

CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Conservation International

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): Investing in technology to build communication and financial management capacity for civil society biodiversity conservation NGO's in African Hotspots

Implementation Partners for this Project: SANBI

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): October 1, 2003 – June 30, 2005

Date of Report (month/year): January 2006

II. OPENING REMARKS

The support of CEPF with this grant towards the South Africa Hotspots Program (SAHP) has been invaluable during the last three years from the inception of the grant through the amendment process to support the needs of the program as it underwent a financial hardship. The ability of the SAHP to grow and meet its goals has been supported through the implementation of a necessary IT infrastructure required to allow the program to operate efficiently and reasonably. At the end of the day, biodiversity conservation is a business like any other, and as such, requires the same tools and infrastructure as any other business to support its effort and allow it to be successful. In an environment in which timely communications is crucial to being effective, this grant has allowed a solid foundation to be built for the program to be successful over the long-term. When compared to other programs that do not have a sufficient communications infrastructure, it can be observed the difficulties that are endured during a normal business day by individuals. It is hoped this grant will act as a basis for future investments in IT infrastructure towards the support of biodiversity conservation, and that proper budgeting is needed in all grants for IT, as it would be for rent or electricity, in order for a program to be successful in its efforts.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: To improve communication and financial reporting of current and future biodiversity conservation projects by CI and other CEPF grant recipients through improved internet facilities at the KRC.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
CI and other CEPF grant recipients using the improved IT facilities to enhance their project and reporting.	CI and some of its CEPF grant recipients have been and continue to use the enhanced IT facilities in order to manage its project and provide effective reporting.

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

Before the implementation and connection of the SAHP program to the CI global network, there were ongoing difficulties with standardized email, the ability to use oracle financials, and providing the staff there with reasonable and expected IT support, as required by any CI employee. Since the separation of the SAHP program from the SANBI IT infrastructure, the use and maintenance of the CI global IT systems by the SAHP staff has been simplified and utilized highly. This has allowed the SAHP program as well as the SKEP CEPF recipients to provide effective and timely financial reporting to CI and CEPF. It has also allowed the program to more effectively manage its projects utilizing the standardized systems and protocols developed by the institution and used on a global basis.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

During the life of the CEPF grant, SANBI underwent a number of large changes within its technological infrastructure, allowing it to grow its capabilities as an institution and provide its own staff with a modern IT infrastructure and proper IT support. A negative side-effect was their choice in infrastructure was not compatible with CI's, severing the relationship of utilized shared connectivity by both institutions. This required the SAHP program to procure its own dedicated connectivity in order to maintain its connection to the CI global network and allow continued use of its systems. This was an unforeseen incident which impacted the SAHP program budget. This required the adjustment within this CEPF grant to provide funds to cover the cost of connectivity through the end of the 2005 fiscal year.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs: *Enter the project outputs from the Logical Framework for the project*

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1: Conservation International's projects in the African Hotspots (initially in the Cape Floristic Region, and the Succulent Karoo, Eastern Arc and Coastal Forests,) are effectively using IT services for improved sharing of information and financial management.	The SAHP program has been effectively using the available and implemented IT services to manage their projects in the region. This includes both communicating information more effectively and managing and reporting their finances.
1.1. Hardware purchased according to CEPF procurement policies within first month of grant disbursement.	Hardware was purchased at differing times throughout the life of the grant. Not all of the hardware required was purchased during the first month.
1.2. Installation of broadband connectivity conducted by joint CI-NBI IT team within 3	The shared broadband connectivity between CI-NBI(SANBI) was procured within this time frame.

months of grant start date	
1.3. Financial accountants from each Hotspot submitting Oracle reports on effective system on monthly basis.	To the best of my knowledge, the SAHP program has been submitting the necessary monthly oracle reports in a timely manner as required by DC Finance.
1.4. CI financial management teams supported by the CI-IT team on an as needed basis.	The CI SAHP financial management team has received support whenever needed by the local IT administrator as well as from the CI global IT team.
1.5. CI African Hotspot offices operations are improved through better access to intranet facilities..	The CI SAHP program has improved their operational and communication efficiency greatly because of the improved internet connectivity.
Output 2. NBI is operating as an effective information and communication hub for Southern African biodiversity organizations and Initiatives that address Hotspot concerns (e.g. Global Invasive Species Programme, CAPE, IUCN site on Transboundary Conservation Initiatives; Southern Africa Bioregional Programmes Web-site, Botanical Society of South Africa, Western Cape Nature Conservation, etc.)	NBI, now known as SANBI, has tremendously improved their effectiveness within the Southern African region to provide centralized management and communication facilities for all their partner organizations within the region, because of the investments into their IT infrastructure, made possible by the joint CEPF grant for CI SAHP and SANBI.
2.1. Hardware purchased according to CEPF procurement policies within first month of grant disbursement	Hardware was purchased at differing times through the life of the grant. Not all the hardware required was purchase during the first month.
2.2. Contractual agreements for IT management needs (web-site, e-mail, etc.) with BotSoc, WCNCB, and IUCN in place within six months of grant start date	Both SANBI and CI have provided IT services to the IUCN staff located within the SANBI campus. This occurred at a much later time than the six months specified, as IUCN was not yet established at that time on the campus.
2.3. Organizations and people are using the IT infrastructure provided by NBI's information hub.	Everyday, many organizations and individuals take advantage of both the SANBI and CI IT infrastructure made possible through this grant. The numbers of organizations and individuals relying on this infrastructure continues to grow.

Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

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

The only output perhaps not fully realized was output 2.2. There are few contractual obligations in place between CI/SANBI and other NGOs. However, many NGOs are being provided services and support from both CI/SANBI on an as needed basis.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

I highly recommend an orientation class be provided to those individuals that will be managing and reporting on the grant, before the grant begins. This would have alleviated a tremendous amount of assumption, guesswork and 'learning as we go', on the individuals responsible. It should not be assumed that people are familiar with the grant management and reporting process. This was a new experience for both myself and Nicholas Evans.

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

Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)

VII. 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 funded 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 funded project.)*
- D Regional/Portfolio leveraging (Other donors make large investments in a region because of CEPF investment or successes related to this project.)*

Provide details of whether this project will continue in the future and if so, how any additional funding already secured or fundraising plans will help ensure its sustainability.

Continuous fundraising is occurring and will be required to maintain the operational efficiency of the IT infrastructure for the SAHP and Wilderness programs. It continues to be a necessary support structure utilized by those programs, and has allowed those programs to more efficiently raise funds for other projects as well as expand their capabilities to do biodiversity conservation in the region.

VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is highly believed, and through my observational experience, that in order for most large or small NGOs to be successful in carrying out projects towards biodiversity conservation, that a modern IT infrastructure allowing for ease of communication is necessary. It has also been observed that many projects that are funded by CEPF or other donors do not properly account for these operational costs, which are critical to the success factors of the projects within these grants. I highly recommend that the IT and communication infrastructure be part of the assessment towards the granting of funds towards projects and/or funding is supplied for communications capabilities within those grants awarded.

VIII. 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

No

If yes, please also complete the following:

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