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STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON THE KHMER COAST



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for the
Ministry of Tourism, Royal Government of Cambodia,
and
the provinces of Koh Kong, Sihanoukville, Kampot and Kep





Disclaimer To prepare these guidelines, nine students and three staff from the University of the Sunshine Coast visited the four provinces of the Khmer coast in September 2012. Interviews were held with national and provincial government officials with responsibility for environmental protection, fisheries management, planning and public health. Data were gathered on the status of the Khmer coast, existing tourism, fisheries, infrastructure and water quality management approaches. The guidelines are based on the information made available to the authors and their observations, and may include misinterpretation of fact and intent.

These Strategic Guidelines are not a plan for tourism in the Khmer coast: planning is a matter for the national and provincial governments of Cambodia, in this case, through the Ministry of Tourism.

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Reviewer Dr Christine Jacobson

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STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON THE KHMER COAST



Foreword

The provinces of Preah Sihanouk, Kep, Kampot and Koh Kong comprise Cambodia's coastal zone and offer tourists scenic beauty, beaches, marine and terrestrial biodiversity, culture and historic heritage. This has been recognised by the Khmer coast being included in the Club of the World's Most Beautiful Bays. These features are, or can be, tourism assets that will increasingly contribute to Cambodia's economy. Koh Kong's Cardamom Mountains and adjacent mangrove forests are part of the second-largest virgin rainforest in Southeast Asia; Kampot's cultural and cuisine heritage; Kep's beachside getaway with local appeal; and the thriving hub of Sihanoukville offer tourists a diverse, uniquely local experience unlike that of our Southeast Asian neighbours.

Tourism is now one of the world's fastest growing economic sectors and one of Cambodia's four main economic pillars. While increasing tourism drives much needed development and increased gross domestic product, it also places pressure on existing infrastructure and ecosystem services. Concentrated pressure resulting from rapidly expanding tourism may result in localised environmental consequences that have a cumulative effect.

There are indications that land use practices and development are threatening the natural integrity and values of coastal areas and their ability to continue to deliver ecosystem services for the community. The condition of the physical environment with development of environmentally sensitive coastal areas may also affect the socio-economic status of the local people, including their health, prosperity and well-being. Factors such as increased production of solid and liquid wastes from tourism, habitat fragmentation caused by unregulated development and the potential loss of traditional social and cultural identity need to be managed sustainably.

Historically, development of tourism in Cambodian coastal areas has been driven primarily by financial interests. Integration of tourism development planning that addresses financial, environmental and social factors will ensure a sustainable future for tourism and the Cambodian people. A cooperative approach between the four provinces is needed based on the principles of good governance, inter and intra-generational equity, protecting the distinctiveness of each of the four coastal regions and applying the precautionary principle to ensure long-term sustainability and adaptive capacity. Development of the Cambodian coast requires planning for sustainable conservation, restoration and development, including protection of the region's historical and cultural values. Nature and cultural-based tourism are an integral part of a sustainable future for the Cambodian coast and development that meets these objectives is the goal of the Royal Government of Cambodia.

These Strategic Guidelines provide clear direction for tourism planning, development and management in the coastal zone. They incorporate the vision and policies of the Royal Government of Cambodia and can form the basis for action by my Ministry, the Provincial Governments of Sihanoukville, Kep, Kampot and Koh Kong, as well as Ministries responsible for resource management and communities of the Khmer coast.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr. THONG Khon
Minister of Tourism

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Rapid tourism growth in Cambodia is driving the need for planning and development in the coastal areas that is sustainable. Strategic planning is needed to protect environmental values while enhancing economic growth. Coordination between the four coastal provinces of Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong can ensure a sustainable tourism future that offers a unique experience for local, national and international tourists for years to come.

The Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012 – 2020 (TDSP 2012-2020) (RGoC 2012) provides a framework for planning and indicates the Royal Government of Cambodia's desire for sustainable tourism development and for it to be an important sector for raising the country's socio-economic status. The strategic directions in this report seek to align with the TDSP 2012 – 2020 and to assist policy makers, stakeholders and governing bodies in making proactive decisions that facilitate sustainable tourism in the Khmer coast. The strategic directions acknowledge Cambodia's legislation, policies and procedural framework and aim to foster innovative thinking and effective governance of tourism for a sustainable sector of the economy.

The goals for tourism on the Khmer coast are to:

- maximise economic benefit, while minimising negative social and environmental implications;
- raise awareness and community commitment to protecting and presenting tourism assets;
- restore the integrity of degraded natural areas so that the ecosystem services they provide can contribute to improving the health and well-being of the Cambodian people;
- enrich local cultures, preserve customs and celebrate natural, cultural and historic heritage;
- act as a rationale for improving public infrastructure that will support local livelihoods and improve community well-being;
- increase cross-cultural understanding through social interactions;
- diversify the economic base of local communities; and
- be a model of sustainable tourism in developing countries.

An overview of existing policy that has guided the preparation of these Strategic Guidelines is given with a preliminary inventory of tourism assets, their status and implications for tourism. These are not comprehensive and need to be updated; but they are considered sufficient to form the basis for the Strategic Guidelines.

The principal guidelines

Strategic action 1: Update legislation and prepare statutory plans for sustainable and integrated coastal zone management

Some Cambodian legislation and regulations relevant to managing the orderly development of the coastal zone are overdue for review or do not provide sufficient guidance for development and management. The needed action is to provide a clear vision and direction for development and management of resources through a hierarchy of statutory strategic plans. This will require the coordinated action of multiple Ministries.

Strategic action 2: Develop a Khmer coast tourism strategy

These Strategic Guidelines lack the force of law and need to be converted to a statutory plan/strategy to define national and provincial policy for tourism development and management. These need to be outcome-focused using hub and spoke development planning to provide direction for sustainable coastal development for the four coastal provinces and diversify products for targeted tourism marketing.

The objectives of the strategy/plan, once developed, are to:

- provide direction for sustainable management of coastal development in response to the rapid expansion of the tourism sector, and mitigation of potential impacts to the coastal environment from development and sea level rise;
- stipulate minimum requirements and appropriate criteria with planning parameters for development and all building approvals, including development permits granted to foreign investors;
- recognise the natural, cultural and heritage assets for each province and secure the protection of all culturally significant sites and remnant vegetation of the province;
- identify and prioritise the restoration of degraded landscapes and key heritage buildings of cultural and/or historical significance and assets through identification of environmental threats and natural ecosystem processes;
- prioritise the maintenance and upgrade of all tourist sites;

- develop Sihanoukville as the major service hub for tourism through marketing, providing access to other coastal areas and development of a range of accommodation styles;
- define complementary and themed tourism based services and products in the surrounding rural areas branching from the cities of Sihanoukville to Kep, Kampot and Koh Kong;
- ensure developments on the outer islands provide a range of accommodations and activities for tourists that reflect, enhance and protect the natural and cultural values of the islands;
- identify the unique attributes of each province in terms of the natural and built environments, tourism trends and activities, while engaging the communities to develop further tourism services and products in keeping with sustainable development principles.

Strategic action 3: Protect natural and cultural heritage

Action required includes the identification, documentation and prioritisation of natural, cultural and heritage tourism assets, clarifying their value to different stakeholders, prioritising the restoration of degraded assets for sustainable tourism and maintaining community access to sites. This requires inventory of resources and probably the expansion of Cambodia's protected area network.

Strategic action 4: Upgrade public infrastructure

The development of sustainable tourism is dependent upon the provision of public infrastructure and support services underpinning the capacity for growth in the tourism sector. The provision of clean beaches, clean water, and healthy environment, adequate accommodation suited to the nature of the environment and energy efficient systems enables the country's ability to grow with increasing demand. Key infrastructure needs include:

- developing sufficient capacity for solid waste collection and recycling stations, sewage treatment facilities (at least secondary treatment sewerage systems in the provincial capitals);
- establishing a reliable potable water supply to the central towns, particularly in tourism areas including the outer islands;
- providing safe and reliable transport services and networks to tourist sites and recreation areas within and around the central towns in each province; and
- providing support for the development of tourism based eating and relaxing areas between the central towns and along designated tourist routes to tourism attractions.

Strategic action 5: Improve tourism service delivery and capacity to respond to tourism growth

Much of the Khmer coast is poorly prepared for growth in tourism demand. Best practice guidelines are needed for existing businesses and short-term training towards developing the common vision identified in existing policy of the Ministry of Tourism. While the private sector can be expected to respond to demand for accommodation, community action is needed to develop tourism products. Immediate training is needed to identify to communities how they might engage in delivering tourism products. Ultimately, the provision of quality products and services depends on the availability of a body of people trained in tourism and hospitality to a professional level. This calls for the development of a tertiary level training that includes the management of resources used by tourism.

Strategic action 6: Increase community-based products and services

These Strategic Guidelines call for giving support to community based tourism initiatives based on best practice standards. Apart from establishing tourist attractions based on the Khmer coast's natural and cultural assets, this will increase local revenue and ensure that local communities benefit from increased tourism activities while developing new markets, promoting longer visitor stays and increasing local revenue potential by charging appropriate fees for services and products. Key actions identified are:

- improving the capacity of existing attractions to meet the impacts of increased tourist visitation;
- expanding and diversifying the available range of natural, cultural and heritage products; and
- assisting communities to engage in tourism service provision by reducing financial and knowledge barriers to active involvement.

Strategic action 7: Targeted marketing and tourism promotion

These Strategic Guidelines call for marketing and promotional tools that target specific audiences appropriate for the themes identified in Strategic Action 2 for each coastal province. However, active marketing needs to await development of a base of product to be able to respond to increased tourism demand. This means that marketing for most provinces will be towards creating complementary tourism identities for each province.

The marketing function of tourist information centres needs to be enhanced through improved displays of provincial visit opportunities, with operating costs met by providing booking services on a commission basis.

Strategic action 8: Establish transparent systems for investments, income and disbursements

Implementing these Strategic Guidelines will not be without cost. Multiple investments by government, the private sector and communities are needed. The Strategic Guidelines identify the need for developing a targeted portfolio of investment requirements that can be presented to government, international aid agencies, the private sector and communities. However, on-going management requires recouping costs on a user-pays or fee for service basis. Appropriate fees include site entrance charges, tour operator fees, site-vendor fees, bed and development taxes because operator business largely depend on assets provided by government. In return, government must be transparent in how this income is disbursed. The proposed disbursement principle is to return income generated by improving services, marketing and assisting with host community development.

This expenditure needs to be publicly reported annually, with an assessment of the tourism sector's performance to inform all stakeholders of progress towards a sustainable tourism sector on the Khmer coast.

Strategic action at the Provincial level

At the Provincial level, strategic actions largely relate to developing tourism products that position the Khmer coast as a destination that offers a variety of experiences.

- Preah Sihanouk can be developed to offer an active and relaxing suite of experiences ("Khmer coast Relax") based on its active city, eating, drinking and relaxing opportunities related to its annual Sea Festival, beautiful beaches, and SCUBA diving at off-shore islands.
- Kampot Province lends itself to historic heritage and its agricultural livelihoods themes ("Khmer coast Heritage") through offering tourism activities and accommodation to immerse tourists in the heritage and history of the province, while developing agri-tourism businesses (e.g. Kampot pepper).
- Kep Province is envisaged as an up-market residential tourism destination that builds on existing reputation for fine seafood ("Khmer coast Cuisine") celebrated with food festivals.
- Koh Kong Province can become the eco-tourism centre for Cambodia ("Khmer coast Nature") attracting adventurous travellers seeking tropical rainforest, beautiful beaches and coral reefs and those wishing to get off the beaten track.

Proposed actions are not necessarily province-specific, although they do identify the needed emphasis for each province.



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Acronyms, abbreviations and place names

Repeated acronyms

| | |
|----------------|--|
| ASEAN | Association of South East Asian Nations |
| CBET | Community-based Ecotourism |
| CITES | Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species |
| EIA | Environmental impact assessment |
| ESD | Ecologically Sustainable Development |
| GDP | Gross Domestic Product |
| GIS | Geographical Information System |
| ha | hectares |
| HAT | Highest astronomical tide |
| IUCN | International Union for Conservation of Nature |
| KCSP | Khmer coast Strategic Plan |
| KCTS | Khmer coast Tourism Strategy |
| MAFF | Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries |
| MCFA | Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts |
| MOE | Ministry of Environment |
| MOP | Ministry of Planning |
| MOT | Ministry of Tourism |
| NFWF-STF | National Fish and Wildlife Foundation - Save the Tiger Fund |
| NGO | Non-government organisation |
| PPP | Public-Private Partnership |
| RGoC | Royal Government of Cambodia |
| SIA | Social (and cultural) impact assessment |
| SMART | Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound |
| Smithsonian | Smithsonian National Zoological Park Conservation & Research Center |
| TDSP 2012-2020 | Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012 - 2020 |
| UNEP | United Nations Environment Programme |
| UNESCO | United Nations Education Scientific and Culture Organisation |
| WCS | Wildlife Conservation Society |
| WWF | World Wildlife Fund |

Abbreviations and place names

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Sihanoukville | Kampong Som |
| Sihanoukville Province | Preah Sihanouk |
| Strategic Guidelines | Strategic guidelines for sustainable tourism on the Khmer coast |



Definitions

Ecologically Sustainable Development is using, conserving and enhancing community resources so that ecological processes, on which life depends, are maintained, and the total quality of life, now and in the future, is increased.

Environmental offset is an action taken to counter-balance unavoidable, negative environmental impacts that result from an activity or a development. An offset may be located outside of the geographic site of the impact. An offset should only be applicable when an impact cannot be avoided or minimised and all other regulatory standards have been met.

Heritage is something received by an individual or community from the past, that affects them now, is significant to them, has value to them, and can be passed on. Heritage is what is inherited from past generations, maintained in the present and the bequeathed to future generations. Heritage includes tangible culture (e.g., buildings, monuments, landscapes, books, works of art, and artefacts), intangible culture (e.g., folklore, traditions, lifestyles and livelihoods, language, and knowledge), and natural heritage (e.g., culturally significant landscapes, and biodiversity).

The **Precautionary principle** is that lack of full scientific certainty should not be used as a reason for postponing a measure to prevent degradation of the environment where there are threats of serious or irreversible environmental damage.

Tourism is travel for recreational, leisure, or business purposes. Within the concept of tourism, a number of niche markets and economic activities to serve these markets have emerged.

Adventure tourism is tourism activity, usually in a natural setting, involving physical exertion, endurance and degree of risk-taking.

Community Based Tourism (CBT) is tourism activity, locally owned and operated, that contributes to the well-being of communities through supporting sustainable livelihoods and protecting valued socio-cultural traditions and resources.

Cultural tourism is tourism activity that responds to tourist interest in experiencing cultural, social and heritage factors unique to a community.

Ecotourism is tourism activity in culturally rich and natural settings that contributes to improving the well-being of the host community and conserving the environment. Ecotourism is a form of sustainable tourism that is sensitive and responsive to environmental characteristics and fosters environmental and cultural understanding and appreciation.

Mass tourism is a larger scale form of tourism often associated with 'sea, sand, sun' resorts and characteristics such as transnational ownership.

Nature-based tourism is tourism activity that depends on the natural qualities and condition of the area in which the activity takes place.

Pro-poor tourism is tourism that results in increased net economic benefit to the poorer members of the visited area.

Responsible tourism maximizes the benefits to local communities, while minimizing negative social or environmental impacts. Responsible tourism helps local people and communities conserve vulnerable cultures and habitats or species.

Sustainable tourism meets the needs of present tourist and host regions while protecting and enhancing opportunities for tourism into the future.





STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON THE KHMER COAST

PART A: PLANNING CONTEXT

This section introduces the study area, the Cambodian Government's policy guidelines for planning, international tourism trends, and the aims and objectives of the study. It makes the case for strategic planning and presents the planning principles that should guide tourism development within the Khmer coast provinces.

PART A: PLANNING CONTEXT

A1.0 The mandate for these Strategic Guidelines

These strategic guidelines for sustainable tourism on the Khmer coast (Strategic Guidelines) have been prepared as part of on-going cooperation between the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism, based on a Memorandum of Understanding initiated in 2010. Following an Australian Aid, Australian Leadership Award Fellowship program in 2011, the Cambodian coastal provincial governors and Ministry of Tourism staff, through the Minister for Tourism, invited the USC to assist in developing a tourism strategy for the Cambodian coast. These Strategic Guidelines provide interim direction for sustainable tourism on the Khmer coast in advance of integrated coastal zone planning by the Royal Government of Cambodia and development of a Khmer coast Tourism Strategy (see Markovic et al. 2009).

A1.1 Statutory requirements and directions for tourism planning

A1.1.1 Law on Tourism 2009

The Cambodian Law on Tourism (MOT 2009) provides the Ministry of Tourism with powers to address tourism policy and planning at national and regional levels, as well as tourism promotion, the quality of tourism service provision, standards of tourism, tourism licensing, tourism business activities, conduct of tourism stakeholders, management and monitoring of tourism information, and international cooperation in the tourism sector (see also King et al. 2009).

A1.1.2 Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012-2020

The Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012-2020 (TDSP 2012-2020) (RGoC 2012), adopted in the Plenary Meeting of the Office of the Council Minister, July 2012, provides a framework to guide tourism development in Cambodia. The TDSP 2012-2020 indicates the commitment of the Royal Government of Cambodia to sustainable tourism development and acknowledges tourism's potential to raise the socio-economic status of the country. The TDSP 2012-2020 projects that Cambodia will receive seven million international tourists and eight to ten million domestic tourists, bringing annual revenue estimated at US \$5,000 million and creating 800,000 jobs in the tourism sector.

The TDSP 2012-2020 specifies five fundamental principles for tourism development:

- tourism business will be free to operate in a competitive open market economy;
- clear policies will actively guide tourism development;
- the Royal Government will cooperate with private sector development partners;
- opportunities will be provided for local people to engage in tourism development, especially community-based products, which ensure asset protection, benefit sharing, job creation, reduction of migration and poverty alleviation; and
- laws will be enforced effectively and consistently to protect legitimate tourism activity and ensure quality, responsible and sustainable tourism development.

A1.1.3 National Tourism Policy

The *National Tourism Policy* (MOT 2010b) expands on the *Law on Tourism* identifying a focus on developing a diversity of tourism destinations, and products and services that deliver experiences attractive to different tourist markets. However, emphasis is to be given to products and services that enable Cambodians, as individuals and communities, to participate in tourism businesses and gain benefit directly from tourism.

A1.2 Other strategic planning initiatives

A1.2.1 National Strategic Development Plan Update 2009-2013

The Royal Government of Cambodia (2010) continues to emphasise the role of tourism (and eco-tourism) in the economy and identifies, as a high priority, improvement of tourism infrastructure and the development of more tourism destinations and attractive tour packages. It also recognises the importance of preserving and promoting the rich Khmer cultural heritage and traditions. However, it acknowledges that:

- the quality of some resorts, facilities and tourism services do not meet required standards;
- tourism development is concentrated in urban areas, which has prevented the poor in remote areas from benefiting from tourism development;
- physical infrastructure necessary for the tourism sector (e.g. roads, electricity, clean water supply, liquid and solid waste management) is still insufficient;
- incomes generated by tourism have not contributed significantly to the promotion of domestic production and consumption of locally-produced commodities;

- implementation of approved tourism investment projects by some private companies has not progressed according to schedule; and
- the quality of human resources, of both public and private sectors, engaged in tourism sector is still low.

A1.2.2 National ecotourism policy and strategic plan

The National Ecotourism Policy and Strategic Plan (SNV 2009) provides guidance for ecotourism development under the broad categories of institutional framework, conservation of ecotourism resources, soft and hard infrastructure, product development and quality assurance, and business viability and investments. It identifies a 'hub and spoke' approach to ecotourism development around the major tourist destinations of Siem Reap, the north-east provinces, Phnom Penh, and Preah Sihanouk.

A1.2.3 Provincial tourism plans

Preah Sihanouk has prepared a provincial tourism plan to provide directions for tourism development in the province. This provides a model for other provinces that can be integrated with these Strategic Guidelines to provide more comprehensive guidelines for sustainable tourism development.

A1.2.4 ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015

The ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2011-2015 (ASEAN 2011) identifies six overarching principles for guiding tourism development in member countries: integrated and structured tourism development, sustainable and responsible development, wide-ranging stakeholder collaboration, quality tourism products, and service excellence and distinctive and interactive experiences.

A1.2.5 ASEAN tourism standards

Standards are being prepared for a number of issues and niche markets (e.g. community-based tourism, ecotourism) that are relevant to ASEAN. These provide detailed guidelines for the development of sustainable tourism products and provide a basis for development as mandatory requirements and criteria for accreditation and certification. A unified approach to standards of performance across ASEAN is supported and should be assumed to be embraced by these Strategic Guidelines.

A1.2.6 Implications for tourism planning and tourism

All strategic plans and indeed law and policy emphasise the requirement for tourism in Cambodia to be sustainable. They emphasise the importance of building on, protecting and presenting the nation's rich natural and cultural heritage and using tourism to generate wealth and well-being for local poor communities. These policies and plans underpin the preparation of these strategic guidelines.

A2.0 The need for effective tourism governance for the Khmer coast

A2.1 Overcoming historical constraints

Cambodia's economic vulnerability within South East Asia is influenced by its recent history of conflict, global impacts of climate change and the impact of fluctuating world economies. Cambodia's capacity to repair and build is currently heavily reliant on foreign aid and NGOs to assist in the rebuilding process. Cambodia has also historically experienced threats from its more wealthy neighbours (Thailand and Vietnam) for control of land and cultural sites. The effects of the Khmer Rouge regime and years of war with neighbouring countries have affected the social fabric of the country, evidenced by minimal educational standards, minimal training and employment opportunities, inadequate infrastructure, community health issues and a lack of social support services.

A2.1.1 Tourism investment and economic leakage

Large (international) tourism investments have the advantage of providing employment and stimulating economic activity but may only temporarily reduce dependence on primary commodities as a source of income for local communities. If income only goes to foreign investors and not circulated locally, then benefits to the community are greatly reduced (Ennew 2003). Buying local products from local producers keeps money circulating close to where it is spent and creates a ripple effect increasing the local multiplier effect that benefits local communities as the value of money is maximised.

A2.1.2 Implications for tourism

Tourism can provide a powerful rationale for infrastructure development, complement and value-add to other economic initiatives and provide the necessary source of revenue to fund commercial activities that improve community well-being. However, the balance between foreign and local investment requires careful consideration to ensure net benefit to Cambodia and its communities in the short and long term.

Despite large increases in foreign tourists and tourism-generated revenue accounting for 10-12% of GDP, there is a high leakage of tourist revenue from Cambodia. In the coastal provinces, this is an issue due to the high level of

foreign investment; for example, the long-term leasing of islands to foreign investors. Foreign investment is necessary to upgrade and expand infrastructure and facilities to accommodate tourism growth. However, tourism leakage reduces the net flow of foreign currencies and can offset the positive economic impacts of tourism.

A2.2 Governance to achieve the legislated and policy vision

Development of the Khmer coast to meet the projected growth of tourism requires co-ordinated planning of appropriate infrastructure, environmental protection measures, and protection and restoration of the coast's natural, historical and cultural values. This needs to occur within an economic environment that is conducive to investment, for international and local entrepreneurs and communities alike. There is significant risk in tourism investments and investment will not occur if the process of governance is unstable or unclear. Guidelines that are transparent and that are implemented consistently and equitably reduce one aspect of investment risk. They can clarify for investors the tourism vision and provide guidance in the types of development that will gain government (and community) support.

A2.2.1 The current direction of coastal tourism development

A lack of enforceable planning regulation threatens the aesthetic, biodiversity and heritage values (tourism assets) of the Khmer coast. The capacity of the coastal environment to continue to deliver the ecosystem services that support community livelihoods, and which visitors come to experience, is being compromised by development that is inconsistent with the vision for tourism. The process of incremental development has cumulative effects that can lead to unsustainable development, resulting in negative impacts on the landscape, biodiversity, eco-system services and communities (Markovic et al. 2009).

Historically, tourism-based development in some areas of the Khmer coast has been based on financial criteria with little consideration given to environmental and social factors. Natural assets that are already promised or sold to overseas developers have the potential to result in the irreversible loss of natural and cultural values. Previous and current land use practices and development threaten the natural integrity and values of the coast have led to pollution, poor water quality, unsustainable exploitation of resources and the forced relocation of communities. The need for stringent and cohesive planning controls is urgent for all coastal provinces.

A2.2.2 Constraints to effective governance

Planning constraints and threats from tourism development of the Khmer coast have been identified by the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGoC 2012; Royal Government of Cambodia 2010) as:

- lack of establishment of the National Tourism Board to support sustainable tourism and guide and facilitate co-ordinated action by stakeholders;
- unmatched governance mechanisms at the national and provincial levels; and
- lack of government capacity to plan, manage and support tourism development due to the inability to establish the National Tourism Institute as provided for in the *Law on Tourism*.

Other political constraints include an imbalance in the level of functional responsibilities delegated to government ministries and provincial departments. This is restricting the ability of some departments to perform core services effectively. For example, the Ministry and Departments of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction have large portfolios with limited resources. The separation of Land Management from Urban Planning and Construction might allow sufficient resources to effectively authorise Land Titles in a timely and controlled manner and enable Urban Planning and Construction departments to focus on providing the necessary support for planned tourism growth and development.

A2.2.3 Implications for tourism

The current lack of co-ordinated coastal governance is resulting in:

- poor coordination of service delivery and information sharing between provincial departments and national ministries;
- unregulated development, often approved by provincial governments without the capacity to fully assess proposals;
- a lack of infrastructure to support current and future tourism needs (e.g. numerous opportunistic 'spot developments' stretch infrastructure provision as opposed to staged regional development);
- low capacity for enforcing regulations relating to protected area management, development approval conditions, fisheries management, and waste management;
- no provision for centralised liquid or solid waste management and the ability for communities to access these services;

- land use conflicts through a lack of designated land use zoning (e.g. agricultural zoning to protect farmland, industrial zoning to facilitate effective and efficient management of industrial waste, and designation of areas suitable for tourism development);
- a lack of essential social infrastructure such as sanitation, hospitals, police, schools and other services catering for increasingly centralised local populations engaged in on-going building and development projects;
- a lack of transparency and accountability in the development approval process and community members are not informed of development proposals that may affect their lifestyle and livelihoods and are not afforded sufficient opportunities for input into the approval process;
- development proposals that force relocation of community members; and
- development that restricts access to public spaces by locals.

A2.3 The confounding effect of climate change and extreme weather events

The delayed rainfall in 2010 in Cambodia demonstrated the dependence and vulnerability of the Cambodian people, particularly rural communities in relation to climate change. Lower rainfall resulted in lower water supply levels and, as a result, many rural communities suffered. In the previous year, Cambodia experienced destructive typhoon Ketsana. Temperatures in the South East Asia region are projected to increase 1.5-3.7°C by 2081 and a rainfall fluctuation between -2% and +15% by 2100 (Rizvi & Singer 2011). The coastal zone is already witnessing saline intrusion from poor land use practices, sea-level rise and associated storm surge. The key impacts that climate change is projected to have on the coastal zone include sea level rise, more frequent and intense typhoons, ocean acidification and rise in sea temperature.

A2.3.1 Implications for tourism

Coastal communities and small islands with infrastructure that has not included consideration of extreme weather, early warning systems and information and knowledge of appropriate community adaptation behaviour are at high risk from the impacts of climate change (FAO 2008). Major tourism attractions such as fringing coral reefs and coastal resort developments are likely to be affected and the quality of the tourist experience diminished. Coastal environments, such as the Koh Kong intertidal mangrove communities, which provide shoreline stability, fisheries nursery habitat and nutrient sinks, are vulnerable to climate change impacts.

