

COMDEKS

Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

United Nations Development Programme
Environment and Energy



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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.

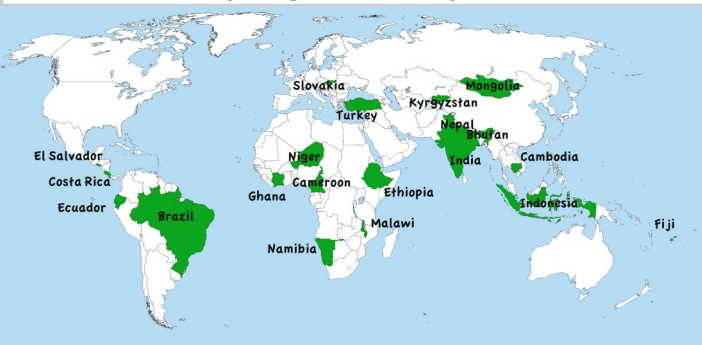
For more information about the COMDEKS project and latest news, please visit our blog at www.comdeksproject.com

Welcome to the eighth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) Equator Initiative Prize awarded to COMDEKS grantee in Turkey
- 2) Eco-Tourism gives women a new lease on life in Cambodia
- 3) Piloting the resilience indicators in Namibia
- 4) Sharing the Seeds of Knowledge—a short film from Turkey
- 5) Portfolio Update: Stories from Costa Rica, Ethiopia, and Slovakia
- 6) A COMDEKS Photostory from Ghana

COMDEKS Country Programmes: July 2014



Equator Initiative Prize Awarded to COMDEKS grantee Mediterranean Conservation Society in Turkey



Fisherwoman in Gökova Bay, Turkey

Photo: Zafer Kızılkaya

We are proud to announce the success of the Mediterranean Conservation Society, a COMDEKS grantee and partner in Turkey, in winning the 2014 Equator Prize. The Equator Initiative is a UNDP-led partnership dedicated to supporting and advancing local sustainable development solutions aimed at increasing economic and ecological resilience. The Prize is awarded every

two years to honor outstanding local efforts towards poverty reduction through conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Mediterranean Conservation Society was selected as one of thirty-five winners from 1,234 nominations from over 120 countries across the world. The Equator Prize 2014 winners will be honored at a high-level ceremony at Lincoln Center in New York on Monday September 22, 2014 as a kick-off to the UN Secretary-General's Climate Summit.

In response to the destruction of marine ecosystems, declining fish diversity and abundance, and shrinking economic returns for fishermen due to unsustainable fishing practices, the Mediterranean Conservation Society has created a framework and methodology for establishing community-based enforcement strategies of "No Take Fishing Zones" (NTFZ). Although the Network of Gökova Bay NTFZ was established in 2010 to support local fishermen and fisherwomen, illegal fishing continued due to a lack of effective management and enforcement within the NTFZ network.

Aiming to engage the fishing community, the Mediterranean Conservation Society's framework positions local stakeholders at the forefront of marine biodiversity conservation by allowing them to communicate, in their own language, the benefits of these NTFZ and by introducing a marine patrolling model, developed in close cooperation with the Coast Guard and Fisheries and Aquaculture Departments.

Since the Mediterranean Conservation Society began its efforts in Gökova Bay, fishing stocks have grown dramatically, as have the average incomes of cooperative members. Patrolling activities have also contributed to the protection of marine species diversity such as in Boncuk Cove, one of the NTFZs which is the only known place for endangered sandbar sharks breeding in the Mediterranean. Additionally, the community-based enforcement network of the NTFZ zones has led to the promotion of alternative livelihoods such as pescaturism, which reduces fishing pressure on the ecosystem and allows community members to enjoy more economically sustainable lifestyles.

The community as a whole now feels the responsibility of protecting NTFZs, enhancing communication channels between gov



(Continued from page 1)

ernment officials and local constituents working cooperatively to enforce the NTFZ as well as empowering women to become professional members of the fishing cooperatives and participate in the management.

