

# PROJECT STATUS REPORT

JULY 2015 - DECEMBER 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

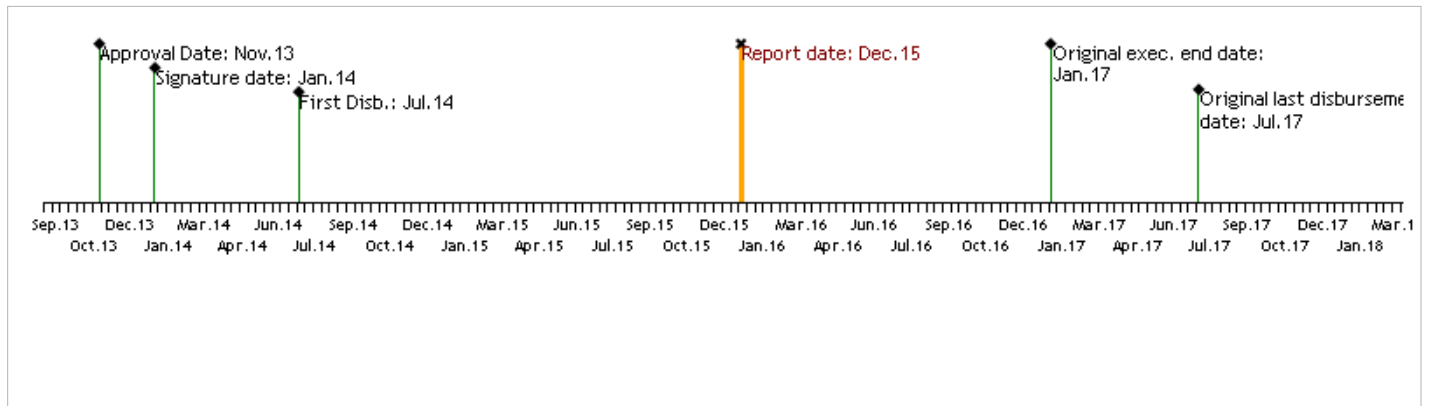
**Design Team Leader:**

FILIPPO BERARDI

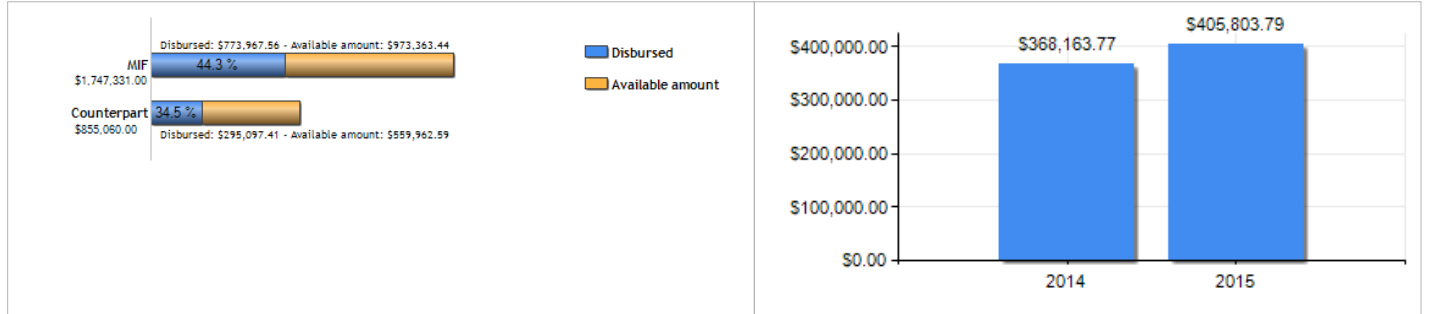
**Supervision Team Leader:**

ISABEL AUGÉ

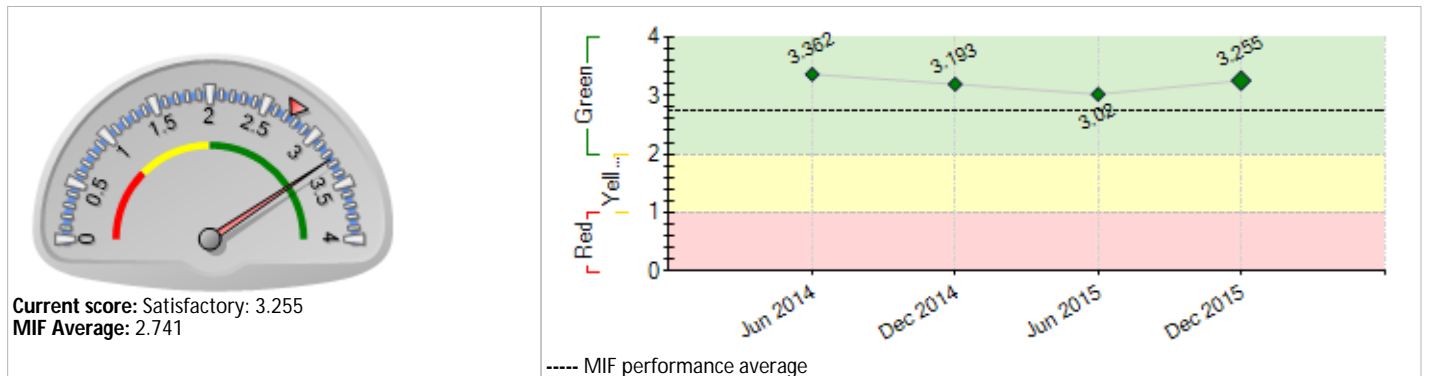
**PROJECT CYCLE**



**FUNDS**



**PERFORMANCE SCORE**



**EXTERNAL RISKS**

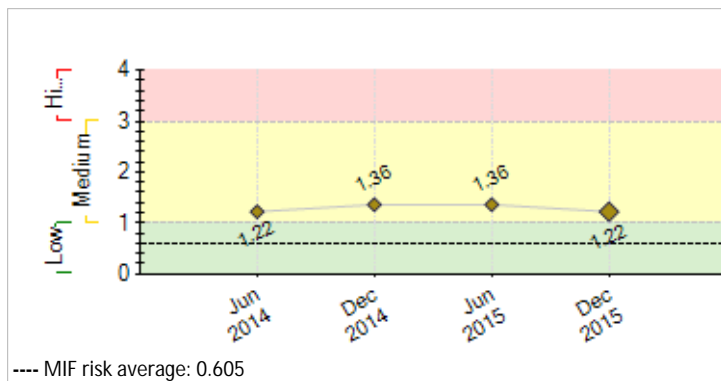
**INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY**

**Risk**

**Financial Management:** Medium

**Procurement:** High

**Technical Capacity:** Medium



## SECTION 2: PERFORMANCE

### Summary of project performance since inception

Audubon and its partners are strengthening 15 project sites to build the capacity for bird-based tourism while also working to increase market demand (C1). We produced a world-class bird guide training curriculum and trained 180 individual guides from rural communities surrounding key protected areas (M2, 3, 5) and trained an additional 240 individuals in marketing (M4) and customer service. We created 7 itineraries and identified 14 tour operators and/or hotels committed to supporting project sites and hiring local guides. Audubon gained endorsement and support by all 4 national governments for the trainings. Audubon is connecting the US birding market to the project sites through participation in international bird and tourism fairs in the US and abroad. The PBS Newshour aired an 8 minute segment featuring the project in The Bahamas. Overall, the project appeared in 9 local newspaper articles or online media (C2). We educated 750 adults and 4,000 children in local communities on the value and importance of birds (C3). Finally, we produced an economic analysis and valuation of the bird tourism market for each country (C4). Two critical actions through the end of the project include: working with tour operators to sell destinations; marketing sites to the Audubon network. We are moderately optimistic about achieving the final objectives, because a key variable to success is the number of visitors to project sites.

#### Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

The most important results during this period were the number of guides trained (194 guides achieved of 112 planned) and the marketing and outreach activities, most of them surpassing the value established for this moment in the implementation. One additional achievement, unforeseen, was the Bahamas government's declaration of Protected Area to a 50 acre site, as effect of this project and Audubon's action together with the local partner, the Bahamas National Trust. This achievement is in total alignment with the purpose of this project in terms of increasing the understanding and value of the natural capital to the local communities. Additionally, the other aspect of the purpose (to increase economic opportunities in rural areas by connecting communities to bird-based tourism markets) Audubon and its partners are achieving it through the bird guides graduating, the hotels and tour operators being reached and all the marketing being done (most of these indicators' values have been reached and surpassed).

