The members of the executive committee were the focal point to make contact with the general people at the beginning. Selected committee members accompanied the project team during the study period especially during interviews, FGD and inception workshop. This mechanism helped significantly in attracting communities' response regarding the new intervention of protected area management called co-management. The community were involved with the project in a diversified way and hence got the benefits accordingly. This can be summarised as follows:

1. The project with its continuous sharing, discussion and follow up programmes has been able to create awareness among the villagers about the importance of conservation in enhancing sustainable livelihood that will also benefits the future generation too. The remarkable reduction of illegal felling of the forest tree species was one of the salient indicators in support of this claim. Furthermore, community people are actively participating in the joint patrolling teams in the name of Community Patrolling Group (CPG) to prevent illegal activities inside the wildlife sanctuary .Such involvement also playing a significant impact in creating care about the biodiversity and its conservation importance.
2. Two field guide selected from the community were engaged in different capacity to assist the study team during the survey and collecting data through formal and informal process. They received monthly honorarium for about 5/ 6 months depending on their engagement. Such scopes create confidence among the interested people to be more caring to the conservation activities in order to harness more opportunities like this.
3. Face to face interview with various stake of community helped building partnership between project staff and the villagers that can be used further as a platform for any future interventions related to environmental and socio-economic development programme.

4. The study helped the local people to get more insights into the co-management programme implementing by the forest department through a project named IPAC. Our project also helped to remove mistrust regarding forest department's role in community development through conservation of the protected area.
5. Local people were introduced with the major forest tree species through field excursion inside the forest to demonstrate practically about trees, their importance and method of conservation. This approach created opportunity for any interested people to see and know about the major floral resources of the study area. This is one of significant outcomes of the present study that will have long lasting impact on nature conservation.
6. Group visit was arranged inside the wildlife sanctuary to acquaint the local community with the flora and fauna posed greater impact on ecology of the area too since the community understood the importance of regeneration in maintaining biodiversity of the area. Maintaining a good habitat for elephants can save the resources of the villagers and reduce the frequency of human-elephant conflict was well perceived through this project.
7. The young generation of the community is heading more towards conservation efforts' than ever taken by Forest Department of Bangladesh through the co-management approach. They have realized the prospects of eco-tourism that can be a viable source of livelihood using the resources of the wildlife sanctuary. The present Rufford supported project also strengthened the process through sharing experience with the trained eco-tourist guides of the study area. Many of them are constantly keeping contact with us in search of information, resources etc.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes it is highly important that the work continues for another term to attain its full length success. I will apply for the second phase grant from RSG to accomplish and attain the desired goals and objectives out of this study.

As mentioned earlier that the concept of co-management in the protected areas management of Bangladesh is relatively a new concept. With the official inception of the project *Nishorgo*, co-management approach has begun in five protected areas of Bangladesh during 2004-2009. After the completion of the pilot project this approach scaled up further through a new programme called Integrated Protected Area Co-management (IPAC). Currently it is being implemented in 28 protected areas of Bangladesh including some of the wetlands of Bangladesh.

The present study managed to initiate a better understanding and awareness among the community regarding the value of conservation and how this effort can help them to enhance and secure their livelihood. The CMC as a local institution playing crucial role in the governance of the protected areas. However, to grow as an independent organisation that is technically, financially and physically capable of undertaking all the decisions needed for the betterment of the wildlife sanctuary is a time worthy process. The present study apprehended more collaboration between community via CMC and the project team to attain desired goals of the project. So it is imperative to continue the study subject with the availability of the funding. Co-management being a new concept must be patronised through proper support to harness the effective outcome that will ensure sustainable conservation and livelihood of the people dependent on the protected areas.

It is also too early to summarise, how co-management is influencing the overall governance of the protected areas. A further continuation of the project can only project the dimension of the approach in a more decisive way.

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

The outcome of the study is intended to be shared with the scientific and general community in various ways. Some of the strategy that taken can be summarises as follows:

1. The basic objectives, aims and goals of the project was shared through an inception workshop arranged in the study area by engaging various stakeholders ranging from park authority, CMC members, villagers, NGOs to civil society.
2. Three focused group discussions (FGD) were organised with women, community people and field level park staffs of Bangladesh Forest Department. The FGDs acts as platform to disseminate the objectives of the study to the vast members of the community through the participants apart from gathering general views regarding the concept. The participants got a good hand of message regarding their rights, responsibilities and accountability in order to ensure sustainable management of the *Chunati Wildlife Sanctuary* that will also impact in their livelihood too.
3. A completion meeting was arranged at community level to share the outcomes of the projects. Comments, views and suggestions from the community were also shared regarding the project and co-management as a means of governance in the protected areas of Bangladesh.
4. A paper prepared based on the outcomes of the project has been accepted in the 1st Bangladesh Forestry Congress, held from 19-21 April, 2011. The paper acknowledged the generous support of the Rufford Small Grants Foundation (RSGF) in undertaking the study (attached herewith).
5. An article is under preparation based on the outcomes of the project to be submitted in a peer reviewed journal. The generous support of the RSGF will also be acknowledged here that will help the readers to get idea about the mission and vision of Rufford in the field of conservation.
6. The detailed report upon completion will be submitted to CMC, Bangladesh Forest Department and interested professionals for further reference, circulation and use.
7. Couple of popular articles in national dailies will be published highlighting the importance of the protected areas in conservation and the available RSG support for the project.
8. A presentation is under active consideration to be arranged at University of Western Sydney, Australia during November, 2011 to share the findings with the academia and researchers working in the field. This will also give a good hand opportunity to disseminate the study findings and will publicise the activities of RSG to the vast section of people.

