



REALIZING COMMUNITIES IN HARMONY WITH NATURE

Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative

COMDEKS India



Empowered lives.
Resilient nations.





Village Map = AAGAAS

Introduction

The Community Development and Knowledge Management for the Satoyama Initiative (COMDEKS) is funded by the Japan Biodiversity Fund, implemented by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and delivered by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme (SGP).

The COMDEKS project aims to promote and support Socio-Ecological Production Landscapes (SEPLs) to maintain their contribution to human well-being and the core objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity. The program focuses on delivering small-scale finance to local communities and NGOs in developing countries to fund community-based projects. Lessons from these projects will be distilled and disseminated for replication in other parts of the world.

COMDEKS is the flagship project of the International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative. The vision of the Satoyama Initiative is "Realizing Societies in Harmony with Nature".

Project Background

The COMDEKS Project in India focuses on communities residing within the Himalayan mountain system in India who earn their living through multiple livelihood options and choices. The project utilizes an **integrated landscape approach**. This approach emphasizes integration between forestry, land management, agriculture, and animal husbandry, through local kinship based institutions to access resources, information, knowledge and skills. Local communities are linked to a range of stakeholders and institutions for promoting local resource based enterprise, for example, linking producers to markets for better lives and livelihoods.

However, forces of the market as well as challenges such as animal menace, fragmentation of land holdings, and outward migration are all testing the traditional systems and bringing sustainable practices under threat.

The Centre for Environment Education (CEE), with assistance from Society for Strategy Technology and Delivery for Development (STADD), developed a Landscape Strategy involving communities within **Uttarakhand State - the focus area for COMDEKS implementation**.

The focus of community-based projects in the area is opening new avenues for local men and women in community responsible tourism, dairying, agriculture, value added from Non Timber Forest Products (NTFP), among others and each of such initiatives creates a connection to traditional knowledge and its surrounding wisdom with a strategic focus on local and niche markets. However, the belief and willingness of communities residing in such landscapes inspires hope to find a path towards sustainable landscape based living, and one that will be appreciated by the world for its relevance.

It is thus important to address the needs of such communities who also hold a larger responsibility of being the custodians of nature and forests for a nation keen to develop industrially. **COMDEKS** and the **Satoyama Initiative** can thus contribute to community well-being and generate lessons for upscaling and sharing in other parts of the world.



Map for State of Uttarakhand, India

Project Approach

COMDEKS believes in:

- Consolidating wisdom on securing diverse ecosystem services and values.
- Integrating traditional ecological knowledge with modern science to promote innovations and wise use of resources.
- Exploring new forms of co-management system while respecting traditional communal land management practices.

Key Perspectives of the Approach

This approach deals with the following five key perspectives:

- Resource use within the carrying capacity and resilience of the environment.
- Cyclic use of natural resources.
- Respect for and recognition of the value and importance of local traditions and cultures.
- Resource management by various participating and cooperating entities.
- Contributions to local socio-economies in the area.



Thematic Areas

The COMDEKS programme operates within the SGP Operational Guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures. Supported activities will focus on sustainable livelihood approaches and income enhancement to conserve cultural heritage and traditional practices. The UNDP-implemented GEF-SGP and COMDEKS thematic areas in India are:

- Biodiversity Conservation
- Climate Change
- Prevention of Land Degradation



Village Mapping Exercises
with Communities

Criterion for Financial Support

Following SGP practices, COMDEKS supports field based, participatory process approaches for better lives and livelihoods. COMDEKS encourages working with poor, remote, unreachable, marginalized, and tribal communities. Organizations and projects are given preference according to the extent that they focus on the issues and concerns of how societies can/should live in harmony with nature. The details are mentioned in Figure I

Figure I

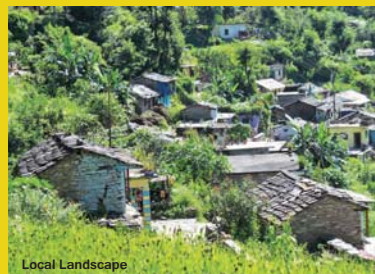
The three key points for moving with society in harmony with nature

- **New Business Models**
Various products with added value; link to markets
- **New Commons**
Single stakeholder framework to multi-stakeholder framework
- **Resilience**
Resilience both in the face of frequent disaster risks and towards gradual environment changes

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Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced **provision of ecosystem services** within the target landscapes through conservation activities and sustainable use of natural resources.
- Improved **agricultural productivity in the target landscape** by promoting sound and sustainable agricultural practices, resulting in increased food security and income generation.
- Alternative **livelihoods options** promoted within the landscape to enable access to markets and local financial institutions including banks.



Local Landscape



- **Institutional systems** strengthened at the landscape level by promoting sharing of knowledge and information on effective use of resources and landscape related issues, and a more participatory decision making in the target landscapes.

Figure II

New business model for promoting green economy

Conventional Systems	Socio-Ecological Production Systems
• Mono Cropping	• Multi Cropping
• Mass Production	• Small Volume Production
• Homogeneous Landscape	• Mosaic Landscape
• Lower Price	• Additional Value; Better Prices
	• Links to Markets
	• Diversity of Products

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Knowledge Management Plan

Research-based institutions will be involved in capacity building of local communities. Links will also be established with the **Land Development Board, Uttarakhand, Wildlife Institute of India, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), Bamboo Mission, State Government, and Government of India.**

COMDEKS will focus on involving all stakeholders to understand risks, build a culture of cooperation, acquire appropriate low cost, simple, and easy to adopt technologies, and have a vision for sustainable actions.

Projects will focus on building local, kinship based, women-led institutions, supporting skills creation at the local level, and enhancing business models more sustainably.

Figure III

Green Economy for societies in harmony with nature

- **Green Economy for mainstreaming sustainable development in the business sector**

- **New Business Model**

Improve livelihoods without degrading biodiversity and ecosystem services

Align with the objective of promoting societies in harmony with nature

Make the best use of natural resources by transitioning to multi-products and high value-added agriculture, forestry, dairy, etc.

Convergence with state supported initiatives

Effective documentation for consultation and use by future efforts

Strengthening local institutions and their access to resources

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