

Succulent Karoo Biodiversity Hotspot

Program for Consolidation

September 2009

The only arid ecosystem to be recognized as a global biodiversity hotspot, the Succulent Karoo, covering parts of southwestern South Africa and southern Namibia, is characterized by its diverse and endemic flora, especially succulents and bulbs. The hotspot is home to 6,356 plant species, 40 percent of which are endemic or unique to the region. In addition to its floral diversity, the hotspot is a center of diversity for reptiles and invertebrates and also supports a variety of mammals and endemic birds.

As detailed in the Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) ecosystem profile for this hotspot,¹ local and global awareness of the significance and value of the Succulent Karoo has been low. Most of the region's 100,000 square kilometers are used for communal or commercial grazing, with other human impacts – mining, agriculture, ostrich farming, illegal collection of fauna and flora, and anthropogenic climate change – adding to the pressure on biodiversity.

CEPF is a joint initiative of l'Agence Française de Développement, Conservation International, the Global Environment Facility, the Government of Japan, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and the World Bank. A fundamental goal is to ensure civil society is engaged in biodiversity conservation.

The CEPF strategy for this hotspot was created based on the results of the Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Plan (SKEP), which included a comprehensive and participatory process to develop a 20-year conservation and development strategy for the region. SKEP, now the Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Program, developed an overarching framework for biodiversity conservation and sustainable development in the hotspot.

The SKEP vision states that: “The people of the Succulent Karoo take ownership of and enjoy their unique living landscape in a way that maintains biodiversity and improves livelihoods now and into perpetuity.” CEPF funding in the Succulent Karoo was designed to support this vision and key elements of the 20-year strategy. The specific niche for CEPF in the hotspot has been to catalyze key activities in under-funded geographic priority areas using innovative mechanisms to achieve biodiversity conservation by involving specific land users such as the agriculture sector, mining companies and communal authorities.

¹ Ecosystem Profile, The Succulent Karoo Hotspot, www.cepf.net/Documents/final.succulentkaroo.ep.pdf (PDF - 496 KB)

To meet this challenge, CEPF awarded 89 grants valued at \$7.9 million from 2003 to 2008 to civil society groups to help conserve the region's rich biodiversity. These organizations also leveraged an additional \$4.5 million for conservation in the hotspot.

Achievements: As described in the report assessing the five-year investment period², several important conservation results were achieved:

- More than 2.9 million hectares of biologically important land were added to the conservation estate via establishment of conservancies, signing of stewardship agreements, and the incorporation and designation of state land. In addition, CEPF grantees helped to improve management on more than 3 million hectares of land.
- Each of the seven biodiversity conservation corridors identified as priorities for CEPF investment were reinforced by anchor projects that improved coordination, collaboration and synergy between civil society partners. CEPF promulgated best practice guidelines for the wine, rooibos, off-road vehicle, and potato industries. CEPF also promoted improved practices for ostrich farming and for rehabilitation of mine dump sites.
- CEPF contributed directly to the creation of 395 short-to-medium-term jobs and to the growth in number of environmental nongovernmental organizations from five in 2003 to more than 20 today. Indirectly, through a partnership called the SKEPPIES fund, CEPF further contributed to the creation of 19 businesses and 109 local jobs.
- CEPF conservation targets and priorities were integrated into South African and Namibian institutional frameworks for biodiversity conservation, and all relevant national and provincial government agencies are now aware of SKEP priorities.

Justification for consolidation: Although CEPF investment has raised the profile of the Succulent Karoo and led to greater conservation interest and action, the region remains under threat. Like many remote and arid areas in the world, the region suffers from lack of popular understanding of its ecological value, low institutional capacity and poverty. These factors could undermine the partnerships and new institutional arrangements that CEPF started during the first five-year investment period. Thus, a three-year consolidation program will:

- Solidify the specific institutional and site-based biophysical gains made thus far.
- Leverage funds and make strategic use of funding pools to ensure sustainability of SKEP initiatives.
- Ensure that the best practices begun in the past five years are now replicated in other South African conservation programs.

