



# SATOYAMA INITIATIVE

Advancing socio-ecological  
production landscapes for  
the benefit of biodiversity  
and human well-being

Protecting biodiversity entails not only preserving pristine environments, such as wilderness, but also conserving human-influenced natural environments, such as farmlands and secondary forest, that people have developed and maintained sustainably over a long time. These human-influenced natural environments are often inhabited by a variety of species adapted to and rely on these landscapes to survive, hence they play an important role in sustaining and enhancing biodiversity. But these landscapes—and the sustainable practices and knowledge they represent—are increasingly threatened in many parts of the world, due for example, to urbanization, industrialization, and rapid rural population increase or decrease. Measures are urgently needed to conserve these sustainable types of human-influenced natural environments through broader global recognition of their value.

## Initiation of the *Satoyama Initiative*

To tackle this critical issue, the Ministry of the Environment of Japan and the United Nations University Institute of Advanced Studies (UNU-IAS) jointly initiated the *Satoyama Initiative*. This international effort promotes activities consistent with existing fundamental principles including the Ecosystem Approach<sup>1</sup>. Our core vision is to realize societies in harmony with nature, that is, built on positive human-nature relationships.

With the launch of the International Partnership for the *Satoyama Initiative* at the Tenth Meeting of the Conference of the Parties (COP10) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in October 2010, we intend to officially establish an international platform to accelerate our efforts. The *Satoyama Initiative* is

<sup>1</sup> The Ecosystem Approach is a way to manage entire ecosystems, keeping in mind that all their components (including ourselves) are interconnected. Its main objective is conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity in an equitable way. Endorsed at COP5.

expected to contribute significantly to achieving the three objectives of the Convention.

## Vision: Realizing Societies in Harmony with Nature

The vision of the *Satoyama Initiative* is to realize societies in harmony with nature, comprising human communities where the maintenance and development of socio-economic activities (including agriculture and forestry) align with natural processes. By managing and using biological resources sustainably and thus properly maintaining biodiversity, humans will enjoy a stable supply of various natural benefits well into the future. Through the *Satoyama Initiative*, we will review, with social and scientific points of view, how relationships between humans and nature should function in what are now referred to as **socio-ecological production landscapes**<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> This term is used to describe the targeted areas of the *Satoyama Initiative* based on the discussion of Japan *Satoyama Satoumi* Assessment.

Kabaya, Western Province, Rwanda: Rwandan farmers practise an agroforestry system which involves the combination of food, fodder, green manure and tree crops. Maize is a major staple/cash crop, while Napier grass and *Alnus* species help sustain the multiple needs of subsistence farmers by not only providing fodder and green manure but also stabilizing soils on terraces.





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Olive, Western Province, Solomon Islands: Shifting cultivation results in a mosaic of cultivated and fallow forest areas.

**A three-fold approach:** Our three-fold approach is intended to maintain and rebuild landscapes in which land and natural resources are used and managed in a more sustainable manner:

- Consolidating wisdom on securing diverse ecosystem services and values
- Integrating traditional ecological knowledge and modern science to promote innovations
- Exploring new forms of co-management systems or evolving frameworks of “commons”<sup>3</sup> while respecting traditional communal land tenure

Understanding the diverse ecosystem services and values that give rise to human well-being is an indispensable aspect of this approach, as is consolidation of wisdom on securing these services. It is also critical to discuss how to create synergy between traditional knowledge and modern science to promote innovations, because without sufficient scientific corroboration, a wide range of traditional knowledge is not being used optimally. Also vital to the process is exploring new forms of co-management systems or evolving frameworks of “commons”, comprising not only landowners and local residents, but also various interested parties who also benefit from relevant

<sup>3</sup> “Commons” referred to here excludes international/global commons.

ecosystem services, while respecting traditional communal land tenure where necessary. This new social mechanism would support and promote the maintenance and rebuilding of socio-ecological production landscapes.

**Perspectives on activities in practice:** In following the above approach, the maintenance and rebuilding of socio-ecological production landscapes in various localities—that is, putting sustainable use and management of natural resources into practice—should entail five ecological and socio-economic perspectives:

- Resource use within the carrying capacity and resilience of the environment
- Cyclic use of natural resources
- Recognition of the value and importance of local traditions and cultures
- Multi-stakeholder participation and collaboration in sustainable and multi-functional management of natural resources and ecosystem services
- Contributions to sustainable socio-economies including poverty reduction, food security, sustainable livelihood and local community empowerment



Sacred Valley, Cusco Region, Peru: The Quechua people cultivate varieties of native crops in small patches for subsistence purposes, and the harmonious relationship maintained between humans and nature is termed the *ayllu* landscape.



