

# COMDEKS

## Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

United Nations Development Programme



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Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

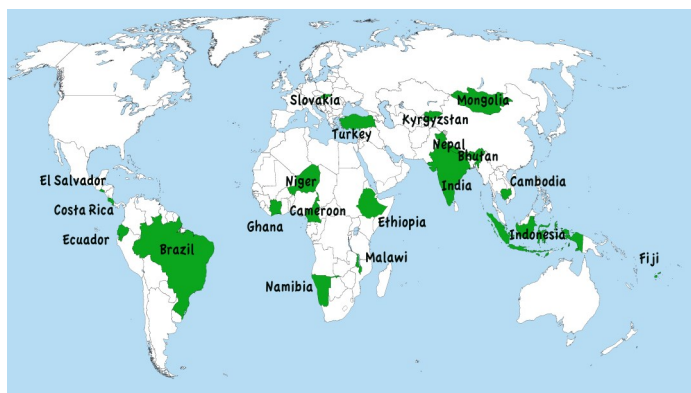
*This newsletter is produced by the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project, implemented by UNDP and funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund. It provides updates on a range of topics including the status of ongoing country programmes, landscape performance indicators,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

Welcome to the seventeen issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) COMDEKS Programme extension
- 2) Strengthening community resilience in Bhutan
- 3) Rehabilitation of ancient taro terraces, Fiji
- 4) Alternative energy technologies for improved livelihoods in India
- 5) Portfolio Updates: Ethiopia and Indonesia
- 6) Video from Brazil

### COMDEKS Country Programmes: September 2016



### COMDEKS Programme extension for comprehensive knowledge sharing and experience exchange

To allow sufficient time to facilitate further exchange of COMDEKS experiences and lessons learned, the COMDEKS programme has been extended until December 2017. As the 15 SGP Upgrading Country Programmes will replicate experiences from the COMDEKS approach during OP6, extending the project through 2017 allows COMDEKS experiences and knowledge to be fully absorbed and adopted by the Upgrading SGP Country Programs and the SGP Global Programme as they adapt to embrace a landscape approach. For these and other community-based development programs, COMDEKS offers a potent example of how environment and development benefits can be scaled over

larger geographic areas and over many communities simultaneously, and how these efforts can be linked to national development and land use planning to magnify their effects.



Ex-post baseline assessment at the Gamri Landscape

Photo: Bhutan

Throughout 2017, the COMDEKS team will continue to facilitate knowledge exchange, produce newsletters and participate in IPSI events. In the first quarter of 2017, a number of meetings and workshops are expected to take place in each target landscape with participation by local communities and key stakeholders in systematizing and disseminating the experiences and lessons learned from the ex-post baseline assessment in each country. At the global level, the COMDEKS Global Knowledge Exchange Workshop will take place in late January 2017. It aims to promote a better understanding of the Satoyama Initiative's perspectives and activities, its partnership (IPSI), as well as COMDEKS achievements. It will further be a platform to analyze results and conclusions of the COMDEKS programme, and share and disseminate knowledge and experiences from successful on-the-ground actions for replication and upscaling of landscape planning and management approaches. Finally, it will build staff technical capacity through specialized training and provide opportunities for planning of future work.



## Strengthening resilience of the Thongrong community, Bhutan

Besides from land degradation due to erosion and landslides, human-wildlife conflict is a major problem for local communities both mid- and downstream of the Gamri Watershed, the COMDEKS target landscape in Bhutan. This conflict with wildlife such as porcupines, monkeys and wild boars has considerably reduced traditional crop diversity and causes economic losses every year. In some cases, farmers have left their lands fallow due to their inability to cope with these losses and damages.



Mustard Harvest

Photo: Bhutan

Through the COMDEKS-supported project "Increasing productivity and rural income through sustainable agriculture landscape management" and with the technical support of the National Soil Service Centre and Dzongkhag Administration, Tashigang, the community-based organization (CBO) Thongrong Sazhing Tshogpa helped 47 households in the Thongrong community to bring over 28 hectares of agricultural land under sustainable management by establishing hedge rows and check-dams. Farmers were also enabled to establish 4.5 km of solar fencing around their fields, which is expected to reduce crop loss due to wildlife and hence improve their production by at least 50%.

To further enhance livelihood opportunities of this community, the project introduced mustard cultivation, which already yielded over 3,000 kg of mustard seeds in this past harvest alone. An oil expeller unit allows mustard oil production generating additional income and reducing household expenses on cooking oil. In March 2016, this machinery was officially inaugurated by Ms. Niamh Collier-Smith, the UNDP Bhutan Deputy Resident Representative. During this site visit, Ms. Collier-Smith noted the importance of this project as well as its far-reaching impact on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Congratulating the community group for their efforts and achievements, she

highlighted that "the impact of what can be achieved here would go beyond this village, this country and across the world".

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

## Rehabilitation of ancient taro terraces in the Natewa National Park, Fiji

Centuries ago, ancient Fijian tribes established water taro terraces when water taro was a major food source, and abandoned terraces of this sort are found throughout the high islands in the central Pacific. They have also been an integral part of the Natewa National Park on the island of Vanua Levu, which comprises a wide variety of habitats such as mountain and coastal forests, shrub lands, coastal headlands, streams, and wetlands. Many of these support sensitive and threatened animal and plant species. Prior to COMDEKS-supported activities, this area has never been under any form of biodiversity management. Hence, there is enormous unrealized potential for the Natewa National Park to contribute to biodiversity conservation on a national and regional scale, in line with the park's aim to create a positive balance between nature conservation and economic development.



Rehabilitated taro terraces

Photo: Fiji

With COMDEKS support, the Nambu Conservation Trust (NCT), which is a non-profit organization established by the Matagali Valenisau clan landowners from the chiefly village of Natewa, successfully rehabilitated local taro terraces by planting 20,000 taro, masi, and sweet potato seedlings. It further helped to establish a sound biodiversity management system and created sustainable livelihood activities for the local community by incorporating traditional knowledge into a modern approach. In the future, water taro terraces can play a critical role in providing a local sustainable source of drought resistant and organically grown staple food in the region.

This conservation project was particularly successful through its close communication with local stakeholders and actively



(Continued from page 2)

empowering women and youth to participate in an otherwise male dominated sector. Earlier this year, the community was able to achieve an additional income of FJD 1,500 (about USD 720) through sale of the first harvest of taro on local vegetable markets by 15 students. Revenues are used for the continued maintenance of taro terraces as well as the park's further development.

The successes of this project were also featured in the Fiji Times, which can be viewed at <http://www.fijitimes.com/story.aspx?id=338226>.

*Contributed by Katarina Atalifo-Malo, Fiji National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP, and Losana Muallaulau, Fiji Programme Assistant, GEF SGP, UNDP*

## Alternative energy technologies for improved livelihoods of the poor in Uttarakhand, India



Smokeless cook stove

Photo: India

The Juanpur Valley, situated in a remote hilly terrain of Uttarakhand in the Himalayas, poses a number of daily challenges to the local communities and their livelihoods. Employment opportunities are few and the forests that could provide a means to daily living and livelihoods have already been declared as Protected Areas, leaving communities to depend on animal husbandry and agriculture. Most local farmers cultivate marginal land, which rarely exceeds one hectare each. The fields are scattered and land consolidation is not a common practice.

Particularly the women in this region are resource poor and heavily dependent on the environment for meeting their basic needs, usually working for 16-18 hours a day, out of which around 8-10 hours are spent on collecting fuel wood, fodder, and drinking water. A COMDEKS-supported project hence aims to reduce this drudgery by demonstrating innovative approaches to enhance livelihood opportunities for the poor through alternative energy technologies, including the sustainable management of micro-hydro powered watermills, reviving and upgrading traditional watermills, and installing cow dung fed biogas plants in selected project

areas, producing enough biogas to sustain the cooking needs of the families and replacing firewood and kerosene. Through this project, 40 participatory, women-led Self Help Groups (SHG) were formed and supported to obtain bank accounts and affordable credits for community activities, functioning as an institutional system. The various locally suitable livelihood activities conducted with these SHG included the cultivation of vegetables, spice processing, and animal rearing. As part of the hydro-energy component, four units of multifunctional watermills, capable of milling as well as generating electricity, were installed in Tehri Garhwal, and 22 watermills were set up along streams, each one catering to a cluster of five villages and capable of grinding 400 kg of wheat a day. As part of the bio-energy component, biogas plants were installed in twelve households, aiming to demonstrate their benefits of saving time and costs related to cooking fuels as well as the reduced negative impacts on the environment. Through these twelve biogas plants, fuel wood consumption and CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are annually reduced by 16.8 tons and over 30,000 MT respectively. Additionally, 60 energy-efficient and smokeless cook stoves were installed, each saving 3-4 kg (up to 50%) of firewood per day per household. These activities further encouraged community members to conduct other activities pursuing sustainable practices related to natural resource use.

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

## Portfolio Updates: Ethiopia



Farming activity to diversify crop production

Photo: Ethiopia

The twelve COMDEKS-supported projects in the Gilgel Gilbe 1 catchment area, the target landscape for COMDEKS activities in Ethiopia, focused on the construction of physical soil and water conservation measures aimed at reducing siltation and sedimentation, as well as the promotion of practices that increase soil fertility. In November 2015, the

(Continued from page 3)

COMDEKS Ex-post Baseline Assessment was completed. Its report illustrates the impacts achieved at the landscape level regarding livelihood improvement of the communities as well as biodiversity conservation.

Both biological and physical soil and water conservation measures were undertaken to enhance the rehabilitation of degraded lands. Between May 2015 and April 2016, about 250,000 multi-purpose tree/shrub seedlings and grasses were planted in closed areas, which successfully reduced run-off and increased infiltration, contributing to the re-charging of ground water and improvement of the hydrological cycle in the landscape. At the landscape level, to increase agricultural production and ensure food self-sufficiency, most CBOs participated in activities to enhance soil fertility and conserve water. This included a number of measures on farmland such as the preparation and application of 12,000 m<sup>3</sup> of compost and manure on approximately 75 ha with the participation of 850 community members, the planting of 35,000 agro-forestry tree seedlings on 280 ha, and the construction of approximately 70 kms of soil bund and 6 km of cut-off drains on 92 ha of farmland. This resulted in improved soil conservation, soil fertility and water retention capacity of the treated land, which in turn contributed to increased agricultural yields and incomes in the landscape.

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

## Indonesia



**Sustainable seaweed farming**

**Photo: Indonesia**

Based on the Landscape Strategy developed in February 2014 for the COMDEKS target landscape of Semau Island in Indonesia, a small island located in the Sawu Sea, eight projects have received support as part of the COMDEKS portfolio of landscape interventions. Biodiversity and natural resources have been restored and protected through plantation of tree and shrub seedlings to strengthen forest cover as well as planting over 20 ha of mangroves in coastal

areas over the past year. Sustainable agriculture and aquaculture have been promoted by introducing organic farming practices and technologies. Some local agricultural crops such as watermelons, peppers, rice, and eggplant have been reintroduced, and various energy and time efficient technologies for water use in agriculture have been promoted. As a result, crop yields have increased by 20% and household incomes rose in some cases by 100% through the sale of organic products as well as by engaging in markets as a farmer collective rather than individually, thereby generating higher revenues. Another initiative supported farmers to access the Kupang market through the global online trading platform KOTAK, which allows them to save costs associated with traveling to Kupang or selling through middlemen, as well as to sell their produce at a premium price under this arrangement.

Additionally, the strengthening of institutional governance for participatory decision-making has been a central aspect of the COMDEKS Landscape Strategy in Indonesia. Local leaders, social innovators as well as local government and district officials are supported regarding environmental protection in Semau Island. Environmental forums were established in seven villages to bring together leaders and other stakeholder groups to discuss their vision for efforts regarding forest conservation and water consumption, among others, and to develop implementation plans, carry out activities and monitor progress.

*Contributed by Catharina Dwiastarini, Indonesia National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP*

## A video from Brazil



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

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

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