

FINAL PROJECT COMPLETION REPORT

I. BASIC DATA

Organization Name: BirdLife International

Project Title: Building a national constituency for bird and biodiversity conservation in Madagascar

Date of Report: December 2003

II. OPENING REMARKS

Provide any opening remarks that may assist in the review of this report.

Acronyms or special terms:

BIMP BirdLife International Madagascar Programme – a national programme reporting to the BirdLife International secretariat (not an autonomous NGO, and therefore not a BirdLife Partner in the strict sense used by BirdLife). “BirdLife International xxxx Programme” has been approved as the standard branding for country programmes, and so BIMP replaces BMP used in the proposal.

Asity Malagasy bird conservation NGO, established in 1996, which had applied to be admitted to the BirdLife Partnership. Asity was identified as the most promising NGO to form the basis of the eventual BirdLife Partner, and therefore the project worked with Asity as well as BIMP, with a view to merging the two at some future point. Asity is the “selected Malagasy NGO” referred to in the proposal.

IBA Important Bird Area (a site identified as of global conservation importance for birds, based on standard criteria)

An objective of the project was to create the nucleus of a national organization that could ultimately (but not in the lifetime of the project) be admitted to the BirdLife network, integrating the strengths of the staff or organizations already present into a single organization, without losing any. A short explanation of how this process took place follows, as it is integral to understanding the whole report; key players are BIMP and Asity (defined above).

The project quickly confirmed Asity’s suitability to be involved in further developments. In March 2003, Asity’s general assembly approved in principle a proposal from its president to collaborate with BIMP, without change in institutional identity, for two years, as a test for a closer relationship later on. Modes of operation, responsibilities and project priorities for this collaboration were planned in a workshop in June 2003, attended by most Asity members and all BIMP staff, along with other stakeholder and the press at an opening session. A summary of the workshop is given in section VII (Additional comments and recommendations). This provided the necessary mandate for further activity and planning to include Asity alongside BIMP. Accordingly, from then on, most activities were carried out by Asity and BIMP jointly (for example, attendance at BirdLife’s Africa Partnership meeting in September 2003), and this will continue.

III. ACHIEVEMENT OF PROJECT PURPOSE

Project Purpose: A strong, independent and sustainable BirdLife network organization contributes significantly to the conservation of important biodiversity in Madagascar

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Purpose-level:	
1. An agreed programme of training and development delivered to the BMP and personnel of a selected Malagasy NGO	Achieved. Training needs assessment was followed by the following training: communications (internship in UK), fundraising (internship in Nairobi), IBA monitoring (training event in Kenya), IBA data management (training event in Kenya), English (classes locally), office management, institutional development, financial management and accounting, project development (1:1 support in Madagascar). Beneficiaries were BIMP and Asity staff.
2. BMP, working with elements of a Malagasy NGO, has a functioning biodiversity conservation programme based on updated IBA inventories and priorities	Achieved. Wetlands conservation programme launched in July 2002 and greatly expanded in April 2003, including national awareness-raising and advocacy relevant to all wetlands, as well as action at specific sites. Managed by BIMP; Asity involved as subcontractor. Ten additional IBAs identified since national inventory (1999). All data being added to IBA database following database training in Kenya, August 2003.
3. BMP, working with elements of a Malagasy NGO, has site conservation projects at two or more IBAs	Achieved. Site action at Mahavavy – Kinkony wetlands IBA since July 2002, with activities begun at Mangoky – Ihotry wetlands IBA in November 2003.
4. BMP, working with elements of a Malagasy NGO, implements targeted surveys at data-deficient, high priority IBAs.	Achieved. Surveys at Mahavavy Delta, Lake Kinkony and nearby lakes. Discovered record numbers of several threatened species, including the almost unknown Sakalava Rail (photographed, filmed and two nests found).
5. BMP employs at least five full-time technical and administrative staff	Achieved. Six Malagasy staff employed (director, biodiversity advisor, administrator, biologist, fundraiser and communications officer) alongside 4 support staff (cleaner and 3 watchmen)
6. Staff from BMP and a Malagasy NGO are, in sum, in a position to be assessed for suitability to form a BirdLife International network organization.	Achieved. BIMP and Asity both stable and operational, allowing assessments in February and June by head of BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat (H. Thompson) and Chair of Council for the African Partnership (Kinfe Abebe). Recommendations were made, then discussed and turned into strategy and programme at a workshop in June 2003. Conclusion was that a single Malagasy NGO, created by merging of BIMP and Asity, may well prove admissible to the BirdLife network after 2 or more years of monitored collaboration.

