

# 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](http://www.comdeksproject.com)

Welcome to the fourth issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- (1) Japan and UNDP launch COMDEKS in ten additional countries
- (2) COMDEKS Nepal participates in IPSI Regional Workshop
- (3) UNU-IAS Public Seminar on Resilience Indicators
- (4) Japan visits COMDEKS activities in Cambodia
- (5) Gender dimensions in Fiji baseline assessment
- (6) Stories from COMDEKS participating countries: Ethiopia, Slovakia, and a photostory from Malawi

### COMDEKS Country Programmes: June 2013



### About COMDEKS



The Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project (COMDEKS) is the flagship project of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative, a global initiative to promote sustainable use and management of natural resources in socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes.

Funded through the Japan Biodiversity Fund established within the CBD Secretariat, the COMDEKS Project is a five-year partnership programme implemented by UNDP, and delivered through the GEF Small Grants Programme.



### Japan and UNDP launch COMDEKS in ten additional countries

The Government of Japan and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) launched the second phase of a major biodiversity and sustainable development partnership, and announced new projects in ten countries.

Communities in Bhutan, Cameroon, Costa Rica, Ecuador, El Salvador, Kyrgyzstan, Indonesia, Mongolia, Namibia, and Niger will join the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS). This brings to twenty the number of countries involved in the joint programme. It promotes inclusive, community-based approaches to the sustainable development of landscapes and seascapes, incorporating support for biodiversity conservation, human security—in particular food security, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation.

Launched in 2011, COMDEKS is the flagship programme of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative, a global effort to promote the sustainable use and management of natural resources in socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes—a term describing the Satoyama concept of people in harmony with nature—pursuant to the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Communities in Brazil, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Ghana, Fiji, India, Malawi, Nepal, Slovakia, and Turkey are already involved in designing and implementing landscape strategies for the realization of “societies in harmony with nature”, as defined in the vision of the Satoyama Initiative. The landscapes and seascapes being targeted span diverse ecosystems, ranging from coastal areas, watersheds, and pastoral systems to lowlands and highlands areas.

This initiative, which works through UNDP’s Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme, provides small grants directly to local community organizations with a contribution of US\$10 million from the Japan Biodiversity Fund.

The five-year programme is implemented by UNDP in partnership with the Ministry of Environment of Japan, the Secretariat of the

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Convention on Biological Diversity, and the UN University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS).

The Government of Japan, with its significant financial contributions to biodiversity conservation, disaster risk reduction, and climate change adaptation, is a strong partner in helping developing countries to strengthen their resilience. This partnership builds on continued collaboration between the Japanese Government and UNDP to promote knowledge sharing and expertise and strengthen capacities for sustainable development.

During the second phase, UNDP, the Ministry of Environment of Japan, CBD and UNU will join hands to scale up the programme from its initial pilot phase, facilitating knowledge and policy communication based on lessons learned and good practices.



**COMDEKS grantee benefits from agroforestry systems, Nepal**

Please click [here](#) for the full press release available on the UNDP website.

## COMDEKS Nepal participates in IPSI Regional Workshop



**Workshop Participants, Kathmandu, Nepal**

**Photo: IPSI**

On 14-16 May 2013, the UNDP implemented COMDEKS project was prominently featured during a Satoyama Initiative workshop held in Kathmandu, Nepal. Knowledge gained and lessons learned from our COMDEKS activities in Nepal were highlighted by the SGP National Coordinator during a discussion with the Ministry of Forests and Soil Conservation, the Government of Nepal and the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) Secretariat.

The objective of the workshop in Nepal was to share information

and experiences from the Asian region relevant to IPSI and to further promote IPSI activities and understanding of the partnership in the region.

Please click [here](#) for the full article on the Satoyama Initiative website.

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

## UNU-IAS Public Seminar on Resilience Indicators



**UNU-IAS Symposium, Yokohama, Japan**

**Photo: UNU-IAS**

Experts from Bioversity International and the United Nations Development Programme gathered on Earth Day (22 April 2013) at United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies in Yokohama, Japan to discuss the resilience of the world's socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS). Both IPSI member organizations have taken leading roles in developing and piloting indicators for resilience in SEPLS. The seminar marked the launch of the latest UNU-IAS Policy Report on "Developing Indicators of Resilience in Socio-ecological Production Landscapes".

In his opening remarks, Wataru Suzuki, Coordinator of the International Satoyama Initiative at UNU-IAS, provided some background on the long collaborative process that has led to the development and testing of a set of twenty indicators for resilience in SEPLS. Nadia Bergamini, Bioversity International, shared some of the results of the initial testing of the indicators and lessons learned; and emphasized their usefulness for establishing a common understanding at the local level for improving community resilience. Diana Salvemini, UNDP, presented the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project, a collaborative effort under IPSI, which supports local community activities to promote sustainable landscape-level management approaches. Her presentation highlighted how the resilience indicators have been used to support the development of landscape strategies in a participatory and inclusive multi-stakeholder process involving the communities that inhabit, use, and protect these landscapes.

Please click [here](#) for the full article and presentations included in the Satoyama Initiative website.

*Contributed by Robert Blasiak and Dr. Kaoru Ichikawa, United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies*

## Japan visits COMDEKS activities in Cambodia



COMDEKS - Donor Visit

Photo: Cambodia

On March 23-24, 2013, a representative from the Ministry of Environment of Japan, Rikiya Konishi visited two community-based projects financed by the COMDEKS Project in the Siem Reap landscape, Cambodia. Mr. Konishi was accompanied by the COMDEKS Project Coordinator, Diana Salvemini; and the SGP National Coordinator, Navirak Ngin, and was welcomed by project stakeholders and beneficiaries.

Each project is designed to increase the resilience of the socio-ecological landscape, while improving the livelihoods of community members. The two local community-based organizations in the Steung Siem Watershed landscape that were awarded grants through COMDEKS are the Human Resource and Rural Economic Development Organization (HURREDO) and the Sataphana Chivit Organization (SCO). The two projects will restore biodiversity through reforestation and forest protection schemes. Local livelihoods will be improved through integrated agroforestry activities, and the creation of support systems such as seed (rice) banks and women's finance groups. Restoration of irrigation systems and the protection of community forests and fisheries will ultimately lead to increased crop and fishery productivity.

Community participation in land and water use associations encourages the involvement of the community in establishing a robust governance system. A short video-clip developed by SCO about the initial launch of the project at the community level has also been streamed on national television to further increase community exposure and visibility of supported activities.



COMDEKS - Donor Visit

Photo: Cambodia

The objective of the learning mission was to visit the COMDEKS funded project sites, and provide feedback to project partners and beneficiaries in the implementation of the COMDEKS strategy to strengthen the resilience of the target socio-ecological production landscape. Mr. Konishi was pleased with the progress

witnessed and praised the focus on knowledge management and communication. In particular, the mission team was encouraged to observe the committed participation of the Provincial Departments of Agriculture, and Water Resource and Meteorology, commune council leaders and community members, highlighting the strength of the projects moving forward.

*Contributed by Ngin Navirak, Cambodia National Coordinator, GEF-SGP UNDP and Vanchan Taing, Executive Director, HURREDO*

## Gender dimensions in FIJI baseline assessment

In Fiji, the baseline assessment and community consultation workshop aimed at piloting the Resilience Indicators and developing the landscape strategy for the Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula took place at the end of January 2013. The Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula was chosen as a target COMDEKS landscape for three reasons; the terrestrial and marine environment are considered global hotspots of biodiversity, efforts generated through COMDEKS can help provide viable income options for community livelihoods within the landscape, and finally, this landscape provides an opportunity to document and revive traditional practices used for proper land management and natural resource control.



Fijian woman processing Tapa

Photo: Fiji

The baseline assessment process in the Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula illustrated that gender sensitivity and inclusivity is imperative for the COMDEKS initiative to meet its target goals. By providing opportunities to every community member, regardless of gender, the COMDEKS program can better promote sustainable use and management of natural resources in socio-ecological production landscapes with the aim of maintaining, rebuilding and revitalizing them.

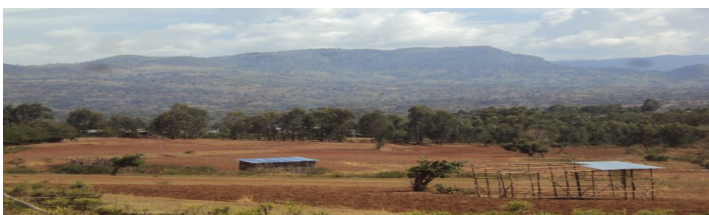
While the scoping and baseline assessment meetings did not require the separation of the two genders, it was evident that the Peninsula still retains conservative traditional elements which place women in a subservient role within the communities. Decision-making and ownership of resources are inherited by men in the Natewa-Tunuloa Peninsula, but women, despite little access to resources, have proven that they can greatly improve the livelihoods of their communities. More specifically, women exhibit a great talent in conserving community assets and natural resources for the next generation. The chief of the Karoko Village, in the Tunuloa district, suggested during the scoping exercise that COMDEKS projects for his village should be led by women in recognition of their successful use of land to support small scale cottage industries, such as bark cloth production and weaving.

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Despite the patriarchal set up, gender integration in this pilot project should focus on strengthening women's capacities, leadership abilities, and helping to advance their involvement in governance and decision making processes. COMDEKS Fiji should support specific projects managed by women's groups within the landscape. An additional entry point is to ensure that women's participation is a criterion for community based institution strengthening, and that women are involved in any engagement with external partners and networks. Finally, it is essential that gender knowledge is captured and documented to improve the participation of women in future community programs.

*Contributed by Katarina Atalifo, Fiji National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP and Ulamila Kurai Wragg, Fiji*

## Portfolio Update Ethiopia



**Degraded Landscape**

**Photo: Ethiopia**

In Ethiopia, COMDEKS funds are presently being used for ten different projects from selected catchments of Gilgel Gibe 1 (GG1) and ten Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) are active partners in implementing COMDEKS activities throughout the GG1 catchment landscape, benefitting an estimated population of 20,000 inhabitants.

Activities that are supported in these ten projects include: programs aimed at the biological stabilization of the physical soil and water conservation structures at critical points in the landscape, especially in the buffer zone of the GG1 dam; crop diversification, agroforestry systems, multipurpose tree plantations, integrated crop-animal systems and other traditional approaches aimed at increasing and stabilizing yields, as well as improved storage of agricultural products; activities aimed at supporting eco-friendly small-scale community enterprises, and finally, activities aimed at setting up effective community-based institutional governance structures.

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

## Slovakia

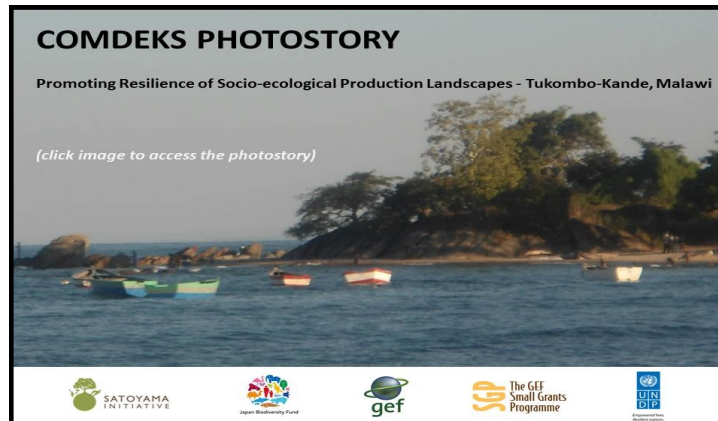
In Slovakia, the COMDEKS long-term aim is to increase resilience of natural ecosystems and human production systems through partnership-based activities which promote eco-system functions and increase landscape diversity. Its target area is located in the north-eastern part of the Východoslovenská nížina Lowland (Eastern Slovakia Lowland), in the Latorica river basin. The area is 40,242 ha and includes 35 municipalities with approximately 23,000 inhabitants. The region is of rural character and has

a relatively low population density. The area was selected as a COMDEKS pilot landscape mainly due to its biodiversity and hydrological values, as well as the landscape's poor ranking among the most underdeveloped Slovak regions in terms of socio-economic, agricultural and ecological factors.

COMDEKS has currently awarded six projects in the target landscape supporting a range of activities including the regeneration of wetlands, reforestation programs, piloting alternative municipal waste-water treatment methods, applying sustainable management practices in livestock fattening methods and introducing the practice of honey production. Other activities include the establishment of a local market and forum for local farmers and artisans to help support the production and sale of traditional local products.

*Contributed by Klara Tothova, Slovakia National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP*

## Malawi



The target landscape selected for COMDEKS activities in Malawi is the Tukombo-Kande socioeconomic production landscape, a fishing town located in the Nkhata Bay district of northern Malawi. The landscape is biodiversity rich with several pristine vegetation types and has high potential for ecotourism, aquaculture, wetland conservation and sustainable agriculture production.

The baseline assessment and the testing of the indicators were conducted with participants from eight villages in the Traditional Authority areas of Zilakoma, Malengamzoma and Fukamapiri using several tools, including focus group discussions, key informant interviews with stakeholders from different sectors, problem tree analysis, transect walks across the landscape and sketch mapping, use of trends table, participatory scoring and ranking using stones and drawing stars. A map of the landscape, identifying landscape elements, assets and boundaries was discussed and modified in a participatory manner in consultation with the local communities.

*Contributed by Alex Damaliphetsa, Malawi National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP and Valerie Askinazi, COMDEKS Intern.*

**Previous Issues of COMDEKS Newsletter: [Issue 1](#), [Issue 2](#), and [Issue 3](#)**