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

The study proposal was made for 10 month duration starting from July, 2010 to April, 2011. However the project was extended for another 2 months due to the delayed inception of the project. The detailed activities under broad heading are presented herewith:

Activities	Jul 10	Aug 10	Sept 10	Oct 10	Nov 10	Dec 10	Jan 11	Feb 11	Mar 11	Apr 11	May 11
1. Performing banking formalities	■										
2. Official formalities to obtain permission to conduct study	■	■									
3. Selection of the research associate and selection of community staff		■									
4. Inception workshop and First FGD			■								
5. Interim follow-up session with project staff					■						
6. Second and third FGD				■	■						
7. Fieldwork				■	■	■	■	■	■		
8. Final meeting										■	
9. Reporting											■

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.

The total budget for the project was £6447 and the amount sought for the project from RSG was £5800. RSG Foundation approved the budget accordingly. However, after the collection of the amount in USD it stood about \$8336 as on 5th July, 2010. This amount is equivalent to £5489 (as per collection date exchange rate; a copy of the bank can be supplied if necessary). So the following budget expenses presented based on the received amount in local currency equivalent to GBP.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Pre-project preparation				
1. Fess, tax and official payments	75	60	15	Extra amount used in other head
2. Bank fees	30	311	-281	Including local bank fees and Intl. transaction fees deducted before the actual amount deposited in the account
Research Material and equipment procurement				

1.	Digital voice recorder	45	40	5	Expended from other source(not fm RSG budget)
2.	Digital camera	310	315	-5	Adjusted with previous item
3.	USB 16 GB -2 Nos	30	33	-3	
4.	Books ,maps and documents procurement	150	160	-10	
5.	Accessories for herbarium	25	30	-5	
6.	Rain gears	20	35	-15	
7.	Measuring tape and marking tape	20	30	-10	
Stationery					
1.	Paper, pencils, marker, drawing sheets, boards etc.	40	35	5	
2.	First aid box	30	30	0	
3.	Batteries for voice recorder	30	25	5	
Printing and communication					
1.	Xerox	40	45	-5	
2.	Computer printing	40	35	5	
3.	Phone &Fax	35	45	-10	
Honorarium for personnel					
1.	Research Associate-2 nos.@£78 /month(6x78+5x78)	850	858	-8	It was calculated wrong in the approved proposal(£925)
2.	Local guide- 2 Nos.	780	720	60	
3.	Key informants per diem during interview/survey	70	110	-40	Participants' no. and rate has increased as per the local context.
Training and field trip					
1.	Inception workshop	30	40	-10	Price fluctuation of the commodities and rent for hiring accessories
2.	FGD- 3 event	45	55	-10	
3.	Field trip with local participants	300	250	50	No. of participants reduced hence costing was less
Travel					
1.	Major travel	1000	1000	0	
2.	Local transport	250	275	-25	High demand with less availability specially during evening time
Lodging and food					
1.	Accommodation	800	820	-20	Price increment specially the local accommodation
2.	Food	500	575	-75	Price fluctuation. Needs to invite local community people in many instances to get their support
Completion workshop, publication, CMC support		595	530	65	

Miscellaneous	307			
Total budget	6447	6462	15	
Rufford approved budget	5800		The rest expenditures covered through a research grant from Australia.	
Actual amount deposited in Bank	5489			

1£ = 102.5 BDT (as on 5th July, 2010).

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

While conducting the study through RSG supported project it constantly felt the need of more awareness and capacity building of the community and the local organisations namely CMC. In order to bring success in the management of protected areas through co-management approach, it is imperative to strengthen the technical and financial capacity of the CMCs. They need to have their own budget to implement projects independently. Such capacity will help them to bring confidence in the local community for more efforts towards conservation if it is able to address the issues of livelihood.

The devolution of power is very important to make co-management a success. Local community should be given rights and responsibilities in decision making process. More participation and cooperation from the local governments deemed as urgent needs to foster the zeal of community conservation approach like co-management. Community governance must be ensured to attain desired goals and objectives of conservation that will truly reflect local people's needs and aspirations too.

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 support from RSG has been mentioned in many instances throughout the process of project implementation. In producing conference paper, journal article and popular writing in the newspaper the name of the RSG and its generous support has been duly acknowledged. The goals, objectives and the support provided by the Rufford were frequently mentioned during the workshops i.e. inception and final one. Publicity of Rufford will also be made in the planned presentation to be held in Australia.

11. Any other comments?

We have started the journey towards a participatory natural resource management through co-management that actively involves community in decision making process. The devolution of power in the governance of protected areas will only be possible when local people are empowered with rights, access and responsibility of certain resources like protected area. The concept needs to be tested in context to the local situation instead of applying it as a panacea for conservation and development. The present study investigated the notion of the participatory governance in a short period of time. A continuation of the study can give more insights into the practicability of the concept in context of Bangladesh.