

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.

Grant Recipient Details

Your name	Abdul Wakid, Ph. D
Project title	Developing a Dolphin Conservation Network in Brahmaputra river system, Ind
RSG reference	01.03.07
Reporting period	June, 07-May, 08; but one activity was continued till Dec, 08.
Amount of grant	£10,000
Your email address	wakid@aaranyak.org
Date of this report	26-02-2009

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
Prioritizing the habitats of Ganges river dolphins in Brahmaputra river system which need community-based monitoring			Fully achieved	30 dolphin habitats (which were identified in our 2005 dolphin survey in the entire Brahmaputra river system, supported by 1 st RSG grant) were prioritized (in June, 07) for community-based monitoring
Identifying youths (volunteers) from the local communities residing around prioritized dolphin habitats to participate in the Dolphin Conservation Network (DCN)			Fully achieved	30 educated, dedicated and motivated community youths were selected (some of them from our 2006 project on stakeholder involvement in conserving dolphins, supported by 2 nd RSG) to participate in the Dolphin Conservation Network as volunteers. However, instead of one month, it took 5 months (July-Nov, 07) due to unfavourable climatic and political conditions.
Capacity-building of the selected members of Dolphin Conservation Network involving them			Fully achieved	One 3-days intensive field-based training on 'how to monitor and protect your dolphins' was organized to train, motivate and organize all the selected members and brought them into a single Dolphin Conservation Network. This activity was completed within Dec, 07.
Developing the Dolphin Conservation Network			Fully achieved	At the end of the training, all the trainees were allowed formally to be a member to the Dolphin Conservation Network. Each of them was allotted a defined dolphin habitat (nearest to their localities) to monitor twice in a month and the skill to monitor and information dissemination. This activity was completed within June, 07.
Monitoring of dolphins and their habitats with the help of community-based Dolphin Conservation Network (DCN)			Fully achieved	The members of Dolphin Conservation Network started to monitor the allotted dolphin habitats from January-December, 08. Tremendous inputs were received from the members who helped to raise the conservation awareness at habitat level. To get the maximum benefit and examine

				the output of the Network, we continued the activities till Dec, 08.
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2. Please explain any unforeseen difficulties that arose during the project and how these were tackled (if relevant).

The project activities were hampered by local climatic conditions (high flood) and political conditions (insurgency in some areas) at the beginning of the project, which later was well-adjusted.

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

a. Linkage development: Through this project we developed a very good linkage with the local communities residing in and around identified important dolphin habitats across Brahmaputra Valley.

b. Awareness increase: With the help of our trained members of Dolphin Conservation Network (DCN), we conducted awareness campaign simultaneously in and around all the prioritised habitats of Gangetic dolphin in Brahmaputra Valley, which increased the level of awareness among local communities towards protecting 'their' nearest dolphin habitats. Also the regular 2 times dolphin monitoring in each month by the member of Dolphin Conservation Network (who infect belonged to the local communities), supported and closely guided by our Project Coordinators, attract the attention of the local communities towards the importance of their dolphins and motivated them to protect 'their' dolphins.

c. Enhancing the species protection: Our experience over last several years dolphin conservation in Brahmaputra Valley teach us that involving the local communities residing around dolphin habitats is the best approach at the current situation in Brahmaputra Valley. Therefore, we involved them in the protection of their dolphins, the result of which was reflected in the findings of the population status of the species across the Valley in 2008 (in 2005 survey we recorded 250 dolphins in the entire Brahmaputra river system, whereas in 2005 survey, we recorded 250 dolphins).

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

This project was being proposed to initiate an effort to conserve the endangered Ganges river dolphin in Brahmaputra river system (within India) through the involvement of local communities residing in and around of the most prioritised identified habitats. It was because the fact that due to the very remoteness of the existed dolphin habitats and inadequate management influence in and around most of these habitats to protect the dolphins, community-based conservation initiative is the best practice for the long term survival of the species in Brahmaputra river system. With the help of this project, we have (a) identified those communities residing in and around the most prioritized dolphin habitats across Brahmaputra Valley, (b) involved the most motivated and skilled youths from those communities as a member to the Dolphin Conservation Network after providing proper training, (c) involved the selected community youths in monitoring and protecting their nearest dolphins and the dolphin habitats as well as in the awareness raising among the communities from where they belonged and closely guided their activities , and (d) provided a small financial support to each members for the valuation of the time they provided for dolphin conservation. Therefore, this project involved the local communities residing in and around 30 most important dolphin habitats in Brahmaputra Valley in all its stages and thus the local communities got maximum benefits (both directly and indirectly) from this project.

