

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	Gurgen Khanamirian
Project title	Expansion of Prime Butterfly Area network in Armenia
RSG reference	17389-2
Reporting period	May 2015 – Aug 2016
Amount of grant	£5000
Your email address	gug.khanamirian@gmail.com
Date of this report	25 th of December 2016

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>Identify the areas important for the protection of butterflies on locations Gnisheek, Ourtsadzor and Artanish-Shorzha as potential PBA, and to analyse their conditions.</p>				<p>Descriptions of three Prime Butterfly Areas (PBAs) have been compiled and submitted for the approval by Butterfly Conservation Europe (BCE). Initially planned nine to 12 PBAs have been merged into three units; the total area of PBAs is increased in comparison to the proposed one. The total proposed area was 75 sq. km, while the achieved one makes 152.5 sq. km (more than twice). Gnishik area makes 29.2 sq. km instead of proposed 20 sq. km. Description is presented online at: http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/gnisheek.html</p> <p>Ourtsadzor location makes 61.2 sq. km instead of proposed 15 sq. km. Description is presented online at: http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/ourtsadzor.html</p> <p>Ardanish-Shorzha location makes 62.1 sq. km instead of proposed 40 sq. km. Description is presented online at: http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/artanish-shorzha.html</p> <p>Note: the total area of PBAs is exceeding the proposed one.</p>
<p>Approve the status of the PBA for selected sites with Butterfly Conservation Europe (BCE).</p>				<p>The proposed PBAs have been approved with the Butterfly Conservation Europe BCE. The results have been discussed during the last annual meeting of BCE in Wageningen (March 2016), which was attended by the project member – Karen Aghababyan</p>

<p>Prepare justification for including the PBAs into list of Emerald Sites, and submit those to the focal point of the Bern Convention in Armenia.</p>		<p>The justifications of the areas have been supplemented by the description about bird species diversity and have been discussed during biogeography seminar dedicated to Emerald Network (Tbilisi, Nov 2015). Then the sites have been proposed to the focal point of the Bern Convention in Armenia. Then the areas were finally revised by representatives of Secretariat of the Bern Convention during the last Biogeography Seminar dedicated to Emerald Network (Tbilisi, Dec 2016).</p> <p>Note: In addition, since the opportunity appears – the question was discussed with the representatives of the Bern Convention Secretariat.</p>
<p>Clarify status of IUCN red-listed species in the PBA and provide information to IUCN SSC.</p>		<p>A report about the state of IUCN listed species in PBA is submitted to IUCN SSC. The distribution range and population trends on three IUCN species: <i>Parnassius apollo</i>, <i>Phengaris (Maculinea) arion</i>, <i>Phengaris (Maculinea) nausithous</i>, where calculated not only for the PBAs as it was proposed, but also for entire country. The information is compiled in a form of species accounts, and is published online, see at: http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/parnassius-apollo.html http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/maculinea-arion.html http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/maculinea-nausithous.html</p> <p>In addition two more Papilionidae species, which are included in the Red Book of the Animals of Armenia (2010), have been accessed. The information on those species is published in a form of species accounts online, see at: http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/parnassius-mnemosyne.html</p>

			<p>http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/papilio-alexanor.html</p> <p>Note: In addition, since the Papilionidae species have been recently prioritised by IUCN SSC, two more accounts have been prepared.</p>
Develop routes for butterfly-watching in selected PBA and display them on the site Butterfly Conservation Armenia.		T	<p>Three new butterfly-watching trails have been identified and charted. The information about the trails was published online, see here: https://www.google.com/maps/d/edit?hl=en&authuser=0&mid=1mlFXAOaETI0wJUUDk7KptqFGS6Y&ll=40.84046573719634%2C44.77791309224858&z=8</p>
To design guides on routes of butterfly-watching in PBA adjacent to protected area.			<p>The trail guiding brochures for each of the province have been designed and printed and provided to the lake Sevan National Park, Gnishik community-managed Protected Area, and the Khosrov Forest Nature Reserve.</p>
Develop and install road signs, warning about the entrance to the territory of high conservation importance.			<p>Six road signs (two per each PBA) aimed at informing tourists about butterfly species diversity of the area, and meanwhile warning local inhabitants about necessity of careful treating of the habitat are designed, prepared, and installed with assistance of staff of Sevan National Park, Gnishik community-managed protected area, Khosrov Forest Nature Reserve, as well as with the help of local members of communities: Gnishik, Arpi, Areni, Urtsadzor, Shorzha, Artanish.</p>
Conduct training to staff of the protected area on tour-guiding at butterfly-watching trails.			<p>The training in guiding of butterfly-watchers over the developed trails have been designed, the employees of protected areas who can act as trail guides have been selected; the training was successfully conducted with six people (two persons per Protected Area).</p>
Conduct a series of			<p>Three excursions with the schoolkids have</p>

