PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION REPORT

Project ID:	10581
Project Name:	Implementing Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) Site Conservation and Preventing Global Extinctions
Countr(ies):	Global, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Madagascar
Implementing Agency:	UNEP

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Overview

A. Description

Project name Implementing Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) Site Conservation and Preventing Global Extinctions	
Country Global, Chile, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Madagascar	
GEF ID 10581	Implementing Agency UNEP
Executing Entity AZE Partnership and Secretariat (American Bird Conservancy - ABC), Birdlife International	
Trust Fund GET	Project Type MSP
PIR Submission 9/15/2025	Fiscal Year , PIR Number FY 2025 , 3rd PIR
Objective To improve the conservation of Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites.	

B. Ratings and Disbursements

Implementation Progress Satisfactory	Development Objective Satisfactory
Overall risk Low Risk	
Project Financing 2,145,651.00	Cumulative Disbursement 677,068.00

C. Key Dates

CEO Endorsement/Approval 12/18/2021	Agency Approval 12/18/2021
Implementation Start 7/21/2022	First Disbursement 9/26/2022

Expected MTR	Actual MTR
Expected Completion 12/31/2026	Actual Completion

II. PROGRESS STATUS AND ISSUES

A. Progress: Information on progress and outcomes of project implementation activities

In 2025, the GEF AZE project made significant strides. In Colombia, the Ecohabitats team at the Río Saija AZE site secured funding and deployed 12 acoustic recorders for monitoring, with training provided to local indigenous leaders on bioacoustic tools and two sampling events conducted in April and May. Fundación ProAves initiated monitoring of Grallaria fenwickorum and Coeligena orina at the Páramo de Urrao AZE site, conducting regular surveys across 7 trails, collecting visual and auditory records that informed preliminary population density estimates for both species. In terms of conservation planning and management effectiveness, virtual and in-person METT (Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool) workshops were successfully held on May 23 and June 25, respectively, to train regional corporations and local partners in protected area management and establish baseline assessments. Additionally, Corporación Salvamontes undertook a mini-expedition in December 2024 at the Alto de Ventanas AZE site to gather biological data for the management plans of two reserves, reporting potentially new species. Community engagement and nature-based livelihoods were advanced, with Fundación ProAves conducting two training workshops on June 5 and 6 for children near the Colibrí del Sol Reserve. Finally, capacity building in KBA standards and AZE site documentation was strengthened through a short training workshop course on KBA and AZE site identification and nomination at the ATBC Congress in Oaxaca, Mexico, engaging participants from 9 countries. Colombia's total AZE sites increased to 45, encompassing 89 trigger species.In Chile, conservation planning and implementation advanced significantly with the completion of monitoring studies at the Putre AZE site, a comprehensive Telmatobius study in the Loa Province AZE sites (including Vilama, which utilized environmental DNA analysis to confirm species presence), and research on Eriosyce chilensis at the Los Molles Pichidangui AZE site. The conservation plan update for the Mehuín AZE site was also finalized, while participatory processes for developing plans continued for 3 other AZE sites. A major achievement in protected area designation was the official creation of the Quebrada Ojo de Opache Nature Sanctuary (approximately 351 hectares) at the Las Cascadas Loa River AZE site on October 11, 2024, identifying it as a potential reintroduction site for the Loa frog. Capacity building and training were bolstered by a virtual KBA workshop held on January 8, 2025, involving about 100 experts, successful training for public servants on 'High Andean Amphibians,' and a nursery training on April 25. Additionally, nature-based livelihood options were explored, including developing a questionnaire for entrepreneurs near the Mehuín AZE site to assess interest in tourism and natural product ventures, and initiating efforts to advance nursery practices at the Los Molles-Pichidangui AZE site.In Madagascar, at the Bemanevika AZE site, ecological monitoring of Aythya innotata continued from January to June, revealing a new observation site and identifying other endangered species, while a biological study on Microcebus lemurs was completed. Conservation planning advanced with the initiation of the approval process for a new DINA (local agreement) and the local validation of the Protected Area Management Plan (PAG) update for Bemanevika-Mahimborondro, which also achieved a Management Effectiveness Tracking Tool (METT) score of 73. Across the Mahavavy Kinkony (CMK) AZE site, efforts focused on firebreak establishment and maintenance, and at the Manjakatompo-Ankaratra AZE site, firewall installation began alongside intensified patrols that resulted in four prosecutions for illegal

