Welcome to the fifth issue of our Newsletter!

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3. COMDEKS Turkey poster to be featured at IPSI-4 in Fukui
4. New Brochure from COMDEKS India
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COMDEKS Phase 2: New landscapes and seascapes identified

In June 2013, the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative project grew to twenty countries with the launch of the second phase of the Project. Implemented by UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of Environment of Japan, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United National University Institute of Advanced Studies, COMDEKS is the flagship project of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative, a global initiative to promote sustainable use and management of natural resources in socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes.

Target landscape and seascapes selection and community consultations in the newly joined countries are underway. Some of the identified socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLs) in Phase 2 countries include, inter alia: the Gamri Watershed, in Bhutan; the Jaltepeque-Baja Lempe Protected Area, a forest and coastal area, in El Salvador; the Lake Issyk-Kul, a saline lake located in the Tian Shan mountain range in Kyrgyzstan; the East Nusa Tenggara seascape, in Indonesia; and La Mare de Tabalak, a watershed area in Niger.

Following selection of the target landscapes and seascapes in each country, the SGP National Steering Committees will select a grantee to facilitate the development of a participatory landscape strategy to guide community-based activities at the landscape level.

UNDP Community-based Landscape Approach

Through its implementation of the project “Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS)”, UNDP is refining a new community-based landscape management approach based on lessons learned from decades of experience with community level projects and activities. The aim of this new approach is to engage and empower community organizations to enhance and sustain the ecological, economic, and social resilience of the landscapes and communities they live and work in.

Community organizations – cooperatives, self-help groups, advocacy groups, etc. – will pursue sustainable management of the landscape and its resources if the benefits of doing so enhance the economic and social well-being of the people who live there. To maintain their interest, innovation and commitment, community organizations must own the process of landscape planning and management. This ownership is built by community organizations exercising their agency as primary decision makers, determining the socio-economic and ecological objectives of landscape management, the innovations to be pursued, the modes of implementation, the indicators of success, and the lessons learned. Above all, community organizations – by reflecting on the decisions they made in implementing their own initiatives – build their capacities to adapt their practices to ecological, economic and social challenges and opportunities. As owners of landscape planning and...
management, community organizations are active partners – not passive beneficiaries - who have the key role in determining how they meet the demands of enhancing resilience by strengthening ecological sustainability, economic growth and social cohesion.

This UNDP community-based landscape approach focuses on building Socio-Ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS) that are mosaics of uses and intensities of use that permit the conservation of biodiversity, sustain the generation of ecosystem services and enhance livelihoods and incomes, especially for the most vulnerable. This evolving approach relies on the implementation of a stakeholder-driven, participatory planning process that strengthens local organizational capacities and ownership, as well as the networks of organizations and relationships across sectors that are fundamental ingredients of social capital for resilience and sustainable development.

In this emerging community based approach, landscapes are selected based on a wide variety of criteria, the most important of which is the demonstrated interest and engagement of the communities themselves. A participatory baseline assessment is carried out to identify priority problems in the landscape as well as their root causes. Using mapping exercises, problem tree analysis, and focused group discussions, community members and stakeholders identify the characteristics, resources, challenges and opportunities of their landscapes.

As part of this process, a set of Indicators for Resilience in Socio-ecological Production Landscape and Seascapes is applied, developed by IPSI members, UNU-IAS and Bioversity International, to help measure and understand the resilience of target landscapes and seascapes.

Community participants select desirable resilience outcomes and long-term objectives of landscape management in the areas of ecosystem services, sustainable production systems, income generation and the strengthening of institutional and governance systems at the landscape level. These objectives form the basis for the COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy, a comprehensive document outlining the landscape profile and strategic approaches for community-based actions to achieve the objectives. These approaches then guide the selection of specific community initiatives for direct grant funding.

A fundamental premise of the emerging UNDP approach is that community organizations select the problems to be addressed as well as the innovations to current practices that should be tested for potential future adoption and dissemination. The enormous diversity of landscapes requires locally-adapted solutions to meet the needs of stakeholders and the ecosystem functions on which they depend. The knowledge of local stakeholders has been developed through years of observation and experience with the management of natural resources and ecological processes. When combined with more systematic and conventionally scientific approaches, community organizations can identify innovations, test them and obtain reliable results for reflection. Based on this analysis, these innovations may be adapted for further experimentation by community organizations, and lessons learned are disseminated to all other stakeholders in the organization as well as across the network of organizations in the landscape. In this sense, resilience enhancing techniques and technologies are developed and/or adapted locally by the organizations themselves – learning reliable systems of innovation is key to the process of community empowerment to adapt to change.
The poster, titled “Challenges and solutions to enhance the resilience of the Datça - Bozbüren Peninsula’s socio-ecological production landscape and seascape”, is used in key points of the Peninsula as an educational tool for enhancing capacity of the local communities living in the area, and building awareness among tourists visiting the area.

