

# CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

## I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** Botanical Society of South Africa

**Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):** *Creation of a SKEP Database*

**Implementation Partners for This Project:** Niven Library, Percy FitzPatrick Institute, University of Cape Town

**Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):** November 1, 2007 – October 31, 2008

**Date of Report (month/year):** 30 October 2008

## II. OPENING REMARKS

This project undertook to build an online, searchable bibliography to support the partners of SKEP.

## III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

### 1. What was the initial objective of this project?

The objective of the project was to manage information on the Succulent Karoo by creating a database compiling institutional knowledge. A subsidiary objective was to mentor a proficient black database /research librarian to build and maintain a skills base in this arena.

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

The objectives of the project remained the same throughout implementation.

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

A database comprising 10399 entries was compiled and launched on the internet for the use of SKEP partners. We had the opportunity of mentoring and training two black librarians, one of whom has already taken up a full time position with SANBI.

### 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.

A survey conducted at the Interfaces 2008 meeting in Oudtshoorn in August 2008 demonstrated that awareness of the database was negligible, and consequently use of the database was very low. The figures of this survey were communicated at a meeting

held with CAPE and SKEP in September 2008 where a number of suggestions were made to improve the visibility of the database. This is being addressed by SKEP.

**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.**

The development of a subject-specific bibliographic database is an excellent way to introduce a library intern to an unknown discipline as the constant working with the literature reinforces learning of the language used by that discipline, this is particularly the case with a scientific or natural science discipline. Because the work is repetitive and often boring, combining the database task with more general library duties provides a rounded internship and improves the skills of a newly trained librarian. The intern in question commented

“I gained a lot of experience such as creating a web searchable database, editing, cataloguing, classification, indexing and internet searching.”

Many people are not familiar with subject specific databases and do not necessarily use these for their information needs. The Internet and in particular search engines such as Google have improved skills and awareness in this respect. In the case of the SKEP database project more advertising of the database, its contents and its value could have been included in the project design from the outset.

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

This was the second of two internships undertaken with CEPF funding. The project coordinator has surveyed both the CAPE and SKEP community and established that regular advertising of the databases is essential to create an awareness of this tool. A survey conducted at Interfaces 2008 indicated that a merged database would serve the community more effectively. These points have been reported to CAPE and SKEP and have been taken up more generally at SANBI. A broader database is visualized taking in the knowledge base of all the biomes and the possibility of employing a SANBI library staff member is being investigated to keep the database up to date and broaden the scope.

The databases have yet to be merged and transferred to the SANBI website. The project coordinator is waiting for a directive from SANBI about when this should be implemented. SANBI has indicated that the task will not be tackled before early in 2009.

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

The project required the incorporation of related bibliographies, namely the Karoo Bibliography and the Land Degradation bibliography. These were in different formats and had to be reformatted to be incorporated into the SKEP database. In some cases data has not been captured accurately. Not all material in these data sets is accessible in South Africa, such as some of the theses completed at foreign universities.

All possible records in the database were tagged with the details of a holding library in the western Cape, eastern Cape and Namibia. This was in order to make the database

more than just a list of references and where possible provide a place where the information can be consulted.

#### 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
Biota	B	\$450	Support for Interfaces 2008 conference
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	

***\*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.)*

#### V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The database software used for this project is CDS/ISIS software available free on registration from UNESCO and supported by BIREME, Brazil. The software is used widely in developing countries as an inexpensive means of creating databases. The software has recently (2008) been made wholly open source and can be supported on a Linux platform once modifications have been made. The version used for this database is CDS/ISIS for Windows 2003 edition UNESCO), and GENISIS vers. 3.0 (BIREME).

At present the SKEP database can be accessed on the Niven Library Server at the URL:

<http://nivenlib.pfp.uct.ac.za/wwwisis/SKEP.01/form.htm>

## 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](http://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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