As compared to the Western Cape province of South Africa, the Northern Cape – and the broader area of Namaqualand in which much of the Succulent Karoo lies – has greater poverty, lower levels of education and skills, and higher levels of unemployment. Springbok, the main city in the region, lies 900 kilometers away from Kimberly, the Northern Cape provincial capital, and 570 kilometers from Cape Town. In such a remote location, it is important to maintain momentum, particularly in terms of public awareness and the political and policy arenas.

² Assessing Five Years of CEPF Investment in the Succulent Karoo Biodiversity Hotspot, www.cepf.net/Documents/Final_SKassessment_Nov08.pdf (PDF - 380 KB)

As such, consolidation activities will start with continued strengthening of government and nongovernmental partners in the Namakwa District of South Africa, including work with the provincial Department of Tourism, Environment, and Conservation (DTEC), the Namakwa Biodiversity Advisory Forum, and the community-based organizations that can be reached via the small grants of the SKEPPIES fund. District environment and local economic development officers need support in their relations with communities, land owners, and provincial government as they promote improved land-use management practices, use of contractual agreements (phrased as “stewardship” mechanisms in the region), and income generation activities.

The use of stewardship mechanisms bears particular discussion. CEPF first supported this concept when working in the Cape Floristic Region of South Africa and subsequently expanded support for this approach to the Succulent Karoo, given the predominance of grazing in the region and the large tracts of land owned by private ranchers. Replicating this model has not been easy in the Succulent Karoo, given the lack of local government capacity and critical work with farmers who have a distrust of government. The consolidation program will secure the place of stewardship within the Northern Cape government and lead to expanded conservation in private land holdings.

While the institutions of the Northern Cape require continued support, two particular geographic sites within the broader Succulent Karoo would benefit the most from further CEPF funding: the Knersvlakte protected area of the Western Cape province and Sperrgebiet National Park in southern Namibia. Consolidation grants will enhance the resilience and durability of these two protected areas, which were created due at least in part to CEPF grants. Activities will focus on strengthening the financial viability of these areas, building the awareness of people living in the buffer zones, and using stewardship mechanisms to fill gaps in the actual conservation estates.

The consolidation program will expand upon two elements of work from the first phase that leverage funds for conservation. First, the consolidation program will facilitate the release of as much as \$2 million from an existing fund for land acquisition, the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust (LHSKT). Previously, CEPF supported the creation of a framework for stewardship agreements with individual commercial farmers, communal farmers, mining corporations, and statutory bodies, leading directly to increased area in conservation. CEPF also supported the research to determine which properties would be the most appropriate to purchase. The consolidation program will continue to apply the contractual and legal knowledge gained previously to make expanded use of the Trust. Second, the consolidation program will strengthen the organizational underpinnings and better define the niche of the SKEPPIES Fund, positioning it to become a financially independent small grants making body for at least the medium-term. Specifically, consolidation-supported activities are expected to lead to increased funding for key activities from the Development Bank of South Africa and other donors.

CEPF has been an important funder of two of South Africa’s biome-based conservation efforts, the Cape Action Plan for the Environment (C.A.P.E.) in the Cape Floristic Region Hotspot, and SKEP. Consolidation funds will ensure that the SKEP initiative continues by strengthening networks within the hotspot, disseminating and replicating best practices from the initial 89 grants, and garnering support from national, provincial and district-level agencies.

As described further below, while there is interest in the Succulent Karoo from funders interested in climate change and desertification, CEPF remains the only significant donor in the region dedicated to biodiversity conservation. As such, CEPF consolidation funds are critical for maintaining strategic gains to date. The investment priorities shown in Table 1 represent the most efficient way to enhance the resilience and durability of conservation gains made during the initial CEPF investment period.

