

Final Evaluation Report

Your Details	
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Project Title	Conservation of Hippopotamus in Bui National Park, Ghana; Participatory Stakeholder Approach
Application ID	27235-1
Grant Amount	£5,000
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Date of this Report	8 th April, 2020

1. 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
Determine current population and distribution of Hippos at the Bui National Park.				The project has undertaken a hippo population and distribution survey within the Bui National Park (BNP). We followed the protocol previously used by Bennet et al. (2000) to survey hippos in the same park. Overall, a total of 65 km of the Black Volta River was surveyed within BNP. This was achieved with the help of motorised canoes. Four team members counted hippos with the help of binoculars. This was to help with the validation of numbers counted. The entire stretch of the river was divided into three zones. Areas where hippos were sighted were mapped with the help of hand-held GPS. This protocol helped us to determine the population as well as map the current distribution of hippos within the Bui National Park.
Undertake stakeholder consultative meetings on Hippo Conservation.				The project has successfully held stakeholder consultative meetings with local community leaders, chiefs and traditional authorities, management and staff of Bui National Park as well as leaders of fishermen and farmer's associations. The meetings discussed some strategies to reduce threats to hippos and other biodiversity within the area.
Increase community education on the conservation status of Hippos at Bui National park.				The project undertook several conservation education approaches aimed at ensuring that local communities are aware of, involved in, and committed to the long-term conservation of hippos in the Bui conservation area. Some notable activities included house-to-house meetings, school conservation campaigns, community meetings and

				many others.
Reduce the incidence of Human-Hippo conflicts				The project undertook activities targeted at reducing significantly incidence of human-hippo conflicts. Local communities were advised to desist from farming very close to known hippo ponds. Signposts were erected at prime areas to inform locals about the presence of hippos. Video documentary on destructive impacts of human-hippo conflicts were shown to the public.

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

1. The Bui hydropower dam construction has significantly altered the national park landscape. The dam had expanded the Black Volta River significantly to an extent that, the river has overflowed its boundaries and extended outside the national park. The damming of the river has caused several acres of vegetation, including local communities and community lands, to be submerged. It is now impossible to distinguish the part of the river that falls within and outside of the national park. In addition, the expansion of the river made it impossible to walk along the riverbanks to count the hippos as earlier proposed. To overcome this challenge, the project team adopted the use of motorised canoes for the population and distribution survey. However, this brought about unintended budgetary constraints as hiring of canoes was not accounted for in the budget.
2. The river has become very deep for the hippos. All known hippo ponds are currently non-existent. Also, there were significant levels of fishing activity on the river system. This causes significant disturbance to the hippos. This means that the hippos have adapted to moving from one place to another at different time intervals, making their monitoring very difficult.
3. Some parts of the river were very inaccessible making our fieldwork difficult. Driving through the rugged roads within the BNP caused many mechanical problems for our project vehicle. The project team stratified the river into three zones in order to access the full extent of the river traversing through the BNP.

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

1. Data on the total number of hippos within the area have been established. Overall, 94 hippos were recorded along a 65 km stretch of the river and within three zones of the BNP. This number includes juveniles as well as mature individuals. Accordingly, this translates to 1.4 hippos per km. The number provides evidence of the critical threat's hippos face at the BNP. This survey also documented anthropogenic activities, which are relevant influential

factors in the decline of the species. Overall, persistent small-scale fishing on the Black Volta represents the greatest threat to hippos. This is because they are constantly disturbed in their habitat by traps and noisy motorised canoes. This forces them to be constantly moving. The survey provides significant information necessary to draft conservation measures for the hippos.

2. Our community conservation education and outreach activities resulted in the creation of an “action group” consisting of the authorities of BNP and some community heads. The group is known as the Bui Hippo Conservation Action Group. The group also serves as an over-watch arm that documents and reports on activities of individuals that are detrimental to the species. They continue to ensure that community education on the species is maintained within the local communities. Overall, the group shows significant local buy-in and integration into the project. This will ensure that the project impacts are sustained beyond the project timelines.
3. Human-hippo conflicts have reduced by at least 50% during the project timeframe. This was achieved through our targeted conservation education and erection of signposts at areas where hippos are known to occur. Throughout the project period, farmers were also educated to use simple technologies such as pepper grease, fences and others to deter hippos from visiting their farms. Individuals who were educated during the project period are also educating their fellows to refrain from acts that results in human-hippo conflicts.

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

Heads of communities have been included in the Hippo Action Group. These individuals have been provided with practical education on the ecological significance of the species to their welfare. They are also part of the decision body which has been tasked to develop local conservation policies for the species.

