

FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT (FOR THE GOURITZ MEGAPARK CONSERVATION CORRIDOR)

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Name: Western Cape Nature Conservation Board

Project Title: Development of a Strategic Management and Business Plan to ratify the objectives of the Gouritz Megapark Conservation Corridor

Project Dates: 4/01/03 to 8/30/04

Date of Report (month/year): 1/07/05

II. OPENING REMARKS

The Planning phase of the Gouritz Megapark Project (now Gouritz Initiative) was initially scheduled for a nine-month period starting from May 2003 . Due to the efficient use of the allocated financial resources, and the reduced spending on stakeholder workshops, the project team was in a position to continue working within budget for a further three months to the end of May 2004. The budget allocation for this phase was \$119,255.

Due to the intervention initiated by C.A.P.E. (Cape Action for People and the Environment) and CI (Conservation International) in order to strategically align the C.A.P.E. and SKEP bioregional programs in the GI domain, an extension of three months was requested to the end of August 2004. This additional (new) output was: "Integration of CAPE and SKEP visions in the GI strategy". The final budget allocation was increased by \$20,992 to \$140,247 in order to incorporate this output.

A final payment of up to \$14,024 is due on approval of this Final Project Report and the Final Financial Report.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose:

To deliver an agreed upon Strategic Management and Business plan for the Gouritz Megapark conservation corridor that will enable all the major stakeholders active within the region and all the potential partners of this project, local and national political entities, government institutions, parastatal bodies, funding institutions and civil society to support this project throughout its development and implementation phases.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
<p><i>1. Private landowners and statutory reserve managers utilize the entire domain of the Gouritz Megapark in an ecologically sustainable and financially viable way.</i></p>	<p>Private landowners have been involved in pilot projects in off-reserve agreements through the stewardship program of the WCNCB. This process is still in its initial stages and will be rolled out as a consolidation strategy during the implementation phase. Statutory reserve managers are contributing significantly to the establishment of private-public partnerships to ensure financial viability and the sustainable utilization of the Gouritz Megapark (called the Gouritz Initiative – GI).</p>
<p><i>2. Civil society and other potential partners participate in all the projects required to maintain the Gouritz Megapark.</i></p>	<p>Although this is the planning phase of the GI, civil society is already participating in pilot projects pertaining to the conservation economy, biodiversity management planning, sectoral land-use practices (codes of conduct for biodiversity friendly activities) and other projects like stewardship, biodiversity security, a multi-stakeholder green-court initiative and green permit initiative for the ostrich industry,, awareness raising through a web-site etc. Through the GIS report a number of projects which are essential for retaining the biodiversity in the GI, was identified. These will be addressed priority-wise in the implementation phase of the GI.</p>
<p><i>3. The boundaries of statutory and private conservation areas are extended to protect the biodiversity of the core area of this conservation corridor.</i></p>	<p>Focus areas (core nodes) and corridors have been determined through scientific identification. This led to the identification of a 1-year stewardship plan, which is being reviewed with further scientific information to also include a five year and 20 year strategy for the conservation of core areas and the corridors (extending the conservation estate)</p>
<p><i>4. The spatial extent and agreed upon objectives for the Gouritz Megapark are incorporated into the statutory approved Integrated Development Plans of all the relevant District and Local Municipalities.</i></p>	<p>The GI strategic business plan and GIS spatial plan have been introduced into the District Municipalities system of Integrated Development Plans (IDP's) and Spatial Development Frameworks (SDF's). The District Municipality (EDEN) IDP manager represents the municipalities in the GI-domain, and serves on the Steering Committee of the GI. Furthermore, all local municipalities' IDP officers are members of the GI Forum. The GI scientific advisor also presented the outcomes of the GI GIS to a full Eden Technical Working Group, which includes IDP representatives of the 5 affected local municipalities in the GI core area.</p>
<p><i>5. Partnerships with other implementing agencies for conservation projects in the transitional Succulent Karoo, the Subtropical Thicket and the coastal zones secured.</i></p>	<p>Partnerships were secured with the WCNCB, Agulhas Biodiversity Initiative, Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor, SANParks, SKEP, STEP, Garden Route Initiative (GRI) LandCare and some coastal zone and Klein-Karoo conservancies and associations. Strategic re-alignment led to the incorporation of the SKEP staff and objectives into the GI process.</p>

	<p>However, the planned intervention by CAPE and CI, which did not fully unfold, resulted in an insufficient partnership with CAPE – which, if not rectified, will have a detrimental affect on the future success of this project.</p> <p>The Marine and Coastal Management (MCM) component of the national Department of Environmental Affairs is involved in marine surveys and planning in the Gouritz estuarine areas.</p>
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Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

The level to which the project objectives have been achieved, given the size of the GI (which was expanded after the GIS report), is highly exemplary given the initial (short) time period and the fact that the GI has just completed its initial planning phase. The impact is such that all relevant sectors (statutory and private) are already contributing to the GI process and are already considering the GI objectives in their respective disciplines and strategies (e.g. project to implement a green permit system for the ostrich export industry, a major player in the GI with tremendous impact on the biodiversity in the planning domain).