Table 1. Investment Priorities and Activities

<p>Investment priority 1: Sustain stewardship, improved livestock management and local economic development investments in the Northern Cape Regions of the Succulent Karoo. Implementing partner: Conservation International-South Africa Potential leverage: Citigroup; British High Commission; Development Bank of Southern Africa; DeBeers Consolidated Mines; Northern Cape Department of Environment, Tourism, and Conservation; Ford Foundation; Fonds Francais pour l'Environnement Mondial; private funders</p>	
<p>Outcome 1: Stewardship and local conservation-based development investments are sustained in priority areas within the production landscape in the Namakwa District; and, an independent SKEPPIES Fund is institutionally consolidated to become a sustainable financing vehicle for conservation in the hotspot.</p>	
Activity	\$350,000
<p>Ensure that local economic development in the Namakwa District supports biodiversity conservation by mentoring community, government and corporate implementers to implement best practices related to land management, stewardship agreements, livestock production, and livelihood activities.</p> <p>Support implementation of the Northern Cape Department of Tourism, Environment, and Conservation (DTEC) stewardship strategy in Namakwa District by providing ecological expertise and facilitating district-provincial government links leading to completion of stewardship agreements.</p> <p>Enhance, focus and finalize the establishment of SKEPPIES as an independent sustainable financing vehicle, by completing legal processes, conducting a strategic review for expanding the small grant portfolio, securing new financing and upgrading systems for project application, approval and reporting to improve verification of conservation outputs.</p>	
<p>Investment priority 2: Institutionalize the SKEP learning network and mainstream local level governance for conservation. Implementing partner: South Africa National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) Potential leverage: Other ongoing SANBI programs; Development Bank of Southern Africa; UNDP; National Department of Public Works Extended Public Works Programme; National Department of Water Affairs and Environment United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification Programme; Hans Hoheisen Charitable Trust</p>	
<p>Outcome 2: Enabling environment created through embedded learning network, localized governance and mainstreamed conservation approaches.</p>	

Activity	\$300,000
<p>Ensure capture and replication of best practices and ecosystems services knowledge from the first five-year grant period in the hotspot through case studies, publications, and learning exchanges such that this knowledge is used for project development in the Succulent Karoo and other biomes in South Africa.</p> <p>Support the Namakwa Biodiversity Advisory Forum and other institutional frameworks such that conservation is mainstreamed into local governance, production sectors, civil society and associated project development.</p> <p>Through SANBI's ongoing SKEP Coordination Unit and its national programs, support Namakwa District government personnel and civil society to use previously developed tools for planning, stewardship, land reform, project development, and monitoring and evaluation [including the national Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool, or METT, in protected areas.]</p>	
<p>Investment priority 3: Expansion of mechanisms to make greater use of the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust (LHSKT) for land acquisition and stewardship arrangements.</p>	
<p>Implementing partner: World Wide Fund for Nature</p>	
<p>Potential leverage: LHSKT, Namakwa District DTEC</p>	
<p>Outcome 3: Innovative acquisition and/or management arrangements executed and legal mechanisms completed for the LHSKT.</p>	
Activity	\$159,000
<p>Recognizing that the LHSKT holds funds for land acquisition, but is handicapped by a trust deed that prevents its capital being used for any other purpose, support consensus strategy among Namakwa District DTEC, SAN Parks, and Cape Nature (in the Northern Cape Province) to prioritize land acquisition and stewardship arrangements for corridors and buffers around key biodiversity areas in the Succulent Karoo.</p> <p>Provide legal analysis in relation to the South African tax code to allow for tax incentives that reduce the purchase cost of land or pay for management costs, thereby facilitating land transfers and enhancing use of the LHSKT, and disseminate this information to landholders.</p> <p>Create sample legal contracts (<i>pro formas</i>) for the LHSKT covering the range of owner-manager relationships in the Northern Cape and Western Cape provinces, and support test cases for each, thereby facilitating use of the LHSKT.</p> <p>Plan and execute one innovative acquisition in Namaqualand and Knersvlakte through the use of land swaps, tax incentives, or stewardship easement methods.</p>	
<p>Investment priority 4: Complete efforts to ensure good management of the Knersvlakte Priority Area in South Africa.</p>	
<p>Implementing partner: CapeNature</p>	
<p>Potential leverage: Ministries of Environmental Affairs and Tourism and Finance, CapeNature</p>	

