

# COMDEKS

## Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

United Nations Development Programme



Issue No. 19, March 2017

Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

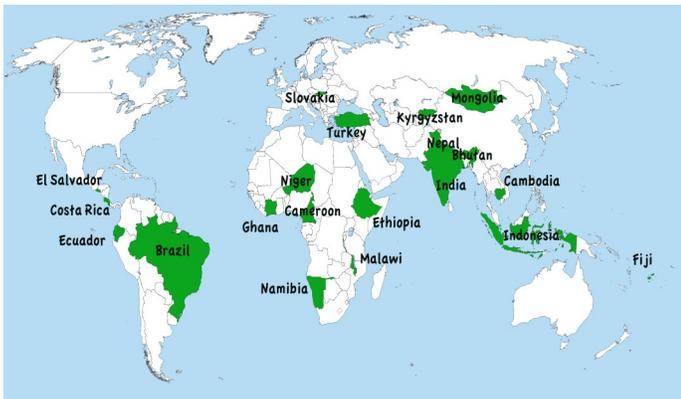
*This newsletter is produced by the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project, implemented by UNDP and funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund. It provides updates on a range of topics including the status of ongoing country programmes, landscape performance indicators,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

Welcome to the nineteenth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) COMDEKS Global Workshop in Costa Rica
- 2) Additional COMDEKS projects implemented in Ecuador
- 3) Reviving dairy production in Tarikhet Block, India
- 4) Upscaling in Mongolia's northern forest steppe
- 5) Portfolio updates: Cameroon and Kyrgyzstan
- 6) Video from Bhutan

### COMDEKS Country Programmes: March 2017



### COMDEKS Global Knowledge Exchange Workshop held in Costa Rica

From January 23 to 26, COMDEKS hosted its Global Knowledge Exchange Workshop in San José, Costa Rica. Participants included representatives from the Ministry of Environment of Japan, the Secretariat to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the United Nations University, the Global Environment Facility, the SGP Central Programme Management Team, as well as SGP National Coordinators from COMDEKS partner countries and SGP Upgrading Country Programmes, and other partners and stakeholders.

The 4-day workshop opened with welcoming remarks from the SGP National Coordinator from Costa Rica, Mr. Edu-

ardo Mata, the UNDP Resident Representative, Ms. Alice Harding Shackelford, the UNDP-GEF Head of Climate Change and GEF Principal Technical Advisor, Mr. Stephen Gold, the Partnership and Resource Mobilization Coordinator from the GEF Secretariat, Ms. Pilar Barrea, the Counselor to the Japanese Embassy to Costa Rica, Mr. Taijiro Kimura, the Global Biodiversity Strategy Office Director from the Ministry of Environment of Japan, Ms. Fumiko Nakao, and the Costa Rican Minister of Environment and Energy, Mr. Edgar Gutierrez Espeleta.



Group photo of workshop participants

The first day of the workshop focused on introducing the programme and its approach, as well as provided the opportunity for in-depth knowledge and experience sharing related to the COMDEKS methodology and landscape resilience objectives among participants. On Day 2, a site visit to partner communities in the Rio Jesús María Watershed, the target landscape in Costa Rica, was organized for participants to learn about project activities and results from the local communities. Day 3 involved a number of training and feedback sessions on relevant toolkits and guidance material used within the landscape approach. On the final workshop day, participants explored synergies with other programs and opportunities for replication and scaling up.



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This workshop provided a valuable platform to 1) promote a better understanding of the Satoyama Initiative's perspectives and activities, the achievements of COMDEKS and its partnership with SGP; 2) analyze results and conclusions of the COMDEKS programme, and share and disseminate knowledge and experiences from successful on-the-ground actions; 3) build staff technical capacity and provide opportunities for capacity building and planning for future work; and 4) promote synergies with other programs and opportunities for replication and scaling up of landscape planning and management approaches and practices.

You can download the summary report [here](#).

### Additional COMDEKS projects implemented in Ecuador to improve resilience in earthquake affected communities



Artisanal sea salt production

Photo: Ecuador

An earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 on the Richter scale severely affected numerous poor communities in the Ecuadorian coastal area on 16 April 2016. As the strongest and most devastating earthquake in decades, and together with its more than 500 aftershocks, it left at least 660 dead, more than 7,000 wounded, more than 30,233 people sheltered and more than 1,125 buildings destroyed.

During the GEF Fifth Operational Phase (OP5), SGP Ecuador worked on five biocorridors in this coastal landscape, following a community-based landscape approach, the cornerstone of the COMDEKS approach. SGP's strategic framework in Ecuador "Biocorridors for Living Well" supports sustainable production landscapes, enabling community productive activities to generate ecological connectivity, as well as community partnerships to facilitate strategic alliances, not only for the conservation and management of community resources, but also for managing a larger landscape - the biocorridor itself.

SGP partner communities along these biocorridors with a total population of approximately 6,000 have suffered from

severe damage to their property and buildings through the earthquake. As the impacts of the devastating earthquake from April 2015 in Nepal prevented the implementation of any further COMDEKS activities in its target landscape since, the remaining COMDEKS grant funds were re-allocated to communities along these Ecuadorian biocorridors to best respond to the urgent needs of the affected communities, as well as to continue to enhance community and landscape resilience and sustainability.

The funding provided grants to four smallholder organizations for integrated initiatives promoting COMDEKS resilience objectives in two affected SGP partner biocorridors as a strategy to "building back with more resiliency". These initiatives aimed to re-establish sustainable livelihoods and productive activities in the Biocorridors for Living Well by recovering tourist infrastructure and artisanal sea salt production, while strengthening communication by rebuilding community centers as well as community collaboration and landscape governance through targeted trainings and workshops.

Contributed by Ana Maria Varea, Ecuador National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

### Reviving dairy production as an alternative livelihood activity in Tarikhet Block, India



Construction of biogas units

Photo: India

The COMDEKS-supported project "Creating Resilient Communities in a Landscape Approach through Institutional Strengthening in the Tarikhet Block", implemented by the NGO Chhatrasal Seva Sansthan (CSS), has facilitated a sense of ownership and responsibility to protect the environment the communities depend on, thereby conserving biodiversity and protecting ecosystems in the landscape.

As a central part of this project, CSS strived to revive dairying as a livelihood activity given the limited income from agricultural activities, which have been severely impacted by local climatic changes and pests. Prior to this project, dairying had been seen as a fading activity due to issues with fodder avail

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ability and pests having impacted animal health. Across an area of 110 square kilometers covering seven villages with 147 households and a population of 1,310, the project facilitated the creation of nine Self Help Groups (SHG), which further link to the Jai Shri Krishna SHG Sangh Mahila Dairy (JSK) federation, to support the expansion of dairying activities with improved market access.

To address the local obstacles to dairy production, the project promoted fodder and grasslands development, implementation of a “para-vets” system, and new technology and equipment for dairying. Additionally, the project supported the adoption of 200 energy-efficient, low smoke cook stoves and 28 biogas units running on animal dung and crop residue to meet domestic cooking needs and to reduce pressure on forests for fuel wood. As another positive effect, local communities discovered that use of slurry from biogas units helped farmers to kill the Kirmul pest threatening local crops. The initiative resulted in a higher cattle population and productivity, thus reviving a traditional livelihoods activity while adopting sustainable land management practices.

*Contributed by Anil Arora, India Senior Project Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP*

## Upscaling of a COMDEKS-supported initiative in Mongolia’s northern forest steppe



Conserving green fodder for winter

Photo: Mongolia

Blending social innovations and resource conservation approaches, the “Blossoming Almond” Initiative in Mongolia’s northern forest steppe region is successfully scaling up community-based climate solutions that have been piloted with COMDEKS support within the “Community Development Integrated with the Management of Tujiin Nars Protected Area” project, implemented by the Bayanchatsargana community and the CBO Khos Bayankhangai. Together with the CBO Batdem, the three CBOs are leading this initiative through the Bayanchatsargana Community Partnership. While in some areas of Mongolia extractive industry heavily impacts pastoral agricultural land, the pressure in this re-

gion rather comes from in-migrating households, driven by pasture degradation in Western Mongolia. In Mongolia, all pastureland is state owned and used communally. Local communities and governments providing enabling policies and support to community efforts are key to integrating and guiding such newcomers.

The Bayanchatsargana Community Partnership is a role model for sustainable living. These communities demonstrate how to improve their lives by protecting natural resources and enhance their household incomes by adopting new livelihood strategies in livestock and non-livestock activities that also contribute to climate change adaptation and mitigation. Grazing management, afforestation, agroforestry for fodder and fruit production, and the protection of wetlands all contribute to carbon sequestration and are adaptive measures to local climate change impacts.

The “Blossoming Almond” Initiative has already achieved notable results, including the re-planting of more than 200 hectares of forest. Milk processing, vegetable cultivation, and a fruit and forest tree nursery in addition to traditional livestock income have tripled local household incomes. The combined approaches of social inclusion and community action have attracted great support by the local government and spurred expanded cooperation with other organizations, including the Selenge Province Forest Authority and the Mongolian Forest Forum. Situated near the Tuujin Nars National Park forest, the “Blossoming Almond” Initiative is also becoming a model for sustainable buffer zone management with community participation.

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

## Portfolio Updates: Cameroon



Production enterprise of fuel-efficient cook stoves

Photo: Cameroon

Nine COMDEKS-supported, community-based projects have been implemented in the Bogu region to rehabilitate the watershed and promote sustainable farming techniques, clean energy, gender inclusion and ecosystem conservation

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as a foundation for increasing income generating activities. To sustain food security and crop revenues in the changing climate, quality seeds of different varieties of onions, maize, and sorghum resistant to climate change were provided to farmers in the Bogoto region, increasing crop yields by about 95%, and training on post-harvest technologies of agricultural products was promoted in the landscape. With the support of two COMDEKS projects, five natural water ponds were cleaned and rehabilitated. Water from these natural ponds is now used for gardening, drinking for livestock, and for laundering. Availability of constant water sources and promotion of agroforestry techniques have enabled the production of some traditional African vegetables such as okra, folere, calabash, cucumber, melon or squash, egg-plant, and tomatoes.

To reduce the use of fuel wood, whose harvest has caused deforestation, a production enterprise for biofuel and improved stoves operated by women was set up to produce biofuel from various household and agricultural waste such as groundnut, maize and sorghum waste. Additionally, the production and use of biogas was also promoted in partner communities. To improve access to drinking water, three solar powered boreholes were constructed to pump and store water. More than 10,000 seedlings of various tree and shrub species, including fruit trees such as guava and mango that were produced in various community nurseries, were planted to further restore and revitalize the landscape.

*Contributed by Marie-Laure Mpeck Nyemeck, Cameroon National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP*

## Kyrgyzstan



Nursery construction for red-listed amphibian

Photo: Kyrgyzstan

As part of the COMDEKS portfolio of projects in Kyrgyzstan, 17 projects were selected for COMDEKS support in the target landscape, a coastal strip around Lake Issyk-Kul. These projects have been focusing on the restoration of degraded land in the coastal zone of the lake, restoration of wetlands,

establishment of nurseries for wild endemic plant species, and preserving local threatened plant and animal species. In the village of Kuturgu, a community wildlife reserve was created to preserve the habitat of the Central Asian frog, while in Chon-Sary-Oi village, a micro-reserve was created for wetland birds on 2.5 ha of degraded land. To support protection of the Snow Leopard – a red-listed species – technical and expert support was provided in establishing a Snow Leopard Secretariat to ensure conservation cooperation among twelve countries in the Snow Leopard's range. Two social enterprises were founded by local communities to restore populations of two endemic fish species, which are now running the only two ecological fish farms in Kyrgyzstan.

Water resources throughout the target landscape were restored by installing a number of sustainable drip irrigation systems, allowing local communities to revive degraded agricultural land and cultivate endemic fruit trees such as Issyk-Kul apples, pears, apricot, and cherries, while conserving scarce water resources. Overall, COMDEKS activities have supported 18 alternative income generation opportunities in 14 communities. These included the creation of the first algae farm in Kyrgyzstan, which cultivates waterweed (spirulina) for cattle feeding, using a special bioreactor powered by solar energy. Other initiatives established solar greenhouses for the cultivation of medicinal herbs, and promoted beekeeping, eco-certification and various eco-tourism activities around Issyk-Kul.

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

## A video from Bhutan



Click on the image above to access a video from Bhutan

*Contributed by Singay Dorji, former Bhutan National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP, and Tara Monger, Bhutan Programme Assistant, GEF SGP, UNDP*

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