For more information about the 2014 Equator Prize winners, please click [here](#).

Eco-tourism gives women new lease on life in Cambodia



Tourists visiting Kampong Phluk Floating Community

Photo: UNDP Cambodia

When it was her turn, Toooh Yi maneuvered her wooden boat to the dock to pick up two tourists and began paddling away. Other women paddlers followed suit in an orderly fashion to give visitors a tour of the flooded forest in Kampong Phluk commune in northern Cambodia. In this flooded community located on the edge of Tonle Sap Lake, women are getting a new lease on life through an eco-tourism scheme. The project is part of a larger initiative to protect the flooded forest and fish habitat, and aims to provide the villagers with an additional means for a better life. Women, especially widows who are the sole breadwinners of their families, are the main target. They are among the most vulnerable group and in need of opportunities to earn income to prevent them from falling deeper in poverty.

Although they have adapted to their way of life already, the villagers face rather grim conditions in daily life here. Clean water is scarce. In case of medical emergency, they have to travel by boat, motorcycle and car to reach the nearest hospital in Siem Reap city, some 40 kilometres away. Since this is a flooded community, there is virtually no land space for rice farming and fishing is their way of life that dates back many generations already. For Toooh Yi, 46, the options are quite limited. Because of motion sickness, she is afraid of going out to the lake to catch fish like others do and so most of the time she confines herself to raising pigs and growing vegetables at home. "Taking tourists on a boat ride is the only other job that I have to make some money," said Toooh Yi, who has an 82-year-old father and an aunt under her care.

On Cambodia's tourist map, the famed Angkor temples are normally the most sought-after, making Kampong Phluk community an unlikely tourist attraction. But one draw there is the villages are made up of wooden stilt houses that line the canal, the main route for passenger and fishing boats traveling to and from the

lake. Another lure is the sight of the lush green canopy of the Barringtonia trees that, when submerged during the rainy season, provide a perfect spawning ground for fish, the main source of protein for Cambodians. One way to preserve the flooded forest, an area of about 5.5 hectares, is by turning it into a tourist destination, said 37-year-old Mut Siek, a member of the eco-tourism committee. "This is the sanctuary for many kinds of birds and fish. Since we don't have land to plant rice, fishing is the only occupation we have. That is why, in the common interest, the villagers join together in preserving it," she said.

Under the scheme, twenty-five women identified as the poorest of the poor were picked to receive a boat each at a price tag of US\$294 in credit. Under a mutual agreement, each woman makes a monthly payment of US\$5 over five years after which they can own the boat outright. On average, the site receives daily 200 visitors, who, after touring the famed Angkor temples, want to catch a glimpse of life in the flooded villages. Once they arrive at the wooden pier, which was built with UNDP's support, the camera-toting tourists, two at a time, hop onto a small wooden boat to be given sightseeing in the flooded forest.

Sok Plang, a local council member, said that, in the spirit of equality, the eco-tourism committee has set up a system where the villagers take turns to get a shot at the opportunity to earn money through the scheme. For every one-hour ride, a woman paddler can earn US\$4, including tips. It may not be a whole lot but could go a long way for those who do not have much to rely on, he said. "At least they can now earn additional income that they can use to buy medicine or in an emergency," he said. "That is why the conservation of this forest is so important to us here." The conservation and eco-tourism activities have received support from the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS), funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund, implemented by UNDP and delivered by the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP).

Contributed by Munthit Ker, Public Information and Media Officer, UNDP Cambodia

Sharing the Seeds of Knowledge: A short film from COMDEKS Turkey



Local fisherwoman in Datça-Bozburun Peninsula

Photo: Zafer Kızılkaya

The SGP Turkey Country Programme, has recently released "Sharing the Seeds of Knowledge", a short film documenting COMDEKS activities in the Datça-Bozburun peninsula aimed at

(Continued from page 2)

enhancing landscape resilience. In the documentary, community members and representatives of local organizations discuss the impact of supported activities on sustainable development within the target landscape area. The film encourages reflection on the outcomes of supported projects at the landscape level, and brings together lessons learned from the experience of COMDEKS projects in Turkey that can be applied for more effective project replication in similar socio-ecological production landscapes.

COMDEKS projects in Turkey are designed to simultaneously improve the livelihoods of local populations while strengthening the resilience of surrounding ecosystems of the target landscape. COMDEKS projects in Datça-Bozburun also focus on the development of effective conservation plans (i.e. forest management plan or species conservation action plans) and on promoting effective institutions and sustainable governance at the landscape level.

Please click [here](#) to access the English subtitled version of the video.

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

Resilience Indicators Workshop in the Ipumbu-ya-Shilongo Conservancy, Namibia



SEPLS scoring exercise during baseline assessment in Namibia

Photo: Namibia

The Indicators of Resilience in Socio-ecological Production Landscapes and Seascapes (SEPLS) is an ongoing collaborative activity of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI). The first phase of the collaborative activity, carried out by the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS) and Bioversity International, was the production of a set of twenty indicators for community-based assessment of perceived resilience in SEPLS. In the second phase, UNU-IAS and Bioversity International were joined by UNDP COMDEKS and the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) to revise the indicators and create a toolkit for use of the indicators in the field.

On 28 and 29 March, 2014, a workshop was held in the Ipumbu-ya-Shilongo Conservancy in northern Namibia in which the SEPLS indicators were used to conduct a baseline assessment of the current situation of the conservancy as a critical step towards the development of a landscape strategy for the area. The Ipumbu-ya-Shilongo Conservancy was created in 2012 as a means to empower local stakeholders to manage and benefit from their resources jointly on a local level. Currently, the Con-

servancy is in the process of developing a long-term plan to convert part of its land for sustainable wildlife use while maintaining the viability of its agriculture, which is the primary means of subsistence for the local community. Beyond the immediate development of the landscape strategy and identification of projects to be carried out directly through COMDEKS, the indicators will be used as an adaptive management tool, with a plan to hold another assessment workshop within the next few years in order to identify trends in perceived resilience and to evaluate the effectiveness of the strategy.

For information about COMDEKS activities in Namibia, and to access a Photostory from Namibia describing the baseline assessment and community consultation process, please click [here](#).

Contributed by William Dunbar, Communications Expert for the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative

Portfolio Update

Costa Rica



Visible land degradation in Rio Jesus Maria Watershed

Photo: Costa Rica

In Costa Rica, the Rio Jesus Maria Watershed has been identified as the target landscape for COMDEKS activities. The ecological diversity of the area is currently under pressure from increasing degradation and deforestation, which is exacerbated by high levels of erosion stemming from poor road design and lack of vegetative cover in particular during the rainy season. Located in the Pacific Region of Costa Rica, the Rio Jesus Maria watershed spans 352 square km, and is comprised of several smaller sub-basins that are composed of a combination of secondary forests, coffee and fruit trees, mangroves, pastures, plantations, bodies of water, as well as urban areas.

Although once a rich and productive landscape, the Rio Jesus Maria watershed has lost the majority of its natural forest cover, and faces increasing pressure from decreasing biodiversity and agricultural biodiversity, as well as freshwater scarcity during the dry season and unsustainable agricultural practices. A baseline assessment consisting of multiple workshops, consultations with community leaders, and field visits was held in December 2013, and in March 2014, the Costa Rica COMDEKS Landscape Strategy was approved by the NSC. Two workshops have been scheduled for mid-2014 in order to support potential COMDEKS grantees in the elaboration of project proposals.

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

(Continued from page 3)

Ethiopia



House under construction to be used for fattening livestock

Photo: Ethiopia

An 127,800 hectare area called “Gilgel Gilbe 1 catchment” located approximately 260 km southwest from Addis Ababa was selected as the target landscape for COMDEKS activities in Ethiopia. Challenges in the target area are representative of those facing the rest of the country: in spite of a rich endowment of natural resources, communities within the target landscape struggle with poverty, food insecurity, and environmental degradation.

