

PROJECT STATUS REPORT

JULY 2016 - DECEMBER 2016

SECTION 1: PROJECT SUMMARY

PROJECT NAME: Strengthening Bird-Based Tourism as a Conservation and Sustainable Development T

Project Number: RG-M1238 - Project Num.: ATN/ME-14117-RG

Purpose:

The Project result objective is to increase economic opportunities in rural areas by connecting communities to bird-based tourism markets as well as increasing the understanding and value of the natural capital to local communities.

Country Admin

UNITED STATES

Country Beneficiary

BAHAMAS, BELIZE, GUATEMALA,
PARAGUAY

Executing Agency:

NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY

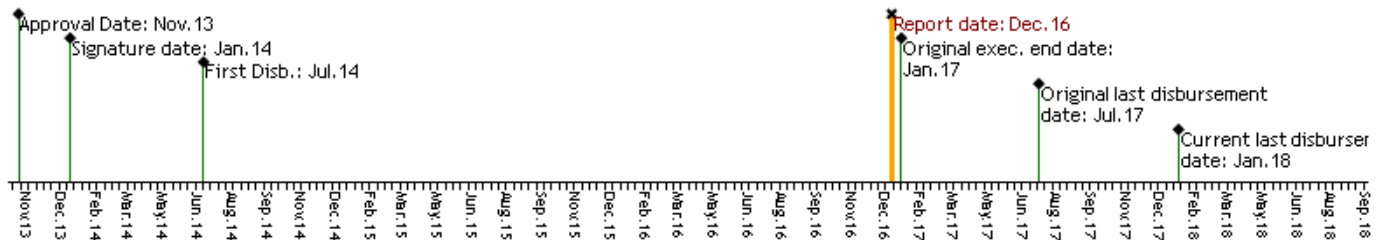
Design Team Leader:

FILIPPO BERARDI

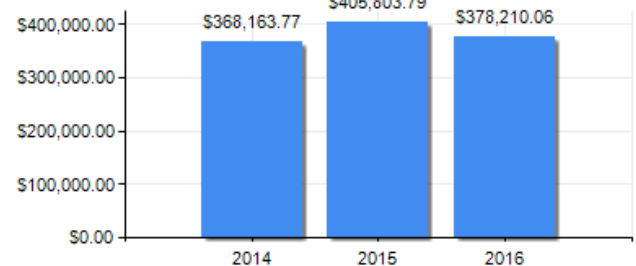
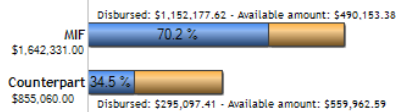
Supervision Team Leader:

ISABEL AUGÉ

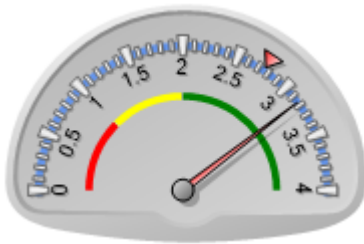
PROJECT CYCLE



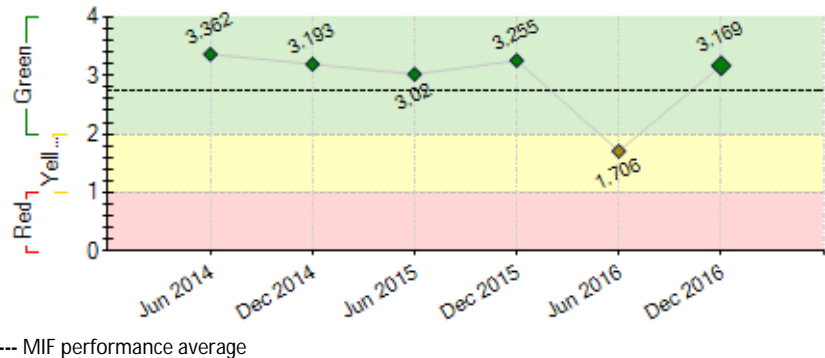
FUNDS



PERFORMANCE SCORE



Current score: Satisfactory: 3.169
MIF Average: 2.758



EXTERNAL RISKS

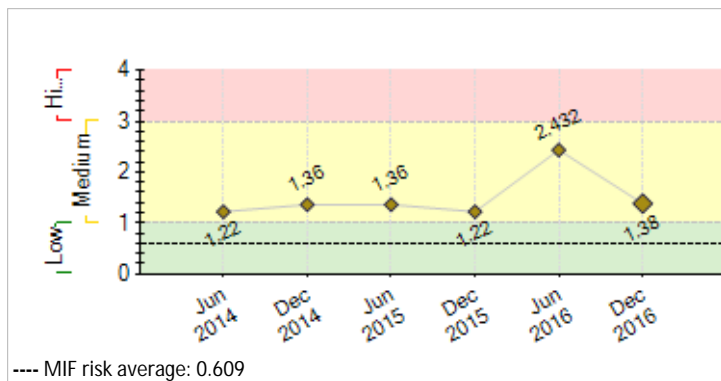
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Risk

Financial Management: Medium

Procurement: High

Technical Capacity: Medium



SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE

Summary of project performance since inception

The project is creating value in Natural Capital by empowering communities and creating economic opportunities through bird-based tourism around 15 protected areas across four countries. Results: formal protection of the 92,000 acre Joulter Cays National Park (The Bahamas), development of a world-class bird guide training curriculum (basic and advanced) adopted by MOT in all countries, 276 community guides graduating from the basic guide training (M2, C1), environmental education and community engagement programs reaching 1780 adults and 5597 children (C3 and M6), economic analysis of the bird tourism market for the first time in all countries (C4); development and adoption of seven tour itineraries by local and international tour operators, such as Holbrook Tours, and hotels committed to supporting project sites and trained guides (C4). A major risk is a lack of tourists visiting sites and hiring local guides that is being addressed through promotion/marketing within the Audubon network, with local MOTs and partners, organizing specific tours with participating local and international tour operators, promoting the project at nine birdfairs, and through 20 media mentions (C2). Audubon is highly optimistic about achieving project objectives and indications are that the guides are beginning to attract clients. Three critical activities through the remainder of the project are finalizing the marketing materials, finalizing trails, and organizing tours through operators.

Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

Summary of project performance in the last six months

Audubon and our partners have continued to achieve, and in some cases surpass, most of the goals. Additionally, training workshops continue with original guide cohorts to continue interest and add an additional 63 graduating participants for basic and advanced courses. All advanced guide training courses have now been completed, graduating a total of 64 participants (surpassing the goal of 30) (C1). An additional 288 adults were engaged in local communities through environmental and conservation education opportunities (C3 and M6). M4 execution was delayed due to the impact of Hurricane Matthew on the target communities, and is now scheduled for February 2017. In consultation with the MIF, the project was extended for an additional six months to allow for the completion of tasks addressing sustainability suggested by the mid-term evaluation completed this semester. The team has developed work plan and budget changes to accommodate the suggested tasks. Major remaining pending activities include: business and marketing trainings in the Bahamas (M4), and the completion of marketing materials on the project (C4).

Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

SECTION 3: INDICATORS AND MILESTONES

Indicators		Baseline	Intermediate 1	Intermediate 2	Intermediate 3	Planned	Achieved	Status
Purpose: 1 The Project result objective is to increase economic opportunities in rural areas by connecting communities to bird-based tourism markets as well as increasing the understanding and value of the natural capital to local communities.	R.1 # of bird guides graduating from basic or advanced bird guide program	0	112			230	340	
	R.2 % of guides rated as good or excellent by visitors.	Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Jul 2017	Dec 2016	
	R.3 % of visitors rating visit to site as good or excellent .	0	0			75	0	
	R.4 Change in annual visitation to project sites.	Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Jul 2017	Dec 2015	
	R.5 Percent of community members indicating positive attitudes toward natural capital of protected areas and national parks.	75679	0			82900	0	
Component 1: Improved structure and capacity of bird-based tourism MSMEs (supply side development) Weight: 51% Classification: Satisfactory	C1.11 Basic and advanced bird guiding training program developed	Feb 2014	Feb 2017			Jul 2017	Dec 2015	
	C1.12 # of guides trained (BASIC) who passed the exam.	0	0			75	0	
	C1.13 # of guides trained (ADVANCED)	Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Jul 2017	Dec 2015	
	C1.14 # of people participating in English for tour guides course	40	0			50	40	
	C1.15 # people participating in the apprenticeship program	Jan 2014	Feb 2017			Jul 2017	Jun 2016	
	C1.11 Basic and advanced bird guiding training program developed	0	4	4		4	13	Finished
	C1.12 # of guides trained (BASIC) who passed the exam.	22	38	160		299	276	On Course
	C1.13 # of guides trained (ADVANCED)	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jul 2017	Dec 2016	Finished
	C1.14 # of people participating in English for tour guides course	4	4	9		30	64	On Course
	C1.15 # people participating in the apprenticeship program	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2016	On Course

