

## Cape Floristic Region Biodiversity Hotspot Program for Consolidation

June 2008

### Background

Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund (CEPF) investment in the Cape Floristic Region biodiversity hotspot concluded in December 2006 following allocation of \$6 million in grant funds. Funds were awarded based on four strategic directions, with a geographic focus on three mega-reserve corridors. CEPF's investment was a significant and catalytic contribution to implementation of Cape Action for People and the Environment (C.A.P.E.), the stakeholder-driven, 20-year strategy for conservation and sustainable development of the Cape Floristic Region.

CEPF's five-year investment cycle sought to catalyze civil society action on the most urgent geographic and thematic conservation priorities identified in CEPF's Ecosystem Profile<sup>1</sup> and the C.A.P.E. strategy. In the targeted geographic areas, CEPF aimed to complement other funding sources to augment the strength and capacity of the institutional structures being developed to implement C.A.P.E. Through a focus on nongovernmental organizations and private sector participation, CEPF filled an important funding niche to implement key components of the action plan. Throughout, CEPF supported innovative mechanisms and projects that can now serve as models for implementation of the 20-year strategy.

During the CEPF investment period, the Cape Floristic Region was also the recipient of two Global Environment Facility (GEF) grants: C.A.P.E. Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative, and the C.A.P.E. Biodiversity Conservation and Sustainable Development project. Both of these projects are due to be completed in 2009. To date, there are many project examples where CEPF and GEF-funded projects have catalyzed and complemented each other, and contributed to overall sustainability.

### Achievements

CEPF assessed the impact of five years of investment<sup>2</sup> and concluded that the CEPF investment in the Cape Floristic Region contributed to 184,785 hectares being added to the conservation estate via establishment of conservancies, signing of stewardship (contractual) agreements, and the incorporation and designation of state land. Land management was improved on a total of 1,032,556 hectares. Four ecological corridors were reinforced as a result of CEPF investment, including the Baviaanskloof Mega-Reserve (1,036,549 hectares), the Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor (1,830,562 hectares), the Gouritz Initiative (3,274,097 hectares), and the West Coast Biosphere Reserve (386,259 hectares). Best practice guidelines were developed for viticulture and for flower production, with full support of industry.

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<sup>1</sup> [Ecosystem Profile](#), Cape Floristic Region, December 2001 (PDF - 1.3 MB)

<sup>2</sup> [Assessing Five Years of CEPF Investment in the Cape Floristic Region Biodiversity Hotspot](#), April 2007 (PDF - 263 KB)

In addition, CEPF-supported projects contributed to the alleviation of poverty via job creation and improvements in livelihoods, with projects reporting at least 451 jobs created, 1,232 persons trained, 117 organizations created or strengthened, and more than 355 individuals benefiting from capacity-building opportunities.

The investment also supported the development of a much larger constituency that is now participating in biodiversity conservation. Many of these people are from disadvantaged communities and are deriving economic benefits from their involvement. Additionally, governance structures that are embedded in local institutions, regular conferences, forums, workshops, meetings, and announcements function to keep the C.A.P.E. community connected, and continue to raise awareness and promote learning and capacity building across the region. At least \$3.8 million was leveraged for conservation.

Cape Floristic Region stakeholders have made significant strides to conserve key landscapes, and have pursued an inclusive strategy to ensure support and broad involvement from a variety of sectors. The C.A.P.E. program also has been instrumental in developing and innovating tools that are being used in other South African bioregional programs. In this regard, CEPF's impact in the region can be measured beyond its borders and in other important biodiversity hotspots in southern Africa.

### **Justification for Consolidation**

While much was achieved during the five-year investment cycle, it is clear that many challenges remain to ensure that conservation of the Cape Floristic Region Hotspot is on sustainable and solid footing. Participants at the final assessment workshop expressed much concern about the sustainability of the efforts that they have been working on over the past five years, stating that there are weaknesses and gaps in the work that has been undertaken. The accomplishments are fragile, and need further attention and support. With this in mind, a consolidation program of \$1.65 million to be implemented over three years is planned. The Cape Coordination Unit housed within the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI) is poised to assist CEPF to take this next phase forward, as the unit remains fully functional and involved in and committed to the implementation of the C.A.P.E. strategy. The Cape Coordination Unit is prepared to fulfill this role without further funding from CEPF. The overall consolidation program will build upon successes of the first five years and help to take the region forward in a proactive and sustainable manner. The investment priorities and justifications are listed below.