### Summary of project performance in the last six months

Audubon and its partners continued to build the capacity of bird tourism service providers (C1), completed the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> of 8 milestones, and developed a monitoring and evaluation system. 180 individuals completed the basic-level guide course this semester, which was carried out in 12 locations. Trainings are ongoing in Paraguay. Partners in Bahamas, Belize and the Petén trained 240 individuals in marketing and customer service. Because of this project, governments have offered additional training to complement ours and are facilitating guide licenses in our project sites. Audubon continues to connect project sites to the US birding market through communications to the Audubon network (website, chapter newsletter) and participation in international bird and tourism fairs (Ohio, England) and conferences (Guatemala) (C2). Partners educated 1000 more adults/children in bird awareness and promoted the use of eBird by 36 more bird guides (C3). Partners in Belize and the Petén met in December to initiate cross-border marketing of project sites (C4). With our GIS team, we identified the structure and began testing of the monitoring system. Currently, there are some delayed activities (tourism plans, birding trails, community engagement strategies, collection of tourists' feedback), due to a longer project startup time than estimated. Over the next semester, we will focus on pushing the marketing component and preparing ways to disseminate knowledge gained through the project.

#### 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
<b>Purpose:</b> <b>1</b> 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	194	
		Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017	Dec 2015	
	R.2 % of guides rated as good or excellent by visitors.	0	60			75	0	
		Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017	Dec 2015	
	R.3 % of visitors rating visit to site as good or excellent .	0	60			75	0	
		Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017	Dec 2015	
	R.4 % Change in annual visitation to project sites.	0	10			10	0	
		Feb 2014	Feb 2017			Feb 2017	Dec 2015	
	R.5 Percent of community members indicating positive attitudes toward natural capital of protected areas and national parks.	40				50	40	
		Jan 2014				Feb 2014	Dec 2015	

<b>Component 1:</b> Improved structure and capacity of bird-based tourism MSMEs (supply side development)  <b>Weight:</b> 51%  <b>Classification:</b> Satisfactory	C1.11	Basic and advanced bird guiding training program developed	0	4	4		4	13	Finished
	C1.12	# of guides trained (BASIC)	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2015	On Course
	C1.13	# of guides trained (ADVANCED)	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C1.14	# of people participating in English for tour guides course	4	4	9		30	0	On Course
	C1.15	# of people participating in the apprenticeship program	Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2014	On Course
	C1.16	# of individuals trained in business and marketing	0	50	130		130	38	Delayed
	C1.17	# of individuals trained in hospitality (incl., cooking, customer service, etc)	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C1.18	# of site-level tourism development plans	0	25	25		50	16	On Course
	C1.19	# Audubon members providing feedback on bird tourism experience at project sites	Feb 2014	Jan 2016	Jan 2017		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C1.110	# individuals with internships	0	30	175		175	93	On Course
	C1.111	# sites with birding interpretation and trail signage	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C1.112	# of individuals trained in hospitality (incl., cooking, customer service, etc)	0	180			200	146	On Course
	C1.113	# of site-level tourism development plans	Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C1.114	# Audubon members providing feedback on bird tourism experience at project sites	0	4	4		4	0	Delayed
<b>Component 2:</b> Marketing (demand side development)  <b>Weight:</b> 24%  <b>Classification:</b> High Satisfactory	C2.11	Value of advertising by governments in Audubon and other internationally distributed magazines	0				32450	32450	On Course
	C2.12	# of stories in Audubon magazine on project sites	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C2.13	# Audubon chapters reached by project marketing	0	467	467		467	467	On Course
	C2.14	# of hotels and tour operators including project sites in tour packages	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C2.15	# of tourism and birding fairs where project is promoted	0	12			24	15	On Course
	C2.16	# of marketing events hosted by Audubon magazine or chapters	Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C2.17	# of articles or programs in other media outlets highlighting project sites	0	3			6	7	On Course
	C2.18	# of birding trails developed	Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C2.19	# of government or industry websites including content about project	0	3			6	5	On Course
	C2.110	# of birding festivals	Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C2.111	# of articles or programs in other media outlets highlighting project sites	0	1	2		3	9	On Course
	C2.112	# birding trails developed	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C2.113	# of government or industry websites including content about project	0	4	12		12	9	On Course
	C2.114	# of birding festivals	Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
<b>Component 3:</b> Conservation outreach, education and citizen science.  <b>Weight:</b> 15%  <b>Classification:</b> Satisfactory	C3.11	# of individuals attending conservation programs on birds (adults)	0	300	720		1180	748	On Course
	C3.12	# of individuals registering their sightings on e-Bird or in park database	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
	C3.13	# of students participating in environmental education programs related to birds.	0	15	45		80	68	On Course
	C3.14	Community engagement strategies developed.	Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course
<b>Component 4:</b> Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy.  <b>Weight:</b> 10%  <b>Classification:</b> Satisfactory	C4.11	Report and fact sheet (1 fact sheet each country) on economic benefits of bird-based tourism	0				4	4	Finished
	C4.12	Project Infographic developed	Jan 2014				Jan 2017	Jun 2015	On Course
	C4.13	# of US promotional events	0	1			2	0	Delayed
	C4.14	Audio-visual on the project developed	Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Dec 2015	On Course

