



CEPF Final Report

August 2015

Project Title: Institutional capacity to coordinate and align different initiatives towards the development of a regional action plan to nurture and sustain the contribution of biodiversity and ecosystem services to livelihoods and resilient economic development.

Introduction:

The Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region Non Profit Company signed an agreement of Wildlands Trust for the implementation of the Critical Ecosystem Partner Fund (CEPF) for the implementation of the K2C CEPF Project in August 2015.

The CEPF Project is co-funding the K2C Biosphere's mandate to coordinate and align different initiatives towards the development of a regional action plan to nurture and sustain the contribution of biodiversity and ecosystem services to livelihoods and resilient economic development.

The Strategic Direction from the CEPF Ecosystem Profile for this Small Grant Project addressed *Strategic Direction 2: Expand conservation areas and improve land use in key biodiversity areas:*

- 2.1 Develop and implement innovative approaches to expand private and communal protected areas, particularly for habitats underrepresented in the current protected area network
- 2.2 Integrate conservation practice into land-reform agreements to expand conservation management and sustain livelihood opportunities

The CEPF project is co-financing and addressing the following Key areas within the above two goals (which are being demonstrated with the Moletele Community Property Association in Buffelshoek, and on their claimed land on the Blyde River, to assist in the following anticipated outcomes:

1. Coordinate actions in order to **expand the protected area network's influence** and improve **Biodiversity and Ecosystem services** at landscape level, while enhancing site-specific studies as pilot sites;
2. Synthesise, coordinate, enhance and improve **benefit-and-access** sharing through targeted capacity development and **support-**, awareness, research and training interventions to sustain and improve livelihoods at Demonstration Sites;

3. Synthesise, coordinate, improve and sustain local **economic development opportunities linked to improved and sustained biodiversity and ecosystem services**

The CEPF funding is thus provide further funds for strengthening the protected area network's influence through innovative approaches and improved conservation management and land use practices. The CEPF funding is a catalyst enhancing existing operations within the area, and creating and enabling environment for other streams of funding (e.g. through NRMP funding) in addition to the GEF 5 funding, thus ensuring sustainability of current operations.

Project Summary

In essence the CEPF Funding provided institutional capacity to coordinate the Moletele CPA's Community Based Eco System Adaptation (CEBA) project with K2c Network partners (i.e. Klaserie Eco Children, Timbavati Foundation, Nourish and Global White Lion Trust). This Project's planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation processes are guided by a Community Ecosystem Based Adaptation (CEBA) philosophy. This is an African response to current development and environmental challenges, moving beyond the more traditional concept of Ecosystem Based Adaptation (EBA), and including a strategic focus on social cohesiveness, inclusiveness, sustainable development and the realization of Green Economy related opportunities.

The CEBA philosophy highlights the link between local communities and their supporting ecosystems, emphasizing the holistic aspects of human interaction and biodiversity. This inter-relationship between communities and their ecosystems is seen as an essential element of the adaptation concept. The CEBA philosophy therefore draws on Africa's strengths of its people, traditional knowledge and the natural environment.

This CEBA philosophy emphasizes:

- A strategic focus on the restoration and care of the ecosystems that underwrite the welfare and livelihood of communities.
- Pro-poor development approaches aimed at "enabling sustainable access to the economy" for unemployed community members, with a view to nurturing a catalytic generation of green jobs that will characterize an "African Green Economy" supported by green collar workers.
- The establishment of critical delivery partnerships between community leadership, business, civil society and government.

Within this context, the project is developing a complimentary suite of socio-economic development and conservation interventions, with a view to implementing these at each CEBA Project site. Collectively these interventions catalyse and support a broad based and integrated sustainable development approach. The interventions currently include:

- **Trees for Life** - based on the simple proposition that poor, jobless and marginalised individuals can 'grow' themselves out of poverty by propagating indigenous trees and bartering these trees for livelihood support.
- **Recycling for Life** – encourages and allows poor and marginalised people to collect and trade recyclable waste for livelihood support.
- **Greening Your Future** – supports the restoration of the community' ecosystems, with emphasis on reforestation, Invasive Alien Plant Clearing and the clearing of drainage lines.

Project Activities coordinated during this reporting period (August 2014 –July 2015)

- Inception Meeting with Partners
- Workshops with Moletele CPA
- Learning Exchange to Kwa Zulu Natal
- Appointment of Coordinator
- Beneficiary Selection and contracting
- Administrative Systems in place
- Site Mapping
- 3x Training Workshops for Beneficiaries
- Co-hosted Wildlands' Funders visits and Media Tour
- Hosted a site visit from CEPF Programme Management (Please refer to [Appendix D](#))
- Monthly Reports to Wildlands Trust (Please refer to [Appendix A & B](#) July examples attached)

Budget Spending

Please refer to [Appendix C](#) attached.

Conclusion

The CEPF SGP, although it might be considered relatively low in monetary value, has provided the opportunity/basis to pilot several sub-projects by participating partners of the K2C Network, which collectively seeks to demonstrate improved livelihoods and resilient economic development through improved conservation, land-use management and by expanding the wildlife economy. The program was conceptualized and strategically designed in such a manner, as to establish principles and processes, partnership networks, enabling institutional arrangements at all levels and co-learning exchanges, to attain this overarching goal. This project and its partnerships followed a systemic approach in understanding the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystems services, as well as associated livelihoods, and implications for natural resource management within an integrated Socio-Ecological-Systems view.

Principles such as participatory approaches between community members and key stakeholders, co-learning/social learning, capacity development, integrated Natural Resource Management approaches, establishing equitable and enabling institutional frameworks, addressing different community beneficiation models (asking questions such as how to value benefits, who benefits etc.), sharing of information etc. are some of the key elements central to the CEPF SGP.

This was not a once off project. The project enabled administrative systems and a hub for the partner network. Although the system and relationships built are strong, a key lesson learnt is that a resourced and structured central space or hub is a key success factor.