

COMDEKS

Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

United Nations Development Programme



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Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.

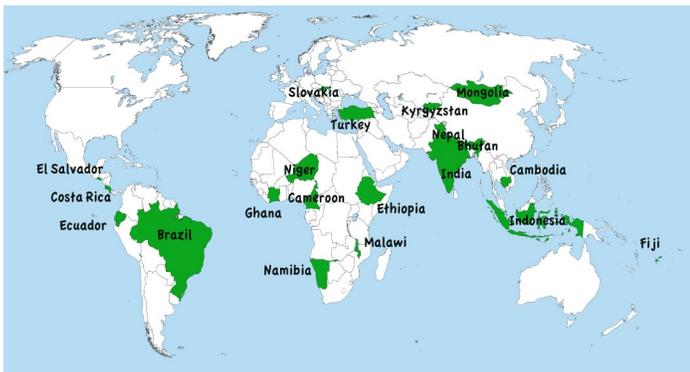
This newsletter is produced by the Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative Project, implemented by UNDP and funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund. It provides updates on a range of topics including the status of ongoing country programmes, landscape performance indicators,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

Welcome to the twenty-first issue of our Newsletter!

In this edition, we highlight:

- 1) Celebration of the "Arbor Day" in Costa Rica
- 2) Videos on the Resilience Indicators produced by the GEF-Satoyama Project
- 3) Women and youth empowerment around Lake Tabalak, Niger
- 4) Community-driven development in Brazil
- 5) Portfolio updates: Bhutan and El Salvador
- 6) Video from Cameroon

COMDEKS Country Programmes: September 2017



Celebration of the "Arbor Day" at the San Mateo community, Costa Rica

Commemorating the "Arbor Day" in Costa Rica on June 15th, the National Commission for Land Degradation (CADETI), SGP Costa Rica, and the local government of San Mateo jointly organized a celebratory event, which involved presentations, and reforestation activities. Further partners included the Costa Rican Institute for Electricity (ICE), the Ministry of Agriculture (MAG), the Ministry of Environment (MINAE), the National Commission of Forest Fires (CONIFOR), the Community Committee of Aqueducts and Water Services (ASADA Labrador), as well as the primary and high schools of Labrador and San Mateo.

The Arbor Day aims to encourage individuals and organi-

zations to plant trees. Regional Representatives of the Ministry of Education (MEP) and the local government of San Mateo gave presentations about the importance of a healthy forest cover for soil and water conservation, and tree seedlings and information materials were handed out to the about 250 participants. Additionally, this event served as an opportunity to promote the formation of new community forest fire brigades in the Biological Corridor where the Jesus María River basin is located. These volunteer-based brigades are trained to help prevent and control forest fires in Protected Areas and Reserves.



Allen Rojas (Rio Jesus community) receiving a tree seedling Photo: Costa Rica

Many of these activities were coordinated with the support of SGP and COMDEKS grantees. The tree seedlings handed out to participants and used for this reforestation campaign have been raised by the Association for the Organic Agriculture Movement of the Central Pacific (MAOPAC), which implemented a COMDEKS-supported project to protect water and soil resources through reforestation activities. One of the main results of this project was the establishment of a 4-year agreement (2015-2018) with the ICE to jointly produce overall 80,000 fruit and timber trees to be planted by the communities of the Jesus María river basin. All the 12,000 trees that were planted during this year's Arbor Day were part of this agreement.

Contributed by Charles Dixon, Costa Rica National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP, and Ms. Paula Zuniga Diaz, Costa Rica Programme Assistant, GEF SGP, UNDP



Videos on the Indicators of Resilience produced by the GEF-Satoyama Project

Two videos were produced for the IGES e-Learning Series on “Balancing Biodiversity and Community Resilience through Production Landscapes and Seascapes” with cooperation from the executing partners of the GEF-Satoyama Project: Conservation International Japan (CI Japan), the United Nations University Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability (UNU-IAS), and IGES.

The video “The guardians of Ecuador’s dry forest: A story of community resilience” follows researcher Ikuko Matsumoto from the Institute for Global Environmental Strategies (IGES) visiting the Agua Blanca community in Ecuador. It showcases the community’s best practices of sustainable living and explains local governance issues. The video further illustrates how the Resilience Indicators and the multi-stakeholder workshop on community resilience, conducted by the GEF-Satoyama Project, have helped the community and other stakeholders to better understand landscape resilience and enter a dialogue on how collaborate towards the common goal of promoting biodiversity conservation and sustainable livelihoods.