Describe the success of the project in terms of achieving its intended impact objective and performance indicators.

BIMP and Asity are increasingly strong, independent and sustainable organizations. Although neither is or was expected to be a BirdLife Partner, they are part of the BirdLife network; for example the BIMP director and Asity president both attended the BirdLife Africa Partnership meeting in September 2003, and contributed to the BirdLife Africa Programme 2004-2008 in ways permitted by the Bylaws of the meeting. Asity cannot yet be admitted to the BirdLife NGO network (and this was never a possibility for BIMP as it is not an NGO), as according to BirdLife rules a longer period (2 years) of collaboration is needed before this can be agreed. However, progress towards this goal could hardly be better, as launching of the necessary collaboration was agreed

during the project, there is strong support for the creation of a single NGO based on the current nucleus of BIMP and Asity, and joint action has begun.

Through their increasing capacity, BIMP and Asity are contributing significantly to the conservation of important biodiversity in Madagascar in several ways, for example, by:

- direct site action – the wetlands project in the Mahavavy-Kinkony IBA,
- advocacy – the attention on wetland conservation has contributed to a general increase in conservation attention on these highly threatened ecosystems
- participation in national networks such as the Palissandre Group – defining the very important new protected area category of Site de Conservation.

Were there any unexpected impacts (positive or negative)?

The leverage of the capacity-building programme has been very large, not only in financial terms. As the above shows, a capacity-building programme can deliver direct conservation gains within its lifetime, but is also a very good platform to attract additional funding and relationships. The adoption as a key strategy of capacity development for an autonomous national NGO has attracted strong government buy-in for BirdLife’s programme. Madagascar wetlands were selected as the theme for the 2003 British Birdwatching Fair (BBWF), attracting considerable funds (expected to be around £140-150,000) and also exceptional awareness-raising opportunities and an expected boost for ecotourism in Madagascar; the selection of Madagascar wetlands by the BBWF organizers (with very stiff competition from other projects world-wide) was based partly on the existence of the capacity-building programme, which added much value to the event and emphasized its relevance to BirdLife’s highest priorities for network development.

The project catalyzed support to national and visiting scientists and conservationists. The BIMP team helped at least four studies or visitors to plan and/or carry out important conservation work: projects on the Eleonora’s Falcon, Madagascar Plover and Sakalava Rail, Eastern rainforest of the Mantadia-Zahamena corridor, and photo-reportage of the Mahavavy delta wetlands.

IV. PROJECT OUTPUTS

Project Outputs:

- Output 1: Nucleus of an effective national conservation NGO partner is available
- Output 2: Capacity of existing NGOs and staff for conservation of IBAs is enhanced
- Output 3: Information on BirdLife International and IBAs in Madagascar is widely available (nationally and internationally) and used
- Output 4: Capacity is strengthened for institutional development
- Output 5: The project is well managed by the BirdLife International secretariat

