

COMDEKS

Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

United Nations Development Programme



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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.

Welcome to the twelfth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) National Energy Globe Award to COMDEKS grantee in Mongolia
- 2) Upcoming Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop in Africa
- 3) "Today for me, tomorrow for you": assessment in Turkey
- 4) A community-based approach to measuring resilience in peri-urban areas
- 5) Financial Inclusion in Northern Malawi
- 6) Portfolio updates: Costa Rica, Cameroon, and a photo story from Niger.

COMDEKS Country Programmes: June 2015



soil bag building construction technology, which saves on wood, was successfully introduced to build greenhouses, cattle shelter and residential houses.

With technical assistance from Hiroshima University, the project introduced an alternative approach to construct greener and more reliable solutions for local herders and farmers, along with onsite training and capacity building.



Accepting the Energy Globe Certificate.

Photo: Mongolia

These awards provide recognition and serve as a platform for further replication and scaling up of COMDEKS and SGP projects.

Contributed by Ganbaatar Bandi, Mongolia National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

National Energy Globe Award to COMDEKS grantee in Mongolia

We are pleased to announce that the *Clean Energy* NGO, a GEF/SGP and COMDEKS grantee in Mongolia, has been awarded the 2015 National Energy Globe Award, a prestigious environmental award that distinguishes the best projects from within a country. The award was presented by Mr. Richard Schenz, Vice-President of Austrian Federal Economic Chamber at the Mongolian Opera and Ballet Theatre in Ulaanbaatar. The grantee, *Clean Energy*, has successfully implemented the project "Introduction of a soil bag construction technology and initiation of agro-tourism", co-financed by the SGP and COMDEKS, where a

Upcoming Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop in Africa

The IPSI Secretariat is currently organizing the Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop in Africa in the city of Accra, Ghana from 10-12 August 2015. The Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop aims to strengthen the knowledge base related to the sustainable management of production landscapes and seascapes in the respective region as well as to widely share the concept of the Satoyama Initiative. The African Regional Workshop is expected to further the efficacy of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) by creating shared understanding of issues related to socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes



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(SEPLS) among IPSI member organizations and other participants, to promote more effective communication among members in Africa and expand IPSI's network. The workshop will serve as an opportunity to collect and synthesize knowledge on SEPLS in Africa from the various participating nations across the continent.

Additional information can be found on the IPSI [website](#).

"Today for me, tomorrow for you": Ex post Baseline Assessment in Turkey



Protection of threatened local Mediterranean forest ecosystems. Photo: Turkey

During the second half of 2014, Turkey carried out an ex-post baseline assessment aimed at analyzing successful innovations that resulted from COMDEKS interventions and identifying priorities for future projects. The assessment was carried out with the support of Doğa Derneği (Nature Association) and Seferihisar Doğa Okulu (Seferihisar Nature School), and was implemented through face-to-face interviews with project managers, the SEPLS indicator survey and a workshop held in November 2014.

The workshop "Today for me, tomorrow for you", along with a topical documentary, facilitated knowledge sharing via mass media and the internet, increasing awareness in the target landscape. Along with this, in order to ensure participation, a local contacts database was prepared, posters were shared through social media and stakeholders were kept informed through messages.

During the evaluation period, thirty project stakeholders were interviewed and 60 people participated in the SEPLS survey, the results of which showed a positive improvement in information sharing, learning and innovation as compared to 2012. As a result of projects, 38,227 ha have been restored and protected in the target landscape and a number of globally endangered species such as the Mediterranean Monk Seal, and *Caretta caretta*, have been protected. Through public education campaigns illegal fishing has been suppressed, resulting in a substantial recovery of local

fish stocks. In addition to this, 700 m of ghost nets (derelict nets that kill fish) and 5000 m of ghost fishing line have been removed, greatly improving the safety of area waters for fish and other marine organisms.

