

# 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 fifteenth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) Certificate of honor to COMDEKS project in Kyrgyzstan
- 2) Sixth IPSI Global Conference (IPSI-6) in Cambodia
- 3) Best practice exchange for farmers in Brazil
- 4) Reducing biotic pressure on National Park in India
- 5) Portfolio Updates: Turkey and Niger
- 6) Photo story from Bhutan

### COMDEKS Country Programmes: March 2016



### Certificate of honor issued to COMDEKS-supported fishery project in Issyk-Kul, Kyrgyzstan

We are pleased to announce that in December 2015, GEF SGP Kyrgyzstan and the Public Association "Issyk-Kul Pond Keepers" received a certificate of honor (pochetnaya gramota) by the Fishery Department of the Ministry of Agriculture for a COMDEKS-supported project establishing a fish farm in the Issyk-Kul region. The award honors the successful contribution of this project to biodiversity conservation of the Issyk-Kul Lake as well as the development of the fishery sector in Kyrgyzstan by rehabilitating two endemic fish species populations.

Issyk-Kul is a unique aquatic ecosystem in Kyrgyzstan. Today, these lake waters inhabit more than 20 species of fish, of which eight species are endemic, or peculiar only to Issyk-Kul. Initiated by the "Issyk-Kul Pond Keepers" and with

the aim of preserving the lake's ecosystem, the project carried out targeted activities to preserve endemic fish species such as Issyk-kul marinka and Scaleless osman.

Implemented in Lipenka village in the Jeti-Oguz district of Issyk-Kul region, this project created the necessary conditions for breeding different carp fish with use of solar water heating collectors and solar photovoltaic panels that provide electricity for circulating water in the fish pools, also making their operation resilient to the frequent power cuts in the region. With the assistance of the Fund for Development of the Issyk-Kul region, shelters for fish shops and two big concrete tanks were built for fish larvae to mature. More mature fish are then moved to two adolescent ponds, where they reach the required weights and sizes. The release of these endemic fish into the lake is planned for Summer 2016.



GEF SGP and the grantee receiving certificate of honor Photo: Kyrgyzstan

Besides environmental benefits, this initiative also generated economic benefits for local communities. Through the improved local fish farming opportunities, communities were able to decrease the import of juvenile carp from neighboring Kazakhstan, thereby reducing risks and costs associated with this import, including difficulties with the acclimatization of fish to the local environment, import of parasites and viruses, and losses and risks during the transportation of live



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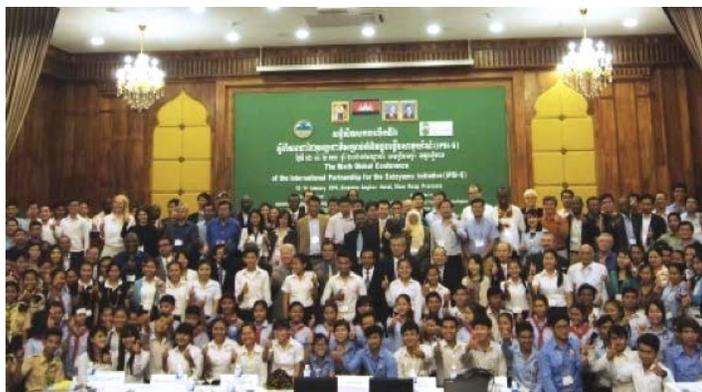
fish. The further project provided valuable best practices for endemic fish breeding that can be replicated across the all Issyk-Kul region.

*Contributed by Ms. Evgeniia Postnova, Kyrgyzstan National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP*

### Sixth IPSI Global Conference (IPSI-6) in Cambodia

The Sixth Global Conference of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI-6) was held 12-14 January 2016 in Siem Reap, Cambodia. The conference was organized by the IPSI Secretariat and hosted by the Ministry of Environment of Cambodia, and included a meeting of the IPSI General Assembly, a Public Forum, and a day of excursions to several sites around Siem Reap and Angkor Wat.