Planned vs. Actual Performance

Indicator	Actual at Completion
Output 1:	
1. Two current technical and administrative staff (excluding watchmen and driver) maintained	Same two technical and administrative staff (excluding watchmen and driver) maintained
2. Four additional technical and administrative staff hired	Four new technical and administrative staff hired.
3. Contracts and working conditions accepted by staff	All contracts valid, accepted, and working practices formalized in “Règlement Général du Personnel” document.
4. BMP and NGO staff are aware of and accept BirdLife criteria for network	Criteria explained in detail at several meetings, including special session at a workshop involving

organizations	BIMP and Asity in June 2003.
Output 2:	
1. BMP and NGO capacity reviewed by team from BirdLife International partnership.	Review completed. Main review in February 2003 by head of BirdLife Africa Partnership Secretariat (H. Thompson). Follow-up on key topics by HT and Council for the African Partnership (Chair and Vice-chair) in June and September.
2. Needs assessment and capital equipment available for maintenance of an effective biodiversity conservation programme	Needs assessed and capital equipment bought for maintenance of an effective biodiversity conservation programme.
3. Highest priority activities identified in training needs assessment carried out	Training in communications, fundraising, IBA monitoring, IBA data management, office management, institutional development, financial management and accounting, project development and English.
4. Targeted surveys in at least 2 data-deficient, high priority biodiversity sites used as testing/training grounds for BMP/NGO staff	3 surveys at one site, imminent for second. Surveys during project period were restricted to Mahavavy-Kinkony, a highly variable site requiring several visits at different seasons, led by BIMP. Survey of second site (Mangoky-Ihotry) beginning in November 2003, led by Asity.
5. IBA inventory reviewed and updated, and priorities re-assessed in light of information since 1999	Inventory reviewed, and ten new IBAs proposed. One, Bongolava forests, considered a high-priority site for site action. Others such as Makira Plateau are already proposed as new protected areas. Proposed new IBAs need to be ratified by BirdLife secretariat before formal recognition.
Output 3:	
1. Use of BirdLife International data by decision-makers and donors in policy documents and statements	Further copies of 1999 IBA inventory provided to new government officials. No statements are known specifically to have mentioned BirdLife data, but at World Parks Congress (September 2003) President Ravalomanana announced a 3-fold planned increase in protected area coverage, and specifically mentioned wetlands as a neglected area that would gain special attention. BirdLife's efforts to promote wetlands surely contributed to this.
2. Information on the functioning and strategies of the BirdLife International partnership, and its vision for Madagascar, disseminated among decision-makers, donors and national and international NGOs	BirdLife books, leaflets and brochures disseminated, and this backed up with media coverage (TV and newspapers) and face-to-face meetings with decision-makers, donors and national and international NGOs, achieving good buy-in from government for BirdLife's strategy.
3. Citations of BirdLife International Madagascar data in national and international publications	Extent of achievement not determined. Data used in various publications, but no information available on how many.
4. Communication plan developed, with advocacy and awareness-raising targets and indicators set	Communications programme developed for wetlands programme (e.g. brochure produced, programme for local radio broadcasts initiated) and for overall BirdLife programme, but not formalized into single document with targets and indicators. This remains a priority, and will be done in the next few months.
5. Funding proposals for implementing communication plan submitted	Funding for wetlands programme (especially British Birdwatching Fair) raised during CEPF project will cover implementation of most communications