Outcome 4: Knersvlakte Protected Area management efforts consolidated and expanded.	
Activity	\$300,000
<p>Recognizing that CEPF helped create the Knersvlakte Provincial Nature Reserve in the Northern Cape, enhance the resilience of this protected area by building the human and financial capacity of the protected area management authority, including the formalization of permanent, full-time staff positions within CapeNature for the reserve.</p> <p>Improve management plan for the reserve through ecosystem baseline mapping and tourism studies.</p> <p>Facilitate the use of stewardship agreements on private land – including conservancies, biodiversity agreements and contractual agreements – to ensure proper protection of the total Knersvlakte landscape, including corridors and buffers.</p> <p>Incorporate protected area-related employment into the plans of local economic development authorities and promote public awareness of the reserve via local media.</p>	
<p>Investment priority 5: Complete efforts to ensure good management of the Sperrgebiet Priority Area in Namibia.</p> <p>Implementing partner: Namibia Nature Foundation</p> <p>Potential leverage: Namibia Ministry of Environment and Tourism</p>	
Outcome 5: Sperrgebiet National Park management efforts consolidated and expanded.	
Activity	\$300,000
<p>Recognizing that CEPF helped create the Sperrgebiet National Park in southwestern Namibia, enhance the resilience of this protected area by supporting implementation of the park management, business and tourism plans.</p> <p>Use audience-specific messaging to people in the communities surrounding the park so that they understand park legislation and regulations and their own rights and responsibilities in relation to park management and resources, thereby enabling them to increase the benefits they derive from the park.</p> <p>Explore and capitalize on the small and medium enterprise promotion activities being supported by other donors in the communities surrounding the park.</p> <p>Promote collaboration between the Ministries of Mines/Energy, Environment/Tourism, and Fisheries/Marine Resources on mining rehabilitation and park management on the coast.</p>	

Total consolidation budget: \$1,409,000

Donor Collaboration: CEPF and its grantees are committed to collaborating with a wide variety of donors to achieve the conservation outcomes pursued under consolidation. The challenge in the Succulent Karoo is that while donors support national-level activities in Namibia and South Africa and also support work in protected areas in other geographic regions in these two countries, there is very little donor support in this specific geography.

Namibia

World Bank: Active projects include (1) the Coastal Conservation and Management Project, which has a geographic focus in Erongo, north of the Succulent Karoo, but does address ICZM policy issues which will complement work in the Sperrgebiet; and (2) the Integrated Community-Based Ecosystem Management Project that supports conservancies via policy and extension from a national level. The World Bank reports no pipeline projects of any kind in Namibia.

GEF: GEF shows 15 projects in some form of approval or implementation in Namibia (including those named for the IBRD, above). At least one is closely related to Sperrgebiet activities, the Strengthening the Protected Area Network grant to the Ministry of Environment and Tourism. There is another – NAM PLACE – that focuses on several protected landscapes other than Sperrgebiet. The other projects deal with complementary issues, such as land and livestock management and climate change adaptation.

South Africa

World Bank: The World Bank has one active environmental management project in the Succulent Karoo, the Richtersveld Community Biodiversity Conservation Project, operating at a total project cost of approximately \$2 million. This project has been in planning or implementation throughout the CEPF five-year investment period, and as such, during that period and now during consolidation, CEPF has ensured that grant activities would occur in adjacent, but not overlapping, geographic areas within the hotspot. Implementing grantees – SANBI and CI – have ensured that their work has complemented that of the Richtersveld project. Other than this project, the World Bank has no active or pipeline environmental management or development projects in the Succulent Karoo. There are active environmental management projects in other parts of the country (i.e., C.A.P.E., St. Lucia Wetlands, Addo Elephant Reserve, Maloti-Drakensburg transfrontier), and there is a national renewable energy program. These will have thematic links to CEPF grants in the Succulent Karoo, but no direct connection.

GEF: GEF shows 19 projects in some form of approval or implementation in South Africa (including those named for the IBRD, above), but none are focused on or based in the Succulent Karoo. Many, if not all, of the national programs have complementary activities (e.g., solar water heating, climate change preparation, national biodiversity action plans) to CEPF-proposed development efforts in the region.

Information available from the Agence Française de Développement and the Government of Japan show support in South Africa and Namibia, but nothing specific to the Succulent Karoo. Furthermore, the MacArthur Foundation does not include the southern Africa region as one of its geographic priorities for conservation grants.

