



Over the past three years, BirdLife International, through a mandate given to [SEO/BirdLife](#) (BirdLife Partner in Spain), has been implementing a national capacity development process to develop the capacity of a national NGO in Morocco, GREPOM (Group for Research and Protection Birds in Morocco by its French acronym) hoping that it will lead on the BirdLife programmes in Morocco to help conserve biodiversity there. This is part of a transition process towards the representation of BirdLife in Morocco, and away from the current BirdLife Morocco Country Programme. The desired end, in line with BirdLife operations elsewhere in the world, is to have a strong, committed and credible national NGO representing BirdLife as a member of the BirdLife Partnership. A key milestone in the process was achieved on Saturday, September 8th in Rabat, when the General Assembly of GREPOM unanimously ratified the amendment of the bylaws that allows it to be eligible for joining the BirdLife Partnership. The new approved statutes enable the organization to adopt a professional structure, which will enable it to progressively assume responsibility for the work done so far by the office of SEO/BirdLife in Morocco (BirdLife International Morocco Country Programme). The event, attended by SEO/BirdLife's CEO, Asuncion Ruiz, the Acting Head of the International Department, Ramon Martí, and the international team of SEO/BirdLife (MCP), was attended by about 80 GREPOM members. Dr Mohammed Dakki, GREPOM's President, presented GREPOM's new strategy, which is aligned to the BirdLife International strategy, based on four pillars: preventing extinction of the most threatened bird species, conserving natural areas and habitats, promoting sustainability and improving the livelihood conditions of local people. In her address to the General Assembly, Asunción Ruiz said: "This event has enormous value for BirdLife International because it represents the culmination of years of work in Morocco. We have taken a giant step forward towards ensuring that a Moroccan NGO will soon assume leadership of the conservation of biodiversity, sustainable use of natural resources and improving the living conditions of the people, following the well-tested BirdLife Partnership approaches. It is also an emotional event for SEO/BirdLife, which has been the main coordinator and promoter of this important work in Morocco, which involved many people and institutions who must be acknowledged for their involvement and support. There is a lot of work to be done still, of course, and GREPOM will need sustained support for a few more years. However, the effort was worth it." The affiliation process started one year ago, in a workshop held in Rabat, which was in turn a product of a longer process of identification undertaken by [BirdLife International through its Morocco Advisory Group](#). Rabat and Madrid 08/10/12. **More Information:** Imad Cherkaoui, Morocco Country Programme icherkaou@seo.org Carmen Fernandez, Press SEO /BirdLife 91 434 09 10/699 98 36 70