	outputs planned.
6. Needs assessment and capital equipment available to deliver communication outputs	Equipment and skills available. Hardware and software acquired (computer, software, scanner, DV camera, CD writer etc); training given through internship in UK for new communications officer.
7. BirdLife's IBA database integrated so far as possible with CI's Madagascar Biodiversity Network (MBN), and staff trained in the used of both these tools, and in the integration.	Agreement reached to share data, as part of higher level BirdLife-CI collaboration. BirdLife data (global) are being reorganized at present, and so sharing them is currently impossible, but will be easy when the reorganization is complete.
Output 4:	
1. A new institutional structure, either created or modified from existing structures, is proposed	Achieved at two levels. Completely new institutional structure established for BIMP. Needs (minimal) identified for modifications at Asity if it is to be eligible to be a BirdLife Partner. Potential structure for new NGO created from merger of BIMP and Asity identified (but only to be proposed when any merger is actively considered, which will not be for 2 years at least).
2. Locally appropriate mechanisms for NGO governance, membership, fundraising, management and carrying out technical work are proposed, and highest priority actions carried out.	Clear understanding of BirdLife principles and current mechanisms for Asity and BIMP (of the aspects mentioned in this indicator, NGO governance and membership are not applicable to BIMP, but all other subjects are). Needs (minimal) identified for modifications at Asity if it is to be eligible to be a BirdLife Partner. As for previous indicator, it would have been premature to propose changes to working mechanisms of Asity at this stage.
3. Needs assessment and capital equipment available to maintain an efficient office	Needs assessed and capital equipment obtained to maintain an efficient office.
4. General fundraising strategy developed, with funding targets and indicators set	Funding strategy for Asity-BIMP collaboration developed in June 2003 workshop, in which BIMP fundraiser will work for the joint BIMP-Asity programme. Further plans made during Nairobi internship in August.
5. Five-year strategic/development plan and work programme developed for embryonic NGO, with timetable and budgets set	Agreement reached at Strategic Planning workshop (June 2003) was for a two-year period of collaboration between BIMP and Asity. Programme in development is for this period, not five years; elements have been agreed, such as the work at Mangoky and the use of the BIMP fundraiser for both BIMP and Asity fundraising. BIMP has developed a five-year Accord de Collaboration (MoU) with Malagasy government/parastatal partners (Direction Générale des Eaux et Forêts, and Association Nationale de Gestion des Aires Protégées), which makes specific provision for a change in the status of BirdLife's representation in Madagascar (from country programme to network member NGO) without compromising the agreement.
6. 4 funding proposals for IBA conservation action submitted	11 proposals submitted, of which most prepared jointly between BIMP and secretariat HQ, but 3 by BIMP only. These cover wetlands programme and capacity building; proposals for work at other IBAs in preparation. Donors approached: British Birdwatching Fair 2003 (successful), UNDP-GEF (submitted, long process

	continuing), CEPF (concept approved, full proposal in preparation), Tubney's charitable trust (successful), Guernsey Overseas Aid Committee (rejected), Mitsubishi Corporation Fund (rejected), Macarthur (2 concepts rejected), CI-CBC Madagascar (3 proposals submitted for further capacity building and networking for BIMP and Asity), Swedish Club 300 (proposal in preparation for Bongolava forest).
7. Funds secured to cover core costs until June 2005	Wetlands project funding and British Birdwatching Fair will cover most of core costs until 2006; funds for some further needs currently sought.
Output 5:	
1. Support to in-country outputs is provided	Intensive support provided by frequent email contact with all technical staff. Further support through 6 person-visits to Madagascar by BirdLife secretariat staff (from UK or Nairobi office), and two internships for BIMP staff (in UK or Nairobi office).
2. Strategic plan for future BirdLife secretariat and other supporting BirdLife Partners' role is developed ("Country Co-ordination Plan")	Country Co-ordination Plan approved by Council for the Africa Partnership (CAP) in October 2002. Plans further presented and endorsed at BirdLife Global Council in April 2003 and CAP meeting in September 2003. This "Madagascar model" for integration of country programmes and new NGOs is a very important test case for the rapid development of strong NGOs in countries lacking BirdLife partners.
3. Three-monthly technical reports are approved by donors	Four reports submitted, covering July 2002 – June 2003, all approved.
4. End-of-project audit shows that funds were fully spent on their agreed purposes	Funds fully spent on agreed purposes.

Describe the success of the project in terms of delivering the intended outputs.

The project was highly successful in delivering its outputs. The nucleus of an effective national conservation NGO partner is clearly present, and is beginning to achieve results on the ground, with greatly increased capacity for both conservation action and (especially) institutional development. A handover of local ownership of the activities was very noticeable as the project progressed; initially, secretariat supervision was very close, but is now much less so.