<p>activities and excursions with school students to explain the importance of the area and the need of butterfly protection.</p>			<p>been conducted. The excursions were attended by 30 schoolkids. In addition the work on the PBAs in Armenia was presented for the students of Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia, and Yerevan State Pedagogical University. The works have been highlighted through the Facebook page of Butterfly Conservation Armenia (current state – 492 members), through the Wikipedia pages, and through the Butterfly Conservation Armenia website (average visits – 200-300 individual persons per week)</p>
<p>Conduct a final seminar with stakeholders to present the results of the project (Ministry of Nature Protection, Focal Point of Bern Convention, Khosrov State Reserve, National Park Sevan, National Park Gnisheek, representatives of environmental NGO, Wildlife tour agencies).</p>			<p>The final seminar was hosted by Birding Armenia Club – another activity of TSE NGO. The meeting was attended by about 30 persons, among them – representatives of Bio-resource Management Agency of Ministry of Nature Protection, WWF Armenia, KfW Program on development of Eco-corridors in Armenia, Association of Young Biologists NGO, Birdlife Armenia NGO, Yerevan State University and Yerevan State Pedagogical University, representatives of two local tourism companies.</p>

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

Basically we did not face major obstacles. Negotiations with governmental officials and with administrations of protected areas went smoothly and helped in development of new collaborations.

There is only one difficulty related to publication of the planned article “Expansion of the Prime Butterfly Areas of Armenia”, since beside the three PBAs assessed during

the implementation of the current project, there are other potential areas, which can serve as PBAs and we think that it would be effective for further fundraising to include those areas into the article too (at least at a map). Therefore initial selection of those potential PBAs slows down the process of article preparation.

Nevertheless the final design of the article was discussed and it is passing through the final steps of polishing.

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

- Expansion of Prime Butterfly Areas with other 152.5 sq. km and their inclusion into the Emerald Network which gives them the status of international protection, and obliged our government to develop management plan for those areas
- Further development of infrastructure for Butterfly watching, which can become one of the important factors of financial sustainability of the surrounding communities and bring the livestock husbandry into the balance with the ecosystems' needs.
- Development of collaboration with protected areas and surrounding communities on further collaborative management of those areas. Thus we have already been contracted for implementation of monitoring of butterflies at Lake Sevan National Park and Artanish-Shorzha PBA; we have negotiated development of butterfly-watching in Gnishik community managed Protected Area (Gnishik PBA) and Khosrov Forest Nature Reserve (Ourtsadzor PBA).

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

The members of local communities have been involved at the stage of development of the information infrastructure (mostly youth and adults) and at the stage of excursions (mostly schoolkids). Local discussions with the representatives of six communities demonstrate their conservative readiness on gradual switching into ecosystem friendly business under our leadership. One of the bright examples of outcome of such discussion: production of rosehip juice that is made in support of species and habitat conservation, because it can partially substitute the livestock husbandry by decreasing intensity of grazing; because the farmers understand the link between healthy habitat – number of rare butterflies – flow of tourists – farmers' income.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

We plan to move in the following major directions:

- Further expansion of PBAs in Armenia up to 40 (at the first stage).
- Development of butterfly-watching as a mechanism of sustainability for our organization and rural communities.
- Further identification of species which can serve as indicators of ecosystems.
- Development of community based monitoring of indicator species for rapid assessment of ecosystems' wellbeing.
- Continuation of assessment of conservation statuses of endemic butterfly species at National Level and for IUCN SSC.

