

SGP The GEF
Small Grants
Programme



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Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme South Africa Country Programme



2016



Supporting community environmental action



environmental affairs

Department:
Environmental Affairs
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GEF Small Grants Programme
South Africa
Programme Booklet

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Glossary

AFAF	All for Africa Foundation
CBO	Community-Based Organisation
CFRPA	Cape Floral Region Protected Areas
CPS	Country Programme Strategy
CPMT	Country Programme Management Team
CSAP	Camdeboo Satellite Aquaculture Project
CWT	Camdeboo Women's Trust
DEA	Department of Environmental Affairs
EE/RE	Energy Efficient/Renewable Energy
EMG	Environmental Monitoring Group
EPWP	Expanded Public Works Programme
FIMI	International Indigenous Women's Forum
GCBR	Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve
GEF	Global Environmental Facility
K2C	Kruger to Kanyons Biosphere Region
NSC	National Steering Committee
OP5/6	Operational Phase 5/6
PV	Photovoltaic system
POP	Persistent Organic Pollutants
SAHRA	South Africa Heritage Resources Agency
SANBI	South Africa Biodiversity Institute
SCLC	Southern Cape Land Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SGP	Small Grants Programme
SIZA	Sustainability Initiative of South Africa
SKEPPIES	Succulent Karoo Ecosystem Programme
SKI	Seed Knowledge Initiative
STAR	System for Transparent Allocation of Resources
UN	United Nations
UNCBD	United National Convention of Biological Diversity
UNCCD	United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFCCC	United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change
UNESCO	United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Support

Foreword from the GEF Operational Focal Point for South Africa

The GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) in South Africa (SA) has been instrumental in putting South Africa on a path to sustainable development. By providing financial and technical support to projects that conserve and restore the environment while enhancing people's well-being and livelihoods, the SGP demonstrates that community action can maintain the fine balance between human needs and environmental imperatives. The SGP SA takes cognisance of the fact that environmental degradation such as the destruction of ecosystems and the species that depend upon them, increasing levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in our atmosphere, pollution of international waters, land degradation and the spread of persistent organic pollutants are global environmental challenges that endanger us all. Whilst these are global challenges, the SGP SA has worked with the civil society to address the issues at a country and local level.



The SGP's primary stakeholders, poor and vulnerable communities are most at risk because they depend on access to natural resources for their livelihoods and often live in fragile ecosystems. In South Africa, the SGP has invested a lot in the development of such vulnerable and underprivileged communities impacted by the effects of environmental degradation and in GEF-6, following the adoption of the landscape approach, most of the resources would be invested in the Vhembe Biosphere Reserve in Limpopo province, one of the most rural and poorest of the provinces in the country.

It is concerning that not much is known about the SGP in South Africa and to that end, the SGP South Africa Secretariat has embarked on developing knowledge products that include this booklet. These products will highlight the importance of the SGP in catalysing the work of the civil society in the environment sector in South Africa with the purpose of alleviating ever-increasing environmental challenges.

Over the past 15 years, the SGP SA has made great strides in addressing community-level environmental challenges and as South Africa, we will endeavour to strengthen this programme to ensure that it responds to the vision of the government as envisaged in the National Development Plan and Section 24 of the Constitution of South Africa.

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Mr Zaheer Fakir, National Department of Environmental Affairs

GEF Operational Focal Point of the Republic of South Africa

Message from UNDP Resident Representative

It is within our communities that we can each do our part to address the global environmental challenges. Civil society organisations remain the bedrock partner for the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) as invaluable ‘feet on the ground’ to address environmental challenges that we face. Efforts of international organisations’ could never replace the remarkable contributions of these civil society organisations but can encourage and support them.



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Resilient nations.*

Since 2001, the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme in South Africa has been helping to empower local communities to implement environmental and climate change projects by providing grant funding support. The GEF SGP grants, albeit small in scale, have proved to have significant impact for local communities and the country as a whole. These projects collectively contribute to achieving environmental objectives while at the same time also support poverty reduction and local empowerment objectives through food security, job creation, income generation, skills & capacity development, awareness creation, contributing to gender equality as well as enterprise development. These local objectives are also entrenched in South Africa’s National Development Plan as well as the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals.

The small-grants funding landscape in South Africa is well established with a number of private sector, civil society as well as international organisations supporting a myriad of community development projects across different sectors. The uniqueness of the UNDP GEF SGP has been its ability to play the role of a ‘risk-taker’ in supporting less capacitated community organisations with the objective of contributing to building their organisational capacity to execute small projects, thereby improving their ability to grow and mobilise additional resources.

The initiatives implemented by the recipients of the small grants have directly or indirectly benefited over 1,580 households during the 5th phase of the GEF (2010 -2015) and since 2001 have contributed to the conservation of over 550,000 hectares of community conserved areas and protected areas. Many of the projects have been made possible thanks to the co-financing contributions from the Government of South Africa, international donors and the private sector providing over US\$8mill in co-financing since 2001. This booklet provides a ‘snapshot’ of the projects implemented by the GEF SGP across the country in the 5th phase of the GEF.

We acknowledge and thank all the recipients of the grants for their remarkable work. We also thank the SGP National Steering Committee (NSC) who provide the strategic oversight and guidance to the programme as well as adjudicating on the grant allocations, guided by the Country Programme Strategy. This publication is a step forward in enhancing the public awareness of the work of the UNDP GEF Small Grants Programme in South Africa.

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Mr. Gana Fofang, UNDP Resident Representative
South Africa

1. Introduction

1.1 Background and Overview

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) unites 183 countries in partnership with international institutions, civil society organisations and private sector to address global environmental issues while supporting national sustainable development initiatives. The GEF was established in 1991 as an independent financial mechanism to assist countries in fulfilling their obligations under the following Conventions they have signed and ratified: the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the United National Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) as well as the Minamata Convention on Mercury.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a corporate programme of the GEF developed out of the idea that locally managed projects that conserve the environment and develop sustainable livelihoods for communities, will have a greater effect on the global balance between human needs and environmental priorities. These initiatives need then to be up-scaled, replicated and mainstreamed in other parts of the country and the world, creating a ripple effect of community-managed conservation areas that benefit people on the ground. Since its commencement in 1992 at the Rio Earth Summit, the SGP has funded over 20,000 grants of up to US\$50,000 to communities in more than 125 countries, including South Africa.

The SGP is implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), while the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) provides financial and administrative support. A global Central Programme Management Team (CPMT) provides supervision and technical support to program countries. Each participating country has an SGP National coordinator, supported by a National Steering Committee (NSC) that provides strategic guidance on the Programme as well as the review, selection and approval of grant funding. The NSC is comprised of UNDP Country Office, government, civil society, academia and private sector representatives. Activities in each participating country are guided by a Country Program Strategy (CPS) developed for each operational phase of the GEF. In South Africa, the GEF SGP works in partnership with the national Department of Environmental Affairs (DEA) as their Focal Point, through which GEF makes resources available and where project results are shared.

SGP funding support is used to implement environmental initiatives within the GEF focal areas of biodiversity conservation, land degradation and sustainable forest management, chemicals and waste management, international waters and climate change. The community-based projects must meet environmental objectives while at the same time supporting poverty reduction and local empowerment objectives. The funding is also used to support skills and capacity development, raise awareness, monitor conservation sites, open up dialogue within knowledge systems, manage the project effectively and share the lessons learnt across various sectors. By facilitating community action on the ground level, SGP-funded projects could have a real lasting global impact in the long-term.

1.2 GEF Focal Areas



Biodiversity

Not only is biodiversity important to the plants and animals, but serves as an important resource to us, be it food, medicine, fuel or shelter, as well as provide a cultural and spiritual connection with nature. It is especially vital to the livelihoods of local communities, who can assist in improving the sustainability of protected areas and introduce biodiversity conservation measures to all production sectors.



Climate Change

Climate change mitigation measures are implemented through the proliferation of clean energy technologies, land use practices and improving energy efficiency. Besides reducing greenhouse gas emissions, these interventions also look towards building local communities' capabilities to be resilient against natural disasters and climate variability. This will not only improve the health of our planet but also the livelihoods of our local communities.



Land Degradation

As part of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD), it is important to tackle land degradation by implementing sustainable land management approaches to natural resource management including in agriculture, forestry, drylands and rangelands. Through land rehabilitation, small-scale farming communities can improve the quality of their landscape and food productivity, which in turn will also strengthen their food and economic security.



Sustainable Forest Management

In order to protect indigenous forests, it is important to involve local communities in sustainable forest management. They are not only resource dependent on these ecosystems, but also have a deep cultural connection to these forests. Sustainable land use interventions are implemented to ensure ecosystems and restorative activities are connected.



International Waters

Most of the world's countries are connected by oceans and transboundary surface and groundwater basins; water bodies that do not adhere to borders. It is important to address sustainable development challenges faced by those that live on these borders and are dependent on the ecosystem services and products provided by

these water bodies. Countries that share these transboundary lifelines need to work together to help each other and conserve their water resource.



Chemicals and Waste

Pollution caused by persistent organic pollutants have an adverse effect on humans and nature, as well as diminish our planet's ozone layer. Proper management of chemicals throughout their life cycle is important to protect our health and the global environment. This includes interventions to minimise waste output, reduce the use of pesticides and increase awareness in communities.

