



# Cambodia COMDEKS Project in Stung Siem Reap Watershed Landscape

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# Project brief

**Project title:** Community Development and Knowledge Management for the *Satoyama* Initiative Project (COMDEKS)

**Implementing Partner:** United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/GEF SGP

**Project duration:** July 2012-Dec 2016


**Project goal:** Project has been designed to support local community activities to maintain and rebuild socio-ecological production landscapes and to collect and disseminate knowledge and experiences from successful on-the-ground actions for replication and upscaling in other parts of the world.

As part of COMDEKS, Cambodia Small Grants have provided 7 Small Grants funding to LNGOs/CBOs to support local community organizations with the overall long term objective to enhance socio-ecological production landscape resilience by developing sound biodiversity management and sustainable livelihood activities with local communities to maintain, rebuild, and revitalize landscapes.

COMDEKS grant making is expected to generate key lessons on community-based best practices to maintain and rebuild socio-ecological production landscapes toward the realization of “societies in harmony with nature”, as defined as the vision of the *Satoyama* Initiative.

# COMDEKS Cambodia Zones



 Steung Siem Reap watershed boundary

 Socio-Ecological Zone

- 1** Tonle Sap Flood Plain
- 2** Rice plain
- 3** Agro-archeological complex
- 4** Agro-Forest mosaic
- 5** Upland agriculture
- 6** Kulen National Park



