



Choukai - ranger at a Choukai river crossing. Credit: Gemfield

FAUNA & FLORA INTERNATIONAL

FFI's Partner Crisis Support Fund Update

March 2021



**MAP SHOWING GLOBAL
SPREAD OF PROJECTS WHERE
FUNDING HAS BEEN APPROVED**



Project staff on boat to Great Bird Island, Antigua. Credit: FFI

BACKGROUND

FFI's Partner Support fund was launched in May 2020 in response to the dual impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of challenges to the ongoing operations and survival of in-country conservation organisations as a result of loss of core income streams, coupled with a sharp increase in local threats to biodiversity as a result of lockdowns and economic uncertainty.

FFI quickly established and operationalised a new Partner Crisis Support Fund, and sourced funding from long-term donors and from a public appeal.

SURVIVE : Maintain central core operations and conservation interventions in the face of reduced income streams

ADAPT : Strengthen their response to increased on-the-ground threats associated with Covid-19

THRIVE : Develop more resilient financial operational models and income streams (for example where previous sources of income have been disrupted) to ensure effective recovery from the current crisis

The first grant was agreed that month, and FFI has maintained a target of swift decision making to ensure grants can be agreed and in place within 10 days of application receipt.

Since May 2020 FFI has allocated \$1,329,942 of funding to 34 partner organisations in 14 countries. A full list of the grantees is included in Annex 1.

FFI is tremendously grateful to the many generous donors who have supported this Fund, including Arcadia – the charitable fund of Lisbet Rausing and Peter Baldwin, players of People's Postcode Lottery, ARM, Liz Claiborne & Art Ortenberg Foundation, Waterloo Foundation, and many generous individual supporters.

Thank you.

34 PARTNER ORGANISATIONS supported through 24 grants

\$1.78 million raised to date
\$1.33 million awarded



Foraging mushrooms in Romania. Credit: Lizzy Schultze

NEW GRANTS

Four grants have been made over the last six months. These include:

ProPark Foundation for Protected Areas, Romania

Grant \$22,000

ProPark provides a unique role in the development of protected area management skills in Romania, and represents an important legacy for FFI's historical engagement in this space. However, in a context of already declining funding options for NGOs in Romania, Covid-19 restrictions placed ProPark's existing financial plans at risk, creating a critical situation for the organisation. Covid-19 lockdown stalled the roll-out of a novel sustainable financing enterprise, which would have created a new income stream

for ProPark, resulting in projected losses for 2021. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund will be used to retain key staff and with them the organisation's vital skills base to enable them to restart their important capacity building and conservation work when the situation allows. Retaining key staff will also allow ProPark to re-establish the new enterprise as a means to bolster future cash flow to support the organisation's future recovery from this crisis.





Environmental Awareness Group, Antigua & Barbuda

Grant \$14,220



Seventy-five percent of Antigua & Barbuda's economy is dependent on tourism. The pandemic has severely affected this sector, with resulting job losses and business closures. The Environmental Awareness Group has worked to protect a number of offshore islands with sensitive habitats, where invasive species have been removed and disturbance has been minimised. However, as a result of the economic crisis more people are visiting these islands for fishing or recreation, and there is no longer the 'informal surveillance' usually provided by visiting tour groups. This is resulting in more fishing, vegetation clearance, fire setting and risks of invasive species reaching these islands. At the same time, a proportion of the normal income for the Environmental Awareness Group comes from tourism, leaving a significant gap in their funding

this year. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund will support the Environmental Awareness Group's core operational costs and help maintain project activities, including ongoing checks on the status of the offshore islands, and in particular making sure that invasive species are not becoming re-established during this period. By helping to retain key staff, the Environmental Awareness Group will have more time to adapt new operational and financial models for a post-Covid operating context (when international tourism may be depressed for a number of years). Support will be given to the development of a revised financial strategy including identifying income diversification options, along with specific training in accounting procedures to increase the overall financial resilience of the organisation.



Saint Lucia National Trust, Saint Lucia

Grant \$52,700



Saint Lucia National Trust focuses on the management of natural and cultural heritage in Saint Lucia, and a significant proportion of its income has come from visitors to its sites. The drop in tourism as a result of Covid-19 has severely affected the organisation's income, reducing its ability to maintain its varied programmes of work. Despite scaling-back operations significantly, the Trust still faces significant funding challenges. Funding from the

Partner Crisis Support Fund will retain key staff positions, and thus enable the maintenance of priority conservation programmes. As a result the Trust will be able to maintain ongoing protection efforts for offshore islands, monitoring of marine turtles, conservation of rare and endemic species, mangrove management, beach protection and will be able to challenge any development proposals submitted for vulnerable sites.