1.3 GEF SGP in South Africa

In South Africa, GEF SGP started in 2001 and since then it has supported over 100 projects across the country to the value of over US\$4,7mill and co-financing of over US\$8,6mill (\$6,6mill cash & \$2mill in-kind) by 2016. SGP South Africa has gone through four operational phases (OP) of the GEF and is currently in the 6th operational phase ending in June 2019. In 2016, the total grant allocation from the GEF resources stands at US\$5,295,611. Table 1 illustrates the funding allocation under each phase:

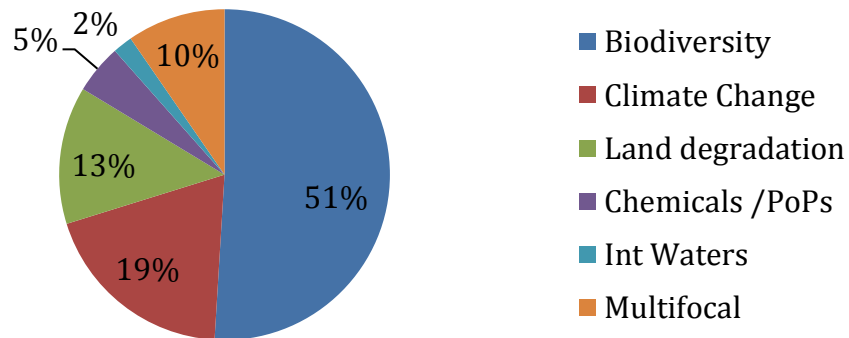
Table 1: Total GEF Grant Allocation

Operational Phases	OP2 (1999-2004)	OP3 (2005 – 2007)	OP4 (2007-2010)	OP5 (2010-2014)	OP6 (2015-2019)	TOTAL
GEF Grant allocation (US\$)	576 402	669 209	1 350 000	1 600 000	1 200 000 ¹	5,295,611

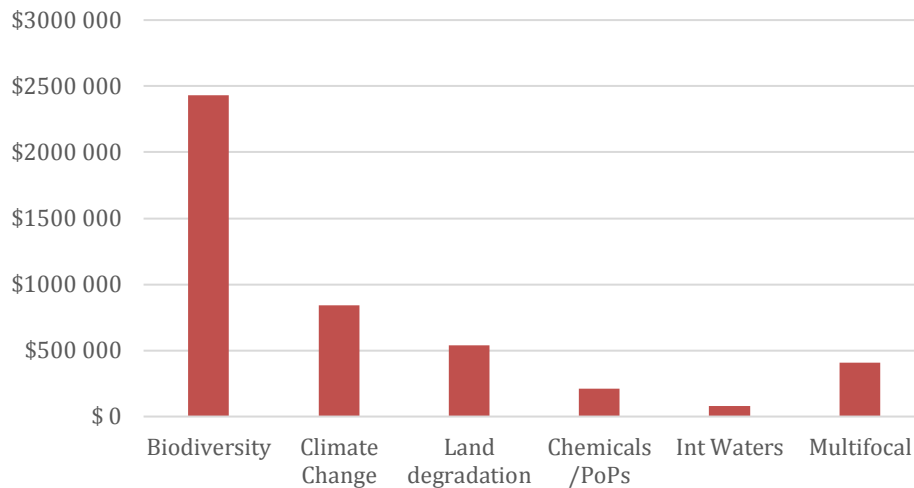
Since the country programme inception in 2001, a substantial proportion of project grants have been in the biodiversity focal area standing at 51% of the 110 projects implemented thus far, followed by climate change at 19%, land degradation at 13%, multifocal projects at 10%, persistent organic pollutants at 5% and international waters at 2%.

¹ US\$500,000 STAR allocation, US\$500,000 CORE resources and US\$200,000 CORE Priority funding for Agro-ecology projects

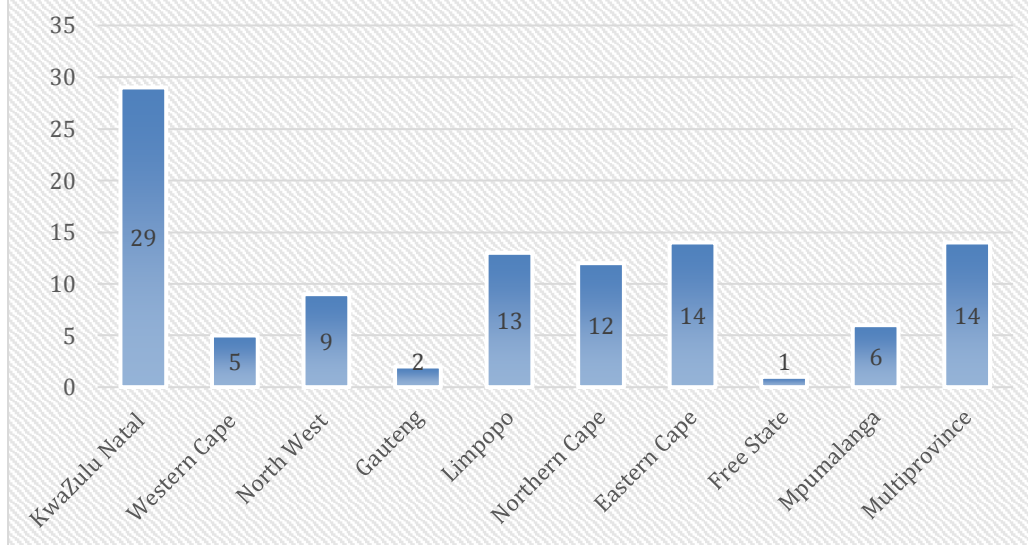
Projects split per Focal Area



Total Grant Allocation per Focal Area

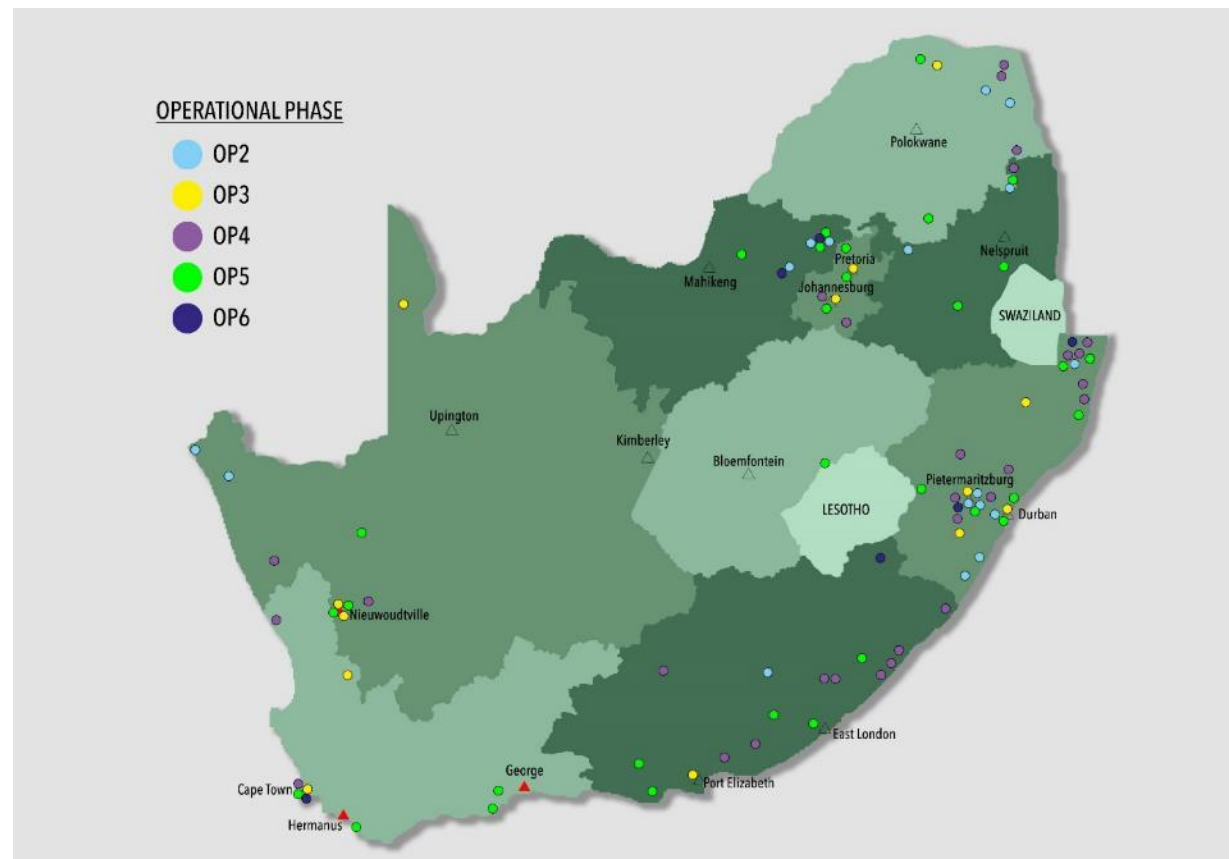


No. of SGP Projects Per Province



KwaZulu Natal Province has been the largest recipient of the GEF SGP funded projects with close to 30 projects valued at over US\$1,3mill followed by Eastern Cape with 14 projects funded by SGP. Only 1 project has been funded in the Free State on international waters and this could be attributed to lack of civil society organisations working within the SGP focal areas within the Province. Many of the projects are implemented by NGO's based in Gauteng and Western Cape with projects located in the Eastern Cape and Limpopo provinces.

Figure 1: Projects Map



Note: Multi- province projects not marked²

1.4 Alignment with National Priorities

The South African National Government is committed to global sustainable development and environmental conservation initiatives, evident from their signatory status on ratified multilateral environment agreements like the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Convention to Combat Desertification, Madrid Action Plan for Biosphere Reserves and Strategic Action Programmes for shared international water-bodies. The government has also developed numerous national policies that aid in the fight against environmental degradation and the upliftment of impoverished communities. These include the South African Rural Development Plan; South African National Strategic Plan for Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries; the South African National Development Plan 2030 and the South African National Climate Change Response Strategy.