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
M4 [*] BAHAMAS: Carry out tourism business and marketing training for MSMEs (i.e. financial management, etc.). Individuals trained.	60	Jan 2016	27	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. 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
2. 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
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 Guest
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.	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
<b>PROJECT RISK LEVEL:</b> Medium <b>TOTAL NUMBER OF RISKS:</b> 5 <b>IN EFFECT RISKS:</b> 4 <b>NOT IN EFFECT RISKS:</b> 0 <b>MITIGATED RISKS:</b> 1			

## 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:

To ensure sustainability of key aspects of the project, Audubon has directly engaged and involved governments -- Ministry of Tourism of the Bahamas, Belize Tourism Board, INTECAP Guatemala (national training institute), and JICA (Japanese development agency)—in many of the project activities. Because of this, governments have perceived a longer term value in the project and, therefore, have invested in aspects such as training, which has helped to strengthen and expand the number of beneficiaries. For example, INTECAP offered their community guide licensing course this year in three towns in Atitlan in conjunction with the bird guide course, so that participants could receive a guide license upon completion of both courses. INTECAP publicly and officially adopted the bird guide curriculum and will offer the course in the future. Our curriculum and training have also been integrated into other government and development entities' programming (BahamaHost, BTB training program) to ensure future cohorts of bird guides.

## SECTION 6: PRACTICAL LESSONS

	Relative to Implementation	Author
1. Training The EU has served as a conduit to share lessons learned when project partners are implementing similar activities. In the case of the bird guide training activity, lessons include: 1) Course length of more than 5 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 among participants can keep them engaged and motivated between training sessions; 4) The use of a template and 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 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 full engagement.		Stewart, Sarah
2. Reporting- Some of the project partners recognized the need to create a tool/template to collect beneficiary data (location, gender, etc.) early in the project cycle; this serves to seamlessly fill in the PSR. The use of a standardized geoform to capture attendance, gender, location, etc. would be very useful for regional projects. Shortly after fulfilling prior conditions, FOMIN could offer a webinar to the EU on how to complete the PSR, suggest templates to collect beneficiary information and perhaps connect a new EU with a seasoned EU to give input for completing the first PSR.	Implementation	Stewart, Sarah
3. Monitoring system- Initiating the project baseline earlier in the project schedule is essential, because the creation and use of a project-wide monitoring system is dependent on that information. For organizations that	Implementation	Stewart, Sarah

do not have an established project level monitoring system, the creation of a new one can require negotiations among many stakeholders and last from 6-12 months. Developing the system in a series of phases allowed us to ensure buy-in by all the stakeholders. Having support from FOMIN during the development of the M&E system was very helpful. It would have been useful to see other examples of monitoring systems created for FOMIN projects and talk to others at the beginning of the development to find out ways to shorten the process.