## Areas Targeted

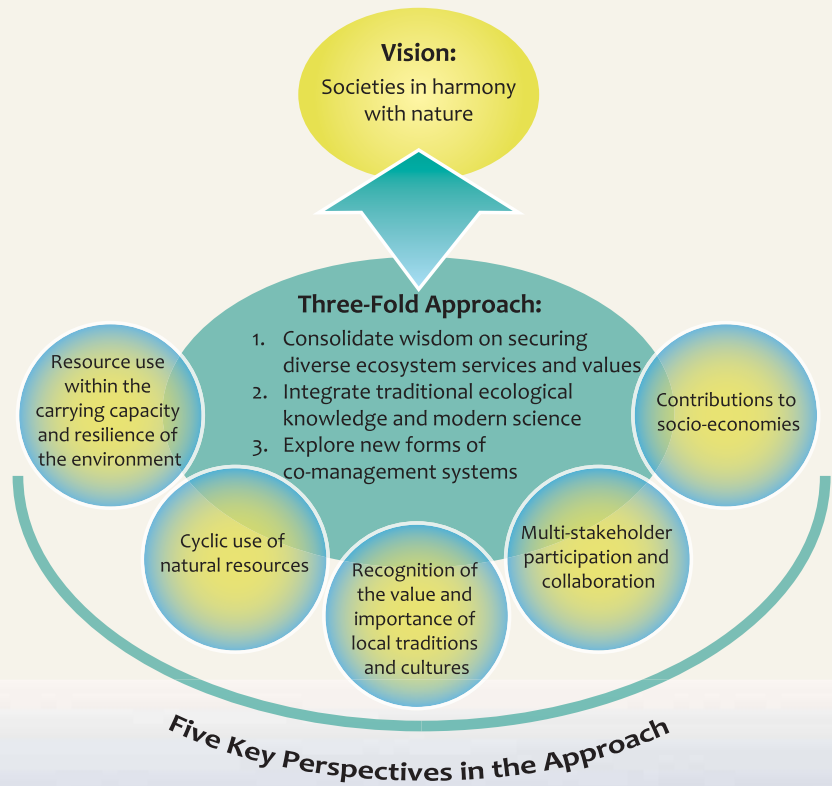
The Initiative will target such areas as villages, farmland, and adjacent woods and grasslands that have been formed and maintained through long-term human influence. These unique places at the interface of nature and human settlement have many names— *muyong* in the Philippines, *kebun* in Indonesia and Malaysia, *mauel* in Korea, *dehesa* in Spain, and *terroir* in France. Such landscapes vary widely due to their unique adaptations to local climatic, geographic, cultural, and socio-economic conditions; however, they are equally valuable in terms of sustainability. The Initiative should preferably be named after its target areas. However, since there is no universal term to indicate such areas, we use “Satoyama”. “Satoyama” denotes mountains, woodlands, and grasslands (*yama*) surrounding villages (*sato*) in Japan.

## Expected Impacts of the Initiative

By rebuilding harmonious relationships between humans and nature, we expect the Satoyama Initiative to contribute to slowing the escalating loss of biodiversity worldwide, with the dual impacts of retaining and enhancing the biodiversity found in human-influenced natural environments and promoting sustainable use of natural resources.

In the process, the Initiative may also help improve human well-being, for example, enhancing stable food production and income generation by applying pluralistic land uses and betterment of living conditions by promoting environmentally friendly biomass resources.

## Conceptual Structure of the Satoyama Initiative



Furthermore, the Initiative can also allow for the enjoyment of the benefits of sustainable use of genetic resources through appraisal of traditional knowledge and cultures.



Hoshino Village, Fukuoka Prefecture, Japan: A harmonious relationship with nature is nurtured in satoyama by sustainably managing landscape consisting of rice fields, vegetable plots, tea plantation, conifer plantations, bamboo and hardwood forests, which enriches biodiversity by providing diverse habitats.

Allen Parish, Louisiana State, United States: The traditional practice of rotating pastureland with rice fields maintains soil fertility and helps control mosquito-borne diseases.

## The International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative

The International Partnership for the Satoyama Initiative (IPSI) aims to carry out the activities identified by the Satoyama Initiative described in the Paris Declaration as the inside of this brochure. The Partnership is open to all organizations committed to promote and support socio-ecological production landscapes for the benefit of biodiversity and human well-being, such as national or local governmental organizations, non-governmental or civil society organizations, indigenous or local community organizations, academic, educational and/or research institutes, industry or private sector organizations, United Nations or other international organizations, and others to foster synergies in the implementation of their respective activities.

Members of the IPSI will collaborate to promote the following highly useful activities:

- Collect, analyze, and distill lessons from case studies to be disseminated via a searchable online database
- Encourage broad and effective research, including how to integrate results in policy and decision making
- Work with donor organizations on directing greater resources to and effective implementation of related projects
- Enhance the capabilities of stakeholders involved in maintaining or rebuilding socio-ecological production landscapes
- Encourage and expand networks among interested parties to promote information sharing and understanding of Satoyama Initiative goals and activities.

For more information on the IPSI including how to apply for the membership, please visit:  
<http://satoyama-initiative.org/>

Spessart, Bayern State, Germany: A common rural German landscape that blends beech and oak forests managed for timber and wildlife habitat, meadows for grazing, and vegetable plots.

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For more information, please contact:

Global Biodiversity Strategy Office  
 Ministry of the Environment of Japan  
 Tel : +81-3-3581-3351

UNU-IAS  
 E-mail: [isi@ias.unu.edu](mailto:isi@ias.unu.edu)