



# m&e case study

## C.A.P.E. and the Botanical Society: a symbiotic relationship #16



The Botanical Society (Botsoc) has been committed to the preservation of the Cape Floristic Region (CFR) for nearly 100 years. Cape Action for People and the Environment (C.A.P.E.) is the first bioregional programme operating under the South African National Biodiversity Institute (SANBI). The C.A.P.E. partnership's strategy focuses on strengthening institutions to create the capacity required for conservation. The mutually beneficial interaction between the broader C.A.P.E. partnership and the Botanical Society of South Africa (Botsoc) has strengthened both, thereby making a significant contribution to the conservation of this region. This article looks at the contribution that each organization has made to the partnership and vice versa, and reflects on how much has been achieved through mutual co-operation.

### THE CONTRIBUTION OF BOTSOC TO C.A.P.E.

**Botsoc strengthened the CAPE partnership by:**

- **Piloting important projects and ideas**
- **Developing tools such as fiscal incentives**
- **Building capacity through training programmes and staff development.**

**Being part of the C.A.P.E. partnership has transformed the Botanical Society into a more strategic organization. This has been achieved by C.A.P.E.:**

- **Providing a platform for broader dialogue and influence.**
- **Funding critical projects and staff.**

Botsoc has a depth of experience in the field of conservation. The organization has participated in many pilot projects, and was able to contribute many strategic insights to the newly formed C.A.P.E. partnership, particularly in the policy arena. Many of the Botsoc pilot projects formed the basis of broad regional programmes subsequently undertaken through C.A.P.E.

One of Botsoc's early projects involved alien clearing on Table Mountain. This small project was significant because it illustrated the potential for using previously unemployed people to clear invasive alien plants. The project approach prompted the development of Working for Water.

Botsoc has a long-standing commitment to training. It has provided significant support for training programmes through the C.A.P.E. partnership in areas such as Environmental Assessment, Land Use Planning, Fiscal Incentives and Stewardship.

Botsoc consciously recruited and trained people to build relationships. People who had trained as contract staff while working on Botsoc projects went on to permanent positions with other C.A.P.E. partners, there making significant contributions. In addition, previous permanent staff members, such as Kristal Maze, Mandy Driver and Mark Botha are now located in SANBI and WWF-SA, providing support and direction for biodiversity conservation across the whole country. The body of committed volunteers supporting Botsoc is another of its strengths, as they bring a wide range of backgrounds and experience and a strong ethic of involvement. For example, Botsoc members make up 60% of the CREW<sup>1</sup> teams.

Botsoc has frequently played an important role in developing new tools for conservation, providing support and dedicated capacity to whichever government agency has the official mandate for implementation. They also develop important material on the flora of the region which is integrated into broader C.A.P.E.-sponsored educational programmes.

### C.A.P.E.'S CONTRIBUTION TO BOTSOC

The establishment of the C.A.P.E. partnership brought together a wide variety of role-players. As the first bioregional programme under SANBI it had a national presence and government mandate. This partnership was able to access additional national and international support. The C.A.P.E. partnership provided Botsoc with a wider platform for interaction and increased the impact of its actions both regionally and nationally. Many Botsoc approaches, tested under C.A.P.E., have subsequently been rolled out in other regions.

While C.A.P.E. was still being established, Botsoc, under Prof. Bruce McKenzie, took the risky decision to establish a dedicated Conservation Unit which would have a proactive and strategic approach, with a significant complement of full time staff. Funds leveraged through C.A.P.E. played a significant role in securing of this unit.

Involvement in the C.A.P.E.-funded Cape Flats Nature Project broadened the organization's socio-economic focus, providing much needed experience in engaging community groups from disadvantaged backgrounds. The collaborative forum provided by the C.A.P.E. partnership also facilitated the development of partnerships with others in the conservation sector. For example:

Botsoc has developed important partnerships with key government agencies through collaboration on C.A.P.E. projects. For example, it has developed a close relationship with CapeNature through interaction on land use planning and stewardship.

C.A.P.E. projects such as the CREW threatened plants programme provided an exciting opportunity for Botsoc members to engage in important conservation action.



