



COMDEKS PHASE 4

NEWSLETTER – ISSUE 2 | DECEMBER 2025

Community Development and
Knowledge Management for the
Satoyama Initiative Programme

About COMDEKS

The Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Programme (COMDEKS) was launched in 2011 as a flagship programme of the Satoyama Initiative, a global effort to promote the sustainable use of natural resources in landscapes and seascapes with local communities whose livelihoods and cultural heritage depend on them.

The COMDEKS programme provides small-scale finance directly to local communities, Indigenous Peoples and civil society to implement locally-led projects that improve livelihoods and well-being, conserve biodiversity, address climate change, build resilience and support local cultures and practices.

Launched in 2022, COMDEKS Phase 4 is funded by the Ministry of Environment Japan (MOEJ) and the Keidanren Nature Conservation Fund (KNCF), and implemented by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP) at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



TIMEFRAME
2022-2027



15 PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES

Nepal, Viet Nam, Bhutan, Cambodia, Samoa, Kyrgyzstan, Morocco, Türkiye, Jamaica, Peru, Costa Rica, Cameroon, Ghana, Tanzania, Uganda



TOTAL FUNDING FROM MOEJ AND KNCF
1 BILLION JAPANESE YEN



ALIGNED TO THE SUSTAINABLE
DEVELOPMENT GOALS

OUR STORIES

- ▷ **COMDEKS:** In Harmony with Nature
- ▷ **Seeding the Future:** Conserving Agrobiodiversity in the Peruvian Andes
- ▷ **From Plastic to Purpose:** Women of Laya Drive Circular Economy in Bhutan
- ▷ **Resilience Reimagined:** Landscape Conservation in Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul Basin
- ▷ **Lower Tamor, Nepal:** A Blueprint for Sustainable Landscapes
- ▷ **Tanzania's Kolo Hills:** Where Nature, Culture, and Community Resilience Intersect



COMDEKS: In Harmony with Nature

Discover how communities around the world are blending traditional knowledge with modern innovation to protect biodiversity and foster sustainable livelihoods through the COMDEKS programme. From Bhutan's highlands to Japan's Satoyama landscapes, this story showcases how small-scale, community-led efforts can drive global environmental impact, demonstrating that people and nature can truly thrive together. Dive into the journey of resilience, cultural heritage, and ecological harmony.

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Seeding the Future: Conserving Agrobiodiversity in the Peruvian Andes

High in Peru's Ácora district, *Aymara* communities are fighting climate change by reviving ancient seeds and traditions. Extreme droughts and frosts have devastated crops, threatening food security and livelihoods. In response, women leaders like Pascuala Pari and Fanny Ninarahui are spearheading seed banks to conserve native grains and tubers, including quinoa, *cañihua* and *oca*, to restore agrobiodiversity. These banks enable seed exchanges, safeguard traditions, and strengthen resilience against climate shocks. Supported under COMDEKS Phase 4, these grassroots efforts combine ancestral knowledge with modern irrigation techniques, proving that conserving seeds means conserving life, culture, and hope for a sustainable future.

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From Plastic to Purpose: Women of Laya Drive Circular Economy in Bhutan

In Bhutan's remote Laya community, women are leading the fight against plastic pollution. Supported by the SGP and UNDP through COMDEKS Phase 4, SHE Cycle Solutions launched a plastic management campaign in July 2025 reaching over 400 residents. With improved road access bringing waste challenges to these mountain communities, these women are responding by turning plastic into crafts and forming cooperatives like Gangla Namros. "We want to keep Laya clean and show that women can lead change," says founder Sonam Choden. Their efforts promote a circular economy, create income generating opportunities, and safeguard Laya's pristine environment, showcasing local action at its best.


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Resilience Reimagined: Landscape Conservation in Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul Basin

In Kyrgyzstan's Issyk-Kul Basin, communities are driving landscape restoration through the COMDEKS Programme. Using the Resilience Indicator Toolkit, local residents, including women, youth, and eco-activists, assessed five key areas of socio-ecological resilience. Their insights shaped a strategy that tackles environmental threats and promotes inclusive, locally-led solutions. "We're not just restoring ecosystems, we're restoring relationships between people and nature," says Altynai Achilova of the Rural Development Fund. This participatory process is helping to build stronger ecosystems and empowering communities to lead the way toward a more resilient future.