Click on the image above to access the videos.

The video “Biodiversity and Resilience Indicators: Communities managing production landscapes and seascapes” aims to provide a training of trainers on the use of the Indicators of Resilience. It introduces the idea of socio-ecological production landscapes and seascapes (SEPLS), and highlights their role as strongholds of biodiversity and sustainable living that are increasingly threatened by rapidly growing human demands, industrialization, urbanization, climate change, and other threats. The video further outlines the concept of resilience and explains the Indicators of Resilience, their purpose as well as the benefits of using them within participatory assessment workshops.

For more information and to view the videos, please click [here](#).

Women and youth empowerment around Lake Tabalak, Niger

Based on the landscape strategy for the area surrounding “Lake Tabalak” in Niger, eight community-based projects have been supported to strengthen the productive capacity of the landscape by diversifying farming techniques, managing invasive species that threaten the local ecosystems, restoring degraded land, and supporting alternative income generating opportunities.



Project evaluation workshop

Photo: Niger

The high participation of vulnerable groups such as women and youth has particularly contributed to increasing food security and improving livelihoods. Through the introduction of modern farming techniques, including improved and more resilient crop seeds, yields and production quantities of vegetable crops have considerably increased, improving incomes and nutrition. These activities helped create employment, with more than 1,500 women and young people now active in market gardening. Over 150 women have found employment in the production of forest seedlings, each earning an annual income of 40,000-80,000 FCFA (USD69-137). Projects have also strengthened women groups and cooperatives to further empower women and improve their access to land. Women accounted for nearly 70 percent of the sand dune restoration and nursery work, and they have been actively involved in community management committees.

Women have also been actively involved in a project to design locally suitable cooking equipment and establish of a revolving fund to finance alternative income-generating activities. By mid-2016, the revolving fund had accumulated working capital of 300,000 FCFA (USD525), which women fishmongers have used to purchase fish frying equipment and accessories for their local businesses. These women were able to increase their incomes by 46% on average between 2014 and 2016. Of the 4,238 community members whose livelihoods improved through the portfolio of supported initiatives, 2,871 were women and 68 unemployed young gradu-

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ates. Promoting sustainable alternative livelihoods and strengthening participatory local environmental governance have considerably reduced the vulnerability of local women and youth, slowing the mass exodus of young people to large cities and other countries.

Contributed by Ms. Nanatao Ismail, Niger National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

Local communities as drivers of sustainable rural development in Brazil

The portfolio of supported landscape initiatives in the Upper Jequitinhonha Valley has led to stronger collaboration of farmers and community-based organizations through a common vision for environmental conservation, agro-ecological production, as well as sustainable and inclusive rural development. The 14 rural communities that have participated in projects to strengthen the resilience of their multi-purpose landscapes were able to observe clear benefits of their collective action through a landscape approach.



Drip-irrigated vegetable farm

Photo: Brazil

They have recognized their capacity to achieve tangible impacts on their livelihoods and biodiversity conservation through concerted efforts at the grassroots level, and feel empowered to build on them further.

Prior to these initiatives, it was unimaginable for these communities to obtain organic certification for locally produced ecosystem goods, but through SGP and COMDEKS support they were able to adopt sustainable resource management practices, water conservation techniques, and agro-ecological methods free of chemical use. By forming farmer associations they further improved their market access and their products such as cassava, corn, vegetables and fruits are now organically certified by the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Supply (MAPA) through a participatory certification system.

Expanding on these achievements and the common vision fostered through the landscape approach, a network of partner organizations was established in 2015. It is managed by a group of organizations such as the SGP and

COMDEKS grantee Alternative Agriculture Center Vicente Nica (CAV), the Union of Rural Workers, the Technical Assistance and Rural Extension Enterprise of Minas Gerais (EMATER), and the Turmalina's City Hall, among others. Through regular meetings, the network aims to gain a better understanding of environmental issues in the region, as well as to develop guidelines to improve the situation. On 4 July 2017, the network organized a multi-stakeholder workshop for approximately 300 participants from 20 municipalities, discussing local environmental issues and exploring possible solutions. The network as well as other participating local governments, communities, and private sector and civil society organizations are determined to further drive sustainable rural development and biodiversity conservation through a collaborative approach.