Individuals appointed by community heads to assist with the hippo survey were trained in survey techniques and use of equipment. These individuals are currently working as monitoring agents for hippos within their communities.

Local communities and school children benefitted from education on human-hippo conflicts to safeguard their food security and their livelihoods. Communities also received training on conservation status of hippos and promotion of ecotourism as economic livelihood option for local communities.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Yes. In the next phase of the project, we aim to undertake a further hippo census in other isolated populations in Ghana. We will also work with locals to develop and promote ecotourism for hippos at BNP as a form of incentive for hippo conservation.

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

Preliminary results of the project have been shared with authorities of the Bui Conservation Area and community heads engaged in the project. The project team is still in the process of developing a manuscript that will be accessible to the conservation and research community. The results of the work would be shared with the IUCN Hippo Specialist group to update the records of hippos at the BNP.

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

Funding from the Rufford foundation has been used for a period of 12 months. The project lasted from February 2019 to February 2020. This duration is exactly as was anticipated.

8. Budget: 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. It is important that you retain the management accounts and all paid invoices relating to the project for at least 2 years as these may be required for inspection at our discretion.

Item	Budgeted Amount	Actual Amount	Difference	Comments
Project launching	300	250	-50	£50 was saved due to a reduction of fee for the venue
Daily Sustenance allowance (food and accommodation) for team members for the entire project duration	1500	2230	+730	Accommodation was limited and thus the team had to share rooms, which make funds available to cover monitoring and evaluation sessions of the project
Vehicle rental and fuel	2000	3000	+1000	
Stationary for Community conservation programmes	300	470	+170	
Project administration (internet, phone and stationary)	200	200		
Safety boots for team members		100	+100	
Branded T-shirts and banners	500	600	+100	
Conservation signage	400	750	+350	
Hiring of motorised canoes for survey		1500	+1500	This item was not budgeted for due to the proposed protocol

				that was proposed. However, it was impossible to follow the survey protocol due to the modifications caused by the construction of the Hydroelectric dam.
TOTAL	5000	9100	+4100	£2400 of the overspend was co-funded, leaving an overall overspend of £1700.

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

Looking ahead, there is the urgent need to assess the threats, populations and distribution of hippos in Ghana. This will help develop a more comprehensive strategy for their conservation. There is the need to better educate local communities to co-exist with hippos and to reduce their hunting pressures.

Importantly, there is the need to work collaboratively with all local stakeholders to develop more sustainable income options. In this regard, hippos could be used a flagship for ecotourism. Harnessing the ecotourism potential of hippos in Ghana will create jobs for many locals especially women who are most vulnerable to human-hippo conflicts.

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

Yes. The Rufford Foundation logo was used in designing signage, banners and t-shirts for publicity of the project. The Rufford Foundation logo was also used on outreach and awareness materials and PowerPoint slides for conservation education.

11. Please provide a full list of all the members of your team and briefly what was their role in the project.

Ransford Kofi Agyei

Ransford was responsible for the overall coordination and implementation of the project. My role mainly was to ensure that the project objectives were attained in a cost-effective fashion. Ransford coordinated with the necessary stakeholders including BNP management, local chiefs, government representatives, schools and faith-based organisations to ensure that project was successful.

Oppong Osei Tutu

Oppong was responsible for the community conservation and behaviour change component of the project. He led the community consultation and education on the conservation status of Hippos in the BNP. He was also responsible for engaging farmers and fishermen on effective strategies to reduce human-hippo conflicts.

Adwoa Sarfowaa

As a sociologist, Adwoa Sarfoa was responsible for facilitating all stakeholder engagements aimed at ensuring the long-term conservation of Hippos at the BNP. She was also key contact person for schools and colleges conservation, designing and leading simple tools to educate school children on biodiversity conservation. She was instrumental in mainstreaming women in the decision-making process in all aspects of the project.

Dompreh Christian

Christian was responsible for leading the field ecological survey. He led the team to collect both population and distribution data. He was also led the analysis of the data using the relevant statistical software. As a native of the area, he was the key contact person for the local taskforce who are volunteering in diverse ways to ensure that the project impacts are maintained over time.

12. Any other comments?

The project team is grateful to the Rufford Foundation and INEC-Ghana for providing financial assistance for the successful implementation of this phase of the project. We are also grateful to all stakeholders especially the management of BNP especially Mr Gilbert Asiamah-Antwi, Osman Kwaku and Mr Peter Dzobo for their assistance throughout the project. Many thanks to local chiefs, community leaders, teachers and religious leaders for their in-kind contributions and support towards the project.

