

PROJECT STATUS REPORT

JANUARY 2015 - JUNE 2015

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

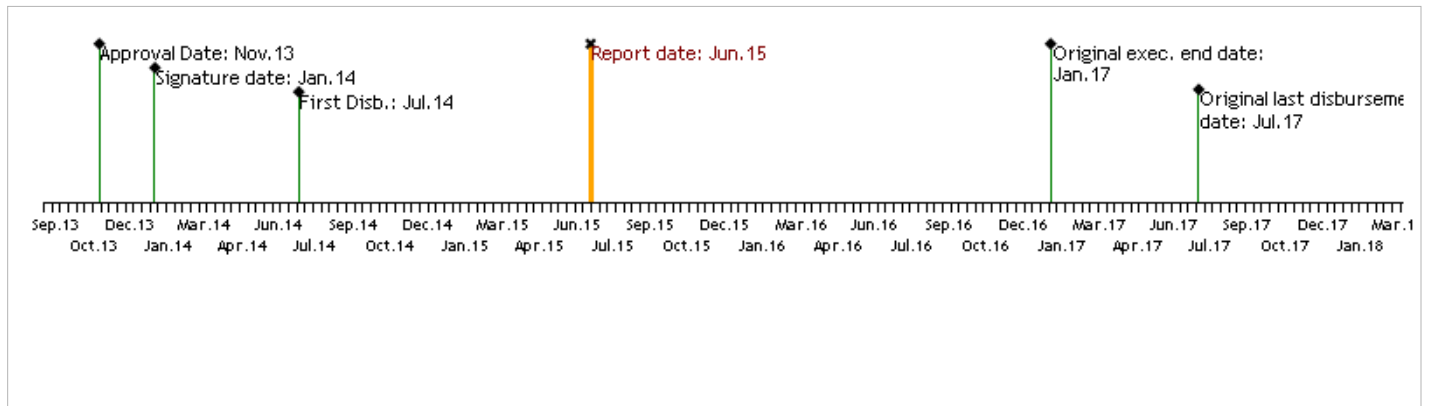
Design Team Leader:

FILIPPO BERARDI

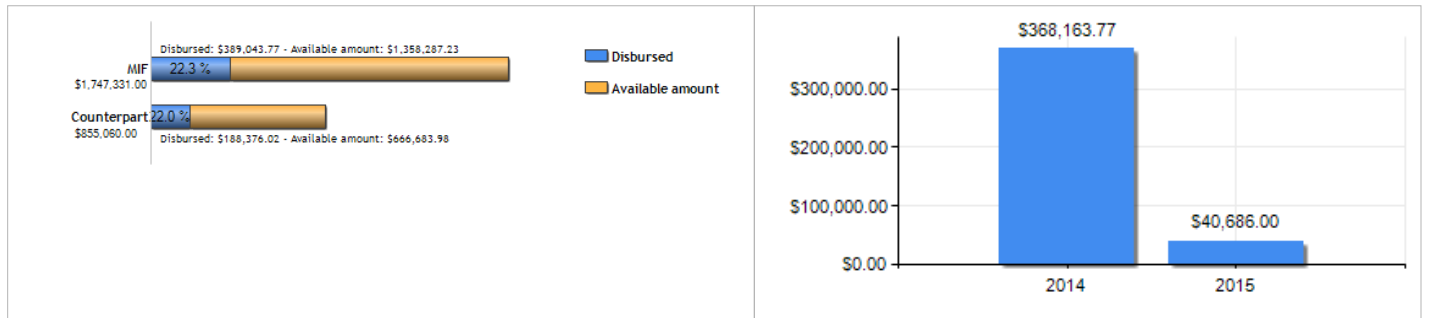
Supervision Team Leader:

FILIPPO BERARDI

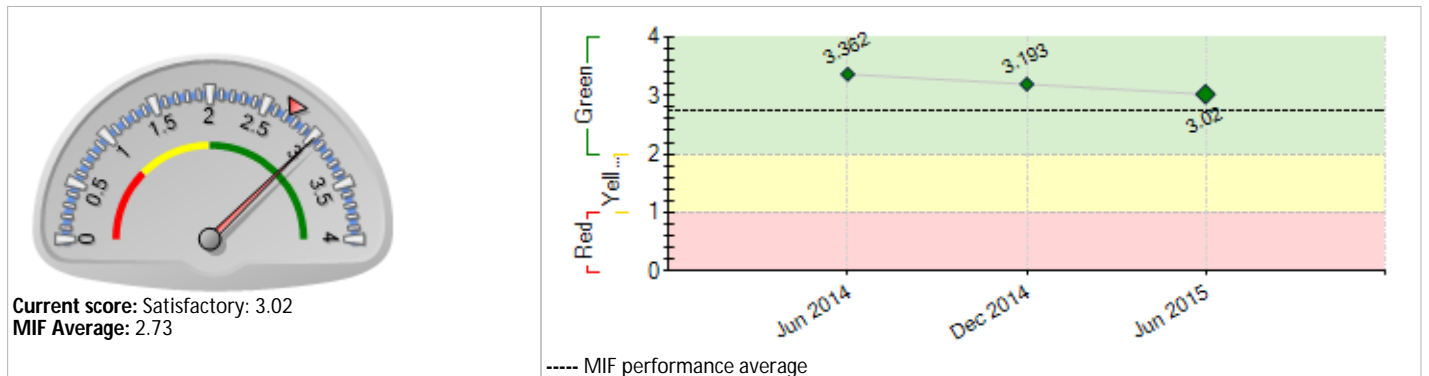
PROJECT CYCLE



FUNDS



PERFORMANCE SCORE



EXTERNAL RISKS

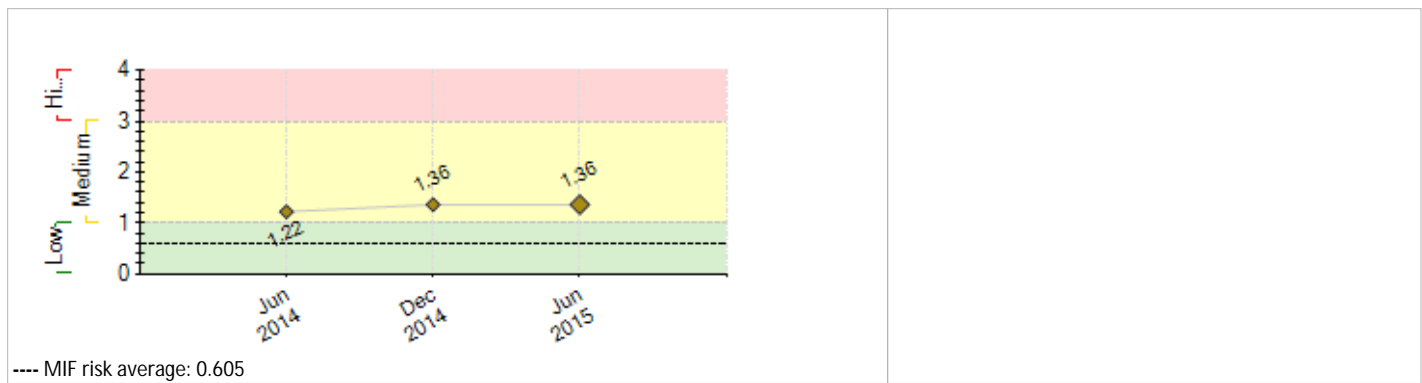
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

Risk

Financial Management: Medium

Procurement: High

Technical Capacity: Medium



SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE

Summary of project performance since inception

As of July 2015, we reached the 4th of 9 milestones. World class regional and country-level curricula have been developed, equipment distributed, Government Ministries and in-country Tourism Associations engaged and guide training instructors contracted. Most project partners initiated trainings of bird guides; these are nearing completion in 2 locations. The project has been replicated in Colombia by USAID and in Guatemala by JICA.

Audubon has worked at strengthening public/private partnerships in all project countries gaining endorsement and support by all national governments for the trainings. In addition, Audubon continues to connect the birding market across the U.S. through Audubon's channels and other means. Media attention continues to be high, stimulating interest and support.

Community engagement by partners has exceeded expectation, with an emphasis on women in several communities. In Belize, an introduction to birds for women's groups in Mayan communities stimulated interest and a better understanding of the project. In The Bahamas, youth groups from schools on the 2 target islands have been introduced to birds and the concept of jobs in the environmental field.

We completed an economic analysis and valuation of the bird tourism market for each of the 4 project countries. By sharing the information with partners and relevant departments within Ministries of Tourism, we hope to stimulate more support for the growing industry.

Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

Audubon and its partners continue working hard to achieve the goals established. Although with some delays to reach the indicators due to a slow start as reported in previous PSR, the project is moving towards the achievement of its goals.

Summary of project performance in the last six months

Of the partners that have initiated bird guide trainings; 38 individuals in the Peten, Guatemala have completed the first round. The level of participation and interest is high; female participation in The Bahamas exceeds 50%.

We developed itineraries and reached out to several tour operators and the entire Audubon network at the Audubon Convention (audience of ~350). Now, we seek to produce articles and videos and participate in fairs to reach an even wider audience. The Bahamas Ministry of Tourism is looking to promote the tours and create products that support the project. Other media and marketing highlights over the past six months include: participation in Passport DC at the Belize Embassy and an 8 minute clip on PBS Newshour- our first national media segment.

The education programs are very strong. To date, the partners have engaged and educated 350 adults and 3000 children on the importance of birds to the ecosystem through classroom talks, bird counts, camps, etc. We developed the first knowledge sharing product—Bird Tourism Market Study, that outlined the importance and value of this market sector.

During the next six months, project partners will begin small business trainings; Audubon will more aggressively develop the marketing components and begin to push tourists to the various destinations. Audubon will also begin to scope new countries for consideration of future MIF investment.

Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

In general, the project is being executed at good pace now in spite of the initial delays. Paraguay faced delays due to the change of area of intervention after realizing that the initial area was not the most suitable one, and redirected their activities to a more accessible area for the tourist. Government offices in Bahamas and Belize are involved supporting and promoting the activities in those countries. In Guatemala individuals are very engaged.

Audubon is very committed to the model and works hard and in good direction towards the achievement of the goals established.

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	38	
		Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017	Jun 2015	
	R.2 % of guides rated as good or excellent by visitors.	0	60			75	0	
		Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017		
	R.3 % of visitors rating visit to site as good or excellent .	0	60			75	0	
		Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017		
R.4 % Change in annual visitation to project sites.	0	10			10	0		
	Feb 2014	Feb 2017			Feb 2017			
R.5 Percent of community members indicating positive attitudes toward natural capital of protected areas and national parks.	40				50	0		
	Jan 2014				Feb 2014			
Component 1: Improved structure and capacity of bird-based tourism MSMEs (supply side development) Weight: 51% Classification:	C1.11 Basic and advanced bird guiding training program developed	0	4	4		4	13	Finished
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C1.12 # of guides trained (BASIC)	22	38	160		313	38	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C1.13 # of guides trained (ADVANCED)	4	4	9		30	0	On Course
		Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2014	
	C1.14 # of people participating in English for tour guides course	0	50	130		130	38	Delayed
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C1.15 # people participating in the apprenticeship program	0	25	25		50	11	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016	Jan 2017		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C1.16 # of individuals trained in business and marketing	0	30	175		175	0	Delayed
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2014	
	C1.17 # of individuals trained in hospitality (incl., cooking, costumer service, etc)	0	180			200		
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017		
C1.18 # of site-level tourism development plans	0	4	4		4	0	Delayed	
	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2014		
C1.19 # Audubon members providing feedback on bird tourism experience at project sites	0	30	90		150	0	Delayed	
	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2014		
C1.110 # individuals with internships	0	2			4			
	Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017			
C1.111 # sites with birding interpretation and trail signage	0	2	7		8	4	On Course	
	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015		
Component 2: Marketing (demand side development) Weight: 24% Classification:	C2.11 Value of advertising by governments in Audubon and other internationally distributed magazines	0				80000	32450	On Course
						Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C2.12 # of stories in Audubon magazine on project sites	0	1	1		4	1	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C2.13 # Audubon chapters reached by project marketing	0	467	467		467	467	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C2.14 # of hotels and tour operators including project sites in tour packages	0	12			24	12	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C2.15 # of tourism and birding fairs where project is promoted	0	3			6	5	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C2.16 # of marketing events hosted by Audubon magazine or chapters	0	3			6	5	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C2.17 # of articles or programs in other media outlets highlighting project sites	0	1	2		3	5	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
C2.18 # birding trails developed	0	4	6		6	1	Delayed	
	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015		
C2.19 # of government or industry websites including content about project	0	4	12		12	2	Delayed	
	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015		
C2.110 # of birding festivals	0	3			3	4	On Course	
	Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2015		
Component 3: Conservation outreach, education and citizen science. Weight: 15% Classification:	C3.11 # of individuals attending conservation programs on birds (adults)	0	300	720		1180	353	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C3.12 # of individuals registering their sightings on e-Bird or in park database	0	15	45		80	28	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
	C3.13 # of students participating in enviromental education programs related to birds.	0	775	2075		3000	3016	On Course
		Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	
C3.14 Community engagement strategies developed.	0	5	5		5	2	Delayed	
	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015		
Component 4: Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy. Weight: 10% Classification:	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		
						Jan 2017		
	C4.13 # of US promotional events	0	1			2		
		Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017		
C4.14 Audio-visual on the project developed	0				1			
					Jan 2017			
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			
M4	BAHAMAS: Carry out tourism business and marketing training for MSMEs (i.e. financial management, etc.). Individuals trained.	175	Dec 2015			
M5	BELIZE: Pilot national BASIC bird guide training and certification in at least 3 sites (Cockscomb, St. Herman's, Crooked Tree)	3	Dec 2015			
M7	PARAGUAY: Complete national BASIC and ADVANCED bird guide training and certification.	2	Jun 2016			
M6	PROJECT WIDE: # of students participating in the environmental education programs related to birds: min = 2075	2075	Jun 2016			
M8	PROJECT WIDE: 3 birding festivals organized and carried out	3	Sep 2016			