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

Positive

From early discussions and assumptions it was thought that the GI would meet with significant resistance from especially the farming community. This turned out to be a misconception and the farming community became closely associated partners of the project for the most part, especially through interactions with Organized Agriculture (Farmers Unions), Department of Agriculture (as part of the Area Wide Planning/LandCare program) and even emergent farmer organizations. The Department of Agriculture has become one of the most supportive and collaborative partners of the GI.

Through the existing SKEP partnership and buy-in of some role players, projects that are planned through the SKEP initiative now align and include the GI.

Because of the participatory process that the GI followed, projects were identified via stakeholder input – this means that the bottoms-up approach which was planned, materialized. These projects mostly align with the scientific project identification which was done through the GIS report. The idea of the GI not being prescriptive, but that stakeholders should actively participate in identifying biodiversity focused projects, was thus established. A successful project already running as a result of active stakeholder participation, is the GI website (www.gouritz.com)

Negative

Due to differences in the interpretation of Terms of References (ToR's) by both the local scientific advisor and the project coordinator of the GI, intervention had to take place to

ensure the effective roll-out of this project. A GI Reference group was established to focus on the outputs which were to be met. This proved to be invaluable for more effective inter-communication. However, a lesson learned would be that more open communication between the local scientific expert and the operational members of the program, is pivotal for the success of a project of this nature.

The apparent lack of commitment from both C.A.P.E. and CI, especially with respect to the planned intervention as mentioned above, led to the belief in the GI team that proper leadership was lacking. Communication between the GI team and especially CAPE was sporadic – something that needs to be addressed in the implementation phase.

A participatory project involving so many stakeholders and operational staff needs proper teamwork. This implies that communication and group efforts with respect to achieving LOI outputs need to be a priority over individual efforts. Also, interpersonal differences should not influence the positive outcomes of a project such as this.

The socio-economic data, which had to be incorporated in the GIS layers, proved not to be spatially compatible. A lesson learned here is that the ToR of the consultants needs to be better defined.

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: Project coordinator, the assistant and steering committee for the Gouritz Megapark appointed.	
<i>1.1 Project coordinator and assistant appointed</i>	Completed
<i>1.2 Office of coordinator and assistant established</i>	Completed within first week
<i>1.3 Steering Committee for the Gouritz Megapark established</i>	Completed and currently includes the SKEP Advisory Committee (includes a Constitution)
Output 2: Domain and key activities required for each sector of the Gouritz Megapark identified through a CPLAN exercise and its findings captured in a GIS database.	
<i>2.1 Consultant for CPLAN and GIS database appointed.</i>	Lombard & Wolf were appointed and completed their work successfully
<i>2.2 Workshop with terrestrial and aquatic scientists completed and data captured</i>	Several scientific workshops were held with a range of scientists from different disciplines and data was captured and digitized by consultants.
<i>2.3 Comments of stakeholders incorporated into resistance layer for GIS database and spatial plan.</i>	Comments of stakeholders were incorporated in a stakeholder engagement database. Due to the non-empirical nature of the data from the financial/socio-economic study conducted by SETPlan the inclusion of certain data sets would have been detrimental to the integrity of the mostly scientific nature of the GIS-database. It was agreed between the SETPlan and Lombard & Wolf consultants to hold extra workshops in order to process and incorporate relevant information regarding stakeholder comments and data in the resistance layer for the GIS database and spatial

