

# Report on grant from CEPF - Duineveld Coastal Association, South Africa

1. *Grantee* - Duineveld Coastal Association
2. *Project* - Turning Duineveld Eco-Threat Into Profitable Employment:  
Phase 1 - Development of a Business Plan

Preparation of detailed operations plan for start-up of sustainable project to eradicate threatening alien vegetation

3. *Amount* - US\$ 1,967
4. *Time* - three months, July-September 2004
5. *The background*

Duineveld Coastal Association represents stakeholders in a 50 km stretch of relatively unspoilt coastline bordering the Indian Ocean in the Southern Cape, South Africa.

The vegetation is fynbos - the world's smallest, most concentrated and most threatened plant biome - and coastal thicket (interspersed with remnants of ancient coastal forest), here called "strandveld dune thicket".

This relatively unspoilt coastal zone has been earmarked for conservation and as a nature area (official planning documents, 1988 and 1993) and has been designated for "contract reserves" (Cape Action Plan for People and the Environment, 2000). It is part of the Gourits Initiative.

The environment is being threatened by a fast-growing, highly invasive alien plant, *Acacia cyclops*, which forms thick stands in which endemic plant life cannot survive. At least 6,000 hectares of natural vegetation have been overrun in the membership area of the Duineveld association.

The dune country receives an annual rainfall of under 300 mm and is marginal agricultural land, with an extremely low grazing capacity (11 hectares for one cow per annum). People simply cannot afford the cost of clearing the alien bush.

6. *The objective*

Against this background, an ideal was conceived to "turn the Duineveld eco-threat into profitable employment".

*Acacia cyclops* makes excellent fuel for barbeque fires, with long-lingering coals. Having a barbeque is a great South African pastime, and virtually all the holiday accommodation at Southern Cape resorts is equipped for barbeques.

Meanwhile there is disproportionate unemployment in communities living near the coast.

The proposal was to properly equip a number of struggling local woodcutters and establish a system of supervision of woodcutter teams on private land, with additional monitoring by Cape Nature Conservation.

## 7. *The project*

The project was for concentrated liaison and consultation with affected parties and potential allies, and the preparation of a detailed operations plan with twin objectives: to eradicate the invasive alien bush, and to create a self-sustainable local economic activity.

The process was driven by committee members of the Duineveld association, freely giving their time and energies, and fully supported by Cape Nature Conservation and the Southern Cape Business Centre (a small-business development body).

- 7.1 Initial proposal and questionnaire was distributed, followed by intensive liaison with stakeholders and Duineveld members.
- 7.2 Infested lands on the coast and immediate hinterland were inspected.
- 7.3 Individual meetings were held with landowners living in various towns and districts of the Southern Cape.
- 7.4 Training and support institutions were visited and canvassed.
- 7.5 A preliminary market survey for barbeque firewood on the Southern Cape (George-Mossel Bay and coastal resorts in between) confirmed earlier observations.
- 7.6 Liaison with suppliers of equipment (chainsaws) and consumables assisted the calculations of project costs.
- 7.7 A day workshop with representative stakeholders was held in the Albertinia town hall (29 July 2004), followed by prompt circulation of notes to all present, other interested parties, and committee

members in other parts of the country.

- 7.8 Further liaison and meetings took place with existing and potential woodcutting contractors and with Cape Nature Conservation.
- 7.9 At the request of Southern Cape Business Centre a further meeting for group discussion was held with woodcutters and members of the local community (Theronville community centre, 20 September 2004).
- 7.10 A detailed operations plan was prepared for the project "**Turning Duineveld eco-threat into profitable employment**". Planning drafts were subjected to review processes, checking and confirmations. The detailed planning document includes budget break-downs and cash flow projections.
- 7.11 The ops-plan was submitted to CEPF for consideration in September 2004.

## 8. *Financial*

The project was completed within time and budget, with a small cash balance at the discretion of CEPF. Verification was by Duineveld Coastal Association's auditor.

## 9. *The outcome*

Considerable enthusiasm for the proposed project is evident, both amongst members of the Duineveld association and in the local communities which stand to benefit. However, in order not to comprise CEPF, the regional newspaper has been asked to refrain from publishing any report at this stage.

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Joh Groenewald  
Secretary, Duineveld Coastal Association  
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**For more information about this project, please contact:**

Joh Groenewald  
Duineveld Coastal Association  
PO Box 4430  
Pretoria 0001  
South Africa  
Tel/Fax: +27 (0)12 802 0679  
johgroen@mweb.co.za