5. Are there any plans to continue this work?

Of course, yes. With the help of the reported project, we have initiated a community-based dolphin conservation effort in Assam, which gave us results beyond our expectations. Now this initiative needs to be strengthened, which in near future will be the major backbone for protecting the endangered Ganges river dolphin in Brahmaputra. Therefore, we would like to continue this work, with a modified, well-planned and well-coordinated way and we have a distinct planning for that.

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

The output of the Dolphin Conservation Network (monitoring and awareness campaign) will be conveyed to the management authority in the form of a Report. The scientific findings (after proposer scrutiny of the collected data) will be published in scientific/semi-scientific journal. The people of Assam and India will be conveyed the results and the effort in the form of popular scientific article through local newspaper and journal.

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

Although the project was supposed to start in May, 07, still due to late in fund receiving, the project actually started in June, 07. Accordingly, the project duration was June, 07-May, 08. However, due to unfavourable climatic and political conditions in Assam, selection of community youths as members, establishing the Dolphin Conservation Network and make the Network as fully functional, consumed more time than expected (instead of 2 months, it took 6 months). Although monitoring works by Dolphin Conservation Network was proposed to continue for 10 months (to be completed within October, 08), we extended it to December, 08 to experiment the effectiveness of the developed community based Dolphin Conservation Network at annual basis. Therefore, the project was officially successfully completed in December, 08.

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.

Exchange rate: £ 1 = Rs. 80/-

Item	Budgeted Amount (£)	Actual Amount (£)	Difference (£)	Comments/Explanation
Travel	3000	3249	- 249	More field days than estimated
Core team member's honorarium	2800	2718	82	Donated the saved amount for field travels
Core team member's per diem	2000	1942	58	Donated the amount to volunteer per diem
Per diem for Dolphin Conservation Network's member for dolphin monitoring	1200	1266	- 66	More monitoring days than proposed
Communication	360	232	128	Less expenditure than estimated, which later adjusted for travel expense

Report	200	--	200	Utilized for contingency
Contingency	440	601	- 161	More field expense than estimated
Total	10,000	10,008	- 8	

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

We conducted experiment on the efficiency and future potentiality of the Dolphin Conservation Network, which we developed during the course of the project. The results of these experiments confirmed us that if we continued the activities of this Network with proper planning, support and intensive monitoring, then in near future, this Dolphin Conservation Network will be the backbone of the long term protection of the endangered Ganges river dolphin in Brahmaputra river system in India and will be an example for other river dolphin conservation in the world. Therefore, we strongly feel that for the better protection of the Ganges river dolphin in Brahmaputra, this Network should be strengthened and continued with following steps.

- a. Strengthening the capacity of Dolphin Conservation Network
 - Further training and motivation to the members of the DCN.
 - Increasing the time of involvement of DCN members and accordingly increasing financial assistance to the members.
- b. Increasing the effectiveness of the Dolphin Conservation Network
 - Establish a rapid response cell for the rescue of stranded/killed dolphin.
 - Boat-based monitoring (except high flood season) to be introduced covering the most prioritized dolphin inhabited river stretches.
 - Involve the DCN members to motivate the local fishermen communities for dolphin friendly fishing around dolphin habitats.
 - Develop better linkages of the DCN members to the concerned management authorities.
 - Regular and critical monitoring of the activities and progress of each of the DCN members.
- c. Developing the Dolphin Conservation Network into a sustainable community-based conservation effort
 - Introduce dolphin-friendly income generation activities for the members of Dolphin Conservation Network.

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?

Publicity has given to RSGF during community-based meetings organized by Dolphin Conservation Network members. Till now the logo was not used any publications (which will be made after submission of this report).

11. Any other comments?



Observing the result from the Dolphin Conservation Network in protecting the endangered Gangetic dolphins in Brahmaputra river system, we strongly recommend RSG for supporting follow up activities (mentioned in 9.) to continue this effort.