Mukutan Conservancy, Kenya

Follow-up Grant \$22,433



The ongoing loss of tourism income to Mukutan Conservancy over the last year has further affected its financial situation. Predictions suggest that international tourism is unlikely to recover for a number of years, thus requiring the rapid development of new, longer term income streams. At the same time the wider economic crisis is driving additional threats to wildlife populations in this region. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund aims to help Mukutan Conservancy

to develop new income streams, through an investment into a much-needed revised fundraising and communications strategy and dedicated fundraising capacity. A strengthened online presence and the ability to actively pursue emerging funding opportunities will be an important first step in building longer-term organisational resilience.

UPDATES FROM THE FIELD: WHAT OUR PARTNERS TOLD US IN THEIR REPORTS

Mohammed, caretaker of Northern White Rhinos in Ol Pejeta, Kenya. Credit: Carlos Dreus/WWF

Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya

Grant received \$100,000

The loss of international tourism as a result of Covid-19 profoundly affected Ol Pejeta's income, and tourism is unlikely to recover for a number of years. Although the conservancy worked to reduce its operational cost, there was a real threat to its core functionality and ability to protect its unique biodiversity, and globally important rhino populations. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund supported the costs of rangers involved in critical rhino protection operations, as well as covering some wider organisational costs. As a result of this support general operations and leadership were maintained and key staff have been retained to ensure ongoing wildlife protection across the conservancy, ensuring the effectiveness of teams on the ground. Paying

rangers' salaries has also enabled them to support their families during the pandemic, whilst making sure that rations for patrols were sourced locally has helped to ensure funds flowed to local communities, further strengthening the good relationship between the communities and the conservancy. The funding also helped maintain the anti-poaching canine unit (comprised of dogs and their handlers), helping to maintain the overall security of the conservancy, and rhinos and other species within it. As a result, Ol Pejeta was able to maintain zero poaching levels, and the rhino population grew by 6% over the period of support - from 171 to 182 (143 black rhinos, 37 Southern white rhinos and 2 Northern white rhinos).





Mukutan Conservancy, Kenya

Grant \$62,060

As a result of the pandemic and the cessation of international tourism, the Mukutan Conservancy was forced to close all its tourism facilities in 2020, resulting in massive losses of income. The conservancy was 'fighting to keep its head above water' financially, whilst simultaneously addressing increased threats to wildlife as a knock on effect of tourism-related job losses in the local area. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund was used to maintain conservancy operations, with a particular focus on ensuring the anti-poaching team (65 rangers) could be retained and was able to continue to operate. At the same time, the impact of flooding on roads and ranger bases necessitated their repair, to ensure the more remote areas of the conservancy remained accessible to anti-poaching patrols. The funding meant that twelve rangers from the local community were able to keep their jobs, and have been able to focus on protecting some of the most remote and vulnerable areas of the conservancy. It also meant they could continue to support their families at a challenging economic time, which has had a knock on effect of creating enormous good will from the local community. The presence of the rangers in these remote areas has also helped to reduce incidents of human-wildlife conflict, which have reduced significantly (by up to 80%) since their deployment. A herd of 75 elephant lives undisturbed in this area of the conservancy, and wild dog and cheetah have also been spotted within the area for the first time in six years.



"In July, thanks to the support from FFI, we set up a dedicated anti-snaring patrol with our rangers. The result has been that since October we have not found any snares whatsoever within the conservancy."

**Sveva Gallman
Executive Director
Mukutan Conservancy**



Mountain gorilla. Credit: Liz Eaton/FFH

Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda

Grant: \$79,748



As a result of Covid-19, all mountain gorilla related tourism was closed in Uganda, which led to a drastic loss of income to the Uganda Wildlife Authority and risked undermining the maintenance of operations at key gorilla reserves, including Mgahinga Gorilla National Park. At the same time the loss of tourism reduced incomes for local people who had worked in the tourism industry, resulting in enhanced pressure on natural resources in these parks. Funds from the Partner Crisis Support Fund helped to maintain key management and gorilla conservation activities, including contributing to the operational costs of 45 rangers. Park edge communities received support through micro-credit schemes and the creation of novel employment opportunities, enabling some of

those previously working in tourism (including members of the indigenous Batwa community) to engage in reserve management jobs such as invasive plant removal. Fifty-two community members were paid (and fed) to uproot and remove over 20,000 invasive tree saplings from Mgahinga Park, which were then donated to local communities for use as firewood. Community members were also employed to build stone walls to help reduce the risks of crop raiding by buffalo from the park, thus helping to reduce human-wildlife conflict. The funding also helped the park authorities to maintain regular outreach work with the wider communities, including 24 radio shows promoting the benefits of conservation and recognising its challenges.