Some tourism assets may cease to function as tourist attractions (e.g. coral reef loss through bleaching due to sea temperature rise). International and domestic tourists may cease to visit the attraction or shift their reasons for travelling to certain areas resulting in a mean loss or shift in tourism income for the coastal provinces (Forsyth et al. 2011).

Many potential climate change impacts can be ameliorated through planning and adaptive management (e.g. all coastal development approvals provide for a 100m buffer from waterways and shorelines and require the retention of shoreline vegetation).

A3.0 Sustainable product development

The product of sustainable tourism is the destination itself and this requires development, branding and marketing. A co-ordinated approach between the provincial governments is needed to maximise product development and present the four coastal provinces as a unique but integrated 'Coastal Cambodian Product' different to neighbouring countries and the land locked provinces of Cambodia.

The integrated coastal product needs to communicate a single message for each of the provinces enticing visitors to take the time to travel beyond Sihanoukville and stay a little longer. Each province should be promoted to capture the imagination of its target market and encourage coast-wide travel to experience the differences between the provinces.

A3.1 Truth in marketing

It is important that marketing of the Khmer coast as a tourist destination is honest and what is promised can be delivered. Advertising the region as 'pristine' or 'paradise' is not an accurate portrayal and will inevitably lead to disappointment or anger on arrival if the advertised destination is covered in litter, visitors get sick due to poor sanitation facilities or sewage is flowing onto the beach. In addition, if places are perceived as nothing more than beaches, sun or paradise, visitors are less likely to learn about the real place and their experience will be reduced to a set of clichés and stereotypes (Britton 1979).

The Khmer coast has many authentic experiences to offer. Valued travel experiences will be created through the promotion of the Khmer coast provinces based on the unique characteristics of each province. In addition, tourists who are searching for an alternative travel experience are likely to use travel guides such as Lonely Planet or

websites such as Trip Advisor to get accurate reviews of their chosen destination. If the coastal provinces prefer sustainable tourism to mass-tourism, then honesty is the best policy.

A3.2 Support services

Support services of marketing and promotion, training and information systems are either absent or poorly developed and co-ordinated. Promotion of the distinctive values of each of the coastal provinces would encourage an inter-provincial partnership in the development of tourism on Cambodia's coastline.

Data and information on tourism, natural and heritage resources and sustainable development is not readily available to tourism operators, planners or the community. Data base technology can assist business and government in decision-making. Teaching institutions may be in a position to co-ordinate data acquisition, retrieval and dissemination.

Tourism training is seemingly non-existent in the coastal provinces, nor is training specifically relating to achieving sustainable tourism. This suggests that a suite of certificate and associate diploma courses would be of value in developing a sustainable tourism industry in the region. The need is for integrated training in tourism, protected areas management, natural resources management and cultural heritage management.

A3.3 Implications for tourism

The natural and cultural resources of the Khmer coast provide an opportunity for development of tourism products that complement and contrast with those of more developed tourist areas in South East Asia. The existing tourist product reflects this potential but is largely undeveloped or co-ordinated, with limited services for tourists.

Realisation of the potential lies in:

- emphasising quality before quantity;
- ensuring value for money;
- ensuring authenticity and integrity;
- respecting, preserving and enhancing the coast's natural and cultural attributes;
- ensuring development is in keeping with the local character;
- providing memorable experiences with the emphasis on involvement and learning; and
- having professional staff for planning and managing tourism, heritage resources and service delivery.

A4.0 Tourism trends

A4.1 International trends

Global tourism has continued to grow and diversify over the last 60 years to become one of the largest and fastest-growing economic sectors in the world, which despite occasional shocks, has enjoyed nearly uninterrupted growth, from 277 million international arrivals in 1980 to 983 million arrivals in 2011 (UNWTO 2012b). Travellers are now seeking superior and more authentic cultural and heritage based experiences (UNWTO 2012b); they 'are looking to satisfy their need for leisure, recreation and discovery in a way that is friendly to the natural, cultural and social well-being of the destinations they visit' (Markovic et al. 2009). Sustainable tourism can provide a high quality tourist experience, a rationale for environmental protection and development of public infrastructure, improved quality of life for locals and enhanced cultural pride as well as increasing opportunities to develop local commerce, provide employment and generate foreign exchange (Levy & Hawkins 2010). Nature-based tourism is one of the faster growing sectors in international tourism, with growth rates of up to 30% per year, driven by concern for the environment and the impact that travel has on contributions to climate change.

Cambodia is part of the ASEAN tourism initiative, the fastest growing tourism sector in the world. Despite the global economic downturn, Cambodia's tourism remained positive in 2009 with 65 million international and domestic tourists (RGoC 2012). ASEAN tourists have grown to 45% of total tourists, while European tourists are approximately 10% of visitors to ASEAN countries. For the Asian market, 15 million tourists travel from China, Japan, Korea and about 1.9 million from India. ASEAN tourism grew in 2011 by 7.4% with 81.23 million tourist arrivals, with 2.88 million to Cambodia.

Nature-based tourism demand in Cambodia is projected to increase by 10% annually (MOT 2010a). Data from the Ecotourism Visitor Survey (SNV 2009) indicates that international visitors (77%) travelled to multiple countries during their trip to south east Asia; most often to Thailand, Vietnam, Laos, Malaysia and Singapore. Cambodia is in a position to attract part of this market. Ecotourism is an idea that emerged from the intersection of ecologically sustainable development and the growing tourism industry (MOT 2010a). A main emphasis of ecotourism is to ensure that tourist dollars flow back into conservation of resources and the local community (MOT 2010b).

The average length of stay in Cambodia is 6.5 days, with an average expenditure of USD115.78 per visitor. Leisure and holiday are the primary reasons for visiting and account for over 80% of tourists. Currently, the majority of

tourists travel to Siem Reap to explore the Angkor Wat temples. In recent years, with recognition of a market niche opportunity, the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism has promoted development of the coastal region as a new tourism destination, with a focus on sustainable development. In 2011, the Cambodian coastline was announced as a member of the 'Most Beautiful Bays in the World'.

Excluding Angkor Wat, 22% of tourists to Cambodia visited a protected area; of these, 26% was from Europe, 23% from ASEAN countries and 20% from Asia and Oceania (SNV 2009). While visiting natural sites did not rate highly as a major motivator, it was still a very popular activity amongst European travellers. The most popular protected area region visited was the Tonle Sap (45%), followed by the northeast (19%) and Khmer coast region (18%). In general, Europeans were interested in visiting the Cardamom Mountains and coastal areas, while Asian visitors were interested in northeast Cambodia (SNV 2009). A keen interest in the environment and recommendations from friends were the main motivators for visitors attending a protected area.

Activities undertaken by international visitors during a trip to protected areas included interacting with locals, eating local food, viewing local animals, water-based activities, trekking and purchasing local handicrafts. Domestic visitors were found to have participated in water-based activities, purchased local handicrafts, viewed wild animals and interacted with locals (SNV 2009). Daily expenditure for tourists that visited a protected area was around USD40.

Visitors from ASEAN countries prefer to stay in hotels, whereas westerners are more likely to experience stays in guesthouses, eco-lodges and home-stays during their trips to protected areas (MOT, 2011). Most of the visitors suggested that they would be willing to pay a conservation fee. Discussions with tourists indicated that receiving organizations should be accountable for the money spent on conservation, although tourists expressed concern about whether their money would be used appropriately for conservation purposes.

A4.2 Local trends

The coastal zone of Cambodia attracted 1.6 million domestic tourists in 2011, indicating the importance of the coastal provinces to domestic tourism. The province of Kampot contains the largest population with a diverse rural population spread throughout the province. Kep, the smallest province in land size, has the lowest population. Although Kampot has the highest population, Preah Sihanouk has the highest level of infrastructure and is currently the only provider of a commercial seaport, which drives much of the business development and growth.

Population growth is consistent within all provinces excluding Koh Kong, which experienced negative growth in 2009. This may be due to limited employment opportunities and migration. Growth is important to sustain tourism demands and retaining human resource skills needed to meet the demand of tourism. Due to the geographical location of Koh Kong, marketing tourism initiatives, which target tourists travelling to Thailand and encourage travel to Koh Kong, could prove economically beneficial.

A5.0 Towards a unified sustainable tourism brand for the Khmer coast



Figure A1. Coastal provinces of the Khmer coast

These Strategic Guidelines seek to develop a sustainable tourism sector on the Khmer coast that will provide a model for sustainable coastal development, create a healthier, cleaner, safer environment and promote sustainable livelihood opportunities within the coastal provinces. It identifies the high-value regional assets for tourism on the Khmer coast and provides guidelines for sustainable management for future tourism development. The Khmer coast can build a strong, diverse economic future based on nature- and culture-based tourism initiatives, environmental protection and community participation. Following a hubs and spokes model of development (see Section C2.2), the four coastal provinces of Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong (Figure A1), each with their own unique assets, can collectively share in the benefits of strategic tourism development of the Khmer coast as a premier and unified destination brand (see Pierret 2011).

A5.1 Aim and objectives

The aim of this report is to provide a framework for policy makers, stakeholders and governing bodies to facilitate development of nature- and culture-based tourism that emphasises sustainable development principles. These strategic guidelines align with the fundamental principles and strategic directions identified in the Cambodian Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012 – 2020 (the Plan).

This report seeks to:

1. identify the nature- and culture-based assets and values and prioritise the protection (and regeneration) of valued natural and cultural assets;
2. identify actions to advance sustainable tourism growth in the coastal provinces; and
3. provide a basis for developing a statutory coastal tourism strategy that
 - maximises economic benefit and minimise negative social, health and environmental implications through strategic planning initiatives;
 - raises awareness, strengthens perceptions and enhances community commitment through increased understanding and appreciation of the nature and culture and tourism's role in protecting and presenting valued features;
 - supports the diversification of the economic base of local communities;
 - encourages community engagement in the development of nature- and culture-based tourism initiatives, the enrichment of local cultures and the preservation of the environment and cultural heritage values unique to each coastal province;
 - provides a rationale and priorities for the development of public infrastructure that supports expanding tourism and local livelihoods and improves community health and well-being;
 - increases cross-cultural understanding through the provision of multi-lingual tourism information; and
 - provides an exemplar model for effective sustainable development in developing ASEAN countries.





STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON THE KHMER COAST

PART B: KHMER COAST TOURISM ASSETS

This part of the report is an inventory of assets and products developed to serve tourists. Potential products are also identified. The inventory is not comprehensive; although it does suggest that a rich and diversified natural, cultural, historical and community lifestyle heritage exists within the coastal provinces, which could form the basis for a vibrant tourism sector.

Cambodia's coastline is 435 km long and includes coastal habitats with high biodiversity values including off-shore islands, mangrove communities, seagrass meadows, white sandy beaches and coral reefs. Developing marine and terrestrial ecotourism products and services in the region will attract specific market segments, extend the length of stay, diversify tourism products and services and open opportunities that benefit local communities.

Cambodians depend on its natural resources for their livelihoods and socio-economic growth. Increased pressure on natural resources and pollution are causing increased risk and damage to public health and the environment, which impacts the economic sustainability of the country (Markovic et al. 2009). Natural assets, in particular, need to be protected if they are to remain as assets for tourism. The intrinsic values of these assets represent ongoing economic, social and environmental opportunity through sustainable tourism activities such as hiking, diving, fishing and locally owned and operated tours to extraordinary biodiversity hotspots.

PART B: KHMER COAST TOURISM ASSETS

Underpinning the strategic actions proposed in Part C and D is the vision for developing the Khmer coast as a tourism destination built on the inherent qualities of assets for tourism rather than contriving products that conflict and contradict the 'nature' of the assets. Tourism assets can be considered in the context of the Forum for the Future's Five Capitals Model (natural, social, human, manufactured and financial) of sustainable development (see Viederman 1994). Of importance to this report is that changes in the 'nature' of an asset or capital, such as the environment, infrastructure or development style, can alter tourist perceptions of a place (positively or negatively) and their choice of destination and on-site behaviour. This can have implications for management and successful tourism development.

B1.0 Climate

Like the rest of Southeast Asia, monsoons dominate Cambodia's climate. The southwest monsoon brings the rainy season from mid-May to early October and 80% of the rainfall. The northeast monsoon flow of drier and cooler air lasts from early November to April (Figure B1). The coast receives an average of over 2000mm of rain per year, although Koh Kong and mountainous areas can receive double this amount. Relative humidity ranges from 65-70% in January and February to 85-90% in August and September.

During the rainy season, rainfall events occur on over half the days of the month, although the average hours of sunshine remains at 5 hours per day or half of the daylight hours (Figure B2).

Average daily temperatures are consistently between 25 and 30°C over the year, although peaks approaching 40°C and minimums as low as 15°C are common (Figure B3). In mountain areas, temperatures can be as much as 10°C lower than on the coast (e.g. at Bokor).

Implications for tourism

Despite warm temperatures and ample sunlight hours, the distinct wet and dry seasons mean that coastal tourism is subject to marked tourism seasonality. This is exacerbated by seasonal flooding, which makes travel to country destinations difficult. Seasonality and flooding are threats to tourism and the response needs to be managed, including through developing a diversified range of tourism products located in places less vulnerable to these weather-dependent events.

B2.0 Geophysical assets

B2.1 Mountains and hills

Defining the Tonle Sap-Mekong Basin are surrounding mountains that also back the Khmer coast (Figure B4). The Krâvanh (Cardamom) Mountains in the southwest, which align northwest-southeast, rise to more than 1,500 meters. The range contains the 10 highest mountains in Cambodia. The Dâmrei (Elephant) Range, an extension of the Cardamom Mountains, runs south and southeast at elevations over 1,000 meters. These two ranges border the Gulf of Thailand with a narrow coastal plain that contains the capitals of the coastal provinces (Hortle et al. 2004).

The ranges are largely Mesozoic sandstone, with localized areas of limestone and volcanic rock. The system extends into Vietnam and Phu Quoc Island. Younger basalt areas produce gemstones (rubies, sapphires, and zircons). The north-eastern part of the mountain unit includes granite ridges that reach a maximum elevation of 1,813 meters at Phnom Aural, the highest mountain in Cambodia.



Figure B1 Monthly rainfall at Sihanoukville
(Source: World Weather Online)

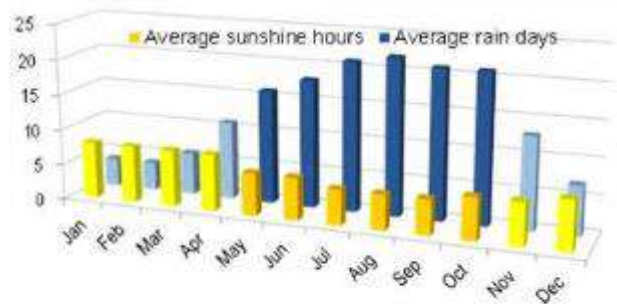


Figure B2 Average rain days and sunshine hours per month
(Source: World Weather Online)

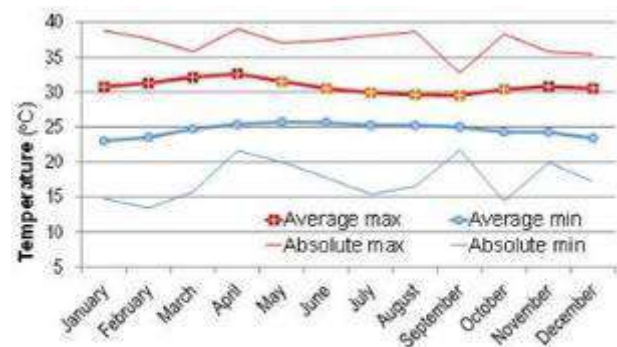


Figure B3 Monthly temperature at Sihanoukville
(Source: World Weather Online)



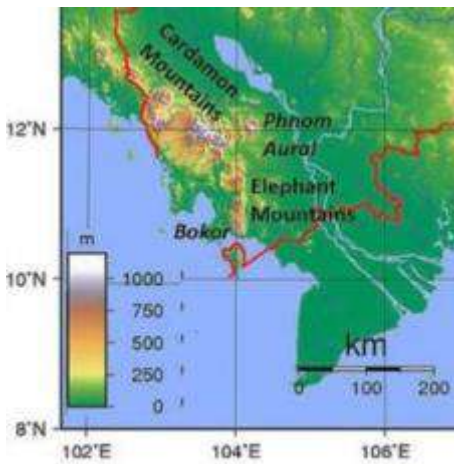


Figure B4 Mountain ranges backing the Khmer coast

The ranges rise steeply from the coast, leaving only a narrow coastal plain. Within the coastal plain are minor elevated areas, which, like much of the mountain chains, have been designated as protected areas (World Wildlife Fund & Millikin 2007).

Status of mountain areas

Most elevated areas have protected area designations (Table B1). These mountain areas have remained isolated, although access has improved since road and rail links were established in the 1960s between the port of Kampong Som (Sihanoukville) and Kampot, Takev, and Phnom Penh.

Table B1 Protected mountainous areas in the coastal provinces

| Protected area | Area (ha) | Province |
|-----------------------------|-----------|--|
| National Parks | | |
| Kirirom | 35,000 | Kompong Speur & Koh Kong |
| Botum Sakor | 171,250 | Kampot & Preah Sihanouk |
| Phnom Bokor | 140,000 | Kampot |
| Ream | 21,000 | Preah Sihanouk |
| Kep | 5,000 | Kampot |
| Wildlife Sanctuaries | | |
| Aural | 253,750 | Pursat, Kompong Chhnang, Kompong Speur & Koh Kong. |
| Phnom Samkoh | 333,750 | Koh Kong |

Implications for tourism

The mountain ranges provide an aesthetic backdrop to the coastal areas and geographically separate the coastal region from the heart of the country. The mountains include some of the most important conservation areas of Cambodia and South East Asia. They have high potential for eco-tourism activity.

B2.2 Limestone karst and cave systems



Impressive limestone karst rear from the rice fields and crops of vegetables around Kampot and Kep. The limestone was formed by marine sediments of the Proterozoic to the Quaternary (from 2,500 million years to 2.6 million years ago). They are isolated from other limestone karst areas in Indochina but extend into Vietnam. Weathering has created vertical cliffs, stalactite caves, and basal erosion features, which are the result of sea level rises.

Despite their small extent, their high biological diversity is probably because geographic isolation creates species endemism and diversity (Belson 1999; Clements et al. 2006). There are 322 plant species recorded from the karst areas (Sam & Tam 2009). The fauna is rich, with at least 155 vertebrate species, including rare and endemic species of birds and other animals. There are 114 bird species recorded from the Vietnamese outcrops. Thirty-one mammal species have been recorded in these areas, including nine species of bat (Tran 2001; Truong et al. 2004). Reptiles (32 species) include the intermediate-toe gecko (*Cyrtodactylus intermedius*), toe lizard (*Cyrtodactylus paradoxus*), flying gecko (*Draco maculatus*), and tokay gecko (*Gekko gekko*). Thirteen amphibians have been recorded. Prominent in the invertebrate fauna are terrestrial snails, with 65 species recorded, including 36 species recently identified and endemic to the region. The karst supports a high diversity of cave invertebrates (Deharveng et al. 2001) including at least two endemic genera of beetles (Ferrer 2004).

Many of the caves in the limestone outcrops of Kampot and Kep are religious and archaeological sites (e.g., Phnom Trotung, Phnom Sor, Phnom Khyang, Phnom Chhnork, Phnom Sar Sear), but they are also home for bats and an unexplored diversity of wildlife.

Status of karst areas

The limestone karst and cave systems are unusual features of Kampot and Kep provinces and considered to be the most vulnerable in Indochina (Belson 1999). The karst, caves and natural wells have not been studied. However, their biodiversity value is likely to be high and of interest for research and ecotourists. There are currently no environmental or cultural heritage protection measures in place for the karst areas (Clements et al. 2006) except what is afforded by religious respect.

The major threats to these unique cave complexes are limestone quarrying, calcite removal, guano collecting and unmanaged tourism. Calcite is used traditionally in Kompong Trach to make very strong mortar. The guano is used as fertilizer but its removal has significant impacts on cave biota. Without effective management, increasing tourism pressure could negatively affect their integrity and biological values.

Implications for tourism

The limestone karst present a unique opportunity for tourists to explore and learn about the historical, natural and cultural values of the sites, and provide employment opportunities to assist in alleviating poverty in local villages. However, lack of knowledge of the biodiversity contained within the caves and on the karst hinders interpretation.

B2.3 Coastal plains

The Cardamom and Elephant Ranges separate the narrow alluvial coastal plains from the Mekong-Tonle Sap Basin. The provincial capitals and most provincial towns are on the plains, and are now connected by road and sea. The plains and the foothills of mountainous areas are the agricultural production areas of the coast and the location of the coastal population. Rice, pepper and fruit production are the major agricultural activities, with salt farming around Kep and Kampot.



Status of coastal plains

While most of the coastal plain has been cleared for rural production, areas of lowland rainforest still exist in Koh Kong Province, and mangroves line the many small rivers of the coastal fringe, with quite extensive areas in Kampot and Koh Kong Provinces.

Implications for tourism

The narrow coastal plain means that forested land and rural production areas are readily accessed from the provincial cities. Opportunities to develop farm and community-based nature tourism products are high.

B2.4 Rivers and estuaries

The rivers and creeks in the coastal zone all flow to the Gulf of Thailand and are relatively short (15-20km) with water levels varying significantly with seasonal rainfall. Flash flooding is common in the wet season. In upland areas, many dry completely during the dry season, but the short distance from elevations of about 600m mean that waterfalls are common in the wet season. Where they enter the sea, the streams form deltas, where the levels of turbidity are usually high and mangrove forests develop. The sea affects most of the streams in the coastal plain with brackish conditions extending well upstream from the deltas. Most estuaries are used as havens for small fishing boats.



Koh Kong province has many rivers with Kah Bpow (Koh Poa or Stoeng Kaoh Pa) and Stoeng Me Toek Rivers being the largest. Endangered Irrawaddy dolphins are reported to frequent the estuary of the Kah Bpow and occasionally swim upstream to the provincial capital of Krong Koh Kong. Many rivers and streams have broad and long waterfalls and cascades. Nine are identified by the Koh Kong Working Group Report (2002) as having potential as tourist attractions: Prek Ta Eisey or Neary Sy, Kbal Chay Prek Tatey (Tatai), Tra Pang Rong Kbal Chay, Keng Vekcha, Veal Kachaut, Kbal Chhay Soun Metek, Py or Kampoul Phnom, Khleng Kok, and Cham Yiam waterfalls.

About 16km from **Sihanoukville** are the Kbal Chhay waterfalls on the Prek Tuk Sap River. However, during the dry season, the stream dries and the cascades become merely a trickle of water.

There are nine large rivers in **Kampot Province**: Kampong Krognoung¹, Kbal Romeas, Kampong Bay, Keo and B.G.I², Koh Toch, Kdart, Smach, Thnaout, Trapeng Ropov and Teouk Chhou³ Rivers. Most of these are polluted by waste from urban markets and human waste, although upstream, where cascades are common, water quality is much better.

Particularly during the wet season, local residents and tourists use the upland parts of the rivers for recreation focused on the waterfalls and cascades. The major waterfalls used are at Koh Por (Kbal Chhay), Tatai, Thmor Roong in Koh Kong province, Kbal Chhay near Sihanoukville, and Popokvil (at Bokor), Prek Thnaut and Teuk Chou in Kampot province. At these places, local community members establish temporary vending stalls, selling food, clothing and souvenirs.



Status of rivers and waterfalls

Rivers close to more densely populated areas, such as Sihanoukville, Kampot, Sre Ambel, Koh Kong towns, appear to be polluted with sewage and solid waste, although streams in the west are in better condition than those in the east. This pollution from land-based sources poses a potential threat to the coastal marine ecosystems and resources (MOE 2006) and to human health (NCSC 2005).

¹ Flows from Voir Mountain.

² Flows from Kamchai Mountain.

³ Flows from Bokor Mountain.



Many of the rivers and estuaries are currently being used for tourist boat trips to explore the mangroves and waterways. On the Tatai River is the floating 4-Rivers resort. Recreational development associated with waterfalls tends not to be designed, and use is unregulated leading to carrying capacity being exceeded. Vendors occupy sites close to the waterfalls and streams, which detracts from the natural aesthetic values of the sites. Investment in redevelopment and regulation of vendors is needed.

Implications for tourism

The rivers and waterfalls have considerable tourism potential as day visit sites, and for adventure tourism activities (e.g., canoeing, white water rafting), and associated nearby community based (home-stay) accommodation. These products can support the incomes of local communities. However, water quality is a major concern and removal of development from the water edges and effective treatment of human and solid waste to avoid stream pollution is essential for the future. Redevelopment of all currently used sites is needed to handle the number of tourists visiting the sites. This will involve the construction of boardwalks and viewing platforms, formalised parking and separation of vendors from the core tourist attraction. Training/certification for high-risk adventure tourism activities, such as white water rafting, is needed.

B2.5 Islands and beaches



The total length of the Cambodian coastal area is generally accepted to be 440km. There are 60 islands: 23 in Koh Kong province, 22 in Preah Sihanouk, 13 in Kep and 2 in Kampot. While some islands off the Khmer coast have resort developments, many remain heavily vegetated and sparsely populated and retain their natural setting and relaxing atmosphere not found in the urban centres of the mainland and on developed islands. Traditional villages and locals engaged in fishing and agricultural subsistence activity reside on the islands. Timber fishing boats trade and provide transportation to the mainland and neighbouring islands. Coral reefs, extensive seagrass meadows and mangrove communities provide important fisheries habitat and conservation values.

B2.5.1 Example islands

Islands off **Kep** include Koh Ankrong, Koh Pou, Koh Sen, Koh Tbal, and Koh Tunsay (Rabbit) island. These provide a diversity of tourist experiences from undeveloped to low-key, locally owned islands.

Small investment but large returns: the case of Koh Thonsay

Rabbit Island (Koh Thonsay) is 4.5km southwest of Kep. This largely pristine island is 2km², and populated by 7 or 8 families who grow coconut palms and fish for subsistence. The inhabitants have barely touched the island and its natural assets have been preserved. With low-key developments, such as thatched roofed bamboo guest houses and restaurants, wooden beach massage platforms and hammocks, the site is an example of how (eco)tourism development can be low cost but high yielding and provide tourist opportunity diversity to the Khmer coast that complements more investment-intensive operations. Tourists can stay in the bamboo beach huts, crafted to filter the natural light, for \$5 a night.

The charm of Rabbit Island lies in its simplicity, with no electricity available except between 6-10pm from generator power. There are no motorised vehicles on the island and the traditional fishing boats, which undergo the 25-minute trip from the mainland, are a real commodity and can be likened to the gondolas of Venice, providing tourists with a novel, low impact form of transportation. The island is largely litter-free, because the inhabitants carefully sort their waste into piles of plastic, glass and organic waste. The sandy beaches, rocky shores, jungle covered hills, mangroves and built areas amid coconut palms can all be accessed by hiking the track that circles the island. Corals and brightly coloured fish inhabit the surrounding warm shallow sea, making it excellent for swimming, snorkelling and diving. Already, international researchers and ecologists have been attracted to the island, but there is clear potential to expand the attractiveness of the island for dive tourism.

Rabbit Island exemplifies many of the islands off the Khmer coast and is a contrast to many 'developed' islands of Cambodia and neighbouring destinations. Its value lies in its seclusion, peace, quiet, and natural attractions, for international and domestic tourists alike. While additional development is possible, maintaining the difference will be important for the image of Kep and the Khmer coast as an exemplar of coastal tourism development.



Koh Rong, Preah Sihanouk, is also typical of many of the islands with low-key development that offers tropical-style accommodation, restaurants and bars and opportunities for snorkelling, SCUBA diving and fishing on the fringing coral reef. A tourist development lease exists over a significant proportion of the island, presenting uncertain futures for the local community due to land tenure issues, and threatens the stability of existing businesses. Land surveys and allocations need to be negotiated for fair and secure tenure for all stakeholders.

