

# CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

## I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** Garden Route Botanical Garden Trust

**Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):**

Ensuring an Effective Role for the Southern Cape Herbarium and Garden Route Botanical Garden in Conservation in the Southern Cape, South Africa

**Implementation Partners for This Project:** Botanical Society of South Africa

**Project Dates:** March 1, 2004-December 31, 2004

**Date of Report (month/year):** April 2005

## II. OPENING REMARKS

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

Please see our quarterly narrative reports for detailed information linked to expenses. You will note that it became more difficult as the time went on to correlate specific activities with those laid out in the original LOI and Log Frame.

Fully participative workshops and meetings brought new ideas and possibilities which arose through us being able to understand and inform role-players, in more detail than before, what resources and services we can provide. While the wealth of input from the role-players involved gave us a much clearer idea of what they need from us.

It emerged very clearly that we hold resources and have the potential to deliver services which local role-players perceive they want and need - BUT our lack of staffing capacity to maximise on these opportunities and to adequately deliver them remains a huge problem.

The reasons for the longer time frame needed to achieve the objectives of our project can be ascribed to the following:

- ❖ The plethora of NGO initiatives and conservation bodies with whom we needed to interact and with whom we hoped to form partnerships, are overburdened with meetings and workshops – Many of these because most of them are in a similar state of flux and planning as we are! But also around attempts to respond to the exploding real-estate development occurring on the Garden Route and the immediate threats to the natural environment which they pose.
- ❖ Instead of combining forces there has been a fracturing of effort, perhaps because the larger initiatives with funding such as GRI (Garden Route Initiative, SANParks) and GI (Gouritz Initiative, Western Cape Nature Conservation Board) are managed by traditionally very different and stand-alone parastatals, whose decision-makers are mostly in Cape Town, whose administration is tortuous, and

who appear to have difficulty in instituting “real” mutually beneficial two-way partnerships with each other or with NGO’s.

### III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

- 1) What was the initial objective of this project?
  - a) Ensure an Effective Role for the Southern Cape Herbarium and Garden Route Botanical Garden in Conservation in the Southern Cape, South Africa
  - b) Position the GRBG as pivotal to the success of CAPE / CEPF aligned projects in the southern Cape.
  - c) Arrive at a workable strategy and partnership agreements between all committed organisations (role-players / partners)
  - d) Plan projected financial and business strategies to enable capacity-building. Most important is to assure immediate funding to enable the early appointment of a full-time fully qualified taxonomist / curator for the herbarium and ongoing administrative backup.
  
- 2) Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.
  - 1a) No - Our main aim (and title of the project) remained the same and remains possible but will take more time to achieve
  - 1b) Yes - This had to be changed as it became clear that the CAPE/CEPF initiatives were not able or ready to address this and we were not able to engage sufficiently with them. All refer to us as partners, but nothing really tangible or realistic emerged or was agreed upon. In fact they perhaps interacted even less than other roleplayers. Perhaps they are all still too occupied in positioning themselves and too busy. We therefore had to concentrate on other role-players who were able to engage more effectively with us.
  - 1c) No - Remains a major objective but it became clear that this was not going to be achieved nor resolved within the time frame though some useful associations have become stronger and possible partnerships have emerged (see below). The scope and structuring of partnerships needs rethinking due to constraints and problems (see below). It became clear that “partners” had needs for which most/some of them would be prepared to pay. But they could not offer either regular funding, nor formal capacity building support to the GRBGTrust. So lack of capacity remains the biggest stumbling block to achieving our objectives – the resources and services are there and needed, BUT without staff to deliver them the GRBGTrust is not able to capitalise on this, thereby generating the funds to employ the missing staff. It is a circular self-perpetuating problem and we need to find a way out and forward. Perhaps seed funding to contract the necessary staff for one or two years could set the ball rolling and kickstart future sustainability?
  - 1d) No - This remains an objective but has not been fully achieved. Without formalised agreements of partnership and support it is only possible to produce “Projections” rather than a “Business plan” - based on assumptions that capacity

will be improved. Identified needs from role-players which arose during of the project process led to us trying out the following example:

**Vegetation Surveys** - We carried out a series of Vegetation Surveys to test this avenue as a possible means to generating funds to allow us employ a full-time taxonomist / herbarium curator. Although the exercise was extremely valuable in many ways and generated sufficient funding to pay for our present part time curator for 6 months, it also raised a host of questions regarding the possibility of assuring adequate and secure funding to find, attract, and employ a sufficiently well-qualified field botanist / taxonomist – even if such a person can be found! Other options need to be looked into such as contracting the services of a field botanist only when the need arises – but this leaves us back at square one regarding the essential on-going & day-to-day curating of the herbarium. Vegetation surveys and identifications are definitely something we can do and which would generate funds, without any advertising we had almost more work than we could handle.