Were any outputs unrealized? If so, how has this affected the overall impact of the project?

Output 3 – Information on BirdLife International and IBAs in Madagascar is widely available (nationally and internationally) and used – was not achieved as fully as the others. Information on the structure and functioning of BirdLife was well disseminated and promoted, but BirdLife's wealth of data less so. This was partly a result of the ongoing reorganization of BirdLife's data holdings, which is expected to be finally completed in March 2004. Further efforts to disseminate and promote the IBA survey results (in the 1999 and 2001 books), which are unique and under-rated, are needed.

The insistence by the National Association for Protected Area Management that BIMP should participate in the Palissandre Group – defining the very important new protected area category of Site de Conservation – is also a sign that BirdLife's work is recognized and respected at the highest levels. However, one donor rejected BIMP's concept proposals on the grounds that it was only funding organizations with a "proven track record of working in the country"; and in news releases issued by various agencies in response the President Ravalomanana's protected areas pledge in September 2003, Asity was not mentioned among the leading national environmental NGOs in Madagascar. It may be true that BIMP's and Asity's capacity and levels of

programme development do not yet compare with those of the bigger players, but more advocacy will be justified in future, to do justice to our achievements and capacity.

V. SAFEGUARD POLICY ASSESSMENTS

Provide a summary of the implementation of any required action toward the environmental and social safeguard policies within the project.

None applicable

VI. LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE PROJECT

Describe any lessons learned during the various phases of the project. Consider lessons both for future projects, as well as for CEPF's future performance.

Project Design Process: (aspects of the project design that contributed to its success/failure)

- The project was well designed, drawing strongly on BirdLife's experience in strategic planning and capacity development of NGOs.
- Retaining an output on project management and technical support was helpful (output 5) to keep track of the secretariat and Africa Partnership's role.
- The decision to appoint key staff from the previous BirdLife (Projet ZICOMA) team, but then recruit additional staff openly, was successful in ensuring a solid BirdLife "core" in the team, but allowing new skills to be added.
- The decision not to have a permanent expatriate technical adviser was successful in ensuring national ownership and compatibility with Asity (national NGO); at no time was this ever questioned. However, more time should have been budgeted for headquarters staff time (country programme officer): 50-75% (not one month, or <10%) of the time of a headquarters staff member would have been justified, and still much cheaper than an permanent adviser.

Project Execution: (aspects of the project execution that contributed to its success/failure)

- For training, internships, BirdLife network events and on-the-job training were preferred over training courses delivered by external agencies. This proved economical and generally successful.
- Involvement of the BirdLife Africa Partnership was critical to the NGO development objectives, because the Partners (rather than secretariat) are in the best position to demonstrate the value of joining the network, and also because the Partnership itself determines whether or not a Malagasy organization will be admitted. This took place in two main ways. The chair of the Council for the African Partnership (Kinfe Abebe of the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society) attended the BIMP-Asity collaboration workshop in June 2003, and was able to explain at first hand the benefits to national NGOs of being a BirdLife Partner. The president of Asity (together with the director of BIMP) attended the Africa Partnership meeting in September, meeting representatives of all the Partners, and participating in the regional planning process.
- Involvement of the BirdLife African Partnership secretariat in Nairobi (that is, the Africa Division of the BirdLife secretariat, as distinct from the Partnership itself, as described above) was also critical to NGO development objectives, because the staff have unique experience in facilitating the development and cohesion of national NGOs and networks. Key staff directly involved through visits to Madagascar and hosting internships in Nairobi were Hazell Thompson (head) and Maaiké Mantén (institutional fundraiser for Africa).
- Close cooperation and frequent communication between the BIMP team (and latterly also Asity) and the secretariat headquarters helped to ensure success. Attention to detail and rapid correspondence were key parts of this, and so it was crucial that the country

programme officer (project manager) in UK was able to allocate the necessary time. This work entails considerable UK-based costs and may be seen as administration, making it hard to fund. However, as this report makes clear, the support given is in fact largely technical, and the country programme officer system provides an economical way to provide the support needed.