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

We consistently are sharing our results with:

- Network of Butterfly Conservation Europe through the personal communication online (via e-mail and Facebook groups) and offline (during Conferences, Workshops, and other meetings).
- Local development organizations such as United Nations Development Program (UNDP), German Organization for International Cooperation (GIZ), World Wide Foundation (WWF Armenia), and others through regular meetings.
- Local governmental institutions such as Ministry of Nature Protection, various Protected Areas, Research Institutes, and others through regular meetings.
- Local Universities such as Yerevan State University, Yerevan State Pedagogical University, Americal University of Armenia, and others through guest lecturing.
- Representatives of the local NGOs through regular meetings.

Our communication already allows:

- To receive a grant from UNDP Small Grant Program on development of infrastructure for butterfly-watching in Gnishik PBA.
- To become contracted by Lake Sevan National Park for implementation of butterfly monitoring.
- To become contracted by UNDP/GEF project "Mainstreaming Sustainable Land and Forest Management in Mountain Landscapes of North-Eastern Armenia" for development of forest monitoring tool based on butterfly indicator species.

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

The grant was provided for the period of May 2015 till August 2016 (16 months). However it was necessary to promote the three PBAs at the last Emerald Biogeography Seminar, which was implemented in December of 2016; that is why the entire project length took longer than it was proposed (20 months).

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
Salaries	1483	1529	-46	fluctuations of exchange rate
Transportation	1140	1277	-137	fluctuations of exchange rate + we traveled about 50 km more
Accommodation (food and hotel)	829	917	-88	fluctuations of exchange rate
Information Materials (road signs and brochures)	1280	1274	6	fluctuations of exchange rate
Trainings and Seminars	268	143	125	fluctuations of exchange rate
Total	5000	5140	-140	The difference was covered by the sources of TSE NGO

The rate of 1 GBP = 694.85 AMD was used at the planning stage as of 5th of Feb of 2015. Later the rate was varying throughout the year.

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

As during implementation of the first project we think that there are three important steps to achieve sustainability in conservation of butterflies and their habitats:

1. to continue development of the PBAs in Armenia and further in Caucasus and to secure their including into the Emerald Network and further preparation and implementation of the management plans per site;
2. to continue conduction of assessments of global conservation status of Caucasus endemic species of butterflies for IUCN Species Survival Commission

and assessments of national conservation status of habitat specialist butterflies for the Ministry of nature Protection of RA;

3. to continue building capacity for development of butterfly watching branch of wildlife tourism focusing on the staff of National Parks and local enthusiasts from rural communities; to build network between local service providers and tour agencies.

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?

The logo of the project was used at all six information boards placed at the three PBAs, at trail guiding brochures, at the presentation during the last seminar, and at the website <http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/>. The RSGF was acknowledged at the description of each of the PBA (see at <http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/gnisheek.html>, <http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/ourtsadzor.html>, <http://www.butterfly-conservation-armenia.org/artanish-shorzha.html>), and will be acknowledged in the article "Khanamirian et al 2017 Expansion of the network of Prime Butterfly Areas in Armenia".

11. Any other comments?

The current grant helped to build up on the success of the first grant and not just to expand the network of PBAs in Armenia but to significantly improve and increase the network with stakeholders. We were able to make a significant step towards the long-term goal of sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems of Armenia and support conservation of unique and vulnerable communities of one of the most wonderful creatures at our earth – the butterflies.

Also we would like to acknowledge the great assistance of Ministry of Nature Protection, especially Bioresources Management Agency and especially ones of Dr Ashot Hovhannisyanyan (Head of the Agency) and Dr Aram Aghasyan (head of the Division of Specially Protected Natural Areas), the Khosrov Forest State Reserve, and its director Hrachya Hovakimyan, the National Park Lake Sevan, and its director Mr Vahe Gulanyan, the Gnishik community-managed protected area, and its president Arsen Matevosyan, as well as great help of WWF Armenia and its director Karen Manvelyan. Also we would like to express our gratitude to Martin Warren, Chris van Swaay, Irma Wynhoff, Sue Collins, Tom Brereton, Rudi Verovnik, Josef Settle and Martin Wiemers from the Butterfly Conservation Europe for their great consultancy of our works during implementation of the project.