

# COMDEKS

## Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

United Nations Development Programme  
Environment and Energy



Issue No. 5 September 2013 Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

*This newsletter is produced by the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project, implemented by UNDP and funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund. It provides updates on a range of topics including the status of ongoing country programmes, landscape performance indicators, project impacts and results, and noteworthy announcements.*

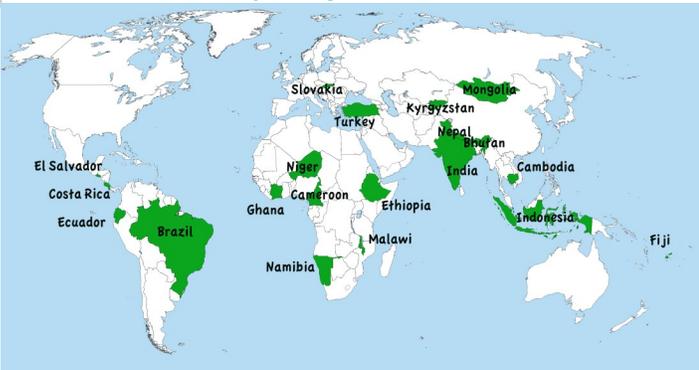
For more information about the COMDEKS project and latest news, please visit our blog at [www.comdeksproject.com](http://www.comdeksproject.com)

Welcome to the fifth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- (1) COMDEKS Phase 2 new landscapes and seascapes identified
- (2) UNDP Community-based Landscape Approach
- (3) COMDEKS Turkey poster to be featured at IPSI-4 in Fukui
- (4) New Brochure from COMDEKS India
- (5) COMDEKS grantees and beneficiaries in Ghana commemorate World Environment Day
- (6) Portfolio Update: Photostory from Cambodia, Stories from other participating countries: Fiji, India, Bhutan

### COMDEKS Country Programmes: September 2013



### COMDEKS Phase 2: New landscapes and seascapes identified



A mixed-use agricultural area

Photo: Cameroon

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 seascape 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



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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.



Displaying handicrafts in the target landscape

Photo: Bhutan

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.



Participatory consultation with community

Photo: Cambodia

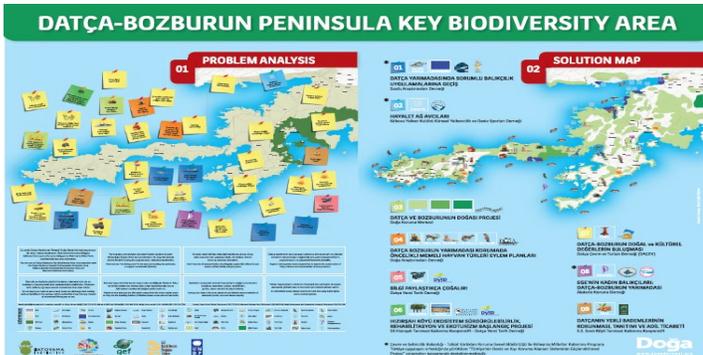
Innovation, adaptation and the dissemination of the lessons learned and other knowledge gained is the essence of social learning and the basis for the formation of social capital for adaptation and resilience. Reflection on landscape level resilience outcomes allows grantees to adjust activities and approaches and inform new planning and action. By involving community organizations across the landscape in participatory processes, the community based landscape approach moves beyond short term projects to a more programmatic and strategic approach aimed at creating and reinforcing resilient communities and landscapes for long-term engagement and commitment. The COMDEKS Project has been established as a concrete testing ground for this new vision and approach.

*Contributed by Nick Remple, Technical Advisor, Community Resilience and Sustainability, UNDP-GEF and Diana Salvemini, COMDEKS Project Manager, UNDP-GEF.*

### COMDEKS Turkey Landscape Poster to be featured at IPSI-4 in Fukui

As part of the community consultation process and mapping exercise of the COMDEKS socio-ecological production landscape, COMDEKS Turkey has produced a poster of the Datça-Bozburun Peninsula, a key biodiversity area in the Muğla province of Southwest Turkey and the target landscape for the COMDEKS Programme in Turkey. The poster was submitted by COMDEKS to a poster session to be held at the upcoming IPSI-4 meeting in Fukui, Japan, as an example of the quality of local knowledge captured during the community consultative process and the on the ground community-based activities funded by COMDEKS at the landscape level.