² Some projects with a national footprint are marked in Gauteng province where the organisations were located

The National Development Plan (NDP) articulates a framework for South Africa's transition to an environmentally sustainable, climate-change resilient, low-carbon economy by 2030. Importantly the NDP firmly establishes the link between socio-economic development and a sustainable environment agenda. According to the Plan *"South Africa faces urgent developmental challenges in terms of poverty, unemployment and inequality, and will need to find ways to link poverty alleviation efforts to the achievement of a sustainable environment free from environmental degradation and carbon-intensive energy consumption"*. Poverty alleviation and the empowerment of vulnerable communities is at the centre of the DEA's policy and legislative thrust. The legislative and policy architecture of the government's environment conservation approach ultimately speaks to rural development, poverty alleviation and the creation of livelihoods. These goals are also articulated in government's Comprehensive Rural Development Programme (CRDP) and underlines the work of government across all spheres. The implementation of SGP environmental interventions is well aligned with the government policy objectives as the implementation of projects must meet environmental objectives while supporting poverty reduction and local empowerment objectives. An analysis of a few projects surveyed during the 2015 programme evaluation revealed that project outcomes have been varied with most projects having a clear linkage between poverty alleviation, livelihood and employment creation and environmental conservation whilst some set out to build capacity and catalyze income generation initiatives within communities.

SGP's environmental conservation thrust with a specific emphasis on biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, the protection of international waters, land degradation and elimination of persistent organic pollutants speaks to the DEA's overall strategic objectives of:

- protecting and improving the quality and safety of the environment to give effect to the right of all South Africans to an environment that is not harmful to health and wellbeing;
- the management and protection of South Africa's oceans and coastal resources;
- the facilitation of an effective national mitigation and adaptation response to climate change and;
- the creation of better conditions for effective corporate and cooperative governance, international cooperation and implementation of expanded public works projects in the environment sectors.

1.5 Alignment with UN Sustainable Development Goals

Following on the Millennium Development Goals, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a plan to eradicate global poverty and give our planet a chance to recover from destructive human activities. The scale and ambition of this project is marked by 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets that will seek to balance three components of sustainable development – the economic, social and environmental.

GEF investments help to reduce threats to the global environment while contributing to a range of additional impacts. GEF SGP projects helps further these SDGs in multiple ways, including poverty reduction, skills development, job creation and gender equality through combining it with various other goals. Many of the goals are interlinked and can have multiple outputs that benefit local communities and ecological systems. Economic and social development through income generation activities and enterprise development, food security, women's empowerment, education and training, sustainable resource management, promoting inclusivity through women's empowerment, youth and indigenous people in environmental conservation measures, climate change mitigation and adaptation interventions, conservation of biodiversity, access to institutions and building partnership networks are some of the many important facets of GEF SGP projects.

Figure 2: GEF and the SDGs



Source: GEF

1.6 Achievements thus far

- During the 5th phase of the GEF, SGP contributed to over 370 jobs through community conservation initiative; more than 2,500 people trained with 65% women and an estimated 11,998 people (approximately 1,580 households) mainly in the rural areas, have benefitted from the SGP supported projects, contributing to the government's goal of reducing poverty through environmental conservation. SGP project also contributed to supporting over 40 small and micro business enterprises e.g. honey production, eco-tourism, vegetable gardens, crafts, waste recycling, indigenous tree nurseries, etc.
- Since 2001, two World Heritage Sites and three RAMSAR sites were involved in community conservation activities. These include iSimangaliso Wetland Park and Maloti-Drakensberg

World Heritage Sites. Ramsar sites include the Orange River Mouth, Ndumo Game Reserve, Makuleke Wetlands,

- More than 550,000 hectares of community conserved areas and protected areas were established, conserved and/or expanded
- Over 13,000 indigenous plants were cultivated and replanted in degraded environments and 122 indigenous vegetation and endangered species were protected.

All of these initiatives were conducted in close consultation with and involvement from indigenous communities, women and youth. The projects supported capacity development of over 100 civil society organizations.

Other major successes throughout the years also include:

- Registration of 3 sacred natural sites in Limpopo with the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA) from provincial to national status.
- As part of SGP's climate change action measures, 2 schools and more than 400 households are using energy-saving technologies that lower their electricity costs and carbon footprint, from solar panels for cooking, lighting and powering computers to biogas digesters that reduce dependence on electricity, thus reducing the use of wood materials as fuel. This also included campaigns to raise awareness around climate change and renewable energy as well as train people up to be skilled in the installation and maintenance of these technologies.
- Agro-ecology and countermeasures against land degradation has been vital in the conservation of over 9,600 hectares of communal land utilised for sustainable agricultural purpose, improving food security in drought-stricken regions and providing over a hundred people with employment. Many of the small-scale farmers are now producing organic vegetables for own consumption as well as generating an income by selling surplus produce to local retailers and local community. Small-scale farmers continue to advocate for policy change to support seed and food sovereignty. One project partner (Heiveld Cooperative) exports organic rooibos sourced from small-scale farmers to the international markets and another (Flower Valley Conservation Trust) has facilitated the export of Fynbos flowers to the international markets.
- GEF SGP supported civil society participation and inputs into the National Waste Management Policy on mercury contamination impacts and the National Air Quality Policy on ambient and emission limits through GroundWork in 2008 which led to improvements in these legislative documents.
- GEF SGP supported civil society participation and inputs into the second Integrated Energy Planning (IEP2) process in 2008/2009 through Sustainable Energy & Climate Change Project (SECCP)

1.7 Awards received by SGP Grantees

Many of the SGP-funded project grantees have also received national and international awards for the recognition for their work. These include the following:

- 2015 Women in Environment Award issued by the National Department of Environmental Affairs, won by Ms. Mary Raletsoane of Setsoto Women's Group for her contribution towards women empowerment through the Adopt-a-River Project for the Caledon River in Ficksburg, Free State
- 2015 Women in Environment Award by Heiveld Cooperative for Sustainable Land Management in the cultivation of organic rooibos in the Rooibos Heritage Route, Northern Cape Province

- 2014 Energy Globe Award received by Food & Tree for Africa for their greening initiative that contributes nationally to offsetting carbon emission by providing trees and training to residents of low-cost housing settlements.
- 2014 UNDP Equator Initiative Award for Sustainable Land Management by Heiveld Cooperative for sustainable harvesting of wild rooibos tea
- 2013 Global Leadership Award received by Ms. Mphatheleni Makaulule of Mupo Foundation in recognition of her work with women and communities in the Venda region of Limpopo
- 2011 Sustainable Economic and Environmental Development (SEED) Award was won by Mooi River Waste Recycling, a CBO supported by Groundwork Trust which focused in air quality and waste management
- 2011 SEED Award was also won by *Why Honey*, an organisation which partnered with Gouritz Biosphere Reserve to train local community members in beekeeping, providing them with necessary equipment and marketing Fair Trade honey
- 2010 Inyathelo Philanthropy Award won by Noel De Villiers of Open Africa for his contribution to social investment, advancement and sustainability in the country.
- 2010 UNDP Equator Initiative Award won by Makuleke Community located in the northern part of the Kruger National Park for ecotourism initiative based on the principle of community based conservation as the most effective mechanism for long-term biodiversity protection and equitable development.



Heiveld Cooperative representatives received a UNDP Equator Award in 2014



Setsoto Women's Empowerment Group and Heiveld representatives with their awards on Women & Environment in 2015

2. Overview of Projects

2.1 Background

The GEF SGP OP5 (2010-2014) funded projects in South Africa was spread out through most of the provinces, namely North West, KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo, Western Cape, Eastern Cape, Northern Cape and the Free State. During this period, 34 projects were supported through GEF SGP System for the Transparent Allocation Resource (STAR) funds with 17 projects falling under the biodiversity focal area, 6 in land degradation and sustainable forest management focal areas; five in the climate change focal area; 2 in the chemicals focal area; 2 in international waters focal area and 2 were multifocal (these focal areas are expanded in section 1.2 above). The total grant amount issued in OP5 to the SGP was US\$1,600,000.

The projects had achieved various successes, including upscaling and replicating these effective activities to other regions and facilitating knowledge exchanges between communities. In KwaZulu-Natal, five communities gained valuable knowledge on agro-ecology approaches from Biowatch, which tapped into indigenous knowledge systems to improve the communities' food security. In the Southern Cape where farmers are involved in agro-ecology projects, the integrated community development plan produced by Southern Cape Land Committee (SCLC) is being implemented in various sectors in other municipalities in Eastern and Southern Cape.

Climate change interventions have also made a mark in South Africa through SGP-funded projects. Renewable energy training and awareness raising reached over 10,000 people in rural and peri-urban communities. Successes in communities like Makgabetlwane, where Mmalerotha Farmers' Co-operative introduced biogas digesters to the community, have generated interest at the provincial government level where they want to replicate the project in other villages.

Another excellent initiative that is recognised at the national level is the work of the Flower Valley Conservation Trust, who are dedicated to conserving endangered Fynbos flower in the Western Cape, which forms part of a World Heritage Site – the Cape Floral Kingdom. They developed and implemented the Sustainable Harvesting Programme with various partners, as well as train up data collecting and monitoring skills of the local communities, which promotes citizen science.

These and many more SGP projects and programmes support the South African government's strategy to reduce poverty and create employment by developing low-income communities' economic opportunities in a diversified and sustainable manner through environmental conservation. SGP can play a vital role in realising the government's goals by focusing on specific components of projects that will complement and upscale these initiatives.