		Feb 2014	Jan 2016	Jan 2017		Jul 2017	Dec 2016	
C1.16	# of individuals trained in business and marketing	0	30	93	125	143	125	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016	Jul 2016	Jul 2017	Jun 2016	
C1.17	# of individuals trained in hospitality (incl., cooking, costumer service, etc)	0	180			200	283	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C1.18	# of site-level tourism development plans	0	4	4		4	2	Delayed
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C1.19	# Audubon members providing feedback on bird tourism experience at project sites	0	0	0		150	17	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jun 2017	Dec 2016	
C1.11	# individuals with internships	0	2			3	3	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C1.11	# sites with birding interpretation and trail signage	0	2	2		6	5	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jun 2017	Jun 2016	

Component 2: Marketing (demand side development)

Weight: 24%

Classification: High Satisfactory

C2.11	Value of advertising by governments in Audubon and other internationally distributed magazines	0				32450	32450	Finished
						Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
C2.12	# of stories in Audubon magazine on project sites	0	1	1		2	1	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C2.13	# Audubon chapters reached by project marketing	0	467	467		467	467	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C2.14	# of hotels and tour operators including project sites in tour packages	0	12			24	27	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C2.15	# of tourism and birding fairs where project is promoted	0	3			6	11	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C2.16	# of marketing events hosted by Audubon magazine or chapters	0	3			6	6	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C2.17	# of articles or programs in other media outlets highlighting project sites	0	1	2		3	20	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C2.18	# birding trails developed	0	4	6		6	4	Delayed
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C2.19	# of government or industry websites including content about project	0	4	12		12	12	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
C2.11	# of birding festivals	0	3			3	5	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	

Component 3: Conservation outreach, education and citizen science.

Weight: 15%

Classification: High Satisfactory

C3.11	# of individuals attending conservation programs on birds (adults)	0	300	720		1180	1780	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C3.12	# of individuals registering their sightings on e-Bird or in park database	0	15	45		80	119	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2016	
C3.13	# of students participating in environmental education programs related to birds.	0	775	2075		3000	5597	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
C3.14	Community engagement strategies developed.	0	2			5	2	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jul 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	

Component 4: Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy.

Weight: 10%

Classification: Satisfactory

C4.11	Report and fact sheet (1 fact sheet each country) on economic benefits of bird-based tourism	0				4	4	Finished
		Jan 2014				Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
C4.12	Project Infographic developed	0				1	0	On Course
						Jul 2017	Jun 2016	
C4.13	# of US promotional events	0	1			1	0	Delayed
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jul 2017	Jun 2016	
C4.14	Audio-visual on the project developed	0				1	0	On Course
						Jul 2017	Jun 2016	

