

Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society



EWNHS

Africa NGO-Government Partnership for Sustainable Biodiversity Action Project

## National IBA Conservation Strategy

**VOLUME I : Background Document**



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## **ACRONYMS:**

BLIS	BirdLife International Secretariat
BSP	Biodiversity Support Programme
CBOs	Community Based Organizations
CI	Conservation International
CSE	Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia
EPA	Environmental Protection Authority
EWCO	Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation
EWNHS	Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society
IBA	Important Birds Area
IBCR	Institute of Biodiversity Conservation and Research
ICBP	International Council for Bird Preservation
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
NBSAP	National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NIBACS	National Important Bird Areas Conservation Strategy
NLC	National Liaison Committee
NP	National Park
NPFA	National Priority Forest Area
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SSG	Site Support Group
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Service
WWF	World Wide Fund

# **National Important Bird Area Conservation Strategy (NIBACS)**

## **1. Overview of Biodiversity and Important Bird area Process**

### **1.1 Issues and Challenges of Biodiversity Conservation**

Conservation of nature and natural resources has long been accepted as a major cure for our planet's destruction especially in terms of the threats posed by man's continual over-indulgent actions. The ecological problem of Africa has been suggested by some, as an act of balancing resources against human needs (Huxley, 1961). Huxley (1961) also noted in his survey of wild life conservation in East and Central Africa that the balancing of resources against human needs must be based on resource conservation, resource use including optimum land use and conservation of habitat. When we come to the Ethiopian situation the conservation problem is not different from many other non-industrialised countries of Africa. To a large extent the growth of human populations and the unwise land use of man has exacerbated the condition of resources as we see them today (Brown, 1973). The last century has seen perhaps the most serious damage to nature and natural resources compared to all other ages combined. As an example, only 70 years ago, the world used a very small fraction of oil compared to what is used today. Technological advances and growing human needs are putting a pressure on the earth's renewable resources and the future generations of the world will greatly be affected by decisions and actions taken today. For a country like Ethiopia the scenario takes a different shape in view of what is happening in the industrialised countries. Ethiopia's major population segment is agrarian and largely depends on natural resources for livelihood. Any alterations to this convention will limit Ethiopia's population's ability to cope with life and the consequences of this balance are added poverty and misery. Conservation of resources especially that of wildlife and protected areas has its own negative history in Ethiopia. In general, the degeneration of the environment owes itself to several factors of which perhaps the lack of clear policies, strong institutions, laws governing the ownership of land, awareness of threats and consequences could be mentioned as major.

The last two decades have seen a radical change in the approach towards the conservation of nature. New words like biodiversity and sustainable development have evolved to take into consideration the variety and variability of life on earth and best systems of resource utilisation. In the course of evolving conservation work, even more modern approaches are being experimented with. Some of the newer approaches include the identification of indicator species (and sometimes key species), and hotspot analysis to conserve biodiversity at a larger scale. Perhaps the most evocative work to date that tried to use a specified taxon to identify hotspots for biodiversity at global level is the International Council for Bird Preservation's (now BirdLife International) project known as "Putting Biodiversity on the map". In this publication, (ICBP, 1992), it has been shown that a greater biodiversity inhabits a very small part of the world and that birds are good indicators of these unique places. This same work revealed that species with restricted ranges occur together

and important hotspots for birds are generally important for other taxa such as plants and other animals. This and other work together with efforts to conserve biodiversity using innovative methods including various community participatory approaches are now the tools for the day.

The dependence on biodiversity for livelihoods most importantly for food, medicine and shelter in Africa has been emphasised widely at various times in the past. Swanson and Barbier (1992) note that the vast majority of rural poor live in ecologically fragile areas, cultivating marginal lands of low agricultural potential and are directly dependent on natural resources for their livelihoods. The commercial fisheries of the world, yielding perhaps the greatest percent of the world's protein, produce up to 70 million tons of food annually (Dasmann, 1981). The majority of people in the developing world depend directly on various forms of plants with medicinal properties for treating ailments and illnesses. UNEP (1993) documents the fact that 20,000 species of plants are used as traditional medicines around the world and only 5,000 species have been thoroughly investigated as a potential source of commercial drugs. It is generally understood that the proportion of Ethiopia's human population that is agrarian is somewhere in the range of 80-85% of the total. This figure is in direct proportion of how much dependence there is on the land and its resources. The farmer or pastoralist in Ethiopia earns a meagre income from tilling the land or raising livestock. It goes without saying that the condition of the land (whether it is well managed or not) is a critical element for the survival of human and animal life in the country. Land management systems including tenure are recognised as important facets when dealing with the conservation of biodiversity in any one locality.

In the past, conservation efforts in Ethiopia (and to a large part in Africa) have tended to emphasise sites of global importance with high scientific value in biological diversity and focus on areas of high species richness and endemism (BSP, 1993). These values have had little in common with the local needs and aspirations of people living close to protected areas. However, it was these values that largely prescribed the actions of conservation efforts in Africa including that of Ethiopia (BSP, 1993). However, given sub-Saharan Africa's overwhelming dependence on biological resources, new, aggressive strategies for biodiversity conservation that incorporate local and national values are urgently needed.

While it is known that biodiversity can be conserved using various strategies it is not always easy because decision-makers need tangible information on which they can base their final decisions. Some of the strategies that have been forwarded to conserve biodiversity by the Biodiversity Support Program (1993) on the continent include:

- Acknowledging local values, indigenous knowledge systems and priorities;
- Involvement of local people in the management and use of biological resources;
- Control or reverse the loss of biodiversity; and
- Treat biodiversity conservation and economic development as integral

aspects of the same process of sustainable development.

While the above methods are invaluable aids in the effort to conserve biodiversity, the world and especially the developing world require a practical and effective method of identifying where a nation's biodiversity is found and an approach of prioritising where effective conservation action is to be implemented. Prioritisation for conservation is needed largely as the result of limited resources in terms of finance, time and skills.

The Important Bird Area Programme that has been running in Ethiopia since 1995 has been identifying hotspots for birds, prioritising sites for action and as of recent started to implement site based conservation action at a number of sites in the country. The identification of hotspots (more commonly known as Important Bird Areas or IBAs) is the start of the whole process of conserving the nation's biodiversity. These sites have been identified using standardised methods but a critical segment of the work still requires refining and also a strategy is needed that can tie the IBA work with other initiatives in the country and especially the communities that live in and along side the sites. A strategy is required that is acceptable to the nation's efforts to conserve biodiversity at all scales and at the same time be able to conform to the needs of communities and answer to questions of livelihoods.

While the need to conserve biodiversity in all its forms is recognised nationally, the need to streamline activities is lacking widely. This gap can find solution when all concerned can come up with a strategy that recognises the significance of natural assets of a country for livelihoods and development, major areas of emphasis, problems that require addressing, roles of all stakeholders and institutional responsibilities. To this end, Ethiopia is on the track towards developing a National Biodiversity Strategic Action Plan (NBSAP). The NBSAP is being developed by a number of professionals from a wide variety of institutions. This kind of participatory approach is a requirement to enable the inclusion of ideas, needs and backgrounds of all stakeholders.

The IBA initiative ties into the NBSAP favourably and adds strength to overall structure because of its unique approach to biodiversity conservation at species, site and habitat level. The simple and yet effective means of conserving a wide range of biodiversity while primarily concentrating on a few known, key species is a strong point that will make the NBSAP an influential and resourceful document. Besides the pure biodiversity aspects, an NBSAP will most importantly discuss the human side of conserving biodiversity at local and national level. Again, the IBA initiative ties well into this side because it aims at applying distinctive solutions to social dimensions of biodiversity conservation by working closely with and assisting local communities realise the advantages of conserving the environment.

## **1.2 The Concept of Important Bird Areas**

The Important Bird Area (IBA) programme of BirdLife International is a worldwide

initiative aimed at identifying, documenting and protecting a network of sites critical for the conservation of the world's birds. It applies internationally agreed criteria to define the global importance of sites for biodiversity conservation at a national level. This is followed by a cycle of monitoring, action and advocacy to ensure conservation of these sites, in perpetuity. Although the criteria used are based on birds, the programme works for the conservation of birds and their habitats and, through these, the diversity of all life on the planet.