Since the baseline assessment was first conducted in May 2012, local stakeholders have engaged in various projects funded through COMDEKS as part of a coordinated strategy to address these challenges and increase resilience in the socio-ecological production landscape. Projects include the construction of physical soil and water conservation measures aimed at reducing siltation and sedimentation, as well as the promotion of practices which increase soil fertility. In addition, many ongoing projects are focused on livelihood improvement activities to increase well-being in the community in an ecologically viable way. One notable example is a project dedicated to the promotion of sustainable aquaculture through the Gilgel Gibe Fishery Cooperative. A range of activities, including the training of CBO (Community Based Organization) members on integrated conservation strategies/production technologies and on improving market access for CBO enterprises, aim to enhance the socioeconomic resilience of the community.

Contributed by Zeleke Tesfaye, Ethiopia National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Slovakia



Wetlands in the Latorica river basin

Photo: Slovakia

In Slovakia, nine projects are currently being implemented within the 40,242 hectare area in the Východoslovenská Nížina Lowland selected as the COMDEKS target area. The area includes a 213 hectare national nature reserve which is home to five en-

dangered bird species, and has been selected through the Ramsar Convention as a “Wetland of International Importance,” a nomination designating its importance as a region ecologically, economically, and culturally. However, large scale drainage projects and deforestation in the target landscape have significantly altered the local ecology. Socio-economically, the region is characterized by a lack of investment, low wages and low levels of education.

Projects implemented in Slovakia focus on a range of activities seeking to increase socioeconomic resilience, such as a rural revitalization effort to improve beekeeping facilities and small farm holdings of goats and sheep. Working together with the public, projects raise public awareness and promote the sale of local products through regional brand creation.

Other activities focus on the improvement of ecosystem networks of such as the enhanced integration of water management activities and the revitalization of forests. In November 2013, SGP Slovakia organized a knowledge fair, in cooperation with the Kosice and Presov regional authorities and the supported COMDEKS projects, to support the establishment and development of local partnerships in Eastern Slovakia to replicate best practices of COMDEKS and SGP projects.

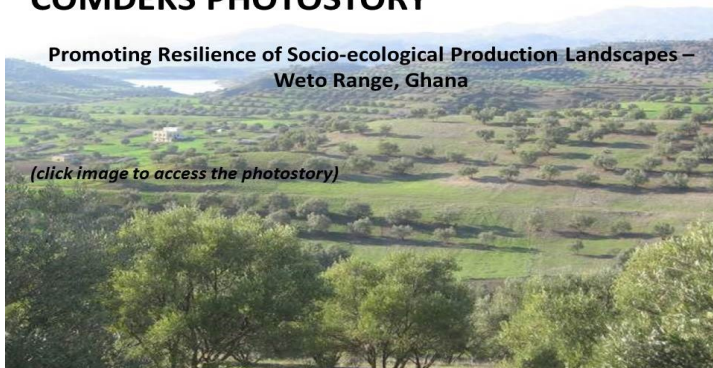
Contributed by Klara Tothovo, Slovakia National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

A COMDEKS Photostory from Ghana

COMDEKS PHOTOSTORY

Promoting Resilience of Socio-ecological Production Landscapes –
Weto Range, Ghana

(click image to access the photostory)



Click the image above to access a video photostory from Ghana describing the baseline assessment workshop and the community consultation process that led to the development of the COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy for Ghana.

Contributed by George Ortsin, National Coordinator GEF-SGP, UNDP and Anna Mensah Programme Assistant GEF-SGP, UNDP.

Previous Issues of COMDEKS Newsletter: Issue [1](#), Issue [2](#), Issue [3](#), Issue [4](#), Issue [5](#), Issue [6](#), and Issue [7](#).