

CEPF SMALL GRANT FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Legal Name: Wilderness Foundation South Africa

Project Title (as stated in the grant agreement): *Empowering Local Communities along the Baviaanskloof Route: Training in Tourism and SMME development*

Implementation Partners for This Project: STTI services, Baviaans Local Municipality and Kouga Local Municipality

Project Dates (as stated in the grant agreement): December 1, 2006 – November 30, 2008

Date of Report (month/year): January 2009

II. OPENING REMARKS

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

In an attempt to reduce the pressures on the natural environment, the Wilderness Foundation (and specifically the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve Project Management Unit) identified a need to facilitate the socio-economic upliftment & development of local communities in the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve Project planning domain.

The concept foresaw the training of 50 local community members, in and around the Baviaanskloof, to facilitate an understanding of tourism as well as the development of small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME's) with the intention for them to tap into the tourism market associated with the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve.

The training was also be done in order to enable local community members to participate on the 7 local tourism routes developed by the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve Project Management Unit.

As a result, in 2006 with funding from CEPF, a 'Training in Tourism and SMME development project' was initiated as a means to empower local communities to participate in the Baviaanskloof Routes, in order to promote income generation opportunities and the facilitation of SMME development which in turn would alleviate the pressure for natural resource consumption within the planning domain.

III. NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

1. What was the initial objective of this project?

To train 50 local community members in and around the Baviaanskloof to

- facilitate that they get an understanding of what tourism is; and its associated benefits;
- introduce them to the concept of sustainable tourism
- provide them with basic information to start a small business; and

- introduce them to the concept of business planning in order for them to participate in the Tourism Routes linked to the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve.

It was envisaged that the training in turn would allow for income generation opportunities and contribute to livelihood options so that the pressure of harvesting natural resources within the Mega-reserve could be reduced.

2. Did the objectives of your project change during implementation? If so, please explain why and how.

NO

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

Training took place over a two year period as follows:

Training of local community members in -

- o 2007 - Gamtoos Valley Route, Steytlerville scenic route, Willowmore Gateway
- o 2008 - Baviaanskloof Heritage Route, Coastal Gateway and Western Gateway

Advertisements were placed locally and selection interviews were conducted by relevant PMU staff in conjunction with Tourism Officer and Municipal Councilor in the respective areas.

The modules covered included:

- o What is tourism
- o Sustainable tourism
- o Starting a small business
- o Introduction to business planning.

Certificates indicating that the candidates underwent training successfully were presented as part of ceremonies either linked to the municipality (e.g. Baviaans Local Municipality), or a specific ceremony arranged for certificate presentation (e.g. Gamtoos Valley Route).

Partnerships: the service of the firm STTI (Skills Training Through Integrated Services) was procured to provide the training and a good working relationship was developed with this service provider that has allowed for some trainees to be trained at a reduced rate.

Candidates were highly committed during the training and indicated that it was enlightening, motivational, practical and much needed in the region as local community members 'saw tourists coming and going' but did not know where to start to tap into the tourism market or start a small business.

In the Steytlerville Scenic Route and Willowmore Gateway, some participants formed partnerships and started small 'informal' businesses with skills they previously were not aware could be 'converted' into a business e.g. story telling, indigenous / local food catering, offering interpretive guided walks based on local knowledge and requesting a donation for guiding services rendered as well as playing music at functions.

In the Gamtoos Valley Route, Steytlerville Scenic Route, Baviaanskloof Heritage Route and Willowmore Gateway, some candidates started businesses on their own (not in partnership with others) e.g. business venture: selling clothes, sweets, etc., in their neighbourhood / area that they bought from the closest town, providing music at functions, etc.

In the Gamtoos Valley Route, Steytlerville Scenic Route, Willowmore Gateway and Coastal Gateway Routes, participants who had existing small informal businesses, e.g. catering, painting, woodworking, needlework, have started to manage their business in a more formal manner. The training allowed for candidates to understand the benefits of tourism and to identify innovative ways to tap into the tourism market (e.g. approaching private shop owners to display their wares in the shop).

