

PROJECT STATUS REPORT

JANUARY 2016 - JUNE 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

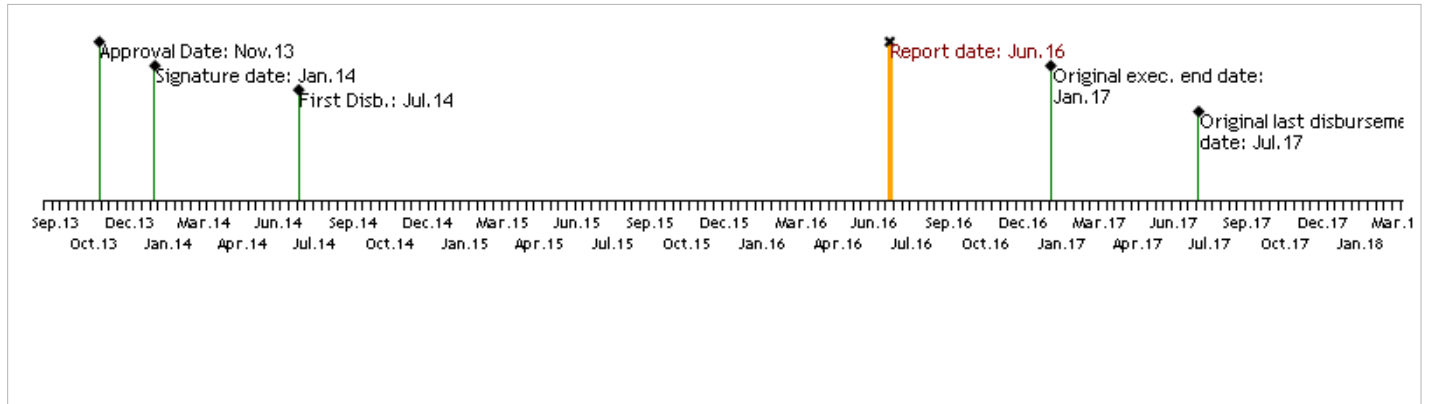
Design Team Leader:

FILIPPO BERARDI

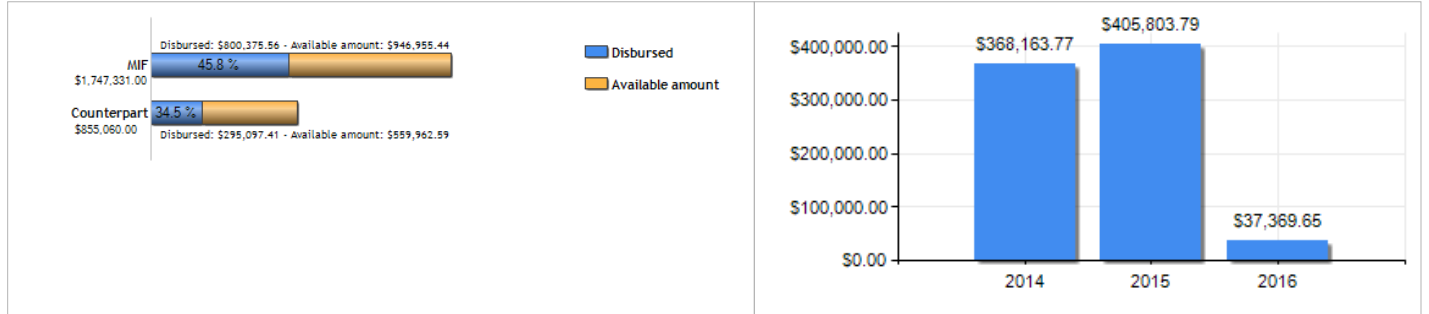
Supervision Team Leader:

ISABEL AUGÉ

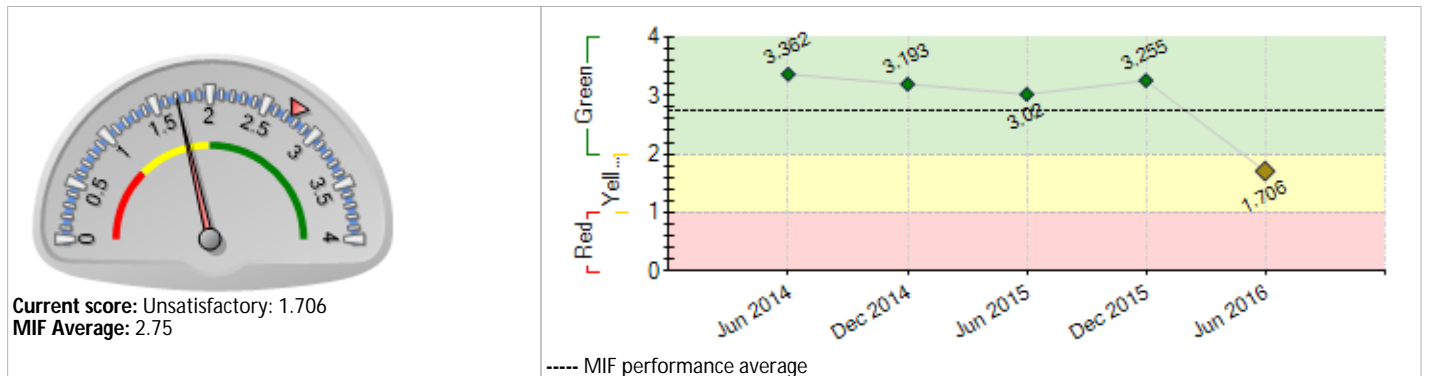
PROJECT CYCLE



FUNDS



PERFORMANCE SCORE



EXTERNAL RISKS

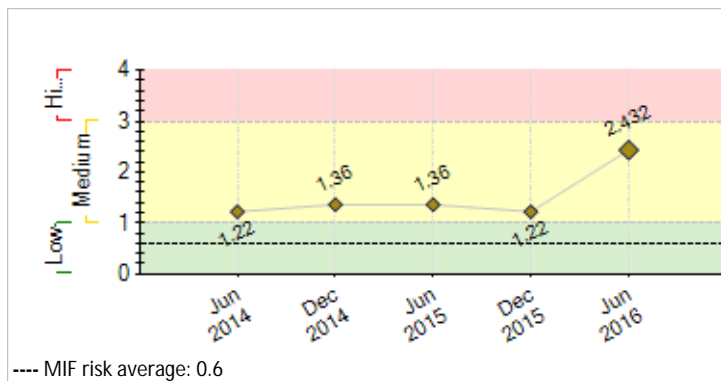
INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY

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 include: 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) that has been adopted by MOT in all four countries, 268 community guides graduating from the basic guide training (M2, C1), environmental education and community engagement programs reaching 1546 adults and 5597 children (C3 and M6), economic analysis of the bird tourism market for the first time in all 4 countries (C4); the development and adoption of seven tour itineraries by local and international tour operators, such as Perrillo Tours, and hotels committed to supporting project sites and hiring our trained guides (C4). A major risk is the attraction of tourists to the sites for sustainability, which is being handled through promotion/marketing. This includes nine birdfairs, 15 media mentions plus an additional nine mentions by government/industry websites, and a PBS Newshour segment (C2). Audubon is moderately optimistic about achieving the project objectives, as we are still developing the promotional component and finishing trainings. Two critical activities through the remainder of the project are the development of marketing materials and launching trips to the sites in partnership with tour operators.

Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

NAS is in permanent contact with MIF not only providing periodic reports in-person on the project execution, but also coordinating activities and solutions to the issues that come up. Results are being achieved at different rates in the different sites, making it somehow difficult to report within the established deadlines, due to the very distinct characteristics and situations of each place.

Summary of project performance in the last six months

Audubon and its partners reached, and in some cases surpassed, the goal numbers for indicators within C2 and C3, and completed an additional two milestones (M6, M7). Bird guide training courses in Paraguay were completed this period, graduating 74 basic guides and nine advanced guides (C1, M7). The project has reached an additional 744 adults and 1598 students in local communities through environmental and conservation education opportunities (C3 and M6). Advanced guide training courses were completed in The Bahamas and with one partner, Petén, in Guatemala (C1). Belize and the Guatemalan partner in Atitlan will finish advanced guide trainings for next reporting period. Audubon presented the project at the Americas Partnership Meeting of BirdLife International to all 19 Americas Partners and the BirdLife Secretariat and Americas Secretariat staff (C2). M5 has been delayed due to timing and poor attendance in the first round of the classes, so Audubon and the Bahamian partner are in the process of developing a new plan to fulfill this milestone. Goal numbers for a couple of the trainings (C1) might not be reached by the end of the project due to an original overestimation of individuals able to participate in the trainings. Efforts will be made in the final semester to carry out additional trainings that engage more individuals. The major pending activities are the marketing trainings in The Bahamas (M4), and the development of marketing materials on the project (C4).

Comments from the Supervision Team Leader

Agree with the Executing Agency comments

At the very end of the reporting period NAS announced the departure of the Project Coordinator, and agreed her replacement with the MIF. The newly appointed coordinator has been with NAS and very close to the project since the beginning of implementation, making it a natural substitution. Although she is new in the position, is rapidly getting up to date in the details of the position. This substitution is not creating visible delays in the implementation and reporting thus far, and MIF does not expect major issues related to this matter. Due to this situation, MIF agreed to grant a short extension for the presentation of NAS' financial statements and justification of funds/new disbursement request.