The programme was initiated in the 1980s in Europe by the then International Council for Bird Preservation (now BirdLife International). This global programme identifies, at a national level, all the important bird areas in the world. The production of the first ever bird hotspot directories in the world are the ones for Europe and the Middle East, in 1989 and 1994, respectively. The IBA programme, which is being co-ordinated by BirdLife International, has been active in Africa since 1993, as result of which it has been possible to identify 1228 IBAs in 58 countries. The IBA programme in the African region, of which Ethiopia is a part since 1995, is addressing site-oriented research and action, encompassing management, monitoring, education, advocacy, and national and international legal protection.

The work behind the research, documentation and publishing of hotspots or IBAs is not only to fulfil the need to fill gaps in ornithology or satisfy the quest for knowledge. The main aim has been to use birds as a stepping-stone to identify major concentration of biodiversity in the countries. The results of the studies and later production of directories has shown that birds can be positively used as indicators to show sites of high biodiversity for other forms of life. In various earlier studies, especially ICBP's "Putting Biodiversity on the Map", the presence of rare or endangered species, concentrations of species, affiliations of certain species with important ecosystems at a site, and other bird complements have shown parallel congruence for other biodiversity. Birds have proved to be excellent indicators of biodiversity or productivity because they are easily seen and are relatively well known as compared to other animals. Their dispersal in almost every corner of the world also makes their comparative studies simpler.

Another aim of the study is to create a network of sites that would enable the conservation of birds at a national and regional level. As birds have shown to be indicators of biodiversity, a network of sites would ensure the survival of a correspondingly large number of other taxa. Together with this, it is understood that the goodwill of communities and local people is a prerequisite if effective conservation action is to be implemented. To enact the work of closely working with people, and at the same time conserving birds and their habitats, the programme has come up with innovative participatory method of working with people commonly known as SSGs. A Site Support Group is a group of persons living around or at the site who work towards the goal of conserving the site with the birds. The main objective of setting up site support groups is not to create an interface between any conservation organisation and the community at the site (though this may be true in the beginning) but the ultimate goal is to create a self-enhancing, self-propagating interest group who will wilfully take up the work of conserving local environment at a site.

At another level, the programme has not ceased its task by only identifying areas of high avian biodiversity but has gone a step further to prioritise IBAs based on various information including biological resources and threat levels. This prioritised list of IBAs acts as an enhanced framework for identifying where and how limited financial and human resources should be allocated to sites requiring various levels of attention.

Though the work of identifying and prioritising IBAs is the basis for continuing conservation action at site level, the conservation of IBAs will not be complete unless there is a framework that enables what we should do in IBAs, a description of who the main stakeholders are and what their roles should be, a system of identifying objectives for IBA conservation and a consensus on prioritised required actions. A holistic approach that would have guidelines for national IBA conservation is needed. NIBACS are required in this instance to create this holistic approach that will clarify the future of IBAs as a system of conserving major avian and other biodiversity areas nationally.

In Ethiopia, protected areas are conventionally defined as places important for large and visible wild animals, specifically mammals. However, there are other places (represented within all the known ecosystems of the country), which are hot spots for biodiversity and hence are extremely important deserving protection. Ninety species of mammals, which have never been recorded in any of the principal wildlife conservation areas of the country, are known to occur in these areas. Some of such sites have already been designated as Important Bird Areas (73 in number) using international site selection criteria set by BirdLife International Secretariat. Important Bird Areas encompass all major habitat types including deserts, semi-deserts, wetlands of different nature, forests, bushes/scrub lands, mountains and grasslands. Though most such habitats are important for multifarious unique and threatened wildlife (both flora and fauna), they have never won the attention of concerned stakeholders to be incorporated into the national protected areas network. Though some of the potential forest resources of the country (about 58) have long been identified as National Forest Priority Areas (NFPA), they still remain on paper and never been treated as protected areas. The Important Bird Area approach thus is one of the best options to advocate conservation of biodiversity outside the non-protected networks in Ethiopia.

### **1.3 The IBA Programme in Ethiopia**

As an extension of the global IBA programme and Africa wide initiatives, the Ethiopian IBA programme started in 1995 with a two years funding from European Union. The Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, BirdLife Partner in Ethiopia, implemented the project in collaboration with the Ethiopian Wildlife Conservation Organisation (EWCO), a government institution, and technical and voluntary support from BirdLife International. The mission of the programme is to identify, document and protect a network of sites critical for the long-term conservation of wild bird species and other taxa.

On the basis of internationally agreed selection criteria and two years of field and deskwork, which included approaching relevant institutions at all levels, 63 hotspots for birds were identified in Ethiopia. Based on the site accounts compiled for the sites, Ethiopia published the first ever IBA directory in Africa in 1996 entitled: **Important Bird Areas of Ethiopia: A First Inventory**. This publication, which gives detailed accounts of site description, birds, other wildlife, conservation issues, contacts and references on all the sites identified was distributed to all concerned government institutions and relevant conservation organisations within the country and abroad. The hard data thus compiled provide planners and decision-makers with the means of setting priorities for conservation action and for effective targeting of funds. There is now a plan of producing revised edition of the directory, with ten new sites surveyed since then, included. It is hoped that this directory can be considered as a companion publication for the NBSAP document in guiding conservation activities at site levels. While the first phase of the IBA work culminated in the publication of the directory, it marked the beginning of serious professional work in the ensuing years.

While sites are selected using scientifically defensible, quantitative criteria, the IBA concept is a pragmatic one. Thus, the existing protected area network is taken fully into consideration as IBA sites and will, in many cases, form the backbone of the network with additional sites proposed to fill in the gaps. Accordingly, nine National Parks (100%), three Wildlife Reserves (35.7%), two Sanctuaries (50%), three Controlled Hunting Areas (14.3 %) and about fifteen National Priority Forests (25.9 %) have been already included in the IBAs of Ethiopia.

IBA process enhances biodiversity conservation in Ethiopia by involving all the stakeholders (Government, community members and Community Based Conservation Organisations); advocating the incorporation of important sites for birds in the national natural resources development and conservation strategy so that they will be considered in future development and biodiversity conservation plans and activities of the country; and gathering data and information on hotspots for biodiversity and publish and distribute the same in the form of books/directories and other useful information kits. The project was further reinforced with funding obtained from GEF for five years.

#### **1.4 African IBA Project (Regional Project in ten African countries)**

African NGO-Government Partnership for sustainable Biodiversity Action Project is the second phase of the IBA programme being implemented in ten African countries (including Ethiopia) since 1998. This project not only scales-up past achievements but also lends an important dimension to future biodiversity conservation by introducing innovative plans for important habitats in close co-operation with all stakeholders, including the communities.

It seeks to enhance conservation of all globally important biodiversity in Africa through strengthening NGO-Government partnerships and building capacities of local and national government for biodiversity conservation in the Important Bird Area process. Of the 1228 IBAs identified in 58 countries and territories that make up the

Africa Region, over 500 are located in the 10 countries implementing the project. The specific project objectives include, among others:

- Enhance biodiversity and natural environment conservation in Africa through local and national NGO-Government partnerships in the IBAs.
- Enhance the conservation of a network of key biodiversity sites throughout Africa.
- Strengthen NGO-Government collaboration for effective biodiversity conservation.
- Develop cadres of national conservationists in Africa.
- Create strong, financially sustainable partnerships and local constituencies.

The project has developed new methodologies for achieving sustainable conservation, such as the **Site Support Groups (SSGs)** and **National Liaison Committee (NLC)**. Local (site-adjacent) communities are brought into the conservation action process for particular sites through programmes designed to increase awareness, stimulate enthusiasm, and create suitable economic opportunities and train local conservationists. One of the key activities of the project and one that is central to the conservation of IBA is the development of **National IBA Conservation Strategy (NIBACS)**. Hence is the need to produce one in Ethiopia, with EWNHS (implementer of the project) as organiser of the process.