	plan, especially regarding the major impacts and opportunities within the domain e.g. Agriculture and Tourism. This was done successfully.
2.4 Results of financial feasibility study incorporated into GIS database.	This was completed by SETPlan and relevant sections on tourism and agriculture were digitized and incorporated into GIS database.
2.5 Land-use options for each sector of the Megapark determined and incorporated into final vision and objectives document.	Land-use options for each management sector of the GI were referenced via the final strategic business plan for the GI
Output 3: Stakeholders identified and involved in the process.	
3.1 Extended stakeholder database compiled from spatial plan for Megapark.	The ongoing database of GI stakeholders is currently in excess of 725 members
3.2 Potentially affected stakeholders consulted after each of the three draft spatial plans has been produced for Megapark and their comments incorporated into draft vision and objectives document for the Megapark.	Potentially affected stakeholders were consulted after a preliminary spatial plan delivered by the GIS consultants in January 2004 and in more detail during workshops after the final product was delivered in April 2004. Stakeholder comments (needs and concerns) were built into the 6th Draft Strategic Business and Management plan for the GI and also into stakeholder engagement database
Output 4: Financial feasibility study for Gouritz Megapark conducted and business plan prepared.	
4.1 TOR for consultant prepared and suitable candidate selected.	The consultant SETPlan was selected prior to the onset of the planning phase to conduct a socio-economic/financial pre-feasibility study for both the Cederberg and Gouritz biodiversity initiatives.
4.2 Spatial plan data incorporated into first draft of business plan and presented to project team and key stakeholders.	The first draft of the business plan was developed by the co-ordinator during September 2003. The initial spatial plan data was not available until January 2004. However, the spatial plan data was incorporated into consecutive drafts of the business plan and presented to the project team and key stakeholders including the GI Steering Committee and Forum.
4.3 Consultation process established between business plan consultant and project team.	The business plan was compiled by the co-ordinator, who formed part of the project team (GI Reference Group).
4.4 Final business plan in which the financial implications of objectives for various sectors of the Megapark are indicated completed.	The 6th Draft Strategic Business and Management Plan for the GI was completed and supported by detailed objectives/projects for various sectors plus their estimated financial implications. An LOI for an initial 2-year implementation phase with detailed financial implications of objectives for the GI implementation phase was also completed and submitted to CEPF at the end of July 2004.
Output 5: Strategic management and business plan developed, through a participatory process with stakeholders, partnerships with civil society secured for all the identified projects and the Gouritz Megapark vision and objectives integrated with government regional plans.	
5.1 Projects required to ratify objectives of each of the Megapark sectors, their financial feasibility and socio-economic impacts identified and listed in the vision and objectives document.	Projects were established through a scientific process for each management sector of the GI. These projects were separated into aquatic and terrestrial components within which the main ecological features (both pattern and process) were highlighted. Together, the ecological features and the threats the sectors face provided the motivation needed for the projects. Appropriate institutions to

	be involved in the projects, and appropriate communities (with high levels of unemployment) who could contribute to, and benefit from the projects were identified as well as financial estimations provided.
<i>5.2 Core and transitional conservation sectors of Megapark identified in consultation with stakeholders and spatially indicated in final plan for the Megapark.</i>	Through the WCNCB stewardship program core and transitional (corridors and linkages) sectors were identified in consultation with relevant stakeholders like conservation managers, the agricultural sector and scientists. A one year consolidation strategy was initially proposed and spatially indicated and is currently under review with the acquisition of scientific data after the final GIS product was delivered in April 2004. A further 2 year, 5 year and 20 year strategy will follow during the implementation phase.
<i>5.3 Key cultural historical sites within Megapark identified and captured in spatial plan and priority projects determined in consultation with civil society and NGO stakeholders.</i>	With the help of archeological scientists and the tourism sector, key cultural-historical sites were identified and captured in the spatial plan. This will form part of the second, interactive phase of the GI website.
<i>5.4 The socio-political requirements of civil society identified during consultation process incorporated into final plan for Megapark and its associated GIS database</i>	A comprehensive stakeholder engagement record has been developed. By the end of July 2004 more than 3300 stakeholders were consulted, many on a follow-up basis.
<i>5.5 GIS database with objectives for each of the Megapark sectors and their agreed upon spatial occurrence presented to relevant District Municipalities.</i>	The GIS database and relevant sectoral objectives were presented to the relevant District Municipalities by the scientific advisor in a regional IDP technical workshop. The data and final GIS report was also submitted to all the relevant local municipalities.
Output 6: Agreed upon management and business plan for the Gouritz Megapark presented to stakeholders, present and future potential partners, civil society and the media.	
<i>6.1 Potential partnerships for the identified projects secured, listed in the management plan and the associated GIS database.</i>	Completed
<i>6.2 Potential funding institutions for projects identified and some funding secured for priority projects.</i>	Various funding institutions for projects have been identified and recorded. Funding for training of local communities has been obtained via the South Cape Business Centre.
<i>6.3 Final agreed upon plan printed and released at public function to media.</i>	A final agreed upon plan was consolidated and summarised in a launch document (GIST of the GI) and released to the stakeholders and media during the launch on 27 August 2004.

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

If delivering the pre-determined outputs (as per log frame) is an indication of accomplishment then this project was a resounding success. However, this is not one of those (predictable) projects. The GI became larger and more complex as it developed, requiring a rethink in strategy and outputs while not losing any of the initially determined objectives as per the log frame.