Opportunity for best practice development: the case of Koh Rong Island

Koh Rong is a largely pristine, tropical island and the largest within Preah Sihanouk and is home to 502 families. Its extensive white sandy beaches, freshwater resources, natural forests, and diving opportunities on the fringing reef gives it high potential for tourism development. Currently:

- an overseas investor has plans for \$200 million development of 4,000 (unspecified) hectares over 20 years;
- the island communities do not have secure land tenure;
- groundwater is accessible and appears plentiful, but sewage is returned untreated directly to the aquifer or disposed of through inshore marine outfalls; aboveground storage is rudimentary;
- there is no other infrastructure (power, sanitation and waste management);
- there is a casual security presence for illegal fishing and piracy;
- there are several accommodation providers, bars and restaurants;
- a diving school operates from the island with links to Sihanoukville; and
- fishing is important to local subsistence.

Because development has not started there is an opportunity to use Koh Rong as an exemplar of sustainable island tourism development; development which is sensitive and preserves the unique environment and encourages community involvement; where visitors can interact with the communities and be part of Cambodian culture. The quality of the visitor experience and the level of community benefit from improved infrastructure, employment opportunities and increased standard of living could measure success.

While development of an exclusive resort similar to those in other parts of the world is a likely option given the interest of overseas investors, Koh Rong presents an opportunity for Cambodia to develop tourism, which maintains the inherent natural values of the island and considers the welfare of the local people. UNWTO (2012a) suggests that tourists are becoming more discerning and are looking for destinations that reflect the culture of the country and are not just a repeat of what other countries offer. This requires good governance and political will. The development of Koh Rong could provide an exemplar for providing secure land tenure for all stakeholders and the development of infrastructure appropriate to the island to provide clean, safe and secure water supply, a sanitation system (either centralised or as part of any resort), power and waste management.

Koh Kong Khoa, Koh Kong province, largely remains as an uninhabited island with seven white sand beaches. Further south is **Koh Sdach**, close to Botum Sakor National Park's southwest tip. It has a small fishing port, sandy beaches, locally operated restaurants and seaside bungalow accommodation that offers SCUBA diving, snorkeling and fishing activities on the fringing reefs. It is typical of many of the islands off the Khmer coast.

Status of islands

Most of the islands off the Khmer coast are undeveloped, although many have leases controlled by off-shore investors. They are outstanding natural areas with considerable tourism potential. Sustainable tourism development success depends on maintaining the natural beauty of the islands, providing adequate public health infrastructure and offering a marked contrast to those in neighbouring countries. There are sufficient islands to provide a range of accommodation and development styles from un-starred to 5-star.

Implications for tourism

Due to the environmentally sensitive nature of coastal islands and fringing coral reefs, development approvals need to ensure that the natural beauty of the islands and traditional use is protected, while enhancing economic growth. Consideration of sea-level rise and erosion of shorelines is essential. Effective environmental impact assessment is essential, including consideration of cumulative impacts and decline in diversity of possible experiences to be enjoyed on the islands. In principle, inshore islands should not exclude local and day use, while islands more distant can be for niche markets.

B2.5.2 Example beaches

Apart from the beaches of Sihanoukville, most of the coastal beaches are undeveloped. The beaches around the offshore islands tend to be the most attractive because of the lack of influence from sediment loads from the coastal streams. All of the islands have high-quality sand and coralline white beaches.

The closest beach to Koh Kong town, with the non-Khmer name of Resort 2000, is on the Kah Bpow river estuary. The quality of this beach varies from muddy in the rainy season to clean with good swimming in the dry season. Along the Koh Kong ocean front, some distance from the town centre, is Bak Khlang (Koh Yor) beach and further north (toward Thailand) is Cham Yeam beach, possibly the best coastal ocean beach. Cham Yeam is a narrow beach that almost disappears at high tide, but is sandy at low tide. It is quite picturesque, fronted by palm trees, with beach side restaurants. This area has become the focal point of Koh Kong development, with beachside restaurants, a new five star casino/hotel, guest houses, and the Safari World zoo. Other notable beaches include Stueng Vek, Beng Kacharng, Lum Dum beach, Koh Kong Kroa, Ao Biar, Prek Ta Noun and Koh Phos or Chke Prous.





The golden sands of **Sihanoukville's** mainland beaches (Victory, Independence, Sokha and redeveloped Ochheuteal) are a focus of sun and sand tourism in the province. Accommodation and restaurants, rapidly being upgraded, back the beaches.

The coastal beaches of **Kep** and **Kampot** provinces lack the white sands of Sihanoukville and are largely mangrove edged shorelines or with engineered rock walling. These create shoreline recreation opportunities rather than beach experiences and water-based recreation.

Status of beaches

Most beaches of the Khmer coast are in good condition although erosion and solid waste pollution that arrives with the tides degrades beach quality especially on mainland beaches.

Implications for tourism

All beaches have tourism potential; however, protection of coastal dunes and avoiding development close to the shoreline is important to ensure the natural resilience of the mangrove and dune shorelines is maintained.

B3.0 Regional ecosystem assets

B3.1 Wet evergreen forests

B3.1.1 Floristics ⁴

The Cardamom-Elephant Mountain rain forests are part of a wet evergreen forests belt that extends along the mountains east of Bangkok, Thailand, through to Phu Quoc Island. These forests are some of the most species-rich and intact natural habitats in the region, but are also one of the least explored. It can be expected that isolation, moist and stable conditions, intact and undisturbed habitat, and rugged terrain will result in new species being found.



While ecological and floristic composition of the wet evergreen forest communities is poorly studied, local endemism appears to be high. One of the most abundant canopy species is *Hopea pierrei*, a small tree of limited distribution outside of this area. An unusual dwarf forest (5-10 m) on the acid and skeletal soils occurs on the sandstone plateau of the southern Elephant Mountains. This community is dominated by the conifers *Dacrydium elatum* and *Podocarpus (Dacrycarpus) imbricatus* and a variety of Fagaceae and Myrtaceae, *Vaccinium viscifolium*, and *Schima crenata*. On ridgelines or areas exposed to strong winds, this community reaches no more than 5 m. Sphagnum bogs are also present.

A distinct montane forest community occurs at elevations above 700m. These forests have dense evergreen tree canopies (to 30m) dominated by Fagaceae, including *Lithocarpus cambodienseis*, *L. guinieri*, *L. farinulenta*, *L. harmandii*, and *Castanopsis cambodiana*. Also important are species of Lauraceae (*Cinnamomum* and *Litsea*) and Myrtaceae (*Syzygium* and *Tristania*). There is a rich understory with shrubs of Rubiaceae and Euphorbiaceae, palms (*Arenga pinnata* and *Pinanga cochinchinensis*), arborescent ferns (*Cibotium*, *Cyathea*, and *Oleandra*), *Pandanus*, and Araliaceae. Epiphytes, including many orchids, are abundant, particularly where fogs or mists are common.

Pinus merkusii (Cambodia's only indigenous *Pinus* species) occurs on the Kirirom Plateau, where it grows with *Dipterocarpus obtusifolius*, *Rhodomyrtus tomentosa*, *Phyllanthus officinalis*, and a variety of Melastomataceae and Rubiaceae. Dipterocarps once formed the dominant canopy elements of a tall evergreen forest in coastal areas, with *Shorea hypochra*, *Anisoptera costata*, *Dipterocarpus costatus*, and *Hopea odorata* all abundant. Also important as canopy trees are *Parkia streptocarpa*, *Heritiera javanica*, *Swintonia pierrei*, and *Syzygium cinereum*. These forests have largely been cleared. In addition to typical lowland evergreen rain forests, the southern slopes of the Elephant Mountains support a dwarf rain forest community (< 12m) in poorly drained depressions. Dominant species in these waterlogged sites are *Dacrydium elatum* and *Podocarpus neriifolius*, with a scattered distribution of *P. (Nageia) fleuryi* and *P. (Dacrycarpus) imbricatus* (World Wildlife Fund & Millikin 2007).

B3.1.2 Fauna

The wet evergreen forests are likely to be habitat for more than 100 mammalian species (60 confirmed by Flora & Fauna International 2000), including the endangered tiger (*Panthera tigris*), Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), clouded leopard (*Pardofelis nebulosa*), Asiatic wild dog or dhole (*Cuon alpinus*), gaur (*Bos gaurus*), banteng (*Bos javanicus*), khting vor (*Pseudonovibos spiralis*), pileated gibbon (*Hylobates pileatus*), and serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*). These have been recorded in relatively high numbers (Flora & Fauna International 2000). It is possible that several large mammals that have disappeared from Indochina's forests (e.g., the Sumatran

⁴ Précised from World Wildlife Fund & Millikin (2007).

(*Dicerorhinus sumatrensis*) and Javan rhinoceros (*Rhinoceros sondaicus*), may still occur in these forests (World Wildlife Fund & Millikin 2007).

The elephant population is possibly the most important in Cambodia and among the largest in Indochina. The forests are also recognized as a Class III TCL⁵ (Sanderson et al.), where large habitat areas allow tigers to occur under undisturbed conditions. The Cardamom Range probably harbors the highest density of pileated gibbons throughout the species' range (World Wildlife Fund & Millikin 2007).

The bird fauna is estimated at more than 450 species and includes two endemic species, various hornbills and green peafowl (*Pavo muticus*). However, many more endemic species are likely to be identified with comprehensive surveys. A population of the critically endangered Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*) and the elongated tortoise (*Indotestudo elongata*) have been recorded (Flora & Fauna International 2000). A total of 34 amphibian species have been found in the mountains, including new species of *Megophrys*, *Philautus* and *Rana (Sylvirana)*, and 17 species that have not previously been reported from Cambodia (Ohler et al. 2002).



The fauna and flora of the wet evergreen ecosystem are not uniformly distributed. The mountains contain a variety of distinct natural habitats, with characteristic wildlife communities. The dry and mixed deciduous forests in the foothills, support the highest density of large mammals such as elephant, fishing cat (*Prionailurus = Felis viverrinus*) and sambhar deer (*Cervus unicolor*: an important prey for tiger); whereas the evergreen forests at higher elevations support a greater proportion of endemic species, such as the chestnut-headed partridge (*Arborophila cambodiana*) and Cardamom banded gecko (*Cyrtodactylus intermedius*). Many plants, several hundred invertebrates and approximately 20 of the small vertebrates found in the montane zone by Flora & Fauna International (2000) are expected to be new species to science.

Untapped ecotourism potential of Bokor Mountain

Bokor Mountain, also known as Preah Monivong National Park or Phnom Bokor National Park (140,000 ha), is known to provide habitat for 38 rare plant species, 249 bird species, 29 mammals, 9 reptiles and 11 frog species. It is one of only two Cambodian ASEAN Heritage Parks, a listing designed to protect the parks unique natural features. The high biodiversity of this area provides potential for wildlife tourism in the national park attracting educational and international visitors. However, a comprehensive survey of the national park has not been undertaken.

The sparsely vegetated plateau is home to the abandoned Hill Station, a modern state of the art casino, and the new towering Statue of Lok Yeay Mao. There is approval for a residential and commercial staged development, which includes a luxury 5 star hotel theme park and cable car.

There is limited development of trekking and bushwalking in the park and key features of Bokor Mountain are not linked. The developed areas can be linked to the national park so visitors can visit the natural zone in conjunction with a visit to the restored Hill Station precinct and the casino.

B3.1.3 Production forests

Forests generate important livelihood benefits in Cambodia and have the potential to offer unique tourism experiences. More than 80% of the population in Cambodia rely on fuel wood and around 8% on charcoal for cooking (NIS 2009). The Forestry Administration (Forestry Administration 2010) estimates that nearly 4 million people, equating to more than 30% of the population, live within 5 km of a forest. Forest resources account for an average of 10 to 20% of household consumption and income revenue. The sustainable management of forestry is vital to the Cambodian economy, tourism and community well-being. Production forests are mainly located in Kampot province and Preah Sihanouk (Figure B5), presenting the potential for nature based tourism and sustainable tourism initiatives involving forests and forestry management.

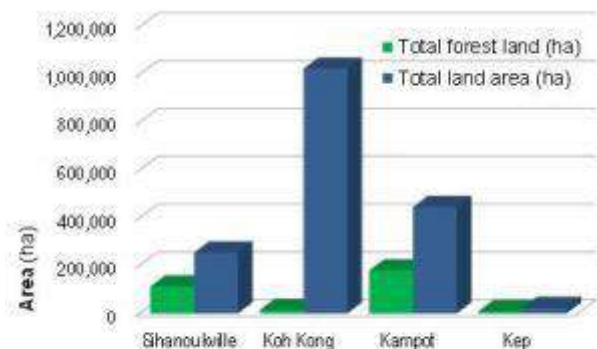


Figure B5. Total land area and total forestry area

Status of forests

There has been significant loss of habitat through illegal logging, degradation of forests, and decimation of species through unregulated development and illegal poaching. The creation and effective management of protected areas will maintain and emphasise the value of sustainable ecosystems, habitat and species protection and ecosystem

⁵ Tiger Conservation Landscape (TCL) Class III are landscapes that have habitat to support some tigers, but with moderate-high levels of threat, and minimal conservation investment; the Cardamom-Elephant Mountain complex as a Long-term Priority classification where questionable persistence exists for tiger populations over the long term

services for use by future generations. Areas of biodiversity significance require appropriate levels of protection through enforceable legislation, policies and guidelines.

Implications for tourism

Effective protection and management of the forests of Cambodia would increase the potential to further strengthen and develop sustainable nature-based tourism as an economic sector based on activities such as bush walking, hiking and wildlife watching (MOE & UNDP 2011).

There is demand from tourists for specialist tours of the national park, eco-lodge accommodation on Bokor Mountain, designated walks and tourism-specific areas for tourists to experience the key natural elements of the park. The provision of safe and well-maintained walkways, paths, boardwalks and tree-tops walks, specific access points (e.g. to view the rapids), management of car parking, signage and waste management would provide the necessary infrastructure to grow the nature-based tourism potential at Bokor Mountain.

The loss of forest cover affects local microclimates and increases the risk of soil erosion, landslides and displaces natural wildlife. Given the importance of forests to rural livelihoods and the coastal zone, any loss of productive forests, leads to a loss of biodiversity, loss of future income and has the potential to negatively affect the livelihoods of forest-dependent communities. Forestry in Cambodia has the potential to strengthen sustainable tourism as an economic sector by providing unique experiences, such as bush walking, hiking and wildlife watching.

B3.2 Grasslands and wetlands



Seasonally flooded grasslands (sedgelands) with *Melaleuca* scrub occur in patches throughout the coastal plain, but particularly in Kampot Province at the northern and western extent of the Ha Tien plain (Vietnam); the western edge of the Mekong Delta. **Anlong Pring Crane Bird Sanctuary** (217ha), Kampot, complements another area of protected grassland in adjacent Takeo Province and reserves in neighbouring Vietnam. However, the reserves are not connected, and are separated by rice paddies and aquaculture farms. In 2010, 300 vulnerable Sarus Cranes (*Grus antigone*), more than 30% of the Cambodia's crane population, were feeding within the reserve. The Cranes usually arrive around mid-November and remain until early May when they begin

their migration to the wetlands in the northern and eastern plains of Cambodia to breed.

Status of grasslands and wetlands

Large areas of seasonally inundated grassland of the Ha Tien plain have been converted to agriculture and aquaculture in Vietnam, while the mosaic of wetland in Cambodia has been reduced to around 1,000ha. Sarus Crane populations have declined significantly in recent decades due to the degradation and loss of wetlands, the ingestion of pesticides, and hunting. The world population is estimated at 20,000 birds.

Implications for tourism

The December-March displays of the Sarus Crane can be a (eco)tourist attraction if supported by wetland boardwalks, bird hides, and other nature-based or rural tourism products. The entrance fee charged by the local community of Kompong Trach is an example of how tourism can directly support poorer communities.

B3.3 Mangroves

Mangrove communities are located in all of the coastal provinces and are integral for sustaining the high marine

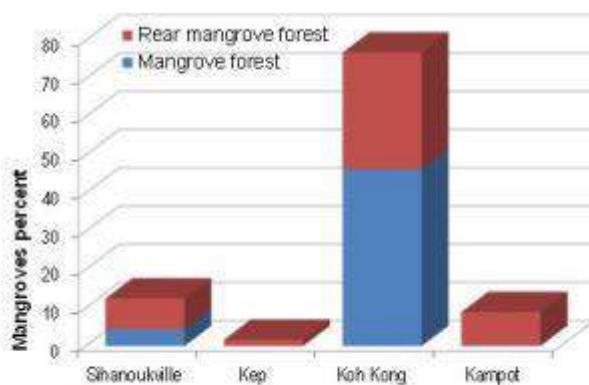


Figure B6 Mangrove extent per cent by province

biodiversity and fisheries values of the Khmer coast. Of the estimated 85,100ha of mangroves along the Khmer coast, about 75% (63,200ha) is in Koh Kong province, 16% (13,200ha) in Preah Sihanouk and the remaining 9% (7,300ha) in Kampot (Rizvi & Singer 2011) (Figure B6). The ecosystem services provided by mangrove communities include the provision of commercially important fisheries nursery habitat, conservation of IUCN listed species, shoreline stabilisation, buffering against storm surge and nutrient sinks.



Mangrove forests are especially important to local communities given that more than 70% of the coastal population rely on their products and resources. Mangroves are critical in producing and supplying marine resources for tourism consumption. The conversion and destruction of mangroves into shrimp farms, salt farms and charcoal production has impacted adversely on marine fish habitats (Rizvi & Singer 2011).

Peam Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary (23,750ha) protects mangrove forests that span over three districts. This mangrove area is the largest areas in Cambodia and probably in the Gulf of Thailand. Over 10,000 people reside in the area, many of whom are economic migrants and displaced Cambodians from inland provinces (Nong 2000). Their ties to the land are not strong and management skills not well developed. These people report significant changes to resource availability over time, catching smaller fish and less of them.

Koh Kapik Ramsar Wetland is situated within the borders of Peam Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary in Koh Kapi Island and small islands along Koh Poa creeks and Klorngyai Rivers or Stoeng Kep with the total coverage of 12,000 hectares. The Ramsar wetlands and mudflats provide habitat for migratory bird species. Some of the best remaining mangrove forests in the Gulf of Thailand are located at this site. Clearing of mangroves in this site has been due to the expansion of intense shrimp aquaculture production and large-scale charcoal production.

Unknown biodiversity richness: the case of Botum-Sakor National Park

Within Botum-Sakor National Park, 37 mammal species have been positively identified; 18 are listed by the IUCN as being of conservation significance (see table) (Royan 2010).

A total of 203 bird species have been identified including seven globally threatened or near-threatened species, 14 biome-restricted species, and three subspecies endemic to the Cardamom Mountains Eco-region (Royan 2009).

Snake species dominate the 69 reptile species recorded in the park. However, the endangered elongated tortoise, the vulnerable Asiatic soft-shelled turtle, the near threatened Asian leaf turtle, the regionally threatened Saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) and critically endangered Siamese crocodile (*Crocodylus siamensis*) occur in the park (Royan et al. 2010).

Only 26 species of amphibian have been recorded in Botum Sakor. However, other studies in the Cardamoms have found large numbers of amphibian species. Since Botum Sakor is more diverse in terms of the number of habitats present, it may be expected that amphibian diversity is considerably higher. The Mortensen's frog (*Rana mortenseni*) and Spine-Glanded Mountain Frog (*Paa fasciculispina*) are of particular interest as they are endemic to the south west of Cambodia and the Thailand part of the Cardamom range (Royan et al. 2010).

There have been 147 species of butterfly identified in Botum Sakor to date (Royan et al. 2010).

Mammal species of Botum Sakor of conservation significance

| Common name | Species | IUCN status |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------|
| Sunda Pangolin | <i>Manis javanica</i> | Endangered |
| Bengal Slow Loris | <i>Nycticebus bengalensis</i> | Vulnerable |
| Indochinese Lutung | <i>Trachypitecus germaini</i> | Endangered |
| Northern Pig-tailed Macaque | <i>Macaca leonine</i> | Vulnerable |
| Pileated Gibbon | <i>Hylobates pileatus</i> | Endangered |
| Dhole | <i>Cuon alpinus</i> | Endangered |
| Sun Bear | <i>Helarctos malayanus</i> | Vulnerable |
| Hog Badger | <i>Arctonyx collaris</i> | Near threatened |
| Hairy-nosed Otter | <i>Lutra sumatrana</i> | Endangered |
| Smooth-coated Otter | <i>Lutrogale perspicillata</i> | Vulnerable |
| Large-spotted Civet | <i>Viverra megaspila</i> | Vulnerable |
| Leopard | <i>Panthera pardus</i> | Near threatened |
| Clouded Leopard | <i>Neofelis nebulosa</i> | Vulnerable |
| Fishing Cat | <i>Prionailurus viverrinus</i> | Endangered |
| Irrawaddy Dolphin | <i>Orcaella brevirostris</i> | Vulnerable |
| Asian Elephant | <i>Elephas maximus</i> | Endangered |
| Sambar | <i>Rusa unicolor</i> | Vulnerable |
| Black Giant Squirrel | <i>Ratufa bicolor</i> | Near threatened |

Status of mangroves

Mangrove communities and associated species are currently under threat from unregulated coastal development, increased sedimentation from illegal logging upstream and other poor land use practices, removal and use of mangrove wood for charcoal production, salt farming, destructive fishing practices and increased use of agricultural pesticides. Current studies indicate that the mangrove forests have been reduced by roughly 35-40% in Preah Sihanouk (Monyneath 2000). Overall, the mangrove area has reduced from 100,700ha in 1950, to 76,518ha in 1993, to 71,683ha (-6.3%) in 1997, to 56,188 (-10.9) in 2002 (NCSC 2005).

Implications for tourism

The mangroves represent a source of livelihood and currently support tourist activities such as a locally guided walks on boardwalks and boat trips through mangrove forests in Preah Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary, Koh Kong Province and to rural coastal villages where visitors can experience local village life and food. Conservation of mangrove communities along the Khmer coast is critical to sustaining fisheries values and promoting community-based tourism initiatives.

B4.0 Marine system assets

B4.1 Coral reefs

Coral reefs exist along the Cambodian coast mostly as fringing reefs with some patch reefs. Recent studies estimate 2806ha of coral reef within Cambodian waters (Rizvi & Singer 2011). In Preah Sihanouk, fringing coral reefs occurs

Table B2. Reef and mangrove indicators of health
(Source: van-Bochove et al. 2012)

| Indicator of coral reef and mangrove health | Measure |
|---|------------------|
| Length of coastline | 435km |
| Reef area, country estimate | 2806ha |
| No of hard coral species | 111 |
| High integrated threat index | 90% of reef area |
| Very high integrated threat index | 10% of reef area |
| Threat indicator marine pollution | High |
| Threat indicator coastal development | High |
| Threat indicator sedimentation | High |
| Threat indicator overfishing | High |
| Threat indicator destructive fishing | High |
| Coastal marine protected areas | 6 |
| Area of coastal marine protected areas | 388,700ha |
| Number of actively managed MPAs | 2 |
| Number of MPAs with coral reefs | 1 |
| MPAs with good management ratings | 10% |
| Area of mangroves (1997) | 63,039ha |
| Area of priority coastal wetlands (1997) | 54,500ha |

around most of the islands and are popular SCUBA diving and snorkelling destinations. Locations that particularly attract divers and snorkelers include the islands of Koh Rong Saleom, Koh Rong and Koh Kron (Rizvi & Singer 2011). Good diving is also possible around Koh Sdach, Kampot, and the small islands off Kep.

Status of coral reefs

The health of the coral reefs is reported to be generally poor, with low species diversity and the average live coral cover for the whole coastline being 23% to 58% (Rizvi & Singer 2011; van-Bochove et al. 2012) (Table B2). However, recent observations suggest coral is relatively healthy and diverse with little evidence of bleaching, some evidence of destructive fishing practices but contiguous reef is dominated by species resilient to turbid water conditions (*Porites* spp., *Turbinaria* spp. and *Pavona decussata*).

Impacts on water quality from adjacent land use practices require greater management measures to mitigate sources of pollution from solid and liquid wastes. Plastic bags from littering and inadequate waste management and raw sewage entering the marine environment are the most obvious on-

going impacting factors on the quality of coral reefs. Destructive fishing practices, anchor damage and illegal fishing are currently negatively affecting the coral reefs.

Implications for tourism

Aside from impacts to coral reefs globally from rising sea level, temperatures and ocean acidification, coral reef health is generally related to proximity to urban development. Conservation and management of coral reefs is a high priority and critical to sustain and grow marine tourism in the coastal zones.

B4.2 Seagrass



Seagrass meadows occur in Cambodian waters in intertidal and subtidal areas adjacent to the mainland, with less dense meadows associated with fringing coral reefs around the islands. Many locally caught fish and crustacean caught on the meadows supply restaurants along the Khmer coast. Seagrass meadows are estimated as covering between 30,096ha (MoE 2007) and 32,492ha (Vibol 2008). They provide habitat for juvenile fish and crustacea (Rizvi & Singer 2011), and foraging grounds for marine turtles and dugong (Hines et al. 2007). Many commercially important fish and crustacea spend a part of their life cycle living in seagrass meadows. The ecosystem values that seagrass meadows contribute to marine biodiversity are highly important for sustainable fisheries and conservation of migrating marine species.

Table B3. Estimated sea grass area by province
(Source: MoE 2007)

| | Sea grass area |
|---------------|----------------|
| Kampot | 25,241ha |
| Koh Kong | 3,993ha |
| Sihanoukville | 164ha |
| Kep | 3,096ha |

Status of seagrass areas

Seagrass along Cambodia's coast covers 10 times more area than coral reefs, with Kampot Province providing nearly 80% of the meadows by area (Table B3). Current direct impacts to seagrass meadows include destructive fishing practices such as motorized push nets, shallow water trawling and weighted bottom nets, which rip up and destroy seagrass meadows (Vibol 2008). Other significant threats include poor land use practices and dredging that increase sedimentation and turbidity levels resulting in direct loss, smothering of seagrass meadows and light attenuation.

Implications for tourism

Many locally consumed fish and crustaceans, which are also critical for tourism restaurants, depend on seagrasses (Rizvi & Singer 2011). Protection of seagrass meadows will also protect the local fishing industry, subsistence fishing as well as the tourism sector.

Enhancing community based projects: the case of Peam Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary

Peam Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary (23,750ha) is aesthetically pleasing, has high biodiversity value, and includes almost all mangrove forests in the Koh Kong Conservation Corridor. The settlement of Boeng Kayak has initiated a community-based project to capitalise on nature-based tourism. A concrete boardwalk (with several diverging bamboo boardwalks leading to shaded seating areas), a suspension bridge and an observation tower have been constructed, and local operators offer boat rides, kayak hire and fishing trips.

While the community-initiated development for nature-based tourism is exemplary, presentation can be improved by:

- the design and installation of signage to interpret the biodiversity, history of the area, conservation and livelihoods of local communities, especially along the mangrove boardwalk (expert advice may be needed);
- progressively improving the sturdiness of boardwalks (e.g. use of marine borer resistant timbers);
- ensuring regular maintenance of the boardwalk, bridge and observation tower (the immediate priority is to repair or replace damaged bamboo sections with sturdier construction materials); and
- ensuring regular policing of exclusion zones to minimise illegal exploitation of marine resources.