3. Projects

3.1 Guidelines for the sustainable use of fynbos species: Implementation of a code of practice and development of provincial regulations

Grantee partner	: Flower Valley Conservation Trust
Location	: Gaansbai, Western Cape Province
Grant allocated	: US\$35,000
Project period	: November 2012 – October 2015
Focal area	: Biodiversity
Project No.	: SAF/SGP/OP5/Y1/STAR/BD/12/06

Project background and description

The Agulhas Plain is a well-recognised biodiversity ‘hotspot’ and is home to biologically rich vegetation types, some of which are classified as threatened species due to unsustainable harvesting as a result of high demand of the Fynbos flower bouquets, poor agriculture harvesting practices and uncontrolled fires.



The Agulhas Plain is an important component of the Cape Floral Kingdom, the smallest and richest of the six plant kingdoms of the world. Sustainability Initiative of South Africa (SIZA) is globally recognised and allows suppliers and producers in agriculture to voluntarily participate in an ethical programme that provides the assurance to customers of compliance with international best practice standards. Aligned with SIZA and the Global Social Compliance Programme, the Flower Valley Conservation Trust (FVCT) developed the Sustainable Harvesting Programme’s (SHP) Code of Best Practice and Species Vulnerability Index that guides Fynbos harvesters and businesses on how to sustainably harvest in the delicate ecosystem. The GEF SGP funding supported the implementation the Agulhas Plain Field Monitoring Project, which is an integral part of the SHP that helped capacitate rural community members to gather data on Fynbos and monitor harvesting practices.

Achievements

- The project supported the development of an accredited course on Fynbos Ecology, Sustainable Harvesting and Research Monitoring
- Training of 28 (17 female & 11 male) field monitors, fynbos flower pickers and alien clearers. Field monitors were trained on how to use field guidelines for harvesting Fynbos, correct identification of harvestable plants & understanding basic taxonomy
- Field monitors were also trained and are now conducting field assessment to gauge level of compliance against the Code of Practice





- Project further identified and trained 20 (9 male & 11 female) field ‘Champions’ to lead each harvesting team for environmental monitoring as well as social and labour issues
- Capacity support to field monitors has helped reduce overharvesting and that the flowers are given sufficient time to rejuvenate before they are harvested again
- Sustainable Harvesting Programme gained support from Fynbos retailers like UK-based Marks & Spencer. The data collected by the field monitors helped improve scientific and community knowledge of the fynbos, and the clearing of invasive alien species also benefitted the delicate ecosystem.



Certified field monitors

3.2 Supporting Alternative Sustainable Livelihoods and Conservation of Natural Resources along the Rooibos Heritage Route, Greater Cederberg Biodiversity Corridor

Grantee partner	: Indigo Development & Change
Location	: Northern Cape and Western Cape Provinces
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project duration	: 04 June 2013 – 21 May 2015
Focal area	: Biodiversity
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y2/BD/12/14



Project Background & Description

The area around Nieuwoudtville is famous for its springtime flowers, but the area is also a big exporter of organic rooibos tea. One key objective of the Rooibos Heritage Route (RHR) is to support alternative livelihoods in order to conserve biodiversity on marginal farming areas. However, there is an urgent need to support the development of the capacities of small-scale farming families to provide eco-tourism services and facilities of a nature and standard that will attract a steady flow of clients

and provide a sustainable source of income year-round. The funding from GEF SGP was earmarked towards supporting indigenous small-scale rooibos farmers to diversify their income outside of harvesting season.

Achievements

- Infrastructure was provided to 5 eco-businesses along the route. This included upgrading of camp sites, installation of solar panels and upgrades.
- A map showcasing 28 interest points along the route was developed with active participation of the communities. Some of the areas were previously unknown or not open to the tourists
- 2 tour operators are now marketing the RHR to local and international tourists
- A website has been developed marketing various aspects of the route accessible on www.rooibosroute.co.za.
- 6 video stories on the RHR from the indigenous people were collected and are available on



the website www.rooibosroute.com/route/multi-media.html

- A Podcast was developed as an audio guide along the route were also collected including the cultural and historical aspects of Nieuwoudtville, Wupperthal and the areas along the route, as well as biophysical information including popular medicinal plants found on the route.
- The project has helped improve the environmental awareness for those travelling along the route and enhancing eco-tourism experiences as well as improved visitor numbers



Reitjieshuis Eco-lodge: One of the small ecotourism business that benefited from the project



Community mapping out potential places of interest for eco-tourists

3.3 Building Capacities of small-scale farmers to address land degradation and conserve biodiversity in productive landscapes in the Bokkeveld, Northern Cape

Grantee partner	: Environmental Monitoring Group
Location	: Nieuwoudtville, Northern Cape Province
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project duration	: June 2012 – June 2014
Focal area	: Land Degradation
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/Y1/STAR/LD/12/04

Project background

Land degradation is a major issue in South Africa, which can have a direct negative impact on food security. Only about 13.5% of South Africa's land surface area is considered arable or suitable for food production. Avontuur is a 1,300 hectares property on the northern Bokkeveld plateau, and this region represents all three major geological strata of the Bokkeveld - Table Mountain Sandstone, Dwyka Tillite and Dolerite - and supports three distinct vegetation types, namely Bokkeveld Sandstone, Nieuwoudtville Shale Renosterveld and Nieuwoudtville-Roggeveld Dolerite Renosterveld.

After 230 years of farming on Avontuur, grazing and agriculture has had a negative impact on its diverse flora, but large sections of the property retained its biodiversity, with 483 known species recorded there. The small-scale farmers required concrete examples of successful rehabilitation, soil control and sustainable land use interventions to enable them to learn and implement appropriate approaches and techniques. This created a unique platform for the Environmental Monitoring Group (EMG) to teach small-scale farmers in the Northern Cape area how to manage land sustainably and rehabilitate degraded lands so that long-term capability of farming can be boosted.



Soil erosion control training workshop with small-scale farmers

Achievements

The project has succeeded in ensuring effective management of erosion on 100 ha of severely degraded land and 400 ha of moderately degraded land on Avontuur using appropriate low-cost interventions.

- Capacities of 74 small-scale farmers from the Bokkeveld were developed in the course of the project, enabling them to practice sustainable land management on their farms and a further 16 farmers from Namaqualand engaged in learning activities on Avontuur in course of an exchange visit.
- 3 demonstration contour banks covering 1,500m were constructed in the Dobbelaarskop farm which was extensively eroded.
- Soil and water conservation demonstration activities and erosion control were undertaken on the Avontuur farm including the construction of 260 check dams & 110 micro-catchments, 6 gabions, surface remediation by means of geotextile & spreading of seeds and breakers on crusted soil.
- The control measures have resulted in plant re-growth and reduced soil and water runoff.



Vegetation establishing in sediment trapped by geotextile check dam

- Training workshops were with small-scale farmers including production of a video. As a result of the project, capacities of over 90 farmers were developed who are now practicing sustainable land management on their farms.
- The project also supported an exchange visit of 16 famers from Namaqualand who were engaged in learning activities on the Avontuur farm.
- The results of the project were published in a poster at the World Overview of Conservation Approaches and Technologies global meeting in Pretoria in 2014 and at the UNCCD COP11, and included in the book "Living Land" published by the UNCCD.
- The project developed a 10min educational film called '*Healing the Land*' refelecting the work of the project in Avontuur & Dobbelaarskop. The film is available on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U5WfbBI3FPo>
- EMG also created a mentorship programme for the Heiveld Co-operative, a collective of 64 organic rooibos farmers. The Cooperative now sells its organic rooibos tea to the local and international market and makes a profit of about ZAR500,000 annually. Heiveld Cooperative also received the UNDP Equator Initiative Award in 2014 for Sustainable Land Management.



Gabions erected in gullies to rehabilitate degraded land



Farmers implementing soil & water management interventions



Previously bare run-off area (plough furrow) re-vegetating after being secured with geotextile

3.4 Setsoto Adopt-a-River Project

Grantee partner	: Setsoto Women's Empowerment Group
Location	: Ficksburg, Free State
Grant allocated	: US\$35,000
Project duration	: July 2013 – July 2014
Focal area	: International Waters
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y2/IW/12/18

Project background

Polluted rivers plague many regions in the world. In South Africa, trash and chemicals in the water cause problems for those dependent on water sources like rivers, but now communities are coming together to help clean up their rivers, like the Setsoto Women's Empowerment Group from Ficksburg. They implemented the Setsoto Adopt-a-River Project in order to conserve the community's precious water resource. The project's main objective was to maintain the Caledon River's integrity, a water body which runs through Lesotho and South Africa. The river supplies water to Ficksburg and the Meqheleng community, however these communities' solid waste disposal, cattle grazing by the river banks, clothes-washing and sand mining in the Caledon River has negatively affected the water quality of the river. The Adopt-A-River programme raised awareness around cleaning and reclamation of the



Women cleaning up the Caledon River

river, as well as providing economic opportunities for community members, especially women, in the clean-up process. The health of the Caledon River is poor downstream