### 1.5 Site Action Model

IBA process is the application of internationally agreed criteria to define the global importance of sites for biodiversity conservation at a national level, followed by a cycle of evaluation and monitoring, involving site adjacent communities in site action and advocacy to insure the conservation of sites in perpetuity. The IBA process, ultimately, builds the capacities of conservation institutions at national and local levels for achieving biodiversity conservation. Through BirdLife International and its various Partners around the World there are similar continental IBA programmes operating through national organisations in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Pacific. The following stages are required for an IBA programme to take place in a given country:

- An IBA project is usually undertaken by local wildlife conservation non-governmental organisations in co-operation with representatives of national government. To that end, identify local lead national conservation BirdLife Partner Example, EWNHS in Ethiopia.
- Appoint a national co-ordinator in each country who, with a team of fellow nationals, will undertake all stages of the compilation of the national inventory.
- Recruit a team of IBA Staff who will be involved in the project

- Conduct induction training for the IBA staff with the involvement of the national co-ordinator
- Identify resource persons/institutions holding relevant data/information on potential IBA sites and Ornithology of the country
- Carry out literature searches and consultations with experts and institutions holding relevant data
- Conduct Site Selection and Survey Planning Workshop
- Provide Training on Bird Identification and Survey Techniques
- Target and organise field surveys
- Collate and analyse data
- Compile site accounts and produce maps
- Establishing/maintaining a computer database
- Produce a National IBA Directory in appropriate language(s). Once identified, directories giving full details of the sites are completed and published. These provide planners and decision-makers with the means of setting priorities for conservation action and for the effective targeting of funds.
- Prioritise IBA sites for conservation action
- Prepare action plan for priority IBAs
- Solicit funds from conservation collaborators (Funding Agencies) - by developing project proposals
- Start on-the-ground conservation activities in collaboration with site-adjacent Site Support Groups and other stakeholders. The conservation activities can be promoted through:
  - Establishment of partnerships with Government, NGOs, CBOs, SSGs, etc.
  - Building capacities of partners (training, awareness raising, etc.)
  - Advocacy/Lobbying
  - Continuous Monitoring and Evaluation

These various steps that are generally followed when implementing an IBA project in a given country can be summarised into the following four overlapping stages:

Stage 1: **Setting-up the institutional framework:** consultation and establishment of national partnerships and agreements

Stage 2: **Identification, survey and inventory compilation:** data collection, field survey, production of IBA inventory and database

Stage 3: **Action planning:** Setting priorities, planning of action at key IBAs, monitoring and advocacy programme development

Stage 4: **Fully developed national site conservation programme:** in which the cycle of monitoring, action and advocacy for the network of national IBAs is well stabilised, with security of future funding

## 1.6 Prioritisation of IBAs

### Rationale

There is a two-fold challenge in conserving biodiversity: on one hand environmentally destructive practices are increasing at an alarming rate, and on the other, we are confronted with limited resources or options for conservation. This situation entails targeting of our limited resources for conservation to those components of biodiversity in most urgent need of conservation attention. This can be achieved only when we are able to establish an appropriate approach of prioritising our biodiversity for conservation action. Prioritisation for biodiversity conservation is a process that involves intentional planning for conservation action. It requires a strategic approach to assessing what we have, defining what we need, setting a goal, realistically ranking what we have relative to our goals and listing actions for conservation (Yilma & Mengistu, 1999).

The need for prioritising for biodiversity conservation arises from the need to meet conservation and sustainable use goals with the limited amount of resources at hand. Saving all of the world's biodiversity is impractical for the reason that there are usually limited resources available to conserve all biodiversity. Consequently, it has become practical to think of and undertake prioritisation process for conservation action.

While Ethiopia has vast reserves of genetic, species and ecosystem diversity, there seems to be little being done to systematically conserve and sustainably use these resources due to underlying problem of not even knowing what needs to be conserved. In another words, the priorities for the conservation of biodiversity remain an illusion. In the past, efforts to conserve biodiversity have mainly centred on "large and cuddly" wildlife species (ibid). Although this approach is just one method to conserving biodiversity, its fallacy lies in the fact that it does not incorporate other essential values of biodiversity. Largely, past efforts of concentrating on large and visible species were not complemented by other forms of biodiversity conservation approaches. Furthermore, past efforts to protect biodiversity have not been participatory in their nature and management.

In an effort to rectify the problem of prioritising for biodiversity, the EWNHS undertook a study of locating and identifying 73 sites (IBAs) throughout Ethiopia that signified priorities for biodiversity conservation. The 73 IBAs are located in 9 Regional States (see table 1) and represent a wide variety of ecosystems (see table 2). The study, which was completed in 1996, made birds a basis for the selection of sites, though they are not only important for birds. This first phase of the study, using information on species, has been able to define and select sites important for birds and other biodiversity.

While these 73 sites are priorities in themselves, the work of prioritising is not complete until we are able to say which sites are more important than others. In other words, it is necessary to prioritise among priorities if we are to apply practical actions for biodiversity conservation. It is actually this fact that persuaded the EWNHS to undertake prioritisation of key biodiversity sites identified through IBA process in Ethiopia.

**Table 1. Summary of IBAs by Regions**

No.	Name of Regions	Number of IBAs
1	Addis Ababa Administrative Region	2
2	Afar Regional State	5
3	Amhara National Regional State	12
4	Gambella Regional State	2
5	Oromia Regional State	38
6	Somalia Regional State	2
7	Southern Nations, Nationalities and Peoples Regional State	11
8	Tigray Regional State	4
Total		76*

\* The actual number of IBAs is 73. Three IBAs are shared among four Regional States and hence is the wrong impression of 76.

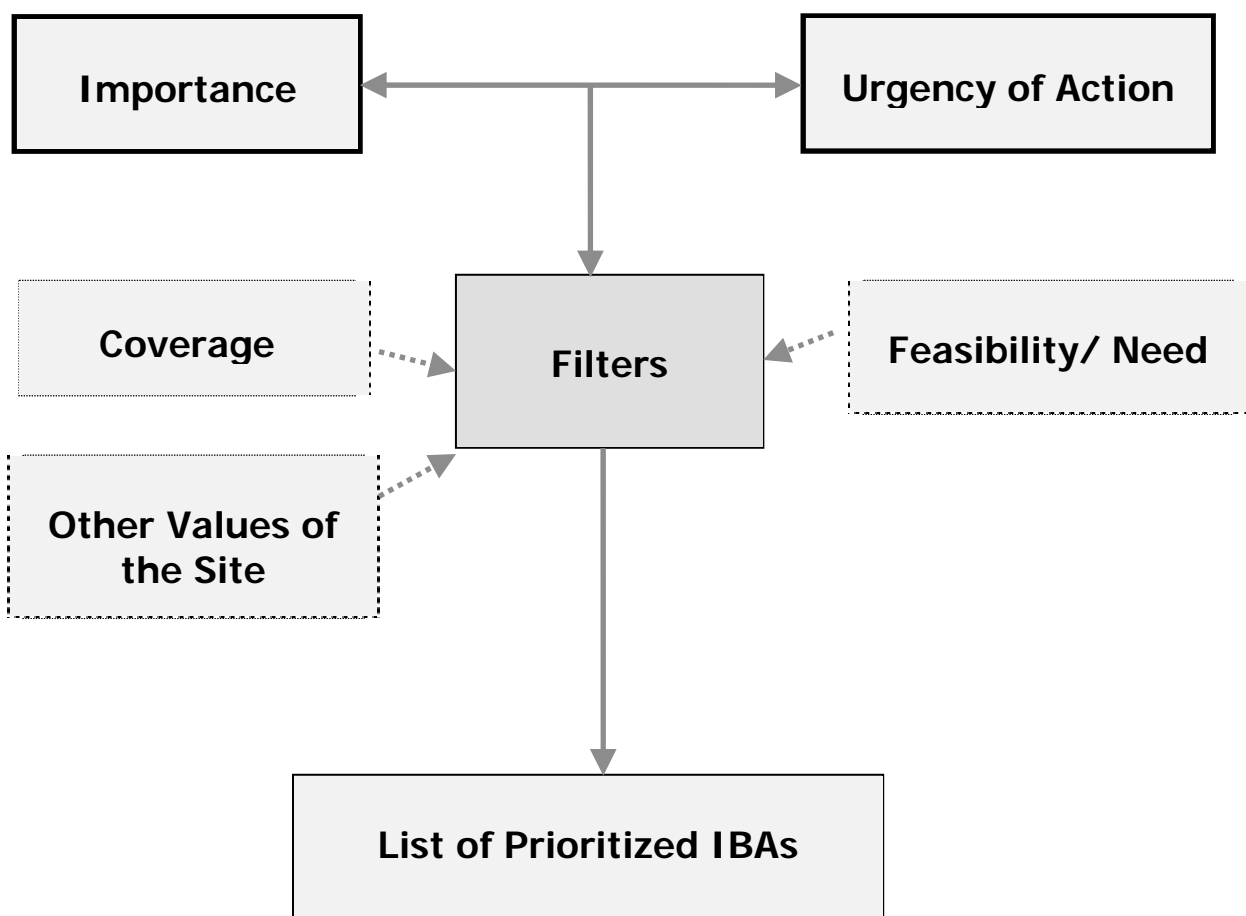
**Table 2. Summary of IBAs by major habitat types**

Major Habitat Types	Number of IBA Sites
Wetlands	29
Bush semi-desert	16
Forest	16
Others	12
Total	73

## Methodology

When conducting a prioritisation process, it is usually necessary to define a model and a set of criteria to work on. According to this model, **importance for biodiversity** (birds and other biodiversity) would be combined with **urgency of action** (threats the sites face). This combined result would then pass through **filters**, which for example can include **coverage** (e.g. regional extent, gaps in knowledge, equity factors), **feasibility/need** (e.g. accessibility, security, other NGOs working in the area etc.) or other **values** (e.g. tourism, cultural and aesthetic potentials). The filters are necessary and will give us a balanced perspective of a site against others when it is possibly heavily biased towards either biological importance or threats. The model thus used has been pictorially depicted below. This model has been applied on each and every site and the end result was a list of prioritised sites for action (see table 3).