B5.0 Cultural and historical assets

B5.1 History and historical sites

B5.1.1 Kampot heritage

a. Pre-colonial heritage

While the archaeological record remains poor (including the evidence in the caves around Kampot), it is probable that Kampot formed an important part of the kingdoms of Funan (1st century to 550) and Chenla (6th century to 802). The ancient Funan sites of **Angkor Borei** and **Phnom Da** in neighbouring Takéo Province indicate occupation from around 400 BC. These sites also contain the earliest known Khmer inscriptions and Khmer sculpture. The archaeological evidence from Oc Eo in neighbouring Vietnam, includes Roman, Chinese, and Indian goods, which suggests that Funan must have been a powerful trading state. The port of Kampot may have supplemented access via the Mekong River.

Under the Khmer empire (802–1431), Kampot probably maintained its strategic importance, although sometime between 1687 and 1695, the Khmer king sponsored Mac Coo, from Guangdong, China, to migrate to Banteay Mas, Kampot, where he served as chief of a small Chinese community, with the Khmer title *Okna*. Mac Coo eventually moved to now Ha Tien, Vietnam. From here, he and his descendants established a small empire stretching from Ca Mau, Vietnam to Kompong Som (Sihanoukville), including Phu Quoc island, and the Bassac arm of the Mekong. The Thais, with Khmer endorsement, eventually removed the Macs and the Khmer coast reverted to absolute Cambodian control (see Carter 2012).



Status of Kampot's pre-colonial heritage

Funan, Chenla and Angkorian sites of Kampot Province have not been identified, recorded or researched. Nor is there understanding of post-Angkorian – pre-colonial sites and history in the province.

Implications for tourism

Pre-colonial heritage sites of Kampot have the potential to be internationally significant, and could form an important focus for tourism, especially for visitors from neighbouring Kien Giang Province, Vietnam. Identification, research and protection of sites are needed before presentation is possible to tourists. Site management plans and basic facilities (e.g. toilets) for existing sites are needed so that the impact of current use is addressed.

b. Kampot town from the colonial era to today

During the French colonial period, the coastal region was administered from Kampot. It had an aggregation of eight villages with 2,500 inhabitants (Khmer, Chinese, Malays, Vietnamese) who worked as farmers, merchants and fishers. To the east were five small villages of Vietnamese fishers and Chinese merchants (pepper), including Kep which was a centre for pepper production. To the west were 10 mainly Chinese and Vietnamese villages, some of which were centres for boat building (Kitagawa 2005). All communities were inhabited by Chinese merchants and Khmer peasants, and mostly located on small rivers that could act as mini-ports. Eastern centres mainly focused on pepper production, with exports to Saigon via Ha Tien, Vietnam and the Vinh-Te Canal. The western centres exported rice and forest products to Kampot and Bangkok using Chinese or Malay sea junks (Kitagawa 2005).



In 1863, Cambodia voluntarily became a French protectorate. The installation of the Resident Marquant and the Route Coloniale No.17 stimulated development of Kompong Bay village with construction of the market in 1900, and the pier, fish market and the river boulevard for the urban centre completed by 1907. Kompong Bay Village (now Kampot) became a colonial administrative centre. Cambodia gained independence after World War II in 1953 and

Kampot remained largely stable, despite the Vietnam-American War, until the Khmer Rouge Era (1975–1979). The **Battle of Kampot** was a major battle of the Vietnam War, also a part of the Cambodian Civil War. From 26 February to 2 April 1974, Cambodian government troops battled Khmer Rouge guerrillas for the control of Kampot city. The Khmer Rouge eventually captured the city, and commenced incursions into Vietnam until the Vietnamese invaded Cambodia and removed the Khmer Rouge (1979). The Pol Pot regime sought to de-modernise Cambodia and Kampot suffered, as did all areas of the country and coast, especially Kep.

Status of Kampot town heritage

While evidence of the heritage of Kampot, prior to the French Colonial Era, remains to be researched and fully discovered, the 'French Quarter' of Kampot town is remarkably intact. This group of buildings is largely contained within the area from the French Bridge crossing the Kampong Bay River and the Durian Roundabout on National Highway 3, the 2000 Monument and the Riverside Road along Kampong Bay River to the Post Office. The original French villas and shop houses appear to be structurally sound, but with dilapidated buildings fronting the footpath, operating as commercial outlets and residential dwellings. Most have rendered painted finishes, timber joinery and high ceilings. Some buildings of heritage significance, such as the Columns Boutique Hotel, are being renovated in keeping with the heritage values of the 'French Quarter'. The mature trees along Riverside Road and Market Street provide ambience, shade and aesthetic appeal. There are very few trees along secondary roads. The buildings on either side of Old Market Road overlook the paved and grassed boulevard that features traditional French lampposts. The Governor's Residence is a stately building on a large allotment further along Riverside Road. The old Kampot Prison, in Prison Street, is in a poor state of repair. The modern Tourist Information Centre is well positioned adjacent to the French Bridge to meet the information and advice needs of tourists and tour operators, but lacks promotional material and trained staff to assist tourists and promote the Kampot heritage assets of the province.

Implications for tourism

Kampot has a rich colonial and post-colonial history with many structures that reflect this history and link to the hill station at Bokor. The opportunity to protect the heritage buildings by making them attractive to tourists provides double benefits of heritage protection and creating a tourist theme for the province.

c. Bokor Hill Station

Table B4. Timeline for Bokor Hill Station
(from Hann (1963), Kitagawa (2005), Kowalczyk (2009))

| Date | Event |
|----------------------------|---|
| 1917 | Rolius inspects the plateau and proposes plans for the hill station. |
| 1921-1924 | The hill station is constructed. |
| 1921 | Route 39 to the hill station completed. |
| 1924 | Wat Sampov Pram (Pagoda of 5 boats) built by King Monivong. |
| 1925 | The largest villa completed (it becomes the Bokor Palace Hotel in 1962). |
| 1940s | The hill station evacuated because of fighting between the French and Khmer nationalists and Japanese invasion. |
| 1945-1949 | Conversion to Military Hospital. |
| 1950s & 60s | The height of tourism at the hill station. Wealthy Khmer are the major visitors. |
| 1959 | Reinvestment in the Hill Station. |
| 1961 | Plans to restore some of the French villas and to build a casino. Two villas are converted to a town hall and an army rest centre. The access road is upgraded. |
| 1962 | Prince Norodom Sihanouk opens the resort. |
| 1963 | The Bokor Palace receives only about 40 overnight guests on the weekends; few are international tourists. Car hire costs from Kampot was the 2013 equivalent of over \$300. |
| Early 1970s to early 1990s | The hill station is occupied by Khmer Rouge and Vietnamese soldiers because of its strategic location. |
| 1972 | Hill station abandoned as Khmer Rouge take control of the area. |
| 1975 | Vietnamese occupy the Hill Station. |
| 1982 | Khmer Rouge retake the Hill Station from the Vietnamese. |
| 1993 | Bokor National Park created; rangers occupy the hospital. |
| Early 1990s | Logging roads built and illegal logging is common. |
| 1998 | Last Khmer Rouge supporters removed. |
| 2001 | WildAid conducts first wildlife surveys. |
| 2008 | The proposal for a major resort development at the hill station site is announced. |
| | Road closed for reconstruction, completed in 2012. |
| 2012 | Thansur Bokor Highland Resort opened. |

The colonial French built **Bokor Hill Station** from 1921 as a place to escape the heat of Phnom Penh. In the initial nine months of construction, 900 lives were lost. The station included many grand villas and a Catholic church. The French abandoned the hill station in the late 1940s, during the First Indochina War, because of local insurrections led by the Khmer Issarak. The void was filled quickly by the Cambodian upper class. By 1962, many of the grander French villas were converted to create the Bokor Palace Hotel and town hall, and Cambodia's first casino was built, complemented by shops, a post office, and the Royal Apartments (Hann 1963). About 10 km before the Hill Station, adjacent to a gigantic Buddha built in 2012, is the abandoned Black Palace (*Veang Khmao*), a small retreat of King Sihanouk. Despite high expectations, the casino did not attract the expected number of tourists, international and local (Hann 1963). Complete abandonment by tourists occurred in 1972, when Khmer Rouge occupied the site. With the Vietnamese occupation in 1979, the Khmer Rouge entrenched themselves on the site making it one of their last strongholds. Until recently, the only occupied buildings were the Ranger Station and Wat Sampov Pram, named after the five oddly shaped rocks near the temple (Table B4).



The site is now under a 99-year lease for development, which includes a road upgrade, repairing the old hotel and casino and construction of a casino resort, eco-villas, entertainment parks, cable car, 18-36 holes championship golf course and country club. The 12-storey resort and casino (652 rooms and suites) includes a Grand Ballroom that can accommodate up to 2,000 people.

Conflicting values: the case of Bokor Mountain

Development of a casino and related 'high-end' tourist facilities on Bokor Mountain have created a capital-intensive, but iconic tourist attraction for Cambodia. The issue here is whether the development and the attracted market overly conflicts with markets more interested in the heritage values of the French-built Hill Station and natural values of Preah Monivong National Park.

Many tourists travel long distances to see wildlife (e.g. Orang-utans in Borneo, whale watching in Australia or Africa's large mammals). Bokor National Park can be protected from external damage and promoted as a wildlife tourism location with observatories, tree top walks, education centres, trekking and specialist tours, designated camping grounds and eco-lodge accommodation. Well managed, minimum impact tours in the outer zones of the protected area and entrance fees can fund park management. To maximise the opportunity for tourism and economic benefit, it is important to recognise all the natural and historic heritage values of the mountain, including existing infrastructure, the ruins of the Hill Station and the built casino precinct.

All future developments must be appropriate and not dominate or compromise the environmental setting. The IUCN national parks category identifies that they are to be managed for ecosystem protection and recreation-activities that do not significantly harm the ecosystem. The risk remains that proposed developments will undermine the integrity of the mountains status as a National Park and conflict with wildlife tourism.

Status of the Bokor Hill Station

Most of the historic buildings, with the exception of the demolished post office and collapsed police station, and the Bokor Palace Hotel, which is being restored, remain in various states of disrepair, including King Sihanouk's Black Palace. There has been no assessment of conservation value and significance undertaken and no protection given to the historic buildings.

Implications for tourism

The heritage of Kampot, including Bokor Hill Station, is an integral chapter in the cultural history of Kampot Province and worthy of emphasis and inclusion in a sustainable tourism initiative. Restoration and presentation of the buildings would create a link to Kampot town and reinforce a heritage tourism theme.

B5.1.2 Kep heritage

Kep city was founded in 1908 as a seaside resort for the French colonialists who called it *La Perle de la Côte d'Agathe*. A merchant of Phnom Penh constructed the first villa in 1910. Later, it was ceded to King Sisowath, and the commissioning of a watering place and sanatorium saw the successful development of a prominent bungalow opened to the public in 1917.

The name Kep may come from the French word for cape (*le cap*). However, Khmer legend explains that Prince Sakor Reach possessed magical powers and hypnotize a commander of Angkor Thom before stealing his horse. While relaxing at the seaside, the commander's troops caught up with the prince, who jumped on the horse to escape. The horse reared and fell on the prince and in the process lost its saddle. The prince made his escape bareback, leaving the saddle behind. Hence, the area was called Kep Seh or saddle for a horse.

Until the 1960s, Kep was a thriving resort town for the French and Cambodian elite who visited for coastal recreation and seafood cuisine. During Prince Norodom Sihanouk's Sangkum Reastr Niyum regime, Kep enjoyed a short period of revitalisation with the development of contemporary style buildings. It was Cambodia's most popular and prestigious beach town and home to the King's resort residence, although it was never occupied. The residence had expansive views over the bay. Predominantly two storey, the brick rendered villas were constructed on large sloping allotments and surrounded by traditional high brick rendered walls featuring ornate entrances. Kep featured a wide oceanfront promenade, statues, traditional crab shack restaurants, a small sandy beach, and extensive mangrove forests. It embodied retreat, peace, healthy recreation, fine dining and connection with the wealthy. Like Kampot and the Bokor Hill Station, Kep suffered from internal conflict and the rise of the Khmer Rouge. Both the Khmer Rouge and locals seeking goods to exchange for rice and cash in Vietnam destroyed many of the stately buildings.

There are currently efforts to again revitalise Kep and return it to its past iconic status. Now, there are nearly 40 guesthouses, resorts and hotels in Kep and it is one of the fastest developing tourist areas in Cambodia, focusing on mid to high-end businesses.

Heritage tourism: the cases of Kampot and Kep

The buildings may be old and many may be crumbling but more than 60 years ago Khmer architects returning from their study in France or under tutorship of European designers shared a vision of style, form, balance and art that had all the hallmarks of writing a major chapter in the history of Cambodia.



The French villas of Kampot, the grandiose ruins of Bokor and the homes of the elite at Kep, the bollards in Kep's streets and colonial lamp-posts, wide boulevards, river esplanades and laneways between streets set the scene for an ambient and idyllic retreat for international tourists; and Kampot has the coffee.

The architectural style may no longer be fashionable to the Khmer and they may prefer a more modern built form, but it is no reason to discount the economic and social value of architectural heritage in the design and implementation of sustainable tourism initiatives. On the Khmer coast, Kep and Kampot combined have the assets to provide a distinctive colonial-theme for attracting tourists. While grander buildings exist elsewhere, the Kampot-Kep collection of colonial architecture is unique in South East Asia.

Status of Kep heritage

Many of Kep's villas remain abandoned, but some of the town's former splendor is still apparent. However, there appears to be limited concern for the heritage status and protection of these buildings.

The provincial government has established beach-side recreation areas with huts and tree-lined sidewalks and large statues, creating an environment for increased investment.

Implications for tourism

The historic heritage of Kep is an extension of that of Kampot, starting with the colonial era, its demise during the times of the Pol Pot regime and now reinvigoration through government and private initiatives. There is the potential to mix the colonial heritage with contemporary design to provide a unique holiday area again for the elite and a visiting populace attracted to the seafood cuisine.

B5.1.3 The strategic importance of Sihanoukville (Kampong Som)

The colonial capital of *Kompong-Som* Province was the Chinese and Siamese village of *Srae-Ambel* (now part of Koh Kong). There were about 50 houses in the village including two Vietnamese homes. Associated with houses on the waterfront were small sea junks used for trade with the ports of Kampot, Chantaboun and Bangkok (Kitagawa 2005). Until 1954, Cambodia's international sea trade was via the Mekong, but the end of French Indochina meant the delta reverted to Vietnamese control. In August 1955, a French/Cambodian construction team cut a base camp into the unoccupied jungle at Kampong Som to commence the construction of a new port. Port construction and the road to Phnom Penh (Route 4) were completed by 1960 and the town renamed Sihanoukville in honour of the King.

Although Kep was a more popular holiday destination, the 1960s saw the construction of tourist and other facilities (e.g., Independence Hotel, villas on Ochheuteal Beach (destroyed in the 1980s), St Michael's Catholic Church (built 1960, closed 1975, reopened 1993), Wat Chotynieng, the original Angkor Brewery (closed in 1975, reopened 1991), and a truck and tractor plant. A second phase of port construction began in 1965, but stalled with the Lon Nol *coup d'etat* of 1970.

During the late 1960s, Sihanoukville served as a transit point for weapons bound for anti-American forces in Vietnam, but with the 1970 *coup d'etat*, it served as a military port for US forces. However, the town's most direct involvement in the American-Vietnam war was on 13 May 1975 when the Khmer Rouge captured the U.S. container ship *S.S. Mayaguez*. The U.S. attacked the off-shore island of Koh Tang, and met fierce resistance. American bombers struck the naval base at Ream, warehouses at the Port, the old airfield, the train yard and the oil refinery north of town. The ship and its crew were freed on 15 May. This was the last official battle of the United States army in the War. At 40m, divers can now see two shipwrecks from the battle off Koh Tang.



After the UN sponsored elections in 1992 and 1993, international tourists started coming to Sihanoukville for the first time, but this stopped abruptly in 1994 when the Khmer Rouge murdered three backpackers taken from a train on the way to Sihanoukville, and three expatriates taken from a taxi on Route 4. With the 1997-98 demise of the Khmer Rouge, Sihanoukville was again open for tourism.

Status of Sihanoukville heritage

Evidence of historic events in the transition of Kampong Som to modern Sihanoukville is hidden by rapid development of the essential port facilities. However, some key buildings and sites remain that reflect the strategic and economic importance of the port to Cambodia and its, at times, turbulent past.

Implications for tourism

The short history of Sihanoukville and absence of consolidated evidence of the past makes development of a history theme for tourism difficult. However, the integration of history in city tours and promotional media can be used to stress the rationale and strategic importance of port development.

B5.1.4 Koh Kong heritage

a. Late Angkorian period heritage of the Cardamom Mountains

In remote, natural rock ledges, scattered around the Cardamom mountains are 15th-17th century sites with 60cm exotic ceramic jars and rough-hewn log coffins (Beavan et al. 2012). The jar burials are a unique feature of the mountain, and a previously unrecorded burial practice in Khmer cultural history. Local legends suggest the bones are the remains of Cambodian royalty, although they are more likely to be the result of funerary rituals associated with highland peoples.



Status of the late Angkorian period heritage

It is probable that other sites remain to be discovered. Total protection of all sites and artefacts is essential. Some material was removed (two jars from the Khnornng Sroal site for the National Geographic "Riddles of the Dead" series in 2003) for museum collections and research, but intact sites remain that could be shown to visitors, provided interference with the sites is avoided.

Implications for tourism

The jars and burial sites have inherent tourist interest and form part of the rich cultural heritage of Cambodia that does not lie solely in Angkorian artefacts. Presentation of some sites to tourists as part of nature-focused tours would be a useful addition to existing visits out of the Chi Phat community based tourism initiative. Protection and respect for sites is important, as well as further archaeological work on understanding the significance of the sites.

b. The lawless frontier-town history of Koh Kong

Kaoh-Kong was ceded from Siam to Cambodia by a treaty on 13 February 1904. In the 1910s, Koh Kong Island was deserted, covered with forest and separated from the mainland by a channel of hundreds of meters. At the northern point, near the small island called Cône, was a custom house. A few Chinese and Vietnamese settled on the coast and fished. The port of Koh Kong was not open for commerce, but a steamship postal service between Saigon (now Ho Chi Minh City) and Bangkok existed. Siamese commercial ships also visited "Kas-Kong" to buy dried fish and Kapik (Kitagawa 2005).

Until the late 1990s, lack of access made Koh Kong one of the most remote and least secure parts of Cambodia. Khmer Rouge in the lower Cardamoms posed a serious threat to locals and travellers and intermittent fighting between the government and Democratic Kampuchea forces continued until 1998. However, construction of the Thai-Cambodian bridge across the Kah Bpow River and upgrading of the national highway meant that Koh Kong was open to industry, investment and tourism.

Isolation in the past also made Koh Kong a centre for wildlife smuggling and sale of wild game for restaurants and local consumption. In 2000, Thailand wildlife traders reportedly came to Koh Kong town each month to buy wildlife products (Momberg & Weiler 1999). In 2005, Yor Ngun (an infamous tiger hunter) was captured in Koh Kong town and charged with having killed and sold at least 19 tigers, 40 leopards, 30 elephants, 500 gaur, banteng and sambar, 40 Malayan sun bears and three Asiatic bears (McGirk 2005). At the time of his arrest, he had 25 bear jaws and 82 bear nails in his possession. He was sentenced to seven years in jail (The Associated Press 2005).



Koh Kong township and the area nearby was also the centre of widespread illegal logging of broad leaf deciduous forests in the Cardamoms. According to environmental agencies, the government logging ban in 2001 has slowed but not prevented the illegal logging trade.

Implications for tourism

While it would be inappropriate to glorify those involved in wildlife smuggling and illegal logging, this history highlights the conservation values of the Cardamom forests and associated natural areas. The history of natural heritage exploitation can be used to emphasise the international importance of the forests and how illegal activities can have a major impact on conservation values.

B5.2 Religious sites

B5.2.1 Cave temples and archaeological sites

The caves in the tower karst between Kep, Kampot and Vietnam are iconic religious, cultural and historical sites containing temples and home to annual festivals. **Phnom Trotung** limestone outcrop is near Tuk Meas village and a cement factory. In the cave, behind a modern shrine is a square brick tower from the late seventh century. Near Kompong Trach town is **Phnom Sor** tower karst. Within this cave-system is a large open area with a reclining Buddha. **Phnom Khyang** is located behind a school and requires a descent to the cave and a squeeze to enter a large cavern. Inside is a brick tower with recesses for offerings. The cave temple at **Phnom Chhnork** is near a



Cham fishing village. Past the wide cave entrance is a pre-Angkorian brick structure of the 5th century Funan era. **Phnom Sar Sear**, 14km southwest of Kep town, consists of three limestone karst approximately 40m in height and covering an area of 1.5km². A small wat and school are at the foot of the karst and a path leads to several caves. The largest is White Elephant cave (Rung Damrei Saa) with a stalactite formation shaped like an elephant's head. The cave of 100 Ricefields provides a view over terraced paddy fields. Other smaller caves in the area contain small shrines and bat colonies.

Status of the cave temples and archaeological sites

Many of the caves have had centuries of religious use, but are not being managed to cope with large tourist numbers. Use and deterioration of cave and religious features threaten these assets for traditional and tourist use.

Implications for tourism

The limestone karst and cave systems are places of cultural significance. With their chimneys, passages, rock formations, Buddhist shrines and pre-Angkorian ruins they are of interest to researchers, international tourists and nature-lovers. While religious tradition welcomes all visitors to temples, there is a danger of use conflict. Separation of tourist visitors spatially or temporally, and construction of paths for visitor safety and to protect cave features is needed.

B5.2.2 Temples and pagodas (wats)

About 80% of the population of the coastal area is Khmer who practice Buddhism, although the presence of Cham (Muslim Vietnamese), Vietnamese, Chinese and Thai reflect history. The Sa'och minority mainly reside in Koh Kong and Kampot provinces. Pagodas are important for the Cambodian culture as a centre of communities and are often located in and on prominent landmarks.



There are about 30 pagodas in Sihanoukville and a population of around 2000 Buddhist monks. **Wat Chotynieng** or Wat Lue (Upper Pagoda) is on a hill overlooking the city and is dedicated to Prince Chourn Nath a Cambodian Buddhist leader. **Wat Krom** (Down Pagoda) is in the city and dedicated to Yeay Mao, the protector of travellers and hunters. **Ream Pagoda** is located in the Ream commune, near the Naval Base and features numerous sandstone carvings. **Chhotanhean Pagoda**, built in 1963, is the oldest in Koh Kong province and located in Koh Kong (Khemarak Phumin City). The stupa at Kun Chang Kun Pen Resort in Neang Kok Village is a place where local people, especially fishers, wish for their family's happiness. Apart from the cave temples, there are three Buddhist temples on the outskirts of Kampot town (**Wat Kampong Bye**, **Wat Sovan Sakor** and **Wat Traoy Koh**) as well as two major Chinese temples.

Status of the coastal temples and pagodas

Most of the temples in the coastal provinces are well maintained through religious practice and festivals. However, few have been promoted as tourism sites. Care is needed to ensure tourist visitors do not overly impinge on religious practice.

Implications for tourism

Many visitors from neighbouring countries as well as domestic tourists will visit temples as part of their holiday. While most tourists to Cambodia will focus on the Angkorian wats, a visit to a local temple, such as the Ream Wat, could form an enjoyable part of a visit. Visitor management and interpretation will be important, emphasising the religious significance and practices of the sites, their community role and the differences between the sites.

B5.3 Festivals

The Khmer tend to celebrate all religious events but, of course, focus on special Buddhist events. However, there has recently been attention given to festivals focused on coastal characteristics. Kampot holds an annual Water Festival and Boat Race on the Kampong Bay River where traditional Cambodian cuisine is prepared. Kep has its Beach Festival and Sihanoukville has hosted the annual Sea Festival. These events have proven to be popular.

Implications for tourism

The similarity, marketing-wise, between the modern festivals creates unnecessary competition between the provinces. There are probably benefits in developing distinctive events that celebrate the special character of the provinces, beyond their coastal location. Themes that emerge relate to heritage (Kampot), coastal cuisine (Kep), nature (Koh Kong), and the sea (Preah Sihanouk). While what occurs during the festival may be similar, the difference in focus could benefit all provinces. What is also missing is the celebration of cultural difference. The minority cultures are barely noticeable, but have a rich culture to protect and present to the world.

B5.4 Arts and crafts

Expressions of traditional and contemporary cultures through arts and crafts is not clearly apparent in any of the coastal provinces, but still exists in silk dyeing and weaving, bamboo/rattan weaving, Krama, sewing, incense manufacture and stone and wood carving, and possibly a lapsed pottery tradition.

Implications for tourism

Khmer handcrafts could be a valuable tourist commodity that would assist in reinvigorating art and craft traditions and form the basis of a productive commune-based industry that would benefit poorer communities and satisfy the tourist demand for souvenirs. It would appear that sharing of knowledge is needed to reinvigorate traditional cultural expressions and probably the import of artisans to re-train community members. There are particular opportunities here for engaging women in tourism.

B6.0 Lifestyle and livelihood assets

About 80% of the population in the coastal provinces is Khmer; the balance includes Cham, Vietnamese, Chinese, Thai and ethnic minorities such as Sa Och.

B6.1 Agriculture

Of the coastal provinces, Kampot produces the largest amount of rice (221,506 tonnes), a vital food source for the community and the tourism sector (Figure B7). Kampot also produces the largest amount of beef with a total of 241,194 tonnes (Figure B8). This amplifies the importance of the rural agriculture sector in Kampot. This presents an opportunity to develop agritourism, where tourists can experience traditional home stays, which incorporate farming of cattle and local produce or tours of such facilities.

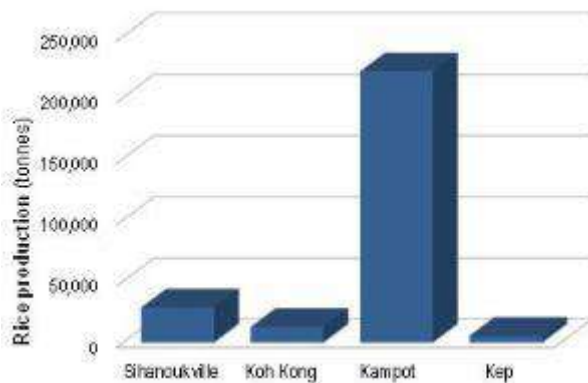


Figure B7. Total rice production of coastal provinces (2009)



Figure B8. Total beef production of coastal provinces (2009)

Pepper production in Cambodia is synonymous with the magnesium and iron rich soils of Kampot and Kep provinces. Green berries grow on climbing vines that reach meters tall and are harvested at the end of the monsoon season for the domestic and international market. Internationally renowned as a condiment, pepper is worthy of addition in many famous dishes. In Cambodia Kampot/Kep pepper is commonly mixed in the traditional Khmer beef dish of *Loc Lak* and pepper crab, and when combined with lime juice and Kampot salt, it is a favoured dipping sauce for seafood. Kampot Province also produces the 'king of fruits' durian; renowned for its taste but strong smell. Durian production is celebrated by a giant durian statue centred in the roundabout on National Highway No.3 in central Kampot Town.

Status of agriculture

Agriculture is the major economic activity in Kampot and to a lesser extent the other provinces; however, all grow produce for local consumption and to supply the growing tourist sector. No agri-tourism activities were identified in the coastal provinces.

Implications for tourism

Culinary tourism is a growing niche market, but all international visitors and many national tourists seek to experience authentic local cuisine. The development of restaurants that specialise in authentic Khmer cuisine (and that of other resident cultures) and agri-tourism experiences, would be an additional attraction/product for the coastal provinces. With wild-caught seafood, all coastal provinces have the opportunity to create a product that differentiates coastal tourism from that of other parts of Cambodia.

B6.2 Fisheries

The capture of wild-caught fish is vital to the coastal economy. Quality seafood is a major tourism attraction,

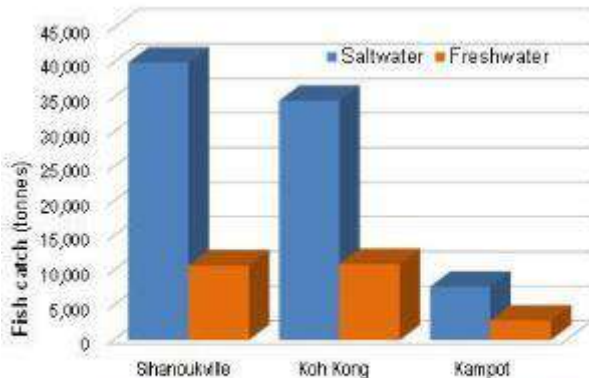


Figure B9. Total fresh and saltwater fish catch (2011)

particularly in coastal areas. Sustainable fishing and land use practices is critical to maintaining marine habitat and marine biodiversity which underpin subsistence, the coastal economy, and feeding of the growing number of tourists. In 2009, fisheries contributed 25.2% of revenue to the primary industry sector. Preah Sihanouk caught the largest amount of salt-water fish (40,100 tonnes), while Koh Kong caught the largest amount of freshwater fish (11,000 tons) (Figure B9). Reef Fish (sweetlips, snapper, barramundi cod, grouper, humphead wrasse and parrotfish are the most valuable and targeted marine species. Also targeted are mangrove mud crab, swimming crab and shrimp/prawn, which attract premium prices.

From the port in Krong Koh Kong, subsistence and export fishing activities take place. Fishing boats from Vietnam and Thailand also fish illegally in the coastal waters of Koh Kong province (FAO 2011). The redevelopment of port facilities in Krong Koh Kong and associated dredging activities will place additional pressures on water quality and fisheries habitat if not managed appropriately.



The *Law of Fisheries 2006* has the provision for a review every five years to assess the effectiveness of management measures and ensure sustainability for the future. This review is overdue and will be useful in assessing current practices, such as purse seining and drift netting, which are banned in other parts of the world. These activities pose significant threat to fisheries sustainability and species of conservation interest listed under the IUCN Red List.

Status of fisheries

Fishing is traditionally an integral part of Cambodian livelihoods and cultural practices in the coastal zone. It is vital for food security and nutrition, and offers unique tourism and business opportunities such as guided fishing trips, SCUBA diving, snorkelling, educational tours and guided local fishing tours. With the improvement of fishing gear since 1979, the loss of enforceable fisheries regulations during the Khmer Rouge Regime, increase in Thailand and Vietnamese fishing boat effort in Cambodian waters, fisheries sustainability is questionable. In addition, climate change, pollution, fragmentation and loss of habitat (e.g. destructive fishing practices, coastal development), invasive species, infestations and over-harvesting may result in severe impacts on fisheries production (FAO 2008).

Over-fishing, illegal fishing activities from neighbouring countries, poor management practices (no legal minimum or maximum size limits to protect breeding populations; seasonal and area closures to protect spawning populations) and lack of effective enforcement have led to the probability of unsustainable fisheries. Damage to ecosystems from dynamite and push-net fishing practices cause a loss of coral reefs and seagrass meadows, and contribute to unsustainable fisheries. Loss of seagrass meadows due to increased sedimentation resulting from poor land use practices and destruction of mangroves for charcoal production are also threats to fisheries, resulting in reduced economic stability and local community livelihoods. Locals do not always make the connection between land-use practices, marine habitat protection and sustainability of fisheries (Nong 2000).

Implications for tourism

The sale of wild-caught fish and other marine products are vital to the sustenance and income of coastal communities. Both the protection of marine resources and the availability of quality safe seafood is also important to the tourism sector because many tourist activities (e.g. diving, snorkelling and the tourism food industry) rely heavily on marine products and resources. Any decline in the availability of quality seafood reduces the potential for developing a distinctive cuisine-based tourism image and product for the coastal provinces.

B7.0 Public infrastructure assets

Infrastructure provides the physical framework that supports economic growth and development. Positive future tourism growth and development will only be possible with the implementation of efficient and effective infrastructure. The level and quality of infrastructure affects public health, tourism growth and sustainability, trade and economic growth. Potable water, sewage treatment, transportation, energy supply and telecommunications are central to the modern world, and in a globally competitive world, Cambodia must be able to meet expected standards if it is to increase its market share from tourism.

B7.1 Transportation network

Improved transport systems and connectivity between coastal provinces, Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and international neighbours enhances the ability for tourists to engage across the four coastal provinces, will lengthen visitor stay, and is needed to cater for the projected increase in tourism. Currently, air, rail, road and sea links are being upgraded and will provide the necessary links to the coast internally and from in-bound countries. Improved all-season accessibility will be a significant benefit for coastal tourism.

Status of the coastal transportation network

Major transportation infrastructure links will soon be completed to bring tourists to the coast. This is complemented by improved cross-border arrangements to allow tourists to flow easily between countries. Within the provinces, local road upgrading to targeted destinations and attractions is needed to increase opportunities for local communities to engage in tourism activity and broaden the range of accessible tourism products.

Implications for tourism

The improved major transport network will open opportunities for within and between province local tourism services, such as bus and tours. Upgrading of provincial roads is needed to make poorer communes accessible and upgrading of the quality of bus services across the coastal provinces would expand tourism opportunities.

B7.2 Sewage treatment

Sanitation is one of the most serious issues facing the future of sustainable tourism as a growth sector for the Khmer coast. Untreated sewage flowing into waterways and coastal areas results in water and soil contamination, and potential for serious impacts on public health. It also threatens freshwater and marine systems (especially coral reefs) that could be a central focus of coastal tourism.

In Sihanoukville, 67% of households do not have a sanitary toilet system (national households, 81%) (CDB 2004). In Koh Kong Province, the vast majority of waste water runs onto the ground, or into the nearest stream or river through sewerage pipes (Caleda 2010). In 2004, 80% of households in Koh Kong did not have a sanitary toilet (WFP 2006). A similar situation exists in Kampot and Kep Provinces.

Status of sewage treatment

All provinces lack an effective sewage system to service the growing population and service the expected growth in tourism. This has serious implications for human and ecosystem health. On islands, the absence of sewerage systems and marine outfalls threatens marine systems risking the loss of environmental attributes that attract tourists.

Implications for tourism

Adequate sanitation is important to the tourist experience and would increase the likelihood of repeat visits if the experience is positive. It is imperative that appropriate sewage treatment infrastructure is developed in all provinces and all tourist destinations for human safety, protection of environmental assets, and to ensure the credibility of the Khmer coast as a tourist destination.

B7.3 Potable water

The percentage of unsafe drinking water sources in the coastal zone is a concern outlined in the 2009 National eco-tourism policy and strategic plan (Figure B10). Despite the high availability of freshwater sources on the Khmer coast (surface and ground), the lack of infrastructure means serious challenges face the coastal provinces in supplying 'safe' drinking water. The major problem associated with surface water is that it is contaminated by faecally-sourced bacteria. In addition, groundwater throughout the region has high arsenic levels. Although provision of safe water is a high priority for the Royal Cambodian Government, it is estimated that only 70% of urban residents outside Phnom Penh have access to 'safe water' and approximately 39% in rural areas. Although tourists are aware that the water is not safe to drink, water treatment facilities in the major cities would alleviate most of the health issues.

Unsafe water presents a current threat to the health and well-being of both residents and tourists alike. Kep has the highest percentage of unsafe drinking water sources (78% of drinking sources are considered unsafe). Currently

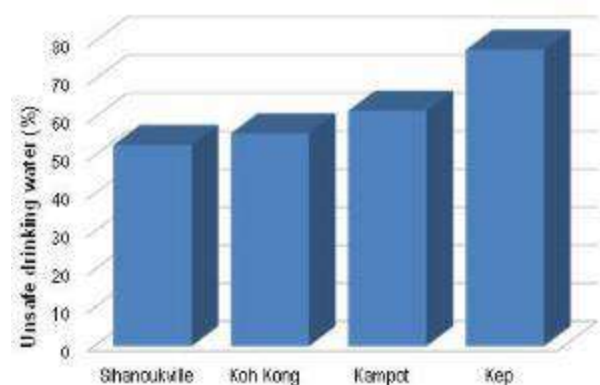


Figure B10. The percentage of unsafe drinking sources in each province (2011)



contaminated groundwater is used as the general water supply for Kep town. In 2004, 51% of households in Koh Kong did not have access to safe drinking water within 150m of their home (WFP 2006). Families mostly rely on rainwater, water from wells or need to buy water from another source (MOE 2002). There is adequate access to and supply of water in Kampot but it is not potable and risks significant contamination from poor sanitation standards and practices in rural areas. In Sihanoukville, 36% households do not have access to a safe source of drinking water at, or within 150 meters of their house (national average 34%). With the establishment of the Sihanoukville Water Supply Authority (SWSA) in 1998, water supply services have been expanded and improved. Urban Sihanoukville has access to 'safe' reticulated water. Peri-urban and rural areas rely on water that has been captured and stored, and groundwater (wells, bores). However, 'safe water' refers to reticulated water and is not necessarily indicative of quality. Sihanoukville's water supply meets aesthetic standards but does not always meet guidelines for microbial and chemical contamination. Improved treatment systems are needed.

Status of potable water supply

Few towns in the coastal zone have reticulated water and none have a reliable supply of treated water suitable for drinking. Adequate, safe water, proper hygiene practices and appropriate sanitation facilities are critical determinants of health. There is significant risk to health and welfare of tourists and residents that requires urgent mitigation with the design, funding and installation of appropriate and reliable water treatment plants throughout the coastal zone. Trained operators are also needed to ensure that standards are met.

Implications for tourism

Safe drinking water is essential for sustainable tourism and the community. Tourists will need to continue to be advised to use bottled water for drinking and to avoid eating raw foods to avoid contracting diarrhoeal diseases. However, a reliance on bottled water creates a growing solid waste issue and does not protect the population from being exposed to pathogens in water used for non-drinking purposes.

B7.4 Solid waste management



Although public littering is common throughout Cambodia, it is a serious issue for the Khmer coast, for environmental, public health and aesthetic reasons. The provision of effective waste management infrastructure to manage litter and solid waste is critical to the future growth and development of sustainable tourism. Once adequate infrastructure for solid waste management is in place, educational programs in schools and the general community will facilitate the uptake of the communities in disposing of waste appropriately. Litter collection programs in schools will also encourage children and families to change habits for a cleaner, healthier, more beautiful environment. These programmes would encourage the reduction, reuse and recycle principles, and implement a reward systems for collecting litter.

Kampot's solid waste management program

Data from Kampot (2009) reflects the status of solid waste generation throughout the coastal provinces. Household waste in Kampot town is 8,544 tonnes a year, industrial waste flowing untreated into the ocean is 584 tonnes, commercial waste 2847 tonnes, and healthcare, institutional and agricultural waste 423.4 tonnes per year. One service company has a daily or every second day collection service for specific areas in the city. There are two government-owned unlined landfills on 17ha of land located 11 km from the city. A Chinese owned liquid waste management plant exists in Kampot and Koh Pong districts and a compost centre built by UNESCO. Effective waste management was observed in central Kampot town (population of 36,367 and 7358 households) with the provision of regularly emptied bins in public spaces; however, businesses waste management is on an 'as needs' basis due to the cost of the service. Households pay USD11 a month and businesses USD20 a month for the service, with only 19% of people understanding the user pays system. This lack of understanding leads to the dumping of rubbish in vacant open spaces, to rot, burn or self-ignite following build-up of gas causing atmospheric pollution. Locals are unaware of the government favoured 'reduce, reuse, recycle' waste system. Compulsory regular waste collection must be provided to all households and businesses with the issuing of fines to the property and business owner for non-compliance. Kampot's Integrated Solid Waste Management Plan is due to be implemented between 2013- 2017. The legal framework exists and it is imperative that these principles are extended province wide (MOE 2012).

Status of solid waste management

All provincial capitals have solid waste collection and disposal systems, but these do not service all areas and best practice standards for management of waste are not in place. Few rural communities have waste management systems. Public awareness of the need to address waste is low. The result is that litter is a widespread issue. At tourist sites, few serviced bins exist and unsightly litter detracts from the appeal of attractions. Waste management on island destinations is a significant issue, with limited space for landfill. Provincial governments are well aware of the waste management issue, but are constrained by funding and public awareness and support for programs.

Implications for tourism

Litter seriously degrades tourist experiences, threatens public health and has major impacts for receiving marine environments. Tourists expect attractions free from litter and a minimum standard of public infrastructure for waste management. These minimum requirements include, but are not limited to, removal of rubbish from public areas, provision of serviced bins, and opportunity for recycling and other sustainable initiatives.





STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON THE KHMER COAST

PART C: STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR THE KHMER COAST

This section provides strategic actions for sustainable tourism development in Cambodia's coastal zone. They are written from the perspective of the Ministry of Tourism and the provincial governments of Koh Kong, Preah Sihanouk, Kampot and Kep.

They are based on the vision that tourism in the coastal zone will be sustainable, resource or tourism asset focused, beneficial to local communities, and progress at a manageable pace.

Actions are prioritised based on the following:

- achievement of tourism success is the rationale (broader environmental and socio-economic issues provide context rather than a criteria for prioritisation);
- the immediacy of threats to the natural and cultural tourism assets;
- protection and improvement of existing tourism assets, products and services;
- establishment of supporting infrastructure to service existing tourist numbers and which will have long-term benefit to tourism and communities;
- development of capacity to manage tourism growth and service targeted markets; and
- development of new products that complement tourism assets and reflect community aspirations.

Timeframes, investment costs and those responsible for implementation are not given, but need to be determined by the capacity of national, provincial, district, commune and individual entrepreneurs to respond.

Existing tourism development plans and commitments are not included in the actions.

PART C: STRATEGIC ACTIONS FOR THE KHMER COAST

C1.0 Strategic action 1: Update legislation and prepare statutory plans for sustainable and integrated coastal zone management

Of critical importance to tourism development are legislation, specific policies and a procedural framework to support the stated vision, which is implied by many Royal decrees and laws of Cambodia as well as strategic planning documents. These are needed to underpin these Strategic Guidelines, including a Khmer coast Tourism Strategy. Legislation review is overdue in many areas (e.g. the *Law on Fisheries 2007*), and some additional regulatory support is desirable to help manage orderly tourism development and best practice services (e.g. regulations or policy guidelines for nature- and culture-based tourism initiatives).

There is also need for (a) statutory land use planning that identifies preferred development types and locations, the development approval process and impact assessment requirements, and (b) strategic action plans for Ministry interests other than tourism that can support tourism development. It is envisaged that these Strategic Guidelines will be adjusted and integrated into a hierarchy of statutory and non-statutory planning instruments.

C1.1 Develop a hierarchy of strategic plans for integrated coastal zone management

Goal: A clear vision and direction for development in the coastal zone.

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| LP01 | Support the review and updating to best practice standards of all legislation relating to the management of coastal zone issues. | 1 |
| LP02 | Support the Ministry of Planning (MOP) and the Ministry of Land Management Urban Planning and Construction in preparing a statutory Khmer coast Strategic Plan (KCSP) in close consultation with all other ministries and the provincial governments. The plan should provide a 20-year integrated vision for the development of the coastal zone and define areas for protection, infrastructure corridors and development principles. | 2 |
| LP03 | Support provincial government with the MOP in preparing statutory Provincial Coastal Plans or planning by-laws to complement the KCSP to guide sustainable development by providing mandatory requirements for developments and criteria upon which development proposals can be assessed. | 2 |
| LP04 | Support the preparation of Ministry and Provincial Action Plans for implementation of the intent of the KCSP. | 3 |

C2.0 Strategic action 2: Develop a Khmer coast Tourism Strategy

While these Strategic Guidelines provide direction for managing tourism growth and actions to focus tourism development on the Khmer coast, they are not policy of the Royal Government of Cambodia and lack the force of law. There is need to convert them to at least a formal policy statement (a Khmer coast Tourism Strategy – KCTS). Similarly, upon review, these Strategic Guidelines can be used as a basis for a short term (2-years) action plan (Khmer coast Tourism Action Plan - KCTAP) prepared at both the Ministry and Provincial levels.

C2.1 Development of the Khmer coast Tourism Strategy and action plans

Goal: Clear guidance for tourism development and actions to achieve sustainable tourism

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| TP01 | Convert these Strategic Guidelines to Action Plans for Ministry and provincial government implementation using SMART (see Acronyms) action statements. | 1 |
| TP02 | Prepare a comprehensive GIS-linked tourism asset database at the provincial level for strategic tourism planning and monitoring of sustainable tourism development. | 1 |
| TP03 | Convert these Strategic Guidelines to a Khmer coast Tourism Strategy (KCTS) that clearly defines the vision and mandatory requirements for tourism development over the next 5-years. | 1 |
| TP04 | Update the database annually for Provincial Tourism Status Reports and a 5-yearly National State of Tourism Report . | 2 |
| TP05 | Prepare Provincial Tourism Strategies that complement the KCTS. | 2 |

C2.2 Provide experience diversity through hub and spoke development

A hub and spoke model is already being applied by the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism to the current major tourism destinations of Siem Reap, Phnom Penh, the north east and Sihanoukville (SNV 2009). It highlights thematic clustering and product diversification to encourage more visitors to coastal tourism destinations and attractions.

'Hub and spoke' form of tourism development refers to centralised areas (the hub) for a concentration of accommodation and other overnight tourist services, and tourism products at the end of transportation 'spokes' (Figure C1). It has the advantage of centralising public utilities (e.g. potable water, rubbish collection, sewage, and energy supply) for cost effectiveness and efficiency. It then facilitates day-visit access to surrounding themed tourist products through the transportation system. The concept does not preclude overnight services along the spokes, particularly at the secondary hubs of Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong, but it reduces the necessity for these and the associated costs of providing for the full range of needs and expectations of tourists who are spending a longer time in an area.. It also has the advantage of not imposing on communities (e.g. poor rural communities) without the experience and capacity to service overnight tourists, while still spreading tourism benefits. Applied to the Khmer coast, the hub and spoke model would see Sihanoukville as the primary hub with Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong towns as secondary hubs linked variously by road, air and sea ferry.

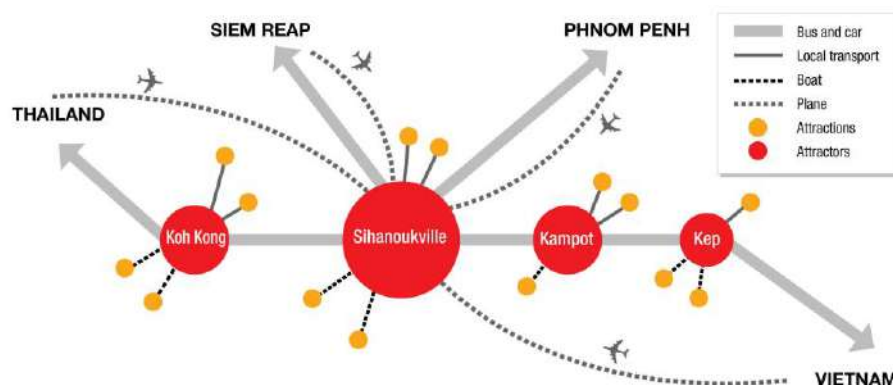


Figure C1. Khmer coast hub and spoke model

Goal: Recognition of Sihanoukville as the primary tourism service hub for the Khmer coast, and Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong towns as secondary hubs through marketing, development of a range of accommodation styles, and expansion of tourism services and products into surrounding areas.

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| TP06 | Proactively foster the development of tourist products within a days-drive or boat trip of the tourism service hubs of Sihanoukville, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong towns. | 1 |
| TP07 | Proactively foster the development of community-based tourist products with the provision of small loans and training in tourism service delivery. | 1 |
| TP08 | In each tourist hub, develop displays and provide information in a centrally located tourist information centre to promote visit opportunities within and around the hubs. | 1 |
| TP09 | Emphasise the tourist hubs in all marketing materials. | 2 |
| TP10 | Complement the central tourist information centre in each tourist hub with a bus and boat terminal where appropriate. | 3 |
| TP11 | Encourage investment in starred accommodation in all tourist hubs. | 3 |

C2.3 Develop tourism products with inter-related themes

Potential sites and features for tourist use are scattered throughout the provinces. Currently, tourists experience these randomly, if at all. They are left to interpret significant sites for themselves, which, without guidance and interpretation, significance is not appreciated. Tourists seek meaning from a visit to justify their expenditure of time and money.

One way of presenting multiple sites is to link them through themes. This has the advantage of attracting tourists interested in specific themes that can be marketed to attract tourists to the hubs and as day tours. Five inter-related themes emerge from consideration of the assets of the provinces: natural heritage, historic heritage, livelihoods, cultural traditions and recreation. The provinces naturally lend themselves to emphasising one or more of these themes and can be used for marketing the provinces as distinctive destinations where different experiential opportunities exist (Table C1). The themes can be marketed as distinct, but interdependent, experiences for tourists

that would encourage longer stays and return visits. While tour guides can present the themes, they can also be reflected in signage style, logos and other identifiable marketing mechanisms. Apart from branding, existing sites will need to be redeveloped to reflect the theme and new attractions developed to complement these and build sufficient product for the theme to be clearly identifiable. Transport services will be needed to link sites along with interpretive services to explain their significance and to develop thematic links.

Table C1 Themes that emerge from consideration of tourism assets and potential emphasis for the provinces

| Theme | Thematic element | Primary emphasis | Secondary emphasis | Tertiary emphasis |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Coastal natural heritage | Forests & wildlife | Koh Kong, Kampot | Sihanoukville, Kep | |
| | Coastal plains & wildlife | Kampot | | |
| | Mangroves, shorelines & wildlife | Koh Kong | Kampot | Kep |
| | Islands, reefs & wildlife | Sihanoukville, Kep, Koh Kong | | |
| | Seagrass & wildlife | Kampot | Koh Kong, Kep | |
| Coastal historic heritage | Pre-colonial | Kampot, Koh Kong | | |
| | Colonial | Kampot | Kep | |
| | Post-colonial conflicts | Kampot | Sihanoukville | Kep, Koh Kong |
| | Post-colonial development | Sihanoukville | Kep | Koh Kong, Kampot |
| Coastal livelihoods | Rural production | Kampot | Kep | Koh Kong |
| | Fishing | Kep, Koh Kong | Kampot, Sihanoukville | |
| Coastal cultural traditions | Cuisine | Kep | Koh Kong, Kampot | Sihanoukville |
| | Arts & craft | Kampot, Koh Kong | | |
| Coastal recreation | Sun & sand based | Sihanoukville | Koh Kong, Kampot | |
| | Coastal relaxation | Kep | | |
| | Marine based | Sihanoukville, Kep, Koh Kong | | |

C2.3.1 Site use, themes and asset values compatibility

Tourism development can reflect and support the ‘nature’ of a place or fundamentally alter its characteristics to change its ‘nature’. For strategic tourism development of the Khmer coast, a key issue is defining the ‘nature’ of locations and their resultant image they portray, determining the identity desired for tourism promotion, and then ensuring that development reflects and reinforces this identity, and on-going actions to manage growth (see Butler 1980). This issue is important because working from and with the ‘nature’ of a place, rather than contriving a tourist product, tends to reduce environmental and social impact, risk, and development costs. It also tends to be more conducive to meeting community aspirations and facilitating their engagement in tourism.

The nature, values and significance of tourism assets, desired themes designed to attract, engage and satisfy tourists, and the levels of existing and expected site use must be considered carefully in tourism planning and developments. Compatibility is essential, otherwise use and development will destroy, alter or demean the value and significance of tourism assets (or other socio-cultural reasons).

Goal: Themed presentation of the provinces and tourism assets, and provision of themed day-visit opportunities that complement and are supported by the provincial service hubs.

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| TP14 | Develop the themes of natural heritage, historic heritage, livelihoods, cultural traditions and recreation as part of the overall sustainable Khmer coast theme. | 1 |
| TP15 | Identify the provinces in marketing as distinctive tourism destinations by developing products in thematic groups and discriminating marketing emphases (see Table C1). | 1 |
| TP16 | Give priority to and support development and tourism service proposals that adopt priority themes for each province or link to themed products. | 1 |
| TP17 | Develop and apply signage and print material presentation standards to reflect themes. | 2 |
| TP18 | Upgrade available information on coastal tourism assets and their heritage significance. Provide this information to relevant tourism operators. | 2 |

C3.0 Strategic action 3: Protect natural and cultural heritage

The natural, historical and cultural areas and sites of the coastal zone represent core tourism assets. Their protection is fundamental to sustainable tourism and presentation of their heritage values is an essential part of eco-cultural, and history tourism. Public and private sector tourism managers need to be allies of conservation and environmental protection authorities, because these authorities are responsible for protection and management of

these tourism assets. Partnerships between heritage resource managers, the MOT and tourism operators will enhance visitor satisfaction while ensuring the protection and preservation of assets.

C3.1 Protect natural heritage assets

Recognition by the tourism sector of the intrinsic value of biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes is essential for sustainable tourism. The tourism sector must work with heritage resource managers to ensure valued resources are not degraded by increased tourism use. The tourism sector should also contribute to the management of natural and cultural areas that are the focus of tourism activity. Development of tourism opportunities need not await complete knowledge of heritage values in an area; however, policies and legislation governing development should apply the precautionary principle.

Goal: Secured protection and presentation of coastal natural heritage assets

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| HP01 | Ensure strict adherence to comprehensive Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (EIA and SEA) requirements for all tourism development proposals potentially impacting on natural areas. | 1 |
| HP02 | Support the Ministry of Environment (MOE) in ensuring that the only development approved for construction in protected areas has the primary purpose and emphasis of presenting the heritage values of the area. | 1 |
| HP03 | Support the MOE in establishing a comprehensive GIS-linked biological-ecological database at the provincial level of both marine and terrestrial resources (tourism assets). | 2 |
| HP04 | Support and advise the MOE in preparing landscape conservation plans for the coast, which include opportunities and constraints for tourism. | 2 |
| HP05 | Support and advise the MOE in preparing management plans for all protected areas in the coastal zone, which include opportunities and constraints for tourism. | 3 |
| HP06 | Support the MOE with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries in declaring the whole of the Khmer coast as a Marine Park Area (MPA), with appropriate zoning plans to guide use (see model of the Great Barrier Reef MPA, Australia). | 3 |

C3.2 Protect historical and cultural heritage assets

Pre-Angkorian, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial era heritage resources in the coastal zone are poorly understood and appreciated. This also applies to cultural heritage and expressions of the communities that reside in the coastal zone. Yet, these are important assets for tourism and part of the national identity of Cambodia. These heritage assets can be developed as products, especially by local communities if they have appropriate support.

Goal: Secured protection and presentation of coastal historical and cultural heritage

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| HP05 | Support the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA) in establishing a comprehensive GIS-linked historical and cultural heritage database at the provincial level. | 2 |
| HP06 | Support the MCFA in preparing conservation plans for the coastal historical and cultural heritage, which include opportunities and constraints for tourism. | 2 |

C4.0 Strategic action 4: Upgrade public infrastructure

The achievement of a sustainable tourism vision requires action beyond the tourism sector. Tourism requires basic public health infrastructure such as effective solid and liquid waste treatment to protect and meet the expectations of tourists and to ensure environmental quality is restored and maintained. A healthy environment is a pre-requisite for a healthy community and healthy tourists. Tourism also needs efficient transportation, telecommunication and energy distribution systems, and safe drinking water. The needs of tourists and the national income they generate can provide a rationale for upgrading public health infrastructure within local communities.

C4.1 Provide environmental and health protection infrastructure – sewage treatment

Goal: Effective sewage treatment and minimisation of untreated marine outfalls for liquid waste disposal

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PI01 | At a minimum, establish (or upgrade) high quality secondary treatment of sewage waste for towns with populations over 30,000 (Sihanoukville and Kampot, Koh Kong and Kep towns). | 1 |

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PI02 | Require all new tourism developments to treat their own sewage to at least secondary treatment level. | 1 |
| PI03 | Require all existing tourist developments to transition to a 'no untreated marine outfall' condition within 5-years. | 2 |
| PI04 | Support investigations into alternative management strategies for dealing with treated sewage effluent and sludge, including safe agricultural reuse to ensure minimal impacts of marine outfalls. | 3 |

C4.2 Provide environmental and health protection infrastructure through integrated solid waste management (reduce, reuse, recycle, disposal of residual)

Goal: Reduced solid waste production and effective management of waste generated from tourism businesses and communities⁶

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PI05 | Support the enforcement of stringent anti-littering legislation. | 2 |
| PI06 | Support the establishment of centralised solid waste management centres that separate waste for recycling and effective disposal in districts with populations over 7000. | 3 |
| PI07 | Support the establishment of regular solid waste collection services in all towns/communes with populations over 7000. | 3 |
| PI08 | Encourage and support the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport with the MOE to develop public and school education programs promoting waste reduction, reuse and recycling and appropriate disposal in the interests of environment and human health protection (see the 'Keep Australia Beautiful' campaign). | 3 |
| PI09 | Establish a clean tourist-community campaign that acknowledges community efforts in solid waste management and clean presentation of public areas. | 1 |
| PI10 | Provide serviced garbage bins for green, recyclable and general waste at all tourist attractions. | 1 |
| PI11 | Require all new tourist developments to have a waste management strategy in place that includes waste reduction, reuse and recycling and, subject to PI06, transfers to centralised district solid waste management centres. | 1 |
| PI12 | Require all existing tourist developments to transition to the requirements of PI06 within 3-years. | 1 |
| PI13 | Require all tourist accommodations and facilities on islands to transition to the requirements of PI06 within 3-years. | 1 |
| PI14 | Require all tourist operators to provide safe drinking water refills. | 2 |

C4.3 Improved tourism transport infrastructure

Goal: An all-weather, efficient transportation network between Phnom Penh and Sihanoukville, between coastal tourism hubs and from the hubs to community-based attractions

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PI15 | Support the upgrade of roads between tourist hubs. | 1 |
| PI16 | Support the completion of the Sihanoukville–Phnom Penh rail link (and beyond), and promote it as an affordable and efficient tourist transport method. | 1 |
| PI18 | Support the provision of tourist boat services on major rivers to access community-based tourist attractions. | 1 |
| PI18 | Support the establishment of a regular tourist bus connection between tourist hubs. | 2 |
| PI18 | Support the establishment of bicycle and footpaths around all tourist hubs. | 2 |
| PI18 | Encourage the allocation of part of roadways between tourist hubs for bicycle use. | 3 |

⁶ Priorities are based on actions that the Ministry of Tourism could initiate directly, but listed in order of need.

| | | |
|------|--|---|
| PI17 | Support cost recovery mechanisms (e.g. general vehicle registration, tourist bus surcharges and toll-roads) to fund the construction of new roads and maintain existing roads. | 3 |
|------|--|---|

C4.4 Improved access to potable water

Goal: A reliable potable water supply for tourists and the community.

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PI18 | In the absence of a reticulated potable water supply, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> require all new tourist developments servicing more than 100 people to be at least 50% self-sufficient in terms of potable water (this may require desalination plants); and | 1 |
| PI19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> require all existing tourist developments servicing more than 100 people to be at least 50% self-sufficient in terms of potable water supply within 5-years. | 1 |
| PI20 | Support the upgrade or development of potable water supply and reticulation to towns/communes with a population of over 7000 people. | 2 |
| PI21 | Support the establishment of a desalination plant in Kep town (this will require national, provincial or private sector investment). | 3 |
| PI22 | Support the use of non-corrosive rainwater tanks throughout the coastal zone. | 3 |

C5.0 Strategic action 5: Improve tourism services and capacity to respond to tourism growth

Perhaps the most important tourism assets are the people directly involved in tourism and the host communities that receive tourists. Both need knowledge of how to deliver quality services and tourist experiences, and to ensure that tourists do not impact negatively on livelihoods and socio-cultural traditions. The importance of tourism and hospitality training is recognised world-wide as essential for successful tourism. However, Cambodia suffers from a lack of a knowledgeable and trained tourism and hospitality sector. This reduces opportunities for local community members to engage in tourism and benefit economically. Promotion of local ownership and initiative maximises the local economic benefits of tourism and can reduce the economic leakage that is inherent in international ownership of tourism businesses.

C5.1 Improve service standards and provide training in tourism asset management and hospitality

Goal: Improved service delivery and protection and management of tourism assets

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| SD01 | Continue to establish best practice guidelines and standards for tourism services and products in conjunction with tourist sectors. For the Khmer coast, needs lie in the areas of, for example, marine activities, adventure activities, community based tourism, rural industry activities (agri-tourism), island development, interpretation and guiding, and community based hospitality and hygiene. | 1 |
| SD02 | Establish incentives (financial and through advertised recognition) for businesses that adopt best practice standards (e.g. Star rating system for food safety in restaurants). | 1 |
| SD03 | With tourism sector support, establish a program of 3-week short courses relevant to delivery of quality tourism experiences that, ideally, can be counted towards academic qualifications. Courses should be delivered through lectures, site visits, and workshops and cover hospitality, tourism management and heritage resource management. | 2 |
| SD04 | Establish an accreditation system for tourism products and services that is endorsed by government and the tourism sector. This may require separate systems for accommodation, hospitality, tourism products and services (e.g. nature and culture-based tourism). | 3 |
| SD05 | Establish an annual awards system to acknowledge quality tourism services and products (eg. Healthy Waterways Awards in south east Queensland). | 3 |

C5.2 Transition community livelihoods to include tourism

Only a minor part of the coastal community will be able to be involved directly in tourism, but most will benefit indirectly and almost all will be affected by increased tourism activity. Increased community awareness of tourism is needed to minimise socio-cultural disruption and to stimulate individual and community interest in developing

tourism products and services. Key objectives are to transition livelihoods to benefit from the value-adding that tourism can bring, substitute exploitative behaviours with conserving activities and alternative livelihoods (UNWTO 2012a).

Goal: Improved community awareness of tourism and increased capacity to develop tourism business products

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| SD06 | Establish a program of 1-day provincial short courses on 'tourism' for coastal community members. Course content could include the tourism system, tourist expectations, benefits and impacts. | 1 |
| SD07 | Establish a program of 1-day provincial short courses on 'heritage resource status and management' for coastal community members. Courses could include addressing marine, terrestrial, historical heritage and cultural resources, and how to engage in tourism that presents these. | 1 |
| SD08 | Establish a program of 2-day provincial short courses in niche tourism business opportunities for coastal community members. Courses could include explaining opportunities for business development to supplement existing livelihoods and business planning, basic business management and book-keeping. | 1 |
| SD09 | Provide micro-financing to support the development of small-scale local business and community endeavours based on a business plan. | 1 |

C5.3 Establish a school for tourism, hospitality and heritage asset management

As provided in the *Law on Tourism 2009*, Cambodia needs a tertiary training and tourism research facility if it is to achieve the goal of sustainable tourism and a pillar of the Cambodian economy. The *ad hoc* training initiatives indicated above aim to address immediate needs, but action should commence now to establish a tertiary level training and research institution. Collaboration with international and national universities and initial investments of donor agencies will be needed.

Goal: Available local professional tourism, hospitality and heritage resource managers to plan and manage tourism growth

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| SD09 | Establish a School of Tourism and Hospitality (in Sihanoukville) with certificate, diploma and graduate programs in tourism and hospitality management. | 2 |
| SD10 | With the Ministries of Environment, Culture and Fine Arts, and Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (at least) expand the School to include training in natural and cultural heritage resource management. | 2 |
| SD11 | Explore interest in expanding the school concept to be the South East Asia School of Tourism, Hospitality and Heritage Resource Management with at least the involvement of Myanmar and Laos and possibly Vietnam and Thailand (see the University of the South Pacific as an example of a regional university). | 3 |

C6.0 Strategic action 6: Increase community-based products and services

While the hubs are largely in place, tourism products along the spokes are largely absent, which limits opportunities for local communities to benefit from tourism. Many existing tourist sites (attractions) are not designed to handle the existing levels of tourism use.

C6.1 Rationalised site use and expanded tourism opportunities

Goal: Rationalised site use and asset presentation of existing tourist sites

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| PD01 | Review and, as appropriate, redevelop all existing tourist sites with the following objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improved visitor management, especially visitor flows; provision of parking well away from the focal area; | 1 |

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • separation of vendor activity from the focal area; • separation of recreation activity from the focal area; • reduced site impacts through site hardening, including the use of formed pathways, boardwalks and barriers; • improved facilities including toilets, hand washing and rubbish bins. and • interpretation of site values and significance. | |
| PD02 | Encourage the formation of community cooperatives that produce and promote local, sustainable products and services (e.g., Cambodian cuisine, art, handicrafts, agricultural products and performing arts). | 2 |

Goal: Expanded tourist (and community) opportunities

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| PD03 | Develop natural heritage tourism products , including walking tracks and boardwalks, with guiding services, particularly in Koh Kong and Kampot (Bokor). | 1 |
| | Develop historic heritage tourism products , with guiding services, particularly in: | |
| PD04 | • Kampot (town and Bokor) – pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial conflict; | 1 |
| PD05 | • Koh Kong – pre-colonial and post-colonial conflict; | 2 |
| PD06 | • Sihanoukville – post-colonial development and conflicts; | 2 |
| PD07 | • Kep – colonial, post-colonial and conflict. | 2 |
| | Develop coastal livelihood tourism products , with guiding services, particularly in: | |
| PD08 | • Kampot (and Kep) – rural production; | 1 |
| PD09 | • Koh Kong, Kampot and Kep – fishing. | 1 |
| | Develop cultural traditions tourism products , with guiding services, particularly in: | |
| PD10 | • Kep – Khmer and minority cuisine; | 1 |
| PD11 | • Koh Kong and Kep – fishing. | 2 |
| | Develop coastal recreation tourism products , particularly in: | |
| PD12 | • Sihanoukville – sun and sand based; | 1 |
| PD13 | • Kep – coastal relaxation; | 1 |
| PD14 | • Sihanoukville, Kep and Koh Kong – marine and island based. | 1 |

C6.2 Local community benefits

The Khmer coast is based on a cash economy with little tax captured by the government to fund infrastructure, services, health and education. Currently, tourists stay for an average of 2 nights spending approximately USD45 per day. The development of more local community products can encourage tourists to stay longer and spend more money during their stay, injecting more vital cash into the local economy. Greater economic influx raises the socio-economic platform of local communities, improves general standard of living and assists in alleviating poverty.

Increasing the overall wealth of the coastal provinces will provide opportunity for investment in key infrastructure such as access, water, sewerage, electricity, rubbish collection and landfill management, and improvements to hospitals and health care for residents and educational facilities. Increased income in the community provides opportunity for expansion and development of new business and markets and increases the demand for further employment and training. Appropriate business expansion and the demand for more food and services will require security of land tenure.

Goal: Communities engaged in tourism enterprises and gaining economic benefits

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| CBT01 | Remove economic and structural barriers to local community involvement in tourism product development. Barriers include lack of financial and human capital to invest in tourism and unsecured land tenure. | 1 |
| CBT02 | Ensure a secure land tenure for communities living within existing tourist attractions and for local and community businesses seeking to develop tourism products, provided they meet sustainability criteria. | 1 |

| | | |
|-------|--|---|
| CBT03 | Support the establishment of district and provincial tourism boards that include representatives of the tourism sector and communities to co-ordinate tourism service provision, marketing of local products, co-ordinated input to tourism planning and a forum for reporting and addressing issues of tourism concern. | 1 |
|-------|--|---|

C7.0 Strategic Action 7: Targeted marketing and tourism promotion

C7.1 Marketing and the Khmer coast brand

A strong brand is crucial for achieving a meaningful and sustainable point of differentiation to attract tourists and provide a competitive advantage over other destinations, especially coastal areas of neighbouring nations. A marketing strategy that offers a diverse range of products and experiences as one brand establishes legitimacy of the Khmer coast as a unique nature and culture-based tourism destination. This will increase Cambodia's international tourism profile and global competitiveness.

Goal: International recognition of the Khmer coast as a destination that complements but contrasts with experiences available in coastal areas of neighbouring countries

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| MI01 | Develop and consistently apply the Khmer coast brand to the natural and cultural assets of coastal provinces and themes identified in Section C2.3. Ensure the brand incorporates the hub and spoke concept, emphasises diversity and the unique qualities of each province, to spread and separate tourists seeking specific experiences for their holiday or multiple experiences as part of a single holiday. | 1 |
| MI02 | Set measurable long-term (5-10 years) marketing and advertising goals with sufficient flexibility to be adjusted in response to externalities. | 1 |
| MI03 | Develop a co-ordinated marketing calendar and complementary advertising strategies months in advance to coincide with important religious and cultural festivals and seasonal attractions. This will develop provincial co-operation rather than competition, and spread tourism benefits equitably. Well-informed tourists tend to stay longer in both wet and dry seasons. | 2 |
| MI04 | Ensure promotional materials are available on web-sites and at airports on arrival, road border crossings and at all information centres. Tourists often keep this information to show family and friends. It is an effective method for spreading information rapidly, reinforcing brand identity. | 1 |
| MI05 | Ensure promotional material is accurate and focused on points of differentiation of the experiences available in each province. | 1 |
| MI06 | Hire a professional marketing agency with a proven record of accomplishment in regional destination promotion, freeing the Ministry to focus on the development of quality tourism services. | 3 |
| MI07 | Use social media (e.g. Twitter and Facebook) to capitalise on 'word of mouth' marketing. | 3 |
| MI08 | Develop applications for mobile devices that can be downloaded that highlight places to visit, eat, special deals, shopping, tours etc. | 3 |

C7.2 Provide accurate information on visitor opportunities with information centres that offer a booking service

The Khmer coast is lacking in accessible multi-lingual information on nature and culture-based tourism. Inconsistent labelling of tourist attractions is also common, leading to locational confusion. Quality tourist information systems allow visitors to make informed decisions about the places they visit. This includes location and directional signage. Such non-verbal assistance can be used to reinforce the marketing brand and reflect the distinctiveness of the provinces. For interpretation of natural and cultural assets, there is the opportunity to use trained local guides. For example, at Phnom Kiri Seila, the villagers have extensive knowledge of the limestone karst, cave and artefacts and confidently direct visitors and explain a feature; however, they lack technical knowledge and communication techniques to make the experience truly memorable.

Tourist information centres

MOT approved Information Centres (e.g. at Ochheuteal Beach, Sihanoukville) improve availability and access to information for tourists and are valuable outlets for information and provision of services for all elements of the tourist sector. International and domestic tourists require clearly identifiable, efficient, vibrant centres, stocked with up-to-date information about current events, timetables for buses and ferries, a register of reliable tuk-tuk drivers and vehicle renters, how to access medical services and accommodation options to ensure maximum enjoyment of

their visit. Connections between tourism-based businesses and information centres are critical for the effective delivery of tourism related information. The centres must liaise with accommodation and service providers to stock their current advertising material and rates, and collect accurate comprehensive statistics on visitation.

The MOT and Tourist Information Centres must: (1) promote the “Cambodian Kingdom of Wonder” brand as well as the Khmer coast themes both locally and internationally (RGoC 2012: 39); (2) develop or adopt a universally accepted logo for information centres; and (3) develop a distinctive Khmer coast brand to improve market recognition of coastal opportunities. Ongoing funding of tourist information centres can be achieved through commissions, but this will require effective e-communication between centres and tourism service providers.

Goal: Well-informed visitors oriented to natural and cultural experience opportunities

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| MI09 | Provide themed pre-visit information through websites, mobile phone apps, and brochures so that visitors can make an informed choice on where they will visit and how they can get there. | 1 |
| MI10 | Promote local tourist attractions by upgrading and theming directional road signage. | 1 |
| MI11 | Provide opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about the natural and cultural heritage values of the coast and specific attractions with improved guiding services and on-site interpretation. | 2 |
| MI12 | Develop a suite of authentic, community developed visit mementos and souvenirs that facilitate positive recollection of the visit and benefit local economies. | 2 |
| MI13 | Develop brochures on tourism attractions, cultural history and natural environment to enrich the tourist experience through enhanced knowledge. | 3 |
| MI14 | Provide advice on appropriate ways tourists can assist the disadvantaged and contribute to ensuring natural and cultural protection. | 3 |
| MI15 | Upgrade tourist information centres in all provincial capitals so they provide a comprehensive information service to visitors and can make booking for tourist service providers on a commission basis. | 1 |

C8.0 Strategic action 8: Establish transparent systems for investments, income and disbursements

C8.1 Investments

The proposed actions will require investments in product development, improving capacity to deliver quality tourism services and marketing. This will require financial investment by the Cambodian government, international aid, tourism companies, communities and individual local entrepreneurs. While the private sector will readily invest in structures and services that will deliver a profitable return, they will only do so if the investment context is seen as being conducive for success. This is about the level of risk associated with the investment. If the investment context is right, this is usually sufficient incentive for the private sector to respond to opportunities. Establishing an attractive investment context is a role of government. Part of establishing this is having a clear investment policy and a vision and plan for tourism that is followed consistently. Private investors need this security. Security is also measured by the commitment of governments and communities to co-invest.

Goal: Multiple investments in public infrastructure, tourism products and community based businesses

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| | In consultation with the provincial governments, prepare a strategic investment needs and opportunities portfolio with potential targets, such as: | |
| ID01 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> international aid agencies for capacity building, law and planning, and public infrastructure that serves tourism and local communities; | 1 |
| ID02 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> international investors in tourism for exemplar developments that set the tone for future investments; | 1 |
| ID03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> local entrepreneurs in each province, largely for hub-centred developments and tourism services (e.g., guiding services, restaurants, accommodation, transportation); | 1 |
| ID04 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> communities for agri-, eco, lifestyle, historical and cultural products, with restaurants; | 1 |
| ID05 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> investments and co-investments by central government, including public infrastructure, schools and health services, | 1 |

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| ID06 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOT, largely for planning, capacity building, marketing and seed funding of community based products; | 1 |
| ID07 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provincial government for local public and tourism infrastructure and local marketing. | 1 |

C8.2 Recouping maintenance and operating costs

Initial capital costs in tourism development are minor when compared with on-going operating and maintenance costs. This applies equally to the public and private sectors. Income is needed to maintain tourist infrastructure and this appears to be absent in many of the existing tourist sites of the Khmer coast. Tourists and tourism operators generally understand the user-pays principle and are happy to pay for quality service if funds are disbursed transparently and on items that are recognised as being required for on-going tourism success. Revenue for maintaining public tourism infrastructure and promoting tourism can come from those that benefit from the infrastructure and service. These include the tourists, tourism operators that use public open space and services, vendors that use tourism sites as their business location and tourists as their clients, accommodation centres whose clients are tourists attracted to the destination by public assets, and developers who draw on public goods and require public infrastructure for the success of their operations.

While the level of fees charged is a matter of government policy, it should be commensurate with the level of service provided or utilised, and equitable in terms of capacity to pay and other contributions made. For example, many tourism assets are the result of a history of community stewardship. This needs to be acknowledged.

Goal: A transparent system for raising funds to develop and maintain tourist facilities, market local products and improve local community well-being

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| | In consultation with the tourism sector, develop transparent systems for collecting fees for services directly from tourists and tourism operators through: | |
| ID09 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> site entrance fees from tourists (e.g. to a national park or temple), | 1 |
| ID10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> operator fees for using a site’s assets (e.g. tour guides who use a national park), | 1 |
| ID11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> on-site vendor fees from businesses that depend on visitation to the site (e.g. restaurants at the entrance or within a recreation area), | 1 |
| ID12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bed taxes from accommodations that depend of marketing of a destination and client use of tourism assets, | 1 |
| ID13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> development taxes from large investors who draw on public utilities infrastructure, destination marketing and tourism assets for the success of their businesses. | 1 |

C8.3 Transparent disbursement of income for strategic tourism initiatives

With the assumption that government and international aid investments need not be repaid, Figures C2 to C6 indicate a possible approach to disbursement of fees and charges applied to tourism activity.

There is also the assumption that leases and permits are required by operators to conduct business within tourist sites. It is through this process that best practice procedures can be prescribed and ideally a requirement for accreditation (see actions SD04). Any system of charges will require transparent governance and independent auditing.



Figure C2 Disbursement of site entrance fees



Figure C3 Disbursement of tour operator fees



Figure C4 Disbursement of on-site vendor fees

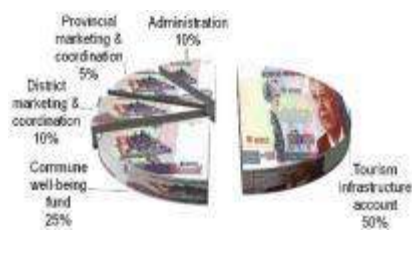


Figure C5 Disbursement of bed taxes from accommodations



Figure C6 Disbursement of development taxes

Goal: A transparent system for disbursement of income from service fees and charges

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| ID14 | In consultation with the tourism sector, local communities, national and provincial government, develop transparent systems for disbursement of income from fees and charges to fund: | |
| ID15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> community well-being initiatives and seed-funding of community and local product development, | 1 |
| ID16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> site management and upgrading, | 1 |
| ID17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> district and provincial marketing of tourism products, | 1 |
| ID18 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> tourism research and training, and | 1 |
| ID19 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> additional tourism and public infrastructure. | 1 |

C8.4 Monitoring and reporting tourism performance

To grow a sustainable tourism sector for the Khmer coast, information on the tourist experience is required. The value of tourist feedback (and visitor statistics) requires careful evaluation of collected data. This needs to go beyond measuring growth in the sector to include satisfaction measures. Tourist operators and the community also require feedback to improve and maintain services and to evaluate the effectiveness of investments. Negative feedback should be seen as an opportunity to improve performance. Public reporting of performance should be required to inform the investment community and host communities to provide information that will be useful for adjusting strategies.

Goal: Comprehensive and efficient monitoring of tourism performance and transparent reporting

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| ME01 | In consultation with the tourism sector, resource management agencies and communities, develop a set of standard questions to measure satisfaction with tourism facilities, services and assets. The target should be to obtain feedback from at least 10% of clients. | 1 |
| ME02 | In consultation with the tourism sector and resource managing agencies, develop a set of standard questions to identify the demographic characteristics of visitors to tourist attractions. | 1 |
| ME03 | Conduct annual meetings with communities involved with or affected by tourism activities to evaluate community impact of tourism. | 2 |
| ME04 | Provide resources to collect and appropriately analyse and report these data. | 1 |
| ME05 | With the provinces, each year prepare a summative report on the state of tourism in the coastal zone that reports on visitor statistics to each province and attractions, the state of tourism assets and visitor satisfaction. Include data in the Ministry's Annual Report. | 2 |
| ME06 | Every 5-years, prepare a comprehensive State of Tourism Report that evaluates progress in achieving sustainable tourism in the coastal zone. | 1 |





STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR SUSTAINABLE TOURISM ON THE KHMER COAST

PART D: STRATEGIC ACTION AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL

This section introduces the provinces of Preah Sihanouk, Kampot, Kep and Koh Kong and actions relevant to each province. The strategic actions seek to reinforce the uniqueness of each province especially for nature- and culture-based tourism. However, where marketing themes coincide, provinces could adopt and adapt the proposed actions identified for other provinces. For example, actions for Koh Kong Province are presented last. Tourism development for Koh Kong can draw on concepts proposed for, say, Kampot Province. In contrast, coastal development guidelines proposed for Kep (Section D3.2.1) cannot necessarily be applied to the beach areas of Sihanoukville: existing development, geographic context and desired tourism themes and image differ significantly.

Issues common to all coastal provinces (e.g. sewage, potable water, theme development and marketing) are addressed in Part C of this report. These should be seen as precursors to actions specified in this section and implemented to provide co-ordinated nature- and culture-based sustainable tourism development across the four coastal provinces. However, actions specified in this part need not be delayed awaiting implementation of actions presented in Part C.

PART D: STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL

D1.0 Preah Sihanouk – *Khmer coast relax*

D1.1 Preah Sihanouk tourism context

Sihanoukville is built physically and economically around the port, but it is currently the focus of tourism on the Khmer coast. The vibrant ‘sun and sand’ tourism development and image that has emerged is now a significant component of the provincial economy. However, protection of marine waters and the quality of the beaches must be maintained. In addition, the natural and cultural assets surrounding the city could value-add to experiences of the existing markets and diversify the economy in areas beyond the provincial capital. Preah Sihanouk offers a broad variety of tourism based activities that include shopping, entertainment, restaurants, nightlife and beaches; but away from the city are waterfalls, coastal islands, natural settings and cultural heritage sites that could complement existing coastal tourism experiences.

The redevelopment of Ochheuteal Beach has not only made the beach more attractive for all, the consultative process that enabled the redevelopment to proceed is commendable. Evaluation is an important aspect of any new public-space redevelopment and government officials acknowledge that formal evaluation of the Ochheuteal Beach redevelopment, including stakeholder assessments, could provide guidance for development plans for neighbouring beaches and all coastal provinces.

D1.1.1 Preah Sihanouk tourism assets

Preah Sihanouk economic environment

Sihanoukville is the hub of the Khmer coast for tourism and commerce. The international deep-water port is central to the local and national economy. Sihanoukville has an international airport and road (and rail) connections to Phnom Penh and Siem Reap and the adjoining coastal provinces. Factories in Sihanoukville’s special economic zones provide employment (e.g. garment making and shrimp processing), and the national beer is produced here. Agriculture (mainly rice and fruit growing) is a relatively minor economic sector, although fishing and aquaculture continue to be of importance. The tourism areas in downtown Sihanoukville provide accommodation, nightlife, restaurants, bars, clubs, entertainment, traditional Khmer massage and shopping. Not only are they a vital part of the local economy but they provide a rich, exotic experience for visitors!

Preah Sihanouk natural environment

The peri-urban areas of Preah Sihanouk are rich in natural assets. Ream National Park is significant due to its high biodiversity values and close proximity to Sihanoukville, providing easy access for tourists. The park is 21,000 hectares of forest, and a 5,000 hectare marine park, which includes coral reefs, marine grasses and mangroves. The Kbal Chhay waterfalls are an important local recreation area and used increasingly by tourists. Off-shore are numerous islands with golden sands and fringing coral reefs; many remain undeveloped.

Preah Sihanouk social environment

Sihanoukville provides accommodation, nightlife, restaurants, bars, clubs, entertainment, traditional Khmer massage and shopping. Not only are they a vital part of the local economy but they provide a rich, exotic experience for visitors. These features are complemented by local markets and street sellers that offer handmade products and other specialties as tourist souvenirs.

D1.1.2 Preah Sihanouk tourism status

In 2011, Preah Sihanouk’s share of the 2.88 million international visits to Cambodia was approximately 100,000 people, with approximately 500,000 domestic visitors. Few visitors travelled to areas away from the coast and city to explore the province’s rich natural beauty, history and cultural traditions.

Unregulated development in the environmentally sensitive coastal areas is currently the largest threat to long-term sustainability of tourism in the province. Pollution from inadequately treated sewage, littering and dumping of wastes threatens the social and environmental values of the province. Less obvious but important, the impacts of climate change need to be addressed in development approvals to account for sea level rise, storm surge, more intense typhoons and impacts to coral reefs from rising sea temperatures. Some of the impacts from climate change can be mitigated by appropriate approval conditions that



include buffers between developments and sensitive coastal areas and minimising sediment and chemical run-off from agricultural lands.

