

COMDEKS

Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

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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 third issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- (1) COMDEKS, and updates on implementation
- (2) Announcement of COMDEKS Phase II initiation
- (3) Piloting indicators for resilience in socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes
- (4) Stories from COMDEKS participating countries: Ghana, Nepal and Turkey

COMDEKS Country Programmes: March 2013



About COMDEKS

The Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project (COMDEKS) is a unique global project implemented by UNDP, and delivered through the GEF-Small Grants Programme, as the flagship of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative.

The COMDEKS Project has been designed to support local community activities to maintain and rebuild socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS), and to collect and disseminate knowledge and experiences from successful on the ground actions for replication and up-scaling in other parts of the world. Currently there are forty-three COMDEKS project proposals under implementation or in the pipeline.



COMDEKS Phase II: starting in June

In June 2013, at least ten additional countries will join COMDEKS during its second phase (2013-2016). Discussions are currently taking place with potential participating countries.

COMDEKS Phase 2 countries will be selected based primarily on their ability to provide lessons on management of socio-ecological production landscapes and thus to contribute to the Satoyama Initiative. Selection criteria include, inter alia, geographic representation, diversity and vulnerability of ecosystems, experience and capacity in the country, absorptive capacity and potential for replication, up-scaling and mainstreaming community work.

Project Snapshot

Goal To develop sound biodiversity management and sustainable livelihood activities with local communities to maintain, rebuild, and revitalize socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes.

Countries First Phase: Brazil, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Fiji, India, Malawi, Nepal, Slovakia, and Turkey.

Implementing Agency UNDP

Delivery mechanism GEF-Small Grants Programme

Timeframe and Budget 5-year partnership programme. Japan Biodiversity Fund contributing with 10 million USD (2011-16).

Status Under Implementation. Phase 2: beginning in June.

Piloting Indicators for Resilience: empowering communities for participatory monitoring

As part of the baseline assessment and community consultation process taking place in COMDEKS project sites, COMDEKS is currently piloting a set of Indicators for Resilience in Socio-ecological Production landscape and Seascapes (SEPLS), developed by IPSI members Bioversity International and UNU-IAS to help measure and understand the resilience of target landscapes and seascapes. This piloting exercise and the feedback received will help UNDP and other IPSI members refine the overall methodology for understanding landscape resilience.

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To date, the community consultation process and the practical application of SEPLS indicators have led to the formulation and approval of COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategies in Ethiopia, Cambodia, Ghana, India, Turkey, Nepal and Slovakia. The SEPLS indicators piloting exercise has enabled the development of participatory transformative strategies that reflect local priorities for the target landscapes negotiated among representatives from local communities, the government, the academia and the private sector. A COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy is a comprehensive document which outlines the landscape profile, expected goals and outcomes, and key measures

Status of COMDEKS Landscape Strategies and Baseline Assessment Workshops

Brazil	Ongoing consultations	India	Completed Feb. 2012
Cambodia	Completed Nov. 2012	Malawi	Under Development
Ethiopia	Completed Aug. 2012	Nepal	Completed Nov. 2012
Ghana	Completed Aug. 2012	Slovakia	Completed Oct. 2012
Fiji	Under Development	Turkey	Completed Sept. 2012

and strategies for community-based actions.

In each participating country, with the support of a scorecard developed for this purpose, the practical application of the indicators during the baseline assessment was conducted by measuring elements of SEPL resilience along four interrelated dimensions, namely, ecosystems protection and the maintenance of biodiversity; agricultural biodiversity; knowledge, learning and innovation; and social equity and infrastructure. After each theme was discussed, participants answered a series of related questions, which were then aggregated to depict the communities' perspective on the resilience of the target landscape.

Through the use of indicators scorecards, interactive mapping exercises, problem tree analysis and focused group discussions, the COMDEKS landscape-wide baseline assessments and community consultations workshops successfully engaged stakeholders in assessing the status of their selected socio-ecological landscape.



Shareholder Workshop

Photo: Ethiopia

In **Ethiopia**, the baseline assessment of the selected landscape, the Gilgel Gibe-1 (GG1) catchment area, was carried out in June 2012 in the four districts (*woreda*) bordering the GG1 dam through focus group discussions (FGD) with community members of the selected neighborhoods (*kebeles*). The process was facilitated by experts from Jimma University, the grantee organization selected to conduct the landscape-wide baseline assessment, with

four FGD with 8-10 individual participants, each to capture the opinions and concerns of the local stakeholders.

The community consultation and participatory assessment was conducted in the context of social conventions, with men separated from women, to enable an effective participation of women in the planning process and in the development of a resilience-strengthening strategy. Additionally, a group of experts and elders was formed to discuss trends, and to map how things have changed overtime in the target landscape and the drivers associated with these changes. Overall, four separate workshops were held to collect and disseminate information throughout the baseline assessment process until the approval of the landscape strategy.



Participatory Village Mapping

Photo: Cambodia

In **Cambodia**, the Steung Siem Reap Watershed Area is the socio-ecological landscape selected for the implementation of COMDEKS. The targeted area is highly heterogeneous due to the wide diversity of biological, geographical and topographical features located within the region. In order to capture the heterogeneity of the target landscape, and identify potential community-based activities to enhance resilience of the landscape, with the use of a Geographic Information System (GIS) the target area was divided into six socio-ecological zones, taking into account the topography, rainfall pattern, soil types, land use, forest cover change, and statutory land tenure systems of the target area.

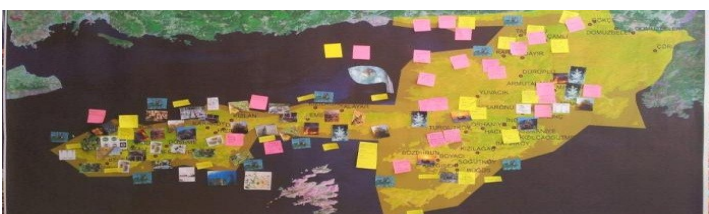
A landscape-wide baseline assessment took place in November 2012 and consisted of participatory rural appraisals organized in 13 villages, resource mapping exercises, seasonal calendars and problem/solution analysis. To better understand the resilience of the target landscape, community consultations were complemented with the indicators piloting exercise. A follow up workshop took place to share findings and to generate discussions concerning the challenges ahead for each socio-ecological zone. Illegal logging, land degradation, low agricultural yields, due to poor water retention networks and the unsustainable depletion of natural resources, were considered as the biggest threats for the resilience of the Steung Siem Reap socio-ecological production landscape.

In **Ghana**, community consultations were organized at the village level through a series of community meetings spearheaded by a newly created Weto Platform, and involving overall more than 1600 people from the 36 selected communities of the Weto range landscape. Additionally, in June 2012, a one-day landscape-wide baseline assessment validation workshop was attended by over 50

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stakeholders, in order to pilot the SEPLS indicators and assess the resilience of the target landscape.

During the baseline assessment workshop, community resource mapping activities and a GIS map developed by the Centre for Remote Sensing and Geo-Information Services (CERGIS) at the University of Ghana were used to provoke discussions, assess the threats to the landscape and identify potential community based activities to manage the Weto range towards the goal of landscape resilience. The baseline assessment helped landscape stakeholders to define a vision for their landscape strategy "A thriving socio-ecological production landscape where the local communities are actively involved in the sustainable management and utilization of the natural resources for increased production, the restoration of biodiversity, wealth creation and continuous flow of ecosystem services".



Interactive Map

Photo: Turkey

In **Turkey**, the baseline assessment of the selected landscape, the Datca-Bozburun Peninsula, was completed in August 2012 through three different workshops involving more than 70 stakeholders representative of the 17 target communities in the area. Stakeholders included officers in forest and agricultural management, rural affairs; cooperatives and unions for agriculture, fisheries, tourism and infrastructure; individual farmers, fishermen, hotel owners, tourism operators; local and national NGOs working on nature conservation and agro-biodiversity. The interactive mapping exercise proved to be particularly successful in providing a spatial dimension to conservation priorities and encouraging relevant and practical solutions to landscape resilience. The SEPL scorecard exercise was used to analyze key concerns and reach a consensus on the most important areas of interest, problems, opportunities and threats.



Stakeholder Workshop

Photo: Nepal

In **Nepal**, the baseline assessment was carried out in 10 selected Village Development Committees (VDCs) of the north-west Makawanpur district. The assessment included a rigorous pre-workshop to measure the SEPL indicators with 32 key stakeholders from the government, NGOs, the media and community

members of selected VDCs. A study-team of experts including agro-forestry and GIS professionals, engineers and rural officers was formed with the mandate to carry out the field surveys and workshops exercise in each of the 10 selected VDCs. Twenty randomly selected community members were invited to participate in the SEPLS scorecard exercise at each VDC-level workshops. As a result, a total of 200 participants were involved.

The SEPLS scorecard results were consolidated into a VDC- level radar diagrams and additional gender based radar diagrams were completed. The results of the SEPLS indicators as well as field analysis were presented at a post- workshop on July 2012. The main concerns were the recurrent floods and landslides affecting the target landscape, the effects of slash and burn agriculture and the resulting deforestation, the loss of agricultural biodiversity and the sharp decline in agriculture productivity of cereals and vegetables, perhaps due to global climate change which begin to manifest clearly in terms of increasing mean minimum temperatures and decreasing rainfall trends.



Local Stakeholder Meeting

Photo: Slovakia

In **Slovakia**, the baseline assessment of the selected landscape located in the north-eastern part of the Východoslovenská nížina Lowland (Eastern Slovakia Lowland), built on the results of a previous assessment carried out in 2007-2009 during the elaboration of the Integrated Local Development Strategy developed under the UNDP/GEF Laborec-Uh Project. During this period several community consultations helped delineate the landscape area.

A two-day landscape-wide baseline assessment workshop, aimed at piloting the SEPLS indicators and developing the COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategy for Slovakia, took place in August 2012. Twenty participants representing members of civic associations and volunteer organizations, village mayors, representatives of agricultural cooperatives and craft centers, and local communities completed the SEPLS scorecard exercise and engaged in discussions regarding the COMDEKS socio-ecological approach and its relevance within the Slovak context. Overall, participants confirmed that SEPL indicators helped them to better grasp and understand the need to link social and ecological aspects within the landscape in order to improve its resilience as well as the quality of life in the area.

For additional information, please contact Ms. Diana Salvemini, COMDEKS Project Coordinator, diana.salvemini@undp.org

Gender Equality and Sustainable Development

Research and past fieldwork experience has demonstrated the importance of policies and programming that empower women during sustainable development initiatives. The social, economic and environmental pillars are further strengthened allowing for a more effective program. The SEPLS indicators for COMDEKS were designed with this in mind.

The social and economic exclusion of women from communities decrease the overall resilience of the target landscapes. During the baseline assessment process, consultations with communities measured gender equality through surveys and questionnaires. Currently, all of the approved COMDEKS Country Programme Landscape Strategies have integrated gender perspectives and incorporated gender sensitive indicators and criteria when designing and implementing community-based projects.

Portfolio Update

Ghana



Participatory Stakeholder Workshop

Photo: Ghana

Currently nine projects have been approved for COMDEKS funding in Ghana. These projects are located in the **Weto Mountain range**, a region of global significance due to very high levels of biodiversity. Training farmers in new agricultural techniques and technology will empower community members to protect and conserve the Weto ecological landscape. Actively supported activities include training programs in mushroom farming, snail rearing, beekeeping, grafting of mango trees and the planting of bamboo seedlings, the creation of a forest nursery, establishing model reforestation activities and the adoption of agro-forestry, the construction of stone walls to prevent soil erosion and other sustainable land management practices.

Contributed by George Ortsin, Ghana National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Nepal

The SGP Country Programme in Nepal currently has four COMDEKS projects under implementation. High food insecurity, a marginalized female population, recurring natural disasters and a high population density lacking access to social services are major problems facing local communities in the **Makawanpur region**. Improving current agricultural practices in the target socio-ecological landscape is considered paramount because of the severe erosion in the mountain farming regions.



Community members in front of a typical village house

Photo: Nepal

COMDEKS projects promote a more sustainable livelihood for local communities through effective land management and restoration of degraded forest. The SALT technique, a low cost and simple method of farming hilly land without losing irreplaceable topsoil, is currently being taught to farmers to help stabilize soils and to grow food more economically. Because of the scarcity of water resources in upland farming communities, micro-irrigation projects (specifically, water harvesting ponds) have also been approved for funding to help communities procure an adequate supply of water. A goat keeping scheme, off-seasonal farming programs, a seed bank, community nurseries, enterprise training and other initiatives are currently under development. All of the programs will target women's participation because of the major role they occupy in agricultural production systems throughout the region.

Contributed by Gopal Sherchan, Nepal National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

Turkey



Fisherwoman in Datça-Bozburun Peninsula

Photo: Turkey

Ten projects have been awarded for the **Datça-Bozburun peninsula**, located in the southwest of Turkey. The region is recognized as a key biodiversity area as it represents a pristine Mediterranean lowland forest and coastal marine landscape. COMDEKS has several goals in the area including the increase in local beneficiaries understanding the ecological and economic benefits of Restricted Marine Protection Areas (MPAs).

Supported activities to enhance the resilience of the target landscape include the development of ecotourism, the conservation of locally produced Datça almonds (through more efficient production, marketing and harvesting), improving current forest management plans, promoting the existence and significance of fisherwomen in fisheries, and supporting the development of conservation action plans to help protect important mammalian species in the area.

Contributed by Gokmen Yalcin, Turkey National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

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