The sixth CEPF partner, CI, has no active presence in Namibia, but is active in South Africa and the part of the Succulent Karoo within it. CI has a long-standing Conservation Stewards Program that promotes the benefits of land ownership and long-term lease agreements to give communities a vested interest in conservation. In the Succulent Karoo, the program has taken the shape of a specific demonstration/pilot project, thereby complementing the CEPF-supported work at the level of district and provincial policy and planning.

Recently, GEF awarded CI a \$5 million Earth Fund “platform” to continue the Conservation Stewards Program. This program is still several steps away from releasing funds, however. CI must secure its 3:1 contribution to the \$5 million grant, receive formal approval for its operational manual from the GEF, and then run a tender process (e.g., call for applications), which itself will likely require private sector commitment of funds. Thus, while groups in the Succulent Karoo may receive funds, there is no guarantee.

Beyond the CEPF donor partners, the only major international agency with overlapping activities in the Succulent Karoo appears to be the German GTZ, which has an ongoing institutional strengthening program with the Namibian Ministry of Environment and Tourism. If anything, the general lack of donor support for the Succulent Karoo is further argument for a CEPF-supported consolidation program.

Stakeholder Resources: SANBI, through its funding from the national government, has paid and will continue to pay for the full-time engagement of a Succulent Karoo regional manager and SKEP financial manager. It also pays for the partial time devoted by the SKEP program manager and the multiple technical and support staff within the organization who work on SKEP, CAPE, the Grasslands, and its other biome-based programs. SANBI engagement has, in turn, led to the Northern Cape Province devoting human resources to stewardship initiatives.

CapeNature saw a Rand 35 million contribution by LHSKT toward land acquisition in the Knersvlakte Conservation Area between 2004-2009. Further, CapeNature itself has earmarked Rand 1.5 million from 2009-2011 for knowledge management within the conservation area and Rand 200,000 to complement grant funds in 2010 and 2011. CapeNature has formally submitted a “Business Case” to the provincial Treasury to continue support beyond the life of the grant.

Monitoring Plan: CEPF will monitor the performance of its grantees in achieving a core set of consolidation targets as outlined below through the review of programmatic and financial progress reports and site visits to each project. The specific targets presented in Table 2 have been selected based on their relevance from the CEPF Global Results Framework. In addition, a specific target for leverage has been added for this portfolio.

Investment Priority Links: As shown in Figure 1, the investment priorities are either directly complementary or are conceptually linked. Where Priority 1 works at a local level within the Namakwa District of the Northern Cape to finish urgent work from the initial funding period, Priority 2 will ensure the sustainability and replication of these efforts over the longer term. Both priorities will benefit from the increased availability of funds from the Leslie Hill Succulent Karoo Trust, and the Trust will in turn support work in the Knersvlakte, as will the SKEPPIES small grant fund. Support for the Knersvlakte and Sperrgebiet reserves continues a core mission of CEPF and will allow for consolidation grants throughout the hotspot (i.e., Namibia, Northern Cape, Western Cape).