- The advice and support from CI as a like-minded NGO with a strong presence in Madagascar, and from CEPF as a donor with an exceptional level of commitment to seeing projects succeed, were essential to overall success. In addition to CEPF staff, whose contribution to the success of the project was greatly appreciated, Olivier Langrand (CI – Washington DC) provided crucial advice in the design of the project, and Frank Hawkins (CI – Madagascar) advised throughout, often by giving guidance directly to the BIMP team.

VII. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The success of the project

This project achieved its purpose and outputs, was innovative in finding new ways to integrate country programmes of international NGOs with the development of national capacity, and timely in doing so at a critical moment for many of the key people and teams involved, in Madagascar and in the wider BirdLife network. We rate it overall as an outstanding success.

Summary of the BIMP-Asity collaboration workshop, June 2003

A proceedings report on the strategic planning workshop has been produced. The following is a brief summary. The title of the workshop was "Definition and establishment of a structure for collaboration between BirdLife International and Asity". CEPF was clearly identified as the funder of the workshop, through its support of BirdLife International under the project reported on here. The workshop goals were (1) to establish a collaboration mechanism allowing BIMP and Asity to work together in a manner that is harmonious and institutionally, financially and ecologically sustainable; (2) to launch a trial period of close collaboration between BIMP and Asity; and (3) to develop a plan of action defined by the two parties. The three-day workshop took place at the Suc de la Ruche Hotel in the suburbs of Antananarivo, following a two-day field trip to Analamazaotra Special Reserve and Mantadia National Park, where participants got to know each other. After an introductory session presenting the participants and their organizations, the main agenda items were: problem and solution identification, advantages and opportunities offered by the collaboration, needs to realize the opportunities, development of a steering committee with composition and terms of reference, identification of projects suitable for implementation under the collaborative trial, and fundraising needs. Key follow-up tasks were the creation of the steering committee, launch of the first collaborative project in the Mangoky (done in November 2003), and the internship in Nairobi for the BIMP fundraiser (done in August 2003), who will also help to raise funds for joint Asity-BIMP projects.

Next steps

Some of the key future activities planned for BIMP, and for the BIMP-Asity combination, are listed below, as they are all outcomes (actual or potential) of the project reported on here. Staff who worked on the CEPF project are fully involved, and in most cases leading, the development of these activities.

- Wetlands programme in the Mangoky Delta and Lac Ihotry region: this project has begun, with Asity subcontracted to carry out a comprehensive biological and socio-economic assessment in the dry and wet seasons of 2003-2004
- Wetlands programme in the Mahavavy-Kinkony wetlands: this project is well underway, with BIMP leading, and collaborating also with the Malagasy association The Dodwell Trust Mitondrasoa on an awareness-raising programme using FM radio programmes listened to on solar/wind-up radios. More funding is needed for this project, and this will be the subject of a full proposal to CEPF (concept already approved) to be submitted imminently.
- Visit by BIMP communications officer to Berga wetlands community-based management project, Ethiopia, which is run by the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society (BirdLife

Partner in Ethiopia), in December 2003, funded by “study visits and exchanges” component of a DGIS framework project to BirdLife International.

- Building on Experience: a capacity-building programme run by the RSPB (BirdLife Partner in UK) for the BirdLife Partnership, to be attended by the president of Asity and director of BIMP in 2004.
- The BirdLife World Conference and Partnership meeting (“Empowering people for change”) in March 2004 (Durban), which we hope Asity and BIMP, and also our Accord partners DGEF and ANGAP, will be able to attend.
- Pan-African Ornithological Congress in November 2004, which we hope Asity and BIMP will be able to attend.