

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Wilderness Foundation South Africa

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): *Baviaanskloof Community Beekeeping Project*

Implementation Partners for This Project: Makana Meadery, Eastern Cape Parks Board

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): December 1, 2006 – November 30, 2008

Date of Report (month/year): January 2009

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

In an attempt to reduce the pressures on the natural environment, the Wilderness Foundation (and the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve Project Management Unit specifically) identified a need to facilitate the Socio-economic upliftment and development of local communities in the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve Project planning domain.

The concept developed envisaged that local community members, in the western Baviaanskloof, would be trained as beekeepers that would put them in a position to produce honey and related products that in turn would provide them with income generating opportunities, and thereby contribute to the improvement of their socio-economic status.

A wide range of products can be produced including: honey, honey beer, waxes for moulds and candles and the high value derivative propolis which can be collected on a sustainable basis from productive hives.

As a result, in 2006, with funding from CEPF, a beekeeping project was initiated as a vehicle for job creation and income generation opportunities and the facilitation of small medium and micro enterprise (SMME) development.

The project was also developed in such a way so as to encourage the formation of partnerships between the trained local community beekeepers, the conservation management agency (ECParks) and some private landowners in the region.

Training took place over a two year period and also included a structured mentoring component.

III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

To train 9 local community members, in the Baviaanskloof, as beekeepers with the intention to reduce their need to harvest natural material from the environment by

- (a) producing honey (and associated products) for subsistence utilisation
- (b) Developing skills to the point where they can produce honey for income generation purposes; and in time, consider small business options related to this production and the sale of related products.

Detail of training:

Year 1: Trainees were trained by instructors from Makana Meadery over a three day period in order to complete the Makana Meadery Beekeeping Certification Course, Level 1. At the end of this course they were made familiar with the basics of beekeeping and were able to catch swarms, place them in hives, assemble hives and perform basic beehive manipulations. Trainees were then issued with a Rhodes University accredited certificate on passing a skill evaluation test.

Mentoring visits: These interactions were an important component of the training and took place once every two months on site with the beekeepers in the Baviaanskloof.

Year 2: Trainees attended a second course hosted by Makana Meadery training staff namely the Makana Meadery Advanced Beekeeping Certification Course, Level 2. This course taught the trainees the potential ways in which to manage their hives as a commercial concern and included honey beneficiation, honey production maximization and beehive expansion. During the planning of this project we were also made aware that beekeepers with this qualification could be considered for international placement and this was considered to also have the potential to provide further opportunities for the trainees.

Mentoring visits: As with the programme for year 1 mentoring and support visits were undertaken once every two months throughout the second year.

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

The project planned to have 9 trained beekeepers on completion but due to changes in circumstances only 7 community members completed the full training programme.

3. How was your project successful in achieving the expected objectives?

The project successfully trained 7 beekeepers that have been producing honey for subsistence purposes for the last 12-18 months. This has complimented their income which can be considered to be at a subsistence level and so a contribution has been made to improving their livelihood options. In addition there has been a reduction in their need to raid wild hives to supplement their diets and the pressure on the natural environment has been reduced in this way. In addition to this the beekeepers have been trading('bartering') with small amounts of honey in their local community which in turn allows them to purchase products (such as meat) that they otherwise may have been inclined to harvest illegally from the nature reserve.

In terms of products the beekeepers have been producing honey (for subsistence use, 'bartering' and for small scale sales), indigenous honey beer (for subsistence use) and wax moulds for their own hives. They are also they are currently positioning themselves to develop wax moulds for sale to more commercially orientated beekeepers and beekeeping institutions as an additional source of income.

Three of the beekeepers have formed alliances and partnerships with the owner of the land on which they reside and this has resulted in receiving assistance to sell small quantities of their honey in a 'semi-formal' manner, which in turn has allowed them to see the potential of their beekeeping activities to contribute to their income.

The remaining 4 beekeepers reside on ECParks land and the ECParks has committed to supporting the project further as part of their commitment to continuing a range of activities initiated by the Wilderness Foundation during the management of the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve Project.

4. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

Yes, there were some failures and disappointments during implementation. These were sometimes of a practical nature related to the management of bee hives but more often than not were related to working with community members who have had limited exposure to these kind of interventions with a result that commitment was not always ideal.

During year one of the project four out of the original nine beekeepers trained for level 1 beekeeping, dropped out of the project mainly due to a wavering commitment to put their new skills into practice. As a result, four new candidates were selected and their initial training was 'fast tracked' in order to undergo the Beekeeping level 2 training with the rest of the beekeepers during Year 2.

