

# CEPF FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

## I. BASIC DATA

**Organization Legal Name:** Conservation International-Southern Africa Hotspots Program

**Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement):** Supporting Innovation and Sustainable Financing of the SKEP Bioregional Programme

**Implementation Partners for this Project:**

**Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement):** July 1, 2005 – December 31, 2006

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

## II. OPENING REMARKS

## III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

**Project Purpose:** To generate long-term sustainability for the SKEP conservation plan by:  
 \*building strategic capacity of the SKEP Coordination Unit,  
 \*catalysing the creation of a SKEPPIESFund as a potential vehicle for long-term financing of initiatives undertaken within the SKEP framework; and  
 \*catalysing a partnership conservation initiative in the Namaqua priority regions as a SKEP anchor project that will focus on achieving conservation targets for these areas.

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<b>Purpose-level:</b>	
There is a smooth transition between the CI and SANBI hosting of the SKEP Programme and donors and stakeholders continue to expand their involvement in the programme through the activities listed.	SANBI has integrated the SKEP Programme and Coordination Unit, including the CI-mentored communications assistant into their Bioregional Programmes Unit. They have successfully raised the profile of SKEP amongst government organizations and although there is still much work to be done here to ensure growing numbers of stakeholders support and are involved in SKEP, the transition to SANBI has been incredibly smooth.
The SAHP Director spends 126 days of the year providing strategic support to the SKEP Coordination Unit and key Programme activities.	The SAHP Director spent nearly 90% of her time over the grant period on strategic and development support of the SKEPPIES and NWI activities. Specific support to the SKEP CU has been done at

	the request of SANBI. Ensuring that there is a request for support was important for the transition as many were fearful that CI would not let go of the SKEP CU reins.
The SAHP Communications Manager spends 135 days mentoring a SANBI intern and producing key communications materials for the SKEP Bioregional Programme in the next year.	The CI Communications Manager effectively managed the SANBI Communications intern who is now effectively rolling out a jointly-developed communications strategy. In the period of the grant, the SKEP branding and web-site were redesigned and the first SKEP partners concert was hosted at the Succulent House, KRC.

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

The impact of this project in transitioning the SKEP programme to a permanent institutional home within SANBI was highly successful. SKEP is well known in the region as a result of the planning process; however, the transition of the programme to SANBI has led to a much greater awareness amongst government agencies as a result. Through the activities of the Director supported by this grant, CI successfully catalyzed the SKEPPIES Small Grants Fund and the Namakwa Wilderness Initiative, a SKEP Anchor project for the Coastal and Upland priority areas. The impact of these efforts by the completion of the grant was 11 additional conservation and development projects supported thru SKEPPIES, as well as significant progress and the adoption of the SKEP targets and conservation plan for the Kamiesberg Municipality, a municipality that is home for 20% of the species found in the Succulent Karoo. Finally, the activities of the CI Communications manager on this project shaped the branding and current communication capacity in the SKEP Coordination Unit which will play a long-term role in ensuring SKEP continues to be promoted and coordinated as a holistic conservation programme for the Succulent Karoo.

***Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?***

Although the transition of the SKEP programme to SANBI was smooth, the impact of centralizing a coordination unit under SANBI in CapeTown has impeded the ability of local stakeholders to engage and feel part of SKEP. All efforts were made to ensure local coordination was transferred to anchor projects and these projects area striving to achieve their own stakeholder buy-in as well as implementation and as a result, were not as dedicated to expanding local involvement in the programme. That being said, the foundation is strong within SANBI and opportunities for lessons sharing with other bioregional programmes has brought a great number of positive impacts on the efficiency and effectiveness of SKEP.

**IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS**

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

**Planned vs. Actual Performance**

Indicator	Actual at Completion
<b>Output 1: SKEP Coordination Unit is strategically supported to become fully institutionalised within SANBI and with local stakeholders and is effectively rolling out the SKEP 20-year strategy.</b>	Completed as stated.
1.1 <i>All SKEP Implementation Committee meetings are attended to monitor and identify critical gaps in the programme.</i>	Completed as stated
1.2 <i>SAHP Director &amp; Communications Mngr participating</i>	Completed as stated

<i>in the SANBI Bioregional Forum and SKEP Technical Working Group Meetings to develop strategies for addressing gaps.</i>	
1.3 <i>CI becomes a signatory on the SKEP MOU and plays a role on one of the SKEP IC sub-committees.</i>	Completed as stated
1.4 <i>SKEP Coordinator and SANBI Director appreciate advice provided by the SAHP team and report to CEPF on the quality of CI support to the SKEP Programme.</i>	Both the former and current coordination teams regularly draw on advice from CI team. The value of this advice can only be provided by the CU to CEPF.
<b>Output 2: A small grants facility exists and is supporting projects that link poverty alleviation to a measurable conservation outcome in the rural areas of the Succulent Karoo Biome in the Northern and Western Cape Provinces of South Africa in line with the priorities identified in the SKEP 20-year strategy.</b>	Completed as stated through the creation and operationalisation of SKEPPIES.
2.1 <i>Integrated strategy for the creation of the SKEPPIES Fund developed and supported by SANBI and CEPF by 30 July 2005.</i>	Completed as stated.
2.2 <i>Appropriate partners for establishment of fund contacted as well as MOU for its implementation developed by 30 October 2005.</i>	Completed as stated.
2.3 <i>Three to five project proposals are submitted to major donors to create alliance for the creation of the SKEPPIES fund by December 2005.</i>	Completed as stated with a successful proposal to DBSA for \$300,000 over the next four years and a proposal currently under review by the DeBeers Trust for a similar match. Two further proposals to USAID and the GCF were submitted and rejected.
2.4 <i>Municipal officials are being made aware of opportunities to modify their IDP projects to generate a biodiversity benefit so as to be primed to take advantage of the fund when it is in place.</i>	Completed as stated and with the formal commitment from the Municipality to supporting the conservation plan as developed by Phil Desmet's CEPF-project through the signing of a formal MOU.
2.5 <i>Depending on when funding is secured, a minimum of 2 projects per quarter will be supported during the period of this grant.</i>	Completed and eleven projects supported by the term of this grant agreement (now 17 at the time of this report).
<b>Output 3: A SKEP Anchor project linking the Namaqua Coast, National Park, and Uplands with the SKEP vision of establishing a network of private and communal reserves linked to the existing Park is developed, funded, and strategically guided to be transferred to local entities through the initial start-up phase.</b>	NWI initiated and financially supported and elements of the project are being transferred to a local Section 21 Company for ecotourism development. Other aspects of the project are being driven by the local municipality, DTEC, ARC, and SANParks. The NWI Projects Forum meets bi-annually and is a great forum for ongoing coordination for SKEP.
3.1 <i>A NWC Priority Area Steering Committee is established by 30 August 2005.</i>	Completed as stated.
3.2 <i>Quarterly NWC Steering Committee meetings are held during the first 18 months of the project and are attended by the SAHP Director.</i>	Completed as stated.
3.3 <i>A new PMU of local organisation representatives is established and mentored by the SAHP Director and Communication Manager to effectively implement the anchor project with scaled back CI Snr mngm't support by December 2006.</i>	A new local PMU exists and is financially secure for the following three years. Unfortunately due to complex nature of the NWI and limited regional capacity, CI will continue to host the coordination of this initiative until 2009.