Milestones	Planned	Due Date	Achieved	Date of achievement	Status
M1 PROJECT WIDE: purchase of basic equipment for bird guiding (e.g. binoculars, scopes, bird guidebooks, etc.)	1	Jun 2014	21271	May 2014	Achieved
M1 Conditions Prior	1	Jul 2014	1	Jan 2014	Achieved
M2 [*] PROJECT WIDE: Develop basic and advanced training curriculum (1basic and 1advanced per country, except basic training for Bahamas)	7	Jan 2015	8	Dec 2014	Achieved
M3 [*] GUATEMALA – Petén: Complete 1st round of national BASIC bird guide training and certification.	4	Jul 2015	38	Jul 2015	Achieved
M5 BELIZE: Pilot national BASIC bird guide training and certification in at least 3 sites (Cockscomb, St. Herman's, Crooked Tree)	3	Dec 2015	3	Dec 2015	Achieved
M6 [*] PROJECT WIDE: # of students participating in the environmental education programs related to birds: min = 2075	2075	Jul 2016	5597	Jul 2016	Achieved
M7 [*] PARAGUAY: Complete national BASIC and ADVANCED bird guide training and certification.	2	Jul 2016	83	Jul 2016	Achieved
M8 PROJECT WIDE: 3 birding festivals organized and carried out	3	Sep 2016	5	Jun 2016	Achieved
M4 [*] BAHAMAS: Carry out tourism business and marketing training for MSMEs (i.e. financial management, etc.). Individuals trained.	50	May 2017	27	Dec 2015	

[*] Indicate that the milestone has been reformulated

CRITICAL ISSUES THAT HAVE AFFECTED PERFORMANCE

[None reported in this period]

SECTION 4: RISKS

MOST IMPORTANT RISKS AFFECTING FUTURE PERFORMANCE

	Level	Mitigation action	Responsible
1. External risks. Security issues in remote areas in some of the selected countries may have an adverse effect on tourism in general in the country and possibly in the specific areas being promoted as part of this project;	Medium	to be determined	Project Coordinator
2. Sector risks. Advertising and promotion are	Medium	Through extensive engagement by the project team with The	Project Coordinator

key components of the project, and this depends on governments and the private sector making the decision to invest in advertising. Although National Audubon and the MIF will engage both sectors as part of the project's activities, including through providing economic incentives to scale up their marketing activities, this is not a guarantee that they will invest in sufficient advertising and promotion;

Bahamas and Guatemala MOT, both are now investing in marketing of destinations associated with this project. The Belize Tourism Industry Association is running an article in their next Destination Belize Magazine and as the product is developed Belize Tourism Board is engaged with helping with promotion.

3. Environmental risk. As part of the development of the natural areas that are the basis for these bird-based ecotourism projects, significantly increased visitation could damage the ecology of the sites. This requires the project to take into account prevention and mitigation measures related to the carrying capacity for tourism.

Medium to be determined

Project Coordinator

4. Reputational risks. The birding sites being developed and promoted through this project will potentially attract thousands of people. If the sites promoted and visited produce a less than satisfactory experience, this could affect the MIF's and Audubon's institutional image as we could be seen as promoting a product that does not live up to the level of quality expected.

Medium

This risk is being mitigated through the 1) provision of specific training in 'hospitality services' which will be delivered to the project locations where this risk was deemed more significant; 2) collection of useful information through a feedback mechanism (in the form of a survey to be given to Audubon members that visit project sites), to be shared with the appropriate people in the supply chain to modify and correct issues over the life of the project, thus ensuring quality control and improvement in visitor experience.

Project Coordinator

PROJECT RISK LEVEL: Medium **TOTAL NUMBER OF RISKS:** 5 **IN EFFECT RISKS:** 4 **NOT IN EFFECT RISKS:** 0 **MITIGATED RISKS:** 1

SECTION 5: SUSTAINABILITY

Likelihood of project sustainability after project completion: HP - Highly Probable

CRITICAL ISSUES THAT MAY AFFECT PROJECT SUSTAINABILITY

[None reported in this period]

Actions related to sustainability which have been taken in the reporting period:

The executing team has actively engaged with MIF, project partners, and internal Audubon communications and marketing to address sustainability suggestions from the mid-term evaluation. During this reporting period, we have been addressing sustainability for the project by: Developing marketing materials that are in the final draft stages for Guatemala and Bahamas and have begun in Belize and Paraguay; encouraging continued learning by the guides through participation in the Christmas Bird Counts and other citizen science activities (Belize won the 2016 Central American Ebird competition for the most checklists submitted); Holbrook Travel and Audubon formed a partnership that ensures trained guides are utilized during Holbrook tours which are being marketed to over 400 Audubon Chapters, 1 million Audubon members and Holbrook client lists. Additional partnerships have been formed with tour operators and tour aggregators to encourage visitation of sites and use of the trained guides. In addition our curriculum and training program have been replicated in Colombia, and is part of an IDB project for San Salvador in The Bahamas.