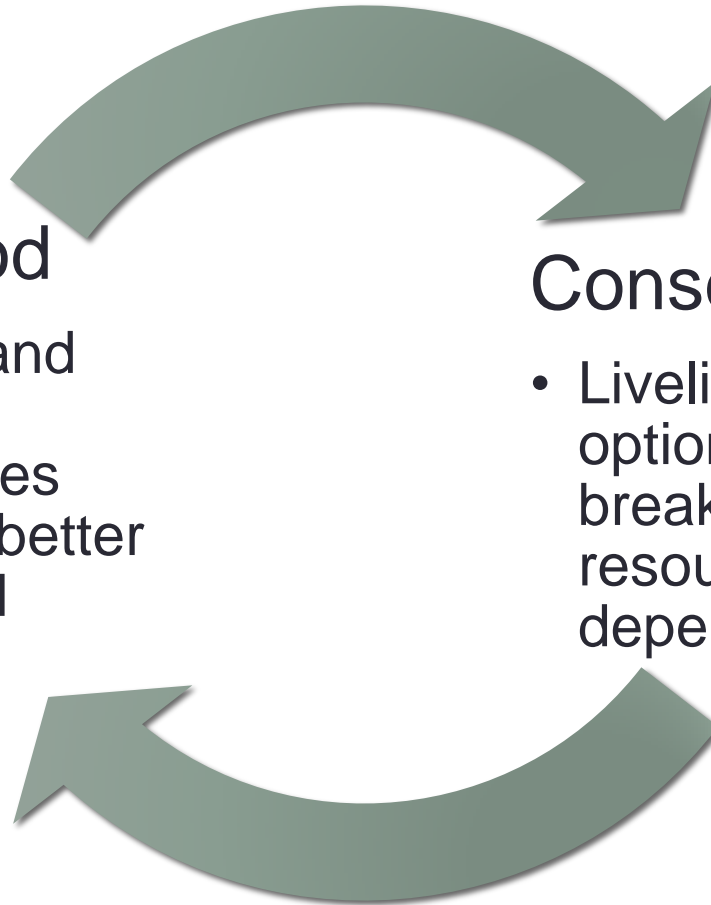
# Strategy Builds Synergies

## Livelihood

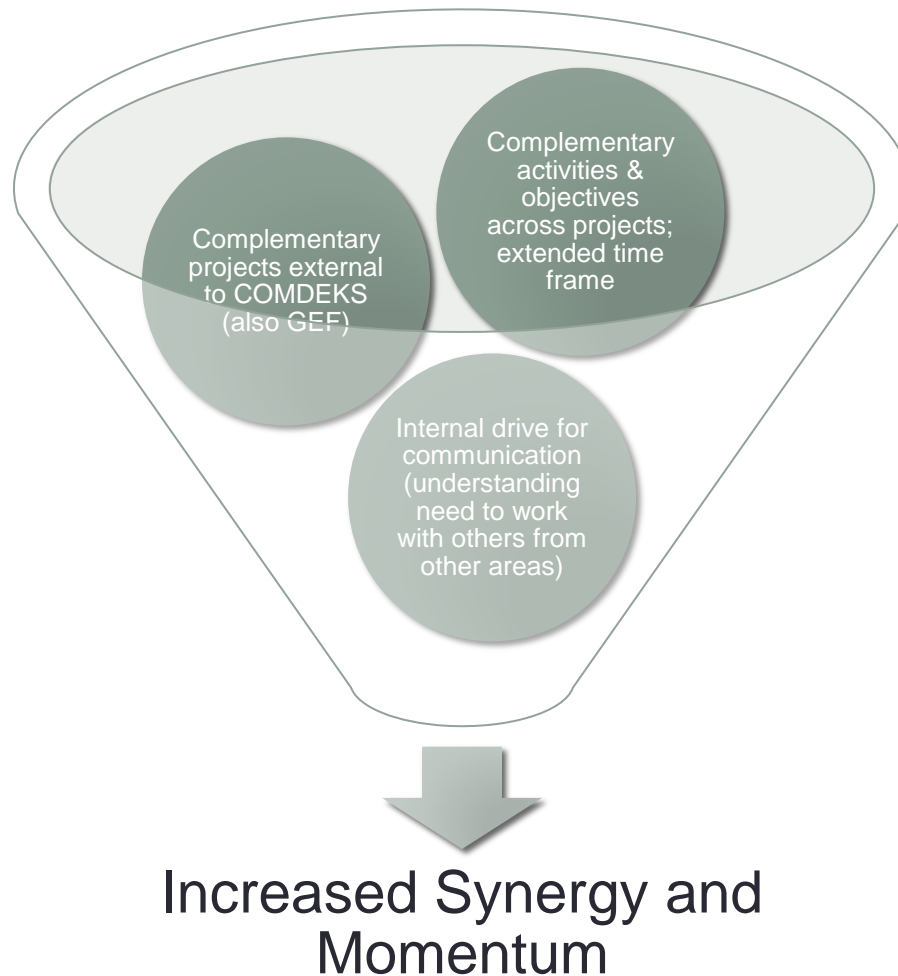
- Healthy and resilient landscapes promote better livelihood options

## Conservation

- Livelihood options help break natural resource dependency



# Strategy Builds Synergies



# COMDEKS Achievements

## Successes



Support local community activities that maintain and rebuild critical landscapes

Collect and disseminate knowledge and experiences for adaptation



Small-scale finance to local community organizations – biodiversity / ecosystem management

# COMDEKS Achievements

## Successes



Communities themselves want to partner up, work with, and share information with other communities, as they realize support is needed from all sides

Motivating communities to become involved in conservation activities through an understanding of long-term impacts where no mitigating efforts are made



Increasing communication and coordination between communities and government bodies to achieve shared objectives

Success has been seen in the project design of implementing sustainable and strategic activities and leveraging funds for additional activities

# Challenges

- A two year period is too short to set up sustainable projects, (capacity building and protected area management); time is needed to change community mind-sets
- Resources are needed for patrolling teams, including equipment and gas; patrolling time is a lost opportunity for income generation
- Some CFs had challenges will full understanding and compliance with rules and regulations
- Lack of understanding from other communities could hinder the process
- Lack of communication between communities, particularly for water resource management, hinders most efficient use of resources
- Higher market links for agricultural projects needed



# Lessons Learned

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## Primary Process Lessons (community consultation)

Start with community problems – build to solutions

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Ensure communities understand the direct benefit of conservation activities to livelihood options

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Leverage funds from livelihood activities to support conservation practices

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## Technical Lessons (project execution)

Maintain at least 50% focus on livelihood options

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Focus on high quality construction for long-term effects (roads, dams, canals)

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Time activities in work plan (needed expenditures) against reality of execution

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# Lessons Learned

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## Capacity Building Lessons

Theory and training on its own is not enough to build capacity, but visits and exchanges to places where activities are running successfully are important

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Time is needed for education and understanding

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## Governance Lessons

Committee members should work towards independently engaging government authorities rather than relying on project staff (which is not sustainable in the long term)

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Commune councils can help bridge communication and strategy action between different areas

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The role at the provincial level can clarify any areas of line ministry overlap, to ensure communities do not receive conflicting information

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# Lessons Learned

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## Additional Lessons Learned

Innovative ideas must be practical and feasible

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Perceptions of communities are often localized and based on area of resource use

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Context of perception is important in understanding priorities and needs

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Important to look at more than just the immediate village / commune → impacts are interlinked between areas, and problems and solutions span across multiple communes and zones

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# Conclusions

- Understanding of damage and the links between the upper, mid and lower watershed areas was strong; exercise was a good chance to reflect on changes seen over a lifetime
- To be successful, it is important to look at more than just the immediate village / commune; impacts are interlinked between areas, and problems and solutions span across multiple communes and zones
- Communities discussed not only biodiversity but the importance of livelihoods; they themselves recognized that without livelihood options, biodiversity conservation would not be sustainable, regardless of awareness of damage

For more detail information on Cambodia COMDEKS post assessment can be find in below video documentary link:

<http://comdeksproject.com/2015/09/16/new-video-from-comdeks-cambodia/>