Private Forest Owner Organisations, Uganda



Grant \$15,000

In the Albertine Rift area of Uganda, FFI has been working with three locally-organised private owner organisations – effectively village-level co-operatives - to align conservation and the improvement of local livelihoods. The economic impact of Covid-19 has had a huge impact on these livelihoods with trade and farming sales brought to a standstill. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund has provided seedlings for community-implemented forest restoration work and helped to maintain community patrols which undertake chimpanzee monitoring. As a result local people remained engaged with conservation, and collected a full set of chimp monitoring data was available for 2020. Ninety-one community members planted out 18,250 seedlings of native trees species, effectively reforesting 19 hectares of the landscape. Access to funds to buy tree seeds for species that could be used in agroforestry, enables local co-operatives to have a line of sight to future crops and sales. Small-scale loans and savings schemes have had strong take up, with 94 households engaging with these initiatives –loans were used to support home construction and maintenance, purchase of livestock, investment into small scale agriculture and horticulture and for establishment of village grocery shops. A small survey of community attitudes completed at the end of 2020 showed a strong understanding of the need to live in harmony with wildlife, and that the presence of unique wildlife (such as chimps) is a key reason that they are receiving the current development support.



Home construction. Credit: FFI

‘There wasn’t any deforestation recorded in the project area.... Community members were busy ploughing and putting back their businesses that had a shakeup due to the pandemic. Many of the members of Private Forest Owners associations are becoming active in activities that improve their livelihoods.’

**Rogers Niwamanya
FFI Project Officer
Uganda**



Ya'axché Conservation Trust, Belize

Grant \$80,000



The economic fallout from the pandemic affected Belize's previously thriving tourism industry, which led to job losses in coastal areas and people returning to inland rural areas of Belize. As a result there has been a move by returning families to clear new agricultural land, often with the use of fire, which has created in turn caused additional threats to the forests of the wider Mayan landscape. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund helped to build local fire management capacity and enabled Ya'axché staff to work with farmers to reduce the need for additional forest clearance. A fire management strategy was developed with both local farmers and the Forest Department. Fire equipment (purchased and shipped from the US) was provided to local communities to help them manage any local fire outbreaks. Communities received training in fire prevention, such as the use of controlled burns

to create firebreaks. Ya'axché adapted their community engagement methodologies to reduce risks of Covid-19 transmission, based on socially distanced training with a maximum of five participants at a time. Community members from other districts have now expressed interest in receiving similar fire management training and support from Ya'axché. Radio and TV adverts in local languages (Quechi & Creole), and discussion panel shows, all helped to raise awareness of fire management and safety, reaching an audience of at least 150,000. Ya'axché staff also supported four farmers to restore 10 acres of land that were severely affected by 2019's fires; 2,100 saplings of suitable fruit and timber species (e.g. citrus, cashew, guava and cedar species) were provided to replant these areas, and the farmers were trained in site and soil management, pest management and sapling planting and care.



Biflores, Cape Verde

Grant \$2,000



Biflores is a small NGO on the island of Brava, and is Cape Verde's only plant-focused conservation NGO. Biflores has run a programme with local schools to develop nurseries for threatened endemic trees. The closure of schools for much of 2020 severely interrupted these activities. The inability to deliver the donor-agreed activities put strain on the organisation, and risked their ability to pay and retain key staff. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund covered the cost of the project officer for four months, allowing the planned work to resume once the schools

reopened. Since then, 44 workshops have been organised at ten schools, involving a total 670 students. Topics discussed included the unique biodiversity of Brava Island and the importance of environment protection, and endemic plants from the Biflores plant nursery were successfully planted out into the gardens at each school.



