

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

Organization Legal Name:	South African National Biodiversity Institute
Project Title:	Institutionalize the SKEP Learning Network, Embed Local Level Governance and Mainstream Biodiversity Conservation
Date of Report:	28 February 2013
Report Author and Contact Information	Lubabalo Ntsholo

CEPF Region: Succulent Karoo

Strategic Direction: 7. Consolidation

Grant Amount: \$300,000

Project Dates: 1 January, 2010 to 31 December, 2012

Implementation Partners for this Project (please explain the level of involvement for each partner):

Conservation Impacts

Please explain/describe how your project has contributed to the implementation of the CEPF ecosystem profile.

Please summarize the overall results/impact of your project.

The project has brought to the fore the immense power of stakeholder engagement, its learning network potential, and its ability to enhance more collaborative and coherent project and programme implementation across a region. The greatest asset that the approach we adopted in implementing this and other projects in the Succulent Karoo has to be our ability, together with the rest of the SKEP partnership, to really break down the institutional barriers and develop programmes of work that are symbiotically beneficial. In summary, the greatest achievements of this project have to be:

- The development and strengthening of the Namakwa Biodiversity Advisory Forum (NAMBAF). This forum has become such a powerful platform for knowledge exchange and information sharing in the Namakwa District. We formally launched it in June 2012, with the signing of a Statement of Intent by 15 government and non-government representatives in the Namakwa District. The meetings are held once every four months, boasting attendances of about 30 people or more
- The strengthening of the culture of learning, enabled through our Learning Network component of work, was something quite new and exciting for the Succulent Karoo people

Planned Long-term Impacts - 3+ years (as stated in the approved proposal):

In the long term, the project would:

* have created the basis for informed and participatory environmental decision making in the Namakwa District. Working to strengthen the Namakwa Biodiversity Advisory Forum, the project will bring together key

decision-makers in the greater Namakwa district with practitioners on the ground and will ensure further mainstreaming of the SKEP strategy.

*Specifically, the project forms the basis from which to consolidate the SKEP strategy on Building the capacity of Local Government for biodiversity conservation. This, the project will do by constantly raising environmental and biodiversity concerns in the Namakwa District. Currently, the Namakwa District and all six local municipalities under it do not have a dedicated environmental unit. This project will fill that gap and work to ensure the creation of a dedicated unit within the municipalities dealing with environmental matters.

Actual Progress Toward Long-term Impacts at Completion:

- The project has exceeded expectations in the manner it has been able to assemble people from different walks of life in Namaqualand under the banner of the Namakwa Biodiversity Advisory Forum. This forum, like no other before it, created a very strong foundation for participatory decision making in matters relating to biodiversity and the environment in the Namakwa District. Through this forum, we have managed to pilot and workshop such products as the Environmental Management Framework of the Namakwa District; we have held various workshops discussing the dynamics brought to the fore by mining in critical areas of biodiversity; we have also discussed the need for a comprehensive Green Economic Development Strategy of the Namakwa district, a recommendation that was widely accepted by the council of the Namakwa District.
- The presence of the Namakwa Project Manager, who was housed within the offices of the Namakwa District municipality, played a significant role in altering the discourse on biodiversity conservation within the municipalities for the better. We managed to align the Municipalities Local Economic Development (LED) programmes with our SKEP biodiversity priorities. The objective was always to influence the municipalities so that they view biodiversity as the natural capital that is essential for the development of the Namakwa District. We have conducted workshops with the municipalities focused on bioregional plans, climate change adaptation, and wind energy development. The capacity building interventions are still required going to the future. But there is an inherent problem of lack of human resource capacity within the municipalities, such that even with the best of training, the management of natural resources will always be found lagging behind. This is a concern we have taken up with the Namakwa District Municipality, and they appreciated the seriousness of the matter, but are also constrained by budgetary limits that they receive from the national treasury.

Planned Short-term Impacts - 1 to 3 years (as stated in the approved proposal):

In the short term, the project will ensure that :

* the SKEP products, information and biodiversity tools developed over the initial CEPF investment are put into use. The major impact of this will be the biodiversity conservation capacity that will be placed within the Namakwa District Municipality which currently has no environmental unit.