The General Assembly is primarily a platform for information sharing and decisions regarding the future direction of IPSI among its members, and this year also included the rotation of the IPSI Steering Committee. The Public Forum is an opportunity for non-members to learn more about IPSI and its activities as well as a venue for discussion of different topics related to socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS), their revitalization and sustainable management.



Participants of the Sixth IPSI Global Conference and Forum Photo: IPSI

This time, the Public Forum was held as part of the interim review process for the IPSI Plan of Action 2013-2018, with working-group discussions around the theme "Planning and reviewing strategic actions for sustainable landscape and seascape management". Six presentations were given on activities related to SEPLS in Cambodia, which also included a presentation on COMDEKS supported activities in the "Steung Siem Reap Watershed Landscape" by Ms. Ngin Navirak, the GEF SGP National Coordinator in Cambodia.

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

*Contributed by Ms. Ngin Navirak, Cambodia National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP*

### Best practice exchange for farmers in the Upper Jequitinhonha Valley, Brazil

In December 2015, COMDEKS supported a site visit to two initiatives in Southern Minas Gerais State, Brazil in order to facilitate knowledge exchange of best practices among small farmers, partners and agronomists. This knowledge exchange helped farmers to improve their understanding of payments for environmental services as well as a farmer-led participatory organic certification process, and transfer this knowledge to their communities in the COMDEKS socio-ecologic production landscape in the Upper Jequitinhonha Valley.



Site visit to organic coffee plantation

Photo: Brazil

It was conducted as part of the activities under the COMDEKS landscape strategy in Brazil, which involves 14 communities aiming to increase landscape resilience and improve livelihoods through enhanced agroecology, water and soil management, as well as enhanced market access opportunities. The exchange was organized by the NGO Vicente Nica Alternative Agriculture Center (CAV), which is also supported by SGP Brazil through co-financing of the strategic project "Living in the Landscape: Building new relationships with nature in the Jequitinhonha Valley".

Most of the cultivation in the COMDEKS landscape is based on sustainable agroecologic practices, however, organic certification is key to improving marketing, which could considerably increase income from ecosystem services for the local communities. During this visit to the Poço Fundo Small Farmers Cooperative, participants learned firsthand about the implementation of the Participative Organic Quality Assurance System in order to replicate it in their landscape. The unique feature of this type of certification is that it is entirely controlled by the farmers themselves, making this process less costly, more independent and hence allowing access to even the smallest farmers.

The participants further visited the Project Water Producers, coordinated by the Extrema municipality Environment Secre-

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tary, which have been facilitating economic incentives for farmers providing environmental services in compliance with local legislation for environmental protection since 2005. Over 170 farmers that conserve soil and water, implement adequate sanitation on their land, and recover degraded areas around water courses complying with the Brazilian Forest Code that guarantees protection of riparian forests, have benefited from these incentives.

The best practices of both of these sites will serve as references for further planning and development of local solutions for environmental issues in the Upper Jequitinhonha Valley.

*Contributed by Ms. Isabel Figueiredo, Brazil Country Programme Manager, GEF SGP, UNDP*

### Reducing biotic pressure on the Rajaji National Park in the Himalayan State of Uttarakhand, India



Handloom center in Rasulpur

Photo: India

The Rajaji National Park, established in 1983 and located within the foothills of the Himalayas, is thickly covered by the Sal Forest and a number of other forest types which include the Western Gangetic Moist and Northern dry Deciduous and Khair-Sissoo forests. The 66 surrounding villages are historically dependent on forest resources for their livelihood and about 50,000 cattle enter the park daily for grazing, putting tremendous pressure on the park's ecosystems.

A COMDEKS funded project aims to provide alternative sources of livelihoods for poor households of mainly Tongia cultivators in villages on Rajaji's southern periphery, with the aim of reducing degradation of the park's ecosystems and improving their social status through a participatory planning process. The project involves sustainable natural resource management for optimizing resource use within the carrying capacity of the park's ecosystems and ensuring environmental sustainability.