### The Framework (Model) for The Prioritisation of Ethiopian IBAs



**Table 3. Prioritized List of Ethiopian IBAs**

Prioritised list on the basis of biological importance, threat &amp; accessibility

Site Code	Site Name	Region	Biological Importance Code	Threat Rank	Accessibility
016	Bale Mountains NP	4	5	4	4
011	Awash NP	4,2	5	4	4
059	Simen Mountains NP	3	5	4	3
007	Ankober/Debre Sina	3	4	3	4
064	Yabello Sanctuary	4	4	3	4
040	Guassa Montane Grassland	3	4	4	3
055	Nechisar NP	7	4	4	3
002	Abijatta-Shalla Lakes NP	4	4	4	4
008	Arero Forest	4	4	3	3
012	Awash Valley	2	4	3	2
037	Genale River	4	4	3	2
052	Metu-Gore -Tepi Forests	4	4	4	3
003	Aba Samuel Wetlands	4	3	4	3
044	Koka Dam	4	3	2	4
013	Awi Zone	3	3	2	4
015	Bahir Dar- Lake Tana	3	3	3	4
021	Bogol Manyo	5	3	2	1
035	Gambella NP	12	3	3	2
049	Mankubsa-Welenso Forest	4	3	3	3
061	Sululta Flood Plains	4	3	3	4
062	Tiro-Boter-Becho Forest	4	3	2	3
070	Chilimo-Gaji Forest	4	3	4	4
073	Senkelle Sanctuary	4	3	4	4
024	Chelekleka Wetlands	4	3	2	4
006	Anferera Forest	4	3	3	4
023	Boyo Wetlands	7	3	4	3
027	Dawa- Wachille	4	3	2	2
031	Denkoro Forest	3	3	3	2
036	Gefersa Reservoir	14	3	1	4
042	Jemma-Jara Valleys	3	3	4	3
048	W/Shebelle River/Warder	5	3	2	1
051	Menagesha Forest	4	3	4	4
053	Mid-Abbay River Basin	3	3	3	1
025	Chew Bahir Lake	7	3	1	1
032	Entoto Natural Park	14	3	2	4
033	Fincha'a-Chomen Swamps	4	3	2	2
046	Langano Lake	4	3	2	4
047	Liben Plain	4	3	2	4
066	Yegof Forest	3	3	3	4
017	Baro River	12	2	2	3
038	Green Lake	4	2	2	3

005	Aliyu Amba-Dulecha	3,2	2	2	3
028	Desa'a Forest	1	2	2	2
029	Dilu Meda (Tefki Flood plain)	4	2	2	4
034	Fogera plains	3	2	3	3
060	Sof Omar	4	2	2	2
066	Yangudi Rassa NP	2	2	2	3
072	Jibat Forest	4	2	3	2
009	Ashenge Lake	1	2	2	4
064	Turkana Lake	7	2	2	1
001	Lake Abbe	2	2	3	2
018	Berga Floodplains	4	2	3	4
039	Gudo Plains	4	2	4	3
043	Koffe Swamp	4	2	2	4
054	Mugo Highlands	7	2	3	3
070	Ziqualla Mountain	4	2	3	3
010	Awassa Lake	7	2	3	4
004	Alemaya-Adele Lakes	4	2	3	4
014	Babile Elephant Sanctuary	4	2	2	2
019	Bishoftu Lake	4	2	3	4
020	Bisidimo	4	2	2	1
022	Bonga Forest	7	2	4	4
026	Choke Mountains	3	2	3	3
045	Konso-Segen Valley	7	2	3	3
056	Mago Nat. Park	7	2	3	2
057	Omo NP	7	2	4	1
061	Shiekn Hussien	4	2	2	2
069	Zeway Lake	4	2	3	4
041	Hugumburda-Grat Kahsu Forest	1	1	2	2
058	Shire Lowlands	1	1	2	1
050	Melka Wakena Wetlands		*	1	2
068	Yerer Forest	4	*	4	3
030	Dindin Arba Gugu Forest	4	*	3	2

## Priority Matrix

A matrix was used to show sites in the prioritised list of IBAs in relation to other sites. This allowed comparisons to be made and clustering.

**Table 4. Priority Matrix**

Threats	Biological Importance				
	5	4	3	2	1
4	○ ○ ○ a	○ ○ ○ ○ a	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ a	○ ○ ○ b	○ c
3		○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ a	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ b	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ b	○ c
2			○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ c	○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ c	○ ○ c
1			○ ○ c		○ c

The matrix is useful in presenting sites in relation to another and ranks them in terms of threat and biological importance. It is also used in giving guidance by indicating primary sites where we should concentrate our resources. The darkest shaded boxes (a) show all those sites with highest level of threat and biological importance, Critically Threatened, (total 19 sites, 26% of total IBAs) while the lighter shaded boxes (b) show sites with intermediate levels of threat and importance, Severely Threatened, (total 23 sites, 32% of total IBAs). Lightest shaded boxes (c) are sites with lower biological importance and threat, Moderately Threatened, (total 31 sites, 42% of total IBAs). The three categories have been termed **Critical**, **Urgent** and **High**, respectively.

The methods used for classifying the sites into the above categories are arbitrary and were purely based on what participants believed to be the best compromise. The matrix shows that there are too many sites at the critical level needing conservation action but nineteen sites are little compared to the need that should be filled for conservation action in the country. As the capacity of EWNHS too low to address conservation at the different categories of IBAs, the forth coming NIBACS is highly expected to allocate roles and responsibilities to all stakeholders to act on conservation of these key biodiversity sites. For distribution of the three categories of IBAs in regions, see Table 5 below.

**Table 5. Distribution of IBAs in Regional States versus classes of IBAs as ranked for conservation actions**

Regional States of Ethiopia	Number of IBAs			
	Critical	Urgent	High	Total
Addis Ababa Administration	-	2	-	2
Afar Regional State	2	1	2	5 <sup>1</sup>
Amhara National Regional State	5	5	2	12
Gambella Regional State	1	1	-	2
Oromia Regional State	10	12	16	38 <sup>2</sup>
Somali Regional State	1	1	-	2
Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional State	1	3	7	11
Tigray Regional State	-	-	4	4
Total	20 (one site shared)	25 (two sites shared)	31	76*

\* Three out of 76 IBA sites are shared among four regional States as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Afar shares one IBA site with Amhara and another with Oromia Regions

<sup>2</sup> Oromia shares one IBA site with Afar and another with Southern Nations Nationalities and Peoples Regional States

## Proposed actions at prioritized IBAs

**Table 6. Activities at Critical sites**

No.	Activity
1	Form site support groups
2	Habitat rehabilitation
3	Advocacy
4	Conservation/Development projects
5	Intensifying research on biodiversity assessment
6	Designation and gazettelement of sites
7	Active management at sites
8	Habitat restoration
9	Site exchange groups/info exchange
10	Lease land
11	Lobby for gazettelement
12	Start activities on the ground
13	Stakeholder analysis

**Table 7. Activities at Critical & Urgent sites**

<b>No</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1	Benefit sharing
2	Training
3	Assist with EWCO's capacity to manage PAs
4	Promote local people's involvement in the conservation of sites
5	Train bird and nature guides to support eco-tourism

**Table 8. Activities at all sites**

<b>No</b>	<b>Activity</b>
1	Awareness and education
2	Monitoring
3	Develop policies
4	Law enforcement
5	Enforce water policy
6	Enforce conservation
7	Networking with concerned bodies
8	Establish bird watching clubs
9	Bridge information gaps
10	Suggest national/regional birds to promote conservation
12	Bridge information gaps

