

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 eighteenth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) Launch of the COMDEKS II publication
- 2) COMDEKS contributions to "SEPLS in Africa"
- 3) Grantee participates in COP22 in Morocco
- 4) Strengthening landscape governance in Indonesia
- 5) Portfolio updates: Mongolia and Namibia
- 6) Video from Costa Rica

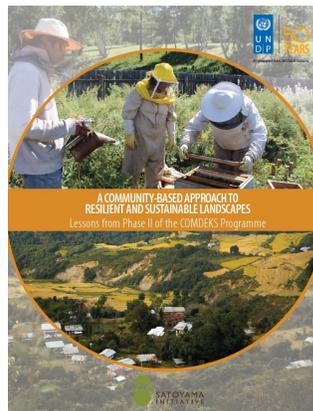
COMDEKS Country Programmes: December 2016



Launch of the second COMDEKS publication featuring phase 2 country case studies

We are pleased to announce that the COMDEKS Programme has launched its second case study publication "A Community-based Approach to Resilient and Sustainable Landscapes: Lessons from Phase II of the COMDEKS Programme" at the end of October at the 1st Conference of Biocultural Diversity. The conference was organized by IPSI partners the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability Operating Unit Ishikawa-Kanazawa (UNU-IAS OUIK), UNESCO, the Secretariat of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the Ishikawa Prefectural Government, along with the Nanao City Govern-

ment, and took place 27-29 October 2016 in Nanao City, Ishikawa Prefecture, Japan.



The conference involved the participation and presentations from researchers, practitioners and policy makers assessing the relationship between biological and cultural diversity as well as their conservation and use on a local level. Ms. Diana Salvemini, the COMDEKS Project Manager, presented the approach and key lessons of on-the-ground COMDEKS activities, highlighting activities and achievements from the Mongolia Country Programme, which is part of the ten Phase II country case studies featured in this new publication.

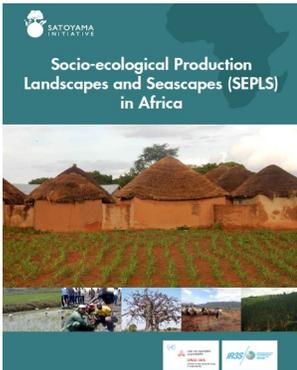
The publication shows how much progress has been made in defining the goals, planning processes, funding mechanisms, and monitoring systems needed to make sustainable landscape management a reality. It demonstrates the strengths of the COMDEKS methodology in a variety of different geographic, cultural, and governance settings, tackling a wide array of environmental, social, and economic challenges. The case studies provide valuable examples of the COMDEKS approach and the improvements in ecosystem services, and rural productivity, income, and community empowerment that result.

The publication will also be presented during the Thirteenth Conference of the Parties to the CBD (CBD COP-13) in Mexico at the UNDP/UNU-IAS side event "Contributions of Funding Mechanisms under the Satoyama Initiative to Mainstreaming Biodiversity for Well-Being", scheduled for December 8th.

The full publication is available for download at the following [link](#).



COMDEKS Cameroon, Ghana and Ethiopia contribute to "SEPLS in Africa" publication



The United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), together with the University of Tokyo's Integrated Research System for Sustainability Science (IR3S/UTIAS), recently published a new publication with the title "Socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS) in Africa".

The publication aims to contribute knowledge and understanding on SEPLS in Africa, focusing particularly on their role in human well-being and sustainable development. It compiles twelve SEPLS-related case studies from six African countries and builds on the Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop in Africa, held in Ghana in August 2015, featuring three case studies contributed by the COMDEKS Cameroon, Ethiopia, and Ghana country teams.

The Bogo landscape in Cameroon is endowed with diverse natural resources with agricultural systems, rich alluvial soils, and a diversified pasture and cultural system, which is conducive to tourism and provides a solid foundation for economic activities and sustainable development. In Ghana, the Weto SEPL is a dynamic, mountainous mosaic landscape characterized by tropical climatic conditions with diverse habitats and land use. The landscape has been shaped by cultural beliefs that have guided the conservation of agro-biodiversity and protection of highly ecologically sensitive areas. Finally, the COMDEKS target landscape in Ethiopia, the Gilgil Gibe 1 (GG1) catchment consists of a diverse mosaic of ecosystems, and the local farming community depends on subsistence agriculture. As a result of the sharp increase in population, the previously rich biodiversity resources have gradually depleted to a level that cannot sustain livelihood requirements.

The case studies illustrate the unique social and environmental backgrounds of the individual target landscapes, the role of local knowledge practices and systems, challenges and threats to the SEPLS, as well as the COMDEKS supported efforts to increasing landscape resilience and improving socio-ecological production, providing comprehensive technical information on the landscape and supported initiatives. Each case study highlights key achievements and recommendations for future activities to conserve biodiversity while improving livelihoods of local communities.

"SEPLS in Africa" is available for download from the IPSI website [here](#).

Grantee from Cameroon participates in the COP22 in Marrakech, Morocco

To showcase the efforts of local communities and CSOs to mitigate and adapt to climate change and in preparation of the 22nd UNFCCC Conference of Parties (COP22) in Marrakech, Morocco, in November 2016, SGP in collaboration with UNDP, GEF, UN Women, and Swiss Cooperation supported the "Initiative Climat COP22", a competition that aims to identify and award outstanding communities-based climate change initiatives in Francophone Africa.

As one of the nominees, the Cameroonian CSO "Association Horizon Info" received the "COP22 Nominee Trophy" for its COMDEKS-supported, community-led initiative promoting the production and use of biocoal to reduce deforestation as well as the difficulties women face on a daily basis related to fetching fuelwood for cooking. Within this project, a semi-industrial biocoal production plant was established and 120 people – including 73 women and 27 youths – were trained to produce biocoal to be used in improved cook stoves. The CSO has already successfully replicated some best practices of this initiative in two other regions of the country, and intends to extend its activities to all municipalities in northern Cameroon by 2020, if more resources can be mobilized. Ms. Fadimatou Hassimi, the CSO's president, was invited to participate in the COP22 and had the opportunity to participate in a number of side events and workshops.



Ms. Hassimi presenting their initiative

Photo: Cameroon

Highlight of Ms. Hassimi's participation in the COP22 was her presentation during the high-level event "Dialogue with Civil Society on Local Climate Action in Africa" held on 15th November 2016, which was also attended by Ms. Helen Clark, UNDP Administrator, Ms. Naoko Ishi, GEF CEO and Chairperson, and Ms. Adriana Dinu, UNDP-GEF Executive Coordinator.

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In her presentation, she highlighted key results achieved through the COMDEKS-supported project of facilitating biocoal production from agricultural waste in the Bogo landscape. Additionally, Radio France International (RFI) interviewed Ms. Hassimi during the conference, and the interview was broadcasted in French-speaking countries across Africa and around the world.

Contributed by Fadimatou Hassimi, COMDEKS grantee, Marie-Laure Mpeck Nyemeck, Cameroon National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP, and Aimé Kamga, Programme Assistant, GEF SGP, UNDP

Landscapes governance at the core of COMDEKS Indonesia's seascape strategy



Resource and community mapping

Photo: Indonesia

Institutional governance is considered to be an important crosscutting topic within the COMDEKS landscape approach. It aims to create and strengthen institutional governance systems for effective participatory decision-making and knowledge-sharing at the landscape level.

COMDEKS has brought together a number of otherwise disparate groups in Semau Island, the COMDEKS target landscape, to work towards landscape resilience through a set of coordinated activities. These included six NGOs and the Ministry of Marine Affairs and Fisheries. Prior to this approach, the NGOs largely worked separately, so this is an important governance reform in itself. During the COMDEKS activities, these organizations have engaged as a collective, under the overall tutelage of the NGO PIKUL. Mapping governance arrangements and social innovators was a useful first step. It helped the project partners to develop a clear understanding of the current arrangements, identify areas for improvement, implement innovations and monitor progress. After a visioning process that produced a common vision and a detailed road map, PIKUL identified local leaders and social innovators as a first step towards raising awareness on sustainable governance and management.

New institutions and networks have been established. Environmental forums – which include the participation of customary authorities, community leaders, community groups and government authorities – have been set up at the village level in each of the seven partner villages to facilitate the restoration of damaged ecosystems and develop a system ensuring the sustainability of these ecosystems. Water Committees have also been established to support improved sanitation. In addition, these groups support the development of binding agreements in the communities to ensure sustainability of activities and results. These agreements include a watershed-related charter, sand mining-related regulations and sanitation-related agreements. The COMDEKS supported governance activities and innovations have collectively supported improvements in a number of interrelated areas, including the establishment of a water conservation area that integrates tree planting with increased access of water to communities; improved irrigation systems and demonstration of conversion to organic forms of agriculture; greater market access; higher prices for the organic produce; the introduction of biogas systems, restrictions on the extraction of beach sand; mangrove restoration; and improved cultivation and processing of seaweed. Using demonstration sites helped to raise the interest of stakeholders in the approaches being proposed and helped generate buy-in from leaders and landlords who were critical to the requisite governance reforms.

Portfolio Updates:

Mongolia



Greenhouse with soil bag construction technique

Photo: Mongolia

The Central Selenge area, the target area selected to implement COMDEKS projects in Mongolia, is one of the main crop and vegetable growing areas in the country, is home to a large animal and plant biodiversity, and has strong social networks. Since the region is crippled by widespread

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poverty, environmental and ecosystem degradation, further exacerbated by climate change, has disproportionately serious consequences for the local population.

Based on the community-driven landscape planning process and the baseline assessment conducted in 2013, 20 CSO-administered projects were selected for COMDEKS support.

The COMDEKS landscape approach has brought communities together to act collaboratively at the landscape level to achieve common goals and integrated objectives. A number of new income-generating activities have been piloted and promoted in the Central Selenge area, including beekeeping, handicraft production, fruit and ornamental tree cultivation as well as eco- and agrotourism. Seven communities in Mandal soum were assisted with identifying tourism products and establishing hiking and walking routes in community protected areas. They also received training in basic tourism services. At the same time, an innovative construction technology using soil-filled bags to form walls was used to construct three houses to provide tourist lodgings in the area. The soil bag construction technique, developed at the Hiroshima University of Japan, reduces expenses and replaces the use of wood for structural stability.

In an effort to support sustainable agricultural practices, some 300,000 tree seedlings have been planted so far around smallholder farmer fields to function as wind breaks and erosion control barriers protecting vegetables and crops. In an attempt to conserve genetic diversity of local food crops and improve food security, communities are in the process of creating local seed banks of native foods. Six community fruit gardens have been established and planted with some 8,000 fruit trees that will begin bringing in revenue in 2017.

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

Namibia



Tree nursery

Photo: Namibia

Six local projects were supported as part of COMDEKS Namibia's portfolio of landscape interventions in the Iipumbu-ya-Tshilongo Conservancy, with each led by a different CBO. The landscape strategy aimed to facilitate sustainable natural resource management for inclusive socio-economic development within the carrying capacity of the landscape, recognizing the value and importance of local traditions and cultures. Due to administrative and planning obstacles, Namibia's community-led projects have developed more slowly than in other COMDEKS partner countries.

Achievements so far already include the issuance of an ecotourism concession license by the government, allowing the Conservancy to provide tourist services not only in its own Conservancy territory, but in the adjoining Etosha National Park, which will significantly increase the potential tourism revenue stream. Marketing outreach has begun, and training in tourism services such as wildlife guiding is scheduled. Additionally, about 100 farmers have received training in sustainable agricultural practices to expand agricultural markets, distribution of micro-drip irrigation systems and crop seeds to 20 families was prepared, a tree nursery able to accommodate 8,000 standard poly bags of tree seedlings was established to support reforestation of about 800 ha of land, and a local youth group has been mobilized to raise guinea fowl for sale on local markets and practice aquaculture, with revenues aiming to fund a community youth center providing internet and other social services to Conservancy youth, who often have trouble finding local employment.

Contributed by Nickey Gaseb, Namibia National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

A video from Costa Rica



Click on the image above to access a video from Costa Rica

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

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