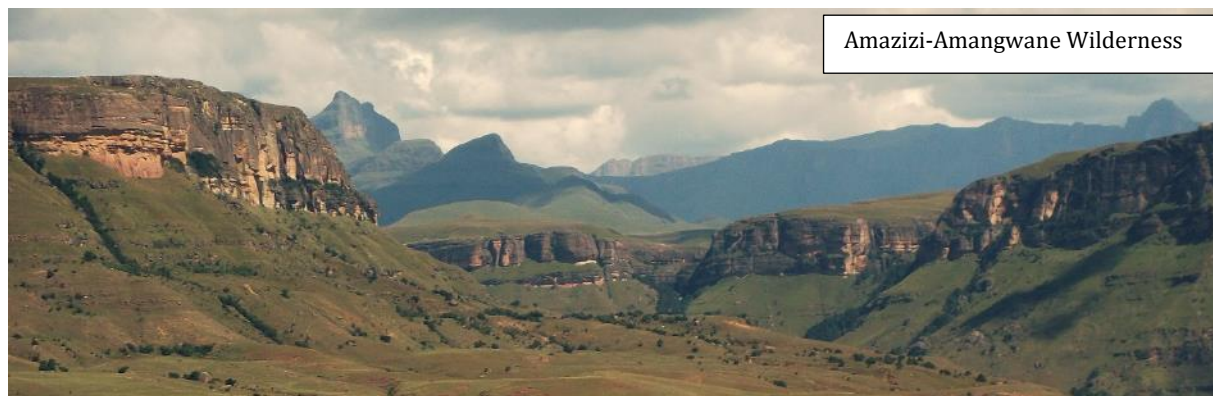
Achievements

- Project has grown to involve over 180 women from 10 women since 2012 who are now generating an income from clean-up activities in partnership with government's Extended Public Works Programme.
- Other income sources include sale of vegetables from their vegetable garden as well as sewing and pottery business. The group also makes furniture from alien plant trees removed along the river banks which they sell to schools and to the community. They are in the process of setting up a sustainable sand mining business to help generate income and curb illegal mining that damage the riverbanks.
- The women's group entered into an agreement with a recycling company which picks up the piled rubbish at a fee for recycling.
- Over 150 women in Setsoto received training on solid waste removal, handling of venomous snakes found in and around the river, first aid and occupational health.
- The group has received two awards from National Government – the Women in Water Award in 2012 and the Women in Environment Award in 2015.
- The group is also engaging with Lesotho partners upstream to lessen the burden of keeping the river clean



3.5 Amagugésizwe piloting cultural and nature-based tourism related economic opportunities in the Amazizi-Amangwane Community Conservation Area

Grantee partner	: Wilderness Action Group
Location	: AmaZizi & AmaNgwane villages, KwaZulu-Natal Province
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project duration	: December 2013 – December 2014
Focal area	: Biodiversity
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y3/BD/13/06



Amazizi-Amangwane Wilderness

Background

Local community members are the main users and guardians of the world's ecosystems, and it is important for them to be part of the environmental decision-making concerning their land use and protection of ecological and cultural values. Adjacent to the Maloti-Drakensberg Transfrontier World Heritage Site (WHS) in KwaZulu-Natal, the Amaguge'sizwe (Treasure of the Nation) Project was implemented by Wilderness Action Group in partnership with Ezemvelo KZN Wildlife in the 45,000 hectare Community Conservation Area (CCA) of AmaZizi-AmaNgwane, an area known as the "*Landscape of Ancestors*" due to the spiritual significance attached to the land by the communities. The project aimed to contribute to the sustainable management of the CCA to ensure that it retains its biodiversity and ecosystem functionality, while also generating economic benefits for the local communities through initiation of a nature-based and cultural tourism initiative. The project was also aimed at establishing the CCA as a Community Nature Reserve.



Rock art site open to the public

Key activities

Environmental monitoring and ecotourism courses were offered to community members, which included the identification of potential hiking trails and other cultural experiences. Participants involved in environmental monitoring also updated maps of the area and clean-up and on-going protection of the area's famous rock art was also implemented. To involve youth in the process, cultural and rock art posters were produced and sent to school to raise awareness on the importance of protecting these cultural heritage sites. The project helped to establish and stabilise hiking trails in the region, which generates income for the local community and makes the area more appealing to

tourists. The Thandanani Craft Centre also received support from the project and were able to produce and sell their craftwork not to only visiting tourists but also the international market.

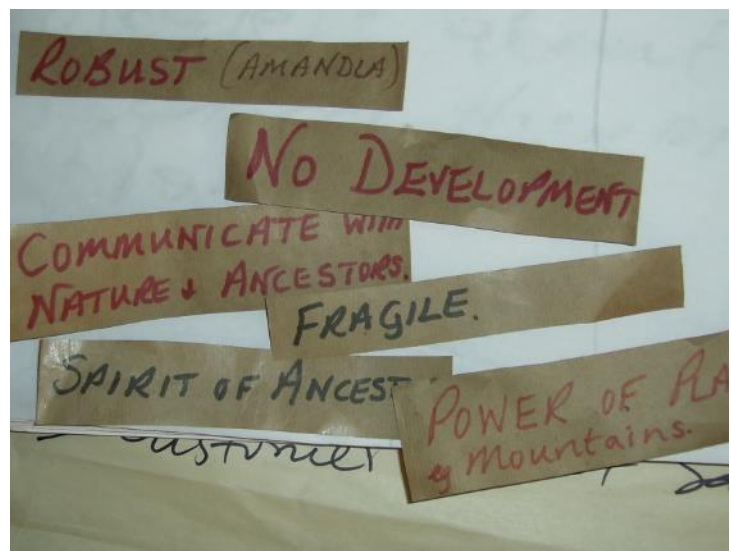
Project achievements



Basket weaving at the Thandanani Craft Centre

- The project has contributed to the recognition of the importance of this area at a national level as a Strategic Ecological Infrastructure Project, within which it is the highest priority for investment in the country.
- A concept development plan was developed with the support of the project outlining community tourism development opportunities inherent in the landscape. These included not only state and private tourism facilities, but also communal tourism facilities such as the Thandanani Craft Centre which received support from the project. 55 women who produce and sell their craftwork not only to visiting tourists but also to the international market which helps generate an income for them
- 8 trails (11km) incorporating a range of overnight hikes, day walks and cultural tourism opportunities were initiated by the project in the CCA and are now being marketed by a tourism agency at www.maloti-drakensberg.co.za

- Path maintenance and stabilisation of 8 hiking trails has set a standard for future trail maintenance and management within the CCA in future with rock art monitoring. This included construction of water barriers, stone-retaining walls, stone packing dongas to encourage re-vegetation. 19 women and 16 men worked on these activities which generated livelihood benefits during the project for local communities through temporary incomes
- A Stewardship and Conservation Agreement spanning the 2 traditional authorities of AmaZizi and AmaNgwane for a Community Nature Reserve is in the process of being finalised.
- Community benefits from the project included, inter alia improved awareness & skills on natural resource management as well as financial relief for approximately 234 families as one breadwinner per family worked on the project
- Outreach to 8 schools in the area has highlighted the importance of an integrated and holistic approach in the management of the CCA



3.6 Supporting small-scale farmers in South Africa to become more seed, food and nutritionally secure and more resilient to climate change, through enhanced seed and food diversity and the application of local knowledge systems

Grantee partner	: Biowatch South Africa
Location	: 5 villages in KwaZulu-Natal Province (Ingwavuma, KwaNgwanase, Mtubatuba, Pongola and Tshaneni)
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project Duration	: March 2015 – October 2016
Focal area	: Climate Change Adaptation, Biodiversity
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y4/BD/14/01



Agro-ecological garden thriving in a drought-stricken area declared as unsuitable for agricultural production

Project background

In northern KwaZulu-Natal, agro-ecology combined with indigenous knowledge systems has had a significant impact on food security in this drought-stricken area. Seed Knowledge Initiative (SKI) by Biowatch is an adaptation measure which focuses on securing seed & food sovereignty for small-scale farmers. This method promotes the establishment of communal and household food gardens filled with a variety of vegetables and fruits. Thus people develop the capability to grow their own organic food, sell it to local retailers and community members and feed their families. The concept also encourages small-scale farmers to diversify crops for increased productivity. As an alternative to conventional agriculture, it works with nature instead of against it. Biowatch is implementing this initiative in five small-scale farmer communities in KwaZulu-Natal, where they provide support to more than 200 farmers to become more seed, food and nutritionally secure, and thus more resilient to climate change.

Key activities

Biowatch has hosted several workshops since 2009 to teach small-scale traditional farmers in five communities, on best practices and how to establish household seed banks. The seeds can be sold or used to replenish food gardens during droughts. The project has also facilitated knowledge-sharing with



Project beneficiary who now sells her organic vegetables to local retailers

international experts and exchange visits with other areas in the region. Several women in the community have established household food gardens using agro-ecological methods, including setting up seed banks through seed selection and exchange. Agro-ecological practices were strengthened through training regarding food plot design, seed plots, swales and building soil fertility. Biowatch and the communities organised a World Food Day event where farmers could discuss their farming practices and receive training on leadership, policy-making and building the agro-ecology movement.

Project achievements

- The project supported 250 farmers (232 women, 18 men) reaching to over 1250 people in the 5 villages. Majority of beneficiaries were women, who through the sale of their extra vegetable crops make an additional income of an estimated US\$800 a year, which also helps improve household food security

Project beneficiary with her household seed bank.



- The project initiated a voluntary compliance scheme on agro-ecology farmers set up by the farmers who committed themselves to the following standards: no synthetic fertilisers, no synthetic pesticides, no GMOs, having fertility beds, using grey water and practicing mulching. Thus far, 48 farmers have received the “I am an AE farmer” pledging to comply with these standards.
- Adherence to the standard is monitored by a team which consists of the individual farmer, a neighbouring farmer and the Biowatch Farmer Support Officer. The development and implementation of voluntary agroecology (AE) compliance has been a vehicle to deepen AE practices and facilitate farmer-to-farmer sharing and learning
- 230 of the 250 farmers have established household seed banks and 48 farmers have more than 14 seed

varieties

- A series of exchange visits, farmer development trainings, events including hosting seed rituals and World Food Day all contribute in capacitating the farmers, and help deepen and spread the knowledge on AE
- The project was upscaled by turning the established sites into learning platforms, increasing the project’s longevity and promoting information sharing within the communities.
- Some of the farmers have been able to harvest crops and save their seeds despite the drought experienced in the area.
- Partnership has been established with the University of KwaZulu Natal to help support a farmer-led research study in the area on farmers’ AE experiences. 3 sites in Tshaneni and Pongola have been identified for this study.