Figure 1. Succulent Karoo Investment Priority Links

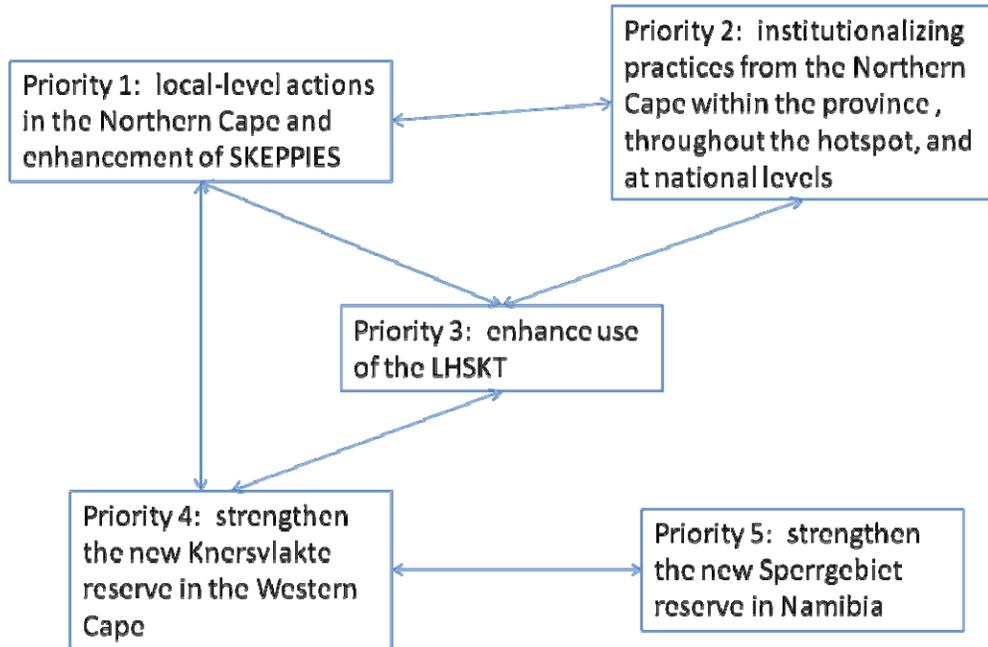


Table 2. Succulent Karoo Logical Framework for Consolidation

Objective	Targets	Means of Verification
Reinforce and sustain the conservation gains achieved as a result of previous CEPF investment in the Succulent Karoo.	20 civil society actors, including NGOs and the private sector, actively participating in conservation programs	Grantee performance reports and Annual Portfolio Overview Reports
	2 key biodiversity areas, one of 113,000 hectares (Knersvlakte) and one of 2.6 million hectares (Sperrgebiet), with strengthened management	Grantee performance reports and Protected Areas Tracking Tool (SP1 METT)
	\$2,000,000 leveraged	Final project reports
	62,000 hectares in production landscapes with improved management for biodiversity conservation	Grantee performance reports and Productive Landscape Tracking Tool (SP2 METT)
Intermediate Outcomes	Targets	Means of Verification
<p>Outcome 1: Stewardship and local conservation-based development investments are sustained in priority areas within the production landscape in the Namakwa District; and, an independent SKEPPIES Fund is institutionally consolidated to become a sustainable financing vehicle for conservation in the hotspot.</p> <p>\$350,000</p>	Public-private partnership structure operating effectively in Namakwa District with local environment and development authorities	Grantee performance reports
	16 stewardship agreements (covering 62,000 hectares) completed	Grantee performance reports

	SKEPPIES Fund governance and operations strengthened such that it receives capital contributions from other donors	Grantee performance reports
Outcome 2: Enabling environment created through embedded learning network, localized governance and mainstreamed conservation approaches. \$300,000	Best practices for conservation in the hotspot made available to a wider audience through multiple written and electronic media, and local forums and events	Grantee performance reports
	Management effectiveness tracking tool used in all protected areas managed by the Northern Cape DTEC	Grantee performance reports
Outcome 3: Innovative acquisition and/or management arrangements executed and legal mechanisms completed for the LHSKT. \$159,000	Strategy for land acquisition in the Northern Cape using the LHSKT developed and agreed to by district and provincial authorities, land owners, and conservation scientists.	Grantee performance reports
	One large individual farmer-owned plot in Namaqualand and one in Knersvlakte placed under improved management via innovative acquisition or stewardship arrangement	Grantee performance reports
	Set of legal <i>pro formas</i> developed making use of tax incentives to allow for increased land acquisition and stewardship agreements	Grantee performance reports
Outcome 4: Knersvlakte protected area management efforts consolidated and expanded. \$300,000	Protected area authority has better trained field staff, financial managers, and operational managers	Grantee performance reports
	Protected area has improved management systems through use of ecosystem and visitor data	Grantee performance reports

	Corridors and buffer zones in Knersvlakte put under stewardship agreements for improved management	Grantee performance reports
Outcome 5: Sperrgebiet protected area management efforts consolidated and expanded. \$300,000	Protected area implementing park management, business and tourism plans	Grantee performance reports
	Surrounding communities make use of their rights and responsibilities in relation to the park	Grantee performance reports
	Cross-ministry collaboration facilitated, leading to improved mining rehabilitation and park management activities in coastal zones	Grantee performance reports