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

Portfolio Updates:

Bhutan



Planting of Napier hedgerows

Photo: Bhutan

The ten supported projects in the Gamri Watershed in Bhutan have focused on sustainable land management, water source protection and capacity development to increase resilience and address water scarcity within the landscape. In 2016, the ex-post baseline assessment was carried out by the college of Natural Resources to assess the impacts achieved as a result of project implementation.

Overall, about 226 hectares of agriculture land have been brought under sound ecological production systems, benefiting over 895 community members in the Gamri Watershed. Moreover, about 465 ha have been brought under sustainable management practices, on 78 ha of which hedgerows have been planted and check dams were installed to prevent erosion on these steep slopes. 52 water sources have been protected, significantly contributing to the overall improvement of soil fertility and restoration of local ecosystems, and providing over 20,000 Gamri commu-

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nity members with access to clean drinking water. In addition, a total of 6,500 trees, 300 bamboos, 15,000 Napier grass clumps, 300 fruit trees, and 250 fodder trees were planted to rehabilitate degraded areas throughout the watershed. To reduce human-wildlife conflict, 8 km of solar fencing were installed to protect about 200 acres of farmland, reducing crop depredation by wild animals by about 80%, which increased production by 50% and substantially contributed to improved food security of local communities. Mustard and turmeric cultivation has been taken up by farmers and their sale enhanced household income and helped reduce cooking oil and turmeric powder imports from other countries. Seven farmers groups were established and about 10 tons of turmeric and 3 tons of mustard were harvested during the first year alone.

Overall, the COMDEKS landscape strategy placed great emphasis on involving different stakeholders and government agencies in the process, fostering strong commitment, knowledge exchange and collaboration towards sustainable landscape governance at all levels.

Contributed by Tshering Phuntsho, Bhutan National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP, and Tara Monger, Bhutan Programme Assistant, GEF SGP, UNDP

El Salvador



Local shellfish tasting

Photo: El Salvador

Since inception in 2014, nine landscape initiatives have been supported to tackle deforestation, overfishing, illegal hunting and increasing water pollution in the region. Each project has created a local youth team for M&E, which have enabled communities to collect project development data in real time. The ex-post baseline assessment was completed in 2017 and [three videos](#) were produced on the supported initiatives.

Through a combination of training in sustainable fishing practices, creation of management plans for local fisheries, establishment of extensive shellfish farming, and purchase of new fishing equipment, fisheries management in the area has greatly improved. As a result, fishery production has

risen, with the availability of mouthless crab, punche, jaiba, shells, mica, sambo, hilama, guavina, chimbera, catfish, snapper, snook, roncón, pancha, grouper, and shrimp increasing considerably. The 45 local fishermen families that are participating in these sustainable practices are now well aware of the benefits of this behavior change and sustainable practices on their livelihoods.

Over 320 hectares of mangrove restoration directly contributed to improving the ecological services provided by the marine coastal ecosystem on which the livelihoods of more than 460 local community members depend, as numerous species of fish, crustaceans and mollusk have been able to recover. Projects further supported the planting of native crops, including corn, pumpkin, squash and beans, as well as poultry and egg production to improve household incomes and food security. Other alternative livelihood activities promoted the recovery of ancestral knowledge for the manufacture of handicraft and fishing gear, as well as ecotourism activities. To increase civil society participation in the governance of local natural resources, nine CSOs were supported to become part of a local development committee in the municipality of San Luis La Herradura.

Overall, about 400 ha of land and water have been brought under sustainable management practices and 360 ha of local ecosystems have been restored, protecting twelve local animal species as well as 14 plant species. Yields of major crops have increased by about 20%, benefiting more than 500 community members.

Contributed by Mr. Juan Rene Guzman Arbaiza, El Salvador National Coordinator, GEF-SGP, UNDP

A video from Cameroon



Click on the image above to access a video from Cameroon

Contributed by Marie-Laure Mpeck Nyemeck, Cameroon National Coordinator, GEF SGP, UNDP

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