D1.2 Strategic actions for Preah Sihanouk



Since Sihanoukville is the hub of the Khmer coast, promotion of responsible tourism development and sustainable tourism initiatives need to be exemplified in the city. Ongoing promotion of the “Clean City, Clean Resort, Good Service” provides a useful focus for marketing of Sihanoukville (Kingdom of Cambodia 2012:36) and creates a good first impression. However, information and services to encourage tourists beyond the city and into the other provinces is needed to maximise benefits to communities across the Khmer coast.

D1.2.1 Realise Preah Sihanouk’s tourism potential with a diversity of quality products

Preah Sihanouk’s attractors for tourists include its urbanised city core and deep-water port, the international airport and transport network to Phnom Penh, Siem Reap and the coastal provinces, and the diversity of natural assets (Figure D1). Apart from being the transportation hub for the coast, it is also the economic centre. It therefore acts as a focal area for tourists attracted to its white-sand beaches and active recreation and nightlife.

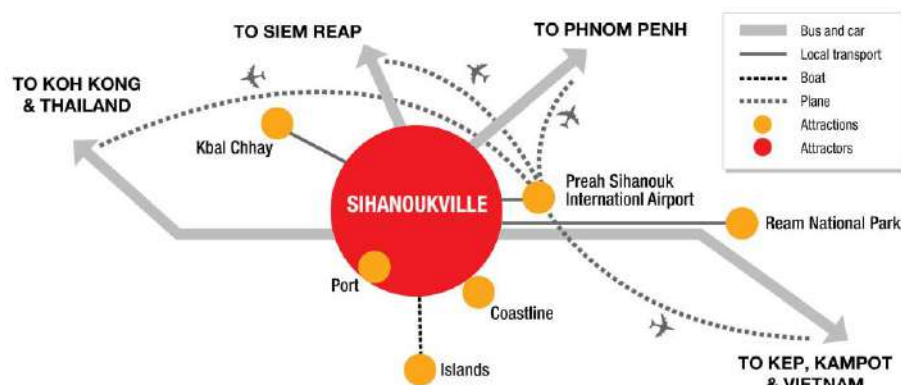


Figure D1. Sihanoukville hub and spoke model

Objective: Develop Sihanoukville as the primary hub for Khmer coast tourism

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PS01 | Establish a central tourist information, tour and accommodation booking and transportation centre, centrally located in Sihanoukville to service the Province and promote visit opportunities to Kep, Kampot and Koh Kong. | 1 |

Objective: Realise the latent potential in Preah Sihanouk’s natural assets

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PS02 | Create a different identity and sense of place for the Province’s islands compared to the active recreation urban core of Sihanoukville by emphasising the <i>Khmer coast relax</i> marketing image. | 1 |
| PS03 | Redevelop mainland recreation areas (e.g. Kbal Chhay waterfall) for improved management of large visitor numbers, including local recreation use. | 1 |
| PS04 | Require performance-based licence conditions on new and re-developments to ensure adequate water treatment, sewage treatment and waste management. | 1 |
| PS05 | Scrutinise all development plans to ensure that they are in accordance with Cambodian values, principles of sustainability, laws and MOT policy, and reflects the natural and cultural character in which it is proposed.. | 1 |
| PS06 | Establish mechanisms to facilitate local participation in delivering tourism services in non-urban areas (e.g. small loans, training). | 1 |
| PS07 | Particularly on islands, re-establish a natural vegetation foreshore buffer to protect beaches from erosion, protect mangroves, seagrass beds and reefs and to maintain the natural beauty of the islands. | 3 |

Business operators and service providers are largely unregulated. Inspections of premises for food safety, hygiene practices and welfare and training of staff are currently inconsistent. Business owners, especially along Serendipity

Road and Ochheuteal Beach want to increase numbers, keep customers happy, safe and keen to return to the Khmer coast. They are the ‘eyes and ears’ of current trends. Stakeholder consultation during the development of the Khmer coast Tourism Strategy provides a platform for businesses to provide input into recommended actions, food safety standards and practices for tourism-based businesses.



Hospitality staff and tourism training is a priority to improve the capacity businesses to meet tourists needs and to offer advice for activities. It is also needed to improve the expertise of tourism officials for reviewing and advising on tourist developments and service delivery (RGoC 2012: 47). The programme must include both the public and private sectors (RGoC 2012: 37). This need is particularly evident in Sihanoukville where tourism demand and expectations are high and development is occurring rapidly (see Section C5).

Objective: The delivery of quality tourism services

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PS08 | Regulate timing of waste collection (e.g. to early mornings) to coincide with times when tourists are least active. It is very important to restrict collection at times when tourists are dining at restaurants and bars (e.g. lunch and evening). | 1 |
| PS09 | Ensure food outlets maintain adequate food safety standards. This will require some training of food safety inspectors, education of food handlers and the establishment of a licencing/inspection program. A star-rating system would provide an incentive for food establishments to comply as tourists would ‘select’ food outlets with higher ratings. | 1 |
| PS10 | Enlist the support of tourist businesses in promoting quality service in the interest of ensuring the image of the Province and Sihanoukville is one of quality, clean and green. | 1 |
| PS11 | Foster the establishment of an independent tourism sector group to represent private interests, support MOT initiatives, provide consolidated advice to the Ministry, and promote quality service. | 1 |

D1.2.3 Ensure tourist safety

Crime, such as theft and violence, in Sihanoukville is not uncommon due to the rapid growth of the urban core, dense population and socio-economic disparity. Local business owners report the need for a greater police presence and, in Serendipity Road, they are using private security services for patron protection and to ensure security of premises.

Objective: Maintenance of Preah Sihanouk ’s image as a fun but safe tourist destination.

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| PS12 | Ensure tourists, residents and commercial premises are protected from harm through an increased police presence, particularly at night. | 1 |
| PS13 | Identify times and areas where crime is most common to provide efficient and effective allocation of police resources. | 1 |
| PS14 | Consult with local businesses to better characterise the nature of threats and most appropriate/effective strategies, including clarification of respective roles and expectations of police, military and private security | 1 |

D1.2.4 Focus marketing as a destination and gateway to the Khmer coast

To be effective as the tourism hub and entry point for the Khmer coast, Sihanoukville must be marketed as a tourism destination and the gateway to the other provinces. It will be where many visitors gain their first impressions of the coast, so Sihanoukville must deliver clean, green and safe tourism experiences. Marketing must identify at least one and two day ‘packages’ of places to visit across the coast, how to get there, what to do, and where to eat and stay along the way. Packages should cater for the existing Asian markets first and then the Western markets. Major themes for marketing of Preah Sihanouk are coastal recreation and coastal natural heritage (Table D1).



Table D1 Marketing themes and emphasis for Preah Sihanouk

| Theme | Primary emphasis | Secondary emphasis |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Coastal recreation | Sun & sand based Marine based | |
| Coastal natural heritage | Islands, reefs & wildlife | Forests & wildlife |
| Coastal historic heritage | Post-colonial development | Post-colonial conflicts |
| Coastal livelihoods | | Fishing |

Tourist information centres need to provide quality information in languages to suit attracted markets on transport, tourism attractors, themes and activities for all four coastal provinces.

Objective: Market recognition of Sihanoukville as the gateway to the Khmer coast

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| PS14 | Present Sihanoukville in marketing as a clean, green, safe tourism destination that is the gateway to the Khmer coast. | 1 |
| PS15 | Ensure media, especially websites, present a consistent message, and are accurate, regularly updated, user-friendly and attractive. | 2 |
| PS16 | Market the vibrancy of 'sun and sand' opportunities around Sihanoukville, the more relaxed opportunities on the islands, and the more active nature-based opportunities of the Sihanoukville hinterland. | 2 |
| PS17 | Interpret for visitors the coastal natural heritage (forests and wildlife, islands and reefs), coastal historic heritage (post-colonial development), and coastal livelihoods (fishing). | 2 |



D2.0 Kampot Province – *Khmer coast heritage*

D2.1 Kampot Province tourism context

Kampot Province is the agricultural province of the coast with a rich history as a port and as a centre of colonial activity. Conservation and presentation of its historical, cultural and rural heritage will differentiate it from other areas of coastal South-East Asia; however, its heritage assets are not being protected or presented. The Province is experiencing increased visitation from backpackers, budget travellers and gamblers to the Casino on Bokor Mountain. Most visitors are from ASEAN countries with few from Europe or other international origins. Tourist port facilities are being developed to link Kampot to Vietnam mainland and Phu Quoc Island.



D2.1.1 Kampot Province tourism assets

Kampot Province natural environment

The natural beauty of Kampot Province is most evident in views from the road to Bokor Mountain. Kampong Bay River and its tributaries dissect mangroves and wetlands to the southeast and forested islands dot the Bay of Cambodia. The islands display glimpses of distant local fishing villages nestled amongst palms on sandy shorelines. With extensive seagrass meadows and coral reefs, these ecosystems provide important habitat for fisheries and marine conservation. The mosaic of naturally vegetated hills and mixed rural land use is equally attractive, and with the marine wetland system providing the rationale for the historic settlement of the area. However, the rainforest beauty of Bokor Mountain remains largely unexplored by visitors.



Kampot Province social environment

The settlement history of Kampot Province means that it retains a rich cultural mix. This is reflected in its architecture, traditional festivals, and a strong commitment to family and community.

Kampot Province economic environment

Kampot Province provides tourists with an opportunity to experience rural provincial life. Local communities in the villages and rural areas subsist on agriculture activities of growing rice and other crops, and farming of cattle, ducks, chickens and pigs. Kampot Town is the commercial and provincial centre with a population of 37,000 residents. It is one of the few towns in South-East Asia where a clear precinct of colonial buildings exists.



D2.1.2 Kampot Province tourism status

Few tourists venture further than Sihanoukville to experience coastal provincial life, and Kampot Province largely attracts tourists in transit to the Bokor casino. Currently, tourists stay an average of two-nights with an average daily spend of USD45. Development of sustainable nature- and culture-based tourism products have the potential to value-add significantly to provincial revenues. This will require developing products of difference from, and complementary to, what is available at the current focus of coastal tourism activity in Sihanoukville. The clear points of differentiation lie in the pre- and colonial heritage, coastal livelihoods and cultural traditions, and coastal natural heritage.



As for the entire Khmer coast, specific and cumulative environmental and social impact evaluation in the development approval process is limited. Unregulated development in the environmentally sensitive coastal areas and national parks is currently the largest threat to sustainable tourism in Kampot province. Pollution from inadequately treated sewage, littering and dumping of wastes also threaten environmental and community health. Poor existing land use practices and tree clearing have led to increased sedimentation of waterways. This will negatively affect the potential for tourism growth and long-term sustainability.



Projected climate change impacts need to be addressed in development approvals to ensure sea level rise, storm surge, more intense typhoons and impacts to coral reefs from rising sea temperatures are factored into strategic planning and adaptation measures. Some climate change impacts can be ameliorated by appropriate approval conditions that include buffers between developments and sensitive coastal areas.

D2.2 Strategic actions for Kampot Province

Kampot Province's natural beauty, history and cultural traditions are potential key attractors for tourists and the development of community-based products can value-add to existing livelihoods and add to Kampot being an

important component of Cambodia's tourism sector. Future successful tourism development depends on preserving and valuing the Province's heritage assets.

D2.2.1 Realise Kampot Province's tourism potential with a diversity of quality products



Potential attractors for tourists to Kampot Province include its colonial heritage, rural and cultural traditions, and its natural environments. However, products based on these features are lacking, as is the needed diversity of accommodation types and access services to rural areas. Possible attractions (tourism products) that can be developed include ecotourism services to complement the development of the Bokor Resort and interpretation of the colonial Hill Station, the limestone karst and caves, the pepper orchards and salt farms in rural areas, Kampong Bay River and the coastal islands, as well as services to provide access to Kep and Vietnam destinations. Kampot town can become the focus of themed day trips to many potential community-based attractions (Figure D2). The key to unlocking this potential is to make Kampot town a tourist destination through protection and presentation of its colonial heritage and as a cultural site where traditional and non-traditional crafts are presented and sold as has been done in the historic village of Hoi An, Vietnam.

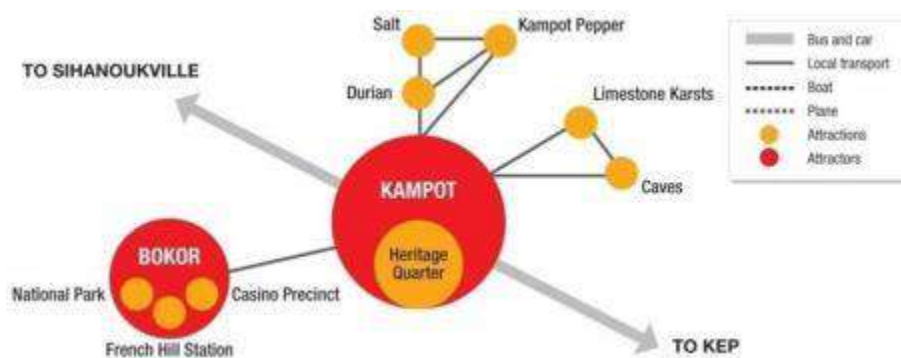


Figure D2. Kampot hub and spoke model

D2.2.1 Develop Kampot as a heritage town

Objective: A revitalised heritage precinct with restored and protected architecture

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KPT01 | Enlist the support of the Kampot community, especially the business community, to present its colonial heritage towards developing the town as a heritage town. | 1 |
| KPT02 | Establish a community committee, assisted by heritage specialists, to oversee the redevelopment and presentation of the colonial heritage. | 1 |
| KPT03 | Inspire the committee and provincial officials of what is possible with site visits to exemplar sites in neighbouring countries (e.g. Hoi An, Vietnam). | 1 |
| KPT03 | Restore the heritage buildings (at least the street-front facades) in the 'French Quarter' of Kampot (a seeding action might be to provide appropriate coloured paint for buildings). | 2 |
| KPT04 | Financially support restoration activities with small grants and tax relief. | 2 |
| KPT05 | Develop a Heritage Register for French heritage sites in Kampot town and the province with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA), including the Hill Station on Bokor Mountain. | 2 |
| KPT06 | Declare the 'French quarter' as a heritage precinct with regulations for demolition control and architectural design parameters for renovations (e.g. maintenance of painted rendered facade, shingle roofs, columns, timber joinery and high ceilings). | 2 |
| KPT07 | Continue the French heritage theme in new construction and developments. | 3 |
| KPT08 | Develop a 'lane culture' in the 'French Quarter' to optimise cultural heritage aesthetics and ambience (e.g. Kipling Lane could be converted for outdoor eating cafes and small retail outlets to encourage tourists to sit, eat, relax and meander the 'French Quarter' using a thoroughfare closed to vehicular traffic at tourist visiting times). | 3 |

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KPT09 | Install discrete multi-lingual heritage signage to complement and reinforce the heritage theme, as well as clear, informative and well-positioned directional signage along the river promenade, streets and laneways and interpretative signage. | 3 |
| KPT10 | Plant mature native species street trees for the greening of the 'French Quarter' to complement the scale and style of heritage architecture and encourage tourists to spend more time in Kampot. | 3 |
| KPT11 | Develop Kampot Town 'French Quarter' tidy streets programme (to complement the "Clean City, Clean Resort, Good Service" theme) towards keeping streets litter free, swept and tidy, adding to the street appeal of the 'French Quarter'. | 3 |
| KPT12 | Create a 'French Quarter' interpretive walk that provides tourists with a well-defined route for accessing key heritage buildings and sites (e.g., the Governor's Residence and Old Kampot Prison, public open space, statues, iconic and religious sites, boat landings, and the French bridge). | 3 |
| KPT13 | Establish a museum or several small museums in the 'French Quarter'. | 3 |

D2.2.2 Revitalise traditional and contemporary craft, cuisine and retail businesses

Restoration of the 'French quarter' as a tourism precinct requires retail sales to justify the investments of government and businesses. Products for sale to tourists can include traditional art and craft (e.g. pottery, wood and stone carvings, textiles) as well as contemporary products (e.g. clothing, home-wares), with potential for sale beyond the tourist market in Kampot. With restaurants serving traditional cuisine, the revitalised 'French quarter' can become a significant part of the Kampot economy as a centre for the creative arts and crafts, and complement the vibrancy of the Kampot markets.

Manufacture of craft souvenirs can be a village cottage industry and therefore spread the economic benefits of the heritage town initiative. In turn, craft communes can provide a link to agritourism initiatives. Craft manufacture also benefits women.

Training in craft manufacture, traditional cuisine and business management may be needed.



Objective: Traditional cottage craft manufacture supplying retail outlets in the restored 'French quarter' of Kampot

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KPT14 | With the MCFA, provide training to communes wishing to revitalise traditional crafts from all ethnic backgrounds. | 1 |
| KPT15 | Provide incentives (e.g. low interest micro-financing loans, rent subsidies) for existing craft retail outlets and quality food outlets to relocate to the 'French quarter'. | 2 |
| KPT16 | Develop displays of Kampot handcrafts at museums, provincial government offices, Tourist Information Centres and key tourist attractions to advertise purchase opportunities. | 2 |
| KPT17 | Secure a record of traditional recipes of ethnic groups in Kampot. | 3 |
| KPT18 | Require all tours to include a visit to at least one craft-manufacturing commune. | 3 |
| KPT19 | Develop a web-site to promote Kampot arts and crafts. | 3 |

D2.2.3 Develop festivals and revitalise traditional performing arts

Cambodians have the opportunity to enjoy 28 days of legislated relaxation in the form of public holidays to celebrate coronations, birthdays and religious festivals. These festivals provide tourists with the special opportunity of being able to participate respectfully in key religious and civic events with the people of Kampot and add a cultural dimension to the 'French quarter'.

Objective: Expanded festivals to be inclusive of tourists that can draw on a body of performers trained in traditional performing arts

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KPT19 | With the MCFA, provide training to individuals and groups interested in preserving and presenting traditional performing arts of all ethnic groups in Kampot. | 2 |
| KPT20 | Provide opportunities for the performing arts to be a prominent part of festivals and revitalisation of the 'French quarter'. | 3 |

D2.2.4 Develop ecotourism products to complement Kampot's historical heritage emphasis

Human settlement is usually related to environmental condition. This is the case in Kampot Province where natural resources and features have provided the context for a long and evolving history of settlement and natural resource exploitation. Tourism can provide economic benefits without irreversible loss of valued natural resources and provide income substitutes for exploitive livelihoods. However, a minimal level of linked tourist products is needed to provide rewarding day or longer packages for tourists.



The carrying capacity of many recreational sites has already been exceeded with current levels of use. Redevelopment is needed to restore their aesthetic and functional character. In most cases, site hardening, restriction of vehicle access and separation of vendors from the core recreation areas are needed.

Objective: The colonial heritage and eco-tourism potential of Bokor Mountain is realised and linked with the heritage theme of Kampot town

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KPT21 | Support the MCFA in (a) declaring the Hill Station as a heritage precinct with regulations for demolition control and architectural design parameters for restorations, and (b) undertaking a comprehensive assessment of the heritage status and value of the site, including potential for tourist use. | 1 |
| KPT22 | Subject to KPT27, restore the ruins of Bokor Hill Station (e.g. the school, Catholic Church, water tower and the Black Palace; noting that the Bokor Palace Hotel has already been refurbished). Consider the potential of restoring one of the buildings as a centre for interpreting the site. | 2 |
| KPT23 | Provide controlled access to the ruins and interpretation by trained local guides who can link the history of the Hill Station to Kampot town, as well as its more recent conflict history. Provide complementary multilingual interpretive signage for the site. | 2 |
| KPT24 | Ensure any new buildings constructed within the defined heritage precinct do not destroy archaeological evidence of the historical roles of the Hill Station and are sympathetic to the historical colonial architectural style. | 2 |
| KPT25 | Support the MOE in (a) undertaking a comprehensive ecological assessment of the Bokor Plateau at least, and (b) identifying sites for ecotourism accommodation (including eco-lodges) and nature-based experience opportunities (e.g. walking tracks, lookouts, elevated boardwalks) that present the natural values of the area. | 1 |
| KPT26 | Redevelop the Ranger Station to include interpretive displays of the biodiversity values of Bokor Mountain and as an education facility. | 1 |
| KPT27 | Encourage and train local community members to provide eco-tours to accessible natural sites. | 1 |
| KPT28 | If agreeable to all stakeholders, work with the owners and managers of the Bokor Resort in developing eco-accommodation and infrastructure to present the natural values of Bokor Mountain. | 2 |

Objective: Aesthetically pleasing and functionally efficient tourist and recreation use areas

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KPT29 | Review and, as appropriate, rationalise use of all existing tourist sites through redevelopment to match visitor numbers and the site's carrying capacity. This includes the provision of adequate toilet facilities. | 1 |

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KPT30 | Develop and implement maintenance schedules, including daily rubbish removal, for all tourist and recreation use areas. | 1 |
| KPT31 | Where use of recreation and tourist sites exceed design carrying capacity, schedule the development of additional areas to match projected tourist and local demand. | 2 |

Objective: Protection of karst ecosystems, caves and culturally important features through managed tourist use

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KPT32 | Encourage the MOE and MCFA to compile an inventory and map the biodiversity and cultural values, as well as the tourism potential of limestone karst areas of Kampot and Kep provinces. | 1 |
| KPT33 | Support the permanent protection of the more significant karst areas with a minimum target of 60% of limestone outcrops being protected. Include at least 20m from the base of the outcrop within the protected area. . | 1 |
| KPT34 | Review the access, management, safety and interpretation of karst currently used by tourists, and prepare redevelopment plans to bring their presentation and protection to best practice standards. | 2 |
| KPT35 | Upgrade access to karst areas and cave systems to minimise use impacts, maximise visitor safety, and provide enhanced opportunities for interpreting karst values. | 2 |
| KPT36 | Upgrade the knowledge and interpretation skills of local community members so they can be effective stewards and interpreters of karst features. | 2 |
| KPT37 | Recoup redevelopment costs with tourist entry fees and service charges. | 2 |

D2.2.5 Develop agri-tourism products to complement Kampot's historical and natural heritage products

As the major rural production province on the coast and growing a diversity of produce, Kampot has the potential to develop successful agri-tourism businesses that value-add to farm production. While successful examples of agri-tourism businesses based on rice and fruit production exist in neighbouring countries, Kampot's pepper industry is possibly the best organised to provide an exemplar of agri-tourism. Pepper farmers have formed cooperatives to share information and resources, and are committed to quality control, research and development (WIPO 2011). Farm visits to demonstrate the growing, harvesting and preparation of pepper products can be organised with visits to nearby rice and fruit farms. Farm restaurants featuring the best of Kampot's agricultural produce and traditional cuisine can be the major income generating activity.



Objective: An established and viable agri-tourism business based on Kampot pepper as an exemplar for other farm sectors

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KPT38 | Encourage pepper farmer cooperatives to develop farm visit opportunities with restaurant and retail sales outlets. | 1 |
| KPT39 | Develop day-tour products that integrate farm and market visits with visits to natural and heritage sites away from Kampot town. | 2 |
| KPT40 | Develop an annual Kampot Pepper Festival, held at the time of the durian harvest, to promote local agricultural practices and traditional cuisine. | 3 |
| KPT41 | Develop a pepper museum, display centre and retail outlet in a renovated heritage building within the 'French Quarter'. | 3 |

D2.2.8 Focused but delayed active marketing towards a heritage town image

Kampot Province lacks the necessary level of tourism product, including accommodation and tour services, to respond to demand that proactive marketing will generate. Overall priority for the province needs to be on ensuring existing products can provide quality experiences for existing markets and the development of new products. Therefore, marketing of the province needs to not only promote existing tourist opportunities, but also increasingly create an image of tourism



based on a mix of heritage, nature and agriculture products (Table D2). This can start simply with images in tourist information centres in Sihanoukville and the existing centre in Kampot town. The initial targets are Cambodian tourists and free-independent travellers seeking to experience a part of Cambodia without large tourist numbers. With greater links to Vietnam, this market will increase in importance.

Table D2 Marketing themes and emphasis for Kampot Province

| Theme | Primary emphasis | Secondary emphasis |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| Coastal historic heritage | Pre-colonial Colonial Post-colonial conflicts | |
| Coastal natural heritage | Forests & wildlife Coastal plains & wildlife Seagrass & wildlife | Mangroves, shorelines & wildlife |
| Coastal cultural traditions | Arts & craft | Cuisine |
| Coastal livelihoods | Rural production | Fishing |
| Coastal recreation | | Sun & sand based |

Objective: Marketing that positions Kampot Province as a destination for heritage, nature and rural tourism experiences

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KPT42 | Maintain existing marketing but shift emphasis to create an identity for Kampot Province as a coastal historic heritage (pre to post-colonial) destination that also has tourist opportunities to experience rural livelihoods, arts and crafts and unspoiled nature. | 2 |



D3.0 Kep Province – *Khmer coast cuisine*

D3.1 Kep Province tourism context

Kep's past tourism connection relates to wealthy French and Cambodian residents who holidayed in traditional French and European villas with views of the national park, the beach and coastal islands. The province was a favoured holiday destination for Cambodians until the 1970s, when most villas were ransacked by the Khmer Rouge and subsequently gutted of their contents. Today Kep is once again attracting Cambodian residents though development of the stately seaside homes has been slow. Few international travellers specifically venture to Kep, although Chinese and Vietnamese travel via Kep to the casino on Bokor Mountain. The town is still known within Cambodia for seaside recreation and its crab markets.



D3.1.1 Kep Province tourism assets

Kep Province natural environment

Kep is a beach resort town with a headland extending into the Bay of Cambodia. The coastal landscape of the seaside town is appealing to visitors because of its sweeping views and long foreshores. Kep National Park extends further into the headland with the Kep townships located at the foreshore. The biodiversity values of Kep National Park include endemic flora and fauna, important for tourism and scientific research. Activities within the park include trekking, bird watching and enjoyment of the forest. There are opportunities for eco-accommodation options in natural landscapes at its perimeter. From the summit, there are panoramic views of the rural lands of the provinces of Kep and Kampot and the Bay of Cambodia. These characteristics have fostered comparison with Noosa on Australia's Sunshine Coast, which has been proposed as a possible model for Kep's tourism image and development style.



Kep Province social environment

The physical damage to Kep also damaged the social fabric of the province; however, fishing communities have persisted and the reputation of the town for seafood has not declined.

Kep Province economic environment

Kep's provincial administration sees the town returning to its status in the 1960s as the premier seaside tourist destination for Cambodians. They have invested in beautification of public areas and the provision of Khmer style shelters for beachside relaxation. The future of Kep again lies, to a large extent, in private construction of seaside homes by the wealthy. With these will come the need for boutique shopping, which can make Kep also attractive to wealthy international travellers. What needs to be protected to realise this vision is the aesthetic quality of the land and seascapes, a commitment to quality, and protection of the seafood resources that has continued to attract local tourists and which is a distinguishing feature of Kep. The seafood industry is both valuable and entertaining. It is a tourist spectacle with markets of woven bamboo crab pots laden with live crabs, weighed and sold to visiting, cashed up wholesalers each day. These wholesalers move the seafood to local and remote restaurants and markets. It is a cash economy and an economy vital to the survival of many Kep families.



D3.1.2 Kep Province tourism status

Kep is just beginning to emerge again as a tourist destination, though it retains its reputation for producing abundant fresh seafood, especially Blue Swimmer Crabs, a species used in traditional Khmer soup and barbecues along the Kep foreshore. The Kep province is also renowned for its sea salt production on the flats and pepper production on the hills surrounding the town. Unique to Kep are Kep Pickles in brightly coloured jars of layered pickled vegetables. These are made by local women when seasonal vegetables are abundant.