The Responsible Fishing Project reached at least 40 professional boat owners and the production efficiency of local traditional almond producers has been improved through the provision of a shelling machine, which has saved \$11,000 in labor costs. Along with this, projects focusing on civil women beneficiaries resulted in significant improvements in the working conditions of rural women, and fisherwomen have been officially added to the list of eligible groups who can seek microfinance through the Turkey Grameen Micro Credit Program. The assessment found that a total of 36 communities (5 governmental institutions and 31 civilian communities) have pursued traditional and innovative sustainable land management practices as a result of COMDEKS interventions, benefiting a total of 14 local organizations. During the evaluation, a number of issues and potential investments in support of the latter three goals (i.e. income generation, agriculture and network development) were raised, a key factor being the expansion of markets for traditionally produced agricultural products and ensuring that they draw the relatively high market value they deserve.

Contributed by Ms. Gökmen Argun, Turkey National Co-ordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

A community-based approach to measuring resilience in peri-urban areas



Consultation before devising landscape strategy.

Photo: Cambodia

Defining a community's resilience loosely as its ability to withstand various types of changes, shocks and disturbances, unfortunately the only way to directly measure resilience is to subject a community to shocks and disturbances and see if it withstands them, which is obviously not practical. So we are left with estimating or measuring indirectly. One way to do this is by using elements that are thought to contribute to resilience and can be measured directly as indicators. Ideally,

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it would be possible to use these to produce hard, quantitative data that could then be used in some sort of universal index of resilience. The fact that different communities exist in different ecological and cultural contexts, however, means that various responses to related challenges may contribute to or undermine resilience differently in different places. This can make it difficult if not impossible to identify and correctly weight quantitative elements of resilience. An alternative approach is to rely on qualitative, perception-based data.

The "Indicators of Resilience in Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS)" were developed through a collaborative activity carried out under IPSI by Bioversity International and the United Nations University (UNU-IAS). After extensive field-testing around the world, they were further refined and updated in a [Toolkit publication](#) in collaboration with UNDP and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), providing guidance on how to apply the indicators. Much of the indicators framework applies to peri-urban areas, particularly where a significant amount of food production takes place. As was pointed out in [a recent TNOO essay](#), peri-urban areas can provide connections between people living in urban areas and rural areas and can see benefits in resilience through effective management.

For more on this approach in peri-urban areas, please see the full article on the [Nature of Cities blog](#).

Contributed by William Dunbar, Communications Expert, International Satoyama Initiative Tokyo, Japan.

Financial Inclusion in Northern Malawi



Catherine Phiri telling her heartwarming story.

Photo: Malawi

Residents of Tukombo, a trading centre in Nkhata bay District, were all smiles about the improvements in their lives since the introduction of village savings and loans by the Chifundo-Chapeta Community Based Organization (CBO). The CBO is a beneficiary of the Community Development and Knowledge management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS) Project. Funded through the Japan Biodiversity

Fund established within the Convention on Biological Diversity Secretariat, the COMDEKS Project is implemented by UNDP and delivered through the GEF Small Grants Programme.

Formed in March 2014, the Mbamba Pilot group of women began saving and trading with Malawi Kwacha (MWK) 5,000 (US\$12). This quickly grew to MWK250,000 (US\$581) by March 2015, representing a nominal growth rate of 4,742% per annum. All the money was collected through loans to the group members. The success of the initiative, is evidenced by a number of group and individual success stories that one comes across in many corners of the COMDEKS project area. Mirriam is one of the happy women who proudly admits that her life has been transformed as she is now able to access money for her various needs. "We lend money to each other to generate a 20% interest. The loan and interest are payable within three months" said Mirriam. The twist is that the interest does not belong to the group, as is the case with commercial banks and traditional money-lenders. It is appended on to the owner's account, ensuring continued growth of one's savings. These will be shared to group members accordingly, at the end of an agreed saving interval.

Please click [here](#) for the full article.

Contributed by Alex Damaliphetsa, Malawi National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Portfolio updates:

Costa Rica



Panoramic view of the Jesus Maria watershed.