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Lower Tamor, Nepal: A Blueprint for Sustainable Landscapes

COMDEKS Phase 4 is breathing new life into Nepal's Lower Tamor landscape, a biodiversity hotspot and cultural stronghold. Aligned to global and national biodiversity frameworks, the COMDEKS landscape strategy blends ecosystem restoration, climate-smart livelihoods, inclusive governance and traditional knowledge. Seven community-led projects, ranging from organic farming to flowering shrub and forest restoration and watershed protection, are creating sustainable incomes while protecting nature. Despite challenges like crop losses from wildlife conflict and climate impacts, local communities are leading the way, proving that resilience and harmony with nature are achievable through collaboration.

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A photograph of a savanna landscape. In the foreground, a herd of zebras is grazing on dry, yellowish grass. Several acacia trees are scattered across the middle ground. In the background, there are rolling hills under a blue sky with white clouds.

Tanzania's Kolo Hills: Where Nature, Culture, and Community Resilience Intersect

Tanzania's Kolo Hills, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, is a stunning landscape of rugged escarpments, ancient rock art, and vital forests that sustain communities and wildlife. Yet this cultural and ecological treasure faces severe challenges: drought, soil erosion, and land degradation threaten its resilience and local livelihoods. COMDEKS Phase 4 is driving change through community-led action: restoring forests, promoting climate-smart farming, and creating eco-tourism opportunities. The landscape strategy aims to protect nature, strengthen local economies, and ensure that Kolo Hills remains a vibrant reservoir of life and culture for generations to come.

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A close-up photograph of a tea plant with vibrant green, serrated leaves. The leaves are covered in small, clear water droplets, suggesting a recent rain or mist. The background is a soft, out-of-focus green, creating a sense of depth and natural beauty. The overall tone is fresh and organic, fitting the theme of conservation and sustainability.

EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

- ▷ **Seminar on Locally-led Landscape Approaches**, Tokyo, April 2025
- ▷ **COMDEKS Knowledge Exchange: Learning from Japan's Satoyama Sites**
- ▷ **High-Level Political Forum, July 2025: Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities Through COMDEKS and the Satoyama Initiative**
- ▷ **Harnessing Digital Innovation for Local Conservation**, June 2025



Seminar on Locally-led Landscape Approaches, Tokyo, April 2025

KNCC, MOEJ and UNDP held an event in Tokyo in April to highlight the public-private partnership for COMDEKS Phase 4 and raise awareness of the Satoyama Initiative. The event presented first-hand insights on COMDEKS implementation from Cameroon, Costa Rica and Türkiye, and underscored the value of cross-sector partnerships in scaling nature-positive solutions and building resilient communities.

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COMDEKS Knowledge Exchange: Learning from Japan's Satoyama Sites

In April 2025, three SGP National Coordinators visited Japan's Satoyama landscapes to learn how traditional farming practices, like wasabi and green tea cultivation, support biodiversity, climate resilience, and cultural heritage. "This was a great opportunity to see the origins of Satoyama, and to compare how we are conserving landscapes and seascapes in Türkiye" says SGP Türkiye National Coordinator, Gokmen Argun. The exchange highlighted how locally-led approaches can harmonize conservation, disaster risk reduction, and sustainable livelihoods, offering valuable lessons for global implementation.

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High-Level Political Forum, July 2025: Building Sustainable and Resilient Communities Through COMDEKS and the Satoyama Initiative

Aligned with the theme of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development held in July 2025, SGP held a side event with key partners to highlight the role of COMDEKS in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and key targets under the Global Biodiversity Framework, including those on inclusive ecosystem restoration and protected area management. The event featured a dynamic panel discussion with civil society and community leaders from Morocco, Kyrgyzstan and Bhutan sharing their experience on COMDEKS implementation.