The left hand side of the poster simulates the interactive mapping exercise wherein community members were asked to mark important assets, including key biodiversity and local products, as well as threats and challenges in the area by sticking notes and photos on a map of the proposed landscape. The composed map not only provides valuable information on the key characteristics of the area, such as local products and important assets, but also underlines the sensitive areas of interest, problems, opportunities and threats including sea pollution, overfishing, ghost nets, etc. The right hand side of the poster outlines nine community-based projects currently supported by COMDEKS, which focus on both land and seascapes of the Datça-Bozbüren peninsula.

Please click here for additional information.

Contributed by Gökmen Yalçın, Turkey National Coordinator, GEF- SGP, UNDP, and Anna Krüger, COMDEKS Intern.

New Brochure from COMDEKS India

COMDEKS India with the Centre for Environment Education (CEE) has produced a brochure presenting the vision and goals of the COMDEKS Project in within Uttarakhand State, the target landscape in India. The brochure outlines the focus and expected outcomes for community based projects within the landscape including access to ecosystem services, increased agricultural productivity, and improved livelihood options.

Please click here to download the brochure and read more.

Contributed by Prabhjot Sodhi, India National Coordinator, GEF- SGP, UNDP.
coa cultivation is returning as the major agro forestry crop within the degraded areas. Ms. Tay joined by the DCE of South Dayi and traditional authorities, planted trees to commemorate the day.

Please click here for additional information.

Contributed by George Ortsin, Ghana National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP and Anna Mensah, Ghana Programme Assistant, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Portfolio Update

Cambodia

In Cambodia, COMDEKS currently supports four community-based projects in the target landscape of the Siem Reap Watershed. Following a landscape approach, and given the variety of functions of the watershed system, approved projects focus both on upland/midland and downstream areas.

Contributed by Ngin Navirak, Cambodia National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP, and Anna Krueger, COMDEKS Intern

Fiji

In Fiji, project development is underway and projects are expected to be approved in the coming weeks. Project selection will be guided by the expected outcomes set forth in the COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy. Eligible projects are expected to demonstrate effective protection or rehabilitation of existing natural biodiversity within the landscape and promotion of sustainable agricultural practices. A launch event for approved projects within the Natewa-Tunula Peninsula landscape is expected to take place in September. The type of projects that would be considered for implementation within the Natewa-Tunula landscape include: restoration of buffer strips or natural vegetation near community water sources; promotion of organic farming and agroforestry; traditional taro irrigation system, and traditional mulberry cloth production. Ultimately, projects are intended to build knowledge, improve local socio-economies, and strengthen local capacities and networks for self-management and long term sustainability.

Contributed by Katarina Atalifo, Fiji National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

India

Women produce yarn in Uttarakhand

In India, six projects have been recently approved for COMDEKS funding in the Uttarakhand landscape. The projects address a wide array of landscape challenges by facilitating better market access for farmers, use of renewable energy sources, encouraging recycling and reuse practices, and introducing higher value-added crops. For example, the “Conserving Biodiversity for positive human-nature relationship through nature and tourism in Kausani Valley of Almora district” project aims to conserve biodiversity, through raising awareness about conservation of natural resources, to promote nature tourism and develop employment opportunities.

Contributed by Prabhjot Sodhi, India National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Bhutan

Yudhiri sub-watershed

The target landscape for COMDEKS activities in Bhutan is the Gamri Watershed in Tashigang Dzongkhag district. Gamri is a main tributary of the Drangme Chhu River and its watershed area drains through eight geog(village) areas. The area is comprised of forests, natural grazing land, and agricultural land and is a traditional seasonal grazing area for livestock. Livestock places a tremendous pressure on the landscape’s natural resources and overgrazing is prominent. In addition to lowering the quality of grazing land, this contributes to landscape challenges such as deforestation, landslides, and the formation of ravines. Annual landslides wash away access roads and endanger upstream and downstream farm houses and other properties. Mismanagement of water and conflicts arising from resource sharing also exist and are some of the challenges the project hopes to address. Currently a baseline assessment is being held in Bhutan to learn more about challenges facing the resilience of the landscape.

Contributed by Singay Dorji, Bhutan National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Previous Issues of COMDEKS Newsletter: Issue 1, Issue 2, Issue 3, and Issue 4