

# COMDEKS

## Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

United Nations Development Programme



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

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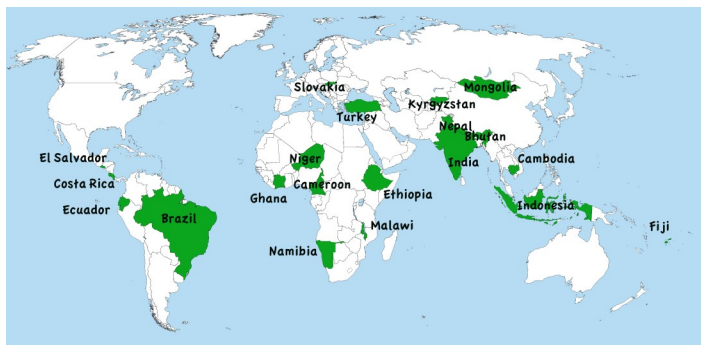
*This newsletter is produced by the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project, implemented by UNDP and funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund. It provides updates on a range of topics including the status of ongoing country programmes, landscape performance indicators,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

Welcome to the thirteenth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) IPSI Case Studies Workshop in Japan
- 2) Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop in Ghana, Africa
- 3) Ex-post baseline assessment in Ethiopia
- 4) Sustainable landscape development through ecotourism-based livelihood promotion in the Himalayas, India
- 5) Portfolio updates: Bhutan and Kyrgyzstan
- 6) Video from Cambodia-Project Assessment

### COMDEKS Country Programmes: September 2015



### IPSI Case Study Workshop in Tokyo, Japan

From June 24<sup>th</sup> to 26<sup>th</sup>, the IPSI Secretariat, in collaboration with the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES), held a special case study workshop centered on the theme of "Enhancing knowledge for better management of SEPLS." As part of this workshop, authors from various countries and organizations gathered at United Nations University headquarters in Tokyo, presenting case study papers and engaging in intensive discussion over three days on the challenges and potential outcomes of work in SEPLS, with a particular focus on the tools and approaches used by and with local communities. In addition to serving as a chance for authors and participants to share and review selected cases, the workshop was also used to facilitate publication of a case study compilation, including a synthesis paper, to provide useful knowledge and lessons learned.

One common assessment that emerged during discussion sessions after the paper presentations was the need to focus not just on conservation activities, but also on work towards creating a culture of shared community governance, integrating efforts into sustainable lifestyles. Ms. Akane Minohara and Mr. Robert Blasiak from the University of Tokyo shared their research regarding socio-ecological linkages in Japan's Urato Islands, noting that strong community bonds (such as a culture of gift giving), intimate knowledge of terrestrial and marine systems, and cultural richness enabled the community to have a robust and resilient response to challenges faced after the Great East Japan Earthquake. This case study highlighted a specific role for SEPLS in enhancing community resilience and disaster risk reduction, but more generally the authors spoke to the importance of building social capital and translating lessons learned for application elsewhere.



Urato Islands, Japan

Photo: Akane Minohara, University of Tokyo

The workshop was held as part of the process of producing the publication of a "Satoyama Initiative Thematic Review" including write-ups of the case studies presented and a synthesis paper aimed at bringing together the various projects and extracting lessons learned. The publication is planned to be launched by the end of 2015.

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

*Contributed by Rachel Olanoff, former COMDEKS intern*



## Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop in Africa

The Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop in Africa was held from 10 to 12 August 2015 in Accra, Ghana. This was the first Satoyama Initiative Regional Workshop to be held in Africa, following on earlier Regional Workshops in Asia (Kathmandu, Nepal, 2013) and Europe (Florence, Italy, 2014). The Workshop brought together around 75 participants from 13 African nations and elsewhere around the world for in-depth discussions of the issues facing SEPLS, particularly in Africa. The event was co-organized by the IPSI Secretariat and, from the Government of Ghana, the Ghana National Biodiversity Committee, the Forestry Commission of Ghana, and the Ministry of Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI). Local cooperating organizations A Rocha Ghana and Conservation Alliance also provided assistance in its organization. The opening ceremony featured guest addresses by the Honourable Dr. Bernice Heloo, MP for the Hohoe Municipality and Deputy Minister for Environment, Science, Technology and Innovation (MESTI) of Ghana, and Daniel Pelle of the Forestry Commission of Ghana.



Participants visit site in the Atewa Range-Ghana

Photo: IPSI Secretariat

The event was chaired by Prof. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah, Chair of the Ghana National Biodiversity Committee, with plenary discussions moderated by Dr. Wanja Dorothy Nyingi, Coordinator of the Kenya Wetlands Biodiversity Research Team and Dr. Maurizio Farhan Ferrari, Environmental Governance Coordinator at the Forest Peoples Programme. Keynote speeches were provided by Prof. Kazuhiko Takeuchi, Senior Vice-Rector of the United Nations University, Dr. Tanya Abrahamse, CEO of the South African Biodiversity Institute (SAMBI) and Prof. Alfred Oteng-Yeboah. These were followed by working group sessions, where participants engaged in in-depth discussion of SEPLS in Africa.

For more information on the Workshop please see the IPSI website [here](#).

*Contributed by William Dunbar, IPSI Communications Expert*

## Ex-post baseline assessment in Ethiopia

During the first half of 2015, Ethiopia carried out an ex-post baseline assessment of its target Socio-Ecological Production Landscape (SEPL) in the Jimma Zone of Oromia Regional State. The assessment was aimed at analyzing COMDEKS project interventions initiated in the target landscape at Gilgel Gibe hydropower catchment and providing recommendations for future activities to enhance resilience of the SEPL in order to develop and implement sound biodiversity management activities to improve livelihoods of the local communities by addressing challenges of environmental protection and food security. An evaluation team composed of six members with professional backgrounds in economics, watershed development and management, forestry, GIS and animal science, participated in the ex-post assessment. A workshop with thirty-five community members was also conducted during the ex-post assessment for the purpose of monitoring resilience by applying the Resilience Indicators developed under the Satoyama Initiative Collaborative activity.



Discussion with community on project results achieved

Photo: Ethiopia

After the assessment, the evaluation team recognized that community perception of the resilience of the target landscape has changed in a positive manner because of COMDEKS interventions via activities focused on cattle fattening, beekeeping methods, tree and fruit seedling production, and soil and water conservation actions. In addition, fuel saving stoves and sustainable fishing practices were introduced to two community-based organizations. COMDEKS projects focused on integrating livelihood activities with the conservation of resources with the aim of ecological restoration, biodiversity conservation, resilience enhancement and livelihood improvements.

According to the ex-post baseline assessment, both communal and private farmlands are benefiting from the organic matter associated with increased vegetative cover, increased soil moisture, and improved soil fertility. The rehabilitated watershed holds a diversity of habitats and vegetation which



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now support a variety of different species of insects and honeybees. Due to COMDEKS interventions, biodiversity in the landscape, including farmlands, is improving as production of seedlings provided several contributions for development. Lands that were solely devoted to maize and sorghum now produce fruits, coffee and vegetables. The interventions across the landscape supported income generation opportunities and sustainable livelihoods. Income from the interventions contributed to intensifying agricultural activities by increasing the capacity to buy agricultural inputs for both crops and livestock production. Many households have now begun to practice the fattening of oxen and small ruminants to get additional income from them. Cattle fattening has become a regular activity in the project area, leading to farm and off-farm jobs for women and youth as well. These improvements in have contributed to resilience and productivity of the natural environment.

During the assessment, community-based organizations unanimously expressed optimism about the sustainability of the COMDEKS interventions even after termination of the project. Members of the assessment group described positive economic, social, and environmental impacts obtained from the interventions as well as skill and technology transfer brought by the project.

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

### **Sustainable landscape development through eco-tourism-based livelihood promotion in India.**

Uttarakhand, a North Indian state, is home to the Himalayan Region. This landscape describes snow-clad peaks and major pilgrim centers amidst terraced fields and delightful views. The communities that reside in rural areas within the Himalayan Mountains earn their living through traditional forestry and agriculture. About 70% of the population in this area relies on this practice, however, sustainable practices are under threat as there is a lack of support from the state to maintain and value traditional ecological knowledge.

With the support of COMDEKS funds, the objective of a community-based project in Chamoli District, Uttarakhand, is to promote community-based tourism, sustainable use of biodiversity, and the lesser known trekking routes to improve the livelihoods of the tribal Bhutia community. One of the thrusts of this project was to use natural resources like Ringal bamboo in production of arts and crafts for income. The Shilpy Federation for bio-tourism and craft promotion was formed to promote conservation of bamboo based crafts starting with seventy-eight women. By the end of the project, seven hundred and twenty people were

instructed on Ringal bamboo handicrafts, carpet and natural fiber-based crafts. Over 126,000 Ringal shoots were established. The project beneficiaries included youth and women from small villages of Chamoli, Pipalkoti, and Suneel.



A basket created from Ringal Bamboo.

Photo: India

Additionally, the establishment of a Bio-Tourism Park (BTP) in Pipalkoti provided a major step in promoting adventure tourism, conservation practices and pilgrimage based activities. For example, groups were trained to ensure a cleaner environment for trekking by waste management through community participation. A core activity in the training also included the establishment of herb gardens. One hundred and fourteen Self Help Groups (SHGs) in the Chamoli District, Uttarakhand were formed including 1,100 women and youth from tribal communities from families below the poverty line. Over eight thousand US dollars in savings were collected by the artisans, families, and hill farmers of these SHGs. Initiatives produced rock climbing and first aid kits, qualified instructors, and organic foods and juices. Each family earned from US \$700-1600 over the past few years. Project practices are being adopted through kinship between close-knit societies. Local people have recognized the project's tourism activity as a source of empowerment and inclusive growth, because of livelihood benefits to the communities.

*Contributed by Prabhjot Sodhi, India National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP*

### **Country Update: Bhutan**

The Gamri Watershed was selected as the pilot landscape of COMDEKS activities in Bhutan mainly considering its rich biological resources and the growing pressures on the landscape from grazing, extraction of natural resources for fodder and fuel wood, landslides and drying up of water sources. Gamri watershed is of high regional significance as it intersects the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary (at Merak and Sakteng), which is home to a number of globally threatened and endangered animal and bird species.

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To understand the current state of the landscape and to identify interventions to develop sound biodiversity management and sustainable livelihood activities in order to maintain, rebuild and revitalize the SEPL, a landscape-wide baseline assessment using SEPL indicators was carried out through a series of consultation meetings with different

ecological production landscape resilience through community based activities. Since the approval of the Strategy, COMDEKS interventions have promoted innovative



Community members at work on site

Photo: Bhutan

stakeholders covering the entire landscape in 2013. The results led to identifying and implementing nine projects that focus on water catchment protection, wetland and watershed management, biomass production and community forest management all ensuring over all community development. Nine COMDEKS projects have been supported in Bhutan to date, focusing on sustainable land management, water source protection and capacity development to increase resilience and address water scarcity within the landscape.

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

## Kyrgyzstan

The target landscape selected as the focus of COMDEKS activities in Kyrgyzstan is a coastal strip around Lake Issyk-Kul, located in Issyk-Kul Province. Known for its unique beauty, Lake Issyk-Kul is rich in natural resources and biodiversity, with a number of areas under the protection of the Issyk-Kul State Reserve and wetlands protected under the Ramsar Convention. The Issyk-Kul Province is an area inhabited by over 400,000 people, mostly employed in the tourism and agriculture sectors. Livestock production is a critical aspect of the local economy, with a significant portion engaged in fishing activities. The main challenge confronting the landscape is the deterioration of natural ecosystems due to the improper use of natural resources and the increased development of tourism.

The objective of the COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy in Kyrgyzstan, approved in April 2014, is to protect natural ecosystems and enhance local socio-



Head of Issyk-Kul fish ponds association

Photo: Kyrgyzstan

practices to mitigate the strain on Lake Issyk-Kul's naturally occurring fish species, along with the cultivation of medicinal herbs, and the use of renewable energy sources. Two social enterprises have been started by local communities to restore populations of endemic fish species, and several demonstrations of drip irrigation have been set up along with sustainable agricultural practices, reducing anthropogenic pressure on the coastal ecosystem. A number of institutions, including governmental bodies and NGOs/CBOs, have been involved in various stages of project planning, resulting in capacity development, effective participation and knowledge sharing.

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

## A Video from Cambodia-Project Assessment



Click on the image above to access a video from Cambodia.

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

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