## **2. Introduction on NIBACS**

### **2.1 What is NIBACS?**

#### **2.1.1 Definition**

There are different options of defining NIBACS. NIBACS is:

- a planning document that clearly shows how the status of national IBAs will be maintained or improved over a long period of time
- participatory process to achieve practical IBA conservation on the ground, manifested as a document, developed in a participatory way and approved by the owners;
- a framework developed and approved in a participatory manner involving all institutions with clearly identified roles and contains goal, objectives, priorities, mechanisms and actions that guides all key players to the key priorities and actions needed to conserve IBAS.
- a process whereby all relevant stakeholders are consulted and engaged in shaping appropriate action that benefits IBA sites
- NIBACS is an agreed and approved set of goals, objectives, priorities and mechanisms, means and actions developed in a participatory manner involving all institutions with clearly identified roles

#### **2.1.2 Guiding Principles**

In principle, NIBACS should:

- be developed in a highly involving and participatory manner and approved by the owners
- be consistent with other national related strategic plans in the context of policy and legal frameworks such as decentralisation
- fit in the existing institutional framework of mandates and ownership
- not duplicate efforts already took place – but fill the gaps in existing documents/policies
- be achievable and realistic in view of resources
- be in line with the goals of national institutions and government

Furthermore, at global levels NIBACS should:

- Address cross-cutting issues (e.g. the issue of migratory birds)
- Contribute to policy and legal frameworks (e.g. Convention on Migratory Species)
- Tap into global/regional agreements (e. g. Ramsar, AEWA, etc.)

## **2.2 The need for NIBACS (Rationale)**

Why do we need a separate strategy in addition to already existing wide range of strategies and plans for conservation of biodiversity in Ethiopia?

Over 1,228 IBAs have been identified so far in 58 countries in Africa alone, of which, about 500 IBAs are in the 10 countries that are currently implementing the African NGO-Government Partnerships for Sustainable Biodiversity Action Project (73 in Ethiopia). These IBAs vary widely in size, habitats covered, legal protection, and utilisation by local people, form of land use, existing and potential threats and biodiversity support. Moreover, in a multi-stakeholder activity like IBA conservation, there should be very wide consultation to harmonise already existing initiatives in concerted manner, as some institutions would be precious about their territories and mandates

On the other hand, although there are clear guidelines for identification and prioritisation of IBAs and different stakeholders are involved in various activities with the aim of conserving IBAs, there happens to be no holistic guideline for national IBA conservation work. This is probably due to high diversity of IBAs, overlaps in ecosystems and multiplicity of institutions and their respective mandates. There is no single existing strategy that can cover all of them at one single go. Existing conservation strategies, hence, do not adequately address the whole of IBA conservation and that there is a need for a framework. The NIBACS is developed to fill this need.

NIBACS should therefore be developed bearing in mind the links it would have with other national biodiversity policies and strategies, such as NBSAP. Though the Ethiopian Wildlife and Natural History Society, BirdLife Partner in Ethiopia, as NGO has no legal mandate and the financial and human resources to manage all IBAs in the country, it has a vested interest, the mission and focus to bring together various players and make a significant contribution to the conservation of IBAs through development of NIBACS. To that end, NIBACS has been a requirement and an important out put of the GEF-IBA project. The aim of NIBACS therefore is to provide a clear focus at a national level for plans and tools and building consensus for conserving IBAs through action by stakeholders.

## **2.3 What is NIABCS for?**

- To build consensus among stakeholders on how to move forward with implementation of site action using the IBA approach

- To provide a clear focus for plans and tools and build consensus for conserving IBAs through action by stakeholders (NGOs, Govt, etc.)
- To ensure the effective conservation of all IBAs in a country by committing key national actors
- To ensure coherence of partners' actions over a longer period of time
- Raise profile of IBA and ensure all conservation agencies are involve in all priority IBAs
- To define actions, priorities, inputs, etc. to ensure that all the threats to IBAs are addressed
- To help get the support of donors and government for conservation of IBAs
- To target skills and resources to achieve conservation of IBAs
- NIBACS is a tool necessary for implementation of other activities (e.g. advocacy, fund raising, site conservation, etc.)
- NIBACS helps to encourage the adoption of IBAs within national guidelines, policies and strategies

## **2.4 Functions of NIBACS**

Among others, NIBACS should:

- Provide a framework for national IBA conservation programmes
- Identify the main stakeholders and their needs and what roles they should play
- Identify objectives of the national IBA programme
- Build consensus on prioritized required actions
- Establish partnership for conservation of IBAs
- Raise awareness on the concept and conservation needs of IBAs

## **3. Developing NIBACS**

### **3.1 Approach**

Developing NIBACS should be a participatory process and to be successful, there is a need to develop, together with the key stakeholders, a clear vision for the NIBACS. Some of the issues that require being resolved in the initial stages are:

- Ownership of NIBACS
- What will be achieved with the NIBACS
- Who is expected to use it

A three-phase strategy development process is envisaged:

1. Developing a draft NIBACS by the NGO in consultation with the National Liaison Committee (or any other appropriate NIBACS team).
2. Holding a national IBA workshop and
3. Completing the strategy itself and seeking endorsement and final approval

Details of implementation vary according to circumstances within each country. However, basic components of NIBACS include:

Goal, Objectives, priorities, actions, work plan, budget, M and E plan, Institutional roles and responsibilities, and Endorsement and/or approval

### **3.2 Information required**

Some of the sources of information in the development of NIBACS are:

- ❑ National IBA directories and prioritisation reports
- ❑ National Partner organisation strategies (preparation underway)
- ❑ BirdLife Strategy and Regional Programme
- ❑ Information on relevant international conventions such as CBD, Ramsar
- ❑ National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans
- ❑ Reports on site programmes and ICDPs
- ❑ National Wildlife, Forestry/Minerals/Natural Resource laws and sectoral plans
- ❑ National Environment, Wildlife, Forestry and Wetland policies
- ❑ In-country donor strategies
- ❑ Government/Donor agreements
- ❑ GEF products, reports on biodiversity, actions and priorities

### **3.3 Skills, capacity and support needed**

Necessary resources required in developing NIBACS include:

- ❑ Legal techniques
- ❑ Biodiversity and conservation expertise
- ❑ Community development expertise
- ❑ Human resource (trained manpower)
- ❑ Finance
- ❑ Time
- ❑ Literature
  - IBA Directory
  - Existing Strategies, policies, plans, etc
  - NBSAP
  - BirdLife Protected Area Strategy
  - BirdLife Strategy and Africa Regional Programme 2000-2004
  - Forestry Strategy
  - Conservation Strategy of Ethiopia
  - International Conventions
  - National Poverty Reduction Policy
  - Forestry and Wildlife policy
  - IBA Priority Setting Document
  - National Monitoring Guidelines

## **4. Stakeholder Involvement**

It would be worthwhile considering such issues as the following when dealing with the roles of stakeholders in the preparation and eventual implementation of NIBACS:

### **4.1 Who has a stake in NIBACS?**

- Everyone who has a role to play in conservation of IBA sites
- Conduct stakeholders analysis to determine participants in the development, endorsement and approval of NIBACS (if possible)

### **4.2 Who drives the NIBACS process?**

A smaller group including:

- BirdLife Partner NGO (EWNHS) as organiser

- NLC
- A Steering Committee drawn from EWCO, EPA, IBCR and EWNHS
- The government biodiversity co-ordination organisation (IBCR)

### **4.3 Who participates in the NIBACS development process?**

The actual categories of participants vary among countries. What matters is the commitment of those who participate in the process. They must commit to the process. A broader group including the above as well as the following can participate in NIBACS development process.