Photo: Costa Rica

The target landscape selected as the focus of COMDEKS activities in Costa Rica is the Rio Jesus Maria watershed, located in the Pacific Region of Costa Rica. Spanning 35,280 hectares, the region is a diverse landscape comprised of forests, coffee and fruit trees, mangroves, pastures, plantations, water bodies, and urban areas. The purpose of COMDEKS activities in Costa Rica is to promote appropriate socio-ecological production systems to protect or regenerate biodiversity conservation, meeting the socioeconomic needs of resident communities and providing methods for sustainable use of natural resources.

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The projects implemented in Costa Rica have focused on supporting and coordinating specific community based actions by financing small-scale projects run by local communities within the priority landscapes to achieve landscape-scale aggregate impacts. To this effect, five community led projects are currently being implemented focusing on water management, reforestation, recovering degraded land, and implementing conservation practices, all contributing to the restoration of Jesus Maria river basin. These initiatives, in addition to contributing to ecological improvements, also ensure significant progress in socio-economic development. Supported initiatives will generate knowledge, practices, methods and management systems and socio-ecological landscapes in Jesús María River Basin for the purpose of replication, development and integration of initiatives in the other eight basins identified by CADETI as the most degraded of Costa Rica.

Contributed by Eduardo Mata, Costa Rica, National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Cameroon



Monitoring and evaluation visit.

Photo: Cameroon

Bogo, situated in the north of Cameroon, is an area with diverse natural resources and agricultural systems due to its hydro-rich alluvial soils. Despite the region's rich natural resources, local actors dependent on agriculture for survival are profoundly affected by the decline in agricultural productivity stemming from soil degradation and increased climate variability. Food insecurity linked to climate variability and soil degradation, unsustainable agricultural practices and weak institutional structures are some of the challenges being addressed through COMDEKS interventions, in order to restore ecosystem services and build resilience in the target landscape.

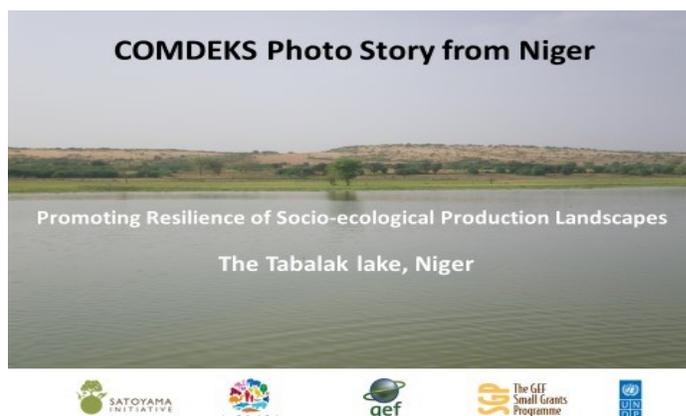
In 2013 a baseline assessment was undertaken for the development of the Cameroon Country Programme Landscape Strategy, and eight local projects have been awarded as part of Cameroon's portfolio of COMDEKS landscape interventions. Supported projects focus on watershed reha-

bilitation, sustainable farming techniques, gender inclusion and ecosystem conservation through community-based activities, including gardening for vegetables and the manufacture of mud bricks in areas around ponds. More than 1000 multipurpose tree species have been planted to restore natural vegetative cover and combat the effects of climate change. Along with this, over 130 cooking stoves have been distributed to women, enabling them to reduce pressure on natural resources, shrubs and trees in particular.

Improved community access to potable water, the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices using organic manures, climate resistant seeds and local vegetables have contributed to economic development, improving the well-being of local communities in the area. A total of 35 hectares have been farmed using green manure and there has been a marked improvement in living conditions, reflected by an increase in purchasing power, improved food security and the stability of young people within the landscape. A revolving fund has been established for women's groups, providing a base for income generating activities, and reducing vulnerability and gender inequality. A number of institutions including local womens' networks, sub-divisional representations of various ministries and the local council through the mayor, are participating in COMDEKS activities, increasing knowledge sharing and improving overall sustainability within the landscape.

Contributed by Ms. Mpeck Marie-Laure, Cameroon National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

A Photo-story from Niger



Click on the image above to access a photo story from Niger.

Contributed by Mrs. Nanatao Ismail, Niger National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Please click [here](#) for previous Issues of COMDEKS Newsletter.