logging. Reforestation was a major success at Manjakatompo-Ankaratra, with 86,053 seedlings planted in the first half of the year. Nature-based livelihood initiatives saw successful trials of agroforestry, rainfed rice, and maize cultivation in CMK, alongside the continued promotion of organic vegetable gardening and community exchange visits. The Itremo AZE site established three operational community nurseries producing 3,627 seedlings for forest restoration, distributed 600 coffee seedlings, and saw 117 beneficiaries in fish farming initiatives. Furthermore, a specialized inquiry into the use and socio-economic value of Podocarpus capuronii was conducted at Itremo to inform its conservation plan, and an AZE project technician participated in technical training on herbarium and plant collection.In Dominican Republic, the conservation plan at the Monumento Domingo Fuerte AZE site was completed in June. Environmental restoration efforts were notable, with 373 Bayahíbe rose plants planted and 723 produced between January and June, supported by nurseries at the Botanical Garden and local hotels. The Reserva Bosque de las Nubes was actively proposed for Other Effective Area-based Conservation Measures (OECM) status. Community engagement and public awareness reached at least 112 community leaders, 38 community members, 122 youth, 22 women, and 103 children through workshops, and the project was featured in two TV programs, impacting over 10,000 people. Financial sustainability gained momentum with funding commencing from the La Romana-Bayahibe Hotel Association and Tourism Cluster, following a co-management agreement signed in 2024, and the Popular Bank Foundation committed to project participation by 2027. Nature-based livelihood options were advanced through shade-grown coffee initiatives in the Reserva Bosque de las Nubes, facilitated by donations of 14,381 additional coffee plants, 20,000 seeds of endemic and native species, and 7,500 cedar trees, resulting in the reforestation of 5.75 hectares. Furthermore, AZE is set to be incorporated into new national invasive species and biodiversity strategies, as well as the Lago Enriquillo Management Plan, with plans to extend this to the Sierra de Bahoruco Management Plan starting in July 2025. Capacity building continued with numerous meetings with the Ministry of Environment, National Botanical Garden, and others, and training for two individuals to become national KBA focal points is scheduled for August 2025.

B. Challenges: Information on challenges of project implementation activities

Project implementation has faced three main implementation challenges:• Delays in Conservation Plan Development: Progress has been slowed by the need to align with local communities' timelines for elaborating conservation plans. Although this has caused delays, it has positively resulted in strong community and local stakeholder involvement.• Delays in mainstreaming activities: While there has been great progress in Component 2 overall, such as with the successful convening of four side events at the CBD COP in Cali, Colombia, there have been some delays in implementing mainstreaming activities. To address this, the project has engaged a Spanish-speaking professional from BirdLife International, and is involving a GEF focal point to facilitate engagement with private and financial sector actors.• Complexity of AZE Site Updates: The most demanding task has been the updating of Alliance for Zero Extinction (AZE) sites using Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) criteria. This process is lengthy, detailed, and research-intensive, which is contributing to slow progress in completing this output.

C. Stakeholder Engagement

No PSC meeting was held during this period. We have been waiting for the MTR to schedule it. We ensured that project partner met in a timely way with the evaluation consultant back in early 2025. We have thought since April 2025 that we would soon receive the MTR report, but we still don't have the final draft.
We plan a PSC meeting in late August/early September 2025.

D. Gender Equality

Does the project have a gender action plan?
Yes
Gender mainstreaming (will be uploaded to GEF Portal):
A Gender Integration Toolkit for the project, to be used by project partners to advance gender mainstreaming, was developed in Spanish and English and shared with project partners. Project leads in 2 of 4 (50%) of the project countries are women, the project manager and financial manager at the executing agency are women, 1 of 2 project leads (50%) at key project partner (BirdLife International) is a woman, both leads for the Bayahibe AZE site in Dominican Republic (100%) are women, and 1 of 2 (50%) of the Indigenous local project coordinators in Chile is a woman.
Overall, progress in gender mainstreaming has been strong. The project prioritizes the integration and participation of women in conservation planning and capacity development programs across its focus countries. In Chile, project meetings have seen significant female involvement, with 188 female participants recorded in various project activities (i.e., approximately 55% of the project meeting participants in Chile were women). In the Dominican Republic, direct engagement efforts have included 22 women participating in sensitization workshops aimed at increasing their knowledge of protected areas, their importance, and ecotourism opportunities. These workshops also targeted community leaders, youth, and children, demonstrating a broad community engagement strategy. Across the project, there is a commitment to develop gender-sensitive training materials as part of capacity development programs. A fish farming project at the Itremo AZE site saw 117 beneficiaries, with 30% of them being women.