- Site Support Groups
- Relevant government institutions, local governments
- Other site level stakeholders (CBOs, NGOs), private sector, media
- National and Local Government representatives
- Other non-governmental organisations and community-based organisations and representatives of the private sector

### **4.4 Who owns the NIBACS?**

- The widest possible group of those affected by, impacting on and benefiting from IBA conservation, e.g. all the groups above, the national and international donors, the international conventions, etc.
- No single entity owns or should claim ownership of NIBACS
- The owners include all Ethiopians as individuals, government institutions with special mandates over biodiversity (e.g. EPA, IBCR, EWCO, etc.), government institutions with ownership of sites (Regional states), institutions with management mandate over the resources, international communities (donors such as GEE, EU, Bank, Conventions, etc.)
- All actors in IBA conservation at a national level
- All national and international stakeholders
- National BirdLife Partner (EWNHS)
- Super-national actors: NGOs e.g. WWF, IUCN, CI, etc.; Conventions, e.g. Ramsar
- The BirdLife family at national, regional and global level

## 5. Themes of NIBACS

To facilitate the process of defining a strategy to conserve IBAs, a list of suggested themes are listed below. While most of them are relevant to all countries implementing the NIBACS, it is important for the stakeholders to decide which theme is most relevant to their situation. Determination of themes should be based and include the following aspects:

- Determine the ***basis for action*** of each theme. What are the concerns at a local, national, and global level? What particular threats or issues of IBAs will the theme address?
- State clear ***objectives*** at both a general and specific level. What will be achieved by acting on this theme?
- Consider the ***relevant actions*** in terms of development and planning, in terms of management and in terms of collaboration that will be required under each theme.
- Establish availability of relevant information, skills, institutional structures and resources to ***implement the actions*** proposed under the theme.

### 5.1 Site Action

Sites (Important Bird Areas) are units that are manageable for bird and biodiversity conservation and restoration. Site action is a site-based activities or measures that contribute towards achieving conservation objectives within a defined area. Data and information collected through research and monitoring help to prioritise problems that prevail at sites and these ultimately lead to identification of appropriate actions to solve the problems. This calls for leveraging actions of strategic partners and stakeholders and careful analysis of existing structures and management systems.

#### Objectives

- ❖ To reduce biodiversity loss at sites designated as IBAs
- ❖ To take action to conserve, and where appropriate restore, all sites identified as IBAs in Ethiopia
- ❖ To produce and implement site management plans at IBAs designated as critically threatened.
- ❖ To bring about changes in human behaviour and attitude towards the need of conserving IBAs.
- ❖ To influence government to take appropriate actions that will lead to the designation of IBAs as official Protected Areas

## **Actions**

- Identify and document all Important Bird Areas (IBAs) throughout Ethiopia (Done)
- Prioritize sites for conservation actions (Done)
- Develop Site Action Plans for all IBAs designated as Critical (19 sites)
- Develop Species Action Plans for globally threatened resident birds of Ethiopia
- By establishing Site Support Groups (SSGs), secure the collaboration of site-adjacent community in conservation of IBAs and biodiversity.

## **Implementation Mechanism**

- ◆ Information and data relevant for site actions available at EWNHS
- ◆ Model Site Action Plans developed by EWNHS for Abijata-Shalla Lakes NP and Berga Flood Plain (both are IBAs) available at the Society.
- ◆ Actions recommended under the other thematic areas of NIBACS all contribute to conservation of sites.
- ◆ Exploit all possible opportunities for using the expertise of volunteers in conservation of sites
- ◆ Solicit funding to implement action plans on the ground
- ◆ Undertake analysis of stakeholders and determine their roles and responsibilities in the conservation of IBAs
- ◆ Stimulate site actions by other conservation players and get information on IBAs packed for marketing.

## **5.2 Research**

A research is basically done to determine the status of conservation targets (e.g. species) and to reveal the root causes of conservation problems at IBAs so as to be able to recommend appropriate solutions. It can be undertaken at all levels (e.g. habitat, site, local, national, etc) and areas (e.g. species, biodiversity, socio-economic, policy and legislation, etc.) when deemed important. As some conservation problems might be easily solved by other actions (e.g. education, awareness, etc.), one needs to identify those, which badly require research as a last resort.

## Objectives

- ❖ To understand properly the basis of conservation problems and be able to develop appropriate solutions
- ❖ To determine the status of globally threatened endemic birds of Ethiopia

## Actions

- Undertake a research to determine the nature of threats that prevail at IBAS and their impacts on conservation of biodiversity
- Carry out research to determine status and requirements of globally threatened birds of Ethiopia

## Implementation Mechanism

- ◆ Identify key conservation problems at IBAs that require research.
- ◆ Assess capacity and resources required to undertake researches
- ◆ Turn research results into appropriate information and disseminate the same to all stakeholders to stimulate actions.
- ◆ Use the research results as advocacy tools in fund raising, formulation of policy and law, to influence government to upgrade status of sites (to consider them as protected areas or to gazette them), for education and awareness raising campaigns, etc.

## 5.3 Monitoring

Monitoring is a process of observing or watching something over a period of time to give warning or notice of changes. It involves follow-up and regular checking of certain variables in order to detect changes or trends (Yilma & Mengistu, 2001).

In the context of NIBACS, monitoring is seen as long-term observation, recording, collation, analysis and reporting of information on IBAs. IBAs need regular audits to determine their status. There should always be a reason and purpose to carry out monitoring and it requires careful planning and a clear set of objectives. A monitoring programme that is conducted on a regular basis will provide valuable lessons that can be incorporated to existing policies and legislation.

There are a hell lot of good reasons for carrying out monitoring activities. Monitoring helps, among others, to:

- produce immense amount of data that can be communicated in various forms to other partners
- enable the detection of changes in environment/sites
- produce information for the revision of management plans/updates on IBAs

- Provide a credible and defensible data on species and site conservation
- identify data gaps
- assess impact of management actions contribute to the conservation of biodiversity as a whole

## **Objectives**

- ❖ To provide timely warning of any deterioration in conservation status, so that action can be taken
- ❖ To track impact of conservation interventions on IBAs

## **Actions**

- ❑ Gather data constantly that are required to give a sound decision on conservation of IBAs
- ❑ Construct and manage database on information gathered through monitoring
- ❑ Put in place networking and feedback mechanisms to facilitate dissemination and access to information.

## **Implementation Mechanism**

- ◆ Determine what to monitor and what variables to use to measure changes in conservation of IBAs. To that end, emphasis will be given to weather-related data, biological information (on birds, animals and plants), human-related (socio-economic) information and policy and legislative factors.
- ◆ Gathering of data should be based on clear guidelines established for monitoring. For the time being, it will be possible to use the Monitoring Guidelines designed by EWNHS at national level. However, stakeholders need to develop species- and habitat-specific monitoring protocols in the future.
- ◆ Monitoring is an activity that requires some level of expertise. While it would be possible to engage local experts in the process, basic training on monitoring techniques is inevitable. To that end, the expertise and capacity of EWNHS should be exploited to train staffs of stakeholders. Moreover, establishing stronger networking with other institutions to access their monitoring-related data is an additional asset.
- ◆ Monitoring can be undertaken with a collaborative action of such institutions as EWNHS, NLC, Government organizations, NGOs, SSGs, Nature Clubs, PAs, Volunteers, and Regional and International Networks.

- ◆ The institutional framework for monitoring, reporting and feedback; the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders and the mandate of coordination will be decided in a consultative forum established by the stakeholders.
- ◆ Low priority IBAs, with less significant threats, require only low-level intermittent monitoring.

## **5.4 Advocacy**

Advocacy is the act or action of supporting or speaking in favour of an idea or plan, especially publicly. In the NIBACS context, advocacy is the act of leveraging the support of and influencing a range of different stakeholders and specifically that of decision and policy makers in conservation of IBA sites.

### **Objectives**

- ❖ To achieve improved conservation through specific or general changes in awareness, management, policy or legislation.
- ❖ To stimulate conservation actions by other players
- ❖ To incorporate the concept and process of IBAs in government policies and legislation

### **Actions**

- Identify conservation problems for which advocacy is a remedy
- Build networking of strategic partners that will be engaged in advocacy activities.
- Identify and stimulate other players to be involved in conservation of IBAs
- Establish feedback and best practices exchange mechanisms to make sure that advocacy has been successful.
- Investigate the existence and gaps in an enabling policy framework and legislation relevant to conservation of IBAs and take note of the obligations that Ethiopia should meet with regards to international conventions in conservation of biodiversity.
- Develop an advocacy strategic plan that would enable one carry out advocacy mission effectively (see below under implementation mechanism)

### **Implementation Mechanism**

- ◆ Brainstorm to sort out and prioritize the problems that will be solved through advocacy

- ◆ Get all relevant and accurate information on IBAs available to national level coordination, priority-setting processes and decision-making.
- ◆ Consider the following points when developing **advocacy strategy** to get across appropriate message to the right audience.
- ◆ Aim – think strategically about what it is that you are trying to achieve and consider whether you have come up with the right message at the right time.
- ◆ Tools and Tactics – there is a whole stockpile of advocacy tools at our disposal. You need to get the right tools for the right audience but also to think creatively about tactics. Think about what tactics carry most weight with you. In general, it is important to ensure that your advocacy includes some element of personal contact. These are some examples of the advocacy tools at your disposal: letters, phone calls, meetings, events (seminars, conferences, etc.), newsletters, site visits, consultations, media, written briefings, petitions, mass lobbies, etc.