The offshore islands with white sands and fringing coral reefs are largely undeveloped and their protection will be important if Kep is to return to its past success as a wealthy tourist destination. The projected impacts of climate change (sea-level rise, increased storm surge and intensity of typhoons, and changes to fisheries habitat) need to be factored into sustainable tourism development and planning for the town and the province, especially foreshore areas. Illegal fishing activities from Thailand and Vietnamese boats need to be managed. The demise of the fishing industry would have dire consequences for sustainable tourism in Kep Province.



D3.2 Strategic actions for Kep Province

Kep's rich natural setting, history as a seaside resort and cultural traditions are key drivers in attracting visitors. Future successful tourism growth depends on preserving these assets and quality development that presents Kep as an exclusive resort area. While this is largely in the hands of the private sector, government investment in establishing a secure potable water supply, an effective sewage treatment system and attractive public open space is required to attract investment (see Section C4.0).



As a small province, Kep town can act as the major accommodation centre with all potential attractions (e.g. the national park, karst areas, and islands with sandy beaches and fringing reefs) in close proximity, including Kampot and Sihanoukville (Figure D3). This reduces infrastructure costs. Kep's contribution to coastal tourism lies in the seaside and seafood features and its potential for development as a high quality boutique seaside residential area.



Figure D3. Kep hub and spoke model

D3.2.1 Protect the land and seascape setting of Kep town

The visually unspoiled land and seascape setting of Kep is its major tourism asset. Protection of natural landscape elements from inappropriate development is essential to realising the vision for Kep as a high value seaside residential and tourism area.

Objective: Maintenance of the unspoiled visual landscape character surrounding Kep

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|--|--|----------|
| The intent of the objective would be achieved by the following development controls. | | |
| KP01 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit building development on the coastal and Kep town side of hills to 20m above sea level. | 1 |
| KP02 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit building development on coastal hills to the height of the native forest vegetation. | 1 |
| KP03 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit buildings on the coastal plain to no more than 5 stories | 1 |
| KP04 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrict buildings within 20m distance from the highest astronomical tide (HAT) on non-dune areas to 2-stories. | 1 |
| KP05 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrict permanent public buildings within 20m distance from the HAT to those needed for maritime safety and coastal services. | 1 |
| KP06 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limit buildings on coastal islands to the height of the native forest vegetation. | 1 |
| KP07 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not allow private buildings to be built on dune areas within 20m distance from the HAT. | 1 |
| KP08 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subject to the above, a net minimum of 10% of all land must remain in a vegetated or restored state, or under horticultural crops. | 1 |
| KP09 | Limit the development of off-shore islands to (a) small-scale, high quality boutique resorts in keeping with the desired image for Kep, and (b) small-scale budget resorts for local and day visitor use. All such developments must have adequate on-site sewage treatment facilities to protect the valuable marine resources. | 2 |
| KP10 | Establish community support for a 'Keep Kep Clean' program that builds on government provision and servicing of rubbish bins in public places, street sweeping, litter collection from foreshores and a levied domestic waste collection service. | 2 |

D3.2.3 Identify, protect, restore and interpret historically representative buildings and structures

For 50-years, Kep was the centre for construction of seaside villas for the French and Cambodian elite. In the 1970s, most were destroyed and gutted of their contents. Few of the buildings remain intact; but some of the shells remain structurally sound and capable of restoration. These buildings are part of Kep's history and heritage.

Objective: A comprehensive record of Kep's architectural heritage, and where possible, representative restorations, and interpretation of the heritage

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|--|---|----------|
| KP11 | Establish a heritage register for Kep with a photographic record of the remnants of occupation pre-1970, an architectural and structural assessment, and an appraisal of their potential for restoration. | 1 |
| KP12 | Prepare a heritage conservation plan for Kep, which identifies priority structures for retention and restoration as a representative sample of architectural styles. | 1 |
| KP13 | Give legal protection from demolition to structures identified as worthy of retention. These will likely include structurally sound villas, fences, bollards and street treatments. | 2 |
| Celebrate Kep's coastal heritage with: | | |
| KP14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an Interpretive Heritage Walk that includes heritage and traditional buildings, historic structures, statues, iconic and religious sites, the beach and boat pier to present the history of Kep as a seaside resort town to the present; and | 2 |
| KP15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a Kep Heritage Museum, within a restored villa, that provides an opportunity to learn about and appreciate the diverse social, cultural, political, and religious history of the province. | 3 |
| KP16 | Relocate the Tourism Information Centre to a restored villa with displays and retail of local products (e.g. salt, pepper and crafts), an accommodation and tour booking service, promotional material on events such as the Sea Festival, and face-to-face advice on experiencing Kep and adjoining provinces. | 3 |

D3.2.4 Create a modern identity and architectural style for the redevelopment of Kep

Redevelopment of Kep should not be constrained by the past. There is an opportunity to take the best of traditional, colonial, modern Asian and Western, and tropical architectural styles to match lifestyle requirements and respond to climatic constraints and opportunities.

Objective: A modern seaside resort town that exhibits an eclectic blend of architectural styles that make maximum use of eco-design and technologies

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KP17 | Encourage innovation in the design of new buildings in Kep and the integration of eco-design principles and sustainable technologies. | 2 |
| KP18 | Where new government buildings or structures are not for ceremonial purposes that demand the expression of cultural tradition, leadership should be provided in designs by emphasising contemporary functionality, responding to climatic and setting characteristics and integration of eco-technologies. | 2 |

D3.2.5 Develop local cuisine to be a feature of the Kep tourism experience

Kep has an established, but still local, culinary reputation for its seafood, especially the Blue Swimmer Crab. Potential exists to build on this reputation by emphasising cuisine tourism, developing the foreshore crab markets as a significant tourist attraction, enhancing the 'Kep picnic' with a seafood festival that also celebrates salt production from the broad acre salt farms, locally grown pepper, pickled seasonal vegetables and fresh local fruit.



Objective: International recognition of Kep's seafood cuisine

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KP19 | Work with Kampot Province to record traditional recipes, especially for seafood, as the basis for providing traditional seafood meals, and production of a recipe book. | 1 |

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KP20 | Establish an annual seafood festival that celebrates the food products of the coastal provinces, and especially its seafood. Emphasise traditional cuisine but provide tastes from other countries. | 1 |
| KP21 | Continue to promote the Kep Crab Markets and Kep Picnic experience as special attractions. | 1 |
| KP22 | Further enhance the foreshore picnic areas with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • daily removal of beach rubbish; • provision and daily servicing of rubbish bins; • interpretive signage on the seafood resources, their habitats and traditional catch methods. | 2 |
| KP23 | Continually upgrade the Crab Market experience but ensure retention of its market character. With demand, provide fine dining opportunities away from the market. | 3 |
| KP24 | Initially protect the viability and enhancement of the Crab Market experience by limiting the number of seafood sales outlets and restaurants away from the market. | 3 |
| KP25 | Develop cooking classes for the different ethnic origins of Kep residents. | 3 |

D3.2.6 Protect fisheries through effective management and habitat protection

Kep's marine resources support subsistence fishing and the supply of seafood to tourism. Fisheries habitats includes extensive mangrove communities, fringing coral reef and seagrass meadows. Nine islands within Kep and Kampot Provinces support small subsistence fishing communities. Eight of the islands are under the jurisdiction of the



Ministry of Defence. There are currently no marine protection measures in place. Enforcement of fisheries regulations by local fisheries officers is required to prevent trawling in seagrass habitats. The harvesting of live coral also requires regulation. Conservation of important fisheries habitat areas such as seagrass meadows, coral reefs and mangrove habitats is critical for the sustainability of fisheries. Setting legal size limits for all commercial species is an important management measure towards sustainable fishing practices. Without an assured, year-round supply of fresh seafood, Kep will not be able to sustain its reputation for quality dining experiences.

Objective: Effective protection of fisheries habitat and management of fishery take

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KP26 | Support initiatives of the Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries to ensure the sustainability of fisheries and protection of mangroves, seagrass meadows and coral reefs; including: | 1 |
| KP27 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the establishment of no-take zones over at least 20% of mangrove, marine grass meadows and coral reefs; | 1 |
| KP28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the establishment of management strategies (for all commercial fishery species) proven to be effective in sustainable fisheries management (e.g. size limits, seasonal and area closures, net size restrictions); | 1 |
| KP29 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the banning of fish catch methods known to be destructive of fishery habitats; and | 1 |
| KP30 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the banning of commercial fish catch methods known to include a high level of by-catch. | 1 |
| KP31 | Support the MOE in establishing a marine park over Cambodian marine waters and definition of use zones (e.g. see legislation and zoning plans for the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Area, Australia). | 2 |

D3.2.7 Establish eco-tourism activities in Kep National Park



Established in 1993, Kep National Park is ideal for hiking for all age groups and fitness levels. The 8km circuit road provides an opportunity to glimpse wildlife such as monkeys, squirrels, hornbills, deer, wild pigs, and reptiles, view the Elephant Mountains and beaches and walk past pagodas. Wildlife diversity and populations have declined in the past 30 years due to increased population pressure and illegal poaching. The park also provides for the cultivation of tropical fruits. Kep National Park currently has a KHR4000 (USD1) entrance fee, which could be increased and the funds directed towards park maintenance.

Objective: Greater use of Kep National Park for its biodiversity and aesthetic value to Kep

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KP32 | Support the implementation of the Kep National Park Management Plan to manage tourism sustainably while protecting landscape and biodiversity values. | 1 |
| KP33 | Increase entry fees for tourists to KHR10000 and KHR40000 per car to enhance management capacity and develop and maintain tourist services. | 1 |
| KP34 | Regularly maintain the road (and walking tracks). | 1 |
| KP35 | Establish short distance (1-2km) loop walking tracks on the coastal side and into the lower interior part of the park. | 2 |
| KP36 | Develop serviced picnic areas (bins, regular rubbish collection, and pit toilets) and a car park at the start of these walking tracks. | 2 |
| KP37 | Progressively remove (over 3-years) the fruit plantations from the park and revegetate the areas or convert them to picnic areas. | 2 |
| KP38 | Provide signage to interpret the landscape and forest communities at vantage points along the park road and walking tracks. | 3 |
| KP39 | Provide the opportunity for visitors to hire mountain bikes for use on the park road. | 3 |

D3.2.8 Focused but delayed active marketing towards a quality seaside resort town image

Like Kampot Province, Kep lacks sufficient tourism product to satisfy increased tourist numbers. Emphasis is needed in establishing an image, vision and investment environment to attract quality residential development and high-end tourism services that responds to exclusivity (Table D3). Emphasis needs to be on establishing the desired image by continuing government investments in public open space renewal and the marketing of real estate and the benefits of seaside living. Marketing will be achieved best by the re-emergence of Kep as a premier seaside destination.

Table D3 Marketing themes and emphasis for Kep Province

| Theme | Primary emphasis | Secondary emphasis |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Coastal recreation | Coastal relaxation Marine based | |
| Coastal cultural traditions | Cuisine | Arts & craft |
| Coastal livelihoods | Fishing | Rural production |
| Coastal historic heritage | | Colonial Post-colonial conflicts Post-colonial development |
| Coastal natural heritage | Islands, reefs & wildlife | Mangroves, shorelines & wildlife Seagrass & wildlife Forests & wildlife |

Exposure to the new Kep can be achieved through the seafood festival, enhanced opportunities for dining, demonstrated renewal by restoration and presentation of heritage buildings and the attraction of a high-end boutique resort to one of the offshore islands.

Objective: Marketing that positions Kep Province as a destination and for investments in quality seaside accommodation, retail and cuisine services

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KP40 | Maintain existing marketing, but shift emphasis to create an identity for Kep Province as a quality coastal residential and tourist destination that offers peaceful recreation and fine dining in a context of unspoiled nature. | 2 |



D4.0 Koh Kong Province – *Khmer coast nature*

D4.1 Koh Kong Province tourism context

Koh Kong is the western-most province on the Khmer coast bordering Preah Sihanouk to the east, Kampong Speu Province to the north, and Thailand to the west, which is now easily accessible to the rest of the province via the Koh



Kong Bridge. As gambling is illegal in Thailand, the Koh Kong Casino receives most of its custom from across the border. Koh Kong has a total land area of 11,160 square kilometres with a coastline 237km long. Compared to its neighbours, it is sparsely populated but growing in population rapidly (132,106 residents in 1998, approximately 1.2% of Cambodia's population and around 207,500 in 2007) (Koh Kong Working Group 2002). In 1998, the size of the rural populations in Smach Mean Chey and Srae Ambel districts were increasing at an annual rate of 33%, placing pressure on land, forest and marine resources.



The capital Krong Koh Kong is a small city set on the Kah Bpow River (also known as Prek Koah Pao) and has a district population of around 36,000 (2008). The Khmer Rouge's presence in Koh Kong until 1979 slowed development in the province significantly. While this has resulted in a lack of infrastructure compared to other provinces, and helped establish Koh Kong's reputation as a 'frontier', it has had the effect of largely preserving the natural environment. From 1979-2000, Koh Kong's population increased at an estimated rate of 16% annually, placing pressure on natural resources (Nong 2000). This growth was mainly in response to market pressures from Thailand and in-migration.



Koh Kong attracts independent travellers, backpackers and nature tourists keen to experience Koh Kong's wild remote environments. In recent years, Koh Kong has been identified as an ideal nature based tourism provider and is striving to improve its image. Community-based ecotourism programmes (e.g. Chi Phat) are offering tourists the opportunity to experience rural Khmer lifestyles in a stunning natural environment. Attractors include Peah Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary, the casino, the Wildlife Safari and nature-based tourism in the Cardamom Mountains.

D4.1.1 Koh Kong province tourism assets

Koh Kong Province natural environment

Koh Kong province is rich in natural resources, wildlife, resorts and beaches. Of these 23 national protected areas in Cambodia, 568,450ha are located in Koh Kong, equal to around 50% of the total provincial land area (Koh Kong Working Group 2002). Minimal development has allowed Koh Kong to retain much of its natural vegetation, mostly evergreen tropical forest covering 869,060 hectares. Protected areas with high biodiversity values include the Peam



Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary mangrove communities, the grasslands of Botum Sakor National Park and the pristine beaches of Koh Kong Island. Koh Kong also has fringing coral reefs and seagrass meadows throughout the marine coasts and around the Koh Sdach island group (Koh Kong Working Group 2002). The Cardamom Mountains host a number of endangered species including Eld's Deer, Siamese Crocodile, Sun Bear, and the Clouded Leopard and the iconic Asian tigers, elephants and monkeys. The Koh Kong Conservation Corridor encompasses these areas providing ongoing environmental protection and attracting nature-based tourism.

Koh Kong province social environment

While Koh Kong lacks the temples and heritage attractions of other provinces, it has cultural appeal. This appeal lies in its atmosphere and its people. Krong Koh Kong is quiet and relaxed, and does not have the hassling street vendors of other tourist-orientated cities such as Sihanoukville.



In 1998, the Participatory Management of Mangrove Resources group consisting of government staff from national and provincial governments and some technical departments began working with local communities to better understand livelihood and management issues in the Sanctuary. The project developed a strategy of community based resource management, identifiable today in the Ranger Station, mangrove regeneration, development of a boardwalk, interpretative signage and entrance fees to the mangrove areas. Local community members went on study tours to other areas in Cambodia working on community based resource management (Nong

2000). Research included the understanding of resource use patterns, marketing influences, livelihood and management issues and the socio economic status for community members (Nong 2000). The project developed strong relationships between government officials and community leaders and the lessons learned are filtering through to other areas within Koh Kong province.

Koh Kong economic environment

The majority of families (67% in 2008) make a living through agriculture. The most commonly cultivated crop is rice (31% of families), while 21% of families make a living through fishing. The rural countryside appeals to tourists and presents opportunity for agritourism facilities and homestays.

D4.1.2 Koh Kong Province tourism status

Historically Koh Kong received little attention as a tourism destination partly due to its remoteness and poor accessibility. Prior to the Koh Kong Bridge's construction in 2002, Thailand was only accessible from the city by boat, and roads from other provinces were in poor condition, especially in the wet season. Improvement of access will continue with the upgrading of main roads.



Tourism services in Koh Kong are being developed. In 2008, there were 8 hotels and 37 guesthouses in the province. With increasing pressure from companies to develop Koh Kong, care is needed to ensure that tourism development is managed appropriately. If nature based tourism is to be Koh Kong's primary attraction, tourism infrastructure and facilities must be appropriate to this market. Low-impact, nature-based tourism facilities are preferable, with establishments striving to preserve and capitalise on the cultural and environmental appeal of the area. Illegal logging, poaching of endemic species (causing threats to survival of the species), unregulated coastal development and pollution remain as threats to biodiversity values and local environments in Koh Kong.

Population pressure is placing greater pressure on the integrity of the mangrove communities within the Peah Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary. Threats to the protection of mangroves include a lack of government and local community capacity to provide adequate protection of the natural resources. Exacerbating this, is the lack of appropriate employment and opportunities for developing new occupations for residents that are environmentally friendly and that would enable participation in resource management initiatives (Nong 2000). Resources to support enforcement (e.g., boats for patrols) are not available to control breaches of the fisheries law, mangrove deforestation and hunting, and there remains a lack of cooperation between government departments to avoid duplication of work. No mechanism exists to enable people to participate formally in community based management initiatives. Poverty remains a barrier to the development of sustainable fisheries practices (Nong 2000).



International image is extremely important when the intended market niche is nature-based tourism and the associated concept of responsible tourism. Communities must be seen to be benefitting from tourism, with conservation and sustainability underpinning new development. Koh Kong has recently received bad press for the impending development of Botum Sakor National Park; for the displacement of local people and development within the national park.



D4.2 Strategic actions for Koh Kong Province

Koh Kong Province, despite its immense potential for eco-tourism development, is the least prepared for an increase in tourism demand. It lacks sufficient accommodation and tourism products to service expected growth. Planned actions are needed to protect its tourist assets at the same time as improving the capacity of local communities to respond to tourist demand, developing accommodation and district-based tourism products, and improving access to these.

Krong Koh Kong can be the tourism hub of the province, from which all other tourist attractions can be accessed (Figure D4). Local transport can provide access to Chi Phat, the Cardamom Mountains, Peam Krasaop Wildlife Sanctuary and Botum Sakor National Park. Islands (including Koh Kong Island) can be accessed by boat, while Thailand and Sihanoukville can be accessed by bus or car. Unlike the other coastal provinces, attractions tend to be dispersed, which means that a visit to multiple sites in one day is not feasible. Koh Kong's defining characteristic is its natural environment. Potential exists for local communities to develop regional tourism products with minimal investment costs, while major accommodation facilities can be provided in Krong Koh Kong. Tourist involvement in conservation activities and providing them with information on environmental programmes can improve the Province's image as a genuine ecotourism destination.



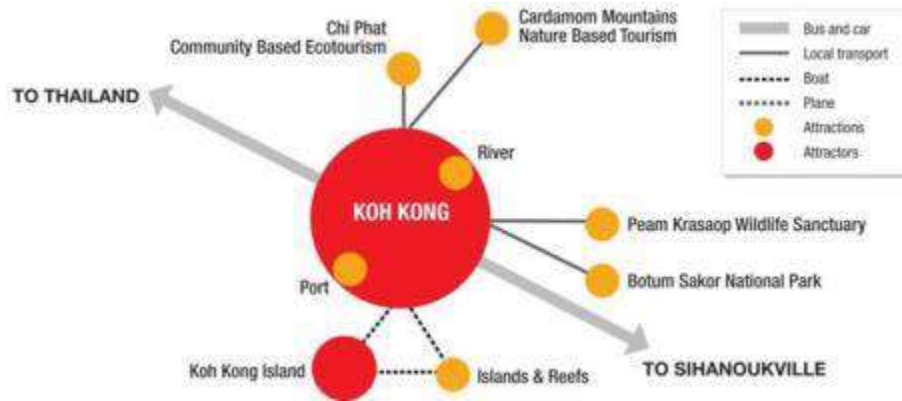


Figure D4. Koh Kong hub and spoke model

D4.2.1 Support the development of plans for effective management of tourism assets and assessment procedures to monitor their status



International, non-government conservation organisations (e.g. Wildlife Alliance, Conservation International, Fauna and Flora International) have been active in Koh Kong Province. They have assisted the Royal Government of Cambodia to conserve the internationally significant natural heritage resources of the Cardamom Mountains. However, most management plans are due for review. With recent significant changes in access and tourism interest in the coastal zone, it is timely to consider the protected area system holistically and to plan to integrate (tourism) development and conservation across the whole of the eco-region, from mountain to sea, from west to east.

Of all the provinces, Koh Kong is also the least understood in terms of tourism assets and their potential for use without loss of value. A rapid assessment method is needed with a capacity for mapping on a GIS for planning, monitoring of change and informing adaptive action. The method could be applied usefully to the other coastal provinces and throughout Cambodia.

Objective: An integrated hierarchy of plans to guide conservation action and delivery of tourism products and services

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KK01 | Support the Ministry of Environment (MOE) with the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) in auditing management effectiveness and review of all management plans for protected areas of the greater Cardamom Mountains area. | 1 |
| KK02 | Support the MOE and the MAFF, in consultation with other Ministries, in developing an integrated strategic plan for the sustainable use of resources within the greater Cardamom Mountains area. | 1 |
| KK03 | Support the MOE and the MAFF in updating all management plans for protected areas within the greater Cardamom Mountains area giving special consideration to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> improving livelihoods through tourism; the location of walking tracks; and sites for eco-lodges. | 1 |

Objective: A GIS linked database of tourism assets and their status

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KK04 | Prepare data sheets for collecting natural, cultural, festival and tourism development information as an inventory of tourism assets, including an assessment of status and capacity for tourist use (examples were prepared for developing these Strategic Guidelines and are held by the MOT). Enter the data on a GIS that has, at least, topographic, tenure and infrastructure layers. | 1 |
| KK05 | Where possible, link the tourism asset inventory to the databases of other Ministries, especially the Ministry of Environment (MOE) and the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA). | 2 |

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KK06 | At least every two years, repeat the inventory to track change in the status of resources, and adjust management practice if undesirable change is occurring and site carrying capacity is being exceeded. | 1 |
| KK07 | Use the data in annual reports on the status of tourism at the provincial and national level. | 1 |

D4.2.2 Improve Krong Koh Kong's attractiveness as a provincial eco-tourism hub

Strategically, Krong Koh Kong needs to transition to a tourist-focused town. This will require private investment in accommodation led by government and community development of tourism products. The town has a thriving marketplace and supporting street vendors can be a low-cost start. Food markets cover an entire block between Street 2 and Street 9. Freshly grown local produce is available for purchase and sustains the local communities. The riverfront precinct already includes tourist hotels, guest-houses, restaurants, cafes and shops. Abutting the Kah Bpow River is a grassed open area with lampposts, paved pathways and small gardens. While this area is in a state of disrepair, it has intrinsic aesthetic, social and historical appeal and can be restored.

Koh Kong Safari World displays some of the region's most iconic species and has the potential to present a strong conservation message with the displayed animals acting as captive representatives of their kind in the wild. However, it is more of an entertainment menagerie than a facility that emphasises conservation of wild populations, research, education and animal welfare (see WAZA 2005). Adding a conservation message and striving to be a leader in wildlife exhibition would demonstrate the provincial theme of forests and wildlife and secure international status in zoo management.



Objective: Increased community and tourist use of the riverfront area

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KK08 | Revegetate the riverfront with endemic plant species. Ensure regular maintenance of the gardens. Connect pathways along the riverfront to provide easy access for tourists and the local community and ensure pathways are maintained and free of obstacles. | 1 |
| KK09 | Provide a clear access link from the markets to the Kah Bpow River and esplanade. | 1 |
| KK10 | Provide daily servicing of rubbish bins. | 1 |
| KK11 | Develop waste minimisation and litter education programs for schools. | 2 |
| KK12 | With the assistance of international conservation NGOs, celebrate UNEP's World Environment (Eco) Day (5 June) or the Earth Day Network's Earth Day (22 April) in the revitalised waterfront area. | 2 |

Objective: The transition of Koh Kong Safari World to be a world leader in zoo management

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KK13 | Encourage Koh Kong Safari World to become a member of the World Association of Zoos and Aquariums (WAZA) and adopt the principles in the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (WAZA 2005). | 1 |
| KK14 | Establish a fund to support a captive breeding program with the aim of returning exhibited wildlife to the protected areas of the province. | 1 |
| KK15 | Provide information, including brochures, to visitors on Cambodian conservation projects with entry tickets and the site map. | 1 |
| KK16 | Interpret the trained behaviours of wildlife in shows in the context of their behaviour in the wild, and include a conservation message. | 1 |
| KK17 | Improve the capacity of staff to offer shows in languages other than in Khmer, depending on the audience. | 2 |
| KK18 | Upgrade enclosures to meet international animal welfare standards for animals in captivity, particularly the tigers. | 2 |
| KK19 | Commence research and staff training for development of the captive breeding program. | 3 |

D4.2.3 Facilitate the transition of local livelihoods to include provision of tourism services



The lack of community experience with tourism, the absence of all-weather access to attractions and site infrastructure is expressed in the few opportunities for tourists in Koh Kong Province. Proposed coastal resort developments will not directly benefit local communities and realise the potential in the environmental assets of the province for tourism. Development of nature-based products is needed to create the image of Koh Kong being the premier ecotourism destination in Cambodia. However, investments in infrastructure are needed ahead of market demand. Otherwise, there would be a delay in investment returns.

Examples of relatively inexpensive but innovative infrastructure can be seen in the Daintree area of the Wet Tropics World Heritage Area, Australia.

Objective: Communities aware of tourism opportunities and developed exemplar products

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|--|----------|
| KK20 | Invest in developing or upgrading sites (initially, sites close to Krong Koh Kong) for tourist use (e.g. swimming holes and waterfalls). | 1 |
| KK21 | Provide community awareness programs on the tourism business opportunities available in eco- and cultural tourism, including study tours by commune leaders and government officials to national and international examples. | 2 |
| KK22 | Encourage the development of traditional craft for the manufacture of tourist souvenirs. | 2 |
| KK23 | Encourage the provision of guided tours to protected areas in the Province. | 2 |
| KK24 | Transition simple refreshment outlets at local village stops to developed cultural and agri-tourism attractions. | 3 |
| KK25 | Assist local fishers to transition or expand their operations to boat tours and water transport services as a source of income. | 3 |

D4.2.4 Focused but delayed active marketing towards an ecotourism image

Koh Kong's overarching theme is nature-based tourism, both in terrestrial and marine settings (Table D4). However, like Kampot and Kep, active marketing needs to await product development. That is, there are currently insufficient tourist attractions and services to meet the demand of increased tourist numbers.

Table D4 Marketing themes and emphasis for Koh Kong Province

| Theme | Primary emphasis | Secondary emphasis |
|-----------------------------|---|--|
| Coastal natural heritage | Forests & wildlife Mangroves, shorelines & wildlife Islands, reefs & wildlife | Seagrass & wildlife |
| Coastal recreation | Marine based | Sun & sand based |
| Coastal livelihoods | Fishing | Rural production |
| Coastal cultural traditions | Arts & craft | Cuisine |
| Coastal historic heritage | Pre-colonial | Post-colonial conflicts Post-colonial development |

Objective: Marketing that positions Koh Kong Province as a tourism destination with internationally significant natural heritage, both terrestrial and marine

| Action number | Activities and priority areas | Priority |
|---------------|---|----------|
| KK26 | Maintain the existing marketing level but shift emphasis to create an identity for Koh Kong Province as the premier eco-tourism destination in mainland South-East Asia. | 1 |
| KK27 | Establish a Tourist Information Centre in Krong Koh Kong to provide information on the natural and cultural resources of the province, the location of existing tourism products and services, activities, transport, health and safety, and events throughout the province. Include the capacity to act as a booking agency. | 2 |





STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR
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PART E: REFERENCES

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