SECTION 6: PRACTICAL LESSONS

	Relative to Sustainability	Author
1. Advertising and Promoting Through extensive engagement by the project team with The Bahamas and Guatemala MOT, both are now investing in marketing of destinations associated with this project. The Belize Tourism Industry Association is running an article in their next Destination Belize Magazine and as the product is developed Belize Tourism Board is engaged with helping with promotion. While we are seeing movement, engagement of the MOT and other industry associations to promote the initiative are still a challenge.		Tazawa, Maki
2. Bahamas Challenges have emerged due to the lack of local booking agents to support the trained guides. The Bahamas is challenging for the tourist to easily book vacations and activities on some of the less visited islands. The lack of local reliable businesses to take the booking and fix all the necessary logistics has slowed down the process of getting customers to the product. By working with the MOT we have now identified one entity GoBahamas.com that is willing to be a local booking agent able to ensure the smooth transfer of birding tourists and logistics organizer. The packages are still in development but we are hopeful that this will be a solution while the industry gets established. In the design of future programs in the Caribbean we should ensure that there is training and resources to help set up local booking agents to support the process.	Sustainability	Tazawa, Maki
3. Training regarding Milestone 4 Engaging communities on Andros Island in the Bahamas has been challenging – specifically Milestone 4, "Carry out tourism business and marketing training for MSMEs (i.e. financial management, etc.) Individuals trained." There have been a number of lessons learned: the timing, length of training and time of day the local calendar of events, fishing seasons all need to be taken into account. Relying on the available schedule of the Ministry of Tourism for this training created a mismatch between the community's ability to participate in the training and the training offering. Many of the businesses engaged were single of small family businesses which created additional conflict as the businesses could not go unattended for days at a time. In the future regarding work in The Bahamas, as well as work in other countries, trainings should take community needs and schedules into deep consideration throughout the scheduling process.	Implementation	Tazawa, Maki
4. Training	Implementation	Tazawa, Maki

For the bird guide training, lessons include: 1) Course length of more than three months can affect consistency of participation; 2) An application process and requirements for minimal level of education and commitment can prevent some attrition and enable the group at-large to move at a good pace; 3) Project-related social media use can keep them engaged and motivated between training sessions and helps keep the groups together after the trainings; 4) The use of a template/rubric for exams standardizes evaluation of knowledge across project sites and saves time; 5) Instructor engagement during and between sessions is essential to keep participants' enthusiasm; 6) An optimal schedule for this type of training is a series of 4-6 sessions lasting 2-3 days each with at least 60% field time; 7) Access to equipment and study material during the entire course allows for better engagement and encouragement to participate in citizen science events helps keep interest and motivation.

5. Project Reporting

Designing data collection systems and filling out the first PSR was difficult. We feel that it would have been helpful if MIF could offer a webinar on how to complete the PSR, suggest/offer templates to support the collection of beneficiary information and perhaps peer to peer connection by pairing a new EA with a seasoned EA to support the process.

We found that templates to collect beneficiary data (location, gender, etc.) were very helpful and helped fill out the PSR. We think that better use of GIS software that collects information, like the ESRI GIS geoform or questionnaire would be very useful for any future regional projects.

6. Timelines and Monitoring system-

Completing the project baseline earlier in the project timeline would have been helpful. The delay in the baseline assessment created a delay in the creation and use of a project-wide monitoring system. In the future we recommend that for organizations new to MIF that greater support be given in establishing timelines and creation of monitoring systems – possibly using examples from other projects. The reporting system that was developed, while comprehensive was not as user friendly as we would have liked it to be, which complicated its use by the partners. Audubon's GIS team continues to look at ways of updating the system and making it more user friendly.

Design

Tazawa, Maki

Design

Tazawa, Maki

Draft