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Harnessing Digital Innovation for Local Conservation, June 2025

Digital technologies are unlocking new possibilities for understanding, monitoring, and protecting biodiversity. In June 2025, SGP and UNDP hosted an online workshop with COMDEKS country teams to explore how digital tools can strengthen locally-led conservation efforts. The session focused on practical applications of digital technology, such as biodiversity mapping, smart data collection and monitoring, and using mobile applications to support local community projects.

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VIDEOS

- ▷ **High-Level Political Forum 2025**
- ▷ **The Samsun wetland landscape, Türkiye**
- ▷ **Building resilience in the Bogo landscape, Cameroon**
- ▷ **The Nicoya Gulf seascape, Costa Rica**



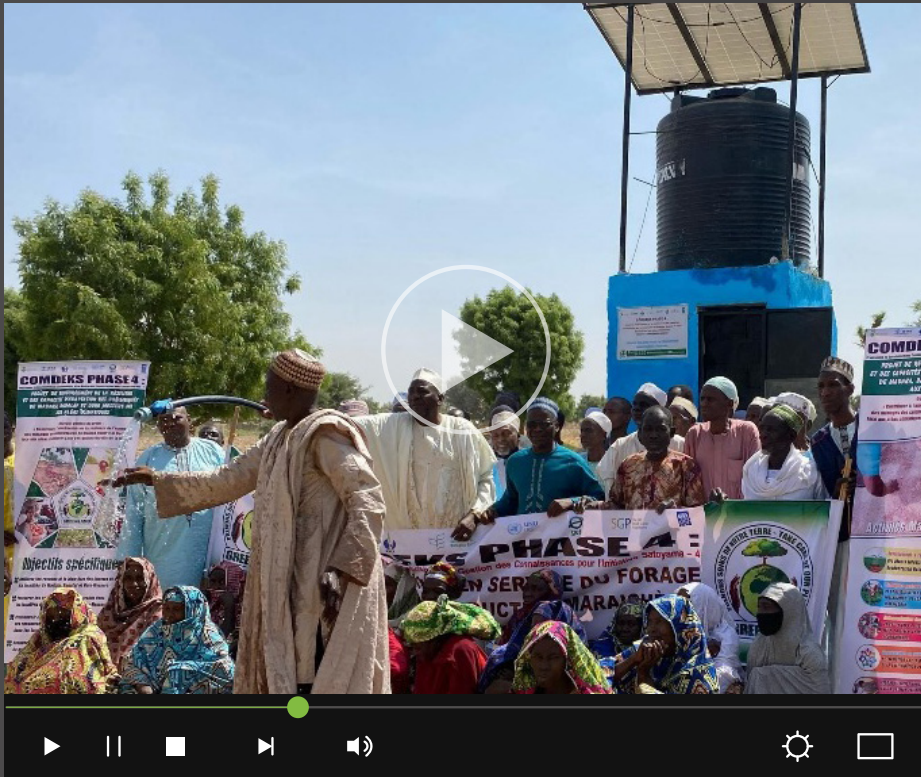
HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM 2025 >>

Photo Credit: Sascha Ali



THE SAMSUN WETLAND LANDSCAPE, TÜRKİYE >>

Photo Credit: SGP Türkiye



BUILDING RESILIENCE IN THE BOGO LANDSCAPE, CAMEROON >>

Photo Credit: SGP Cameroon



THE NICOYA GULF SEASCAPE, COSTA RICA >>

Photo Credit: SGP Costa Rica



The Small Grants Programme (SGP) is a corporate programme of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). Established in 1992, SGP is currently active in 127 countries and promotes community-based innovation, capacity development, and empowerment through sustainable development projects of local civil society organizations with special consideration for Indigenous Peoples, women, and youth. SGP has supported over 30,000 community-based projects on biodiversity conservation and sustainable use, climate change mitigation and adaptation, sustainable land management, conservation of international waters, and chemicals and waste management, while generating sustainable livelihoods.



The GEF is a family of funds dedicated to confronting biodiversity loss, climate change, pollution, and strains on land and ocean health. Its grants, blended financing, and policy support helps developing countries address their biggest environmental priorities and adhere to international environmental conventions. Over the past three decades, the GEF has provided more than \$22 billion and mobilized \$120 billion in co-financing for more than 5,000 national and regional projects.
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