Civil Society Alternative Programme people's march during the 2015 World Food Congress

3.7 Makgabetlwane Village Biogas Project

Grantee	: Maleroba Farmers Co-op
Location	: Makgabetlwane Village, North-West Province
Grant allocated	: USD50, 000
Project Duration	: September 2013 – October 2014
Focal area	: Climate Change mitigation
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y3/CC/13/02

Background

To mitigate climate change, access to low carbon energy is important in alleviating dependency on expensive non-renewable energy, especially in impoverished rural communities. In the Northwest, addressing these issues produced a biogas programme with economic co-benefits that included employment creation and income generation. With electricity tariffs on the increase in the country, this project has helped save the beneficiaries' incomes for other household expenses. The Biogas Project was introduced to the village of Makgabetlwane through the Maleroba Farmers' Co-operative who use the fertiliser, a by-product generated from these biogas digesters, on their vegetable crops. The biogas digesters use cow dung and other organic waste to generate methane gas mainly for cooking.



Household biogas digester

Key activities

The Co-operative operates from an empty school where there is ample water and the community has free access to it for their households and livestock. Biogas digesters were installed at the school as well as at individual households, where they are used for cooking and the by-product used for fertilising their food gardens. Members of the community were also trained up in the installation of the digesters so that more could be installed after the project was completed. Cow dung collection was setup at a Co-op members' cattle kraals and a green energy and climate change awareness campaign was launched in the village. This would mean people would be more conscious about their energy consumption and reduce the dependency on fossil fuels.

Achievements

- 11 biogas digesters were installed in 10 households and in 1 school and by using the methane gas for cooking, an estimated US\$5 a week is saved on prepaid electricity.
- 15 people including women and youth gained skills in tunnel farming which produces vegetables sold to the local community and retailer for an income. The slurry from the digester is used as manure for the communal vegetable garden.



Communal vegetable garden using biogas digester slurry as manure

- The Cooperative gained technical skills on the installation and maintenance of the biogas digester from a service provider and are now capable of doing the installation and maintenance on their own which is helping them generate an income.
- The project generated an interest from the provincial government who had interest in replicating this project to other villages.
- The Cooperative secured 0.2 hectares of land from the tribal authority to establish other vegetable tunnels using agro-ecological farming methods.

3.8 A Demonstration Project Developing the Capacities of Rural Women to Operate Decentralized Solar Electrification

Grantee partner	: All for Africa Foundation
Location	: Barberton, Mpumalanga Province
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project duration	: 02 May 2013 – 30 November 2014
Focal Area	: Climate Change mitigation
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y2/CC/12/16

Project background

South Africa's national energy policy promotes renewable energy as a sustainable and efficient source of energy. Renewable energy is important in terms of alleviating energy poverty, encouraging economic competitiveness and being environmentally sustainable. Low-income communities suffer from the unavailability and unreliability of electricity flow, which leads to household purchases of paraffin and kerosene lamps and candles, increasing the risk of fires. Not only does this pose a health risk and is detrimental to the environment, the ability of students to study and complete homework after school is negatively impacted. All for Africa Foundation (AFAF) set out to train rural women on solar electrification which would provide cleaner energy to their communities, build capacity, generate an income for themselves and operate a decentralized solar electrification system on a semi-commercial basis. As part of this vision, AFAF implemented a SGP demonstration project in rural Sinqobile Township and Fairview Primary School in



7kWh Solar Panels installed at the Fairview Primary School

Barberton, Mpumalanga Province.

Key activities

Community members and school teachers took part in entrepreneurship training hosted by AFAF, which included training on how to install, operate and other technical aspects of solar energy. At Fairview Primary School in Barberton, the Africa Foundation installed 7kWh solar panels that now saves the school money on electricity bills and prevents power outages during school time. The clean energy powers the computer and science labs, as well as the school library. 250 learners from grades 4 to 6 were taught about solar energy and solar electrification, which they could refer to during their lessons. As part of the National Development Plan for job creation, one of AFAF's other objectives was to develop Small, Medium and Micro-Sized Enterprises (SMMEs) that will be able to market, sell, install, service and maintain solar products.



Project achievements

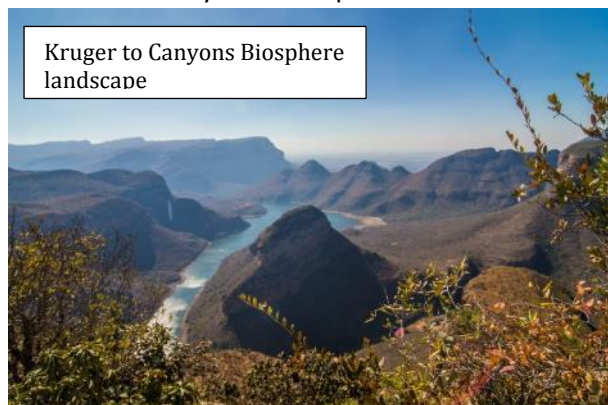
- Since the installation of the solar panels at the school, they have been able to save over US\$75 per month on electricity bills
- Solar kits were distributed to 38 women, which led to the project producing 15 female solar entrepreneurs, who have been thoroughly trained and are now generating income from selling solar products within their communities on a commercial basis, as well as supporting their installation
- Along with capacity development, other immediate benefits include the development of a sustainable commercial model for rural solar entrepreneurship for which a supply chain, product distribution and support network has been established.
- The 22 teachers of Fairview Primary School increased their knowledge on solar energy in order to coordinate the “School Light Competition”.
- The school which used to face power outages, now has a constant supply of electricity for their laboratory, library and computer centre.

3.9 Pilot approaches to demonstrate support of improved livelihoods and resilient economic development through improved conservation, land-use management and protected area expansion: a replicable model

Grantee partner	: Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region
Location	: Limpopo and Mpumalanga Provinces
Grant allocated	: US\$150,000 (strategic grant)
Project duration	: July 2013 – June 2015
Focal area	: Biodiversity and Land Degradation
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y2/SP/12/11

Project background

On the border of Kruger National Park, the Kruger to Canyons Biosphere Region is a coordinated effort by multiple partners to bolster protected area networks. These networks share their benefits with the local community who help assist in natural resource management. Not only does it improve



Kruger to Canyons Biosphere landscape

conservation and biodiversity, the partnerships also provide economic opportunities to its community partners, promoting partnership between community groups and conservation authorities through a systematic and participatory approach. The SGP funding co-financed the following ongoing activities with the landscape; deployment of environmental monitors, livestock health, traditional healers' medicinal plant harvesting and alien bush clearing initiatives.

Key activities

The protected area estate was expanded through biodiversity stewardship agreements and protected area biodiversity and ecosystem services were improved through sustainable livelihood strategies. Capacity development was completed through the training of communities to value biodiversity and ecosystem services, and K2C helped set up equitable governance structures to access benefits of wildlife economy. Knowledge was shared between the various pilot sites in the Biosphere region, as well as with additional sites within the broader wildlife economy. The governance structures established at a local and bioregional level could participate in governmental strategies and processes, as well as access further resources and opportunities in the conservation industry. Sustainable harvesting methods for medicinal plants were taught to and implemented by traditional practitioners, who also acted as monitors for conservation authorities to help stem illegal harvesting.



Medicinal plants for traditional healers' nursery

Project achievements

- A bio-cultural protocol was developed to which traditional healers adhere to when harvesting medicinal plants and can be used to negotiate with conservation authorities
- The project helped support the completion of the traditional healers' license for traditional medicine harvesting with Mariepskop State Forest. The healers have also acquired 10 hectares of land at Share Village where they started an indigenous medicinal tree planting project in

Bush clearing team supported by the project



that land

- The project has laid out a solid foundation for ensuring project sustainability through other initiatives such the full-sized GEF Protected Areas Project and the DEA Wildlife Economy and Community Adaptation Fund
- About 60 new employment opportunities were created and about 1,250 hectares were cleared from alien plant infestation. This was achieved mainly with support from government funding to which SGP contributed to.
- Project experiences are now being replicated in other

sites in Mpumalanga, Limpopo and Mozambique

3.10 Securing local food sovereignty and enhancing climate resilience through ensuring the custodianship and access of local communities to biodiversity and healthy ecosystems

Grantee partner	: Mupo Foundation
Location	: Vhembe, Limpopo Province
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project duration	: November 2012 – May 2015
Focal area	: Biodiversity conservation & Climate Change
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/Y1/STAR/BD/12/02

Background

The Venda people from Limpopo have always had a close relationship to nature. In their sacred indigenous forests, some of which are surrounded by tea plantations, they connect with their ancestors and nature. The sites have also become a hotspot for eco-tourism due to their ecological diversity. Community monitoring and eco-cultural mapping of these sacred sites (*zwifho* in Venda) ensures



Traditional dancers and beneficiaries from Dzomo la Mupo

people do not overharvest indigenous plants for medicinal use, fruits or for firewood. Communication with the plantation owners also provides access to their sacred sites. The Mupo Foundation started a community-based organisation *Dzomo la Mupo* which aims to secure local food sovereignty and enhanced climate resilience through ensuring that custodianship and access to biodiversity-rich sites were in the hands of local communities, tapping into their indigenous knowledge systems.