[*] 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. Local Institutional risk. The permanence of local partners depends not only of their interest but also their capacity to provide counterpart funding. Although NAS performed an in-depth analysis of the local partners capacities in all aspects, external circumstances may drive them to step-down from the project.	Medium	NAS, together with MIF, will analyze the situation if it becomes real and will act together accordingly trying to help the local institution to stay in the project, or establishing the necessary steps to achieve the planned goals in case of the local partner stepping-down.	Project Guest
2. 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 Guest
3. Sector risks. Advertising and promotion are 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;	Medium	to be determined	Project Guest
4. 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 Guest
5. 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.	Low	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 Guest

PROJECT RISK LEVEL: Medium TOTAL NUMBER OF RISKS: 5 IN EFFECT RISKS: 5 NOT IN EFFECT RISKS: 0 MITIGATED RISKS: 0**SECTION 5: SUSTAINABILITY****Likelihood of project sustainability after project completion: P - 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:**

Giving talks on the project at different venues, networking with key stakeholders, getting coverage of our activities by the media and conducting bird guide trainings has resulted in the replication of project activities. In Colombia, USAID approved the development of the Northern Colombia Birding Trail to be executed by Audubon based on the structure of the IDB/FOMIN project; since then, Audubon, via a local partner, began bird guide trainings using the curriculum produced through this project. Another organization - JICA- will be training guides in the Tikal area of Guatemala, also using the curriculum. Finally, Bahamas National Trust will offer an additional course in North Andros, to accommodate participation by people in the north of the island. We are marketing the project sites to the

Audubon network; we expect that as people travel and let others know about their experience, more will want to travel, making the economic benefits flow well beyond 2017. Working with Ministries of Tourism has increased their willingness to prioritize this market sector; we hope this will represent more advertising dollars in the birding market.

SECTION 6: PRACTICAL LESSONS

<p>1. Upon finishing the prior conditions and requesting the first disbursement (6/2014), all of the project partners were excited to get started and over ambitious in the amount of activities, money and contracts they anticipated they could execute during a 6 month period; thus, they requested large disbursements. At 12 months after the 1st disbursement, the EA (Audubon) has yet to request a 2nd disbursement from the MIF, because we (are close to but) have not reached 80% expenditure of the first disbursement. The EA will conduct more oversight for future disbursement requests by local partners and then, if needed, the EA will adjust the request accordingly to ensure funds are expended in less than 6 months. Delays by government stakeholders on the accreditation process for bird guides also contributed to a late start in guide trainings and thus late expenditures.</p> <p>2. Due to the complexity of this project (6 budgets and sets of activities plus the logframe), Audubon created an activity coding system for efficient consolidation of backup documentation for technical and financial reporting which has proven to be critical. All project partners send backup documentation using the coding for naming their documents, thus saving hours of renaming. Having consistent and accepted naming, coding and activity definitions as early as possible (preferably during the project design phase) will save time during reporting periods.</p>	Relative to Implementation	Author Stewart, Sarah
	Implementation	Stewart, Sarah