

# Strategic Environmental Assessment for the Tourism Sector in Cambodia

## Workshop for government decision makers from Ministries of Tourism, Environment, Finance, Planning, Key Line Ministries and Regional Participants from the GMS

28<sup>th</sup> August, 2008  
Hotel Cambodiana, Phnom Penh, Cambodia

### A. Background

The tourism sector is one of the fastest growing sectors in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) with annual growth rates of international arrivals in the region averaging over 7% between 1995 and 2004, with Cambodia averaging over 20%. The tourism sector is also accorded high priority within national planning frameworks as a means to generate increased foreign exchange, GDP, income and employment opportunities.

As the tourism sector in Cambodia expands, there is an increased need for planning of tourism development in order to harness all the potential benefits and to avoid negative impacts. The tourism sector in Cambodia, as well as in the subregion generally, is beset by problems of limited institutional and policy coordination and by limited capacity to cope with the negative social and environmental stresses that can be caused by the expansion of the tourism sector. There is a need for improved planning and policy coordination of the tourism development, both at the national level and the provincial level, and a need for increased capacity to ensure optimization of efficiencies and the environmental and social sustainability of an expanded tourism sector.

### B. Introduction

The Asian Development Bank (ADB), through the GMS Environment Program (Regional Technical Assistance 6289) is providing technical and financial support to the Ministry of Tourism in Cambodia to conduct a pilot Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of its tourism sector policies and plans.

The SEA of the tourism sector in Cambodia is being undertaken with a focus on the national tourism policies, plans and programs and two prime locations for diversification of tourism (1) the Northeast (Monduliri, Ratnakiri, Kratie and Stung Treng provinces) Emerald Triangle bordering Thailand and Lao PDR; and (ii) South-Western Coastal Zone (Koh Kong and Kampit provinces and Sihanoukville and Kep Municipalities) bordering Thailand and Viet Nam. The SEA process is building on priorities identified within the ADB supported GMS Tourism Sector Strategy (2006-2015) and activities within the ADB-GMS Mekong Tourism Development Project.

The SEA process is in its concluding phase.<sup>1</sup> The final workshop will provide an opportunity to disseminate and discuss key results from the SEA on tourism in Cambodia across the national and provincial agencies as well as with regional participants from the tourism sector in GMS countries. At the workshop, the overall conclusions of the SEA will be presented and recommendations for future actions will be confirmed.

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<sup>1</sup> The SEA commenced in June 2007, with a multi-stakeholder scoping workshop in Sihanoukville.

Key stakeholders will present detailed analysis of the social, economic and environmental factors associated with further development of the tourism sector in Cambodia, and assess the nature and intensity of risks associated with different scenarios for tourism development. Details of mitigation options for different aspects of social and environmental impacts will also be outlined and a set of specific recommendations for changes to tourism development will be presented.

Regional dimensions of tourism development will also be explored with a view to sharing best practices and lessons learned in integrating environmental aspects into tourism planning and implementation.

### **C. Objectives**

The objectives of the planning session are to:

1. Discuss the main conclusions and recommendations from the SEA; and
2. Agree on the strategic and operational priorities emerging from the draft SEA report and identify follow-up implementation processes for uptake of recommendations at the policy and project level.

### **D. Outputs**

The expected outputs of the planning session are:

1. A shared understanding of the SEA concept and application of key elements in national and provincial tourism planning;
2. Dissemination of conclusions and findings from the SEA of Cambodia's tourism sector policies and plans;
3. Exchange of current experiences and developments on tourism and environmental planning within GMS countries; and
4. Agreement on next steps from the SEA, including processes to follow-up on institutional and legislative recommendations and implementation mechanisms at the project level.

### **E. Participants**

This workshop will be attended by senior government officials from relevant line institutions in Cambodia, i.e. Ministry of Tourism (MOT), Ministry of Environment (MOE), Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery (MAFF), Ministry of Planning (MOP) and the Ministry of Urban Planning, Land Management and Construction (MUPLMC) at national level. In addition, provincial departments including DOT, DOE and DAFF will also participate in this consultative workshop.

Regional participants (2 each from Thailand, Lao PDR, People's Republic of China and Viet Nam) representing the Ministries of Tourism and Environment are also invited to participate in the event.

**F. Program**

<b>08:00</b>	<b>Registration</b>	
<b>08:30</b>	<b>Welcome and Introduction</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Welcome Remarks</b></li> </ul>	Minister of Tourism M. Thong Khon; Ministry of Environment (tbc); Mr. Arjun Goswami, ADB CARM CD
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Opening Remarks, Agenda Setting and Workshop Objectives</b></li> </ul>	ADB
<b>09:00</b>	<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment as a Planning Tool</b>	Pavit Ramachandran, SEA Component Leader, GMS EOC
<b>09:30</b>	<b>Group Photo/Coffee Break (30 mins)</b>	
<b>10:00</b>	<b>Tourism Sector in Cambodia</b>	Sokhom Thok, Deputy Director, MoT
<b>10:30</b>	<b>Alternate Tourism Scenarios</b>	Robert Basiuk, Tourism Specialist, ADB Consultant
<b>11:00</b>	<b>Open Discussion</b>	Moderated by Robert Basiuk/ Sokhom Thok
<b>12:00</b>	<b>Lunch (60 mins)</b>	
<b>13:00</b>	<b>Baseline Environmental Conditions</b>	Peter King, SEA Specialist, Lead Consultant
<b>13:30</b>	<b>Strategic Environmental Assessment of Tourism Impacts</b>	Peter King
<b>14:00</b>	<b>Mitigation and Adaptation Measures</b>	Peter King
<b>14:30</b>	<b>Open Discussion</b>	Moderated by Peter King/Sokhom Thok
<b>15:00</b>	<b>Coffee Break (30 mins)</b>	
<b>15:30</b>	<b>Conclusions and Recommendations</b>	ADB/EOC
<b>17:00</b>	<b>Next Steps (Open Discussion)</b>	ADB/EOC
<b>17:30</b>	<b>Closing Remarks</b>	MoT, MOE and ADB