

## Background

Natural capital such as cropland and forest resources account for about 40 percent of Cambodia's wealth and contributes significantly to its economy. Agriculture contributed 27 percent of GDP in 2016 and supported the incomes of more than 5 million Cambodians. Tourism is an important engine of growth for Cambodia, with strong entry points for ecotourism, building on the country's considerable natural capital.

A significant proportion of this natural capital is found in the Cardamom Mountains-Tonle Sap (CMTS) landscape, which includes one of the world's most productive freshwater fisheries and the largest protected forest in Indochina. It is a global biodiversity hotspot and supports Cambodians with income, food and water.

However, pressure for land, unsustainable use of natural resources, and heightened impacts of climate change are threatening the long-term sustainability of these natural assets, with consequent adverse impacts on people. To address this challenge, the Ministry of Environment (MoE) developed a National Protected Area Strategic Management Plan (NPASMP) for 2017–2031 and is further developing its ecotourism and non-timber forest product (NTFP) value chains to create incentives for strengthening the management of its natural capital and boost economic prosperity.

With a captive tourism market focused on the Angkor temples, the MoE and the Ministry of Tourism (MoT) are now focusing on developing management policies, regulatory frameworks, strategies, and guidelines to expand ecotourism, including in the CMTS landscape. The Cambodia Sustainable Landscape and Ecotourism Project (CSLEP), financed in part by the World Bank, is supporting this effort.



**Location:** Pusat, Koh Kong, Battambang, Kampong Speu, Kampong Thom, Siem Reap, and Kampong Chhnang

### Financiers:

- International Development Association (World Bank), **US\$50.66 million**,
- Global Environment Facility, **US\$4.2 million**,
- Royal Government of Cambodia, **US\$2.5 million**

### Implementing Agencies:

- Ministry of Environment and Ministry of Rural Development and local government in the seven provinces.

### Approval Date:

May 30, 2019

### Closing Date:

December 31, 2025

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## About the Project

The project development objective is to improve management of protected areas (PAs), and to promote ecotourism opportunities and NTFP value chains in the Cardamom Mountains-Tonle Sap landscape. This will be achieved by:

- **Strengthening the capacity for PAs landscape planning and management** by: (i) developing an Information System and Decision Support; (ii) preparing PAs and Community PAs management plans; and (iii) providing technical assistance on a PA enforcement framework.
- **Strengthening opportunities for ecotourism and NTFP value chains** by enhancing the enabling environment for private sector engagement and by investing in infrastructure such as visitor centers, waste management, and NTFP processing and storage facilities.
- **Improving access and connectivity** through the rehabilitation of rural roads and other related rural infrastructure to help in the development of ecotourism corridors and links with main markets.
- **Ensuring environmental, social and economic sustainability by supporting:** (i) financial management and procurement; (ii) environmental and social management, (iii) revenue and fee management and implement other revenue systems and (iv) effective natural resource management system.

## Beneficiaries and Results

The project is expected to directly benefit about 25,000 people (5,200 households) through economic opportunities and ecosystem services.



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