To reduce pressure from grazing on the park, the project trained a local mason in each village to construct feeding troughs, improving cattle health through clean fodder and water and diverting more cattle from "free grazing" to "stall-fed-conditions", hence reducing the burden on the forest. Additionally, a para-vet was trained and a veterinary camp was established at Daluwala Majabata, with a vaccination program conducted in four villages, vaccinating over 900 cattle against foot and mouth disease and de-worming over 250 cattle to date.

Farmers were encouraged to use traditional sustainable agriculture and seed development practices and a nursery for 14 species of medicinal plants was established, distributing these herbal plants to community kitchen gardens. Bio-composting and the use of bio-pesticides as well as establishing drip irrigation systems and poly tunnels have increased yields and improve sustainability of agricultural land use.

To improve access to clean energy and generate alternative sources of income, nine biogas units were set up with support from the District Administration, a recharging station for solar lanterns was set up with proceeds paid into a community fund, a sewing center was established in Daluwala Kalan village, with 21 girls already having completed a 6-month course in tailoring, and a handloom center opened in Rasulpur, providing courses in handloom and production of other handicrafts.

*Contributed by the Friends of the Doon Society (FOD) and Mr. Prabhjot Sodhi, India National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP*

### Portfolio Updates: Turkey



Fisherwoman in Datça Peninsula

Photo: Turkey

Located in Mugla province and recognized as a Key Biodiversity Area representing one of the most pristine Mediterranean lowland forest and coastal landscapes, the Datça-

*(Continued from page 3)*

Bozburun peninsula was selected as the target landscape for COMDEKS activities in Turkey. Despite 90 percent of the peninsula being protected under natural parks, wildlife reserves, and no-fishing zones, increasing tourism and residential development has resulted in significant habitat destruction in local land and marine ecosystems.

The Landscape Strategy developed through the consultative baseline assessment, which provided an opportunity for 42 key stakeholders to discuss social and ecological values, threats and opportunities, aims to increase resilience of agriculture, improve ecosystem services and promote eco-friendly community-based enterprises, protect local flora and fauna, and strengthen institutional governance mechanisms in the target landscape.

A number of COMDEKS-supported projects have put great effort in protecting marine biodiversity by tackling negative impacts from various angles. Activities included promoting a land-based control mechanism to reduce illegal fishing, creating awareness among local fishing communities about unsustainable fishing practices, and training fisherwomen and their daughters in women leadership to improve their livelihoods through traditional knowledge. Other trainings and workshops focused on the production of organic fertilizers for sustainable agriculture, sustainable beekeeping practices, as well as knowledge sharing among different projects and stakeholders in the region.

*Contributed by Ms. Gökmen Argun, Turkey National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP*

## Niger



Equipment for sustainable fishing

Photo: Niger

The area surrounding "La Mare de Tabalak," a natural freshwater lake located in the central South-Western part of Niger, was selected as the target landscape for COMDEKS activities. Lake Tabalak is a humid area that plays an important role in maintaining the biological diversity in this region as well as in the livelihoods of local communities

depending on agriculture, livestock breeding and fishery. Currently, this region is facing threats of accelerated degradation due to pressure from unsustainable agricultural practices and increasing variability in climate.

In 2013, a baseline assessment was undertaken for the development of the Niger Country Programme Landscape Strategy, and seven local projects have been awarded as part of Niger's portfolio of COMDEKS landscape interventions. Supported projects focus on the restoration and sustainable management of the local environment, removing invasive plant species on degraded land and in the lake, rehabilitating endemic fish and plant species, strengthening local institutional capacity, as well as creating and diversifying sustainable income generation activities.

Across all COMDEKS funded projects, almost 30,000 seedlings have been planted and raised so far to rehabilitate degraded land and sand dunes, with more than 1,850 direct beneficiaries of rehabilitated grazing land and increased land area for cultivation. Locally appropriate training and equipment for 50 fishermen has fostered more sustainable fishing practices that reduce harvesting of juvenile fish and allow fish populations to recover. Furthermore, the high participation of particularly vulnerable groups such as women and youth has contributed to increasing food security and improving livelihoods.

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

## A Photo story from Bhutan



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

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

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