

The Rufford Foundation Final Report

Congratulations on the completion of your project that was supported by The Rufford 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	Kakhaber Sukhitashvili
Project title	Eco-tourism potential assessment of the River Alazani Riparian Forests and to draw action plan.
RSG reference	16735-B
Reporting period	from May 2015 till the end of November 2015
Amount of grant	£7920
Your email address	kakhiberius@gmail.com
Date of this report	30/11/2015

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
Project presentation in Telavi Civic Engagement Center, where the representatives of Akhmeta, Telavi, Gurjaani, Kvareli, Signagi, Dedoplistskaro and Lagodekhi municipalities will be invited. Stakeholders will get full information about the project. The event will be transmitted by media.			X	The project presentation was held at Telavi CCE where the participants received information about the aims of the project, its deliverables; during the presentation the project team also noted down the comments from the participants concerning the project activities.
Organise meetings with viticulturists, bee-keepers, owners of wineries (those who have wine tourism) and owners of hunting lands		X		The owners of few wineries refused to meet us. The meetings with most of other owners were successful and we got information about their views of tourist potential of Alazani riparian forests and the surrounding settlements as well as ongoing touristic events and existing trends. The most interesting appeared the prospective of expending the production the ecologically pure honey as well as the importance of developing the hunting farms
Arrange a meeting with tour operators and independent guides, who guide tourists in the target area and its surroundings.			X	Upon meeting all the tour operators operating in the region, we identified the problems they face working in the region: the infrastructure is missing, the locals have the lack of information and there is a severe deficiency of new touristic products – these are the three main problems identified. It was mentioned as well that the government pays less attention to developing new touristic products in this region. During the project we tried to find people interested in tourism, in this regard we should mention community centers at Heretiskari and Pshaveli.
Conduct social survey with attorneys of local communities about economic and			X	Sociological survey was conducted in 20 villages of the target area. A corresponding report was drawn up

social/cultural potential of the villages.				which was introduced to related state and community organisations (report is attached).
Deliver courses of seminars for those interested in tourism in the target region.			X	For the youth of the target villages the training sessions were arranged with five professional trainers invited to give trainings in tourism and sustainable development. Totally six seminars and training events were conducted: 1. Democracy and tolerance for the tourism development; 2. Preparing and managing a business project in agro tourism; 3. Eco and Agro tourism prospects in the region of Kakheti; 4. Skills required for the guide; 5. Marketing tourist activities via media and social networks; and 6. Personal motivation and development.
Prepare, publish and distribute in the region 2016 year calendar.			X	It was planned to issue a calendar within the project frames, though we produced a brochure based on the request from the locals and the people interested in tourism, where the tourism potential of the target area is covered in greater details. We have enclosed the dates of all local religious and public holidays to the brochure (the electronic version of the brochure is attached).
Create website about the river Alazani riparian forests social and cultural environment, tourism products and recent service.			X	The webpage is constructed and it is undergoing the finishing touches at present. It is worth mentioning that this webpage covers not only the Alazani riparian forests but also the region of Kakheti, its environment protection related issues and the tourism topics www.environmentalkakheti.ge . Very soon the webpage will be a universal electronic source for the society interested in the environmental and sustainable development issues of this region.
Prepare the summery document of the project „Assessment of tourism potential of the river Alazani riparian forests”		X		The draft document is drawn up already; it is worth mentioning that the part of Alazani riparian forests are comprised in a Kakheti biosphere reserve which the government is planning to create in the nearest future. Accordingly, we are in a consultation mode; we would love the

				document to represent the interests of locals, the private sector and the government as well.
At the end of the project we will organise a final presentation			X	The closing ceremony was held at the community centre in the village of Vardisubani. It was attended by the interested parties. They were shared the information about the project outcomes; the attendants commented about the future activities and provided recommendations.
We will purchase environmental and tourist library for the community centers to strengthen their development.			X	For each target community center the small library with environmental and tourism-related literature was purchased. Each of them got 50 books about the environment protection, sustainable development, eco and agro tourism. The library also includes different dictionaries, guides and atlases.

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

Difficulties were mainly revealed during the sociological study, when some of the respondents refused to answer questions. Also some representatives of the private sector refused to cooperate with us.

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

The major outcomes of the project should be considered the following:

1. The community centres now have the appropriate libraries as community centres; thus, this will increase the sustainability within the society since the chances will be bigger that more people will look for the information on eco and agro-tourism, as well as in other fields.
2. The sociological study clearly shows the problems in target fields with the local population - now we exactly know on which fields we should concentrate our efforts (1. Specific infrastructure development, providing information, etc.).
3. Constructing the website is a very important outcome since all interested organisations or individuals will soon be able to get the latest news as well as they will have the opportunity to express their opinion and suggest improvements in the related fields.

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

Local community involvement has always been problematic in Georgia. The very recent past has influenced them to become passive beneficiaries and viewers. Only the government used to take all

kinds of decisions at any level in the country. In this regard it is important to work on the intellectual and material development of civil organisations that are still weak but their number is growing steadily. Both our organisation and the project are actively working in this direction.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

As mentioned above the government plans to create Kakheti biosphere reserve, which will comprise the part of Alazani riparian forests; in addition there is increased interest in the target area for creating the hunting farms. Our future activities will be to monitor and participate in the process of management of these initiatives.

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

Our work has always been transparent. Any interested party can get information any times as well through social networks, the media, and very soon they will get information through the webpage.

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

Grant provided by The Rufford Small Grants Foundation was used in period from May 2015 till the end of November 2015. All activities have been implemented in accordance with the original work plan.

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	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Transportation	1200	1200	0	
Daily food, lunch and accommodation	1300	1300	0	
Honoraria for trainers	780	780	0	
Honorarium for expert in Tourism	780	780	0	
Honorarium for Sociologist	540	540	0	
Stationary	130	116	14	We needed some more stationary to social survey
Brochures	704	707	0	
Cost for libraries	2486	2500	14	One kind of guideline we gained charge of free
Total	7920	7920		

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

- First of all, we intend to draft a special curriculum for those groups and individuals interested in tourism.

- Secondly, we intend to elaborate a scheme of raising awareness of the population based on social study.
- And lastly, we are working to complete the webpage construction in the near future as well as the document on Alazani riparian forest tourism potential.

10. Did you use The Rufford Foundation logo in any materials produced in relation to this project? Did the RSGF receive any publicity during the course of your work?

Logo was used for presentations, on website and on our brochure

11. Any other comments?

The foundation plays an important role in Kakheti region and in particular, in conservation of Alazan River riparian forests and in educating the nearby population in environmental and tourism-related issues. I would like to thank you for the support on behalf of the community centers and the 45 000 people who benefited through this project!