* The project will also ensure that through the learning network component, the decisions that are taken are directly influenced by the experiences of the past.

Actual Progress Toward Short-term Impacts at Completion:

- We placed the Namakwa Project Manager at the Namakwa District Municipality offices, and through that he was able to share information and influence the decisions of the municipality. Through the influence of this project, we managed to immediately utilize the NAMBAF as a platform for lesson sharing and capacity building. Some of the products developed over the first cycle of the CEPF investment that we used for training purposes were the Namakwa Critical Biodiversity Areas Maps, the Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Services report, the Management Plan for the Commons of the Namaqualand Uplands. We also utilized tools that were not necessarily developed directly through the CEPF investment, but which were catalyzed by it, like the Spatial Development Framework of the Namakwa District Municipality, as well as the Environmental Management Framework. Although this approach worked, and would still work with sufficient resources

to keep capacitated people within the Namakwa District, the long term solution still, would be the presence of this environmental management capacity within the Namakwa District Municipality.

- The learning Network component was the easier component to implement. We have organized three learning exchanges that were highly appreciated by the Succulent Karoo community. We also redeveloped the SKEP website, making it a portal for information sharing for all our conservation partners. We ran/still run a monthly online newsletter, which has proved very useful as an information sharing tool for our partners. We have also grabbed the opportunity to use social networks, and have a Facebook page. All these and more have helped in making the learning network a very strong and useful one for the SKEP partnership.

Please provide the following information where relevant:

Hectares Protected: N/A

Species Conserved: N/A

Corridors Created: N/A

Describe the success or challenges of the project toward achieving its short-term and long-term impact objectives.

The project succeeded insofar as being a short term mechanism for biodiversity management in the Namakwa District. The successes mentioned above would not have been possible if it was not for this project and the kind funding from CEPF. Of all the successes thus far, the ability of the project to create such a strong platform for participatory decision making like the NAMBAF is not equaled anywhere, more so in areas with similar geographic, literacy and economic levels.

The challenges were mainly offshoots of the unstable political climate in the Namakwa District. What was previously a very stable municipality with one party with an overwhelming majority suddenly became a hung municipality after the last local government election. We also experienced hard times with the passing away of the Executive Mayor of the Namakwa District Municipality, the late Hendrik Visser. He was a real champion for biodiversity, and his passing took us a few years back in terms of the progress we have made.

The other challenge was that we grossly over-estimated what the project could do within the period of time and amount of resources available. But we managed to work around some of the challenges. We initially committed to establishing local forums and thematic teams, but because this would have been very costly, we ended up utilizing available forums to take biodiversity concerns to all relevant stakeholders.

We also committed to writing about 15 case studies during the course of the project, which was a serious underestimation of what could be done. I explained it to the CEPF Grant Director and we lowered down this number to 8.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

No

Project Components

Project Components: *Please report on results by project component. Reporting should reference specific products/deliverables from the approved project design and other relevant information.*

Component 1 Planned:

Institutionalize the SKEP learning network

Component 1 Actual at Completion:

- We Appointed the SKEP Learning Network officer in July 2010 to drive the learning network component of the project. She has since been made a permanent staff member by SANBI.
- We facilitated and hosted three learning exchanges in the hotspot over the period of three years. The first one involved taking Alexander Bay high school students to key biodiversity areas across Namaqualand. They went to visit the Richtersveld National Park, and were treated to a wealth of knowledge by the elders of the Richtersveld community, where such subjects as traditional natural resource management systems, the cultural significance of biodiversity, as well as the medicinal value of indigenous plants were discussed. The learners also visited the villages of Leliefontein and TweeRivier in the Kamiesberg Uplands where they engaged with SKEPPIES projects (Leliefontein Wetland; Anatolian Sheepdog) Conservation South Africa's Biodiversity and Red Meat Initiative (BRI), and the Succulent Karoo Knowledge Centre. They too travelled all the way to experience marine ecosystems at the coastal section of Namaqua National Park. Local community champions and stakeholders from SANParks, the provincial Department of Environment and Conservation (DENC), Conservation South Africa (CSA) and CapeNature collectively played a role in making the learning exchange a success by sharing parts of the programme and showcasing their efforts.
- The second learning exchange involved municipal and civil society biodiversity management practitioners from Namaqualand and Cape Town. The aim of this learning exchange was for the participants to share knowledge about the conservation of priority municipal biodiversity sites in a way that also addresses socio-economic development objectives of local communities.
- The third learning exchange focused on local ecological and sustainable livestock management for a group of 16 emerging livestock farmers from De Doorns, Sutherland and Leliefontein. These participants embarked on a six day exchange which was hosted by the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) and Agri-Kameelkrans Vereniging, which is a farmer's association that promotes sustainable agriculture within the Leliefontein Communal Area in the Kamiesberg area, Namaqualand. The aim of this learning exchange was for the emerging farmers from the three different communities to share knowledge and experience regarding sustainable livestock management; for the farmers to learn and to share experiences on how to assess the condition of the rangelands in their areas; and for the participants from De Doorns and Sutherland to be exposed to how Namaqualand communal farmers employ herding strategies to manage livestock sustainably without the use of a fenced camp system.
- We have also convened three training workshops, using the platform provided by the Namakwa Biodiversity Advisory Forum. The first was a biodiversity tools training workshop, provided by our SANBI colleague and expert in Biodiversity Planning, Jeffery Manuel. The focal group here was municipal officials, and we intended building their capacity to engage with available biodiversity maps and other products in their processes of decision making. The second one was on Wind Energy and how the municipalities can exploit this opportunities provided by wind to further boost their economic performance. This was offered by Dr Simon Todd of the University of Cape Town. The third one was on the Environmental Management Framework of the Namakwa District Municipality. This was kindly facilitated by the Northern Cape Department of Environment and Nature Conservation, through its Director for Environmental Planning, Ms Rylene Nel
- We have, over the period of time, written five case studies at the time of writing this report. The other three are in the process of being finalized. We had initially committed to writing 15 case studies; we immediately indicated to CEPF that this was a serious overestimation of what we could do. We then revised the number down to eight. We

realized that the process of case study writing was a very painstaking one, requiring huge amounts of time. This has been the most challenging aspect of the learning network component of work. The five case studies are on: (a) Building the Stewardship Capacity in The Bokkeveld; (b) The SKEPPIES Small Grants Fund; (c) Rehabilitating the Leilifontein Wetland; (d) The BRI Stewardship Model; and (e) the Consolidation of the Knersvlakte Nature Reserve

- We also strengthened the SKEP communications over the project period. We wrote informative and vibrant monthly online newsletters, covering a whole range of issues. . In July 2010 there were 387 registered SKEP e-newsletter recipients. Today there are 1036 registered SKEP e-newsletter recipients, bearing in mind that for the latter half of 2011 until April 2012, the monthly SKEP electronic newsletter was not in circulation as we embarked on a process to improve the functionality, look and feel of the SKEP website. We also opened up our website for use by our partners, and we would publish partner newsletters like the Veepos of Conservation South Africa and the Makaam of the Agricultural Research Council. We have regular media releases whenever there is a need for such, and we developed an sms information sharing tool, wherein we send sms'es to our partners, informing them about news in the press and upcoming events

Component 2 Planned:

Mainstream biodiversity products into land use decision making

Component 2 Actual at Completion:

- We appointed Mr Abe Koopman as the Namakwa project manager in August 2010, and he has been driving component 2 and 3 of this project.
- The Namakwa Project Manager has been very instrumental in strengthening the Namakwa Biodiversity Advisory Forum. The forum has become a very valued and useful platform for participatory action and decision making. To demonstrate its value, our partners urged us to develop terms of reference for a more formal NAMBAF, and to this end we developed the Statement of Intent (Sol), which was a voluntary commitment by our partners to actively participate in the work towards the realization of the SKEP objectives in the Namakwa region. The Sol was signed by 15 of our partners at a ceremony attend by the Northern Cape provincial minister for Environment and Nature Conservation.
- The issue of establishing local forums was discussed with the Grant Director when he came to visit the project. We realized that it would not be feasible to establish these forums if we already had existing forums. So we resolved to work within the forums already in existence to strengthen their capacity to engage with environmental issues. We have worked with Agri-Namakwa, which is a union representing commercial farmer in Namaqualand, we have also worked with Agri-Kamerlkraans, which represents communal farmers. We have strengthened relations with the Namakwa LED forum, as well as Namakwa Intergovernmental relations forum. We have also worked with the Komaggas Environmental Justice Network. In all these forums, we constantly sought to mainstream biodiversity conservation, and influence their work to take into cognizance the importance of biodiversity
- As with the above, we also resolved to work with existing teams to discuss specific thematic issues affecting biodiversity conservation. The agricultural unions mentioned above played a huge role in satisfying this requirement. We also worked a great deal with mining issues, particularly in the Bushmanland-Inselbergs Priority area, until a decision was taken by SANBI that working with mining companies was not a critical strategic focal area for us. The SKEPPIES fund operated by CSA still remains the key programme focused on livelihoods and conservation in the Succulent Karoo, and our project worked

hand in hand with CSA, and we formed part of the management committee of the SKEPPIES fund

Component 3 Planned:

Embed SKEP onto key government institutions in the Namakwa district

Component 3 Actual at Completion:

- The Namakwa Critical Biodiversity Areas maps still remain the most important of the products developed through the CEPF investment. SANBI has committed even more staff and resources to make sure that these maps get developed into the Namakwa Bioregional plan, which will make Namakwa the first district municipality to have a bioregional plan in South Africa. Most of our mainstreaming work therefore has been around making sure that the priorities highlighted in the CBA maps get reflected in other municipal products and programmes. The development, later, of the Environmental Management Framework, and the Spatial development Framework, took serious cognizance of the presence of the CBA maps, and they are firmly entrenched in the EMF and the SDF. The more recent development of the Climate Change Vulnerability Assessment of the Namakwa district was also highly influenced by the CBA maps.
- The Land Reform and Biodiversity Stewardship Initiative went silent at the national level, and only got resuscitated in the second half of 2012. But our Namaqualand projects were ongoing, and as such have contributed a great deal to the objectives of the LRBSI. They have been often called to share lessons with other projects at the national level. The leilifontein project specifically has been head and shoulders above the rest
- We have continuously supported the implementation of the Northern Cape Stewardship strategy through regular contributions made at the Northern Cape Stewardship Forum. The contribution to the stewardship programme was made more significantly through the secondment of Ralph van Der Poll from CSA to the provincial department in the Northern Cape. CSA would report more on this
- The SA-METT was done for the Northern Cape by a consultant contracted by the South African National Parks. So there was no need for us to do any more on the METT.

Were any components unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

No components were unrealized. What did change however was the method of doing things. As mentioned above, instead of establishing teams, we worked with those already in existence. After realizing that the commitment to writing 15 case studies was an unrealistic one, we revised this down. But at the end, the objectives of this project were realized.

Please describe and submit (electronically if possible) any tools, products, or methodologies that resulted from this project or contributed to the results.

The products developed through this project are the case studies our learning network officer developed. They will be sent to CEPF in an electric format.

Lessons Learned

Describe any lessons learned during the design and implementation of the project, as well as any related to organizational development and capacity building. Consider lessons that would inform projects designed or implemented by your organization or others, as well as lessons that might be considered by the global conservation community.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

The project was designed with some assumptions in mind that were not necessarily accurate. We underestimated the capacity of the Namakwa District Municipality to assimilate all the biodiversity information. The greatest lesson we learnt here was to ensure in future that there is sufficient 'fit' between project objectives and the ability of our partners to fully grasp such objectives.

Project Implementation: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/shortcomings)

We strategically located the Namakwa project Manager in Springbok, Namaqualand, in order to have a strong SKEP presence in the area. But in actual terms this function became very difficult to manage from Cape Town. We should put more measures in place to manage remote offices in future.