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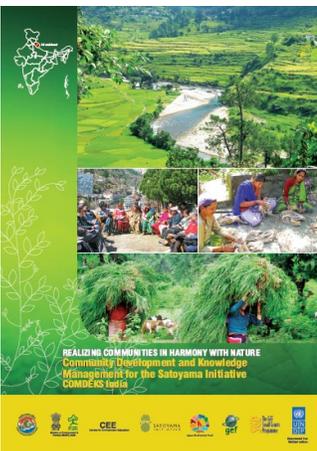


The poster, titled “Challenges and solutions to enhance the resilience of the Datça - Bozburun Peninsula’s socio-ecological production landscape and seascape”, is used in key points of the Peninsula as an educational tool for enhancing capacity of the local communities living in the area, and building 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-Bozburun peninsula.

Please click [here](#) for additional information.  
*Contributed by Gokmen Yalcin, Turkey National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP, and Anna Krueger, 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.*

## COMDEKS Grantees and Beneficiaries in Ghana commemorate World Environment Day



COMDEKS Ghana grantees display WED 2013 pledges Photo: Ghana

In launching this year’s World Environment Day (WED 2013), June 5, the GEF Small Grants Programme in Ghana organized a workshop for the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project (COMDEKS) grantees; and a small celebration for the beneficiary communities in the Weto Range in the Volta Region. The event was attended by traditional authorities of the communities, the District Chief Executives (DCE) of South Dayi and Afadjato Districts, Hon. Kafui Bekwin and Hon. Angela Alorwu Tay respectively, stakeholders in the environment sector including the Forest Services Division, Ghana Fire Service, Ministry of Food and Agriculture and representatives of the nine (9) NGO’s implementing the COMDEKS/Satoyama Initiative Project along the Weto range and community members.

In his welcome address, the DCE of South Dayi District explained the aim of COMDEKS: to conserve biodiversity, while meeting the socio-economic needs of communities by providing for livelihoods, subsistence use of natural resources and the cultural values communities place on the environment.



Local authorities and COMDEKS grantees visit nursery site Photo: Ghana

The keynote address, delivered by Hon. Angela Alorwu Tay, the DCE of Afadjato District, highlighted the theme of WED 2013, “Think. Eat. Save”, aimed at creating awareness on the amount of food wasted around the world and the significant amount of methane gas emanate from food decomposition on landfills, livestock production as well as crop production which contribute significantly to global warming. Ms. Tay concluded her message commending the GEF SGP for the Satoyama Initiative Project in the Volta Region, urging all to support and sustain the project, and outlining some of the progress so far. ‘Significant changes have been observed in the behavior of the people. During the last dry season, the incidence of bushfires around the WETO range was negligible and people are now aware of the environmental consequences of bushfires.’ Tree planting has improved and co

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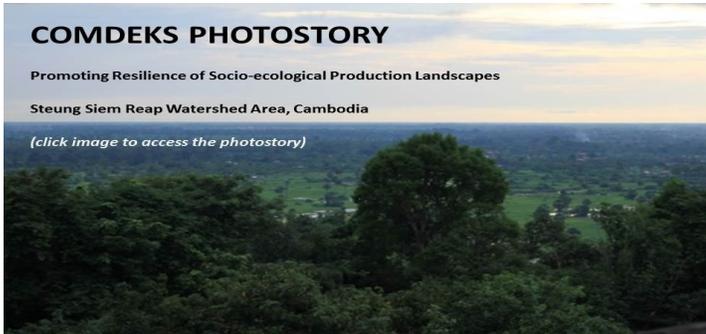
coa cultivation is returning as the major agro forestry crop within the degraded areas. Ms. Tay joined by the DCE of South Dayi and traditional authorities, planted trees to commemorate the day.

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



Traditional vuci farms

Photo: 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-Tunuloa Peninsula landscape is expected to take place in September. The type of projects that would be considered for implementation within the Natewa-Tunuloa 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

Photo: India

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

Photo: Bhutan

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](#)**