<b>Output 4: Enhanced conservation action is achieved through sharing of lessons between programmes and key communication support to SANBI Biodiversity Directorate, the SKEP Coordination Unit, and SKEP Anchor Projects.</b>	Completed as stated with SKEP e-news, web-site and SKEP Partners Conference, and Annual Report productions being supported by this grant.
4.1 <i>SKEP Communications strategy developed during the final phase in CI is refined and fully integrated with the SKEP Anchor projects by 30th August 2005.</i>	Completed as stated.
4.2 <i>Contract between SANBI and CI on communications support signed by 1 August 2005.</i>	Never formalized, but operationalised thru informal arrangements.
4.3 <i>The activities described in the strategy are effectively undertaken and reported on at the Bioregional Forum and to CEPF on a quarterly basis.</i>	Completed as stated.
4.4 <i>Stakeholders feel they have learned a great deal and adapt their projects based on lessons shared at a SKEP Partners Conference held in Feb 2006.</i>	Completed as stated.

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

At the output level, the project was highly successful. Each of the indicators was achieved and a foundation for the SANBI-based SKEP CU, SKEPPIES and NWI initiatives to contribute greatly to the SKEP 20-year strategy and conservation targets has been laid. Each of these initiatives has its weaknesses, but the institutional foundation is firm and there is generally positive and unstoppable momentum and stakeholder support for each activity.

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

The biggest challenge to the success of the programme was the maintenance of the ground-level support for SKEP from a CI-supported coordination unit due to the fact that several key positions, including the position of the Coordinator, was vacant for much of the period of this grant. Although this did not impact the project outputs, it did have an adverse effect on the momentum of SKEP and CI is currently committed to and working with the new CU team to re-build this momentum.

**V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS**

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

N/A

**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.*** The importance of coordination for a programmatic approach to conservation cannot be underestimated. This is particularly true in an area with limited institutional capacity and/or conservation understanding. Continuity in the coordination process was crucial as was a move to the current institutional home. However, given the current and emerging challenges with maintaining continuity, one of

the key lessons has been the importance of the reference group and bioregional meetings to ensure full transfer of historical knowledge and lessons.

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

With regards to the SKEP CU, the current capacity/scientific knowledge challenges as well as the downscaling of participation in the SKEP programme from the Planning Phase by grassroots stakeholders highlights the tension between costs and local capacity building and ownership. As a result of a loss of local structures deemed to be too expensive to maintain at the time, numerous consultancies and calls for proposals were required to ensure effective spending of the CEPF resources and true 'savings'/impact of the approach of such a rapid transfer to SANBI could benefit from an objective assessment.

With regards to SKEPPIES and NWI, the project design was flexible enough to allow for innovation and proved key to catalyzing both of these established initiatives.

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

Due to the good relations between CI and SANBI, there was never a formalization of expectations or meetings around skills transfer and capacity building. As a result, perhaps this aspect of the project was not executed to its full potential. However, the informal nature did allow for more regular discussions which may have contributed to the successful implementation of some aspects of the Coordination programme, particularly around the communications elements, during the period of the grant.

**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
Private Individual	A	\$80,000	CI supported numerous travel and staff costs related to SKEPPIES and representing the SKEP CU at several forums in the absence of the coordinator out of an unrestricted donation to the programme's workplan which included support to the SKEP Bioregional programme.

**\*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.***  
This project is ongoing. CI has secured 3 additional years of funding to cover their core costs of operational support to the SKEP Bioregional Programme, including the costs of raising a \$5 million endowment for the SKEPPIES Fund.

## VIII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## VIII. INFORMATION SHARING

CEPF is committed to transparent operations and to helping civil society groups share experiences, lessons learned and results. One way we do this is by making programmatic project documents available on our Web site, [www.cepf.net](http://www.cepf.net), and by marketing these in our newsletter and other communications.

These documents are accessed frequently by other CEPF grantees, potential partners, and the wider conservation community.

**Please include your full contact details below:**

Name: Sarah Frazee

Organization name: Conservation International

Mailing address: Private Bag x7, Claremont, 7735, South Africa

Tel: 0027-21-7998655

Fax: 0027-21-7626838

E-mail: [sfrazee@conservation.org](mailto:sfrazee@conservation.org)