The initially assumed biodiversity (planning) domain more than doubled (to more than three million hectares) during the scientific expert mapping (Conservation Planning) exercise. The GIS database which was produced through the CPLAN exercise is an example of groundbreaking work in the field of biodiversity conservation particularly in a

rural landscape. Engagement with stakeholders in such a vast landscape required far more than just a few reiterative workshops and strategic meetings with key stakeholders.

The domain covers five Business Units of the Western Cape Nature Conservation Board (WCNCB) which in itself holds unique challenges and opportunities for ensuring an integrated and collaborative approach to planning and implementation by a provincial conservation agency such as WCNCB .

Furthermore, flexibility was needed to allow for a far greater stakeholder participation process than initially assumed. A GI Forum in excess of 80 representative stakeholder members formed the basis of the current 28 member strong Steering Committee. In excess of 400 meetings/workshops/discussions were held with stakeholders. A database has been compiled documenting all these interactions.

The main output, namely that of producing a strategic management and business plan was achieved successfully with the co-operation of all the stakeholders. Clear strategies and action plans formed part of this process and will inform the implementation phase as well as the terms of reference of the roles and responsibilities of the Project Management Unit (PMU) as well as a systematic competency assessment of the positions required to drive the GI implementation process. In order to place the strategic management and business plan in perspective with the five-year implementation phase, a summary document is included as an attachment.

The GI team and partners rose to these challenges successfully and have brought the process safely to the threshold of implementation.

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

All the outputs were realized successfully. In fact, more was achieved than anticipated due to the fact that the project team was able to work for three additional months within the initial approved budget.

One exception was the Financial pre-feasibility study which did not initially provide the expected outcomes. This was later ensured through the further workshops which were held with the relevant stakeholder groupings.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

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

This project has specifically been designed to ensure that

- Environmental and social impacts will only be positive. (The local civil society and environmental scientists were consulted regularly throughout the time span of this project to ensure that no negative impacts occurred during this project or the implementation phase that will follow from this project

- The health of the affected local civil society can only benefit from this project, because it will establish a more ecologically viable environment in which these people live
- The local society will only benefit from the actions that will be instituted to protect their environment. The local civil society was consulted regularly throughout the time span of this project to ensure that the affected society is not negatively impacted upon during this project or even the following implementation phase of this 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

1. One of the most profound lessons was the fact that it is more effective to engage with stakeholders in a rural environment such as the GI through personal small group or individual visits than to hold workshops with large groups of stakeholders at central urban venues. Only certain people attend such workshops and they are not always representative of all the stakeholder groups. Although more time-consuming, great success was achieved by reaching out to communities and individuals in this way. This process also proved to be more cost effective
2. Scientific and other advisors should be involved on an ad hoc basis via feedback, meetings (PMU/Reference Group) and presentations. It would be beneficial if these advisors remain part of the Steering Committee, to enable them to inform the Steering Committee members with respect to decisions to be made pertaining to their specialist expertise. Additionally, a better specified ToR for the scientific advisor would be advisable for future projects.
3. Projects of this magnitude should have more time allocated for the planning phase as it takes at least two months to appoint the staff and to enable them to begin functioning operationally. In some cases the required skills are not available in the job market and some capacity building has to be done first.
4. Some form of bridging finance is required because of the process of submitting LOI's, the time-consuming review process and the inevitable delays which result before the final application is approved, and the funds are forthcoming. This pertains specifically to projects with successive phases that each require LOI's. Alternatively, the bridging period should form part of the first LOI, to ensure continuity of the project before the onset of the next phase.
5. Focus on the project outputs should be the main drive of projects. This implies that negative interpersonal relationships or individual work styles should not interfere with the execution of tasks.
6. It is imperative that ALL bioregional programs form part and parcel of the communication strategy of a project such as the GI.

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

If applying for further funding for the implementation phases of the project is a project requirement, then it should be pertinently stated in the project log frame. Although this was not a requirement in the log frame, tremendous pressure was put on the coordinating team to develop an LOI for implementation from September 2004 onwards. In fact the focus on an implementation LOI was such that it warranted a multitude of meetings, workshops and individual inputs. This was a significant oversight in the log frame.

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

Due to the apparent lack of communication (and the differences of approach) between the GI Coordinator and the GI Scientific Advisor, an intervention had to take place. This resulted in the GI Reference Group playing a greater coordinating role than was originally envisaged. The Assistant Coordinator also spent more time liaising with the Scientific Advisor. Although this did not contribute to any failure on the part of the project, it did harm the integrity of the project in as much as interaction between the Scientific Advisor and Project Coordinator was limited.

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It would be advisable in future to establish a continuity strategy early on or within the log frame of such a bioregional program.

The submission of this final report has been delayed in order to ensure that all the interactions which have taken place during the last few months have been captured, and changes made where necessary.

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 Yes

No

If yes, please also complete the following:

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