Zam Zam, Tajikistan

Grant \$7,000

Zam Zam is a small NGO that promotes the sustainable management of Tajikistan's unique and threatened fruit and nut forests. Due to the pandemic and resulting restrictions on travel and meetings, Zam Zam were unable to complete donor-agreed activities, which undermined their ability to retain key staff and left them financially vulnerable. In addition, in the communities that Zam Zam works with, local livelihoods (based on fruit and nut products) were affected as local people were no longer able to use shared drying and processing equipment, due to contagion risks.

Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund supported the core operations of Zam Zam, including staff time, office and operational costs during the peak of the pandemic period. In addition, basic equipment (such as buckets and cotton fabric covers) were provided to 180 local producers to reduce risks of the use of shared equipment in processing. Basic hygiene supplies and personal protection equipment (soap, antiseptic, face-coverings and gloves) were also made available to 360 community members, thus improving their ability to harvest and process forest products without increasing transmission risks.



Fundação Maio Biodiversidade, Cape Verde

Grant \$37,000

Fundação Maio Biodiversidade (FMB) works to protect the marine environment of Maio Island in Cape Verde, where they run a long-standing turtle protection project. The project is delivered (and funded) through the involvement of international volunteers, who were no longer able to travel to Cape Verde as a result of the pandemic. This means that FMB faced the loss of critical manpower for turtle patrols, and the loss of income that normally supports the salaries of turtle guides, staff and provides vital benefits to the local community. Funding from the Partner Crisis Support Fund supported the salaries of key staff and enabled FMB to employ over 100 people to replace the work of international volunteers in protecting turtle nesting beaches. Funds were also used to pay for local accommodation for the turtle guides close to the beaches, which helped to maintain the homestay programme that had been established by FMB to ensure benefits from turtle tourism flowed to local communities, and particularly to local women.

As a result of the local recruitment of so many seasonal turtle guards, leaders and associated staff, FMB was one of the biggest employers on the island during 2020, helping to reduce the wider economic strain resulting from the sudden cessation of tourism.

In addition, 2020 saw a doubling in participation in voluntary community groups, with 409 people from the community taking part in the turtle protection patrols, beach cleaning and door-to-door campaigns to spread turtle conservation messages. Turtle nesting beaches were patrolled nightly from June to October to deter any egg poaching; as a result poaching was kept to minimal levels (1.4% of nests poached), and actually reduced relative to 2019 figures (2.1%) despite the economic pressures on the island. The funding for FMB staff costs meant that the Organisational Development Plan could still be developed in 2020, which will be vital to guide the diversification of funding streams to ensure recovery from the pandemic and improve longer-term organisational resilience.



Female loggerhead turtle. Credit: FFI



“Biodiversity benefited from this injection of money because many local people would otherwise have replaced their lost income with environmentally damaging activities such as turtle poaching, or illegal fishing. Thanks very much to FFI and the fund, FMB managed to have a good year, despite the pandemic and the problems that caused.”

Gemma Charles

**Programme and Impacts Manager,
FMB**

ANNEX 1:

FULL LIST OF GRANTS AGREED TO DATE

Organisation	Grant agreed (\$)
Biflores, Cape Verde	2,000
Environmental Awareness Group, Antigua & Barbuda	14,220
Chuilexi Conservancy, Mozambique	158,482
Flower Valley Conservation Trust, South Africa	3,591
Fundação Maio Biodiversidade, Cape Verde	37,000
Fundacion Islas de la Bahia, Honduras (FIB)	10,000
GreenViet, Vietnam	3,000
Institut Congolais pour la Conservation de la Nature, DRC	30,000
Kenya Wildlife Conservancies Association, Kenya	250,000
La Recoturh, Centro de Estudios Marinos, Fundacion Islas de la Bahia, Fundación Cayos Cochinos, Fundación Cuero-y-Salado, Honduras	90,000
Mukutan Conservancy, Kenya	62,060
Mukutan Conservancy, Kenya (follow up grant)	22,433
Northern Rangeland Trust Community Conservancies, Kenya	250,358
Oceans Alive, Kenya	5,000
OI Pejeta Conservancy, Kenya	100,000
Principe Foundation , São Tomé and Príncipe	20,307
Private Forest Owner Organisations, Uganda	15,001
ProPark Foundation for Protected Areas, Romania	22,000
Saint Lucia National Trust, Saint Lucia	52,700
Uganda Wildlife Authority, Uganda	79,748
Ya'axche Conservation Trust, Belize	80,000
Zam Zam, Tajikistan	7,000
Zarand Association, Romania	15,042
Total funds awarded to partners	\$1,329,942
Remaining funding for further asks	\$262,233.00

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact:

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