### **Investment Priorities and Outcomes**

#### **Investment Priority 1: *Consolidate and Strengthen Implementation Efforts for Corridor Conservation***

This investment priority aims to improve, consolidate and address key challenges for implementation to secure protected areas within the hotspot, with the aim of addressing long-term sustainability in the five geographic focal areas of CEPF's first investment period. The five areas (Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor, Gouritz Initiative, Baviaanskloof Mega-Reserve, West Coast Biosphere Reserve and the lowland regions that have been targeted for stewardship interventions) are now in a position where further investment can be used to secure the corridor concept within the parastatal institutions that will ultimately have responsibility for ensuring the future sustainability of these areas.

**Outcome 1:** Long-term sustainability of five corridors is secured (Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor, Gouritz Initiative, Baviaanskloof Mega-Reserve, West Coast Biosphere Reserve and the lowland regions that have been targeted for stewardship interventions)

**Investment Priority 2:** *Improve Project Development and Implementation through Support to Grassroots Communities*

Much progress has been made to create and secure the corridors in the Cape Floristic Region. The sustainability of these corridors will to a certain extent be dependent on the ability of civil society to contribute to the conservation of these corridors, through eco-friendly livelihoods and practices. The many previously disadvantaged communities that reside in and around these corridors now need to be further integrated into the corridors, and this project aims to pursue this objective. Specifically, this investment priority will increase project development and implementation skills across the hotspot through training in these skills and provision of sub-grants to implement projects in support of the socioeconomic and biological goals that underpin corridor conservation.

**Outcome 2:** Local communities contribute to the sustainability of four Cape Floristic Region biodiversity corridors

**Investment Priority 3:** *Support the Sharing of Lessons Learned Across and Beyond Corridors within the Cape Floristic Region.*

Much has been learned in the last five years, and this information needs to be shared with other projects within the hotspot. It can also be of great value to other hotspots. The aim is to enhance the learning network and to facilitate learning beyond the region.

**Outcome 3:** Cape Floristic Region Phase 1 lessons captured and shared throughout the hotspot

**Investment Priority 4:** *Engagement with the Business Sector*

During CEPF investment, great strides were made with individual industries (wine, rooibos, potatoes, citrus and flowers) to secure land for conservation and improve best practice. The importance of engaging with the business sector is increasing as more efforts are being undertaken via stewardship to incorporate private lands into the conservation estate. This strategic direction seeks to consolidate the gains and the learning that occurred in a manner that improves the ability of stakeholders to engage with selected industries, and stimulates a coordinated and informed approach as stakeholders move forward with this engagement.

**Outcome 4:** Stakeholders understand and engage in sustainable and biodiversity-friendly industry initiatives

**Investment Priority 5:** *Capacity Development in Implementing Agencies*

This investment priority will increase the likelihood of sustained conservation gains by developing capacity in the key implementing agencies, and more broadly in building landscape-level partnerships and coordination. The investment priority is expected to have a substantial impact in securing the gains made by ensuring that the institutions (including local authorities) charged with conservation in the Cape Floristic Region have the skilled staff required for their conservation challenges.

**Outcome 5:** Key implementing agencies and institutions have the capacity to sustain conservation gains

**Investment Priority 6: *Securing Support from Government***

Sustained conservation in the region will depend on political support from numerous government sectors. While much progress was made, there are still many high-level government officials and agencies that have not incorporated biodiversity conservation into their thinking or planning. This investment priority aims to ensure broad support for and awareness of the C.A.P.E. program.

**Outcome 6:** Selected high-level government officials understand and support long-term conservation of the Cape Floristic Region