We also overestimated our own capacity to write down case studies. This very crucial aspect of the project could not have been done at the rushed manner which we thought it would when we developed the project. This has taught us invaluable lessons in as far as organizing and planning work of this nature is concerned.

Other lessons learned relevant to conservation community:

One of the most important lessons we learnt from this project and other projects in the Succulent Karoo is that 'one size does not fit all'. As much as some models and assumptions may work in the Fynbos hotspot, these may not necessarily work in areas as remote and challenged as the Succulent Karoo. Interventions at these areas need to be informed by the dynamics and politics of the specific areas. The community of the Succulent Karoo is relatively less literate, more poverty stricken, and less organized than the community of the Fynbos region for instance.

Additional Funding

Provide details of any additional funding that supported this project and any funding secured for the project, organization, or the region, as a result of the CEPF investment in this project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
SANBI	In-Kind	R 2 454 655	This covers the support provided by the following staff: Project Manager 100% Director 20% Finance Manager 15% Administrator 40%
SANBI	Cash	R 90 000	Support towards the SKEP conference held in 2011
WWF and West Coast District Municipality	Cash	R 23 458	Support towards the SKEP conference held in 2011

***Additional funding should be reported using the following categories:**

- A** *Project co-financing (Other donors or your organization contribute to the direct costs of this project)*
- B** *Grantee and Partner leveraging (Other donors contribute to your organization or a partner organization as a direct result of successes with this CEPF funded project.)*
- C** *Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Sustainability/Replicability

Summarize the success or challenge in achieving planned sustainability or replicability of project components or results.

SANBI has engaged in serious talks with the Department of Environment and Nature conservation in the Northern Cape to let the department take over these functions, particularly those of the Namakwa Project Manager. In the meantime, SANBI has extended the contract of the Namakwa Project Manager for 1 year, and has made the contract of the Learning Network Officer permanent.

We foresee a bigger role played by the government departments in the Northern Cape going into the future, and a gradual withdrawal by SANBI to let the citizens and officials in the province to take ownership. This will be our greatest contribution to the sustainability of the interventions we have thus far made.

Summarize any unplanned sustainability or replicability achieved.

Safeguard Policy Assessment

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

Not Applicable

Additional Comments/Recommendations

Information Sharing and CEPF Policy

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned, and results. Final project completion reports are made available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and publicized in our newsletter and other communications.

Please include your full contact details below:

Name: Lubabalo Ntsholo
Organization name: South African national Biodiversity Institute
Mailing address: Center for Biodiversity Conservation, Private Bag X7, Claremont, 7735
Tel: +27 21 799 8817
Fax: 086 579 9512
E-mail: L.Ntsholo@sanbi.org.za

*****If your grant has an end date other than JUNE 30, please complete the tables on the following pages*****

Performance Tracking Report Addendum

CEPF Global Targets

(Enter Grant Term)

Provide a numerical amount and brief description of the results achieved by your grant.
Please respond to only those questions that are relevant to your project.

Project Results	Is this question relevant?	If yes, provide your numerical response for results achieved during the annual period.	Provide your numerical response for project from inception of CEPF support to date.	Describe the principal results achieved from 1 July, 2012 to 31 December, 2012 (Attach annexes if necessary)
1. Did your project strengthen management of a protected area guided by a sustainable management plan? Please indicate number of hectares improved.	N/A			Please also include name of the protected area(s). If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
2. How many hectares of new and/or expanded protected areas did your project help establish through a legal declaration or community agreement?	N/A			Please also include name of the protected area. If more than one, please include the number of hectares strengthened for each one.
3. Did your project strengthen biodiversity conservation and/or natural resources management inside a key biodiversity area identified in the CEPF ecosystem profile? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	N/A			
4. Did your project effectively introduce or strengthen biodiversity conservation in management practices outside protected areas? If so, please indicate how many hectares.	N/A			
5. If your project promotes the sustainable use of natural resources, how many local communities accrued tangible socioeconomic benefits? Please complete Table 1 below.	N/A			

If you answered yes to question 5, please complete the following table