**Target audience**= think about who is that you are trying to influence and why. This may comprise all levels of government or non-governmental audiences. These are your stakeholders.

**Timing** – set the time frame within which you aim to achieve the outcomes that you are seeking. You should also consider the key external milestones that will affect delivering your aim.

**Partners** – think about whether there are any partner organizations who could buttress your message and enhance your chances either through creating a louder voice or by adding value. Partners are a sub-set within your stakeholders.

Partners can add value to your advocacy strategy by creating broader appeal or enhancing your personal or organizational credibility on a particular issue.

Examples of typical target audience for an advocacy strategy include: politicians, advisors, researchers, civil servants, media and partner members. These are some of the key audiences you should consider targeting when drawing up an advocacy strategy- and it is far from exhaustive. Day to day work extends to many other audiences including farmers, academia, local authorities, other NGOs, the general public, etc.

**Political Context** – consider how your strategy fits into current political context

**Review and monitoring** – a strategy is a working document. Revisit it regularly to check that you are still on track for your original aim and key milestones.

## 5.5 Education and Awareness Raising

It involves identifying problems and targets for which education and awareness-raising is the best solution for a better achievement in conservation of IBAs.

## **Objectives**

- ❖ To achieve positive change in people's behaviour and attitudes towards conservation of IBAs

## **Actions**

- ❑ Identify problems that impede conservation of IBAs as a result of lack of education and awareness.
- ❑ Identify targets that we would like to educate and make aware of the need for conservation of IBAs
- ❑ Conduct awareness programmes and campaigns
- ❑ Set up communication strategy for efficient flow of information between sites
- ❑ Develop feedback mechanism to ensure the commitment of target groups.

## **Implementation Mechanism**

- ◆ Conduct a training needs assessment by way of brainstorming to identify who to educate
- ◆ Prepare relevant materials for the campaign - to determine the type of information we want to put across
- ◆ Make use of nearby schools and nature clubs to campaign awareness programmes.
- ◆ Establish Environmental Education units to sustain the awareness campaign programmes
- ◆ The Environmental Education Units will follow up if information is flowing properly and targets are committed.

## **5.6 Capacity Building**

- ◆ Capacity building should be taken broadly to include such key components as – training, recruitment and institutional development.

## **Objectives**

- ⊕ To put in place necessary institutions, skills and equipment to enable implementation of planned activities

- ❖ Create an enabling environment to conserve biodiversity in IBAs by supporting existing institutions and contributing towards the initiation of new ones.
- ❖ Train and support the training of skills of communities to assist the wise use of biodiversity in and around IBAs.
- ❖ Assist in the training of Government employees in protected areas to enhance conservation and management of biodiversity.
- ❖ Assist existing conservation institutions build effective agencies by supporting research into organisational assessment and institutional development.

### **Actions**

- Identify problems that impede IBA conservation, which would be solved by capacity building.
- On the basis of the problems identified, carry out capacity needs assessment (training, personnel and resource needs to build the necessary capacity at various levels)
- Identify training opportunities and assist Government employees find proper training for the conservation and management of biodiversity.
- Train community members in various skills that can contribute towards the wise use of biodiversity at IBA sites.
- Assist existing conservation institutions build strong and effective conservation agencies by running research on organisational assessment and institutional development.
- Identify problems that impede IBA conservation, which would be solved by capacity building.

### **Implementation mechanism**

- ◆ Have a clear idea why training is needed for IBA conservation. In other words, it is necessary to know why, who, how, what and when to train for effective IBA conservation. Each stakeholder may require a policy of its own on training.
- ◆ Do your own homework by carrying out research into how and what kind of capacity building is required to eliminate conservation and management problems in priority IBAs. A needs assessment can be defined in terms of personnel, training, equipment and finance. A consultant could do this job.
- ◆ Does the Government policy regarding training support our ideals of providing training or assisting training of employees and community members? If yes, how do we provide the service and if no, find out under what auspices other NGOs provide similar training opportunity to target groups.

- ◆ Link up with all or selected conservation organisations to know if they need an organisational assessment and/or institutional development research. A consultant can carry this out. The best way to go about with this area is to convince agencies in such a way so that they understand that such research adds up to the general effectiveness of organisations in general. It can backfire if the organisation senses that the idea of assessments is in conjunction with poor management or ineffective system.

## **5.7 Information Management**

A special attention should be borne in mind with regards to the techniques of information and data gathering; how to store (both as hard copies and electronic version); how to manage (retrieving and accessing to other partners) and how to make use of them for IBA conservation purposes.

### **Objectives**

- ⌘ To assess information needs, identify and fill data gaps and design mechanisms of gathering information and data relevant for conservation of IBAs
- ⌘ Collect, collate and provide information at all levels as a basis for making decisions and developing appropriate conservation actions.

### **Actions**

- Build the capacity of various partners in terms of information technology.
- Create hard copies and construct databases on species, site and habitat parameters on all IBAs.
- Create and maintain a network for communicating, accessing and sharing information at all levels.

### **Implementation mechanism**

- ◆ Assess information needs at local, national and international levels.
- ◆ Assess degrees of information needs in Government, NGOs and other partners throughout the world.
- ◆ Organise national trainings for partners who could use information technology for effective conservation work.
- ◆ Use existing databases and/or create new ones to handle and update information on various aspects of IBAs

- ◆ Start communication possibilities with opportunities for feedback through brochures, newsletters and other media.

## **5.8 Mobilising and Securing Resources**

Availability of resources is vital to undertake any sort of conservation initiatives. This is not only about money (although money is the basis for everything) but also about human, material and information resources.

### **Objectives**

- ⌘ Ensure human resources, logistical and financial viability to implement activities leading to IBA conservation in Ethiopia.

### **Actions**

- Identify resources requirements for IBA conservation nationally.
- Create strong fundraising mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of future plans.
- Encourage income-generating initiatives by the NGOs and site-adjacent communities
- Build capacity of partners at national level in order to effectively make use of resources.

### **Implementation mechanism**

- ◆ Lobby concerned decision-makers to allocate adequate resources to conservation of IBAs.
- ◆ Develop strategy to develop capacity for mobilizing and managing resources.
- ◆ Be in a position to track every useful funding opportunity in the country and make effective use of existing donor policies.
- ◆ Enhance the capacities of local or community-based NGOs to sustain their own conservation activities through various income-generating schemes.

## **5.9 Setting Priorities for Action**

It involves the rationale for prioritising; the standard framework for prioritising (criteria and methodology); who will be setting the priorities; proposing actions and assessing if there is an enabling environment (policy, legislation, socio-economic and political set ups) to implement actions on the ground according to priorities. In the

NIBACS context, it involves prioritising IBAs for conservation actions on the basis of standard criteria and proposing appropriate actions by priority category.

## **Objectives**

- ⌘ Identify sites where conservation efforts can be focused especially in the context of limited resources and where most demonstrable impact will be achieved.
- ⌘ Advocate for an enabling environment for action in IBAs.

## **Actions**

- Carry out a an IBA prioritisation workshop (done at a national level)
- Gather information and review priority sites to update current conservation action.
- Select sites based on their relative priority index and resources required to implement effective conservation action.
- Study and review national legislations, policies, social and economic conditions that would positively add to the conservation of species, sites and habitats.
- Advocate for better policies and legislations to cover IBA conservation at a national level.

## **Implementation mechanism**

- ◆ Prioritized list of IBAs and proposed actions by priority category are available at EWNHS.
- ◆ Allocate responsibilities to stakeholders to take actions according to priorities
- ◆ Determine timeframe what actions to take where.

## **5.10 Building Partnerships**

Considerations in building partnerships include:

- What is each stakeholder doing that affects IBAs positively or negatively?
- Why build the partnership? What are the reasons for forming partnership? What do we want out of it?
- What is the comparative advantage of forming specific partnerships as opposed to working alone?

- Work with the knowledge that simple alliances are more effective than complex ones.
- Make sure that all participating organisations have clear mandates and responsibilities.
- Institutional alliances will be more effective if all the participating organisations have similar visions and goals.