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

- 1a) This can become a reality as our profile and the recognition of what we can offer and its value to all, certainly increased through the contacts we had with various role-players, NGO's and institutions – but will take time still!
- 1b) This was not a success for reasons see above and below.
- 1c) Several very useful informal partnerships have been mooted and acted upon. SANParks, Western Cape Nature, HilLand Associates, Botanical Society of S A. With less tangible possibilities including the 2 local Municipalities, Eden to Addo, GRI, SKEP, Saasveld (now part of Nelson Mandela Metropole University).
- 1d) We carried out 6 Vegetation Surveys and many plant identifications, which generated R22 000 which only allowed us to pay the present part-time taxonomist over 6 months for 1 day a week (nevertheless she works on average a 3 day week or even more!), my personal input which was vital as a field botanist knowing the local flora well, was not paid for at all! With practise and by improving our voucher specimen holdings and library of botanical taxonomic literature we would become faster and more efficient and could charge more. BUT we need a fulltime taxonomist (preferably who is really proficient field taxonomist as well which is hard to find!) in order to take on the number of surveys needed to fund such a post.

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.

- 4a) Probably the biggest disappointment was that other CEPF / CAPE initiatives are so tied up with their own very busy and demanding schedules and processes, that we have had great difficulty in getting representatives to meetings and into any meaningful dialogue, let alone into formalised partnerships! There seems to be an almost panic-driven inability to address their own concerns let alone anyone else's! It is difficult not to look at this as a failure on our part – but we

have tried to understand the reasons and realise that it is mostly due to the fact that these initiatives are all scrabbling to achieve their own objectives. If there was time to be proactive in regard to major threats to the environment we would probably be able to form partnerships – but everyone is being forced into being retroactive in commenting and objecting to developments, Government Bills etc. already in train.

- 4b) The facilitator we contracted for the workshops was not able to carry out our mandate and much valuable time and energy went into resolving this problem and changing our plans as a result.
- 4c) We were not able to formalise partnerships and get effective MOU's signed and sealed.
- 4d) It is clear that we need a Champion or major institutional supporter – our Trustees, despite the very valuable work they do, have not been able to either identify who or what other than suggesting the Local Municipalities. Despite our many and valiant attempts to get some concrete decisions other than “agreement in principle but not in writing”, regarding our suggested contractual partnership with the George Municipality, we are not really sure if this will ever happen or not! The fact that new elections will be held towards the end of the year and the political party now in control and therefore the Mayor and counselors, will change, makes this even more problematic as we might be talking to the wrong people and have to start all over again next year! But we are determined not to leave it there and will press home the few advances we have undoubtedly made. We will be meeting with possible ANC counselors and political figures as well as continuing dialogue with the present D A council members and attending meetings with both George & Eden Municipalities and related bodies.

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.

- 6 months is too short to form or cement meaningful partnerships.
- Personal working relationships between individuals in different organisations are incredibly valuable BUT do not necessarily facilitate or result in formalised partnerships with the organisation they represent.
- Being an independent NGO or Trust gives freedom to be innovative and proactive – BUT without institutional support or backing it is very difficult to persuade role-players or institutions to “recognise” us or support us financially in order for us to provide their acknowledged needs.
- With the SANBI door closed to more Western Cape Botanic Garden & Herbarium projects, we need to come up with ways around or over this!
- Everyone wants to use our resources and data, but mostly at no long-term financial cost to themselves. How do we use our data to serve conservation ends but at the same time benefit financially?
- Working with local Government is a nightmare of RedTape, boring and interminable meetings, and getting to grips with the morass of constantly shifting internal politics. We have failed to get very far along this route, but are refusing to give up! We

realise that we have chosen an almost impossible time to get local government support as the past few years and the next few to come, have been studded with elections of one kind or another. The people and the party in power may not be there tomorrow and any effort to cement relationships with one person or group may be nullified by the looming next election – BUT this does not mean that what we have to offer is not of value and a contractual partnership is not possible, we have to ride the waves, hang in there, and hope to land eventually.

