

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Wildlife and Environment Society of South Africa: Western Cape Region

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Exploring Options for Governance and Co-ordination of the Gouritz Initiative

Implementation Partners for This Project: All participating organizations in the Gouritz Initiative.

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

Date of Report (month/year): January 2009

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

The Gouritz Initiative (GI) is a long-term, multi-stakeholder landscape-level conservation and development initiative. The initiative was formulated within the framework of the CAPE 20 year strategy and the SKEP priority area strategy for the Little Karoo.

At a workshop in November 2006, concerns regarding GI delivery were raised and a proposal was made to the Steering Committee that a review of two aspects of the GI was needed, namely (a) the progress of the GI, and (b) the overall governance and steering structures of the GI. The Steering Committee undertook to have this review undertaken, and a Task Team (sub-committee), consisting of representatives of Cape Nature, the Steering Committee and CAPE/SKEP commenced the process.

The review concluded that:

“The CEPF funding niche is directed at the capacitation and mobilisation of civil society in attaining conservation objectives. The way that the GI was designed demands a strong, focussed and effective Steering Committee with stakeholder representivity and clear direction. The Steering Committee should hold an introspective, facilitated working session to reconfirm the basic principles of how the GI is structured, the mandate and *modus operandi* of the Committee itself, and those of the Forum, PMU and Reference Group, to clear up misunderstanding and possible ambiguities.”

and

“...it is suggested that a Task Team, comprising members of the Steering Committee, BUM and any external technical support needed, be assembled to guide the process in the absence of a co-ordinator. This Task Team will work closely with the Steering Committee, as well as the Reference Group and BUM.”

This Small Grant project funded the above process.

III.NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

The overall aim of the project was to:

1. Fund the GI secretariat in an interim capacity, while future institutional arrangements are being resolved;
2. Manage the clarification process in identifying the vision, functions, roles and responsibilities of the GI, and the institutional options for its governance, particularly after the CEPF investment has ended; and
3. Explore the need for an advocacy NGO in the GI planning domain, and its possible functions, roles, responsibilities and institutional arrangements.

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

This was a short and fairly focussed project and, as a result, the objectives remained unchanged.

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

A consulting team conducted a stakeholder engagement exercise, culminating in a workshop held on 11 March 2008 (report by S. Soal and R. van Blerk attached). From this exercise, various recommendations were made, the most substantial of which was the creation of a Gouritz Cluster Biosphere. This suggestion received strong support from the private, non-governmental and government sectors.

Due to a de-valuation of the Rand, we were in a position to commission a second consultant to assess the suitability and feasibility of implementing a biosphere reserve in the Gouritz Initiative domain (report by Dr. L. Pasquini attached).

We were fortunate to *still* have funds remaining and Conservation International Foundation approved an extension of the agreement to December 2008. A third report was commissioned (report by Dr. Grant Joseph, attached).

This project has therefore been most useful in resolving a managerial dilemma. It enabled the GI to follow a new course that will enable civil society to contribute more towards the overall goals of the project. Through a thorough consultative

process, involving all stakeholders, the cluster Biosphere Reserve model was unanimously accepted as the “vehicle” to carry the Gouritz Initiative forward.

We aim to submit the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve Nomination form to Provincial Government during 2009. An effective Biosphere Reserve will comfortably continue the vision, roles and responsibilities of the GI. Stakeholders have also clearly stated that a separate advocacy NGO is needed to ensure compliance with legislation and to act as an environmental watchdog.

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.

No. It would be fair to say, that after some three years of extensive dialogue, a clear outcome has been reached.

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.

There is seldom, if ever, an “easy” way to constructively engage with society at a landscape scale. It has taken years to get to where the GI finds itself now and we still have the substantial challenge of creating a viable, effective Cluster Biosphere Reserve.

An important lesson we have learned is that in order to achieve any success at a landscape level, the champions of an initiative must come from within the domain and must be willing to engage in extensive dialogue. This dialogue must be between ALL parties: the various government departments, private individuals, commercial enterprises, non-governmental organizations and political parties.

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

We hope to fully utilise the Cluster Biosphere Reserve concept, as reviewed by Dr. Pasquini (review attached), and detailed by Dr Joseph (report attached).

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.

Nil

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

VI. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF aims to increase sharing of experiences, lessons learned and results among our grant recipients and the wider conservation and donor communities. One way we do this is by making the text of final project completion reports available on our Web site, www.cepf.net, and by marketing these reports in our newsletter and other communications. Please indicate whether you would agree to publicly sharing your final project report with others in this way.

Yes

If yes, please also complete the following:

For more information about this project, please contact:

Name: Steve du Toit

Mailing address: 31 Progress Street, George

Tel: +27 44 874 7097

Fax: +27 44 874 6119

E-mail: steve@wessa.co.za