## **Objectives**

- ❖ To encourage and involve stakeholders to achieve positive contributions to IBA conservation.
- ❖ To establish the capacity for communities to participate in a long-term commitment to conserve their environment.
- ❖ To empower the local community in the management of resources and create benefit-sharing schemes that assist the access and rights to resources,

## **Actions**

- ❑ Conduct a stakeholder analysis to determine the key partners that would be involved in conservation of IBAs
- ❑ Identify the institutional roles and responsibilities of partners and resources needed
- ❑ Seek consensus on conservation agenda among key interest groups (partners)
- ❑ Clarify the legal and policy framework for institutional collaboration to take place

## **Implementation mechanism**

- ◆ Prioritise sites where partnerships are needed and clarify the modalities of building a partnership with other institutions and communities.
- ◆ Build partnerships at national and local site level.
- ◆ Facilitate and supervise the creation of site support groups around IBAs.
- ◆ Create simple alliances.
- ◆ Facilitate decision-making at appropriate levels, particularly at the level of organisations that will be making the decisions.

- ◆ Negotiate and maintain clear project goals.
- ◆ Define and maintain clear mandates and responsibilities for all stakeholders.
- ◆ Be prepared to adapt to changes in the project.
- ◆ Strengthen management capacity within the alliance.

### **5.11 Crosscutting issues**

The development process of the NIBACS requires the consideration of other crosscutting issues throughout the process. These include:

- Equal opportunities (gender, age, disabilities): Effort should be directed towards ensuring that as much as possible the NIBACS is sensitive to gender and responds to the needs of disadvantaged groups.
- Monitoring and Evaluation: For each of the themes, there is need to set the targets/indicators that will show impact of addressing IBA conservation under the specific theme. Secondly, a mechanism should be developed to measure progress and feedback into the strategy.
- Local, Regional and National information flow: One of the underlying principles of IBA conservation that has been very effective is linking site-based stakeholders and concerns to the national planning arena. This is one of the strengths that should be emphasised in NIBACS.
- Using participatory approaches: Successful IBA conservation depends to a large extent on the collaborative efforts of stakeholders and this should be borne in mind at all stages of NIBACS development.

## 6. The Strategy

Themes (conservation issues)	Objectives	Actions	Implementation Mechanisms	
			Who?	Resources (information, data, skills, institutional structure, etc.)
<b>1. Site Action</b>	<p>To reduce biodiversity loss at sites designated as IBAs</p> <p>To take action to conserve, and where appropriate restore, all sites identified as IBAs in Ethiopia</p> <p>To produce and implement site management plans at IBAs designated as critically threatened.</p> <p>To bring about changes in human behaviour and attitude towards the need of conserving IBAs.</p> <p>To influence government to take appropriate actions that will lead to the designation of IBAs as official Protected Areas</p>	<p>Identify and document all Important Bird Areas (IBAs) throughout Ethiopia (Done)</p> <p>Prioritize sites for conservation actions (Done)</p> <p>Develop Site Action Plans for all IBAs designated as Critical (19 sites)</p> <p>Develop Species Action Plans for globally threatened resident birds of Ethiopia</p> <p>By establishing Site Support Groups (SSGs), secure the collaboration of site-adjacent community in conservation of IBAs and biodiversity.</p>		
<b>2. Research</b>	<p>To understand properly the basis of conservation problems and be able to develop appropriate solutions</p> <p>To determine the status of globally threatened endemic birds of Ethiopia</p>	<p>Undertake a research to determine the nature of threats that prevail at IBAS and their impacts on conservation of biodiversity</p> <p>Carry out research to determine status and requirements of globally threatened birds of Ethiopia</p>		

<p><b>3. Monitoring</b></p>	<p>To provide timely warning of any deterioration in conservation status, so that action can be taken</p> <p>To track impact of conservation interventions on IBAs</p>	<p>Gather data constantly that are required to give a sound decision on conservation of IBAs</p> <p>Construct and manage database on information gathered through monitoring</p> <p>Put in place networking and feedback mechanisms to facilitate dissemination and access to information</p>		
<p><b>4. Advocacy</b></p>	<p>To achieve improved conservation through specific or general changes in awareness, management, policy or legislation.</p> <p>To stimulate conservation actions by other players</p> <p>To incorporate the concept and process of IBAs in government policies and legislation</p>	<p>Build networking of strategic partners that will be engaged in advocacy activities.</p> <p>Identify conservation problems for which advocacy is a remedy</p> <p>Develop an advocacy strategic plan that would enable one carry out advocacy mission effectively (see below under implementation mechanism)</p> <p>Identify and stimulate other players to be involved in conservation of IBAs</p>		
<p><b>5. Education and awareness Raising</b></p>	<p>To achieve positive change in people's behaviour and attitudes towards conservation of IBAs</p>	<p>Identify problems that impede conservation of IBAs as a result of lack of education and awareness.</p> <p>Identify targets that we would like to educate and make aware of the need for conservation of IBAs</p> <p>Conduct awareness programmes and campaigns</p> <p>Set up communication strategy for</p>		

		<p>efficient flow of information between sites</p> <p>Develop feedback mechanism to ensure the commitment of target groups.</p>		
<b>6. Capacity building</b>	<p>To put in place necessary institutions, skills and equipment to enable implementation of planned activities</p> <p>Create an enabling environment to conserve biodiversity in IBAs by supporting existing institutions and contributing towards the initiation of new ones.</p> <p>Train and support the training of skills of communities to assist the wise use of biodiversity in and around IBAs.</p> <p>Assist in the training of Government employees in protected areas to enhance conservation and management of biodiversity.</p> <p>Assist existing conservation institutions build effective agencies by supporting research into organisational assessment and institutional development.</p>	<p>Identify problems that impede IBA conservation, which would be solved by capacity building.</p> <p>On the basis of the problems identified, carry out capacity needs assessment (training, personnel and resource needs to build the necessary capacity at various levels)</p> <p>Identify training opportunities and assist Government employees find proper training for the conservation and management of biodiversity.</p> <p>Train community members in various skills that can contribute towards the wise use of biodiversity at IBA sites.</p> <p>Assist existing conservation institutions build strong and effective conservation agencies by running research on organisational assessment and institutional development.</p> <p>Identify problems that impede IBA conservation, which would be solved by capacity building.</p>		
<b>7. Information management</b>	<p>To assess information needs, identify and fill data gaps and design mechanisms of gathering information and data relevant for conservation of</p>	<p>Build the capacity of various partners in terms of information technology.</p> <p>Create hard copies and construct</p>		

	<p>IBAs</p> <p>Collect, collate and provide information at all levels as a basis for making decisions and developing appropriate conservation actions.</p>	<p>databases on species, site and habitat parameters on all IBAs.</p> <p>Create and maintain a network for communicating, accessing and sharing information at all levels.</p>		
<b>8. Mobilizing and securing resources</b>	<p>Ensure human resources, logistical and financial viability to implement activities leading to IBA conservation in Ethiopia.</p>	<p>Identify resources requirements for IBA conservation nationally.</p> <p>Create strong fundraising mechanisms to ensure the sustainability of future plans.</p> <p>Encourage income-generating initiatives by the NGOs and site-adjacent communities</p> <p>Build capacity of partners at national level in order to effectively make use of resources.</p>		

<p><b>9. Setting Priorities for action</b></p>	<p>Identify sites where conservation efforts can be focused especially in the context of limited resources and where most demonstrable impact will be achieved.</p> <p>Advocate for an enabling environment for action in IBAs.</p>	<p>Carry out a an IBA prioritisation workshop (done at a national level)</p> <p>Gather information and review priority sites to update current conservation action.</p> <p>Select sites based on their relative priority index and resources required to implement effective conservation action.</p> <p>Study and review national legislations, policies, social and economic conditions that would positively add to the conservation of species, sites and habitats.</p> <p>Advocate for better policies and legislations to cover IBA conservation at a national level.</p>		
<p><b>10. Building partnerships</b></p>	<p>To encourage and involve stakeholders to achieve positive contributions to IBA conservation.</p> <p>To establish the capacity for communities to participate in a long-term commitment to conserve their environment.</p> <p>To empower the local community in the management of resources and create benefit-sharing schemes that assist the access and rights to resources,</p>	<p>Conduct a stakeholder analysis to determine the key partners that would be involved in conservation of IBAs</p> <p>Identify the institutional roles and responsibilities of partners and resources needed</p> <p>Seek consensus on conservation agenda among key interest groups (partners)</p> <p>Clarify the legal and policy framework for institutional collaboration to take place</p>		

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