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

6a) We have to get answers to the following most important questions that have arisen out of the project meetings and discussions. eg:

- How can we make use of our data and services to serve crucial conservation, environmental and related social needs - but at the same time benefit financially and enable us to employ the necessary staff?
- Can meaningful and supportive partnerships be forged with at least some of the roleplayers we have interacted with – which if there is in a position to commit to this at present and how do we assure this happening?
- To arrive at these answers we have to continue meeting with those roleplayers who seem the best able to forge meaningful partnerships either now or in the future ie: WCNCB, San parks, Local Municipalities.

6b) Because of all the problems around forging financially supportive partnerships in the short-term we HAVE to work at becoming as self-sustaining as possible – ie. becoming a viable “Environmental Business” in our own right. To do this:

- Primarily we need financial support over the next couple of years to ensure a good core body of well trained & qualified staff in order to set the ‘Business’ up and get to the point where income generated adequately funds these staff.
- We have to identify either a Champion or an Institutional supporter and make sure we finalize agreements or a mutually beneficial contractual partnership.

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

- ❖ The project is not yet complete! A lot of work remains to be done building on the past years learning.
- ❖ We are very grateful for the chance given us by CEPF to explore these very important avenues to sustainability and gain valuable insights into what we are and what we could be.
- ❖ We feel that it would be adding value to the money already made available by CEPF in 2004 for the project - by helping us to proceed to the next step and follow up on the valuable insights and exciting possibilities that emerged.
- ❖ Although it is tempting to compare us with existing Botanical Gardens and Herbaria we feel that there would be huge value in allowing us to explore the

possibilities of a different model more suited to Africa, the South, and our vibrant 3<sup>rd</sup> World reality - as opposed to us simply copying and repeating the patterns, and possibly the “mistakes”, of historically accepted Western 1<sup>st</sup> World institutions. We realize the difficulty in achieving this and getting recognition for its validity, but would like to be given the chance to at least try!

- ❖ Please see enclosed Projected Financial Needs & Plan.
- ❖ A Situation Report arising from a recent Trustees meeting and drawn up by Professor Bruce Mackenzie of the Botanical Society of S A is making progress and will be used to approach role-players such as the George Municipality etc when it is completed and adopted by the Trust.

**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.*

<b>Generated</b>	<b>Type of Funding*</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Vegetation surveys various	Payment for services	R22 000	
Identification of specimens SanParks	Payment for taxonomic identifications	R 3000	

*\*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.)

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.

**V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

From the questionnaire filled in for CAPE magazine these points may usefully add to above answers.

**Lessons Learnt:**

- 1) When lack of capacity is the problem to start with, it becomes an almost overwhelming problem for the project to progress successfully.
- 2) 6 months was too short to accomplish all we set out to do.
- 3) More value in really participative meetings with small groups with similar interests or fields of expertise than in holding big and expensive workshops with many varied interest participants.
- 4) Too much going on at the moment as so many initiatives and conservation bodies are in flux and all planning new strategies and systems at the same time - impossible to find a firm foothold in quicksand.
- 5) Very difficult to get decision makers to attend meetings because of so much happening and also because many are not located in George.
- 6) Objectives and actions from the initial Log Frame become increasingly difficult to conform to as new and interesting ideas or plans come to the fore through interactive meetings, therefore flexibility is essential!
- 7) Organising and holding successful meetings is only the tip of the iceberg - collating & minuting the ideas, the learning and the possibilities presented is far more difficult and prioritising subsequent follow-up activities takes a huge amount of time and skill.

**Project Highlights:**

- 1) Greatly increased the "visibility" of the GRBG and the S Cape Herbarium and what we do or could do.
- 2) Valuable contacts and interpersonal alliances forged - inter-organisational alliances more difficult but emerging.
- 3) Huge learning curve for all at the GRBG involved with the project.
- 4) Great excitement at possibilities uncovered, but huge frustration at lack of capacity to implement them.
- 5) The possibility of really valuable partnerships are emerging but it is taking time and patience.
- 6) Biggest disappointment is the lack of meaningful response from other CAPE / CEPF projects in the area.

**NB - We will soon be presenting another LOI to CEPF for consideration for the reasons given in points 6 & 7 above. We would like to once more say how valuable your funding has proved, and how much we appreciate your faith in us thus far!**

<b>VI. INFORMATION SHARING</b>
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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](http://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:

**For more information about this project, please contact:**

Name: Yvette van Wijk  
Mailing address: 49 Caledon Street, George, 6529, South Africa  
Tel: 27-44-8741558 or 27-44-8501135  
Fax: 27-44-8741558  
E-mail: [scherb@pixie.co.za](mailto:scherb@pixie.co.za)