



**Australian Government**



## **Joint Initiative to preserve World Heritage sites in Cambodia**

In response to a dramatic increase in tourism, new environmental challenges and the rapid development of the neighboring communities in Cambodia's Angkor World Heritage Site, Cambodia's APSARA National Authority and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre, in collaboration with the Australian Government, are jointly funding a Heritage Management Framework.

The Australian Government recently announced it will provide A\$1.13 million to support the project and the Royal Government of Cambodia has committed over US\$600,000 for its implementation.

The framework will lay the foundations for an official management plan for the Angkor World Heritage Site and support the role of the Angkor International Coordination Committee and the APSARA National Authority in conserving the values of Angkor.

The project aims to improve heritage management, addressing community concerns and the conservation of monuments and archaeological sites. It will support the development of a land management system for Angkor, undertaken by the APSARA National Authority in response to the World Heritage Committee's resolution at its Quebec meeting in July 2008.

It will also contribute to more sustainable development and poverty alleviation in Siem Reap Province, one of the poorest provinces in Cambodia by helping the local community to share in the cultural and economic powerhouse of tourism at Angkor.

The project will develop a framework for the management of complex cultural sites, local communities and growing tourism which could be applied to other Cambodian heritage sites in the future.

For the universally significant Angkor site, the Heritage Management Framework will develop a set of policies and procedures to enable the APSARA National Authority to conserve the values of Angkor, to improve governance and to help reduce rural poverty.

This framework will be based on a reassessment of all the heritage attributes of Angkor - including continuing social and religious values as well as its aesthetic, historic and scientific values. The framework will also address the complex interrelationship between heritage, tourism, development and the local community.

An important aspect of the project is training key personnel to facilitate skills development and ongoing implementation of management processes and community engagement in heritage management.

The Heritage Management Framework will be prepared under the umbrella of UNESCO involving the Angkor International Coordinating Committee, the APSARA National Authority, foreign missions, other stakeholders and, importantly, the local community.

The formal identification and recognition of the traditional connections and rights of local Khmer people through the planning process will facilitate their inclusion in decision-making at a local level and will recognise their need to live in, work within and prosper from Cambodia's major cultural and tourism attraction.

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