In addition to this, one of the remaining five beekeepers dropped out of the project (reducing the original number of trainees to four) and one of the four additional trainees 'fast tracked' for training dropped out as well (reducing the number to three). This then left us with a total of seven successfully trained beekeepers i.e. four of the original trainees and three additional trainees.

During years 1 and 2 ants (eating the honey) and baboons (raiding the hives) were a major problem that lead to the candidates seeking advice from the trainers. Suggestions made however were not successful in the environment in which the beekeepers were operating in. These challenges are of a very practical nature but it did force the trainees to accept responsibility for their hives and come up with innovative ways of reducing (not stopping) the loss of hives. In some cases this was achieved by strapping the hives to stands or covering them with thorny branches in an attempt to deter the baboons. These actions seem to be working in the challenging conditions within the Baviaanskloof. Various methods were tried to reduce the impact of ants that included scattering ash

around the hives, placing the hives on stands and placing the feet of the stands in cans filled with oil. Using these methods the raids and loss of hives due to ants and baboons s have been reduced, but will be an ongoing problem that requires management.

Another challenge during implementation was that during the colder months of the year the small bee colonies in the hives vacated the hives and this required them to be restocked during the warmer months.

Another unforeseen setback was the destruction of hives in a veld fire that occurred within the western area of the Baviaanskloof during December 2008 which required there replacement.

5. Describe any positive or negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organizations interested in implementing a similar project.

Negative lessons: Although all candidates were excited and enthusiastic at the start of the project, the candidates who did not have a well developed sense of self motivation and commitment caused numerous delays during the implementation of the project.

Positive lesson: Creating deadlines for 'appropriate' performance by candidates, doing regular mentoring visits and applying consequential evaluation mechanisms allows the implementer the opportunity to take corrective action timeously and thereby ensuring that the planned objective of the project is achieved.

Positive lesson: Candidates who have constant 'on the ground assistance' (in this case by an enthusiastic land owner) tend to be more motivated and fare better overall both during training and in their daily management of their hives.

6. Describe any follow-up activities related to this project.

The project has been 'handed over' to the Eastern Cape Parks Board as part of the structured exit strategy of the Wilderness Foundation. In developing this strategy ECParks have committed to:

- facilitating a mentoring programme
- creating complimentary community projects
- investigating the option of allocating land where a small scale honey processing plant can be developed.

In addition:

- The ECParks representative responsible for the future management of the project has been introduced to the staff of Makana Meadery (Beekeeper Trainers) and ongoing interaction has been recommended.
- The ECParks representative has also been introduced to the private landowners who partnered the local community beekeepers and ongoing interaction has also been recommended to nurture and develop this relationship.
- The relevant Wilderness Foundation staff member is also available for advice and guidance where appropriate as part of the structured exit plan.

All of the above actions have been put in place to promote the sustainability of this intervention in the long term.

7. Please provide any additional information to assist CEPF in understanding any other aspects of your completed project.

Out of the nine beekeepers originally trained, seven have hives that are fully operational and are making a positive contribution to their livelihoods and three of the seven trainees have the potential to sell their product commercially.

As part of the project, three honey extractors were provided and are currently housed in the three separate areas where the beekeepers reside. Discussions regarding identifying suitable land on Eastern Cape Parks Board property are underway with the intention to erect a small honey processing plant. This will be catalytic in mobilizing the successful beekeepers to form a co-operative to leverage funding for complimentary training that could assist with developing a more formal business, branding and the marketing of products.

The qualification that the seven beekeepers have obtained is accredited by Rhodes University and is internationally recognized and this could enhance the trainees employment options. To support this, one of the beekeepers is currently being considered for international placing by the Makana Meadery.

IV. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	

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

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

Not applicable

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations:

- Eastern Cape Parks Board should continue with regular mentoring visits to ensure that activities continue and to assist trainees with developing business opportunities in particular.
- Complimentary training should be secured that could focus on:
 - o an introduction to business planning,
 - o an introduction to administrative and financial management,
 - o managing a small business
 - o forming and managing a cooperative
 - o developing a more formal business
 - o branding and marketing of products

The development of these skills will assist the beekeepers to maximize the opportunities that arise and could take place over an extended period.

- ECParks should officially partner Another Way Trust (one of the private landowners who developed a trust to partner local communities), Makana Meadery and the other private landowner supporting the local community members to:
 - o Secure funding for complimentary training
 - o Secure land for a small scale honey processing plant that can house the three extractors already provided by the project
 - o Secure funding to build the honey processing plant.
 - o Facilitate the creation of a cooperative(if the beekeepers decide this is the best option)
 - o Place the project in a position to leverage funding to take the in initiative project to the next level i.e. a business with the ability to distribute the honey and the associated products commercially.

VI. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

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