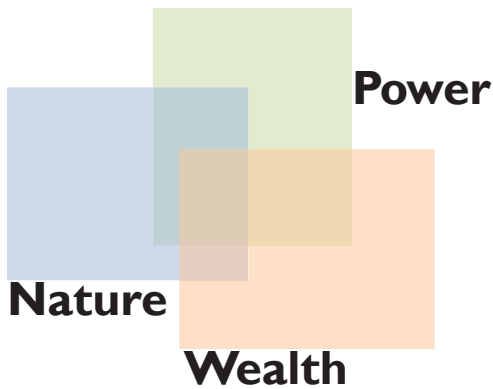




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# TRANSLINKS

*Promoting Transformations  
by Linking Nature, Wealth and Power*

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**Elephant Pepper**  
[www.elephantpepper.com](http://www.elephantpepper.com)

*Elephant Pepper aims to promote the livelihood of farmers living in elephant range through training, the deployment of appropriate conflict mitigation methods and development of agricultural techniques which promote elephant conservation.*

## ***Certified Wildlife Friendly™ Products***

Elephant Pepper PTY Ltd produces two varieties of pepper sauces as well as four spice grinders that mix chili peppers with a variety of spices to create unique flavors. Elephant Pepper sells its products in retail outlets in southern Africa, including the international airport in Johannesburg and through mail order. Recently Elephant Pepper products gained shelf space in Whole Foods Markets and other food specialty retailers in the USA.

## ***Conservation Challenge***

Africa's human population is increasing at nearly 4% per year. African elephant populations have generally stabilized in the last decade, and are increasing in southern Africa, yet continent-wide, only 20% of their range is formally

protected. Increasingly, rural farmers and elephants share the same areas as rural agriculture expands and elephant rangeland is compressed. In this situation elephants can cause widespread damage to a farmer's crops, and compete with communities for land and resources. Conversely, the conversion of woodland to farmland threatens the elephant's survival within many landscapes. By reducing conflict and providing income opportunities from commercial farming, Elephant Pepper has reduced the level of conflict in the region significantly.

## ***Context and Business Model***

Elephant Pepper products grew out of field research focused on methods to address human wildlife conflict in southern Africa. The problem of elephant-human conflict is severe and rises from the fact that elephants destroy the crops of



**Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network:  
Elephant Pepper**



small-scale farmers. These crops are often the only food available to these rural communities. With their food-security and livelihoods threatened farmers retaliated against the elephants which led to death and injury on both sides of the conflict.

Research discovered the effectiveness of chilies to keep elephants away from crops. Application of simply techniques using chilies is sufficient to keep elephants away from farmers' fields. In addition, chilies are an important cash crop. By motivating farmers to plant chilies, Elephant Pepper ensured production of the raw materials necessary to repel elephants from local farms. Moreover two market opportunities were created. One involved larger scale planting of chilies for chili mash that goes into Tabasco sauce and is purchased by a large international market buyer, the other was the development of sauces and spice grinders carrying the Elephant Pepper brand and Certified Wildlife Friendly™, thus linking the products directly to efforts to reduce conflict and ensure protection of elephant populations.

The business model includes a synergistic relationship between the **Elephant Pepper Development Trust (EPDT)** and the for-profit **Elephant Pepper PTY Ltd**, which works collaboratively with local farmers under a shared vision of wildlife conservation and sustainable economic development. Elephant Pepper PTY Ltd. brings financial, social and environmental benefits to its stakeholders; linking farmers to a global market and by raising awareness around successful approaches to wildlife conflict mitigation.

The Elephant Pepper Trust advises farmers on natural resources conservation and sustainable utilization of such resources in relation to the management of conflict with wildlife. It is widely accepted that rural farmers bear the costs of living with elephants, and receive little of the benefits, since as farmers they rarely participate in the tourist trade. Even where community-based conservation and tourism initiatives exist, and elephants generate large revenues, little of the money is seen at the rural household level. Resolving conflict between humans and elephants is widely recognized as one of the most pressing wildlife management issues in Africa, because the costs must be reduced and the benefits increased if elephants are to co-exist in agricultural areas.

In an effort to explore economic options linked to conservation outcomes, Elephant Pepper PTY Ltd was established as a for-profit company to develop marketing partnerships

with other private sector companies and a line of Elephant Pepper branded products – sauces and spice grinders. As part of this private sector development, a business relationship with the company, African Spices, was developed. African Spices committed to the procurement of all chilies from local farmers at an ethical trade price. This gave a significant boost to farmer participation in chili production and a larger supply of chilies to market. African Spices negotiated a contract with the McIlhenny Company, makers of Tabasco brand hot sauces, to purchase significant amounts of chili mash (a semi-processed chili product needed to make Tabasco) that African Spices could produce at a scale. The market for chili mash provided farmers with much needed income, at the same time that the chili control methods reduced human elephant conflict. In addition Elephant Pepper could count on sufficient chili production to manufacture its line of Elephant Pepper branded sauces and spice grinders. As a result Elephant Pepper has been able to contribute to higher rural incomes while ensuring the conservation of elephant populations.

### ***Impact and Monitoring***

The local and regional impact of the program is significant. Currently EPDT works with approximately 600 semi-subsistence out-growers who produce chilies and earn up to \$1,000 annually from sales to African Spices. This compares with maximum incomes of approximately \$180 per year from maize production in the region. Farmers who participate in the out-growing scheme have a guaranteed market for their product. In addition they receive on-going training and capacity building to improve their agricultural production as well as the methods they employ to reduce human wildlife conflict. Detailed monitoring on the impact of the chili interventions on elephants is carried out in partnership with the communities by Dr. Ferrell ("Loki") Osborn, who has been working in the Zambezi region of Africa for over 15 years. The ongoing monitoring and research indicate a significant reduction in human wildlife conflict incidences as a result of Elephant Pepper interventions.



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