Candidates with informal, more formal and specific skills (e.g. story telling, guided walks, indigenous catering services / takeaways) were linked to the relevant Tourism Routes associated with the Baviaanskloof Mega-reserve.

4. Did your team experience any disappointments or failures during implementation? If so, please explain and comment on how the team addressed these disappointments and/or failures.

NO, overall this project was highly successful as ultimately 70 individuals were trained as opposed to the 50 set as the original target.

There were, however, two challenges:

Training in the Gamtoos Valley: Employers were reluctant to give staff members leave to attend the training, even though the trained staff member would be able to add value to the business (especially a tourism business). As a result originally only 6 people were trained on this route. At a later stage, the Project Management Unit therefore identified a community project aimed at empowering women and after determining whether the women met the criteria, selected the entire group for training. This resulted in a total of 26 individuals being trained in this area. The women who started a craft project on their own have indicated that the training was invaluable as they have now positioned themselves to run their projects as a business.

Training envisaged in the Langkloof Route and Western Gateway: Training was not conducted on these routes as none of the candidates met the selection criteria. A minimum education level of grade 7 was a prerequisite for understanding business terms and calculations embedded in the training: Starting a small business and an Introduction into business planning.

5. Describe any positive or negative lessons learned from this project that would be useful to share with other organisations interested in implementing a similar project.

Positive lesson: Some local community members had skills (e.g. painting, sewing, knowledge about the local landscape and local uses for plants, etc.) that they took for granted and without the training they would not have realised that, if managed correctly, the skill has the potential to be an income generation opportunity.

Positive Lessons:

- For this kind of training when one selects unemployed people, they need to be equipped with an existing skill (e.g. woodworking) and be guided to convert that skill into a business.
- People who have already taken the initiative to start an informal business venture or individuals with a clear, concise and realistic idea of what they can or want to start in terms of a small business tend to be more confident as they can apply what they learn to their informal business or their business idea.
- Forging partnerships with local Tourism / Information offices when offering this training facilitates easier implementation of the project.
- Involving the relevant municipal officials in the process (e.g. interviews) could result in unexpected contributions to the training project (e.g. free venue, sponsored catering).

Negative lesson: Certain product owners i.e. guesthouses, restaurant owners or farm owners request that their staff receive training to add value to the service that their establishment can deliver as part of the existing tourism routes but are reluctant or simply not willing to (a) allow staff to take leave and/or (b) give the staff paid leave for training purposes / capacity building.

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

The Tourism Offices of the local municipalities have committed to investigate the possibility of complimentary training and when appropriate, linking candidates with tourists.

The project has been 'handed over' to the relevant Eastern Cape Parks (ECParks) representative who has committed to linking suitable small businesses to the ECParks marketing department, promoting the purchase of local products to tourists and facilitating complimentary training when the opportunity arises.

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

The project initially aimed to train 50 people. At the conclusion of the project a total of 70 had been successfully trained.

IV. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Provide details of any additional donors who supported this project and any funding secured for the project as a result of the CEPF grant or success of the project.

Donor	Type of Funding*	Amount	Notes
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	
		\$	

**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.)*

V. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- ECParks should continue interacting with the trained candidates in order to assist ECParks to select appropriate trainees for further relevant training that would build on the specific /individual trainees skill and build on the training already received in this project.
- Complimentary training should focus on:
 - o an introduction to administrative and financial management,
 - o developing a formal business,
 - o branding and marketing of products,
 - o registering your small business
 - o proposal writing / applying for funds to grow a small business
 - o expanding your small business
 - o forming partnerships with established businesses
- ECParks should officially strengthen their relationship with, and officially partner
 - o The Baviaans Local Municipality and its associated tourism office
 - o The Kouga Local Municipality and its associated 3 tourism offices
- ECParks should investigate similar training, possibly with lower entry criteria , for local community members in the Langkloof Route and Western Gateway and explore partnerships with the relevant municipalities i.e. Koukamma Local Municipality and Eden District Municipality.

VI. 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, 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.

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