E. Knowledge Management

The project has made significant strides in implementing its Knowledge Management (KM) approach, primarily through Component 3, which focuses on enhancing understanding and interest in AZE site conservation. Capacity development in Key Biodiversity Area (KBA) standards is a central element, with Colombia conducting a specific training workshop course for participants from 7 countries on KBA and AZE site identification and nomination at the ABTC Congress in Mexico, and Chile successfully holding a virtual KBA workshop with excellent attendance. Progress in the documentation and dissemination of AZE sites is notable, particularly through the development of a dynamic interface that allows the AZE website to draw data directly from the World Database of Key Biodiversity Areas (WDKBA), ensuring semi-automated and regular updates. For instance, Chile has completed a major consultancy to update 24 AZE/KBA sites, reassessing species and updating site information, with some proposals already confirmed or under review. Colombia has seen the confirmation of 10 new AZE sites, bringing its total to 45, which include 89 trigger species across various taxa. The Dominican Republic also plans to train two individuals to serve as KBA focal points for updating information on the platform. Furthermore, the project is committed to developing gender-sensitive training materials for capacity building and is producing communication strategies, including graphic guidelines and social media publications, to promote a better understanding of the AZE concept at local, regional, and national levels.

III: Minor Amendments

CONTEXT	
Result Framework	
Components and Cost	

Institutional And Implementation Arrangements	
Financial Management	
Implementation Schedule	
Executing Entity	
Executing Entity Category	
Minor Project Objective Change	
Safeguards	
Risk Analysis	
Increase of GEF Financing up to 5%	
Co-Financing	
Location of Project Activity	
others	

IV: Geographic Coordinates of Project Activities

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Rio Vilama, Chile	-22.87	-68.00	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Murmantani, Chile	-21.18	-68.37	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Zapahuira, Chile	-18.19	-69.78	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Loa River, Chile	-22.32	-68.65	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Los Molles - Pichidangui coastal area, Chile	-32.14	-71.47	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Tocopilla, Chile	-22.20	-70.19	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Mehuin 1, Chile	-39.39	-73.14	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Enclave Seco del Río Dagua, Colombia	3.73	-76.67	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID

AZE site Páramo Urrao / De Las Aves Colibri El Sol, Colombia	6.48	-76.16	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Bayahibe, Dominican Republic	18.42	-68.87	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Monumento Natural Miguel Domingo Fuerte, Dominican Republic	18.11	-71.19	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Manjakatompo-Ankaratra, Madagascar	-19.35	47.30	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Itremo, Madagascar	-20.57	46.48	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Mahavavy - Kinkony, Madagascar	-16.02	45.88	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Bemanevika / Tsaratanana massif, Madagascar	-14.35	48.61	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Ankafobe, Madagascar	-18.10	47.18	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Alto de Ventanas. Colombia	7.07	-75.43	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Serrania del Pinche. Colombia	2.34	-77.33	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Rio Saija. Colombia	2.73	-77.44	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

Location Name	Latitude	Longitude	GeoName ID
AZE site Puquios. Chile	-21.0042	-68.3725	

Location Description:

Activity Description:

V. ANNEX

Uploaded Document

Document Category M and E Document	Title Conservation Management Plan AZE Amincha_Carcote_Ascotán_May2025
Document Category M and E Document	Title Conservation Management Plan AZE Puquios 05-2025
Document Category M and E Document	Title Conservation Management Plan Los Molles-Pichidangui AZE site
Document Category M and E Document	Title Monitoring and community outreach report _Urrao AZE site
Document Category M and E Document	Title Monitoring Telmatobius (multiple species) in Chilean AZE sites
Document Category M and E Document	Title 10581-PIR-UNEP-2025-GEF AZE (1)