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	295
		R.2	% of guides rated as good or excellent by visitors.	Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017	Jun 2016
				0	60			75	0
		R.3	% of visitors rating visit to site as good or excellent .	Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017	Dec 2015
				0	60			75	0
		R.4	% Change in annual visitation to project sites.	Feb 2014	Feb 2016			Feb 2017	Dec 2015
				0	10			10	0
		R.5	Percent of community members indicating positive attitudes toward natural capital of protected areas and national parks.	Feb 2014	Feb 2017			Feb 2017	Dec 2015
				40				50	40
				Jan 2014				Feb 2014	Jun 2016

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	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	268	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C1.13	# of guides trained (ADVANCED)	4	4	9		30	27	On Course
			Jan 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C1.14	# of people participating in English for tour guides course	0	50	130		130	98	Delayed
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C1.15	# people participating in the apprenticeship program	0	25	25		50	27	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2016	Jan 2017		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C1.16	# of individuals trained in business and marketing	0	30	175		175	125	Delayed
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C1.17	# of individuals trained in hospitality (incl., cooking, costumer service, etc)	0	180			200	176	Delayed
			Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
Component 2: Marketing (demand side development) Weight: 24% Classification: High Satisfactory	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	12	Delayed
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C1.110	# individuals with internships	0	2			4	0	Delayed
			Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C1.111	# sites with birding interpretation and trail signage	0	2	7		8	5	Delayed
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	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	Jun 2016	
	C2.13	# Audubon chapters reached by project marketing	0	467	467		467	467	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
Component 3: Conservation outreach, education and citizen science. Weight: 15% Classification: High Satisfactory	C2.14	# of hotels and tour operators including project sites in tour packages	0	12			24	26	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C2.15	# of tourism and birding fairs where project is promoted	0	3			6	9	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C2.16	# of marketing events hosted by Audubon magazine or chapters	0	3			6	5	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C2.17	# of articles or programs in other media outlets highlighting project sites	0	1	2		3	16	Finished
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C2.18	# birding trails developed	0	4	6		6	2	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Dec 2015	
	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	
	C2.110	# of birding festivals	0	3			3	5	Finished
			Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
Component 4: Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy. Weight: 10% Classification: Satisfactory	C3.11	# of individuals attending conservation programs on birds (adults)	0	300	720		1180	1492	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C3.12	# of individuals registering their sightings on e-Bird or in park database	0	15	45		80	83	On Course
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 2016		Jan 2017	Jun 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	5	5		5	2	Delayed
			Feb 2014	Jan 2015	Jan 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
							Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
	C4.13	# of US promotional events	0	1			2	0	Delayed
			Feb 2014	Jan 2016			Jan 2017	Jun 2016	
Component 4: Knowledge Management and Communications Strategy. Weight: 10% Classification: Satisfactory	C4.14	Audio-visual on the project developed	0				1	0	On Course
							Jan 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
M4 [*] BAHAMAS: Carry out tourism business and marketing training for MSMEs (i.e. financial management, etc.). Individuals trained.	60	Jan 2016	27	Dec 2015	Not Achieved
M6 [*] PROJECT WIDE: # of students participating in the environmental education programs related to birds: min = 2075	2075	Jul 2016			
M7 [*] PARAGUAY: Complete national BASIC and ADVANCED bird guide training and certification.	2	Jul 2016			
M8 PROJECT WIDE: 3 birding festivals organized and carried out	3	Sep 2016	5	Jun 2016	Achieved

[*] 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;	High	to be determined	Coordinador del proyecto
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;	High	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.	Coordinador del proyecto
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.	High	to be determined	Coordinador del proyecto
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.	Coordinador del proyecto

PROJECT RISK LEVEL: High **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:

To ensure sustainability for the project and the empowerment and use of local guides and communities, Audubon and its partners have engaged and involved governments that have formally endorsed and/or committed to invest in the bird guide training program—Ministry of Tourism (MOT) in The Bahamas, Belize MOT where it has been adopted as the national specialization training license for bird guides, INTECAP (national training institute) and the MOT in Guatemala, and JICA (Japanese development agency). These commitments guarantee the replication of the program in the future, and allows governments to perceive a longer term value in the project for investment purposes. It also allows the strengthening and expansion of the number of beneficiaries reached. For example, INTECAP offered their community guide licensing course in 2015 in three towns in Atitlán, Guatemala in conjunction with the bird guide course, so that participants received a guide license upon completion of both courses. Our curriculum and training program have also been adopted in other countries, such as in Colombia, and there is IDB interest to replicate the program in other areas in The Bahamas.

SECTION 6: PRACTICAL LESSONS

	Relative to	Author
1. Training regarding Milestone 4: Engaging communities in the Bahamas is challenging – specifically Milestone 4, “Carry out tourism business and marketing training for MSMEs (i.e. financial management, etc.) Individuals trained.” There were 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	Stewart, Sarah
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.	Implementation	Stewart, Sarah

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.

3. 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 4-6 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 full engagement

4. 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 EA with a seasoned EA to give input for completing the first PSR. The conjunction of the activity results to the component results to the results/impact results would also streamline the process and allow for greater understanding of the reporting requirements.

5. 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 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 and ensure usability.

Implementation Stewart, Sarah

Design Stewart, Sarah

Design Stewart, Sarah