Key activities

Communities received training on, eco-calendar mapping and environmental monitoring, agro-ecology including the establishment of household seed banks and indigenous tree nurseries. Paralegal training and government engagement workshops were hosted to strengthen the leadership roles of women and give communities a voice in policymaking.

To enhance food sovereignty and climate adaptation measures, 4 more workshops were conducted to revive and strengthen local traditional seed exchange systems; developing eco-cultural calendars and developing a monitoring and evaluation system to monitor progress and development of the seed programme. There was a visit in Chikukwa village in the eastern part of Zimbabwe and the purpose of the visit was to train farmers on permaculture, innovative methods, food-forests and landscape re-generation. Lastly, an organisational workshop was conducted which aimed at strengthening the capacity at all levels of the organisation, from administration to management.



Indigenous tree from the sacred forest

Achievements

- In consultation with 10 traditional clans, the organisation helped to upgrade 3 sacred natural sites (Guvhukuvhu, La Nwadzongolo, Thathe and Vhutanda) from provincial status to national status with the South African Heritage Resources Agency (SAHRA). 4 additional clans also submitted registration of their sacred sites.



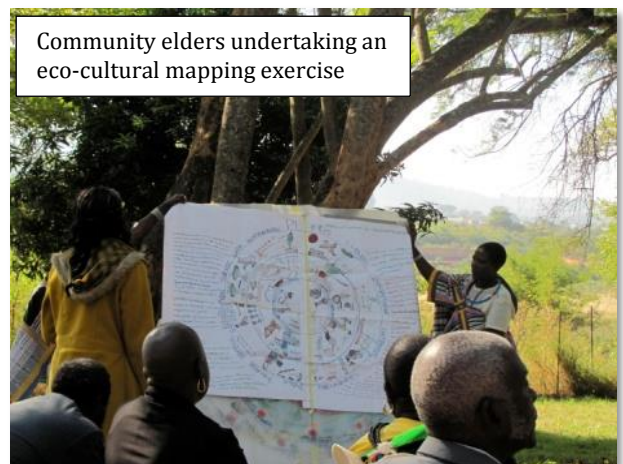
One of the project beneficiaries in her indigenous plant tree nursery

- Women who set up food gardens and indigenous tree nurseries are generating an average monthly income of US\$250 per month from the sale of vegetables and tree sales.

- 3 indigenous tree nurseries with a diversity of 5,630 indigenous tree seedlings and 72 indigenous species were set up, and 4,922 trees were distributed to 10 regional schools, provincial and local government departments, municipalities, chiefs' homesteads and private households. Some trees were planted in sacred sites, wetlands and degraded areas

- Women who started and are continuing with the agro-ecological food gardens and indigenous tree nursery program are generating an average monthly income of R2 500.00 per month from selling trees and surplus crops,
- Some farmers no longer have to buy the maize and vegetables from the shops as they enough harvest of healthy produce for the entire year. Increased crop and vegetable harvests have enabled some families to send their children to school from the money they get from selling trees
- In 2013, Ms. Mphatheleni Makaulule founder of Mupo Foundation received a Global Leadership Award by the International Indigenous Women's Forum.

Mphatheleni also works with the *Dzomo la Mupo* CBO to protect sacred forests and preserve local seed varieties in order to secure food sovereignty.



Community elders undertaking an eco-cultural mapping exercise

3.11 Camdeboo Satellite Aquaculture Project

Grantee partner	: Camdeboo Women's Trust
Location	: Graaff-Rienet, Eastern Cape Province
Grant allocated	: US \$50,000
Project period	: December 2009 – December 2011
Focal area	: Biodiversity conservation
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP4/Y3/RAF/2009/06

Background



The Camdeboo Women's Trust (CWT) was formed in 2009 to develop market-driven, entrepreneurial initiatives to address social problems in the Camdeboo. The CWT aims to facilitate the training and capacity-building of the rural women who would operate and ultimately participate as partners in commercial and profitable businesses. The Camdeboo Satellite Aquaculture Project (CSAP), which started out as a hobby, is currently the flagship project of the CWT, a fish production initiative that breeds and sells fish for canning. Wild fish stocks in the country have been severely depleted, and not only does this project lessen that burden on overfishing by breeding catfish, the high nutritional value of fish will also contribute to food security in South Africa. The project has helped create employment opportunities for the people of Graaff-Rienet, an area plagued by high levels of unemployment.

Key Activities

The project first went through a design phase which created the building blocks for the venture, which included environmental authorisation, aquaculture system design, formulation of a training plan, setting up an operations manual, marketing plan and a business plan. They were also approached by Nampak Packaging to can their product as their own fish stock in the wild have been severely depleted. With the help of SGP funding, CSAP then implemented a 14-month training course that was inclusive of basic education, life skills, personal finance, basic business understanding, aquaculture/vocational training and computer skills. Fourteen individuals were trained to operate the new aquaculture facility and partook in intensive aquaculture training courses.



Achievements

- 14 rural women who received the aquaculture training now have the necessary skills to operate the aquaculture system as well as start their own satellite aquaculture systems. Thus includes water quality analysis, feeding, health management, equipment care, fish movement and stock management



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- The training was registered a formal training with the Agriculture Sector Education and Training Authority (AgriSETA) to ensure that the successful trainees would receive credits towards a higher qualification
- The training has helped support the training of trainers, with the more experienced trainees now supervising and training the new training entrants
- CSAP undertook market research for processing of their fish products which are now being packaged and sold to the local and international market

• This project has attracted funding support from the Industrial Development Cooperation (IDC) of over R23mill for the construction of a catfish processing factory. Other funding support has been received from the Development Bank of Southern Africa (DBSA) Green Fund, the Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (DAFF), the Eastern Cape Development Cooperation (ECDC) as well as the Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP).



Fish products produced by the project and now sold to the market

3.12 Developing a Fynbos Honey Cooperative Enterprise in the Fynbos biome

Grantee partner	: Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve
Location	: Southern Cape & Western Cape Provinces
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project duration	: May 2012 – November 2014
Focal area	: Biodiversity
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/Y2/STAR/BD/12/09

Background



The Gouritz Cluster Biosphere Reserve (GCBR) is considered a region of major biodiversity significance for the planet, so much so that UNESCO designated the GCBR as South Africa's seventh biosphere reserve. This region includes 18 formally protected areas as part of the Cape Floral Region Protected Areas (CFRPA) World Heritage Site. In partnership with *Why Honey* and SGP, GCBR implemented a project aimed to empower emerging beekeepers, contribute to their sustainable livelihoods, raise awareness in the surrounding communities and contribute to research on the impact of beekeeping on Fynbos ecology. The initiative is the first project to market Fair Trade honey from the local vegetation on a commercial scale and is thereby contributing to community engagement and empowerment

Key Activities

A hive factory was established to manufacture high quality standard bee hives and to provide training to emerging beekeepers. This factory was especially important due to the lack of production capacity for small-scale bee hive manufacturers. The hives produced were issued 'on loan' to the participating beekeepers until they demonstrated their ability and commitment to manage their swarms properly. This project allowed for *Why Honey* to establish a fully operational hive factory, along with trained staff, in Knysna, Western Cape. To raise awareness, *Why Honey* distributed displays to regional shows and festivals to highlight the message of environmentally sustainable beekeeping practices to the public. A formal presentation was given at the Gouritz Forum in Oudtshoorn, while *Why Honey* was also invited by the exclusive Gondwana Game Reserve to assist in setting up a hives on the reserve to generate interest from their visitors.



Training of beekeepers on the use of beekeeping equipment

Achievements

- Project supported *Why Honey?* to produce a total of 360 hives for project beneficiaries. This included 60 catch hives, 125 brood hives and 175 supers

- 12 small-scale beekeepers were identified and trained on technical and practical aspects of beekeeping as well as entrepreneurship skills. They were also provided with protective clothing, smoker, fire blankets, fire extinguisher, hive tools and beehives



Protective clothing
provided to beekeepers

- The beekeepers are currently practicing beekeeping as part of their income generation and continue to receive mentorship support

- Partnerships with private land owners, Knysna Municipality and Eden District Municipality established to secure access to land where the hives can be placed and where suitable forage for bees is available. Some beekeepers have secured contracts with landowners and municipalities as service providers to do bee removals, another income source for them.

- Partnership with the Agricultural Research Council (ARC) was forged to undertake an audit of the hives and bee-keeping practices.
- Beekeeping guidelines were developed to ensure that the practices are environmentally friendly and sound bee management practices were introduced to improve the health of bee colonies and to prevent overstocking of veld areas where they forage
- The project won a UNEP/UNDP/IUCN SEED Award in 2011 for small-scale sustainable enterprise development



Hives produced from the
project supported factory

3.13 Strengthening rural livelihoods and conserving biodiversity through sustainable small-scale agriculture

Grantee partner	: Southern Cape Land Committee Trust
Location	: Western, Southern and Eastern Cape Provinces
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project duration	: August 2013 – December 2014
Focal area	: Climate change adaptation and Biodiversity
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y3/BD/13/04

Project Background

The Southern Cape Land Committee Trust (SCLC) was established in 1987 in response to the threatened forced removal of the community of Lawaaiikamp in George under the Apartheid government. A group



No-dig method of making beds

of activists, churches and anti-Apartheid organisations supported the Lawaaiikamp community's struggle to resist the removals. Today, SCLC is an NGO providing land rights advisory services, assistance and education to farmers and people in rural areas. One of the challenges faced by farmers was access to and sustainable management of commonage land. SCLC aims to build alternatives to agrarian transformation by supporting clusters of emerging farmers, ecological food producers and farm dwellers in challenging the current agricultural paradigm, enhancing capacity for local agro-ecological production, and promoting joint

systems through agricultural co-operatives.

Key Activities

Individuals from the community were trained in agro-ecological food production, free range livestock, poultry production, developing community nurseries, and health and safety issues that comply with necessary legislation. Information on global warming, geology of the Karoo and environmental legislation were distributed. Small-scale farmers attended a number of events to promote agro-ecological production, share knowledge, exchange seeds, and encourage networking. Two agricultural hubs were developed that provided up-scaling opportunities, joint marketing and sharing of equipment and seeds to small-scale farmer associations. Commonage land was rehabilitated in three rural municipalities and protected through multi-stakeholder involvement in the enforcement of equitable land use plans and management systems. Forty small-scale farmers from Central Karoo, along with the Legal Resources Centre, attended a workshop to develop some model commonage agreements that these farmers can use to negotiate with municipalities.



Farmers visit a household agro-ecological garden in George, Western Cape

Achievements

- The project reached 42 groups of agro-ecological producers representing 480 producers (234 women and 246 men). This is an increase of 19 agro-ecological producer groups and 295 additional producers. There are now 37 small-scale farmer associations with 667 farmers (184

Free-range organic eggs



women and 483 men). This is an increase of 2 farmer associations and an additional 238 farmers over the 16 months of project implementation.

- 17 small-scale farmer associations registered as co-operatives, which strengthened their network.
- More small-scale farmer associations became linked to municipal forums, expanding them as well as form a new one – the Central Karoo Emergent Farmers – which represents 59 farmers
- Project contributed to improving access to healthy food for more than 500 rural families, and has helped generated income through sale of surplus produce.
- 230 producers have secured stipends through government's Extended Public Works Programme (EPWP) which is an injection of cash into poor communities and some of the producers are investing part of the stipend into their production sites.
- The existing agro-ecological sites have expanded with some acquiring poultry and livestock; others have increased the number of agro-ecological methods employed including community nurseries and worm farms.
- All project sites are now collecting some seed to challenge the domination of the seed markets. Traditional seeds are preserved, and producers are collecting and exchanging seeds
- 9 small-scale farmer associations entered into longterm (9 years 11 months) commonage land use agreements with 2 municipalities (8 in Hessequa Municipality and 1 for the emergent farmers in the Laingsburg Municipality). This is the first time these municipalities have signed long-term lease agreements with small-scale farmers

Medicinal herbs



Vegetable seeds



3.14 Practical Action to Connect Ecosystem Conservation & Livelihood Improvement in the Mpumalanga Lakes District

Grantee partner	: Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT)
Location	: Chrissiesmere, Mpumalanga Province
Grant allocated	: US\$50,000
Project duration	: March 2014 – February 2015
Focal area	: Biodiversity Conservation
Project number	: SAF/SGP/OP5/STAR/Y3/LD/13/07

Project Background

EWT addresses key threats to biodiversity and develops methodologies and best practice guidelines that lead to harmonious co-existence of people and wildlife in the same landscapes. Since 2010, EWT's African Cane Conservation Programme (ACCP) has undertaken conservation outreach programmes in the Mpumalanga Lakes District to sensitise local communities on key environmental challenges in the area. The main focus was on highlighting the threats to cranes and wetlands and how they are linked to landscape management and socio-economic activities. Although the project was successful in reaching out to schools, EWT had to identify strong social components to enable more local stakeholder groups to participate in project activities. Following a community needs assessment and wide stakeholder consultation with government, local communities and farms, the following environmental challenges were jointly identified: water pollution, littering, invasion of grasslands & wetlands by alien wattle tree.



Engaging learners as part of Wetlands Day celebrations

Project activities

The project held meetings with local leaders (ward councillors & youth leaders), school principals, ecotourism business operators, Msukaligwa Local Municipality & Departments of Agriculture, Rural Development & Environment to create a platform for collective environmental problem analysis and planning. Six school gardens were identified in partnership with agricultural extension officers, as demonstration plots on how to mitigate frost impacts, lack of water for irrigation & hailstorms. A



School learners in front of their vegetable garden

manual was developed on how to grow leafy vegetables in different seasons was developed. Equipment was supplied to these gardens. 7 youths were trained to be nature guides in partnership with Birdlife South Africa. The project also supports the setting up of a communal vegetable garden in Lothair in partnership with Communal Works Programme. A craft-making and tailoring project was revised in KwaChibikhulu Township. A clean-up campaign was organised 4 waste recycling points were established in Chrissiesmere.

Achievements

- Project helped create linkages between groups/ institutions that were weak or non-existent before 2014



Tailoring project products

- Six 400m² vegetable gardens were established at schools to provide supplementary food for learners and help them appreciate the benefits of sustainable utilisation of soil & water resources. Vegetables planted include cabbage, spinach, beans and pumpkins benefitting over 500 learners. The 6 gardens established are now being used as practical models for educating learners about the impact of environment on food production

- A 625m² community garden established in Lothair benefits 25 household as well as orphans

from the townships

- A craft and tailoring venture in KwaChibikhulu Township that was dormant was revived after project members discussed the challenges and solutions to revive the project. The craft centre is now supporting a group of 35 community members (27 women & 8 men) by producing material from waste which is sold mainly to tourists visiting the area, thereby helping to generate an income. They also use alien invasive wattle tree to produce crafts.
- 4 recycling points were set up in Chriessiesmere collecting glass, cans and plastics in separate bins. A recycling company in Ermelo was approach and made a commitment to collect the waste and pay the community for the volumes collected.
- A borehole was drilled for Injomane community and a hand-pumping mechanism fitted. This provides water for 50 households as well as 35 school children in Injomane Promary School. It will also supply water for irrigating the school vegetable garden and household backyard gardens. Previously the community depended on water ferried 18 km away.
- The project also supported the distribution of frost nets to 6 schools to help reduce impact of frosts on vegetable gardens during winter. Also distributed at the schools were waste recycling bins
- 7 youth were trained on nature guides and provided with binoculars and bird identification guide for their practical sessions. The training will help them to be employed by local eco-tourism operators.



New borehole for Injomane community

4. Challenges and Lessons Learnt

The GEF SGP projects have provided many key lessons that will be utilised in future operational phases of the GEF SGPOP6 projects and will help in the upscaling, replication and mainstreaming of these projects so that they may benefit other parts of the country, and the world.

4.1 Capacity development

Capacity development of small community organisations in project development and monitoring of project performance and results is a challenge. Training is needed by CBOs on proposal writing, financial management as well as monitoring & evaluation. Grant application process for organisations without prior experience of funding poses a daunting task for them. In smaller organisations, particularly those based in rural areas, the small project staff assume different roles and thus find it difficult to add a responsibility of seeking new and/or additional funding. Further to this are the challenges linked to grant funding requirements during project implementation such as monitoring and reporting on project progress and reporting on finances. It is therefore critical that CBOs partner with and NGO who can capacitate and mentor them in proposal writing, monitoring as well as grant management.



Biowatch farmer training on the biodiversity wheel

4.2 Unique strengths of small community organisations



Community members erect a sign for the protection of their cultural heritage site

It is important to acknowledge that despite the capacity constraints experienced by smaller organisations, their accomplishments and commitment to garnering community trust, building community networks and providing local communities a space to voice their opinions and be heard, are quite inspiring. As much as some community based organisations struggle with reporting on their work, the implementation on the ground is usually remarkable.

4.3 Project sustainability

The sustainability of achievements of small grants projects is often questioned because of the short-term nature of the grants and uncertainty of follow-up financing and support. Small grant activities that are directly linked either to existing larger projects or receive larger co-financing contributions enjoy better support and have better chances for being sustainable beyond the small grant activities. However, it is important to note that working with low-capacity and under-



Aquaculture project in the Eastern Cape received huge funding support from numerous partners after SGP support

served rural communities perceived as high-risk has enabled some small CBOs who gained project implementation experience and capacity to mobilise additional and larger funding from other donors.

4.4 Projects take into account the demands of communities

Some of the projects struggled to adequately achieve the anticipated results mainly due to the failure of the project proponent in taking into account the demand of the target communities. This happens when little effort is made to mobilise communities beforehand and are then not included in the planning or design of a project. Capacity and training support that does not correspond to a community priority or demand will most likely dampen the level of community participation and thus jeopardise the results of the project.

4.5 Hands-on training

Awareness campaigns alone do not help instigate change in communities. Building capacity and skills through experiential training and ‘learning by doing’ improves community members’ understanding of the project and its aims to conserve nature and build livelihoods. The tangible results of the project need to be linked to capacity development, and projects need to expand their focus from raising awareness to include hands-on training.



4.6 Economic and Social Co-benefits

Communities become more active in environmental conservation when they see and experience economic and livelihood benefits that stem from environmental benefits. Selling organically grown vegetables, craftworks, non-timber forest products and recycled products are some of the economic co-benefits that can result from a conservation project. Other socio-economic co-benefits can come in the form of clean water from river clean-up projects and reduced electricity costs when energy efficiency or renewable technologies are introduced to a community. These are immediate benefits that the community can see and provides more incentive for communities to be involved in conservation efforts.

Wider adoption of smaller projects remains a global challenge, and SGP has the opportunity to expand on providing funding to projects, but to also be involved in scaling up and replicating successful projects and promote community involvement in policy-making that impact on environmental conservation issues. By linking small projects to bigger projects when scaling up, their sustainability is strengthened and ensures longevity of the projects’ successes.

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