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**“Botsoc has experienced the power of partnership and now actively recruits and trains its people to build relationships.”**

## COLLABORATIVE PROJECTS

Many of the initiatives started by Bosoc have acted as pilot programmes for C.A.P.E., laying the groundwork for later large scale interventions. Botsoc is now often approached to become a partner in new projects. This did not happen before, and reflects the experience, exposure and relationships facilitated through C.A.P.E.

The broad membership of C.A.P.E. has encouraged the development of collaborative partnerships where each has a unique contribution to make. Some of achievements of the partnership between C.A.P.E. and Botsoc are described below:

- **Biodiversity in Environmental Assessment**

An important project undertaken by Botsoc<sup>2</sup>, developed tools to improve the inclusion of biodiversity in Environmental Assessments. The partnerships facilitated by C.A.P.E. were a very important part of this project. Consequently, biodiversity issues are now included in DEA&DP<sup>3</sup> guidelines for environmental assessment. Training courses build capacity in those responsible for the assessments.

- **Fiscal Reform**

Two years before C.A.P.E. started, Mark Botha had proposed the creation of fiscal incentives for conservation on private land. When Treasury called for a Green Budget in 2007 it created a unique opportunity to influence the tax legislation. The broad platform provided by C.A.P.E. enabled Botsoc to influence policy development. Further sponsorship was provided through the C.A.P.E. partnership to expand this work to include support for municipalities that wished to incentivize conservation through rates rebates. This donor funding has also supported the provision of training on the potential use of these fiscal incentives. Although these incentives are still new, they are expected to play an increasing role in encouraging land owners to take part in stewardship programmes.

- **Stewardship**

Botsoc has long recognised the importance of conserving biodiversity on private land. In 2002, they acquired funding from the CEPF<sup>4</sup> to initiate a stewardship programme: A Botsoc stewardship coordinator and two extension officers were appointed to work within CapeNature on stewardship in the Western Cape. Until that time CapeNature had only been mandated to work on reserves, and not private land. This collaboration was also facilitated by the C.A.P.E. partnership.

The project involved the development of tools to support stewardship: Landowners considering involvement needed clearly defined alternatives. The work helped define the national stewardship categories used in the Protected Areas and Biodiversity Acts. By the time this project ended in 2005, CapeNature had included off-reserve stewardship programmes with private landowners as an expansion of their original mandate.

In addition to the establishment of permanent stewardship posts within CapeNature, SANBI has recently appointed a national stewardship coordinator. Botsoc is working with SANBI to replicate this approach to stewardship in other bioregions where provincial conservation agencies do not yet have an off-reserve focus. Projects are tailored to each situation and, where possible, included into broader bioregional programmes.

- **The Production Sector**

- **Potatoes:** Botsoc was amongst the first to recognise the threat to biodiversity posed by the rapidly expanding potato industry along the West Coast. Their investigations were taken up by C.A.P.E. who were able to mobilize ministerial support, and from 2007 a multi-stakeholder sustainable farming initiative was set up in the Sandveld, including Potatoes SA, producers, retailers, conservation partners of C.A.P.E. and the CEPF.

- **Biodiversity and Wine Initiative (BWI):** With the support of CEPF funding, Botsoc initiated an ongoing industry-specific stewardship programme. By 2009, the 113,127 hectares protected through this programme exceed the footprint of the vineyards. Biodiversity guidelines are now included in the industry certification process. BWI also supports marketing through a biodiversity label which members are entitled to use.

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### Key Words:

*Institutional Strengthening, Non-Governmental Organization, capacity building, partnerships*

Participating in C.A.P.E. has helped transform Botsoc from a small, largely volunteer-based Non-Governmental Organization (NGO), limited to responding reactively, to a far more strategic organization with permanent staff running a number of significant projects. This transformed organization continues to make a critical contribution to regional and national conservation.

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<sup>1</sup> Custodians of Rare and Endangered Wildflowers

<sup>2</sup> Supported by the Global Environment Facility through the World Bank and United Nations Development Programme, and channelled through C.A.P.E.

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<sup>3</sup> Western Cape Provincial Department of Environmental Affairs and Development Planning  
<sup>4</sup> Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund