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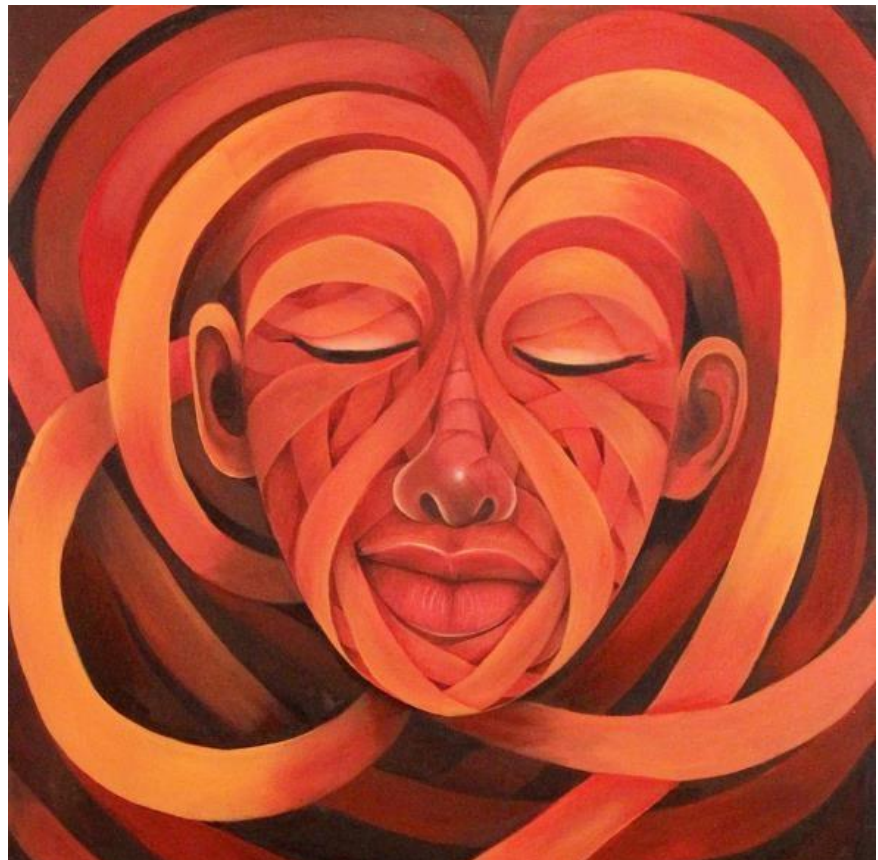
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# STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR HERITAGE TOURISM IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA



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for the

Ministry of Tourism, Royal Government of Cambodia,

and

the Province and Municipality of Battambang

June 2016



**Disclaimer** To prepare these guidelines, 17 students and two staff from the University of the Sunshine Coast visited Battambang Province in September 2015. Interviews were held with national, provincial and municipal government officials with responsibility for environmental protection, fisheries management, planning and public health. Data were gathered on the status of heritage sites and places, existing tourism, livelihoods, water and waste management and infrastructure. The guidelines are based on the information made available, web and literature searches and observation, and may include misinterpretation of fact and intent.

These Strategic Guidelines are not a plan for tourism in Battambang Province. Planning is a matter for the national, provincial and municipal governments of Cambodia, in this case, through the Ministry of Tourism.

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# STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR HERITAGE TOURISM IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA



## *A vision for a tourism future*

Battambang is internationally recognised as a quality heritage tourism destination based on the integrated presentation of Angkorian, French colonial, and Khmer Rouge history that is linked to agriculture and fishery livelihoods, religious and cultural practices and its creative art, craft and cuisine outlets.



## Foreword by the Minister of Tourism

Battambang Province is rich in Khmer and colonial heritage. It has long been recognised as the food-bowl of Cambodia and a hub for art and education. Its cultural value is starting to be recognised globally with preparations being made to propose Battambang City for listing as a UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape – Urban Heritage. The city will be nominated on the basis of its colonial heritage. Its Baroque, Rococo, Art Deco and Neo-Classical facades are some of the best-preserved examples of French Colonial architecture in south-east Asia. This heritage is of global value. However, the province has many other heritage assets. These include historical legacies of ancient cave sites, Angkorian temples, and remnants and history of the much darker days of the Khmer Rouge. Agriculture has been integral to the province throughout history and this is evident in the region’s fine food and traditional livelihoods. There are also many natural and geophysical assets that are significant to local culture such as the Sangker River and the Tonle Sap.

This heritage is valuable to the local community as a source of collective pride. It is also a foundation for future generations to protect, present and enrich Khmer culture. While this heritage has value in itself, these heritage assets also boost Battambang as a potential international tourist destination. The opportunity to experience Khmer heritage can be utilised to attract tourists who might otherwise remain in neighbouring Siem Reap. Therefore, preserving Battambang’s heritage is important culturally, but also for its latent economic and social benefits.

As Battambang continues to develop as a thriving city, it is important to consider its heritage assets. By taking action to preserve its heritage, Battambang City demonstrates commitment to protecting its culture. Strong collective action by Cambodian governments and its citizens can be used to convince UNESCO that Battambang is a capable, contemporary city, worthy of listing.

These strategic guidelines suggest how Battambang’s heritage assets may best be managed to secure UNESCO listing and increase tourism. The strategic directions are based on the vision of the Provincial Government and the Ministry of Tourism. They provide direction for the Province, with the support of the Royal Government of Cambodia, to realise the potential of Battambang as a tourism destination that protects its heritage, boosts pride in its citizens and the broader Cambodian community, and results in a prosperous future for the city and province.

Finally, I sincerely thank the University of the Sunshine Coast, through the sound leadership of its Vice Chancellor and President, Professor Greg Hill, and its Director USC International Development, for their past and ongoing, amicable cooperation, support and assistance.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a stylized, cursive script. The signature is written over a thin horizontal line.

H.E. Dr THONG Khon  
Minister of Tourism  
Royal Government of Cambodia



## Message from the Governor of Battambang Province

It is with much pleasure that I endorse the spirit of this report. I thank the University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland, Australia and the University of Battambang for this initiative to provide sound knowledge-based guidance for developing tourism and ensuring the protection of our heritage. The Strategic Guidelines highlight that in addressing the challenge of economic and social growth for our people, our natural and cultural heritage can easily be underestimated and overlooked. Yet our heritage assets represent who we are, where we have come from and provide direction for where we might go in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Clearly, the Province's natural and cultural heritage is relevant to all Cambodians, but also of interest to international visitors, with direct links to our immediate neighbours. The Strategic Guidelines indicate the capacity for Battambang Province to attract more tourists and ensure that visitors have a positive experience in our province. Strengthening Battambang's tourism sector will bring many benefits to its citizens. Tourism diversifies the province's economy. Battambang is known nationally for its agricultural production. However, over-dependence on this sector carries a great deal of risk. Changing climatic conditions and unpredictable weather events affect farmers' harvest and income. Thus, being able to rely on income from tourism creates a more secure economy. Increased tourism also creates new job opportunities. As a service industry, tourism's success is driven by its workforce, where small investors and participants are rewarded for effort. Tourism creates a number of entry-level positions that engage unskilled people in meaningful work. Such positions are accompanied by training and opportunities for personal development. Additionally, tourism provides opportunities for skilled professionals. Graduates, specialists and multi-lingual individuals may then remain in the province, rather than moving to larger cities for work. This will enrich and ensure Battambang's future.

Having identified these benefits of tourism, the Provincial Government of Battambang is committed to supporting tourism growth in the region. This report is a tool to assist the government in shaping the future of Battambang.

In conclusion, I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation to the Minister of Tourism, HE Dr THONG Khon and Mr THOK Sokhom, Director, Department of International Cooperation and ASEAN at the Ministry of Tourism for their ongoing amicable cooperation, support and assistance. I particularly thank the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and acknowledge the leadership of its Vice Chancellor and President, Professor Greg Hill, and that of Professor RW (Bill) Carter, Director, International Development – USC, in preparing these strategic directions.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Chan Sophal', written in a cursive style.

H.E. Mr CHAN Sophal  
Governor of Battambang Province



## Message from the Mayor of Battambang Municipality

Battambang is a city with much to celebrate. It has a long history of supporting agriculture. Based on fertile soils, the province's farmers sustained millions during the Angkor era and attracted the French colonials. This tradition continues today as Battambang is known as 'the rice bowl of Cambodia'.

The city's colonial heritage is also unique. The legacy of the French Protectorate era is evident in architecture throughout the city. It is some of the most prominent and abundant French architecture still visible in Southeast Asia. However, what is often unseen is the city's artistic heritage. In the 1960s, Battambang became known as a cultural hub due to artists such as Sinn Sisamouth and the golden age of Cambodian cinema. Today, vibrant art galleries and innovative performers continue this legacy.

These Strategic Guidelines give a rationale for why this heritage should be preserved and celebrated. By protecting, enriching and presenting Battambang's heritage assets, the city can achieve world-wide recognition for its heritage assets that exist in its Angkorian ruins, colonial buildings, traditional agricultural practices, and contemporary artistic history. This ensures that these treasures will remain to be enjoyed by all Khmer people and passed on to future generations.

But our heritage, alive within the unique character of the city, can be shared with tourists from around the globe. I believe it is our duty to our forebears and our descendants that we do this, and ensure that our heritage is not forgotten and left to decay and lost. This will require the united support of all levels of government within Cambodia, but most importantly the community of Battambang City. The Municipal Government of Battambang supports the vision inherent in the strategic guidelines and looks forward to contributing to realising the vision of Battambang as a heritage city recognised throughout Cambodia and beyond.

Finally, I offer my sincere thanks and appreciation for the past and on-going amicable cooperation, support and assistance of HE Mr CHAN Sophal, Governor of Battambang Province, above all HE Dr Thong Khon, Minister of Tourism, and Mr THOK Sokhom, Director, Department of International Cooperation and ASEAN at the Ministry. My special thanks and admiration go to the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC), under the sound leadership of its Vice Chancellor and President, Professor Greg Hill, and Professor RW (Bill) Carter, Director, International Development – USC, for his efforts in preparing these important strategic guidelines. Without their tireless efforts and institutional cooperation, support and assistance Battambang would not have this professional guidance in developing heritage tourism in Battambang City.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sieng-EM Wounzy'.

Mr SIENG-EM Wounzy  
Mayor of Battambang City



STRATEGIC GUIDELINES  
FOR HERITAGE TOURISM  
IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



## Executive summary



Preparation of these Strategic Guidelines was motivated by the intention of the Battambang Provincial Government, through the Royal Government of Cambodia, to nominate Battambang as a UNESCO World Heritage Historic Urban Landscape – Urban Heritage based on the French colonial architecture that remains in abundance and in good condition. A successful nomination and being part of UNESCO’s Creative Cities Network is likely to stimulate additional tourist interest in Battambang. These Guidelines seek to define action needed to secure the heritage, demonstrate government and community support for realising the heritage tourism potential of Battambang and diversifying the economy to benefit the local community.

However, protecting and presenting ‘old buildings’ alone is unlikely to satisfy tourists. The French colonial heritage needs to be supplemented and complemented with other attractions. In the last decade, international press has reported on Battambang’s unique city street-scapes, cuisine and creative arts; suggesting a clear direction for developing sustainable heritage tourism.

A rapid inventory of existing and potential tourism products reveals assets that are inter-related, geographically and conceptually, to the French colonial heritage, for example:

- environmental heritage assets, including the Tonle Sap,
- historical heritage assets, including those stemming from the Angkorian and Khmer Rouge eras,
- cultural heritage assets, including religious structures and agricultural land-use, and associated livelihood and lifestyle practices, and
- emerging contemporary assets found in the arts and crafts and cooking.

The challenge is to protect and invigorate these assets to make the collective tourist experience a holistic presentation of Battambang’s heritage.

### STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL

#### Creating a distinctive tourist destination

##### Strategic action 1 Diversify tourist experiences through hub and spoke development



With the French colonial architecture being a major attractor for tourists, concentrating tourism services within a defined heritage tourism zone can establish a starting point for excursions into other parts of the province and minimise infrastructure costs.

##### Strategic action 2 Develop tourism products with inter-related themes

Theme	Sub-theme
Resource	Rivers and lakes Tonle Sap
History	French colonial
Arts and crafts	Contemporary
Lifestyle	Cuisine – traditional & modern Celebrations – religious & secular

The inter-relationship of the Province’s heritage resources can be developed through theming of experiences at specific sites. Key themes are French colonial history, conservation of rivers and the Tonle Sap, community lifestyles, traditions and celebrations, and arts and crafts. Care is needed to ensure site use and themes are compatible with asset values.

#### Underpinning tourism with effective support services

##### Strategic action 3 Upgrade public infrastructure



Infrastructure upgrade and development is necessary to support expected growth in tourist numbers. This includes improving solid waste management, access to and within the province (including greater use of water-based transport), maintenance of public parklands, upgrading of electricity supply for improved safety and presentation, and upgrading of local health facilities and services.

##### Strategic action 4 Improve and formalise communication between tourism stakeholders



The heritage tourism vision inherent in the proposed actions will need community, business and tourism service provider support. To facilitate the engagement and co-contribution of stakeholders requires the establishment of a peak body to represent tourism business interests and fully advising and consulting with local community members who will be affected by action implementation.

**Strategic action 5 Improve information services for tourists**

Tourist information is lacking to assist with pre-visit planning, getting to sites and then understanding site values and significance. Key pre-visit messages are: culturally appropriate behaviour, drug and child protection information and attractions presented by theme. Needed visit information includes: heat and treated water use, direction signage to and at sites, and multi-lingual site interpretation signage. For colonial heritage, interpretive signs and publications should be in Khmer, French and English languages.

**STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE PROVINCIAL SITE LEVEL****Protecting and presenting natural heritage****Strategic action 6 Preserve and enhance management of geophysical assets**

The karst mountains and caves of the province have both environmental and cultural/historic significance (e.g., Phomn Banan). In the context of the Tonle Sap catchment and flood plain, all 'mountains' are significant and merit protection and interpretation.

This equally applies to the waterways and lakes, including Kamping Puoy Lake. However, water assets need pollution controls and clean-up. The Tonle Sap, despite numerous studies, is without a master plan to guide tourism development and maximize community benefits while minimising environmental and social impacts.

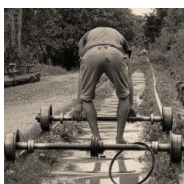
**Strategic action 7 Preserve and improve management of ecosystem assets**

Many ecosystems within the province are cultural landscapes due to occupation over millennia, yet they retain important ecological values that are at risk of being lost. The Tonle Sap and floodplain communities, both natural and human, are vulnerable to pollution, over exploitation and climate change. Planning is urgently needed ensure the undirected tourism development does not jeopardise environmental and social sustainability.

Upland areas are less vulnerable, and largely protected in sanctuaries. These represent ecotourism opportunities of possibly less urgency of development compared with historic heritage sites.

**Protecting and presenting historical heritage****Strategic action 8 Protect, celebrate and present Battambang's rich historical heritage assets**

The Angkorian sites around Battambang offer a more intimate experience to that found in Siem Reap. They are evidence of early Angkorian occupation with links to changing religious beliefs. They can be developed easily as CBT sites with local communities. Presentation of these sites would be a valuable supplement to the colonial heritage. So too are sites associated with the Khmer Rouge era. The rise of the Pol Pot regime, in part, stems from the colonial era: a linking and complement to the stories of the atrocities and resilience of the Khmer people.

**Presenting agricultural traditions, lifestyles and related heritage links****Strategic action 9 Revitalise the agriculture sector and realise potential heritage tourism links**

A sustainable agricultural sector underpins the future prosperity of Battambang and will support tourism with food, but it is also part of the heritage expressed in other assets. Investments are needed to improve agricultural production.

Preparations are also needed for expanded farm tourism initiatives and increased support for existing farm stays and CBT enterprises. The Bamboo Train attraction can be up-graded to be a best-practice demonstration initiative.

**Ensuring effective site presentation and management****Strategic action 10 Improve tourist-site management and maintenance**

All existing tourist sites require regular maintenance, with many requiring up-grading to meet current and future levels of tourist visits. A GIS-linked database of tourism assets and their status would be invaluable for planning and priority setting.

Almost all tourism sites need directional signage to and within sites, interpretation to explain site significance, and identification of who is responsible for management.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE MUNICIPALITY LEVEL

Protecting and presenting artefacts of the French colonial era

Strategic action 11 Gain recognition for, and secure Battambang’s colonial heritage assets



Listing Battambang as a UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape – Urban Heritage, and being part of its Creative Cities Network, will provide a significant boost to tourism through international recognition. However, even without listing, protection and presentation of the French colonial heritage is needed if Battambang is to build its tourism identity on its historic role in French Indo-China. Regulations exist to ensure heritage building protection, but appear not to be fully applied.

Linking tourism and heritage

Strategic action 12 Establish links between tourism services and Battambang’s colonial heritage



A Special Heritage Tourism Zone, based on the core area of French colonial buildings, would demonstrate commitment to protecting and presenting the heritage. It could also be used to attract retail and tourist service businesses that recognise the advantage of being located in an area where a distinctive visual identity is developed and self-sustained by attracted businesses.

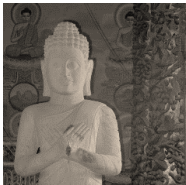
Strategic action 13 Demonstrate the intent of the Special Heritage Tourism Zone with tourist-focused access, recreation facilities and information



To make a Special Heritage Tourism Zone meaningful and identifiable by tourists requires concentrating tourism activity and improving services for their use. Elsewhere in the world, this is achieved by making streets pedestrian-friendly, ensuring public open space, including streets, receives regular maintenance, and provision of well-equipped tourist information centres that deliver a broad range of tourism services. The actions proposed will require the support of the business community and resident population.

Integrating heritage that complements that of the French colonial era

Strategic action 14 Engage tourists in religious and secular celebrations and traditions



Pagodas and temples are rich in history, art and intrinsic to Khmer culture. Associated festivals and ceremonies are of great importance to locals, and have the potential to become significant tourist attractions. This will require ensuring pagodas and other religious sites are well presented and maintained, with opportunities for tourists to learn about the religions, their historical role, and how contemporary religious practice is reflected in other heritage assets. Active and respectful tourist participation in religious and secular traditions can improve understanding of Battambang’s heritage and its relevance to contemporary lifestyle.

Strategic action 15 Re-establish Battambang as the centre for arts and crafts



Through the works of local artisans, Battambang is gaining a reputation as an ‘artistic hub’, as a result of favourable reports in the international press. Art, with rejuvenation of traditional craft skills, naturally complements the presentation of French colonial heritage and together could distinguish Battambang from all other tourist destinations in Cambodia. For this to occur, artists and galleries will need to be supported to become firmly established and traditional craft skills revived, with artisans encouraged to shift from craft to fine art production.

Strategic action 16 Re-establish Battambang as the centre for the culinary arts



As the ‘rice bowl of Cambodia’, Battambang should be its gastronomic centre. This would make it a year-round tourist destination, complement arts and crafts initiatives, and make compatible use of heritage buildings.

A diversity of food styles would need to be encouraged, drawing on traditional Khmer cuisine but also the historic influences from across southeast Asia, China, Japan and France. Ensuring the maintenance of high hygiene standards is essential, as is working towards the establishment of a Battambang School of Fine Food.



## CONTENTS

Foreword by the Minister of Tourism.....	iv
Message from the Governor of Battambang Province.....	v
Message from the Mayor of Battambang Municipality.....	vi
Executive summary .....	viii
Acronyms, abbreviations and place names.....	xiv
Definitions.....	xv
<b>PART A: PLANNING CONTEXT .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>A1.0 Planning mandate and policy directions.....</b>	<b>2</b>
A1.1 Provincial administrative divisions .....	2
A1.2 Statutory requirements and directions for tourism planning.....	2
A1.2.1 Tourism policy and governance .....	2
A1.2.2 Other strategic planning initiatives .....	3
<b>A2.0 The provincial setting for tourism.....</b>	<b>5</b>
A2.1 Demographic and socio-economic setting.....	5
A2.1.1 Agricultural dependence.....	5
A2.1.2 Tourism potential.....	5
A2.2 Climate setting.....	6
A2.2.1 Climate change.....	7
<b>A3.0 Towards sustainable tourism and an identity for Battambang as a tourism destination</b>	<b>8</b>
A3.1 A heritage tourism brand.....	8
A3.2 Strategic Guidelines aim and objectives .....	8
<b>PART B: BATTAMBANG PROVINCE TOURISM ASSETS .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>B1.0 Geophysical assets .....</b>	<b>10</b>
B1.1 Topography.....	10
B1.1.1 Karst and limestone caves.....	10
<b>B2.0 Regional ecosystem assets.....</b>	<b>11</b>
B2.1 Rivers and lakes .....	11
B2.1.1 Kamping Puoy Lake .....	12
B2.1.2 Sangker River.....	12
B2.1.3 Tonle Sap.....	13
B2.2 Cardamom Mountains rain forest ecoregion .....	14
B2.2.1 Roniem Daun Sam Wildlife Sanctuary .....	15
B2.2.2 Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary.....	15
B2.2.3 Samlaut Multiple Use Area .....	16
B2.3 Central Indochina dry forest ecoregion .....	17
B2.3.1 Phomn Sampeau.....	17
B2.3.2 Crocodile farms.....	17
B2.4 Tonle Sap-Mekong peat and freshwater swamp forest.....	18
B2.4.1 Tonle Sap Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary .....	18
<b>B3.0 Historical assets .....</b>	<b>19</b>
B3.1 Pre-Angkorian heritage .....	19
B3.2 Angkorian heritage .....	20
B3.3 Colonial heritage.....	21
B3.4 Khmer Rouge heritage.....	23
B3.4.1 Contemporary Khmer Rouge heritage.....	23
<b>B4.0 Religious and cultural assets .....</b>	<b>24</b>
B4.1 Temples and pagodas .....	24
B4.2 Intangible religious heritage.....	25
B4.3 Khmer festivals.....	25
B4.3.1 Sacred and religious festivals.....	25

B4.3.2 Secular festivals.....	26
B4.4 Arts and craft assets.....	26
B4.4.1 Performing arts .....	27
B4.4.2 Visual arts – contemporary .....	27
B4.4.3 Battambang Provincial Museum and Exhibition Space .....	27
B4.4.4 Pottery, ceramics and weaving.....	28
B5.0 Lifestyle and livelihood assets .....	28
B5.1 Diet, nutrition and cuisine.....	28
B5.1.1 Traditional Khmer food.....	28
B5.1.2 Contemporary cuisine.....	29
B5.1.3 Cooking schools.....	29
B5.2 Agriculture.....	30
B5.2.1 Agri-tourism and alternative livelihoods.....	30
B5.2.2 Bamboo train.....	31
B6.0 Public infrastructure and tourism support services .....	31
B6.1 Health.....	31
B6.2 Transport .....	32
B6.3 Parkland.....	33
B6.4 Public utilities and services .....	33
B6.4.1 Electricity .....	33
B6.4.2 Potable water .....	33
B6.4.3 Solid waste management.....	34
PART C STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL .....	36
C1.0 Creating a distinctive tourist destination .....	36
C1.1 Strategic action 1 – Diversify tourist experiences through hub and spoke development ..	36
C1.2 Strategic action 2 – Develop tourism products with inter-related themes.....	37
C1.2.1 Ensure site use and themes are compatible with asset values.....	38
C2.0 Underpinning tourism with effective support services.....	38
C2.1 Strategic action 3 – Upgrade public infrastructure.....	38
C2.1.1 Improve solid waste management.....	38
C2.1.2 Improve accessibility to potable water and reduce associated solid waste (i.e., plastic bottles) .....	39
C2.1.3 Upgrade access to and within the Province .....	39
C2.1.4 Upgrade electricity infrastructure for presentation and improved safety.....	40
C2.1.5 Upgrade local health facilities for improved community health .....	40
C2.2 Strategic action 4 – Establish and maintain effective communication between stakeholders.....	41
C2.2.1 Establish a peak body for tourism commercial interests.....	41
C2.2.2 Increase collaborative actions of the public and private sectors. ....	41
C2.3 Strategic action 5 – Improve information services for tourists .....	42
C2.3.1 Provide cultural and legal information for tourists.....	42
C2.3.2 Improve Government tourist services and promotion. ....	42
C2.3.3 Provide climate-related health information and ensure the availability of rest facilities .....	43
PART D STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE PROVINCIAL SITE LEVEL .....	46
D1.0 Protecting and presenting natural heritage .....	46
D1.1 Strategic action 6 – Preserve and enhance management of geophysical assets.....	46
D1.1.1 Improve protection and site management at Phomn Banan (an example).....	46
D1.1.2 Develop Kamping Puoy Lake as a significant tourist site. ....	46
D1.1.3 Enhance the presentation and pollution management of the Sangker River .....	47
D1.1.4 Communicate the value of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve to tourism and local livelihoods .....	48
D1.2 Strategic action 7 – Preserve and improve management of ecosystem assets .....	48
D1.2.1 Protect and restore Roniem Daun Sam and Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuaries .....	49
D1.2.2 Use the tourism potential of Samlaut Multiple Use Area and invest in its conservation .....	49
D1.2.3 Realise Phnom Sampeau’s eco-tourism potential through enhanced site management .....	49
D1.2.4 Ensure crocodile farms follow international conventions and upgrade animal and tourist facilities ..	50
D1.2.5 Diversify community based conservation and tourism activities in Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary .....	51

D2.0 Protecting and presenting historical heritage .....	52
D2.1 Strategic action 8 – Protect, celebrate and present Battambang’s rich historical heritage.....	52
D2.1.1 Develop pre-Angkorian sites to contribute to a diversified historical heritage image.....	52
D2.1.2 Redesign and create innovative ways of presenting Angkorian heritage .....	52
D2.1.3 Protect and present the heritage derived from the Khmer Rouge era .....	53
D3.0 Presenting agricultural traditions, lifestyles and community values .....	53
D3.1 Strategic action 9 – Support the vitality of agricultural industries and realise their heritage tourism potential.....	54
D3.1.1 Restore the vitality of the agricultural sector .....	54
D3.1.2 Prepare for expanded farm tourism initiatives and support existing farm stays and CBT initiatives...	54
D3.1.3 Invest in the Bamboo Train attraction to allow it to realise its full tourism potential .....	55
D4.0 Ensuring effective site presentation and management.....	55
D4.1 Strategic action 10 – Improve tourist-site management and maintenance.....	55
D4.1.1 Increase attention given to tourist site management and maintenance .....	56
PART E STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE MUNICIPALITY LEVEL .....	58
E1.0 Protecting and presenting artefacts of the French colonial era .....	58
E1.1 Strategic action 11 – Gain recognition for, and secure Battambang’s French colonial heritage assets .....	58
E1.1.1 Demonstrate commitment to French colonial heritage asset protection .....	58
E1.1.2 Preserve, maintain and restore the French colonial architecture.....	58
E2.0 Linking tourism and heritage .....	59
E2.1 Strategic action 12 – Establish clear links between tourism services and Battambang’s French colonial heritage .....	59
E2.1.1 Define a tourism precinct and hub based on the core area of French colonial buildings .....	59
E2.1.2 Create a distinctive visual identity for the Special Heritage Tourism Zone .....	59
E2.2 Strategic action 13 – Demonstrate the intent of the Special Heritage Tourism Zone with tourist-focused access, recreation facilities and information.....	60
E2.2.1 Make streets within the Special Heritage Tourism Zone pedestrian-friendly .....	60
E2.2.2 Ensure public open space, including streets, receives regular maintenance.....	61
E2.2.3 Improve Government tourist services and promotion within Battambang.....	61
E2.2.4 Engage the community in realising a heritage-tourism vision for Battambang.....	62
E3.0 Integrating heritage that complements that of the French colonial era .....	62
E3.1 Strategic action 14 – Engage tourists in religious and secular traditions.....	63
E3.1.1 Revitalising Battambang’s pagodas and other religious sites .....	63
E3.1.2 Improving the tourist experience and appreciation of intangible religious heritage through participation in traditions.....	64
E3.2 Strategic action 15 – Re-establish Battambang as the centre for the arts .....	64
E3.2.1 Supporting and stimulating Battambang’s local art community. ....	64
E3.2.2 Improving access to performing arts and the business management skills of artists.....	65
E3.2.3 Supporting local artisans to rejuvenate pottery, ceramics and silk weaving .....	65
E3.2.4 Effectively using the Provincial Museum and exhibition space.....	66
E3.3 Strategic action 16 – Re-establish Battambang as the centre for the culinary arts .....	66
E3.3.1 Supporting restaurant diversification as well as primary producers and the arts and crafts sectors ...	66
E3.3.2 Ensuring health standards within the food sector.....	67
PART F: REFERENCES.....	70
PART B. APPENDICES .....	78
Example brochure: Smart tourist guide .....	78
Example brochure: A guide to half and full-day natural heritage sites around Battambang.....	79

## Acronyms, abbreviations and place names

### Repeated acronyms

ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
BCE	Before the common era
CE	Common era
CITES	Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species
CITES MAC	CITES Management Authority of Cambodia
DLMUPC	Department of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction, Battambang Province
GIS	Geographical Information System
ha	hectares
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
km	kilometres
m	metres
MAFF	Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries
MCFA	Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts
MAB	Man and Biosphere
MoEYS	Ministry of Education Youth and Sports
MJPF	Maddox-Jolie-Pitt Foundation
MOE	Ministry of Environment
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOT	Ministry of Tourism
NPCA	Nature Protection and Conservation administration.
NGO	Non-government organisation
RGoC	Royal Government of Cambodia
TDSP 2012-2020	Tourism Development Strategic Plan 2012 - 2020
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Culture Organisation
UBB	University of Battambang
USC	University of the Sunshine Coast

### Abbreviations and place names

Battambang	Battambang Municipality
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## Definitions

**Biosphere reserves** are areas of terrestrial and coastal/marine ecosystems internationally recognized under UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme. They are areas of terrestrial and coastal ecosystems promoting solutions to reconcile the conservation of biodiversity with sustainable use. They are nominated by national governments and remain under sovereign jurisdiction of the states where they are located. Biosphere reserves serve as 'living laboratories' for testing and demonstrating integrated management of land, water and biodiversity.

**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.

**Ecosystem** a biological community of interacting organisms and their physical environment.

**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 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).

**Cultural Heritage** (as defined by convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage) includes:

- monuments – architectural works, works of monumental sculpture and painting, elements or structures of an archaeological nature, inscriptions, cave dwellings and combinations of features, which are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- groups of buildings – groups of separate or connected buildings which, because of their architecture, their homogeneity or their place in the landscape, are of outstanding universal value from the point of view of history, art or science;
- sites – works of man or the combined works of nature and man, and areas including archaeological sites which are of outstanding universal value from the historical, aesthetic, ethnological or anthropological point of view (article 3).

**Natural Heritage** (as defined by the convention concerning the protection of the world cultural and natural heritage) includes:

- natural features consisting of physical and biological formations or groups of such formations, which are of outstanding universal value from the aesthetic or scientific point of view;
- geological and physiographical formations and precisely delineated areas which constitute the habitat of threatened species of animals and plants of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation;
- natural sites or precisely delineated natural areas of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science, conservation or natural beauty.

**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.

**Protected area** is a clearly defined geographical space, recognised, dedicated and managed, through legal or other effective means, to achieve the long term conservation of nature with associated ecosystem services and cultural values.

**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 a 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 rich cultural 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 specific 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 HERITAGE TOURISM IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

### PART A: PLANNING CONTEXT

This part of the Strategic Guidelines introduces the study area, the Royal Government of Cambodia's policy for tourism planning, international tourism trends, the climatic context, 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 Municipality and surrounding areas of the province.

## PART A: PLANNING CONTEXT

### A1.0 Planning mandate and policy directions

These Strategic Guidelines for Heritage Tourism in Battambang Province (Strategic Guidelines) have been prepared as part of ongoing cooperation between the University of the Sunshine Coast (USC) and the Cambodian Ministry of Tourism (MOT) based on a Memorandum of Understanding initiated in 2010 and updated in 2014 to include Griffith University. Through the Minister of Tourism, staff of the Province and Municipality of Battambang and MOT invited USC to assist in developing a tourism strategy for the Battambang Province (Figure A1). These Strategic Guidelines provide interim direction for sustainable heritage tourism in the Battambang province in advance of UNESCO listing of Battambang Municipality (hereafter Battambang) as a Historic Urban Landscape – Urban Heritage.

#### A1.1 Provincial administrative divisions

Battambang Province is located in northwest Cambodia bordering Thailand to the west, Southeast Asia's largest inland water body, the Tonle Sap, to the east, Pursat Province in the south and Banteay Meanchey Province to the north (NIS 2013). Administratively, Cambodia is divided into provinces (25), districts (165 districts [*srok*], 26 cities [*krong*] and 12 sections [*khan*]), communes (1,621) and villages (14,073). This report considers Battambang Province in its entirety. The province covers an area of 11,702 km<sup>2</sup>, and includes 789 villages within 14 districts and 96 communes (Figure A1) (NIS 2013). Under the direction and in cooperation with the Royal Government of Cambodia, all levels of government are responsible for the well-being of its citizens, the sustainable development of tourism, including the protection of natural and cultural heritage.

#### A1.2 Statutory requirements and directions for tourism planning

##### A1.2.1 Tourism policy and governance

Tourism in the Kingdom of Cambodia is governed by the Tourist Development Plan, which comprises the National Tourism Development Plan, The Regional Tourism Development Plan and Local Authority Tourism Development Plan' (*Law on Tourism*, Article 5). *The Law on Tourism* provides a framework for legislative requirements for tourism, including *The Global Code of Ethics for Tourism*.

Cambodia is a signatory to the *ASEAN Tourism Agreement (Association of South East Asian Nations, 2001)*, and Article 6 (C) of the *Law on Tourism* provides the ability to integrate and synchronise the tourism plan into ASEAN and other international tourism frameworks.

##### a. Law on Tourism 2009

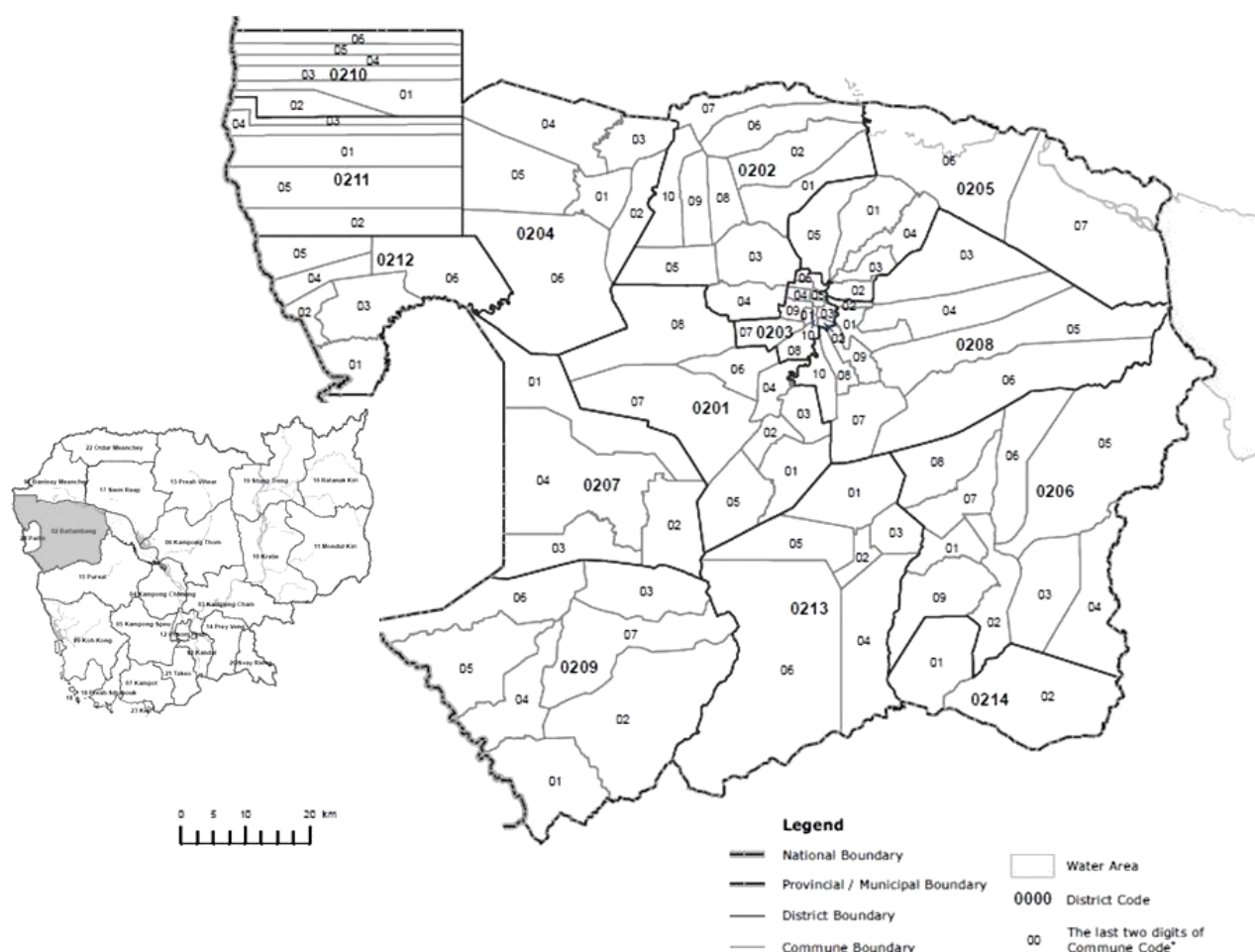
The Cambodian *Law on Tourism* (MOT 2009) provides the MOT with powers to address tourism policy and planning at national and regional levels, as well as tourism promotion, the quality of tourism service provision, standards of tourism, tourism licensing, tourism business activities, conduct of tourism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

##### b. 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 (RGoC) 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 USD5,000 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.



**Figure A1 Districts and communes in Battambang Province**  
(as of 18 May 2011) (Source: NIS 2013)

<b>0201 Banan District</b>	<b>0203 Krong Battambang District</b>	<b>0205 Aek Phnum District</b>	<b>0208 Sangkae District</b>	<b>0211 Phnom Proek District</b>
020101 Kantueu Muoy	020301 Sangkat Tuol Ta Aek	020501 Preaek Norint	020801 Anlong Vil	021101 Phnom Proek
020102 Kantueu Pir	020302 Sangkat Preaek Preah Sdach	020502 Samraong Knong	020802 Norea	021102 Pech Chenda
020103 Bay Damram	020303 Sangkat Rotanak	020503 Preaek Khpob	020803 Ta Pun	021103 Chak Krey
020104 Chheu Teal	020304 Sangkat Chamkar Samraong	020504 Preaek Luong	020804 Roka	021104 Barang Thleak
020105 Chaeng Mean Chey	020305 Sangkat Sla Kaet	020505 Peam Aek	020805 Kampong Preah	021105 Ou Rumduol
020106 Phnum Sampov	020306 Sangkat Kdol Daun Teav	020506 Prey Chas	020806 Kampong Prieng	<b>0212 Kamrieng District</b>
020107 Snoeng	020307 Sangkat Ou Mal	020507 Kaoh Chiveang	020807 Reang Kesei	021201 Kamrieng
020108 Ta Kream	020308 Sangkat Voat Kor	<b>0206 Moug Ruessei District</b>	020808 Ou Dambang Muoy	021202 Boeung Reang
<b>0202 Thma Koul District</b>	020309 Sangkat Ou Char	020601 Moug Ruessei	020809 Ou Dambang Pir	021203 Ou Da
020201 Ta Pung	020310 Sangkat Svay Pao	020602 Kear	020810 Vaot Ta Moem	021204 Trang
020202 Ta Meun	<b>0204 Bavel District</b>	020603 Prey Svay	<b>0209 Samlout District</b>	021205 Ta Saen
020203 Ou Ta Ki	020401 Bavel	020604 Ruessei Krang	020901 Ta Taok	021206 Ta Krey
020204 Chrey	020402 Khnach Romeas	020605 Chrey	020902 Kampong Lpov	<b>0213 Koas Krala District</b>
020205 Anlong Run	020403 Lvea	020606 Ta Loas	020903 Ou Samrel	021301 Thipakdei
020206 Chrouy Sdau	020404 Prey Khpos	020607 Kakaoh	020904 Sung	021302 Kaos Krala
020207 Boeng Pring	020405 Ampil Pram Daeum	020608 Prey Touch	020905 Samlout	021303 Hab
020208 Kouk Khmum	020406 Kdol Ta Haen	020609 Robas Mongkol	020906 Mean Chey	021304 Preah Phos
020209 Bansay Traeng		<b>0207 Rotonak Mondol District</b>	020907 Ta Sanh	021305 Doun Ba
020210 Rung Chrey		020701 Sdau	<b>0210 Sampov Lun District</b>	021306 Chhnal Mean
		020702 Andaeuk Haeb	021001 Sampov Lun	<b>0214 Rukhak Kiri District</b>
		020703 Phlov Meas	021002 Angkor Ban	021401 Preaek Chik
		020704 Traeng	021003 Ta Sda	021402 Prey Tralach
			021004 Santepheap	
			021005 Serei Mean Chey	
			021006 Chrey Seima	

### c. 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.

#### A1.2.2 Other strategic planning initiatives

##### a. National Strategic Development Plan 2014-2018

The RGoC (RGoC 2010; 2014) 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.

The NSDP 2014-2018 notes that the economy is narrowly based on agriculture, garment manufacture, tourism and construction. Even in these sectors, the depth of activity in terms of technological sophistication, vertical integration, and value addition are small. This results in workers' earnings being low. Additionally, tourism growth has so far been restricted to a few provinces causing large interprovincial gaps.

### **b. National ecotourism policy and strategic plan**

The Draft 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.

### **c. Provincial tourism plans**

Few provinces, including Battambang, have prepared a provincial tourism plan to provide directions for tourism development. These Strategic Guidelines provide a foundation for developing such a plan.

### **d. ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-25**

The ASEAN Tourism Strategic Plan 2016-2025 (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.

### **e. 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.

### **f. Protecting natural and cultural heritage**

The RGoC recognises tourism is reliant 'on the preservation of natural cultural heritage and natural environment' (TC 2015). At the same time, it has recognised the need for a legal framework to support anti-corruption, and for transparency at all levels (TC 2015). The RGoC is a signatory to various UNESCO Conventions, demonstrating a willingness and intent to preserve and protect cultural and natural heritage. The Conventions provide guidance on management, protection, administration and funding for protection of UNESCO sites.

## **Implications for tourism planning**

All strategic plans and indeed law and policy emphasise the requirement for tourism in Cambodia to be sustainable. They acknowledge 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 provincial setting for tourism

### A2.1 Demographic and socio-economic setting

#### A2.1.1 Agricultural dependence

In 2008, the population of Battambang Province was 1.037 million (8% of Cambodia; ranked 4<sup>th</sup> of Cambodia's provinces) (1.1 million people in 2011, with an annual growth rate of around 2% (RGC 2014)); 24 per cent resided in the Municipality. Population density was 89 people per km<sup>2</sup> (ranked 12<sup>th</sup> of Cambodia's provinces). Seventy-seven per cent of the workforce were in the agriculture, forestry and fishery sector of the economy (73% for Siem Reap), with less than one percent in the accommodation and food service sector (2% for Siem Reap). The economic output of the Province is about 4.5% of the national economy and is ranked fourth of the provinces for sales, expenses and establishments (behind Phnom Penh, Kampong Cham and Kandal) (NIS 2013).

Cambodians have access to nine years of free education (age groups generally 6-14 years of age) as a right, under the *Education Law* (UNESCO 2011). Many children struggle to be able to stay in school past 12 or 14 years of age; only half of lower secondary school-aged children attended school and upper secondary (years 9-12) enrolments have dropped to less than 25% (UNESCO 2008).

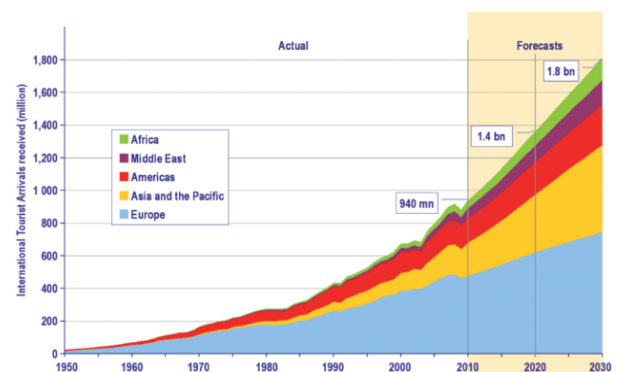
#### Implications for tourism

The prosperity of the Battambang Province is dependent on the economic performance of the agricultural sector. Increased tourism could assist with improving the economy but is unlikely to be a major driver across the province. However, within the municipality, it could be an incentive for improved education, increased business activity based on heritage and culture niche products, including cuisine and the fine arts.

#### A2.1.2 Tourism potential

##### a. International

Driven by significant reductions in the real cost of travel, rising living standards, demographic shifts and changing lifestyle aspirations, international tourism has exhibited almost uninterrupted growth since the 1950s (Kleenman 2014; UNWTO 2015). International tourist arrivals reached 1.13 billion people in 2014 (Figure A2); a 4.3% increase on 2013. International tourist receipts were equivalent to USD1,245 billion. The World Tourism Organisation predicts strong growth prospects for international tourism between 2010 and 2030 (predicted at 3.3% per annum), with the rates in emerging economies expected to be twice that of developed nations.



**Figure A2. UNTWO international tourist arrival data and predictions**

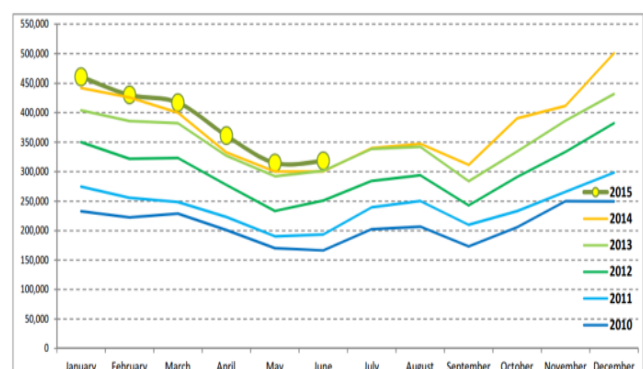
Source: UNTWO 2015

##### b. Cambodia

In 2014, Cambodia received 4,502,775 international tourist arrivals, accounting for 1.7% of the total in Asia and the Pacific and 0.8% of receipts. This was an increase of 7% on 2013, although previously the country had experienced three consecutive years of double digit growth (MOT 2015; UNTWO 2015). Comparatively, China and Thailand, maintained international tourist arrivals of 21.1% and 9.4%, and accounting for 15.5% and 10.2% of receipts respectively.

In line with historical trends, December recorded the highest number of arrivals in 2014, while September retained the lowest, with a difference of almost 200,000 travellers (Figure A3). The peak season also followed historical norms extending from November to March (MOT 2015).

By arrivals, Cambodia's five largest international markets in 2014 were Vietnam, China, Korea, Laos, and Thailand (Figure A4). Top English speaking nations were U.S.A., United Kingdom and Australia (MOT 2014). Within Cambodia, Phnom Penh received 44.9% of visitor arrivals, while Siem Reap accounted for 44.8% (MOT 2014).



**Figure A3. Cambodian international tourist arrivals by month**

Source: Ministry of Tourism (2014)

The World Travel and Tourism Council (2015) estimates domestic tourism’s contribution at 18.7% of total travel. This was forecast to rise by 8.3% in 2015, with continued average annual growth of 7.6% predicted until 2025.

In the first half of 2015, Siem Reap received an increase in tourist arrivals of 10 per cent to 1.2 million. Battambang received 209,000 local visitors (up 9 per cent from 2014), while foreign visitors increased 4.5 per cent to 43,000 (17% of all visitors, but less than 5% of international visitors to Siem Reap).

### Implications for tourism

The strong growth in tourism, both internationally and within Cambodia, provides opportunities for Battambang to draw tourists to the region. Seasonally, November to March is particularly important from a tourist management perspective, while international market data indicates which markets should continue to be cultivated and those that are yet untapped. The strong share of arrivals in Siem Reap is encouraging for tourism in Battambang, which can capitalize on its close proximity. Major tourist markets provide focus for Battambang’s tourism strategy, including marketing and upgrading existing facilities. Tourism planners should consider how to expand and capitalize on the substantial domestic tourism market.

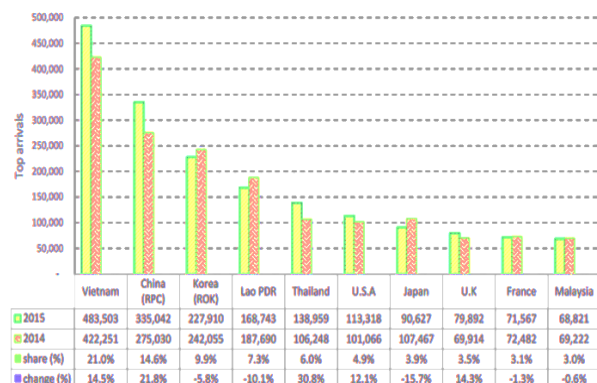


Figure A4. Cambodian international tourist arrivals by residence

Source: Ministry of Tourism (2014)

## A2.2 Climate setting

Battambang Province lies within the driest part of Cambodia, which extends from the north-west to the south (Figure A5). As with the rest of Cambodia and much of South-East Asia, Battambang’s weather is defined by monsoonal wet and dry seasons (WWO 2015). The wet season extends from May through to October, with average monthly rainfall ranging between 130-225mm and temperatures between 20-35°C (Figures A6 & A7). September has the highest rainfall of the year, with an average of 225mm (WWO 2015).

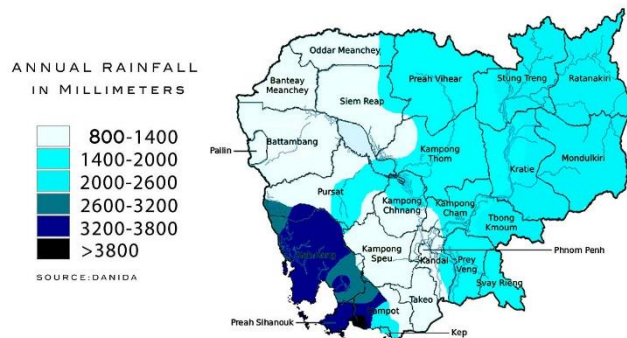


Figure A5. Average annual rainfall distribution across Cambodia

Source: UNTWO 2015

The dry season, November through to April, yields very little rainfall, with monthly averages between 0-80mm and temperatures ranging between 20-38°C (WWO 2015). Throughout the dry months, drought is common, exacerbated by low levels of irrigation and inaccessibility of clean drinking water (D’Agostino & Sovacool 2011; Shaw 2012).

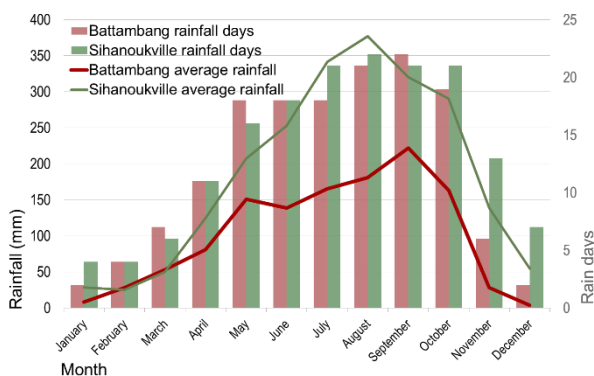


Figure A6 Average monthly rainfall for Battambang and Sihanoukville

(WWO 2015)

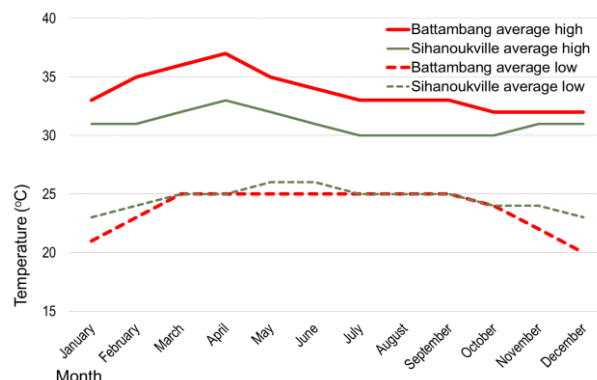


Figure A7 Average monthly temperature for Battambang and Sihanoukville

(WWO 2015)

Temperature varies little between seasons; however, February to May are the warmest months with lows averaging 25°C and highs 35°C (Figure A7). The coolest months are August to January with average lows of 22°C and average highs of 29°C (WWO 2015). Humidity is high throughout the year, ranging between 70-90%, tending to be higher in the wet season (WWC 2015). Sunlight hours throughout the year vary between 6-9 hours a day. The longest days are in January through to March with averages of 9 hours of

sunlight (WWO 2015). The shortest days are during the wet season from August to October, averaging around 6 hours of sunlight (WWO 2015).

### A2.2.1 Climate change

Battambang Province experiences the highest level of drought in all of Cambodia, making the region particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change through drought in the drier months and prolonged flooding in the wet season (D'Agostino & Sovacool 2011; Shaw 2012). The lack of climate change adaptation strategies to mitigate the impacts of prolonged drought and flash flooding are a major contributor to rural poverty in the Province (D'Agostino & Sovacool 2011; Khim & Phearanch 2012). Poor infrastructure and resources, lack of education, out-dated agricultural practices and lack of adequate early warning systems are all thought to prohibit effective regional climate adaptation programs (D'Agostino & Sovacool 2011; Khim & Phearanch 2012). Climate indicators project increased occurrences of severe storms, increased rainfall, prolonged drought, temperature rise and human environmental alterations (such as deforestation) will exacerbate already existing difficult climatic conditions in the region, limiting access to food and water (D'Agostino & Sovacool 2011; Khim & Phearanch 2012).

'Cambodia's population is considered highly vulnerable to climate change because of its dependency on the climate-sensitive livelihood sectors of agriculture and fisheries. Around 80% of the population is rural-based and most farmers are poorly equipped to adapt to climate change. Food security is an existing concern, and data from 2004/2005 shows 25% of the population suffer from undernourishment' (Carter et al. 2014: 118).

#### a. Flooding

During the annual wet season, monsoons/typhoons and resultant flooding are common. Wet season flooding results in swelling of the Mekong River and backed-up water flows into the Tonle Sap causing the lake to triple in size onto the flood plains (Great Rivers Partnership 2012). This annual flooding is important for rice farming, where agricultural practices have been adapted to take advantage of the annual water inundation (D'Agostino & Sovacool 2011). However, changing climatic conditions are proving problematic where extreme rainfall and storms create large-scale agricultural crop destruction, deaths and damage to infrastructure (D'Agostino & Sovacool 2011).

During the 2013 wet season, flooding occurred throughout Cambodia affecting 377,354 homes and approximately 1.8 million people within 20 provinces (including Battambang), with 187 reported dead (UNDP 2013). The floods caused extensive damage to agricultural land, livestock, housing and infrastructure, equating to a total of over USD356 million (UNDP 2013). The flooding was the result of multiple typhoons, heavier than usual monsoon rainfall, flash floods in the western provinces and extensive water level rise in the Mekong River (UNDP 2013). Often floods of this magnitude are followed by extended periods of drought. This combination of flooding and drought significantly affects the agricultural sector and the rural poor (UNDP 2013).

#### b. Drought

Battambang Province experiences extended periods of drought annually from October to April varying in severity. Between 2002 and 2004, droughts affected more than 2 million people and damaged more than 120,000 hectares of rice crops, compounding poverty in vulnerable agricultural regions in Cambodia, including Battambang Province (D'Agostino & Sovacool 2011).

'The combination of poor land-use management (tree-clearing in key catchments), limited access to water and storage of existing water resources make Cambodian communities vulnerable to drought impacts when the monsoons are delayed or end early. Drought affects every aspect of the country's economy and population and leads to economic losses through crop failure, health problems, and environmental damage. Between 1998 and 2002, a 20% loss in rice production was attributed to drought' (Carter et al. 2014:117).

### Implications for tourism

Despite warm temperatures and ample sunlight hours, the distinct wet and dry seasons mean that Battambang Province is subject to marked tourism seasonality. This is exacerbated by flooding of the Tonle Sap and Sangker River, which makes travel between destinations difficult. Seasonality and flooding are threats to tourism and the response needs to be managed through development of diversified tourism products located in places less vulnerable to these weather-dependent events.

Due to high humidity, the effect of temperatures in Battambang are intensified and require warnings for tourists on arrival regarding water consumption, sun protection and heat management plans.

Key tourist locations require shaded viewing and rest areas to reduce sun exposure and heat exhaustion.



## A3.0 Towards sustainable tourism and an identity for Battambang as a tourism destination

### A3.1 A heritage tourism brand

These Strategic Guidelines seek to support the development of a sustainable tourism sector within Battambang Province that will provide a model for sustainable heritage tourism development, create a healthier, cleaner, safer environment, and promote sustainable livelihood opportunities that reinforce the significance of the heritage. It identifies the high-value provincial assets for tourism and provides guidelines for sustainable management for tourism development. Battambang can build a strong, diverse economic future that is supported by nature-, culture-, and heritage-based tourism initiatives, environmental and heritage protection and community participation. Following a hubs and spokes model of development based on unique assets (see Section C1.1), stakeholders in specific areas within Battambang and the Province can collectively share in the benefits of strategic tourism development that supports a heritage tourism brand.

### A3.2 Strategic Guidelines aim and objectives

The aim of these Strategic Guidelines is to provide a framework for policy makers, stakeholders and governing bodies to facilitate development of heritage-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 Battambang Province's nature-, history-, and culture-based assets and prioritise their protection and development as tourism products within a heritage tourism theme;
2. identify actions to advance sustainable tourism growth in the province; and
3. provide a basis for developing statutory instruments that:
  - maximise economic benefit and minimise negative social, health and environmental implications through strategic planning initiatives;
  - support the diversification of the economic base of local communities;
  - raise awareness, strengthen perceptions and enhance community commitment through increased understanding and appreciation of their heritage and tourism's role in protecting and presenting valued features;
  - encourage community engagement in the development of heritage-based tourism initiatives, the enrichment of local cultures and the preservation of the environment and cultural heritage values unique to each part of the province;
  - provide a rationale and priorities for the development of public infrastructure that supports expanding tourism and local livelihoods and improves community health and well-being;
  - increase cross-cultural understanding through by providing multi-lingual tourism information; and
  - provide an exemplar model for effective sustainable development in ASEAN countries.

#### Implications for tourism

The natural, historical and cultural resources of Battambang Province 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 region'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.





## STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR HERITAGE TOURISM IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

### PART B: BATTAMBANG'S TOURISM ASSETS

This part of the Strategic Guidelines is an inventory of assets and products developed, or could be developed, to serve tourists. The inventory is not comprehensive; although it does suggest that a rich and diversified natural, cultural, historical and community lifestyle heritage exists within Battambang Province, which could form the basis for a vibrant tourism sector.

The province includes culturally rich and historically significant heritage sites from pre-Angkorian times, through the French colonial and Khmer Rouge eras to modern Battambang. With protected areas that preserve remnants of regional ecosystems and religious sites and structures, together they have the potential to be significant places for the development of community-based tourism businesses. Developing specific cultural tourism products and services in the region will attract specific market segments and open opportunities that benefit local communities.

Most Battambang residents depend on natural resources for their livelihoods and socio-economic well-being. 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). Cultural and heritage 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 locally owned and operated tours of the city's religious and arts assets, cultural livelihood activities and specific eco-tourism products, including bird watching and nature tours.

## PART B: BATTAMBANG PROVINCE TOURISM ASSETS

Underpinning proposed strategic actions (see Parts C, D, E and F) is the vision for developing Battambang Province 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 these Strategic Guidelines 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 behavior. This can have implications for management and successful tourism development.

### B1.0 Geophysical assets

#### B1.1 Topography

The topography of Battambang Province varies from floodplain areas surrounding the Tonle Sap in the east to the upland mosaic and forested areas and lowland paddy fields in the west of the province (WFP 2015). Limestone and rock hills are scattered throughout the floodplain and are often the sites of religious, historic and natural history significance.

##### B1.1.1 Karst and limestone caves

There are a large number of limestone hills with caves west of Battambang that continue towards Pailin on the Cambodian-Thai border (Price 2011). The karst rise out of the plains to heights of about 300 metres (Price 2011). Many caves are associated with temples and sacred sites (Figure B1). The karst landscape provided key positions in times of conflict, both as lookouts and as sites where mass killings took place. Remnants of military hardware can be found strewn in the undergrowth on the mountains to this day. The mountains and cave systems provide unique ecosystems that support a diversity of flora and fauna. While they are important ecologically, the cave systems also hold significant historical and religious value, especially those such as the Killing Caves at Phnom Sampeau, where genocide occurred during the Pol Pot era. Human remains are preserved at the site as a reminder of the atrocities. A few, namely the Bat Caves and Killing Caves have become known to tourists, but considerable opportunity exists for additional tourism development and associated conservation.



**Figure B1. Karst cave with resting Buddha**

##### Phnom Banan and limestone caves

Banan Mountain and the associated network of limestone caves exemplify the natural heritage and high potential for tourism use of the karst system. A climb of 358 weathered stone steps leads to an Angkorian temple complex. The temples merge architecture from the mid-11<sup>th</sup> and late-12<sup>th</sup> century (Tourism of Cambodia, 2015). Hand-carved lintels above each tower's doorway, and intricate bas-reliefs on upper sections of the central tower are appealing to tourists, particularly in this natural environment (Lonely Planet, 2015). The winding Sangker River can be seen from the mountain top, amidst a patchwork of sugar palms, villages and rice fields (Tourism of Cambodia, 2015). To the south, two more limestone outcrops can be observed: Phnom Krapau (Crocodile Mountain) and Phnom Sampeou (Ship Mountain). Legend associated with these geographical assets increases their cultural heritage value, and hence the potential for tourism.

The limestone caves hold historical and cultural significance for local Khmer people, who bless themselves and others with water that only seeps into the caves at a specific time each year. Naturally formed shapes on the walls, indiscernible to most tourists, are the focus of a traditional moral story. A statue and a prayer area are in the main section of the cave, in addition to a small number of bats.

Accommodation, relaxation areas and food outlets exist, and are suited to the natural environment. The restaurant has the capacity to cater for a large number of visitors.

##### Status limestone caves

Many limestone cave areas already attract tourists and, with improved signage, would become a valuable tourist asset. Existing pathways would benefit from maintenance to accommodate tourists of all fitness levels and those with physical disabilities (e.g., in wheelchairs). Site features and their associated stories are not immediately apparent to tourists, and highlight the need for a knowledgeable tour guide. The limestone caves are usually kept clean, with no visible rubbish inside, although there is some litter around the entrance/exit and on the paths to and from many of the caves. Routine maintenance is required.

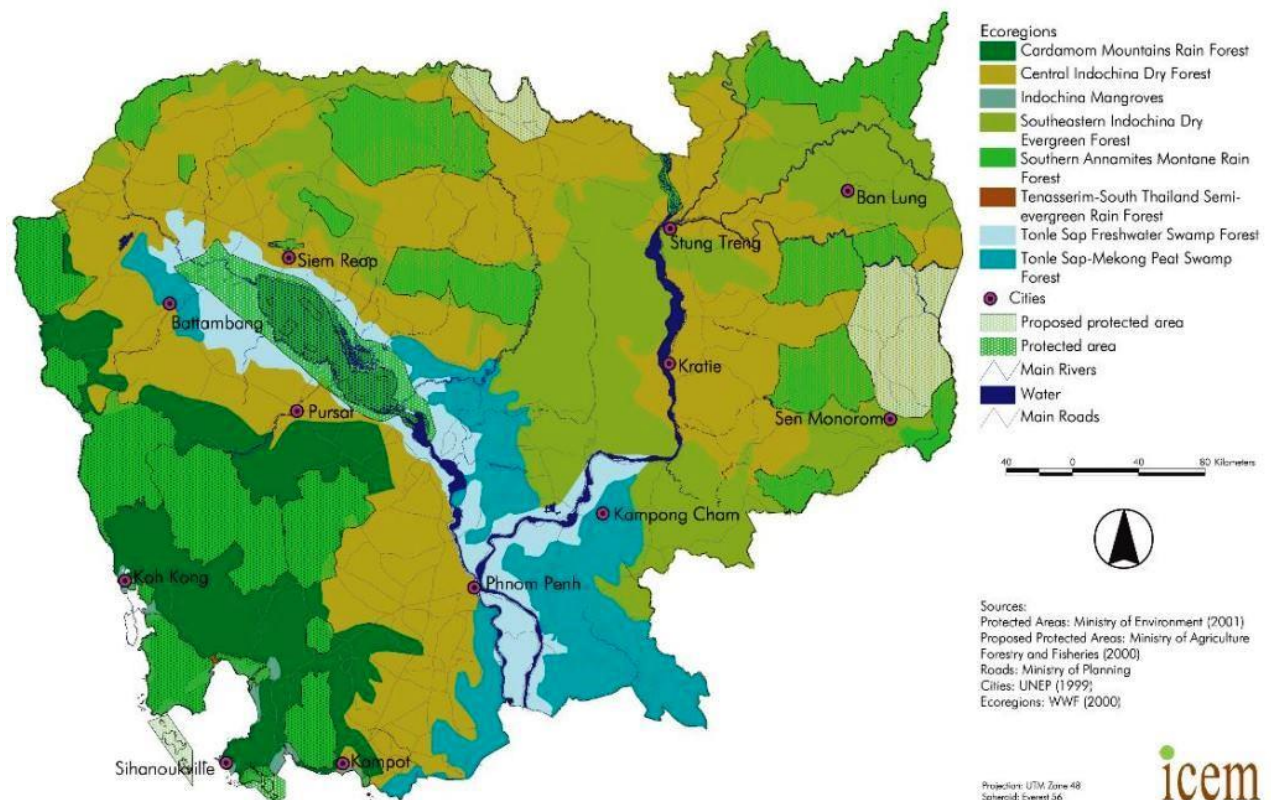
### Implications for tourism

The limestone caves, mountain views and associated legends have the potential to attract tourists interested in Khmer and natural history; however, they are not yet effectively presented or promoted. Improved site management, including a routine maintenance schedule, is needed to protect and present the assets of the area. The combination of natural and cultural history at several of the limestones caves presents opportunities to embrace and enhance the tourism potential. The sites need protection

## B2.0 Regional ecosystem assets

Battambang Province contains six of the seven ecoregions that occur in Cambodia (see WWF 2016; Figure B2). Ecoregions are areas of land or water containing a geographically distinct assemblage of species, natural communities, and environmental conditions. An ecoregion can be characterised by global rarity of the habitat type, richness in species, extraordinary ecological or evolutionary phenomena, and higher taxonomic uniqueness and endemism (WWF 2016). The six ecoregions within Battambang Province are:

- Cardamom Mountains rain forests (WWF ecoregion IM0106),
- Southern Annamites montane rain forests (WWF ecoregion IM0152),
- Tonle Sap freshwater swamp forests (WWF ecoregion IM0164),
- Tonle Sap-Mekong peat swamp forests (WWF ecoregion IM0165),
- Central Indochina dry forests (WWF ecoregion IM0202), and
- Southeastern Indochina dry evergreen forests (WWF ecoregion IM0210).



**Figure B2. Ecoregions of Cambodia**

Source: About Asia Travel <<https://www.aboutasiatravel.com/cambodia/map/eco-regions-map.htm>>

### B2.1 Rivers and lakes

Rivers and lakes within Battambang Province are an underused resource with considerable tourism potential due to their significant natural and cultural features. Kamping Puoy Lake, the Sangker River and the Tonle Sap are potential primary tourist attractions for Battambang. With increased tourism marketing they could present opportunities for local villagers to provide tourism services to supplement incomes. However, the natural and cultural heritage of these sites must be protected from the adverse effects of overuse. This currently and partially exists through constrained access during flood periods and limited dry-season access across the flood plain. Realising the tourism potential will require access services and facilities as well as wildlife-viewing infrastructure within the Tonle Sap. This would open access to the floating villages of the Tonle Sap. Care must be taken to ensure increased tourist numbers are managed within the aspirations of the communities.

### B2.1.1 Kamping Puoy Lake

Kamping Puoy Lake, about 27km west of Battambang, is between Phnom Kul (or Phnom Ta Nget) and Phnom Kamping Puoy mountains (Nguyen et al. 2011; TC 2015) (see also B3.4). Although there are no tangible relics, this lake is a site of significant historical importance, due to its construction during the Khmer Rouge era.

The lake was hand-built by Khmer living in the four surrounding districts, under the command of the Khmer Rouge (Angkor Focus Travel 2012). The lake is also referred to as the 'Killing Dam', as thousands of people died during its construction, due primarily to the harsh living conditions imposed by the Khmer Rouge (Taum & Hum 2005).

The lake is now a site of natural importance (Taum & Hum 2005) (Figure B3). During the wet season, the lake can hold approximately 110 million m<sup>3</sup> of water, which is used for local agriculture (TC 2015). The lake was originally built as part of an irrigation system; however, it is now an ecosystem with lotus flowers blooming in February. The lotus flower seeds are a traditional food source and are available for purchase by tourists. Rare native bird species build their nests on the few trees in the lake, before the wet season. The uniqueness of rare birds nesting in this area add to the natural eco-tourism attraction of the lake.



**Figure B3. Kamping Puoy Lake**

#### Status of Kamping Pouy Lake

The lake is a significant water bird area; however, water pollution has occurred as a result of quarrying in surrounding mountains, where limestone and silica are mined and subsequently exported. Mining creates harmful sedimentation runoff that pollutes the lake and surrounding areas. A scarcity of bins and substantial littering add to degradation of the environment.

#### Implications for tourism

The lake has the potential to be a popular wildlife tourism attraction. However, directional signage is needed to guide visitors: (a) to the site, and then (b) within the site to market stalls where local food, drinks and souvenirs are for sale. There is no information or signage available regarding possible boat trips, or to inform visitors of the natural and cultural significance of the site.

Boat tours are an opportunity available to supplement to the livelihoods of local Khmer and to increase local and visitor understanding of the natural and cultural significance of the lake and its construction.

### B2.1.2 Sangker River

The Sangker River flows 250km from the Cardamom Mountains in the west, through Battambang, to the Tonle Sap (NID 2010; Rot 2000). It is part of a transit route between the cities of Battambang, Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. The river sustains a diversity of wildlife and over one million people in the Battambang and Palin provinces (MJPF 2014). Its average depth is 2.35m in the dry season (October to April) and 6.79m in the wet season (May to October) (MJPF 2014). The Sangker River also flows through a number of fishing villages downstream towards the Tonle Sap. Flooding of the river and the Tonle Sap is beneficial for the rice-based agriculture that is the predominant source of food production in the province (Heng et al. 2013). Floods leave natural sediments and nutrients on the rice fields.

Protected wetlands and narrow bays are also located on each side of the river. These are vital nurseries for freshwater life. Thirty-two species of fish have been recorded from the Sangker River, two of which are endemic; the Trey Kanh Chrouk or emperor loach (*Botia* sp.), and the Kantuy Khmao (*Garra fisheri*), a bottom-feeding carp (Rot 2000).

On the river banks in Battambang are numerous recreational parks. Kayaking is a popular eco-tourist service available, 15 minutes by car (or 25 minutes by tuk-tuk) from central Battambang. The addition of tour guides would add value to the eco-tourist experience. Located next to the kayak rental business is an eco-resort (under construction), which will add to the eco-tourist value of the river.

Tourists can also take traditional boat trips along the river, through the city or a day trip from Battambang to Siem Reap, allowing immersion in the natural and cultural surroundings of the province and access to the local floating villages on the Tonle Sap.



**Figure B4. Banks of the Sangker River**

## Status of the Sangker River

Cambodian rivers are prone to flooding during the wet season. Flash floods result from heavy, constant rainfall, while widespread rainfall in the catchment of rivers flowing into the Tonle Sap (with back-up from the Mekong River) causes inundation of the flood plain (Helmerts & Jegillos 2004). The ensuing erosion causes houses on the banks of the Sangker River to slip. Approximately 250km<sup>2</sup> of agricultural land area around the Sangker River catchment is potentially affected by floods (Heng et al. 2013). Flooding, as well as drought, can prevent tourists from travelling by boat across the lake and along the river.

Increased sedimentation from deforestation along the river is causing a decline in invertebrate numbers, which is likely to affect fish populations (Rot 2000). Pollution, in the form of solid waste (e.g., plastic bags), reduce the tourist appeal of the river (see Figure B4). Solid and liquid waste entering the river accumulates downstream, creating negative environmental impacts on the Tonle Sap, and detracts from tourism. It also affects wildlife habitats, water quality and local communities of the Biosphere Reserve.

## Implications for tourism

While increased opportunities for tourists to use the Sangker River is desirable for sightseeing and access to other locations, this will require embarking/disembarking infrastructure. If a new boat station is constructed as planned, travel between Battambang and Siem Reap will support tourism growth of the area. All-weather access to the Tonle Sap requires careful consideration of potential social and environmental impacts, and significant wildlife viewing infrastructure within the lake.

Litter management is a national problem that can only be addressed through community education programs and effective government-led solid waste management. However, removal of litter from the riverbanks, after each wet season and during the peak tourist period would significantly improve the aesthetic quality of the river, especially adjacent to Battambang City.

### B2.1.3 Tonle Sap

The Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve, partly within Battambang Province, can be divided into: (1) the open lake at the centre, (2) surrounded by freshwater swamp forest, which is contained within (3) a seasonally flooded grassland (Bonheur 2007). The permanent lake is approximately 2500 km<sup>2</sup> and expands by an approximate factor of five to 13,000 km<sup>2</sup> when the floodplain is engulfed (MOE 2001) between August and November. During this time, the lake increases in volume by a factor of 50, from approximately 1.4 billion m<sup>3</sup> to 70 billion m<sup>3</sup>, raising the lake's surface level around 9-10 metres (MOE 2001). Between April and June, the lake may only be a metre deep, while in September to November, the lake can be 12 metres deep. This makes the Tonle Sap the largest seasonally flooded freshwater swamp forest habitat in Southeast Asia (Kuenzer 2013). Where the Sangker River meets the lake, the floodplain is the most extensive; more than 40 kilometres wide, with a flood amplitude of 10 meters.

The Tonle Sap formed as an isolated, inland lake approximately 15,000 years ago. Approximately 5,000 years ago, as a result of climate warming and an increase in sea level, the lake was connected to the Mekong via the Tonle Sap River (MOE 2001). Since then, the lake has maintained a unique hydrological system. In late June each year, snowmelt further inland combines with the monsoon waters from the Mekong to effectively dam the Tonle Sap River, causing the waters to back-up into the great lake. In October, the flow reverses and the lake discharges into the Mekong. This annual cycle of water retention and release underpins the unique biological and ecological richness of the Tonle Sap ecosystem, and allows the lake to play a vital role in buffering floods and droughts in the lower Mekong River (van Zalinge et al. 2008).

The Tonle Sap provides habitat for over 100 species of fish, 30 reptiles, 200 birds (16 of which are globally threatened) and 20 mammals (Figure B5). The lake is the most important wetland in Southeast Asia for the survival of endangered waterbirds and reptiles (van Zalinge et al. 2008). The lake supports the largest colonies of endangered waterbirds in Southeast Asia, in addition to rare flora (e.g., *Diospyros odoeratisissima*). The swamp forests, one of the most characteristic habitats of the region, support both biodiversity and the productivity of the ecosystem (Bonheur 2007), and the lake is crucial to the food security of the Khmer people (van Zalinge et al. 2008).

Approximately 80,000 people inhabit the lake in 170 floating villages (Goes & Nivot 2014). The fish stocks produced by the Tonle Sap contribute 70 per cent of the Cambodian people's protein intake and 15 per cent of Cambodians depend on the take for their livelihoods; harvesting molluscs, eels, crabs, water snakes and shrimp (van Zalinge et al. 2008). In the fishing season, between October and May, the Tonle Sap is one of the world's most productive freshwater fisheries, with 300,000 tons of fish caught annually. This contributes approximately USD200 million to the country's economy.



**Figure B5. Waterbirds soar over Tonle Sap**

The Tonle Sap also supports the world's largest snake harvest, with over 5 million individuals collected annually and used as a source of food (van Zalinge et al. 2008)..

The main local livelihoods in and around the lake are land-based farming and water-based fishing. Travelling through the Tonle Sap, a rare display of cultural heritage can be observed in the form of floating villages and fishers using traditional techniques and devices (150 different types of fishing gear). The flooded forests provide many natural resources used by the local people. Up to 90% of available flora can be used for building materials, fishing gear, firewood and traditional medicines.

### Status of the Tonle Sap

The Tonle Sap is part of a 'Biosphere Reserve'. However, rural livelihoods centred on the lake, and the unique ecological processes and ecosystems contained within it, are under threat from general resource exploitation (Kuenzer 2013). Threats include illegal wood harvesting and overfishing, which causes water quality to deteriorate, and threatens the stability of socio-ecological systems (Kuenzer 2013). Habitat and ecosystem fragmentation, caused specifically by agricultural expansion, infrastructure development and an increase in human settlement on the Tonle Sap floodplain, has resulted in the depletion of flooded forest habitat, destruction of natural corridors for animal migration and general isolation of ecological systems (MOE 2001).

Four major human induced pressures currently threaten the integrity of the Tonle Sap.

1. Depletion of flooded forests at an estimated rate of 1 per cent per annum through land clearing for agriculture, burning for hunting and gaining access, and cutting trees for fishing gear, charcoal and firewood.
2. Overfishing through destructive and illegal fishing techniques (such as electrification) due to a lack of enforcement. Overexploitation is reflected in the decrease in average fish size, catch per unit effort and extinction of larger species.
3. Spread of invasive species (such as the giant mimosa and water hyacinth), which are extremely difficult to eradicate and can have detrimental impacts on the ecology of the region and ultimately the productivity of fisheries.
4. External threats include the construction of dams on the Mekong River Basin. These dams will disrupt the flood cycle of the lake and, in turn, directly affect the entire balance of the regions ecosystem. This will cause detriment to the exceptional productivity of the lake and ultimately, the food security and livelihoods of millions of Cambodians).

Together, these factors place the natural and cultural heritage of the Tonle Sap in jeopardy.

The level of watersnake harvest raises concern for the sustainability of the species endemic to the region (LakeNet n.d.). Additionally, the allocation of fishing lots is based on a neoliberal ideology and does not consider sustainable fishery management. However, the protection of habitat is a strong theme within current allocation rules. Towards fisheries reform, sustainable management of natural resources remains a priority challenge. It is apparent that communities often suffer due to a lack of capacity, and availability of resources, to effectively and properly manage community fisheries.

Tourism use of the lake is rapidly increasing, but constrained by lack of all-year access. Of concern is the lack of infrastructure within the lake to service large numbers of tourists and protect the wildlife spectacle.

### Implications for tourism

Despite its natural attraction for tourism, wet and dry season access currently limits tourist use of the Tonle Sap. All-season access to the lake for recreation and tourist use can be expected in the foreseeable future. Of concern is the potential environmental impact of large tourist numbers on significant wildlife habitat, waterbird breeding areas, and pollution of the waters.

Planning for use of the lake, including identification of permanent and seasonal protected zones, is required before significant improved access is permitted.

Sustainable livelihood considerations for managing the Tonle Sap will include addressing water quality and overfishing. This will also benefit tourism through improving wildlife habitat and supporting healthy human communities. The floating and stilt fishing villages of the Tonle Sap, and villager livelihood practices, are inherently of interest to tourists. However, community livelihoods, not community poverty, needs to be the attraction, both for ethical reasons and the sustainability of community-based and community-focused tourism. Tourism planning with and for the Tonle Sap communities needs to be well-advanced ahead of the arrival of large tourist numbers.

## B2.2 Cardamom Mountains rain forest ecoregion

The Cardamom Mountains rainforest ecoregion (ecoregion IM0106) covers 44,300 km<sup>2</sup>, and contains one of only a few ecoregions in Indochina with intact rain forests. It is listed in WWF's 'top 200 global most outstanding areas of biodiversity' (WWF 2016). The ecoregion is situated adjacent to the southern and

western borders of Battambang Province (Figure B3). It is part of the wet evergreen floristic belt that stretches from Phu Quoc Island, Vietnam, along the Elephant Ranges and Cardamom Mountains, and extending into Thailand. This ecoregion is one of the most species-rich, intact and undisturbed natural habitats in Southeast Asia and has been identified as a biodiversity 'hotspot' (Lo Cascio & Beilin 2010). Ranging from an elevation of 30 m to 1,500 m above sea level, the Cardamom Mountains rainforest is supported by an average annual rainfall of up to 5,000 millimetres in some areas (ADB 2012). The upper montane forest is characterised by extreme moisture from monsoon winds and a dense dwarf canopy (<12 meters). In contrast, the lower montane forest is characterised by a multi-strata canopy, encompassing trees up to 30 m, a mid-canopy of palms and rattans, and a dense understory of shrubs, climbers, and lianas (ADB 2012). The rainforest supports more than 100 mammal species and 450 bird species. Many are threatened, including the Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), clouded leopard (*Pardofelis nebulosa*), wild dog (*Cuon alpinus*), gaur (*Bos gaurus*), banteng (*Bos javanicus*), pileated gibbon (*Hylobates pileatus*) and serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*) (ADB 2012).

With such an abundance of unique plant and animal life, a number of protected areas were established by the Royal Decree in 1993, covering approximately 14,500 km<sup>2</sup> (33%) of the Cardamom Mountain rainforest ecoregion (ADB 2012). The management of Cambodia's protected areas is under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Environment (MOE) and administered by the Nature Protection and Conservation Administration (NPCA), as per Article 4 of *The Protected Area Law 2008* (PAL 2008). All protected areas are divided into four zones: (1) core zone; (2) conservation zone; (3) sustainable use zone; and (4) community zone; as per Article 11 of the *Protected Area Law 2008* (PAL 2008). Battambang Province contains parts of three Cardamom Mountain rainforest protected areas: Roniem Daun Sam Wildlife Sanctuary, Samlaut Multiple Use Area and Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary.

### B2.2.1 Roniem Daun Sam Wildlife Sanctuary

Roniem Daun Sam Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the north-west of Battambang Province. The protected area is approximately 1,980 km<sup>2</sup> and categorised by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) as a habitat and species management area (Category IV) (Wikramanayake et al. 2002). The Sanctuary has been recognised for its high biological importance (Lacerda et al. 2004). The area is also notable for its association with the Khmer Rouge. In the late 1970s, the protected area was subject to extensive minelaying as part of the K5 Mine Belt that stretched over 700 km of the Cambodia-Thailand border (Nathaniel & Andover 2006). Today, the sanctuary contains four border districts: Kamrieng, Sampov Loun, Phnom Proek and Bavel. Intensive deforestation has occurred with the establishment of small towns and road networks, linking the four border districts with Battambang City. Settlement of border towns began in the mid-1990s and intensified by 2000 following the removal of some residual landmines (Killeen 2012). Although some removal of landmines occurred in the Sanctuary in 2000 (Killeen 2012), the threat of minefields (suspected and confirmed) is still present according to the Cambodian Mine Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA) (Wheeler 2008). Farmers in the border districts continue to be injured or killed by landmines (Sony 2015).

#### Status of Roniem Daun Sam Wildlife Sanctuary

Despite its protected status and biological significance, human activity in the Roniem Daun Sam Wildlife Sanctuary severely threatens its natural state. In 2005, it was estimated that approximately 90 per cent of the Sanctuary had been deforested through increased human settlement, illegal logging and agricultural activities (Killeen 2012).

Because of the presence of landmines, the Sanctuary remains hazardous for wildlife, local people and tourists. As such, no tourism activity occurs in the Sanctuary. Access is available only by motorbike via a dirt road; very few tourists visit the area (Suon, D 2015, pers. comm., 7 October).

#### Implications for tourism

Due to the significant threat of unexploded landmines, tourism investment seems unwise.

However, attention to restoring the safety and ecological health of the wildlife sanctuary is required as an investment in a tourism future for the Sanctuary.

### B2.2.2 Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary

The Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the south-west of Battambang Province. The protected area is approximately 3,170 km<sup>2</sup> and categorised by the IUCN as a habitat and species management area (Category IV) (Wikramanayake et al. 2002). Most of the Sanctuary is located within the provinces of Pursat and Koh Kong; however, the northern tip of the sanctuary is within Battambang Province. According to the Rapid Assessment and Prioritization of Protected Area Management Methodology (RAPPAM), of Cambodia's twenty-six protected areas, the Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary is the third most biologically significant (Lacerda et al. 2004). There has been visual confirmation that five out of six primate species located within the Sanctuary are still present: the Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*), Indochinese



silvered langur (*Trachypithecus germaini*), pileated gibbon (*Hylobates pileatus*), pig-tailed macaque (*Macaca leonine*) and long-tailed macaque (*Macaca fascicularis*) (Coudrat et al. 2011). Furthermore, a new species of *Rhaeophoridae* frog (genus *Chiromantis*) was recently discovered in the Sanctuary (Grismer et al. 2007). Lacerda et al. (2004) conclude that the protected area has exemplary plant communities and notable wildlife habitat.

Since the area became more accessible around 2000, it has attracted the attention of wildlife conservationist, naturalist and biologist globally (Brady 2008). Some ecotourism currently exists in the Pursat section of the Sanctuary. Three guest houses have been established and guided hikes to Cambodia's second highest peak, Phnom Samkos, are available (Ray & Bloom 2014). A four-day mountain bike tour is available commencing in Battambang, and travelling south through Phnom Samkos to Kampot Province (Pheap, M 2015, pers. comm., 17 October). Such tours are viable because landmines are not a concern in the area (Wheeler 2008).

### Status of Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary

Despite legislative classification and zoning, Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary had been degraded. The sanctuary has been reduced in size and reconfigured to eliminate sections of flat land seen as suitable for food crop production (Killeen 2012). A road network exist within the sanctuary, making the protected area particularly vulnerable to illegal logging (Global Witness 2002).

### Implications for tourism

Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuary has ecotourism potential due to an abundance of unique flora and fauna; however, access to the core of the sanctuary is via Pursat and Koh Kong Provinces.

### B2.2.3 Samlaut Multiple Use Area

Samlaut Multiple Use Area, also known as Samlaut Protected Area, is the last tropical rainforest in north-west Cambodia, encompassing evergreen and deciduous forest (King et al. 2009). Situated on the northernmost range of the Cardamom Mountains, it lies in the extreme west of Battambang Province along the Thai border (World Wildlife Fund 2014). The protected area covers approximately 630 km<sup>2</sup>, and categorised by the IUCN as a protected area for sustainable use of natural resources (Category VI) (Wikramanayake et al. 2002). Samlaut has two endemic tree species: the rosewood tree (*Dysoxylum lourieri*), which was listed in the top twenty endangered Cambodian tree species by the National Priority Species Workshop (Ashwell & Walston 2008), and the evergreen tree (*Connamomum cambodianum*), also classed as endangered (Fair Wild 2009). Both species have been illegally logged. Endangered fauna in Samlaut include the Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), Bengal slow loris (*Nycticebus bengalensis*), pileated gibbon (*Hylobates pileatus*) and fishing cat (*Prionailurus viverrinus*). Vulnerable species include the clouded leopard (*Pardofelis nebulosa*), king cobra (*Ophiophagus hannah*), sun bear (*Helarctos malayanus*) and Asiatic black bear (*Ursus tibetanus*) (University of Bath, 2009). Evidence of the critically endangered Chinese pangolin (*Manis pentadactyla*) has also been found (MJPF 2015). This ecosystem is important for supporting and conserving rare fauna.

The Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation (MJPF) has established a base in Samlaut to address illegal activities and implement conservation programs. Duties of the MJPF rangers include seizing poaching equipment, apprehending poachers and loggers, preventing land encroachment and wildlife monitoring (MJPF 2015).

### Status of Samlaut Multiple Use Area

While it is a Category VI IUCN area, which by definition allows the sustainable use of natural resources, Samlaut is still at high risk of deforestation. According to the Maddox-Jolie-Pitt Foundation (2015), the main cause of deforestation in Battambang Province is land clearing for agricultural purposes. However, habitat fragmentation caused by deforestation by illegal logging is extensive, alongside the illegal wildlife trade and poaching of Asian elephants and tamarins (MJPF 2015).

### Implications for tourism

The wildlife survey activities of the MJPF provide an opportunity for an active wildlife tourism experience. No previous research experience is required; thus, with brief ranger training, volunteer tourists could assist with research (McCann 2010). A waterfall near the entrance to the protected area also provides tourism potential. The waterfall offers a scenic location where tourists can swim and take photos at no cost. Local communities could be involved by providing services such as food and beverage outlets in addition to the provision of tour guides who could explain the historical and ecological importance of the area.

## B2.3 Central Indochina dry forest ecoregion

This Central Indochina dry forest ecoregion (ecoregion IM0210) has been identified by WWF as vulnerable. In the past, it was home for an abundance of large vertebrates (megaherbivores) and large carnivores, but habitat loss and hunting for trade have had a devastating toll on these species (WWF 2016). While most of the natural habitat has been cleared extensively in Thailand, Laos, and Vietnam, Cambodia still has large areas of forest where this habitat remains intact (WWF 2016). The ecoregion occurs in a central north-south band across Battambang Province (Figure B3). It is characterised by a dry, open canopied deciduous forest covering flat to gently undulating terrain, with an elevation no greater than 200 m (ADB 2012). The open canopy enables the growth of a ground layer dominated by grasses. The ecoregion supports approximately 500 bird species and 167 species of mammals, including two species of endemic Vespertilionidae bats (*Myotis altarium* and *Pipistrellus pulveratus*) (Wikramanayake et al. n.d.). The ecoregion includes a notable assemblage of threatened large vertebrates, including the Asian elephant (*Elephas maximus*), gaur (*Bos gaurus*), banteng (*Bos javanicus*), Asian buffalo (*Bubalus arnee*), serow (*Capricornis sumatraensis*) and wild dog (*Cuon alpinus*). The Asia-wide ecoregion includes sixteen protected areas; however, none are present in Battambang Province. Most of this forest type in Battambang has been developed and converted to rice cultivation, with the dry forest shrub grasslands remaining only on the fringe. Within the developed area a number of noteworthy remnant ecological sites are present, including Phnom Sampeau.



**Figure B6. Viewing bats in Battambang**

### B2.3.1 Phomn Sampeau

Phnom Sampeau is a limestone outcrop located approximately 12 km south-west of Battambang's centre (see also B3.4). The mountain is historically notable for its association with the Khmer Rouge and modern temple; however, it also possesses ecological significance. Caves at the base of the mountain are home to a colony of wrinkle-lipped free-tailed bats (*Charephon plicatus*), the largest colony of any bat species in Cambodia. Every evening the bats emerge in their thousands, forming a constant stream across the sky as they go in search of mosquitos and other insects for feeding. In addition, the mountain supports a small population of long-tailed macaque monkeys (*Macaca fascicularis*) (Milladino, 2013).

#### Status of Phnom Sampeau

The remarkable ecological phenomenon associated with the bat colony generates substantial tourism interest. The daily bat spectacle has been rated 4.5/5 and number 1 of 38 things to do in Battambang (TripAdvisor Australia 2015). Tourists photograph and observe the bat colony and monkey population from both the peak and base of the mountain. While the site is not heavily marketed, local guides looking to improve their English lead tourists around the mountain (Ray et al. 2012).

#### Implications for tourism

While all limestone outcrops have biological significance, the evening bat display has developed as an informal tourist attraction. Site development is needed to provide viewing platforms and to separate the vendors from this area.

### B2.3.2 Crocodile farms

Many crocodile farms have been established in Battambang Province; an example is the Anyan Crocodile Farm. This farm is located in the Gen Dam Spey village on the Sangker River's west bank. The facility has been operating for ten years, with around 400 crocodiles being bred and farmed for export to Vietnam, Thailand and China. The crocodile skin and meat are used for bags, medicine and food in these cultures.

The farm has responded to tourist demand and most tourists visit by tuk-tuk (15 minutes from Battambang's city centre), but directional signage is poor. The facility currently receives the majority of its tourists and revenue from Asian countries that have a cultural interest and fascination for crocodiles, and accept viewing crocodiles in captivity. If this and other farms are to diversify their income sources through tourism, it is important for them to meet recognised standards for wildlife display and animal (and human) care (and service) to: (a) minimise impact, (b) build environmental and cultural awareness and respect, (c) provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts, (d) provide direct financial benefits for conservation, (e) provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people, and (d) raise sensitivity to host countries political, environmental and social environments (TIES 2014).

Increasing tourism potential requires all similar farms to introduce conservation and personal safety practices (EA 2014). Guidance can be obtained through The International Ecotourism Society (TIES 2014): a non-profit association committed to promoting responsible tourism practices that benefit conservation and

communities (TIES 2014). Guidance for good practice exists in the World Zoo and Aquarium Conservation Strategy (see WAZA 2005).

Siamese crocodiles (*Crocodylus siamensis*) are currently listed in Appendix 1 of CITES and are also on the IUCN red list of threatened species, the definitive list of globally threatened species (FFI 2015). This crocodile is also currently banned from export under CITES, which was enacted to regulate trade of wild species (FFI 2015). Fauna and Flora International (FFI) is currently working with the government and local communities to protect the remaining wild crocodiles by developing crocodile sanctuaries protected by local community wardens (FFI 2015). FFI also established the Cambodian Crocodile Conservation Programme (CCCP), which has released 55 crocodiles back into the wild since 2011. This includes crocodiles donated by farmers. The MAFF needs to partner with the farm in educating farm managers about the benefits of captive breeding and not poaching of wild animals. To trade internationally, the crocodile farms in Battambang need to follow the CITES Convention, for which the CITES Management Authority of Cambodia is responsible. To create a tourist destination that is sustainable and ethical in terms of animal conservation, crocodile farms need to improve their infrastructure, conservation aspects and adhere to CITES for the export of Siamese crocodiles.

### Status of Anyan Crocodile Farm

The current condition of the farm does not meet international eco-or farm-tourism standards. Maintenance and general up keep of the development requires improvement, and there is a lack of safety standards. Most crocodile farms do not conform to requirements of international export under the *Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora* (CITES).

### Implications for tourism

Crocodile farms can supplement their income through providing tourism services such as viewing the process of rearing and caring for the animals, sale of crocodile products and restaurants serving crocodile dishes; however, this requires adopting international standards for these services and meeting all legal requirements.

## B2.4 Tonle Sap-Mekong peat and freshwater swamp forest

Tonle Sap-Mekong Freshwater Swamp forest ecoregion (IM0165) includes the seasonally inundated forests that surround Southeast Asia's largest lake, the Tonle Sap. Across Southeast Asia, more than 90 percent of this ecoregion has been converted to scrub or degraded forests. Intensive agriculture and the alteration of the hydrodynamics of river systems have altered natural river fluctuations, adversely affecting the remaining native vegetation. The Tonle Sap and swamp forest were included in the UNESCO Biosphere Reserve; however, with little effective protection or management, much of the habitat has been cleared. This is prime rice-growing habitat (WWF 2016).

### B2.4.1 Tonle Sap Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary

Prek Toal is situated in the north-east of Battambang Province, within the north-western floodplains of the Tonle Sap. It is approximately 32,282 ha and includes a floating village (Kosal 1998). Prek Toal is designated as a central area for the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve and considered an important ecological wetland, due to its populations of breeding large water birds and high fish productivity (Kosal 1998). Prek Toal is one of the most intact areas of freshwater swamp wetland and represents one of the most diverse ecosystems in the Mekong River Basin (Kosal 1998).

The area is a breeding ground for endangered bird species such as the spot-billed pelican (*Pelicanus philippensis*), the greater adjutant (*Leptoptilus dubius*) and the white winged duck (*Cairina Scutulata*), the world's most threatened water fowl (Kosal 1998). The wetland also supports 150 other vulnerable and common bird species (SVC 2015), including five threatened species: the milky stork (*Mycteria cinerea*), painted stork (*Mycteria leucocephala*), lesser adjutant (*Leptoptilos javanicus*), Black headed Ibis (*Threskiornis melanocephalus*) and oriental darter (*Anhinga melanogaster*) (van Zalinge 2008). A globally significant population of grey-headed fish eagles (*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*) occurs in the area, and the masked finfoot (*Heliopais personatus*) was sighted in 2011 (SVC 2015).

The ecosystem's faunal diversity corresponds to diverse vegetation structure. The vegetation of this ecosystem consists of scrubland; shrubs interspersed with swards of herbaceous vegetation dominated by grasslands (Campbell et al. 2006).

Therefore, the main area is a mosaic of swamp scrubland in various stages of regeneration (Campbell et al. 2006). A total of 200 higher plant species have been recorded in this area (Davidson, 2006). Vines are a common either as herbaceous twiners in flooded areas, or as slender perennial vines (Campbell et al. 2006). Flooded forest aquatic plants are used as medicines, firewood, construction, cooking, fishing, cultural beliefs and ecosystem habitats (Goes & Nivot 2014).



**Figure B7. Members of the Prek Toal community**

Although some unsustainable captive breeding and consumption of bird species has occurred, an environmental research station, built in 1998, assisted in the education of local people in nature conservation principles (Goes & Nivot, 2014). However, further education is required for Prek Toal's villages, as poachers continue to be arrested, indicating that the collection of threatened waterbirds is still occurring. In 2001, the Wildlife Conservation Society established a local conservation team of forest rangers, who had previously been poachers, to ensure protection of the bird colonies during nesting (Goes & Nivot, 2014). The program has been effective in reducing 90% of egg collection (Goes & Nivot, 2014). Osmose is another community based conservation program that has been successful in educating Prek Toal children in environmental conservation, ecotourism and sustainable livelihoods (Goes & Nivot, 2014).

The Sanctuary's ecological significance and unique livelihoods currently attracts some tourists. Most visit from Siem Reap, as access from Battambang is dependent on the seasons. The dry season offers the best viewing of the birds when migratory species congregate. However, travel is constrained due to the season's low water levels and takes approximately 4-5 hours along the Sangker River, as opposed to 3 hours in the wet season.

Entrance to the bird sanctuary is managed by the Prek Toal Environmental Research Station and includes a guided boat tour to the bird sanctuary (TC 2015). Additionally, the Research Station and floating villages in the area offer homestays for tourists interested in bird watching.

During the dry season there are reduced fish stocks, which the village relies on for their livelihood. Therefore, the income generated from tourism benefits the community. Between October and May thousands of pelicans, storks, ibis, darters and cormorants gather to nest in large colonies (Goes & Nivot 2014). As December to February are peak tourism times for Battambang, this is an area that will benefit from increased tourism marketing (Goes & Nivot 2014). Tourist facilities at Prek Toal are minimal, with toilets available only in pagodas, local houses and a few restaurants. The current rubbish disposal method of dumping and burning is not sustainable, nor enticing for tourists. However, both of these issues can be eliminated with the addition of rubbish disposal and toilet facilities.

### Status of Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary

Prek Toal is critical for the survival of several species of endangered water birds. The key threat is large-scale egg and chick collection by villagers, largely for subsistence. On the edge of the core area are several fishing villages (1,200 families), many of which are comprised of floating houses on bamboo rafts; an adaptation to the ebb and flow of the lake (Kunthea 2013). The Sanctuary is the last refuge for large waterbirds in Southeast Asia (Goes & Nivot 2014).

### Implications for tourism

The Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary and associated village has considerable potential as a focus for tourism activity; however, attention needs to be given to ensuring the aspirations of the community are considered in future development of the site and infrastructure to support increased tourist numbers. A community-informed tourism development plan is needed.

## B3.0 Historical assets

### B3.1 Pre-Angkorian heritage

Evidence of human settlement in Battambang dates to 4200 BCE (Mourer & Mourer 1970). The cave site of Laang Spean contains bones and stone pots from the Neolithic period; the oldest site of human settlement in Cambodia (Harris 2008). Tools discovered at Laang Spean indicate the beginning of agrarian lifestyles. During the Funan period (ca 70BCE – 550CE), and Chenla period (550 – 802CE), Battambang's fertile land made it a flourishing agricultural centre. Legacies of this period remain in the abundant rice paddies and the province's reputation as 'the rice bowl of Cambodia'. Stilt houses, which were first noted by Chinese traders in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Century, are also remnants of ancient Khmer history (Raymond 2005; Wouter 2015).

Laang Spean is a 1000m<sup>2</sup> limestone cave site at Phnom Teak Treang, 38km from Sdao Village (Forestier et al. 2015). It was first excavated in 1960. Among the discoveries were hammer and chopping tools and stone pots. These artefacts are examples of Hoabinhian livelihoods (Forestier et al. 2015). It also contains graves almost 7000 years old (Harris 2008; Mourer & Mourier 1970). Bones in the cave are particularly well-preserved because plants and animals have been unable to destroy them (Forestier et al. 2015). The cave has now been heavily excavated. It is known as the 'Cave of Bridges' because of the collapse of some of the vaults. The Franco Cambodian Pre-historic Mission, from the Museum National D'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) Paris, is working in partnership with the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts (MCFA) to dig more of the site.

### Status of pre-Angkorian heritage

Currently, Laang Spean it is a site of work and study with very little visitation by tourists. Due to its historical and archaeological significance, the site has immense tourist potential. However, there are no tourist facilities such as information, amenities, parking or tours. It is also difficult to access, being more than one hour's drive from Battambang City. The road (Highway 57) was repaved in 2010, which improves the journey; however, increased development will entice more tourism to the area. Any development strategy will need to include considerations around the co-existence of tourism and ongoing excavation and study.

### Implications for tourism

Access to the Laang Spean site will need to be constrained while archaeological digs are occurring, with site security at other times. However, special site visits are possible to show archaeology in practice. With site security in place and interpretive signage, all-year presentation of the site is possible.

## B3.2 Angkorian heritage

Battambang is rich in early Angkorian heritage. Many people settled in the province in the 11<sup>th</sup> Century due to its fertile fields (MoT 2015a). Evidence of the flourishing agricultural civilisation that lived in Battambang during that period exists in the many ruins and temples within the province. Battambang's four main temples (Wat Ek Phnom, Phnom Banan, Prasat Bassaet and Prasat Sneung) were built between the 11<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> Century (MoT 2015a). The temples illustrate the inseparable nature of Hinduism and Buddhism in Cambodia, a unique aspect that tourists appreciate. The temple complex at Phnom Banan was built by King Udayadityavarman as a Hindu place of worship in 1050. Jayavarman VII reconstructed it as a Buddhist temple in 1219 (Bolton 2013). There is evidence of lintels and statues being recarved to show Buddhist themes (Zepp 2015). The temples are exemplars of Angkorian architecture with intricate carvings. The balustrades at Phnom Banan display the Naga and Apsaras on lintels.

The temples also illustrate the tumultuous nature of life in the Angkor era, which was characterised by a succession of kings, each seeking to unify warring subsidiary states and expand the empire (Lonely Planet 2015). Suryavarman II used Wat Ek Phnom as a base for attacks against his predecessor, Jayaviravarman (Ord 2010). Later in his rule, the temple was used to mark the western point of the empire's core territory (Ord 2010).

Wat Ek Phnom and Phnom Banan are popular destinations and they are well-marketed. Lesser-known temples, such as Bassaet and Sneung, would benefit from similar marketing. Tourists visiting the sites express satisfaction, with Battambang's temples consistently scoring four and five star ratings on TripAdvisor (2015). Reviews indicate that highlights are the journey through the country-side, the quiet, and lack of crowds (compared to Angkor Wat in Siem Reap), and the addition of the new pagoda. Complaints include a lack of information about the temples' history and sites having too few rubbish bins.



**Figure B8. Bassaet temple**

Visitors can purchase a one-day pass to Wat Ek Phnom, Phnom Banan and Phnom Sampeau. In the high season, Wat Ek Phnom is visited by an estimated 50–80 people per day (no accurate records are available). This includes independent travellers and group tours. Staff at Wat Ek Phnom have observed that most visitors are European. They also expressed that the temples are valuable to the local economy. During day-trips to Wat Ek Phnom, visitors stop at rural villages to purchase food such as sticky rice, fish paste and rice paper.

To promote tourism, the Provincial Government has improved the safety of the sites. Support beams at Wat Ek Phnom and Phnom Banan protect the structures from collapse. Staff also commented that the structures have made visitors feel more secure, enhancing their experience. Accessibility has been improved by building stairs at Wat Ek Phnom.

There are currently two main roads to Wat Ek Phnom. The new tourist road makes the site very accessible. The village road to Wat Ek Phnom is also highly valued by tourists. Many visitors commented that driving through villages and stopping to see local handicrafts was a highlight of the experience (TripAdvisor 2015). Planning can be used to capitalise on the value of local products as tourist experiences.

### Status of Angkorian heritage

The province's temples are subject to the *Law on Protection of Cultural Heritage*. The temples have endured many centuries of conflict and weathering, yet remain in good condition. (MoT 2015) and open to visitors. The stone is heavily weathered, yet carvings of Apsaras and other deities are visible. The temples were damaged during conflict between Vietnam and the Khmer Rouge (Zepp 2015). They have also been looted: many statues are headless with stone having been sold in Thailand.

Today, the temple grounds are heavily littered, although gardens are well-maintained and toilets are available. The temples are valued much more than they have been in the past because they attract tourists and hold increased value as a tourism asset.

Site access is still an issue for tourists with special needs.

### Implications for tourism

The Angkorian heritage of Battambang is an unrealised tourism asset that complements the Angkor Wat complex with earlier examples of temples. The potential to visit interpreted smaller sites, without crowds, could provide visitors with greater understanding of the Angkorian era and provide links across mainland southern Southeast Asia in terms of religion and the agricultural attraction of the region.

## B3.3 Colonial heritage

French colonial influence on the landscape of Cambodia began in 1863 when King Norodom requested that Cambodia fall under the French protectorate. Despite this agreement, Battambang, and Siem Reap remained under Thai rule until 1907 when Franco-Thai negotiations (coinciding with King Sisowath's visit to Paris) culminated in Thailand's retrocession to Cambodia of the *sruk* of Siem Reap and Battambang (Chandler 2008).

Following the return of Battambang to Cambodia (under French rule), an urban layout was slowly developed, culminating in the emergence of what may be described as a French colonial town (Chandler 2008). The process of a Westernised style of modernisation included the development of a well-defined network of streets in a grid-like fashion, multiple urban structures, three main streets parallel to the Sangker River and, by 1917, two bridges linking the banks of the river (Erickson 2013). Prison and military facilities were built as part of the French development and, 19 years later, a second development plan focussed on the construction of a railway system to link Battambang with Phnom Penh (Tharoth 2012). Numerous urban development's spread to the west of Battambang, creating urban centres around the Art Deco railway station (Erickson 2013).

French development, including construction of colonial style residential villas, public buildings and notably, the Art Deco market of Phsar Naht, significantly changed the urban landscape of Battambang (Dunston 2014). The north, east and south of Battambang became the focus of a third development programme, which integrated the previous work accomplished in the city centre (Tharoth 2012). The completion of this vast undertaking resulted in Battambang evolving into a modern Westernised provincial capital and the most developed region of Cambodia outside Phnom Penh (Chandler 2008).

With the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the French involvement meant that all resources were directed towards the war effort (Tully 2006). During this time, Japan took hold of much of Asia including Cambodia; France continued to control Cambodian affairs on the condition that they cede Battambang, most of Siem Reap (not including Angkor) and parts of Laos back to Thailand (Chandler 2008). With the end of World War II in 1945, France was eager to reassert its control over Indochina, but in 1947, after a number of conflicts with Thailand, Battambang and Siem Reap were returned to Cambodia (Chandler 2008). France maintained control amidst growing nationalism until 1953, when they yielded to insurmountable pressure from the Khmer people, resulting in Cambodia declaring full independence on 3 July (Chandler 2008).

### Extant colonial heritage

Battambang features some of the best-preserved examples of French colonial architecture, including examples of Baroque, Rococo, Neo classical and Art Deco (Lindt 2011). Despite current local policy protecting heritage buildings from alteration, many are obscured from public appreciation by modern signage and advertising hoardings that conceal the authentic, beautiful facades, ornate balconies, intricate base reliefs and louvered shuttered windows (Dunston 2014) (Figure B4-B6).

In cooperation with the Battambang municipality, the German development agency GIZ has already identified more than 800 buildings as having significant heritage value. From this inventory, much of the city centre of Battambang has been declared a Heritage Protection Area; further highlighting the need for the implementation of guidelines focussed on the protection of these urban heritage sites.



**Figure B9. Floor tiles in Governor's residence**



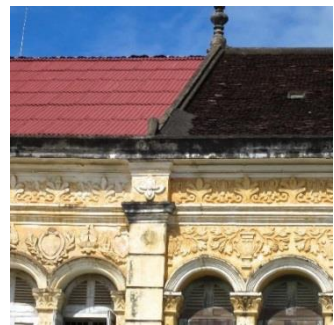
**Figure B10. French Colonial architecture masked by contemporary signage**

The **Lord Governor's house** (*Sala Khaet*) is the largest French colonial style building found in Battambang and is regarded as one of the most interesting pieces of architecture by locals and tourists. The building was commissioned in 1905 by the last hereditary Lord Governor, Chhum Aphaiwong, who hired a prominent Bangkok-based Italian architect to design the French colonial style building on the west bank of the Sangker River. The impressive building features a decorative ornate pediment, an interior with five metre high ceilings, mosaic floor tiles and a dramatic sweeping staircase. However, the interiors of this fine example of French colonial architecture are not open to the public (Cox 2012).



**Figure B11. French colonial architecture and intrusive power lines**

The centrally located **Phsar Naht market** is of particular interest to tourists admiring the French colonial architecture of Battambang with its signature Art Deco clock tower and stepped back façade. The market was built in 1936 by the same French engineers responsible for Phnom Penh's central market and is perfectly located to become a significant tourist attraction. Phsar Naht is in need of refurbishment as the facade and clock tower are in a state of neglect, distracting from the impressive design (Dunston 2014).



**Figure B12. Contemporary (galvanised iron) and French colonial tile roofing**

The key features of many French colonial building interiors are the unique traditional building materials that have been largely overlooked in efforts to restore original details. The traditional craft of tile making, specifically Encaustic cement tiles, is quickly disappearing with only a handful of tile makers left throughout Cambodia. Encaustic cement tiles are found predominantly in French colonial-period buildings and provide an alternative to materials such as linoleum and vinyl tiles, which are less durable and unsuited to a tropical climate. The sophisticated and rich styling of these traditional tiles are increasingly popular amongst Cambodia's ex-pat population and have become a strong trend amongst architects and interior designers. Many of Battambang's colonial buildings feature these traditional tiles, yet their value is often overlooked in restoration efforts. For this reason, it is important that these features be protected or restored in the original style to preserve the integrity of the architecture (Brew 2008).

There are a number of examples of successful restorations, in particular the Battambang branch of the National Bank of Cambodia, which once served as a pawn shop, has been renovated in keeping with the original French colonial aesthetic (Figure B6) as has La Villa, located across the Sangker River at 185 Pom Romchek 5. Built in the 1930s, La Villa has been restored and repurposed as a boutique hotel complete with restored interiors, period fixtures and complimentary art deco furniture (Cox 2012).

In addition to the charm of the French Colonial architecture found throughout Battambang, there are a number of examples of New Khmer Architecture that are particularly noteworthy for the style they bring to the Battambang streetscape. The Sangker cinema, inaugurated by Prince Sihanouk in 1965, and the Battambang cinema built in the early 1970s, both feature architectural quirks unique to the period. Despite their cultural and historical significance to Battambang, both cinemas have been neglected but could easily be restored to their former glory (Dunston 2014).



**Figure B13. Restored French colonial architecture**

In 2015, discussions between UNESCO and Battambang province representatives began. These negotiations aimed to see the inclusion of Battambang in the UNESCO World Heritage Listing to ensure protection of the natural and cultural heritage. Negotiations are ongoing, and if successful, will potentially provide owners of heritage buildings access to monetary funds to assist in renovation and repair (Blomberg, Odem 2014).

### Status of colonial heritage

Battambang features some of the best-preserved examples of French colonial architecture located in the city centre between streets 1 and 3, including examples of Baroque, Rococo, Neo classical and Art Deco (Lindt 2011). Despite current local policy protecting heritage buildings from alteration, many are obscured from public appreciation by modern signage and advertising hoardings that conceal the authentic, beautiful facades, ornate balconies, intricate base reliefs and louvered shuttered windows (Dunstan 2014).

### Implications for tourism

If the tourism potential of Battambang's colonial heritage is to be realised, considerable effort is needed to restore the facades, at least, of the central city area and remove the advertising that obscures the buildings.

This will require the cooperation of the business and residential communities and appreciation of the financial benefits and community pride this effort will bring.

## B3.4 Khmer Rouge heritage

The Khmer Rouge Regime was responsible for one of the most tragic series of events of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Their actions resulted in a loss of nearly 2 million lives due to mass executions, starvation, lack of medicines and exhaustion under a strict regime that stripped Khmer people of their human rights (Sellers 2013). People were removed from cities and forced to work in the rural fields to rebuild the utopian ideal of a predominantly agrarian lifestyle, displacing and fragmenting families (Mam 1998; RGoC 2014; Tyner & Rice 2015).

The historical sites that endure from this period serve as stark reminders of a dark period of history. They also have the potential to be utilised to attract tourists, educate people on Cambodian history, and ensure something of this nature never happens again. However, heritage also lies in the stories of people who lived through the period. First-hand accounts of life under the Khmer Rouge are being lost without systematic recording of personal stories.

**Wat Samroung Knong** was seized by the Khmer Rouge in 1976 and used as a prison, where monks were forced into labouring. The old Pagoda, which was used to house the prisoners, stands as a reminder of this time. The monks housing was previously used for women and children and the remaining buildings were converted into torture rooms, used to interrogate suspects. Wat Samroung was liberated from the regime on 13 January 1979, and since 2009, Youth for Peace organisation have coordinated rebuilding the site and repurposed it as a Community Peace and Learning Centre. The site is being preserved as a place for intergenerational learning and memory, and to promote peace and education at a community level. In 1982, over 100 graves were found in the area behind the pagoda. The exhibitions on display today include the Torture Museum, where the horrific acts are illustrated by paintings and drawings.

The **Well of Shadows** is a memorial site constructed to house the remains of some of the victims of the Khmer Rouge. After being executed, bodies were thrown down the well; in total 10,008 peoples remains have been uncovered in addition to clothing and torture materials. The outside is encased with carvings depicting the Khmer rouge regime and its effect on the Khmer people.

Another site of Khmer Rouge heritage is **Phnom Sampeau** (see also B2.3.2), a site of mass executions carried out by soldiers between 1975 and 1979. To date, over 200,000 bodies have been recovered from the bottom of the cave where the remains were disposed. The mountain is an attractive tourist destination due to several activities provided. Tourists are encouraged to venture further into the cave system by locals who provide flash lights and information about the caves' history during the Khmer Rouge regime. Mid way up the mountains is a viewing platform that provides views of the surrounding rural area. At the base of the mountain, during the late afternoon, the bats from within the caves exit in swarms, which is currently a primary attraction promoted in Battambang.



*Figure B14. Recent temple additions associated with limestone caves*

**Kamping Puoy Lake** was hand dug by prisoners of the Khmer Rouge regime, with 20,000 Khmer people perishing during construction (see also B2.1.1). Many of the bodies remain buried beneath the lake. This is a significant site in Cambodia's history and can be promoted as such in tourism endeavours. At present, boat hire is available at the lake and, if combined with guides who offer historical information, the lake holds potential as an educational tourism asset.

### Status of Khmer Rouge heritage

Wat Samroung Knong serves as a stark reminder of Cambodia's past under the regime. While the site itself is solemn, the historic importance makes it significant, and with tourism potential. Through the museum and the Well of Shadows, tourists are visually engulfed in the sheer brutality of the regime. Local Khmer people have expressed a desire for increased tourism to the area; stating that this is an extremely important site for education to ensure tragedies such as this are never repeated. All Khmer Rouge sites have much to offer tourists who would like to discover more about the lives of Battambang residents who suffering under the regime.

#### B3.4.1 Contemporary Khmer Rouge heritage

The Naga for Peace and Development statue displays an important symbol of Cambodia. This statue is located in the eastern part of the city in a small park and has been constructed from decommissioned weapons retrieved from the war. Built in collaboration between local artists and a Japanese NGO, it represents Cambodia leaving behind its violent past to progress into a time of peace. Locals use the surrounding area as a place for early morning exercise and for children to play and ride bikes.



Although decommissioned, the use of weaponry in this statue alludes to the level of oppression experienced by the Khmer people during the Khmer Rouge reign. Moveable triggers within the structure makes this monument part of Cambodia's history tangible. However, such an awe inspiring statue created out of bleak artefacts illustrates the attitude of the Khmer people in relation to this dark period of time. As the text on the plaque reads:

'This Peace Monument commemorates the commitment, efforts and hopes of the Cambodian people in breaking away from this violent past in this province, and establishing a peaceful, non-violent society'.

### Status of contemporary Khmer Rouge heritage

All contemporary sites are in good condition but lack the level of site maintenance befitting those that lost their lives during the Khmer Rouge era and the aspirations inherent in the words of the plaque at the Peace Monument.

### Implications for tourism

The Khmer Rouge era is of interest to international tourists as a significant part of Cambodia's recent history. The combination of 'killing fields', temples and monuments to the resilience and aspirations of the Khmer people have the potential to be a focus for interpretation and presentation to tourists that complements other heritage sites.

## B4.0 Religious and cultural assets

The most prominent religion in Battambang Province is Theravada Buddhism. In Cambodia, 96.9% of people identify as Buddhist, 1.9% as Islamic and 0.4% as Christian (CIA 2008). Religions represented on a smaller scale include: Baha'i, Confucianism and Daoism (MoT 2015). All religions in Cambodia have been influenced by ancient Khmer mythology and Hinduism, introduced by Indian sea merchants (Aphisit 2011). Because Buddhism is the most identified religion in Battambang Province, places of worship unfamiliar to many western tourists, such as pagodas, provide another significant focus for tourism development.

### B4.1 Temples and pagodas

Battambang has been shaped by religion. The monuments in the area such as Ta Dambang and the Naga for Peace and Development Statue reflect ancient Khmer mythology (Hackin 1932). In the Funan period, trade with India exposed Khmer people to Hinduism (Aphisit 2011; Hackin 1932). Hinduism became the dominant religion for some time. Buddhism's popularity grew simultaneously (Flint 2005). Throughout the remainder of the Funan period, during the Chenla and Angkor eras, the country fluctuated between Hinduism and Buddhism. Today, Hinduism and Buddhism are inseparable in a way that is unique to Cambodia. This history is evident in Battambang's pagodas. For example, **Wat Tham-rai-saw** is a Buddhist pagoda that displays a painting of the Reamker, a unique Khmer epic that adapts the Hindu Ramayana to Theravada Buddhist principles (Ayres 2000).

The influence of Chinese traders is also evident in the city's pagodas. There is a small Chinese temple on the grounds of **Wat Kandal**. Additionally, a Chinese temple and a small Christian church are located along the Sangker River, indicating the influence of traders and missionaries on religious practices in Cambodia.

The pagodas also reveal much about influential individuals in Battambang's religious history. At **Wat Poruil**, there is a statue of Choun Nat, the creator of the Khmer dictionary. At Wat Kandal, there is a large stupa for a wealthy Chinese official who lived in Battambang; its size and Angkorian-style architecture makes it remarkable.

The MoT (2015) has recognised that the pagodas are of interest to tourists. Local tuk-tuk drivers also have valuable knowledge about the pagodas' history, often guiding tourists as a part of their service. However, the pagodas are not formally used as tourist attractions. Visitors are unable to enter without calling ahead to arrange a viewing. Despite this, monks and community members are welcoming towards all visitors. Many Khmer people expressed that more tourists visiting pagodas would be positively regarded.

### Status of pagodas

Most of the city pagodas are in-need of repair. The paint at Wat Tham-rei-saw and Wat Phepitaram is very faded and chipped. All of the wats have broken tiles and most are dirty from bird droppings. Additionally, there are holes in the roof at Wat Tham-rei-saw. Wat Poruil is very well-maintained; however, the condition of stupas vary. The large stupa of a Chinese official at Wat Kandal is in very poor condition due to graffiti, litter and damage to its walls.



*Figure B15. Buddhist monks in Battambang*

Information about the pagodas is not readily available at the sites or online. At present, visitors are unable to interpret the value of the pagodas because they do not have access to information about their history or significance. Additionally, visitors who are not Buddhist may not understand the symbolism of the artwork at the pagodas. This requires attention to promote tourism.

### Implications for tourism

The uniqueness of Battambang's wats and their significance to Battambang's history means that they have great potential as tourist attractions providing a link across Southeast Asia and between all areas of cultural heritage.

## B4.2 Intangible religious heritage

Battambang's religious heritage is also revealed through forms of worship and teaching that are still practiced. Traditional Khmer dancing began in the royal court. The classical style was inspired by the Reamker and performed in temples and palaces. Today, folk styles, such as 'the fishing dance,' are performed at religious ceremonies (Canby Publications 2015). The Reamker is also taught through shadow puppetry, called *Sbeik Thom* (Canby Publications 2015).

Both dance and puppetry have been accompanied by Khmer Pin Peat orchestras for centuries. The traditional instruments are still used in pagodas and at religious events.

### Status of intangible religious heritage

Traditional Khmer dancing, puppetry and instruments are still taught and used in Battambang. These traditional art forms are being revived and embraced by the younger generation (Canby Publications 2015). However, tourists do not yet have access to these performances. The tourist experience would be enhanced by opportunities to view performances, but also to participate through classes and workshops.

### Implications for tourism

Creating memorable, participatory experiences based on intangible religious and cultural heritage will have flow-on benefits for tourism such as positive word-of-mouth and repeat visitation. However, it will also re-invigorate traditional custom and complement site presentations of heritage significance.

## B4.3 Khmer festivals

The Kingdom of Cambodia has a variety of traditional and cultural festivals and events that occur in accordance with the Cambodian lunar calendar. They are predominately influenced by concepts of Buddhism, Hinduism and royal traditions. Most serve as a time of great rejoicing and merriment for local communities and tourists. Festivals on the Cambodian calendar include: New Year's Day held on 1 January and celebrated by a fireworks display; Victory over Genocide Day on 7 January, marking the Vietnamese invasion that ended the Khmer Rouge regime; Chinese new year on 19 February (and while not an 'official' holiday, it represents the start of the Cambodian and Chinese Lunar Calendar); Vishakha Bochea ceremony on 2 May, celebrating the birth of Buddha; King Sihamoni's Birthday from 13-15 May (celebrated with fireworks during the afternoon). Additionally, 25 September is considered Constitution Day in Cambodia and marks the implementation of the Cambodian Constitution. While these dates are important to Cambodians, the following festivals are considered the most significant cultural and traditional practices. The division into religious and secular festivals is somewhat artificial because Buddhism pervades the lives of Cambodians. The division simply separates the sacred from lifestyle-related celebrations.

### B4.3.1 Sacred and religious festivals

**Meak Bochea** celebrates Buddha reaching enlightenment. According to oral accounts, this marks the day 2500 monks came to listen to Buddha simultaneously, and by coincidence. During this time, he foretold his death in three months' time. As Buddhism is the primary religion practiced in Cambodia, Meak Bochea holds significant religious importance for the Khmer people. Traditionally people will gather at their local pagoda in the morning for Dharma prayer to commemorate this day.

It is believed by many Khmer people that an ancestor who dies a violent death is unable to find peace in the afterlife. **Bonn Pchum Ben** is an extremely important ceremony that lasts for 15 days (in accordance with the Khmer calendar). Specific dates for the festival change from year to year, but usually fall around the start of October. This is the time that the gates of hell open so that spirits can return to earth and have a chance to be redeemed. Because many Khmer people died violent deaths during the Khmer Rouge regime, this is one of the most culturally significant ceremonies for surviving family members. While Dharma prayers occur throughout the day, 4:00am signifies a change in proceedings. After an hour of prayer at a pagoda, participants are provided with eight incense candles and can purchase or make 24 balls of rice, which are then distributed at specific locations around the pagoda complex. It is believed this practice will bring peace to the ancestor's spirits. In the centre of the temple complex are large mounds of sand. It is

believed that every grain of sand contributes to the good luck, health and happiness they will receive. White shirts are the preferred dress as they symbolise optimism when coming to the pagoda. On the last day, floating lanterns are made and released to send a blessing to ancestors.

### Status of sacred and religious festivals

Meak Bochea is an important festival for followers of the Buddhist faith both nationally and internationally, and is open for participation at the numerous pagodas around Battambang. Locals say that all are welcome to participate in the festival, including the Dharma prayers, regardless of faith.

The Bon Pchum Ben ceremony is unique to Cambodia and could be promoted for tourist participation. Transport to rural pagodas for early-morning prayer sessions can pose significant problems due to the lack of sunlight. However, if organised in advance, this experience is achievable.

Monks and community members interviewed expressed a desire for tourist participation in Buddhist ceremonies. However, information regarding customs and protocols of prayer sessions should be readily available. City pagodas have the potential to showcase the authenticity of the religion and cultural heritage of the buildings by allowing tourists to participate in pre-organised religious ceremonies.

### B4.3.2 Secular festivals

The **Water Festival** is an extremely important event on the Khmer calendar as it represents the Tonle Sap rivers change in direction. Culturally it is significant as the change in flow brings many fish back up the river. Therefore, the festival celebrates the beginning of the fishing season. Activities include boat racing and a variety of traditional games and songs that unite community members, from all walks of life, in the festivity. Traditional food called *ombok* (pounded rice) is served during the celebrations. At night the boats are decorated in lights, showcased under fireworks. Floating lanterns are also sailed across the river to offer blessings to ancestors.

**Khmer New Year** is a three-day festival held from 14-16 April. Communities participate daily in traditional games and activities during this time. Traditionally, locals clean their houses and yards on day one. This is done to receive blessings from spirits. On day two, a meal is offered to the elders of the family as a show of respect. On day three, parents/grandparents are given a special bath, and in the evening people gather at their local pagoda to wash the Buddha statue for an agricultural blessing. This is important, as most Cambodians are farmers. They believe that washing Buddha will bring them good luck in their harvests as well as provide them with enough water for their farm to prosper.

**Bon Chrott Preah Nongkoal** is celebrated on 6 May and represents the beginning of the sowing and planting season in Cambodia. Celebrations take place in the park bordering the National Museum. Fruit and vegetables are presented to oxen, and it is believed that the choice of fruit or vegetables by the oxen dictates the fate of the agricultural harvest, and which of these foods should be planted. During the festival, both men and women dress in brightly coloured Khmer traditional attire (TC 2015).

### Status of the secular festivals

The Water Festival attracts domestic and international tourists to the main cities of Cambodia, including Battambang, and creates a significant opportunity to showcase Khmer culture. Tourists are welcome to participate in the three-day Khmer New Year event and locals have expressed their desire to spread knowledge about their cultural events. However, without guidance around cultural protocols and practices, tourist may easily offend or fail to understand the cultural significance of the occasion.

Bon Chrott Preah Nongkoal does not consist of any ceremonies or activities other than the prediction of next year's harvest. However, tourists with an interest in traditional agricultural practices may be interested to observe a cultural practice that has been relied upon for centuries.

### Implications for tourism

Event tourism is the focus of many destinations around the world. Khmer enthusiasm for celebrating and sharing traditions is an untapped link to material heritage assets and for cultural enrichment that will be embraced by tourists. However, the meaning and significance of festivals will need to be interpreted.

## B4.4 Arts and craft assets

Historically, Battambang has strongly influenced the Cambodian art scene, playing an important role in a cultural renaissance; more commonly dubbed the Golden Age of the 1960s and 1970s (Lindt 2011). The golden age of singers, musicians, artists, actors and performers were banned under the Khmer Rouge (Dunstan 2014). Many Khmer participants who did not flee Cambodia were executed, wiping out an entire generation of artists and creative people who were of intrinsic importance to the cultural arts development of Battambang (Zanders 2015).

In the wake of the Khmer Rouge, a significant gap appears in the history of the arts. It is now the next generation of artists, those born in the 1980s and 1990s, who are the main participants in an important

cultural revival (Lorenzon 2012). Prestigious publications such as the *New Yorker*, *Phnom Penh Post* and *The Guardian* have all published favourable articles within the last five years, documenting the emergence of this new artistic revival, and the galleries that highlight its unique and eclectic mix of influences.

#### B4.4.1 Performing arts

Much of the artistic revival occurring in Battambang is centred on the visual/performing arts centre and school Phare Ponleu Selpak (PPS). The art school was established by Khmer Rouge survivors in 1994 and has become renowned for supporting and nurturing talent (Lindt 2011). The school offers a formal state education in addition to teaching visual arts, applied and performing arts, theatre, music, design, animation and circus skills for almost 1500 students (Dunstan 2014). While primarily operating as a school, PPS also invites visitors to witness the resident circus troupe performance. Performances occur twice a week in the big top, where students showcase their skills and routines to enthusiastic audiences (Knox 2014).

##### Status of performing arts

The PPS school of art is a popular tourism asset, drawing crowds of enthusiastic spectators to twice-weekly circus performances and visual art exhibitions. Promotion for the schools performances is substantial, with flyers and posters readily found in prominent positions around Battambang, including the front lobbies of most hotels and tourism sites.

#### B4.4.2 Visual arts – contemporary

Between streets 1 and 3, the best of the local art scene can be found in a scattering of small galleries, creating a hub for young creative locals and an attraction for tourists (Valentine 2015). Sammaki Gallery, Sangker and the soon to be re-opened Maek Maek gallery all play a role in the promotion and support of Battambang's young artisans.

A unique blend of cuisine and the visual arts has proven to be a popular attraction for tourists with Lotus Gallery and Bar, attracting a regular clientele since 2013 (Dunstan 2014). Café Chocó'art, Kinyei cafe and Jaan Bai have also achieved a successful fusion of the arts and cuisine through collaboration with local artists, interior designers and providing space for local artists to exhibit their work. Café Chocó'art has notably gained a loyal audience for live painting and avant-garde performances, attracting crowds of both locals and tourists alike (Knox 2014).



**Figure B16.**  
**Contemporary art by**  
**KOSAL 7**

Gallery Romcheik 5, despite its location outside the city centre across the Sangker River, has fast gained a reputation for showcasing some of the strongest emerging artists of Battambang, making it a must see destination for many tourists. Battambang has a greater population of artists per capita than any other city in Cambodia, providing an artistic environment that is an attraction for tourists and has empowered many of the creatively orientated youth, whilst also forging connections with an older generation who survived the Khmer Rouge regime (Zanders 2015).

##### Status of visual arts – contemporary

The level of local and international press that the Battambang art scene has received in the last five years (notably the *Guardian*, *Phnom Penh Post*, *New Yorker*, *Hyperallergic.com*) is substantial, and targets a large tourist demographic interested in visiting cultures rich in the contemporary arts and crafts, fine cuisine and architecture.

#### B4.4.3 Battambang Provincial Museum and Exhibition Space

Located in the centre of town, Battambang Museum has a small collection of Angkorian artefacts, sculptures, works of art and carvings, most of which were found in Cambodia's many temples. The museum also hosts temporary exhibitions, ranging from historically educational to those showcasing arts and crafts (Travelfish 2015).

An exhibition space located next to the Battambang Provincial Museum showcases exhibitions on occasion; however, this might be better utilised as a space to exhibit a permanent art collection. Interest in Battambang's independent commercial art galleries highlights the absence of a state-run Battambang art gallery; however, a state run gallery, will showcase traditional Angkorian art alongside textiles, ceramics, pottery, lacquerware and modern and contemporary art, recognising the best of Battambang's art history (Carruthers 2014).

##### Status of Battambang Provincial Museum & Exhibition Space

Many visitors to Battambang Provincial Museum have already visited historical sites and seek out the museum to gain further knowledge and view artefacts not visible when visiting temples and pagodas. Interpretation of displayed artefacts is minimal or non-existent.

State run official art galleries create an initial destination for tourists seeking an introduction to local art scenes, encouraging visitation to the smaller independent commercial galleries.

#### B4.4.4 Pottery, ceramics and weaving

Traditional Khmer pottery, ceramics and silk weaving are no longer readily found within Battambang; a legacy of the Khmer Rouge regime. These traditional crafts are not clearly apparent within the city centre, where mass produced pottery, sculpture and ceramics using non-traditional techniques are abundant. Traditional Khmer pottery and ceramics are found more readily in Kampong Chhang, Siem Reap and Phnom Penh. The vast majority of silk products available in Battambang are imported from Vietnam and Thailand, as only a small percentage of the silk sold in Cambodia is 100% Khmer made. Siem Reap remains the primary destination for tourists looking for high quality Cambodian silk, with The Artisans d' Angkor National Silk Training Centre at Puok regarded highly by textile enthusiasts.



*Figure B17. Traditional cotton krama (scarf)*

#### Status of pottery, ceramics and silk weaving

Traditional crafts such as ceramics, pottery and silk weaving reintroduced to Battambang through the sharing of knowledge and techniques from artisans based in Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and Kampong Chhang will reinvigorate a lost tradition of trade that will appeal to tourists looking for authentic souvenirs.

#### Implications for tourism

Contemporary art is highly compatible with heritage tourism because of its need for being housed in protected exhibition areas. The French colonial buildings can be converted to art exhibition focal areas, and with dining opportunities, could become a major attraction for tourists to Battambang.

Traditional crafts such as ceramics, pottery and silk weaving reintroduced to Battambang through the sharing of knowledge and techniques from artisans based in Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and Kampong Chhang will reinvigorate lapsed traditions that will appeal to tourists looking for authentic souvenirs. This would complement other artistic activity already developing in the municipality and restore it as the centre for art in Cambodia.

Extension of the Battambang Provincial Museum to include traditional and contemporary art and crafts would give impetus to re-establishing Battambang as a centre for artistic activity.

## B5.0 Lifestyle and livelihood assets

### B5.1 Diet, nutrition and cuisine

#### B5.1.1 Traditional Khmer food

Khmer cuisine is the traditional cuisine of Cambodia, and one of the earliest examples, worldwide, of a national cuisine (Battambang Traveller 2015). Meals are usually shared and consist of at least three dishes of contrasting flavours, textures and 'spiciness' (TC 2015). The use of a variety of locally sourced herbs, vegetables, edible flowers, meat and fish, paired with well-balanced dipping sauces, create the unique flavours that are Khmer food (TC 2015; Battambang Traveller 2015). Significant to Khmer food is the abundance of rice in various forms, served with or within almost every dish (Battambang Traveller 2015).

Prior to the Khmer Rouge takeover in the mid-seventies, families passed on 'secret' recipes through oral tradition (Mam 1998). Fish and rice were, and remain, stock items in plentiful supply due to the regular wet-season that nurtured rice paddies and sustained vast fishing areas (Mam 1998). Climate and season played a large role in the diet of the Khmer people as the food consumed varied with the availability of grains, produce, vegetables, herbs, rice and fruits (Mam 1998).

Due to French protectorate between 1863-1953, there is a distinct French influence on the types of foods available in Battambang, seen now in the availability of pastries and breads, not traditionally part of Khmer diets (Thomson 1945; Freeman 2014). There are a number of French bakeries in Battambang Province and most hotels offer fresh baguettes as a breakfast option. There is also a diverse range of cafés and restaurants that specialise in French cuisine; Choco L'Art Café is an example of French food influences in Battambang.



*Figure B18. Water scorpion that became tradition during the Khmer Rouge era*

### B5.1.2 Contemporary cuisine

Over the past fifty years, Cambodian cuisine has transitioned into a mixture of the traditional (e.g., fish amok), French cuisine (e.g., baguettes), other Western (e.g., pizza) and contemporary local delicacies such as fried cricket and tarantula (Freeman 2014; Yen 2015; Mam 1998; TC 2015). However, the Khmer Rouge, between 1975 and 1979, had dire impacts on the lives of Khmer people due to the inaccessibility of nutritious food, leading to extensive starvation (Mam 1998). Khmer people were forced to survive on staples that were rationed stringently (Mam 1998). Khmer people, afraid of persecution or execution, were forced to burn recorded food histories and were constrained in making or consuming 'traditional' foods (Mam 1998). Families relinquished control over growing practices and foods produced 'belonged' to the Khmer Rouge. To survive, Khmer people sought alternative protein and food sources (e.g., tarantulas, frogs, lizards and crickets) that were readily available in nearby fields. Today these foods are widespread in markets and roadside stalls, seen as a contemporary delicacy to the locals and a daring adventure for tourists.



**Figure B19.**  
*Contemporary cuisine  
mixes Khmer and  
Western traditions*

Cuisine outlets in Battambang can be categorised into restaurants, market food, soup pot kitchens and roadside food stalls that service tourists and the local community.

#### a. Restaurants

Battambang offers a vast variety of restaurant options catering to all tastes and budgets of tourist markets. The availability of fine dining in both Khmer traditional foods and Western foods can be found at many restaurants (e.g., Jaan Bai and Bambu Hotel restaurants). Authentic Khmer foods, priced well and served in a pleasant atmosphere, are readily available (e.g., Coconut Lyly, Nary Kitchen, White Rose and Khmer Delight). Most hotels have a restaurant or café attached, and each is suited for tourists to dine on some traditional Khmer or Western food options before embarking on day tours.

#### b. Market food

The local markets provide a variety of both local and imported foods, including fresh unprepared ingredients and ready-made foods/meals. The introduction of imported foods means that many previously seasonal foods are now available all year round. Visiting the market is a daily ritual for many Khmer, who often do not have the luxury of a refrigerator for longer term food storage. Therefore, the markets have a unique atmosphere with which many tourists are unfamiliar and curious to explore. However, food safety concerns for seafood and meat products exist, as these products are exposed to the elements rather than refrigerated; a requirement for safe food handling practices. Therefore, tourists should be advised to be careful when purchasing any products that are prone to spoilage.

#### c. Soup pot venues

Soup pot venues appear in the form of cafés, restaurants, or roadside stalls. Offering home-cooked foods, soup pot venues are usually family-run, and inexpensive for both locals and tourists. Designed to feed quickly a large number of people, they have become one of the most popular choices for locals due to the ease and speed in which families can obtain and share meals. Dishes offered vary according to seasonality and market cycles; however, they remain largely influenced by the food products and habits of the local region, even though imported products are readily available (Feuer 2015). Soup pot meals in Battambang are endorsed by locals as a balanced and nutritious option that showcases the unique flavours of 'real' local Khmer food.

#### d. Roadside stalls

Roadside stalls are a common sight in the Battambang region. Although non-food items are also sold, it is the variety of snack-type foods that presents a substantial target for tourism marketing. Sticky rice in bamboo can commonly be found for sale at roadside stalls, and delicacies such as crickets, tarantulas and other insects, rice cakes, and French influenced sweet pastries also lure the inquisitive tourists and hungry locals alike.

### B5.1.3 Cooking schools

One way for tourists to learn about the re-emerging Khmer traditional cuisine is to visit one of the many cooking schools within the province. Lessons usually include a guided visit to the market, a take home recipe booklet, extensive information surrounding the purpose and uses of different vegetables and herbs, and finishes with an 'eat your cooking' dining experience.

Khmer cooking classes are rich in family recipes and traditional flavours however formal chef's training surrounding food allergies, food intolerance, vegan/vegetarian/kosher requirements, food storage and safe

handling would safeguard the schools from negative feedback. This however does not apply to all cooking schools (e.g., Coconut Lyly cooking school).

### Status of traditional and contemporary cuisine

A wide variety of eating places exist to meet all tourist budgets; however, there is currently very little education surrounding safe food handling practices, which threatens tourist confidence. Nevertheless, the diversity of food types and eating places represents a latent opportunity for Battambang to establish itself as the cuisine capital of Cambodia.

### Implications for tourism

Seasonality due to adverse weather threatens restaurants reliant on tourism. The response needs to be managed through increased marketing of the food and arts sectors as diversified tourism assets. Despite the majority of restaurant's adhering to safe food handling practices, gastro-related illness from food is still prevalent in the hospital system within Battambang. To build the food sector as a unique asset for tourism sustainability year round, issues to be addressed include:

- supporting and facilitating the creation of Battambang Traders Association that helps promote the food culture of Battambang whilst protecting the interests of restaurants that fall outside the central tourist area;
- facilitating, funding and establishing a professional training centre for chefs focused on promotion of diversified chef skills, particularly those related to safe handling of food, workplace health and safety and food nutrition;
- increasing promotion and marketing of the unique food experience of the Battambang region through updating key tourism websites;
- increasing tourist awareness by increasing distribution of information brochures at airports and hotels focused on food history, availability and locations within Battambang, using a clear mapping system to help orient tourists of restaurant, market and soup pot kitchen locations; and
- providing food information brochures that contain tourist warnings surrounding foods that may not be safe for foreigner consumption such as Quorn, and ice made from tap water.

## B5.2 Agriculture

The lifestyles and livelihoods within the Battambang province are largely dependent on agriculture. Approximately 80% of the provincial population rely on farming for their income (Chheang 2015), with 70% employed in the rice sector (RGC 2014). Battambang is the major rice-producing province of Cambodia (Ministry of Planning Cambodia 2013). Corn maize, cassava, soya bean, mung bean, sesame, and tropical fruits are also grown (RGC 2014). Beef is also commonly produced at the household level.

Most rice farming is for family subsistence and additional income. A large portion of the commercial process of producing rice, however, is exported to the neighbouring countries of Thailand and Vietnam, where more efficient technologies for rice processing exist (Acharya et al 2003).

Rice farming in Battambang therefore has great significance for household income as well as aesthetic appeal, symbolic of the province. Productivity remains an issue for rice farming, as only 20% of irrigation systems are working (MAFF & MOWRAM 2009 in Yu & Diao 2011) and the cost of fertiliser is resulting in its underuse (MAFF & MOWRAM 2008 in Yu & Diao 2011).



*Figure B20. Inspecting the rice fields*

### B5.2.1 Agri-tourism and alternative livelihoods

The high rate of rice production and other agricultural activities in the province provides an opportunity for agri-tourism to be further developed. Private tourism operators already exploring agri-tourism in Battambang are the bicycle tour operators (e.g., Soksabike, Butterfly Tours, Green Lotus Tours).

Dontev village (Prek Daun Teav) is located approximately 7km from the town centre and is being showcased on bicycle tours for the traditional production of goods such as rice paper, rice wine, fish paste, dried banana, bamboo sticky rice and Khmer noodles. Companies taking tourists to the village are taking measures to ensure their sustainability and input into the community.

The village of Phum Krapeu Cheung is close to the culturally significant site of Sampeau Mountain and Ek Phnom temple, approximately 17km from the town centre. This is an example of a rice-farming village with potential for increased homestay development. Phum Krapeu Cheung is also viable due to its location en-route to another popular site, Ek Phnom temple. Most families in this area are rice farmers, with some cattle and shop owners.

The most significant barrier to homestay and agri-tourism development in these areas is the lack of English or other languages, making it difficult for guest-host interaction. This is explained to be because of the expense of English lessons and the lack of time needed for extra classes.

Butterfly Tours is exploring the opportunities associated with organic farming and acknowledge that locals and restaurants will need to be informed of the importance of organic eating for health and biodiversity. This has potential as another agri-tourism venture; in the future, Battambang could possibly have organic farming as a selling point or niche agri-tourism activity.

### B5.2.2 Bamboo train

The bamboo train is unique to Battambang and has become a key attraction in the province. It is part of the province's agricultural heritage. The bamboo train was used in the past for transporting rice produce from village to village in the time after the Khmer Rouge, after the abolition of most transportation. Currently, the bamboo train is used for a pleasure ride through scenic rice fields, stopping at a village selling tourist goods. Khmer people have expressed wishes for the ride to be free for locals, especially because it is seen as important for all locals to experience. The attraction however is lacking any information or historical signs, seating, rubbish bins, or adequate toilet facilities.



*Figure B21. The bamboo train line*

#### Status of agri-tourism

Agri-tourism does not form a major part of the Battambang experience, despite the provinces agrarian tradition. However, the potential is high if associated with value added services such as restaurants. This might be suited to increasing the value of the bamboo train as an attraction.

The bamboo train is a key attraction for Battambang, but needs refurbishment and interpretation of the line's history, including the story of agriculture in the province if it is to maintain its attractiveness. The existing rail building could be the location for more efficient ticketing and interpretation.

#### Implications for tourism

While other opportunities exist, the bamboo train can build on its existing reputation by providing other tourism services that complement the rail experience. However, without interpretation, the bamboo rail line will slowly decline in popularity as other attractions develop. Investment is needed now to enable higher ticketing rates to be applied and to provide a venue for sale of locally produced souvenirs and provision of other services.

## B6.0 Public infrastructure and tourism support services

Infrastructure provides the facilities needed to support development and the growth of the economy. The development of public infrastructure is connected with the positive growth of tourism in developing areas. The sustainability of public infrastructure is reflected in the quality of life and health of the tourist and local population, both physically and economically.

### B6.1 Health

Medical care is 'limited or unavailable outside of Phnom Penh and Siem Reap' (Australian Cambodia Embassy 2005) and medical facilities and services within Cambodia are generally below international standards' (Australian Cambodia Embassy 2015). Tourists are therefore advised to have adequate medical insurance before travelling to Cambodia, as evacuation to Bangkok, Thailand is required for the treatment of serious illness and/or emergency cases (Ray & Bloom 2012). Nevertheless, several hospitals are available. The **Battambang Referral Hospital** is the largest state hospital within the province. It provides a 24-hour, ambulance service. Illnesses associated with tourist visits to the hospital are usually tropical diseases, wound infection, dehydration, heat stroke and gastro symptoms. The hospital does not provide bedding or food for admitted patients, and medical staff speak limited English. **World Mate Hospital** offers immediate emergency treatment on arrival and has the lowest post-surgical infection rates in the country (World Mate Emergency Hospital 2015). No ambulance service is provided; instead police deliver accident victims to the hospital. Staff have limited English language. **Sovaan PolyClinic** offers 24 hour ambulance pick up and referral (Sovaan Clinic 2015). Police are responsible for calling the ambulance (patients cannot directly request an ambulance). Hospital admission/treatment costs are decided on a case by case basis. Tourists may find staff have limited English language skills.

#### Status

Ambulance services do not meet tourists' expected standards for hygiene practices, enabling cross infection in patients to occur. Similarly, hospital treatment is constrained by the absence of infrastructure and medicines.



### Implications for tourism

Tourists are able to receive basic medical treatment in Battambang, however to deal with serious emergencies patients are likely to have to seek medical help outside of Cambodia. Tourists are unlikely to be aware that police, not themselves, must call an ambulance in an emergency. Tourists may find it difficult to communicate if hospital medical staff do not have language skills in French, English or other languages.

## B6.2 Transport

Improving the transport networks within the Province is needed to attract international tourists to Battambang and surrounding communities. Battambang is currently accessible by both road and waterways. The airport and train station are currently not operational. Improving transport from Siem Reap and Phnom Penh will increase tourism opportunities, benefit the economy and further development.

### a. Roadways

Cambodia's national road network serves the primary purpose of connecting the country's capital Phnom Penh with provincial capitals. Much of the road system was built in the 1920s for light vehicular use (Kaneko & Adachi 2002). However, increased road traffic, particularly heavy load bearing vehicles, has led to rapid deterioration of roads, especially in the wet season. In 1999, the Asian Development Bank approved USD68 million loan to finance the restoration of Cambodia's national road network. The funding was for the restoration of 577 km of national roads 5, 6 and 7, including the restoration of bridges. The road networks chosen were all intended to be important in the promotion of economic development. Road network 5 is a primary transportation route for goods and people from Phnom Penh to the Thailand border. Funding was used to upgrade 130 km of the road from Pursat to Battambang (Asian Development Bank 2009). The project was completed in 2006; however, a shortage of funding for maintenance of the National Road network hinders the realisation of the goals of the road upgrading. Road deterioration is exacerbated by the combination of frequent flooding and ongoing use of overloaded heavy vehicles. The transportation services by bus and truck used to be run by the state; however, these services are now run by the private sector in the cities and along many of the national roads (ADB 2009).

### b. Waterways

The inland waterways are used by local Khmer for transport of goods and people, and boat transport tends to be safer than the local road network (Kaneko & Adachi 2002). The low fatality record on the waterways is attributed to the more prominent separation between passenger and goods transportation. Goods are delivered by specialised vehicles that comply with strictly enforced regulations and skippers are required to attend refresher courses for the safe transport of specific cargo. When traveling to Battambang from Siem Reap, it is possible to take a scenic route via boat across the Tonle Sap and along the Sangker River. This method of travel takes between six to eight hours and is a preferred method of tourists, but locals find the roads to be more time efficient. Further development of the inland waterways would offer a more effective mode of transport for both locals and tourists along the Sangker River.

### c. Railways

The French colonial government built the first railway in Cambodia, linking Phnom Penh to Poi Pet on the Cambodia-Thailand border (Kaneko & Adachi 2002). The line ran through the provinces of Kampong Chhnang, Pursat, Battambang and Sisophon. Battambang was an essential province for the railway to pass through as it was, and still remains, Cambodia's greatest rice producing province. The rail services ceased during the 1970s due to the civil war and attacks from armed groups such as the Khmer Rouge. Between the 1980s and 2009 the railway continued to provide a limited service between Phnom Penh and the other provincial capitals despite the limited funding, maintenance and security threats. However, as a result of the limited funding and maintenance of the railway, regular service ended in 2009. The Cambodian Government assigned a contract to Toll Holdings to manage the rail service once the reconstruction of the tracks was completed, although Battambang currently does not possess regular rail services.

### Implications for tourism

Improving the major transport networks would bring greater opportunities for the tourism industries within Battambang. Upgrading the road networks is the initial step toward increased access for tourists. However, the sustainability of the transport infrastructure is what will determine the long term effects on tourist contribution to the local economy. Improving the railway infrastructure between provinces would bring other tourism opportunities, particularly when targeting older tourist populations as trains can offer more comfortable travel and services.

The waterways provide a unique opportunity for tourists to explore rural Battambang from a different perspective. The scenic view, with the relaxing experience of sitting aboard a slow moving boat is an appealing attraction for tourists who would like to travel to Battambang in a relaxing method of transport.

The creation of regular rail services to and from Battambang would provide tourists with additional means of transport to and from the Province and City. Trains offer the opportunity to introduce smooth luxury transport as well as public transport for both domestic and international tourists. Reviving the old train station within Battambang City would provide the people of Battambang with additional jobs as well as stimulating the local economy.

## B6.3 Parkland

Adjacent to the Sangker River is a strip of parkland that is heavily used by locals between the hours of 4:00pm and 8:00pm. The park is also popular during the weekend as a place for leisure activities such as playing football, exercising on the equipment, having a picnic or just enjoying time with family. The night markets are also held near the fountain at the centre of the park each night and are a great place to shop and eat for both tourists and locals.

### Implications for tourism

Maintaining the integrity of the parkland is important for offering tourists a more relaxed experience during their visit to Battambang. In the park, tourists can experience a part of everyday Khmer life in Battambang while taking a break from traveling to see sites outside of the city. Utilising the park space for performances that show the culture of the Khmer people and the history of Battambang provides the opportunity to attract tourists to the centre of the city where they are more likely to spend their money in the night market and local shops in close proximity to the park.

## B6.4 Public utilities and services

### B6.4.1 Electricity

After peace was achieved in 1992, Cambodia was generating 90,000 kilowatts of electricity, 20,000 of which was considered effective output. The generation capacity increased to 15.43 megawatts in the year 2000, with 30% thought to be stand-by capacity (Kaneko & Adachi 2002). The price for electricity in Cambodia is one of the highest in Southeast Asia due to a lack of domestic fossil fuel. The cheapest provider for electricity is Electricity du Cambodia, a state-owned electricity provider that charges USD0.09-USD0.25 per kilowatt; however, only 25% of Cambodia has access to the Electricité du Cambodia grid, making electricity a financial burden for most Cambodians (Nguyen & Ha-Duong 2014). Many Cambodians, without access to this grid, seek alternatives. In recent years, many rice mills and electricity enterprises have introduced the use of rice husk gasifiers to substitute diesel resources in the production of electricity. With the rice production of Cambodia in 2014 being approximately 9.3 million tons, and the husks accounting for 20% of that weight, it is a positive step towards a sustainable power supply for regions with ample husk waste products (Nguyen & Ha-Duong 2014). In 2012, a downdraft gasifier was installed at a mill close to Battambang city to produce electricity for the surrounding area. The mill has a milling capacity of 6 tonnes per day and since the introduction of the 600 kilowatt gasifier, there has been a 60% replacement of diesel consumption within the electricity production process (Nguyen & Ha-Duong 2014) making for a sustainable future electricity source. The gasifiers do have drawbacks as they are described as very loud and produce waste products that can have adverse effects on the immediate landscape.

### Implications for tourism

The implementation of lower electricity costs improves accessibility for tourists, tourism stakeholders and local residents who own the facilities that tourists frequent. This encourages both investor and tourist confidences making areas which were previously outside of the tourist scope due to poor infrastructure more amenable to tourist minimum expectation.

### B6.4.2 Potable water

Unsafe drinking water poses serious health and well-being concerns for both residents and tourists. Cambodia does not have a national water management policy to address the multi sectoral interests of water use (Phyrun 1996). Although many areas of Cambodia have abundant supplies of surface water, which was traditionally used for drinking, the contamination of surface water, often by solid waste and poor sanitation practices in rural communities, means that it is no longer safe for consumption and requires treatment. Nationally, the most common treatment method for drinking water is boiling, with 60% of Khmer people using this method (Skiles 2010). Many families also rely on rainwater as a source of drinking water. A National Institute of Statistics survey in 2000 showed that urban use of rainwater rose from 1.7% in the dry season to 19.8% in the rainy season (Irvine et al. 2006).

### Status of water supply

The current water treatment plant in Battambang has a capacity to produce 8000 metres<sup>3</sup> of safe drinking water each day. This provides 27,000 households (30%) in Battambang with safe drinking water. A new water treatment plant, capable of producing 22,000 metres<sup>3</sup> of drinking water is currently under

construction. The provincial government plans to make safe drinking water affordable to everyone in Battambang Province by 2017. Drinking water is sourced from the Sangker River, and while the government is adamant that sewage water does not flow into it, considerable volumes of plastic and other waste lines the river's edge and potentially contaminates the water supply. Additionally, waste produced by communities through which the river flows is a serious threat to the quality of the water.

### Implications for tourism

The availability of safe drinking water is essential for both tourism and the local community. While the government asserts that tap water from the town is safe to drink, tourists will need to continue to be advised to use bottled water for drinking and to avoid eating raw food as a safeguard against contracting diarrhoeal diseases. Tourists must also continue to be advised that drinking bottled water does not protect them from pathogens in water which is used for non-drinking purposes. For example, lettuce leaves washed under tap water in restaurants may still pose health risks to tourists. A reliance on bottled water creates solid waste issues and can lead to increased littering and efforts are needed to ensure that this problem does not increase as a result of a rise in tourist numbers.

### B6.4.3 Solid waste management

Littering is common both in Battambang city and in rural communities. It is a serious issue because it not only affects the environment and public health, but threatens the aesthetics of many tourist sites. The provision of effective waste management infrastructure is essential to the future growth and development of sustainable tourism. Once substantial infrastructure for waste management is in place, education in schools and the general community will facilitate the uptake of improved waste practices in Battambang and the surrounding communities. Education can change the habits of the people and result in a cleaner, more beautiful environment and a healthier population.

Waste at Cambodian dumpsites has an organic content estimated to be around 73%, followed by 12% plastic, 3% paper and 2% glass (CCAC 2014). Most of this waste is compostable or recyclable and this leaves a very small percentage of waste that needs to be disposed of at a landfill site. The current landfill site in Battambang does not meet international standards. These standards include: leachate barrier systems, leachate storage and disposal, stormwater management, water quality monitoring, landfill gas management and monitoring, amenity issues such as odour, noise and fire control, waste acceptance and site security, the covering of waste and final capping and revegetation (NSW EPA 2015). These standards must be met as the pollutants can degrade the quality of surrounding surface water bodies, groundwater, soil and air (NSW EPA 2015).



*Figure B22. Plastic separated for recycling*

### Status of solid waste management

Although solid waste collection is available in Battambang, only four districts are covered by Cintri, the sole private company responsible for waste collection. Few rural communities have access to waste management systems. Thus, waste dumping on 'vacant' land and burning solid waste are common. Public awareness of littering and the damage it can cause is low. At many tourist sites around Battambang, very few bins exist and litter detracts from the appeal of tourist attractions.

The provincial government is aware of the waste management issue but are constrained by the current contract with Cintri, which prevents the government from conducting their own solid waste collection. This is currently being addressed through negotiation with Cintri.

There is currently no formal recycling facility available in Battambang. There are two private contractors in Battambang who buy plastic bottles and scrap metal from locals and on-sell to surrounding countries.

Non-government organisations operate within the province and work on composting the organic material component of solid waste. The current facility is capable of producing thirty tons of compost a month and the government hopes to expand this in the future.

### Implications for tourism

Litter degrades tourist experiences and threatens the health of the public and the environment. At attractions, tourists expect to see a minimum standard of public infrastructure for waste management. This includes, but are not limited to, the provision of bins that are regularly serviced and the opportunity for recycling and other sustainable initiatives.





## STRATEGIC GUIDELINES FOR HERITAGE TOURISM IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

### PART C: STRATEGIC ACTION AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL

This part of the Strategic Guidelines provides strategic actions to support sustainable tourism development at the Provincial level. All actions (also for Parts D, E and F) are written from the perspective of the Ministry of Tourism and relevant departments of the Battambang Provincial Government.

They are based on the vision that tourism in Battambang will be sustainable, resource and 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, historical 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 AT THE PROVINCIAL LEVEL

### C1.0 Creating a distinctive tourist destination

For Battambang to have a tourism future, it must not only compete with existing internationally recognised destinations, but also the attractions of Siem Reap and the associated Angkor complex of wats, Sihanoukville and the Khmer coast and the Mekong River. However, it can draw from the markets attracted to these destinations by value adding to existing Cambodian tourism experiences and progressively develop its identity as a distinctive Cambodian tourist destination. To do this will require the establishment of an image that is different to other destinations and consistently deliver experiences that are valued by visiting tourists. Tourism products aligned with Battambang’s cultural heritage can be distinctive.

#### C1.1 Strategic action 1 – Diversify tourist experiences through hub and spoke development

A hub and spoke model is already being applied by the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) 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 destinations and attractions beyond the focal areas of Phnom Penh, Sihanoukville and Siem Reap.

‘Hub and spoke’ form of tourism development refers to centralised areas (the hub) for concentrating 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 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, 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 Battambang Province, the hub and spoke model would see Battambang’s French colonial heritage precinct as the as the focal hub, with the Tonle Sap and towns as secondary hubs linked variously by road, air and river.

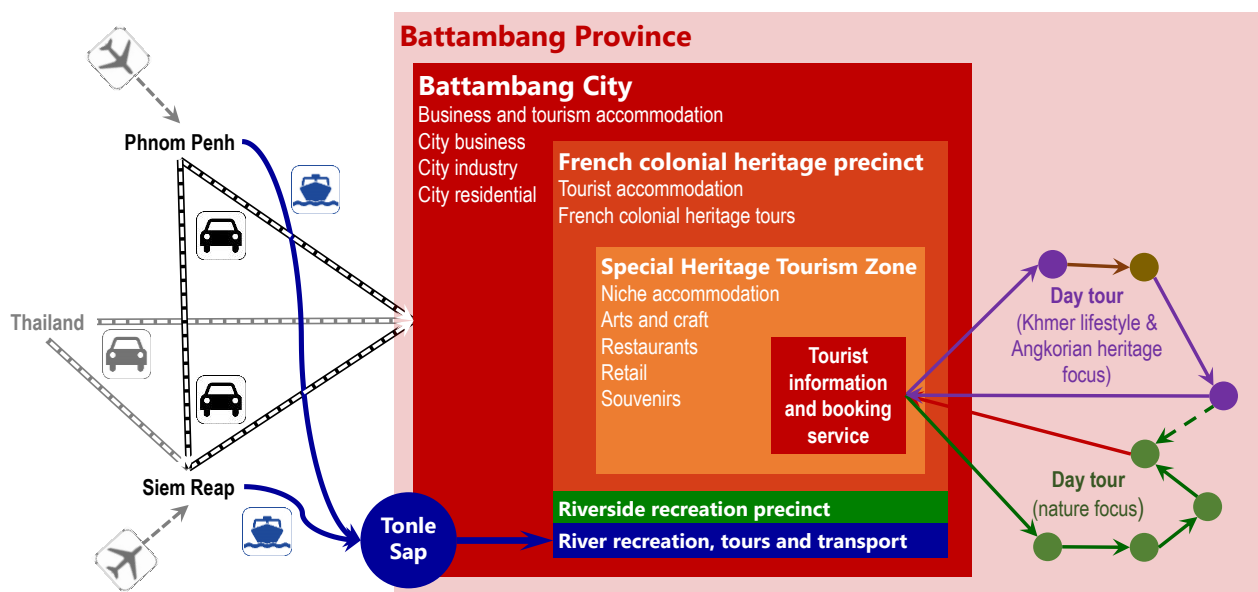


Figure C1. Conceptual tourist sources and city and province tourism focus

**Goal:** Recognition of Battambang as the primary tourism service hub for the Province, and through marketing, development of a range of accommodation styles, and expansion of tourism services and products into surrounding areas.

Number	Action	Priority
C1.1.1	Establish a Tourist Information and Booking Centre with attractive displays of experiences within and around Battambang. The booking service should be a ‘one-stop-shop’ for accommodation, tours and transport on a commission basis. Phone and internet access is essential.	1
C1.1.2	Emphasise Battambang’s French colonial heritage in all marketing and the heritage precinct with its cultural, cuisine and art products.	1

Number	Action	Priority
C1.1.3	Complement the central Tourist Information and Booking Centre with a bus and boat terminal and space for tour and taxi drop-off and pickup.	2
C1.1.4	Proactively foster the development of tourist products within a days-drive or boat trip of the tourism service hub of Battambang.	2
C1.1.5	Proactively foster the development of community-based tourist products with the provision of small loans and training in tourism service delivery.	3

## C1.2 Strategic action 2 – Develop tourism products with inter-related themes

Potential sites and features for tourist use are scattered throughout the province. 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 firstly to the hub and then day tours. Six inter-related themes emerge from consideration of the assets of the provinces: nature, history, livelihoods, arts and crafts, lifestyle and religion. Various areas naturally lend themselves to emphasising one or more of these themes and can be used for marketing the province as distinctive destination where different experiential opportunities exist (Table C1).

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

Theme	Sub-theme	Locations	Thematic links
1.0 Nature	1.1 Rivers and lakes	Sangker River, Tonle Sap, Kamping Puoy Lake	1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.0, 5.2, 6.0
	1.2 Plains	Limestone outcrops (Phnom Banan) Central Indochina Dry Forest (Phomn Sampeu) Wetlands and swamp forests (Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary)	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.0,
	1.3 Uplands	Cardamom Mountains rainfores: Phnum Samkoh Wildlife Sanctuary, Roniem Daun Sam Wildlife Sanctuary, Samlaut Multiple Use Area	
2.0 History	2.1 Pre-Angkorian	Laang Spean	
	2.2 Angkorian	Wat Ek Phnom, Phnom Banan, Prasat Bassaet and Prasat Sneung	1.1, 1.2, 2.4, 3.0, 4.0, 6.1
	2.3 French colonial	Heritage precinct – Battambang City	1.1, 1.2, 3.0, 4.2, 5.1, 5.2, 6.2
	2.4 Khmer Rouge	Wat Samroung Knong, Som-pov Mountain, Kamping Puoy Lake	1.1, 4.2, 5.2, 6.2,
	2.5 Intermediate periods & recent		
3.0 Livelihoods	3.1 Agriculture	Tonle Sap flood plain, around Sangker River	1.1, 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 5.1,
	3.2 Fisheries	Tonle Sap, Sangker River	1.1, 5.1, 5.2,
4.0 Arts and crafts	4.1 Traditional	Villages, Heritage precinct – Battambang City	3.0, 5.0, 6.0
	4.2 Contemporary	Heritage precinct – Battambang City	2.0, 3.0, 4.1, 5.0, 6.0
5.0 Lifestyle	5.1 Cuisine – traditional & contemporary	Villages, heritage precinct – Battambang City	2.3, 2.4, 3.0
	5.2 Celebrations – religious & secular	Wats, temples, heritage precinct and riverside – Battambang City	1.0, 2.0, 3.0, 4.1, 5.1, 6.0
6.0 Religion	6.1 Historic	Wats	2.2, 2.3
	6.2 Contemporary	Temples, churches	2.3, 2.4, 6.1,

The themes can be marketed as distinct, but interdependent, experiences for tourists that would encourage longer stays and return visits. However, the French colonial heritage, arts and crafts, and lifestyle should be the focus for marketing. 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.

### C1.2.1 Ensure site use and themes are compatible with asset values

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 Battambang Province, 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 values).

**Goal:** Themed presentation of the Battambang Province and its tourism assets, and provision of themed day-visit opportunities that complement and are supported by the central service hub.

Number	Action	Priority
C1.2.1	Develop the themes of nature, history, arts and crafts, and lifestyle to establish Battambang as a distinctive destination with much that will interest tourists.	1
C1.2.2	Identify the province in marketing as a distinctive tourism destinations by developing products in thematic groups with the primary emphasis on French colonial heritage, arts and crafts and lifestyles (see Table C1).	1
C1.2.3	Give priority to and support development and tourism service proposals that adopt priority themes.	1
C1.2.4	Give priority to and support tourism initiatives that adopt ASEAN Tourism Standards.	1
C1.2.5	Develop and apply signage and print material presentation standards to reflect themes.	2
C1.2.6	Upgrade available information on heritage tourism assets and their cultural significance. Provide this information to relevant tourism operators.	2

## C2.0 Underpinning tourism with effective support services

The achievement of a sustainable tourism vision requires action beyond the tourism sector. Tourism requires community-wide support and basic 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 needs public health services, 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 investing in the upgrading of community infrastructure.

### C2.1 Strategic action 3 – Upgrade public infrastructure

Fundamental to developing a successful tourism destination is public infrastructure and services to support development and on-going service delivery. While much of this is in place in Battambang, some services need upgrading.

#### C2.1.1 Improve solid waste management

To ensure a healthy and safe visit for tourists and to improve the aesthetics and health of cities, surrounding villages and the environment, sustainable waste management practices are essential.

**Goal:** Sustainable waste management practices throughout the province ensuring attractive tourist sites and protecting the health of tourists, locals and the environment.

Number	Action	Priority
C2.1.1a	Implement a solid-waste collection system throughout Battambang and surrounding towns to make sites cleaner, safer and more appealing for tourists and locals. This may involve:	1

Number	Action	Priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encouraging Cintri to expand its area of waste collection towards complete coverage of Battambang; and</li> <li>providing incentives for households and businesses to be part of the Cintri waste collection service.</li> </ul>	
C2.1.1b	Implement solid-waste collection at all tourist attractions (e.g., temples) to improve the aesthetics of the areas and tourist appeal.	1
C2.1.1c	Reduce landfill by introducing a more sophisticated sorting method to separate compostable, recycling and solid waste.	2
C2.1.1d	Encourage reduced use of plastic bags at shops and markets to minimise the amount of plastic waste at landfill sites. Encourage the development and use of a recycled or biodegradable carry bag system.	2
C2.1.1e	Support the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports (MoEYS) and MOE in developing a lesson plan and support materials for school use to promote understanding of the impact of waste, waste management systems, and practical actions to reduce, reuse, and recycle.	2
C2.1.1f	Upgrade and expand the existing composting plant to cope with increased organic waste as a result of increased tourism.	3

### C2.1.2 Improve accessibility to potable water and reduce associated solid waste (i.e., plastic bottles)

Safe drinking water is essential for maintaining the health and well-being of tourists and the local population. While Battambang's tap water is treated, tourists tend to prefer the use of bottled water. Warnings should be available to ensure tourists do not drink untreated water and avoid eating raw food that has been washed with untreated water to safeguard against diarrhoeal diseases.

**Goal:** Access to clean, safe and affordable drinking water and upgraded systems to accommodate increasing tourism numbers.

Number	Action	Priority
C2.1.2a	Continue to deliver and monitor safe drinking water reticulation throughout Battambang.	1
C2.1.2a	Provide notifications to tourists about the quality of drinking water within Battambang and in areas not serviced with treated water.	1
C2.1.2a	Encourage the use of refillable water bottles from bulk supplies in each hotel and restaurant.	2
C2.1.2a	Clean up waterways to improve the quality of the water and for aesthetic purposes.	2

### C2.1.3 Upgrade access to and within the Province

#### a. Roads

The improvement and maintenance of the road network is vital not only for accessing tourist destinations, but also for the safety of both locals and tourists.

**Goal:** Improved roads to Battambang and between tourism sites

Number	Action	Priority
C2.1.3a	Upgrade and maintain roads between tourist sites of significance.	1
C2.1.3b	Support cost recovery mechanisms to fund the construction and maintenance of roads (enforce vehicle registration).	3
C2.1.3c	Require major developments, including tourism developments, to contribute to road infrastructure development and maintenance at the time of development approval.	3

#### b. Waterways

As the more scenic route for tourists, water transportation provides opportunities for guided tours of the river systems and Tonle Sap whilst also providing communities along the river the chance to become more involved in the tourism sector. Infrastructure is needed to make water transportation more appealing to tourists and also increase the safety of passengers boarding and disembarking from boats. Public loading and unloading areas on the waterways could provide tourists with information about Battambang Province, the municipality and other tourist experiences.



**Goal:** Diverse and high quality water based transport tourist activities throughout Battambang.

Number	Action	Priority
C2.1.3d	Provide infrastructure for boats to dock and passengers to board and disembark safely.	1
C2.1.3e	Remove waste along the river banks within and outside Battambang.	1
C2.1.3f	Provide tourists with guided tours along the river that explain the ecosystems and history of the people living along the banks. Provide training for boat captains so that they can act as guides.	2
C2.1.3g	Provide tourist information at all loading places for tourists along the river.	3

### c. Rail

The railway station and lines within Battambang require substantial repairs if they are to become operational. However, once repaired they could increase the number of domestic and international tourists by providing cheap transport to Battambang from other centres and from Thailand. This would have the additional benefit for freight transport and relieve truck use of the road network.

**Goal:** Explore the possibility of the railway to support the tourism and industry sectors

Number	Action	Priority
C2.1.3h	Seek international assistance for a feasibility study of reinstating rail links from Battambang to Thailand and Phnom Penh.	3
C2.1.3i	Repair the train station in Battambang for use with rail services or conversion to a public space (e.g., for art and craft exhibitions and specialist market).	2

### C2.1.4 Upgrade electricity infrastructure for presentation and improved safety.

Throughout Battambang, power lines are usually tangled, hang close to the ground or running alongside buildings. The tangle of lines is a hazard for people on the streets and detracts from the integrity of the French colonial buildings in the centre of the city. Electricity needs to be delivered to buildings more efficiently to prevent large build ups of electricity cables. Using fewer cables to supply electricity to more buildings simultaneously provides the opportunity to recycle the excess cables to be used in other parts of the province.

**Goal:** Effective electricity access throughout province, more effective power cable distribution and improved safety and presentation.

Number	Action	Priority
C2.1.4a	Implement safety awareness for locals about the dangers of clustered and low hanging power cables.	2
C2.1.4b	Instigate a power cable rationalisation program, commencing in the French colonial heritage precinct, that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>removes tangled power lines that hang low to the ground;</li> <li>improves the quality of power lines connected to private and public buildings;</li> <li>improves the quality of power poles within Battambang.</li> </ul>	2

### C2.1.5 Upgrade local health facilities for improved community health

A healthy community is vital for healthy tourists and sustained tourism. Uncleaned and un-sanitised ambulance services increase the risk of spreading disease and infection to both locals and tourists. Increased numbers of English speaking staff and doctors within hospitals and clinics will create communication pathways for improved tourist health care.

**Goal:** Improved health of the Battambang community as well improved medical services available for tourists.

Number	Actions	Priority
C2.1.5a	With the Ministry of Health provide guidelines on sanitation requirements when registering ambulances for road transport and/or as a business.	1
C2.1.5b	Support English and French language training so that State hospitals and medical clinics have some staff on duty who can communicate with tourists.	2
C2.1.5c	With the Battambang Traders Association promote and make available to tourists emergency contacts numbers for medical treatment through information centres, hotels and on official websites.	3

## C2.2 Strategic action 4 – Establish and maintain effective communication between stakeholders

### C2.2.1 Establish a peak body for tourism commercial interests

While tourism stakeholders throughout Battambang Province have a shared vision for a more prosperous, well managed and high quality tourism sector, cooperation amongst stakeholders is limited. Businesses operate in an isolated manner with little collaboration and minimal cross promotion. Brochures, signs and other marketing material is dispersed haphazardly and tourism operators know little about other tourism enterprises on offer throughout Battambang. A Traders Association could facilitate collaboration amongst tourism business stakeholders. The government probably needs to facilitate the creation of the Battambang Traders Association but as soon as possible facilitate its acting as the independent peak body representing retail businesses in Battambang.

**Goal:** The establishment of a Battambang Traders Association for tourism stakeholders, providing a platform for industry cooperation, unified strategies and planning, the exchange of ideas, mutual support and effective marketing promotion for mutual benefit.

Number	Action	Priority
C2.2.1a	Identify key tourism business stakeholders throughout Battambang Province to be the foundation members of the Battambang Traders Association (BTA) and create a 3-year plan for its introduction, establishment and government withdrawal.	1
C2.2.1b	Introduce the idea, purpose, rationale behind creation of the BTA to identified stakeholders and invite widespread participation.	1
C2.2.1c	Facilitate meetings during establishment of the BTA by providing invitations, a meeting location, a meeting format for proceedings and other key services.	1
C2.2.1f	The Battambang's Department of Tourism will participate in regular meetings (at least bi-annually) to receive input from the BTA and ensure its continued success.	1
C2.2.1i	The BTA should be free to operate independently without restriction of the <i>Laws of Chambers of Commerce</i> , but should be encouraged to affiliate with any Chamber of Commerce in Battambang Province.	1
C2.2.1d	When the BTA is firmly established, direct government involvement should cease, enabling independent operation as a peak stakeholder body.	2
C2.2.1e	After withdrawal, continue to support the BTA through government funding to match initiatives and resources, such as a meeting location, to ensure continued success.	2
C2.2.1h	BTA membership should be open to nationals or residents of Cambodia so as to include a wide scope of business operators including foreign nationals who call Cambodia home.	2
C2.2.1g	During the initial stages of the BTA, the Governor/Mayor should act as chair of the meetings..	3

### C2.2.2 Increase collaborative actions of the public and private sectors.

Cooperation, communication and feedback between the Battambang Provincial Department of Tourism and provincial tourism stakeholders is vital for enhancement of the tourism sector as a whole. For the Government, this allows communication of objectives, strategies and future reforms to unify strategic vision and direction amongst the sector. Furthermore, provincial stakeholders are able to provide relevant input from the tourism community. This collaboration will enable the public and private sectors to work in ways that are mutually beneficial.

**Goal:** Strong collaboration between the Battambang Provincial Government Department of Tourism and members of the provincial tourism sector, unification of strategic vision and direction, as well as two-way communication of relevant information.

Number	Action	Priority
C2.2.2a	Commence regular stakeholder meetings, held at least biannually, with members of the tourism community. Meetings should be broadly advertised and open to all tourism service providers.	1
C2.2.2b	Provide opportunities for businesses to advertise through the Department of Tourism in outlets such as the Tourist Information Centres and online.	2

Number	Action	Priority
C2.2.2c	Facilitate cross promotion between businesses to enable broader reach of advertising material. This may include hotels and restaurants holding a larger variety of brochures, and tourist sites providing leaflets at kiosks and souvenir stands.	1
C2.2.2d	Provide and clearly communicate information about the Department of Tourism's vision for the tourism sector as well as business opportunities and linkages when tourism businesses apply for registration.	2
C2.2.2e	Identify sub-categories within the stakeholder body (such as ecotourism providers, restaurants, guesthouses etc.) and encourage formation of sub-groups to address more specific issues.	3

## C2.3 Strategic action 5 – Improve information services for tourists

Integral to the sustainability of tourism development, as well as the tourist experience of visitors, is clear communication of local social expectations, behaviour and culture. Where this is lacking tourist behaviour may lead to tension, and local community resentment towards tourists and tourism. This can affect the tourist's experience if they believe they have been unfairly treated. Throughout Battambang there is little to no information available at significant tourist sites, which indicate rules or penalties relating to the protection of sites. This includes information on appropriate dress standards at pagodas, permission for photography and rules relating to the removal of artefacts from temple sites.

### C2.3.1 Provide cultural and legal information for tourists

**Goal:** Provision of easily accessible and widely advertised information to tourists on cultural considerations, legal obligations and behavioural expectations.

Number	Action	Priority
C2.3.1a	Provide appropriate signage at relevant tourism venues, including on arrival at airports, hotels and guesthouses, indicating appropriate dress for temples and sacred sites.	2
C2.3.1b	Provide information regarding basic road rules, helmet use, passenger limits and the process in case of an accident.	2
C2.3.1c	Make police contact information available to tourists to report accidents, lost or stolen property via hotels, tourist information centres and Department of Tourism.	2
C2.3.1d	Advertise penalties for drug use and trafficking to warn tourists against using drugs in Cambodia. Provide signage at airports and drug warning information with issuance of visas.	1
C2.3.1e	Continue existing efforts to raise awareness of the prohibition of child sex tourism, stating penalties. Ensure posters and promotional material is available to hotels and guesthouses and in areas where child abuse is a known problem.	1

### C2.3.2 Improve Government tourist services and promotion.

Battambang Province lacks multi-lingual information on nature, heritage and culture-based tourism. Absence of, or inconsistent labelling of tourist attractions is also common, leading to locational confusion. For example, the Well of Shadows is known locally by the pagoda name and locals have difficulty understanding where tourists want to visit. 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 importance of a particular site. For interpretation of natural and cultural assets, there is the opportunity to use trained local guides. For example, at the Killing Caves, the villagers have extensive knowledge of the history and stories; however, they lack communication skills to express the significance and convey the history to visitors.

**Goal:** Widespread, effective and themed tourism promotion

Number	Action	Priority
C2.3.2a	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
C2.3.2b	Promote local tourist attractions by installing or updating and grouping directional road signage.	1
C2.3.2e	Provide opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about the natural and cultural heritage values of Battambang and specific attractions with improved guiding services and on-site interpretation.	2

Number	Action	Priority
C2.3.2f	Develop a suite of authentic, community developed visit mementos and souvenirs that facilitate positive recollection of the visit and benefit local economies.	2
C2.3.2g	Develop brochures on tourism attractions, cultural history and natural environment to enrich the tourist experience through enhanced knowledge	3
C2.3.2h	Provide advice on appropriate ways tourists can assist the disadvantaged and contribute to ensuring natural and cultural protection.	3

### C2.3.3 Provide climate-related health information and ensure the availability of rest facilities

Tourist comfort encourages longer stays at key tourist locations resulting in higher levels of expenditure to the benefit of local communities. Tourists from cooler climates may not be acclimatised, requiring them to rest in shaded areas to avoid heat stroke and exhaustion. Prevention of extended periods of sun exposure and provision of amenities for refreshment alleviates the intensity of the warm climate for tourists. Distribution of climate information is necessary to ensure tourists are aware of temperatures and humidity and can therefore maintain adequate hydration and sun protection throughout their visit. Current information regarding temperatures gives limited overview of the health risks of heat and sun exposure. Tourists undertaking day trips to rural areas need information on the severity of heat, importance of carrying adequate levels of safe drinking water and shaded rest areas with amenities.

**Goal:** Tourists are aware of and prepared for climate related health risks and provision of shaded rest areas all key tourist locations.

Number	Actions	Priority
C2.3.3a	Build shaded viewing platforms/rest areas/amenities and kiosks at all key tourist locations.	1
C2.3.3b	Distribute health information at airports and all major tourist hotels.	2
C2.3.3c	Provide information brochures that stipulate the required amounts of drinking water per day.	3
C2.3.3d	Use and promote existing vendors to provide food and beverage services at key tourist locations.	3





STRATEGIC GUIDELINES  
FOR HERITAGE TOURISM  
IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

PART D: STRATEGIC ACTIONS  
AT THE PROVINCIAL SITE LEVEL

This part of the Strategic Guidelines provides strategic actions for sustainable, heritage-focused tourism development in Cambodia's Battambang Province at sites outside of the provincial capital. All actions (as for Parts C, E and F) are written from the perspective of the Ministry of Tourism and relevant departments of the Battambang Provincial Government.

Site-specific actions proposed should be read as exemplars for other related sites.

## PART D STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE PROVINCIAL SITE LEVEL

### D1.0 Protecting and presenting natural heritage

A core tenet of ecotourism (and heritage-based tourism generally) is the contribution of tourism to resource protection. This means that tourism brokers (operators, managers and communities that benefit from tourism expenditures) should at least minimise impact on resources in the interest of protecting core tourism assets and contributing to conservation goals. Tourism operators should contribute to protection and management of valued resources (tourism assets), which they use as part of their businesses, by: (1) being an advocate for and supporter of the agencies responsible for managing natural and cultural resources; (2) co-funding infrastructure and site services that they use; and (3) co-funding management that ensures the sustainability of the tourism assets. Contributions can be, of course, in cash or in-kind.

#### D1.1 Strategic action 6 – Preserve and enhance management of geophysical assets

The natural geophysical assets of Battambang are core tourist assets. Their protection and preservation is imperative for sustainable tourism development. With significant intrinsic value associated with such areas, they can be appropriately presented as integrated ecological, historical and cultural tourism products to develop tourism themes to create a distinctive tourism identity for Battambang. The successful protection and management of geophysical tourism assets can be achieved if public and private sector tourism managers align closely and collaborate with environmental protection and conservation authorities. Working cooperatively, the MOT and provincial departments, heritage resource managers and tourism operators, can protect and present the assets while ensuring an increase in tourism and visitor satisfaction.

##### D1.1.1 Improve protection and site management at Phnom Banan (an example)

Banan Mountain and its limestone cave systems are significant tourism assets with great potential for attracting visitors to Battambang. However, if they are to be used fully they must be adequately protected and presented in a way that ensures their rich natural and cultural heritage is protected. It is vital to all geophysical landscapes that relevant and stimulating information is accessible to all visitor demographics and that there are methods in place to support continual maintenance of the areas.

**Goal:** Protection of Phnom Banan and its cave systems with safe, clear and clean presentation of site values and maintenance of facilities.

Number	Action	Priority
D1.1.1a	Develop and install strategic signage in all major visitor languages (e.g. Khmer, French and English) to convey information relevant to the site, including: the natural history of the mountain and caves, the history of the temple complex, Khmer legends of Crocodile and Ship mountains,, and stories behind cave figures.	1
D1.1.1b	Institute routine maintenance of the area and servicing of facilities including: removal of litter, provision of additional bins, particularly around the cave entrance, tending of vegetation, and maintenance of stairs.	1
D1.1.1c	Ensure, through supporting the MOE, that the only approved developments are those that have the primary purpose of emphasising and presenting the natural and cultural heritage value of the area and not detracting from it.	1
D1.1.1d	Regulate and, in some cases, limit development of stalls and vendors to protect cultural and natural landscapes.	2
D1.1.1e	Provide ongoing training on tourism awareness (impact and product development) for local operators.	3
D1.1.1f	Make strategic investments to stimulate transition in livelihoods to prepare the community to include tourism as part of their economy.	3
D1.1.1g	Support the MOE in developing landscape conservation plans for Phnom Banan and surrounding areas (and other sites used by tourists), which include opportunities and constraints for tourism.	3

##### D1.1.2 Develop Kamping Puoy Lake as a significant tourist site.

Water bodies, lakes and rivers are tourism assets that provide opportunities to experience Battambang's natural and cultural heritage. Kamping Puoy Lake is one such potential eco-tourism site. However appropriate measures need to be taken to continuously maintain and preserve the lake and the surrounding area, ensuring its natural and cultural heritage values are presented in a clean, safe and

respectful manner. It is vital to preserve the site and provide tourists with opportunity to connect with its history, while simultaneously delivering the experience of an eco-tourist 'hot spot'.

**Goal:** Protection of the natural and cultural heritage of Kamping Puoy Lake, with provisions for ongoing maintenance, safety and educational facilities.

No.	Action	Priority
D1.1.2a	Create signs for directional, hazard and educational purposes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>directional signs to show how to get to the lake from Battambang City and where the local market stalls and boat tours are located at the lake;</li> <li>traffic hazard signs along the roads leading to the lake and around the lake, to include, 'slow down' messages;</li> <li>educational signs to be placed around the lake, including 'do not litter' and interpretive signs telling tourists about the natural and cultural heritage of the lake.</li> </ul>	1
D1.1.2b	Upgrade the quality of boats used for tours across the lake to improve public perceptions and safety. Increase the periodic technical inspections by either the Department of Water Transport or Provincial/City Public Work and Transport Office, from every 6 months (as stated in the <i>Circular on Management of Means of Water Transport</i> ) to every 3 months.	1
D1.1.2c	Increase the number of boats readily available for tourists and create a central docking area as a focal point for boat tours.	1
D1.1.2d	Provide opportunity for language training in major tourist languages for local guides to enhance communication between tourists and tour guides.	2
D1.1.2e	Upgrade the roads leading to and around the lake and continue regular maintenance of them as needed.	2
D1.1.2f	Encourage the MOE to undertake regular water quality monitoring to prevent and reduce water pollution. The guidelines for 'water quality standard in public water areas for both bio-diversity conservation' and 'public health protection' should be used as a signal for remedial action.	2
D1.1.2g	Plant more native trees around the lake to provide a habitat for the native birds.	2
D1.1.2h	Install bins around the lake near the market stalls to reduce litter, but the objective should be to eventually place bins only in arrival/departure areas.	3
D1.1.2i	Initiate advertising programs for the boat tours such as: brochures in shops around Battambang, and advertising through the Department of Tourism in outlets including Tourist Information Centres and online.	3
D1.1.2j	Construct toilet facilities at the lake, ensuring they are at least fifty meters from the market stalls. Support the facilities with routine servicing and maintenance.	3

### D1.1.3 Enhance the presentation and pollution management of the Sangker River

The Sangker River is a tourism asset all tourists will be exposed to when visiting Battambang. For this reason, and to further develop sustainable tourism activities focused on the river, it is vital that the waterway and banks receive maintenance and beautification. Pollution is a significant issue affecting the Sangker River and its natural heritage. Tourists may be deterred from participating in activities (e.g., kayaking) as a result of the river's perceived and actual water quality.

**Goal:** Protection of the Sangker River's natural heritage to support a variety of sustainable tourist activities.

Number	Action	Priority
D1.1.3a	Inform the local community on how to best care for and manage the river environment through incorporation of environmental learning programs in schools, signage showing the impacts of littering, and encouraging environmentally friendly practices, such as refraining from the use of plastic bags (currently in place).	1
D1.1.3b	Battambang Municipality to employ gardeners to maintain, at least fortnightly, the inner city banks of the river free of litter, including adjacent parklands.	1
D1.1.3c	Encourage property owners to upgrade riverside infrastructure to make structures more flood proof and durable.	2
D1.1.3d	Support the MOE in monitoring water quality and cleaning polluted river sections including supporting community clean-up initiatives and enforcing pollution	2



Number	Action	Priority
	regulations. The guidelines for 'water quality standard in public water areas for both bio-diversity conservation' and 'public health protection' should be strictly applied.	
D1.1.3e	Plant more vegetation throughout the riverside park in the city	2
D1.1.3f	Provide a range of boat experiences and tours from self-guided to traditional and luxury. Boat survey (safety and soundness) should be undertaken by the Department of Water Transport (repair) or the Ministry of Public Works and Transport (construction), followed by a technical inspection every three months.	2
D1.1.3g	Support language training for locals to enhance tourist engagement.	3

### D1.1.4 Communicate the value of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve to tourism and local livelihoods

To achieve sustainable tourism in and around the Tonle Sap, the tourism sector needs to appreciate the intrinsic value of ecosystems, biodiversity and invaluable natural landscapes to tourism. Working in cooperation with heritage resource managers, the tourism sector can support the preservation of valued resources even with increased tourism activity.

**Goal:** Secure protection and appropriate presentation of Tonle Sap as a world-class natural heritage asset.

Number	Action	Priority
D1.1.4a	Support the preparation of an integrated tourism and conservation management plan for the Tonle Sap. This will need to involve, at least, the MOT, MOE, MAFF and UNESCO, with a major emphasis on engaging all stakeholders in its preparation.	1
D1.1.4b	Identify and emphasise the Biosphere Reserve as part of Battambang's cultural heritage by facilitating tourist visits to floating villages to explain traditional livelihoods.	1
D1.1.4c	Provide incentives that stress the value and benefits to be realised from biodiversity and encourage local communities to engage in the protection of their environment and its resources.	1
D1.1.4d	Support strict Environmental and Social Impacts Assessment requirements for all tourism development proposals that may impact the natural resources and communities of the Tonle Sap	1
D1.1.4e	Inform community members of the importance and benefits of protecting and preserving the integrity of the Tonle Sap Biosphere Reserve.	2
D1.1.4f	Stimulate transition in local community livelihoods to include tourism through strategic investments in exemplar tourism products.	2
D1.1.4g	Train local community members in providing eco-tours for visitors.	2
D1.1.4h	Increase opportunities for homestays within floating communities to extend the length of tourist visits.	2
D1.1.4i	Support the MOE in establishing a comprehensive GIS-linked biological-ecological database at the provincial level of both freshwater and terrestrial resources.	2
D1.1.4j	Install interpretation signage along major travel routes between Battambang and Siem Reap that can serve to inform visitors about the value of the Tonle Sap's natural and cultural heritage.	3
D1.1.4k	Encourage tourism operators working within the Tonle Sap region to advertise their services throughout Cambodia.	3

## D1.2 Strategic action 7 – Preserve and improve management of ecosystem assets

The natural ecosystem areas and sites of Battambang are potential tourism assets. Their protection is fundamental to sustainable tourism and presentation of their heritage value is essential for eco-cultural tourism. Ongoing support for conservation and environmental protection is required for long-term tourism success. Partnerships between heritage resource managers, the MOT and tourism operators will enhance visitor satisfaction and ensure the protection and preservation of ecological assets.

## D1.2.1 Protect and restore Roniem Daun Sam and Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuaries

Roniem Daun Sam and Phnom Samkos Wildlife Sanctuaries are important ecological assets of Battambang Province. However, the high risk associated with unexploded landmines means that immediate investment in tourism development in these areas cannot be prioritised. However as a potential tourism asset for the future, attention needs to be given to restoring the safety and ecological health of the wildlife sanctuary to allow for the possibility.

**Goal:** Secured protection, safety and management of wildlife sanctuaries.

Number	Action	Priority
D1.2.1a	Support organisations, such as the Halo Trust, Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and the Cambodian Mine Action Committee, in continuing to demine the protected areas.	1
D1.2.1b	Support the MOE and NPCA in conducting duties specified in the <i>Protected Area Law 2008</i> (particularly the elimination of illegal activities and development management).	1
D1.2.1c	Support the MOE in establishing a comprehensive flora and fauna database at the provincial level for species within the protected areas.	2
D1.2.1d	Support and advise the MOE in preparing a management and conservation plan for the protected areas, including opportunities and constraints for tourism.	3

## D1.2.2 Use the tourism potential of Samlaut Multiple Use Area and invest in its conservation

Samlaut Multiple Use Area (under management by the Maddox Jolie-Pitt Foundation (MJPF) is the last tropical rainforest in north-west Cambodia. It is a Category VI IUCN area and has an abundance of IUCN classified endangered species (e.g., the Asian elephant, slow loris and pileated gibbon), giving it strong potential as a tourism destination. Immediate actions must be implemented for its conservation to safeguard its use for sustainable tourism.

**Goal:** Conservation of Samlaut Multiple Use Area's ecological value alongside a safe presentation of the site for tourist use.

Number	Action	Priority
D1.2.2a	Support the MJPF and MOE in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>undertaking a comprehensive ecological assessment of the area, including a wildlife species list, and</li> <li>identifying nature-based experience opportunities (e.g., walking tracks, lookouts, elevated boardwalks, waterfalls and swimming holes) for tourism.</li> </ul>	1
D1.2.2b	Support the MAFF in strengthening penalties for poachers and loggers to deter potential and repeat offences.	1
D1.2.2c	Support efforts to clear landmines in the area to maximise visitor safety, conservation efforts and protect future tourism opportunities.	1
D1.2.2d	Redevelop the entrance to Samlaut to include multilingual signage and interpretation services that explain the biodiversity values of Samlaut, as well as landmine awareness.	2
D1.2.2e	Support the MJPF in providing adequate toilet facilities at the entrance to the protected area.	2
D1.2.2f	Provide multilingual directional signage from Battambang town centre to Samlaut.	3
D1.2.2a	Recoup redevelopment costs with tourist entry fees and service charges.	3
D1.2.2a	Encourage and train local community members to provide accessible eco-tours through the Area.	3
D1.2.2a	Work with the owners and managers of Sek Sok Eco-resort in relocating and developing eco-accommodation and infrastructure to present the natural values of Samlaut Protected Area.	3

## D1.2.3 Realise Phnom Sampeau's eco-tourism potential through enhanced site management

The bat colony residing in the caves of Phnom Sampeau provides a daily spectacle that attracts tourists. If marketed and used with the mountain and caves experience, the site has potential to draw many visitors to the province.

**Goal:** Protect the ecological value of the bat population whilst providing a safe and accessible tourism experience.

Number	Action	Priority
D1.2.3a	Redevelop the base of the mountain to include a carpark for tuk-tuks and tax's away from main viewing area to reduce traffic congestion. Include the provision of a tourist viewing facility to enhance viewing of the bat's exodus from the cave and communicate the value of the asset, and solar ground lighting lining the road.	1
D1.2.3b	Provide multilingual signage on: (a) the biodiversity values of caves and ecological role of bats and the resident monkey population; and (b) the human and ecological dangers of approaching and feeding the monkeys.	1
D1.2.3c	Upgrade infrastructure to the top of the mountain with: (a) blind corner mirrors and guard rails on the cliff edge to maximize visitor safety, and (b) walking pavement at the top of the mountain.	2
D1.2.3d	Construct and lease or seek tenders to develop a restaurant at the base of the mountain but away from the bat viewing area to add to the tourism experience.	3
G	Encourage and train local community members to provide tours of the site, explaining historical, natural and religious features of the area.	3

### D1.2.4 Ensure crocodile farms follow international conventions and upgrade animal and tourist facilities

The crocodile farms in Battambang are a tourist attraction, but to ensure their sustainability and avoid negative international attention, they need to be upgraded to international standards for exhibiting (endangered) wildlife, and meet obligations under CITES.

**Goal:** Improved infrastructure, maintenance, presentation and care of the farm crocodiles, ensuring CITES obligations are met.

Number	Action	Priority
D1.2.4a	With the CITES Management Authority of Cambodia (CITES MAC) assist crocodile farms to demonstrate implementation of and adherence to CITES provisions for export of Siamese crocodiles (CITES permits).	1
D1.2.4b	Encourage the CITES MAC to ensure adherence to the system for registering captive-bred crocodiles to ensure species are not traded unless they meet Convention provisions.	1
D1.2.4c	With the CITES MAC, support local community members through education for sustainable tourism practices in regards to crocodiles and wildlife in general.	1
D1.2.4d	Where captive breeding adheres to CITES, support the crocodile tourist farm to improve the safety of walking platforms and the provision of appropriate railings.	1
D1.2.4e	Assist the CITES MAC in ensuring that all exporters of crocodile products hold required CITES-permits.	1
D1.2.4f	Do not support crocodile farms that do not have a conservation message when presenting farm practices to tourists, or farms that do not adhere to the CITES Convention.	1
D1.2.4g	Encourage farming businesses to maintain garden areas and meet the highest standards possible for crocodile presentations; this includes cleaning cages at least weekly.	2
D1.2.4h	Provide directional signage from Battambang to CITES compliant farms and which meet high presentation standards.	2
D1.2.4i	Encourage upgrading and rehabilitation of site infrastructure and toilet facilities in tourism businesses so that tourists have access to amenities.	2
D1.2.4j	To maximise returns from the farms, encourage local community members to provide and incorporate market and food stalls alongside crocodile tourist facilities.	2
D1.2.4k	Encourage the CITES MAC to promote crocodile conservation through establishing a system where farmers contribute small numbers of juvenile crocodiles to the CCCP.	3
D1.2.4l	With the CITES MAC: (a) assist farmers with multilingual educational signage on the incubation process and the benefits of farming for conservation to reduce wild	3

Number	Action	Priority
	crocodile poaching; and (b) install donation boxes at crocodile tourism facilities, with the funds going towards crocodile conservation.	

### D1.2.5 Diversify community based conservation and tourism activities in Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary

Recognising the intrinsic value of biodiversity, ecosystems and landscapes is essential for sustainable tourism, the tourism sector must work with the MOE, MAFF, the Cambodian National Mekong Committee and UNESCO to ensure valued natural resource are not degraded by increased tourism. Wetlands represent a source of livelihood and support tourist activities such as: local guided tours and boat trips. Effective conservation management of the Bird Sanctuary is critical to sustaining the endangered bird species and promoting community based tourism initiatives. Biosphere reserves have multiple functions that include: conservation, sustainable development, research and monitoring, training and education (UNESCO 2002). Projects on biosphere reserves should give emphasis to UNESCO's mandate in education, science and culture and the MAB approach, promoting the integration of the natural and social sciences (UNESCO 2002). There is demand from tourists for designated boat tours from Battambang to Prek Toal, which the MOT needs to address through the plans for a boat station in Battambang.

**Goal:** Secured protection of natural assets and community engagement in tourism, to bring about both environmental and economic benefits.

Number	Action	Priority
	In cooperation with the Cambodia National Mekong Committee, UNESCO and relevant Cambodian Ministries, and with the insights of other stakeholders, especially the Prek Toal community:	
D1.2.5a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>develop and manage sufficient infrastructure in the area (e.g., toilet and bin facilities) to meet existing and expected tourist demand;</li> </ul>	1
D1.2.5b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>educate local community members in sustainable waste management practices;</li> </ul>	1
D1.2.5c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support partnerships between with NGOs towards reviewing training needs of current eco-tours and guides, ensuring adherence to principles of biosphere reserve management;</li> </ul>	1
D1.2.5d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage partnership between Battambang business, community, and eco-tour services to create revenue through boat transfers from Battambang to Prek Toal;</li> </ul>	1
D1.2.5e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support expansion of community-based tourism on the Tonle Sap - Prek Toal area in compliance with the ASEAN's Community Based Tourism Standard and the Biosphere's Management Plans.</li> </ul>	1
D1.2.5f	Encourage and support the MOE, the MAFF and local police and wildlife officers to give greater attention to enforcing wildlife protection regulations to ensure the integrity of the Biosphere's management and the sustainability of tourism and wildlife populations in the region.	1
D1.2.5g	Encourage the Office of Public Work and Transportation to endorse the construction of a boat station in Battambang.	1
D1.2.5h	Through NGOs, provide basic English language skills for tour operators and guides in the Prek Toal village communities to ensure the benefits from tourism are identified and understood, and opportunities for engaging in tourism services is increased.	2
D1.2.5i	Construct boardwalks that adhere to UNESCO's principles for development of biosphere reserves with the funding and partnership from MAB and NGOs.	2
D1.2.5j	Support NGOs and communities with equipment for tourist use that will enhance the visitor experience (e.g., binoculars or audio-guides in a range of languages). These could be rented to provide income for community-based conservation activities.	3
D1.2.5k	Develop and distribute information leaflets and provide signage in Battambang's hotels advertising boat tours to Prek Toal's bird sanctuary and floating villages.	3
D1.2.5l	Ensure all project documents, reports, information brochures, and web sites identify and make cross references to biosphere reserve status under UNESCO's MAB programme as per UNESCO's Guiding Principles for Projects on Biosphere Reserves.	3
D1.2.5m	Install donation boxes in appropriate locations to fund community development and community conservation initiatives.	3

## D2.0 Protecting and presenting historical heritage

From the inventory of Battambang's tourism assets, the abundance and quality of historic heritage sites and features emerges as a distinguishing characteristic of the Province compared with others of Cambodia. If the tourism potential of these assets is to be realised, they must first be protected and then presented in a manner that benefits and rewards the local community as well as tourists.

### D2.1 Strategic action 8 – Protect, celebrate and present Battambang's rich historical heritage

#### D2.1.1 Develop pre-Angkorian sites to contribute to a diversified historical heritage image

Battambang is rich in ancient heritage. Sites such as Laang Spean are rare and highly valuable to Cambodian and global history. Despite their significance, these sites are unknown to tourists. With development, these sites can become valuable and reputable attractions. The ability to experience ancient history is a unique selling point, which can build Battambang's destination image and attract more tourists.

**Goal:** Develop the ancient assets of Battambang as a highly valuable marketable tourism attraction

Number	Actions	Priority
D2.1.1a	<p>With tourism students from the University of Battambang, the support of the MNHN and the MCFA, develop a day-trip tourist experience at Laang Spean. A timeline of five years is suggested to allow the project to be developed comprehensively, in consultation with stakeholders, to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• create tours of excavated sites,</li> <li>• display artefacts from the cave,</li> <li>• provide information on the cave's history,</li> <li>• include amenities such as toilets, parking facilities and a food stall,</li> <li>• involve the local community to ensure that development is sustainable, and</li> <li>• market this attraction to tour companies as a day trip opportunity.</li> </ul>	2
D2.1.1b	<p>With the MCFA, create a tourist map of caves in the province, which conveys the region's human history in relation to the environment and meeting the food needs of residents over time.</p>	2

#### D2.1.2 Redesign and create innovative ways of presenting Angkorian heritage

Battambang is often overlooked as a destination for Angkorian heritage with most tourists choosing to focus on the Angkor Archaeological Park in Siem Reap. However, the temples of Battambang are differentiated by the fact that they are older, far less crowded and still embedded in local culture and livelihoods. Development and marketing can be used to convey that Battambang's temples offer unique experiences of Angkorian heritage. Provided safety and resource protection is assured, there remains the opportunity for unrestricted access to Angkorian ruins. Actions which preserve this heritage and present it to tourists will enhance the image of Battambang as a focus for heritage tourism. Strategic development of Battambang's easily accessed Angkorian temples (Wat Ek Phnom, Phnom Banan, Prasat Bassaet and Prasat Sneung) is to be the focus of actions.

**Goal:** Convey the value of Battambang's Angkorian temples to tourists by preserving their uniqueness and developing tourist facilities and services.

Number	Actions	Priority
D2.1.2a	Employ gardeners to provided regular maintenance of the sites.	1
D2.1.2b	Place rubbish bins at temple sites and empty them daily.	1
D2.1.2c	Create a clear path to the temples so that the majority of tourists are led through the sites to minimise impact.	1
D2.1.2d	<p>Promote the unique aspects of the temples in marketing material:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• many temples pre-date Angkor Wat,</li> <li>• there is very little crowding,</li> <li>• the temples are used by locals for celebrations and family gatherings, and</li> <li>• the temples display intricate carvings.</li> </ul>	1

Number	Actions	Priority
	This information should be made available online and included in maps and brochures as soon as possible.	
D2.1.2e	Create tourist routes that include the temples and visit opportunities at local villages and handicraft stalls. Publish the routes online and distribute them in hotels and the tourist information centre.	1
D2.1.2f	Add multilingual interpretation signage to explain the history of the temples.	2
D2.1.2g	Upgrade the knowledge and guiding skills of tuk-tuk drivers and local community members. Provide one-day workshops, hosted by the MOT and the MCFA, to increase knowledge of the sites and add value to tourist experiences.	2
D2.1.2h	Employ locals to manage ticket offices seven days a week and provide guiding and food and beverage services.	2
D2.1.2i	Record data on how many tourists visit the sites each day, their nationality, age and gender. This information is to be used to tailor tourist services.	3
D2.1.2j	Upgrade toilet facilities, ensuring that they are away from the temples.	3

### D2.1.3 Protect and present the heritage derived from the Khmer Rouge era

Khmer Rouge heritage sites represent significant tourism assets for Battambang. The significance of these areas is well understood by local communities; however, through specific actions these sites can be greatly enhanced as tourism attractions. The 'killing fields' will both attract and repel tourists, but in them also lie the story of why and how the Khmer Rouge rose to power, the resilience of the Cambodian people, the circumstances surrounding the ultimate demise of the regime, reasons for the delay in ousting Khmer Rouge supporters, and the nation building that has occurred since democratic processes returned to Cambodia. While sites of atrocities may be the attractor for tourists, it is the stories in the sites that need to be told. This greater story and lessons are in all Cambodian families. Public, community and private tourism initiatives can release the story and make the sites meaningful to all beyond places of family death and the macabre, and help support the protection and management of the sites.

Organisation of daily trips to sites can be managed through collaborations between hotels, tuk-tuk drivers and local communities as this would benefit both pre-existing services and also provide an easy way to present information about sites. These actions will foster preservation of and respect for the sites as well as ensure they cope with increasing tourism.

**Goal:** Achieve protection, presentation and promotion of Khmer Rouge heritage assets.

Number	Actions	Priority
D2.1.3a	Support the University of Battambang with student research scholarships to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>document the rise and fall of the Khmer Rouge, particularly as it relates to the Province and identifying sites of historical significance; and</li> <li>collect oral histories of community members with familial association with sites.</li> </ul>	1
D2.1.3b	Maintain areas surrounding sites (e.g., the Well of Shadows), including mowing and removal of rubbish.	1
D2.1.3c	Repair viewing platforms and construct a fence to ensure safety of tourists.	1
D2.1.3d	Record demographics of visitors entering sites to tailor tourist services.	1
D2.1.3e	Provide marketing information that promotes site tours led by knowledgeable local community members.	2
D2.1.3f	Foster collaboration between local communities, hotels and tuk-tuk drivers to organise trips and provide tourists with information.	3
D2.1.3g	Provide more than just one person to take groups through the caves.	3
D2.1.3h	Organise transport for groups to easily access sites and avoid lengthy tuk-tuk journeys.	3

## D3.0 Presenting agricultural traditions, lifestyles and community values

Much of Battambang's history, cultural and lifestyle traditions are linked to agriculture. In turn, these are linked to the seasons and the water flows of the Tonle Sap. What the tourist currently sees is produce, but behind the story of production is the cultural, religious, history, and artistic links that have been enabled by the agricultural productivity of the province.

## D3.1 Strategic action 9 – Support the vitality of agricultural industries and realise their heritage tourism potential

Agriculture is the backbone of Battambang’s economy. It also offers significant potential to draw tourists to the region through agri-tourism activities. However, locations where the story of agriculture can be interpreted are not identified and the story of agriculture’s relationship with history, culture, lifestyle, celebrations and traditions is not defined. For agri-tourism to be part of the heritage experience, farms must be successful and productive, and the best places to tell the agricultural story identified.

### D3.1.1 Restore the vitality of the agricultural sector

Battambang’s agricultural production has slowly declined over recent years. Reinvigoration is needed, possibly through crop diversification, diversified markets, introduction of climate change responsive genetic material, improved irrigation systems, and improved production techniques including sustainable farming. While these matters are not within these Strategic Guidelines to address, the following actions might be considered as an interim to maintain the vibrancy of the sector until sustainable practices are in place.

**Goal:** A thriving agricultural sector that can be interpreted as the foundation for most other heritage assets.

Number	Actions	Priority
D3.1.1a	Encourage the MoEYS and the MAFF to provide a greater number of agriculture scholarships at local universities.	1
D3.1.1b	Encourage the MAFF (with the MoEYS and the University of Battambang) to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>provide training on the System of Rice Intensification (SRI) farming technique and other sustainable production methods;</li> </ul>	1
D3.1.1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>co-invest in the repair and maintenance of the irrigation system;</li> </ul>	2
D3.1.1d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encourage farm diversification;</li> </ul>	2
D3.1.1e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>explore methods for improving supply chain efficiencies and expanding markets;</li> </ul>	2
D3.1.1f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reinstate the fertiliser subsidy, until sustainable farm practices are in place.</li> </ul>	3

### D3.1.2 Prepare for expanded farm tourism initiatives and support existing farm stays and CBT initiatives

Farm related tourism and, with notable exceptions, CBT initiatives are not well developed in the Province. Planning is needed to actively develop farm-related tourism that is coordinated and progressively developed into a collective product that sets an example for Cambodia and southeast Asia that is befitting Battambang’s agricultural tradition.

**Goal:** Battambang Province is recognised for its farm stays and CBT initiatives with associated interpretation of agriculture’s link with heritage.

Number	Actions	Priority
D3.1.1a	Prepare for stimulating greater levels of farm tourism by supporting the University of Battambang with student research scholarships to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) document and GIS map locations within the Province where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a diversity of agricultural produce is grown; and</li> <li>historic buildings relating to traditional agricultural practices remain;</li> <li>particularly scenic landscapes exist, by seasons, based on agricultural activities;</li> <li>festivals are held to celebrate agricultural traditions; and</li> </ul> </li> <li>(b) document links between customary agricultural practices, history and lifestyle traditions of the Battambang and broader Cambodian community, past and present.</li> </ul>	1
D3.1.1b	Encourage existing homestays to adopt the ASEAN Homestay Tourism Standard.	2
D3.1.1c	Support existing farm tourism initiatives by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listing all homestays, community-based tourism initiatives and farm tourism opportunities on the official Battambang tourism website;</li> </ul>	2
D3.1.1d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>listing homestays that have adopted the ASEAN Homestay Tourism Standard and all CBT initiatives that are Endorsed as part of the ASEAN Community Based Tourism Standard on the official MOT website;</li> </ul>	2
D3.1.1e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preparing a brochure with a map and visit information on homestay, CBT initiatives, and farm tourism initiatives for distribution through hotels.</li> </ul>	2

Number	Actions	Priority
D3.1.1f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>including in all communications guidelines for cultural appropriate behaviour when visiting communities,</li> </ul>	2

### D3.1.3 Invest in the Bamboo Train attraction to allow it to realise its full tourism potential

The Bamboo Train is an agricultural attraction unique to Battambang. Its history and the tangible experience make it a valuable tourism asset for the province. However, the experience lacks the level of sophistication expected by international tourists resulting in unrealised opportunities to increase income from the experience and communicate the heritage value of the agriculture sector and the line in particular. The station buildings are in disrepair but are available for (a) interpreting Battambang's agricultural history and heritage links, (b) a restaurant, and (c) sales of packaged agricultural produce. The end-of-the-line retail opportunity would benefit from being dominated by local art and craft and the provision of a short guided walk through the adjacent fields. Government investment in redeveloping the Bamboo Train experience, with assurance of community commitment to maintaining the facilities, is warranted as a demonstration project.

**Goal:** The Bamboo Train experience demonstrates best practice community-level tourism development with strong economic benefits to locals

Number	Actions	Priority
D3.1.3a	Support the redevelopment of the Bamboo Train experience by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>preparing a simple master plan for site redevelopment to include: (a) upgrade of station buildings to include an interpretive display area, a restaurant and small retail outlet for packaged local produce; (b) construction of toilet facilities; (c) restructuring and formalising the end-of-the-line retail experience to be dominated by local arts and crafts, and (d) interpretation of agricultural practices and related celebrations;</li> </ul>	1
D3.1.3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the government investing in: (a) master plan preparation, (b) preparing the old station buildings for reuse, (c) preparing the interpretive displays, (d) constructing the toilet facility; and (e) preparing an advertising brochure.</li> </ul>	1
D3.1.3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>formalising the experience and its management as an endorsed CBT initiative;</li> </ul>	1
D3.1.3a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing a loan to the CBT Management Committee for restaurant outfitting and redevelopment of the end-of-the-line retail facility.</li> </ul>	2
D3.1.3a	For the community to service any loan and to prepare to co-invest for site upgrade: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase ticket cost to USD10.00 for adults and USD5.00 for children; but reduce ticket cost for Khmer/local people to donation only; and</li> <li>provide advice that 50% of ticket costs will go into redevelopment of the site and upgrading of services.</li> </ul>	2
D3.1.3a	Seek NGO or MoEYS assistance in providing subsidised English language classes for Bamboo Train operators so they can act as guides.	3
D3.1.3a	Find sources for locally produced arts and crafts and work with the CBT Management Committee to diversify retail products with an emphasis on homemade good and souvenirs.	3

## D4.0 Ensuring effective site presentation and management

The greatest cost associated with a tourism site is not the initial capital cost, but the cost of on-going maintenance. Yet regular site maintenance and routine servicing are often not included in annual budgets. This results in a poor service for tourists, which leads to disrespect for a site and a bad image for tourism; at worst, a site can become unsafe leading to injury and health issues for tourists and staff.

### D4.1 Strategic action 10 – Improve tourist-site management and maintenance

Effective and planned management of tourism sites is essential satisfying tourist experiences. Proper management includes the provision of public amenities (e.g., regularly serviced toilets), adequate waste disposal facilities, relevant directional and informational signage, designated and well defined activity areas within sites (e.g., car parking, viewing platforms, public parks and footpaths and protection measures), and separation of vendors from the focal attraction. Effective site management needs to be supported by a



schedule of routine servicing and maintenance of facilities. Where these measures are in place, tourists are more likely to have a positive experience, extend their visit and recommend the site to others. Government must show leadership in this regard by ensuring that government-managed sites demonstrate best practice.

#### D4.1.1 Increase attention given to tourist site management and maintenance

While many existing tourist sites in Battambang Province merit investment in up-grading the standard of presentation and service to prepare for increased tourist visitation, prioritisation of investments is difficult without a comprehensive inventory of sites and their status. Ultimately, prioritisation for government investment should be based on meeting the requirements of existing sites to handle existing and likely future visitation and strategic presentation of Battambang’s heritage themes.

**Goal:** Managed public sites of strategic importance to Battambang’s heritage tourism image are presented and maintained to the highest standard.

Number	Action	Priority
D4.1.1a	Develop a comprehensive, computerised data base of existing and potential tourism sites and assets. The data base should include: (a) location information including GPS coordinates, (b) current and potential use levels, (c) ease of access to the site and to other sites, (d) existing and desired protection, presentation and maintenance standard, (e) thematic potential, and (f) a brief statement of heritage value and significance.	1
D4.1.1b	Prioritize existing tourist sites for focused management effort, based on: (a) current tourist usage, (b) existing and potential benefits to local communities, (c) thematic potential, (e) state of repair and safety, (f) site values and significance.	1
D4.1.1c	Fund the re-development of key sites, seeking co-investment by local communities with definition of opportunities for their benefit.	1
D4.1.1d	Towards the completion of the tourism asset data base, review funding priorities giving emphasis to theme development and presentation.	2
D4.1.1e	Establish directional signage at prioritized sites to make location of facilities clear (e.g., where to find toilets, tourist information, food), as well the way to the various aspects of a site (e.g., limestone caves in one direction, ancient temple in the other).	2
D4.1.1f	Provide interpretive signage to communicate history and heritage information about the site to help tourists to connect with the area and develop themes. Signage needs to be in the key languages of foreign visitors	2
D4.1.1g	Build or refurbish, and maintain to a schedule, toilet facilities at existing sites and ensure the provision of toilet paper, hand basins with clean water, soap for hand washing and sanitary waste bins.	2
D4.1.1h	Provide functional waste management at all sites (i.e., rubbish bins), routine servicing (including rubbish collection) and regular site maintenance at all existing sites.	2
D4.1.1i	Ensure all sites have a detailed and applied servicing and maintenance schedule.	2
D4.1.1j	Designate parking areas and footpaths to protect natural vegetation, reduce traffic congestion, increase safety and protect access to key viewing areas.	3
D4.1.1k	Build public seating and shade shelters to provide shelter, rest and eating areas.	3
D4.1.1l	Ensure vendors do not intrude on site attractions, but are located near tourist facilities to enable food and water/drinks to be purchased. Vendors must understand tourist needs and be prepared for weather extremes (i.e., water availability, sunscreen, hats, rain ponchos/ umbrellas, locally made fans) and opportunity to sell mementoes of the site (e.g., post cards and local craft).	3
D4.1.1m	Provide signage that allows tourists to self-assess the accessibility and suitability of sites within their capabilities (e.g., signposted wheelchair access).	3





STRATEGIC GUIDELINES  
FOR HERITAGE TOURISM  
IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

PART E: STRATEGIC ACTIONS  
AT THE MUNICIPALITY LEVEL

This part of the Strategic Guidelines provides strategic actions for sustainable, heritage-focused tourism development in Cambodia's Battambang Province at the Municipality level. All actions (as for Parts C, D and F) are written from the perspective of the Ministry of Tourism and relevant departments of the Battambang Provincial Government.

Specific actions proposed should be read as exemplars for related sites.

Most actions are required to be implemented by Provincial Government Departments and the Municipality in cooperation with the equivalent central government ministries.

## PART E STRATEGIC ACTIONS AT THE MUNICIPALITY LEVEL

### E1.0 Protecting and presenting artefacts of the French colonial era

For Battambang, its French colonial architecture is the outstanding and most easily recognised physical heritage feature of the Municipality; but Battambang's heritage does not lie solely in these structures. They represent but a short period for the people who have lived in Battambang. Battambang's heritage also lies in its natural environments, its long history and extant remnants of this history. It lies in its community traditions, celebrations, artistic endeavours, cuisine and religious practices. It lies in its association with agriculture. These tangible and intangible heritage elements are interdependent and to present Battambang as simply a French colonial town is to ignore the links between heritage elements.

#### E1.1 Strategic action 11 – Gain recognition for, and secure Battambang's French colonial heritage assets

The Battambang community has inherited the heritage assets and are now their guardians, who are responsible for keeping them protected and alive through daily cultural and lifestyle practices, in readiness to be bequeathed to future generations. If Battambang is to be recognised as a heritage city, its heritage significance must be presented as the collective of heritage elements and not just the remnants of the past colonial era. However, both the government and the community must clearly demonstrate commitment to preserving and presenting their heritage assets holistically, starting with the French colonial architecture.

##### E1.1.1 Demonstrate commitment to French colonial heritage asset protection

Nominating Battambang for listing as a UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape – Urban Heritage will be a simple demonstration of government's recognition of the value and significance of the French colonial architecture. However, UNESCO will probably seek evidence of practical action in protecting and presenting the heritage assets.

**Goal:** International recognition of Battambang's heritage values and significance and reflection of these in governance

Number	Actions	Priority
E1.1.1a	Through the Provincial Government, support the Royal Government of Cambodia in nominating Battambang for listing as a UNESCO Historic Urban Landscape – Urban Heritage.	1
E1.1.1b	With the Provincial Government, Battambang Municipality will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• join UNESCO's Creative Cities Network, which is currently formed by 116 Members from 54 countries covering seven creative fields: Crafts &amp; Folk Art, Design, Film, Gastronomy, Literature, Music and Media Arts.</li> </ul>	1
E1.1.1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• strictly enforce regulations concerning advertising signage.</li> </ul>	1
E1.1.1d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• implement reorganisation of power supply cables, which currently obscure building facades.</li> </ul>	3

##### E1.1.2 Preserve, maintain and restore the French colonial architecture

The French colonial architecture of Battambang is the major tangible link to the rich urban heritage of the city and is a considerable attraction for visiting tourists. Through preservation, maintenance, restoration and adherence of current local policy regarding structural alterations, the appeal of the French colonial architecture for tourists will be maximised.

**Goal:** Preservation of Battambang's French colonial architecture

Number	Actions	Priority
E1.1.2a	Through Battambang's Department of Land Management, Urban Planning and Construction (DLMUPC): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• enforce current local policy on renovation and alterations to colonial style architecture;</li> </ul>	1
E1.1.2b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• increase penalties if compliance is not achieved; and</li> </ul>	1
E1.1.2c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• retain heritage architects to advise on the restoration and conservation of existing colonial architecture.</li> </ul>	1

Number	Actions	Priority
E1.1.2d	Require heritage architects to develop standards for restoring and presentation of colonial architecture, including standards for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>re-painting of colonial buildings, and</li> <li>roofing materials used on colonial buildings.</li> </ul>	2
E1.1.2e	Through the MCFA, provide training of local artisans in replicating materials used in the French colonial buildings (e.g., floor tiles) for use in restoration projects.	3

## E2.0 Linking tourism and heritage

If Battambang is to become a tourism destination, redevelopment of the central area of the municipality and transition of businesses from serving the local community to also serving tourists is required. This is already occurring but without direction and without taking advantage of the French colonial heritage in marketing. Aligning tourism businesses with heritage protection and presentation will create a distinctive image for Battambang's tourism and competitive advantage. This will need investment by governments, businesses and the community. The Provincial Government will need to show leadership in providing strategic investments that benefit the heritage tourism image and supportive business investments.

### E2.1 Strategic action 12 – Establish clear links between tourism services and Battambang's French colonial heritage

Protection and presentation of the French colonial architecture is key to Battambang being recognised for heritage tourism. Making this heritage worthy of protection requires giving it meaning and relevance to the contemporary Battambang community and tourist operators. Meaning will be found in understanding its links to other heritage elements and gaining practical benefits from its protection and presentation.

#### E2.1.1 Define a tourism precinct and hub based on the core area of French colonial buildings

The core area of French colonial architecture is located adjacent to the Sangker River and the Phsar Naht market, bounded by properties on both sides of the northern part of Street 113, Street 1, Street 121 and Street 3, and includes Streets 1.5, 2, 2.5 (Pub street) and Street 119. This is the appropriate area to focus efforts to demonstrate to UNESCO the potential of Battambang to become a world heritage site. This central hub is perfectly located for tourists and is characterised by the dominance of French colonial architecture and a scattering of high quality restaurants, independent art galleries, souvenir shops and bars.

**Goal:** Widespread recognition of the benefits of a Special Heritage Tourism Zone for focusing heritage tourism commerce

Number	Actions	Priority
E2.1.1a	Through Battambang's DLMUPC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>declare under the town plan, the area between Street 113 and 119, and Street 1 and 3 a Special Heritage Tourism Zone (to include the streets and properties to the north, south, east and west of the streets, but excluding the esplanade);</li> </ul>	1
E2.1.1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>define that within the Special Heritage Tourism Zone special regulations and allowances can apply to business premises for the purposes of establishing a distinctive tourism centre, protecting and presenting Battambang's French colonial heritage identifiable in colonial buildings dating from 1863 to 1949;</li> </ul>	1
E2.1.1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>define that special regulations and allowances under the Special Heritage Tourism Zone apply with existing regulations regarding the renovation and alteration to colonial style architecture;</li> </ul>	1
E2.1.1d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>define that Special Heritage Tourism Zone allowances can apply, on request, to tourist-serving businesses occupying colonial buildings dating from 1863 to 1949, provided other heritage protection and presentation provisions are met.</li> </ul>	2

#### E2.1.2 Create a distinctive visual identity for the Special Heritage Tourism Zone

Gaining UNESCO recognition, identifying a tourism zone, and even concentrating tourism businesses will not be sufficient to establish a heritage tourism identity for Battambang. The intention presented by words need to be matched by visible action led by government and complemented by support of and actions of commercial (especially tourism) and private sectors of the Battambang community.

**Goal:** Enhanced presentation of Battambang’s colonial heritage and development of the Special Heritage Tourism Zone

Number	Actions	Priority
E2.1.2a	With the Provincial Government, Battambang Municipality will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>in consultation with heritage architects, develop street signage standards for: (a) street names, (b) historic building identification plaques, (c) interpretive signage for key French colonial buildings, (d) business identification signage (to replace existing signage); and</li> <li>a streetscape plan that may include repaving of footpaths and other actions to clearly distinguish the Special Heritage Tourism Zone;</li> </ul>	1
E2.1.2b	• produce and install signage items (a) to (c);	1
E2.1.2b	• implement the streetscape plan;	2
E2.1.2c	• declare the Special Heritage Tourism Zone (not including the boundary streets) a motorised vehicle free zone, between the hours of 10:00am and midnight, allowing for pedestrian only use of the streets and expansion of outdoor seating at bars and restaurants;	3
E2.1.2d	• establish night lighting that complements the existing colonial architecture and creates an appropriate outdoor dining atmosphere; and	3
E2.1.2e	• construct and service public toilets in all streets of the Special Heritage Tourism Zone.	3
E2.1.2f	Acquire (Provincial Department of Tourism, in consultation with the MOT) street-level floor space on Street 1 (within the Special Heritage Tourism Zone) to develop a tourist information centre that provides a booking service on a commission basis.	2

## E2.2 Strategic action 13 – Demonstrate the intent of the Special Heritage Tourism Zone with tourist-focused access, recreation facilities and information

Government will need provide leadership and demonstrate its commitment to making Battambang a ‘heritage city’ by making:

- regulations that shift the Special Heritage Tourism Zone from a centre for Provincial commerce to emphasising tourism services, and
- key investments that provide an example for business and the community.

### E2.2.1 Make streets within the Special Heritage Tourism Zone pedestrian-friendly

The aim is to progressively re-develop streets 1.5, 2, 2.5, and 119 as motor-vehicle free areas (malls) during the times of most use by tourists (e.g., 10am to midnight). This will need parking and drop-off areas on the periphery of the Special Heritage Tourism Zone.

**Goal:** Pedestrian only use of streets within the Special Heritage Tourism Zone, free of motor-bike and car parking, with streets to act as a public mall during hours of major tourist use.

Number	Action	Priority
<b>Immediate</b>		
E2.2.1a	Upgrade streets and footpaths within the Special Heritage Tourism Zone, with consideration given to using paving material in preference to bitumen and concrete.	1
In upgraded streets:		
E2.2.1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>prevent cars and motor-bikes from being parked on footpaths;</li> <li>create regulated lined parking spaces on streets for use by both cars and motor-bikes, with time limits for parking (fines to apply); and</li> <li>provide security for parked cars with parking officers on regular patrol.</li> </ul>	1
E2.2.1c	Except by permit, enforce by-laws that prevent shop owners from putting large amounts of goods/produce on footpaths.	2
<b>Long-term (upon completion of street redevelopment)</b>		
E2.2.1d	Concurrently with immediate actions, construct parking areas and pick-up/drop-off spaces on the edge of the Special Heritage Tourism Zone.	2

Number	Action	Priority
C2.2.1e	Close re-developed streets to motor vehicle use during 'tourist-use hours' as soon as practical.	2
C2.2.1f	By a fee-attached permit, allow distinctly tourist-serving businesses (e.g., restaurants, art shops) to use the footpath during the motor-vehicle free time.	2
C2.2.1g	Encourage street performances on the motor-vehicle free streets.	2

## E2.2.2 Ensure public open space, including streets, receives regular maintenance

Public open space, including the riverside parkland, in Battambang is in frequent use by locals both day and night. Keeping these areas well maintained and regularly serviced (e.g., litter free) will make these areas more inviting to tourists as a leisure hub where they can spend their afternoons and evenings.

**Goal: Vibrant and clean parklands and public open spaces**

Number	Action	Priority
2.2.2a	Keep grass in parklands short by regular mowing, and more frequently in the wet season.	1
2.2.2b	Establish lights along the footpath in parks and keep them on until late at night.	1
2.2.2c	Organise regular rubbish bin servicing to keep litter to a minimum.	1
2.2.2d	Continue to encourage use of park spaces for cultural and social activities, such as dancing, singing and martial arts performances.	1
2.2.2e	Encourage street performances by locals as well as demonstrations of arts.	2
2.2.2f	Regularly check the serviceability of park fitness equipment and maintain and upgrade as necessary.	3
2.2.2g	Build and maintain public toilet facilities for the use of tourists and locals.	3

## E2.2.3 Improve Government tourist services and promotion within Battambang

MOT-approved information centres (e.g., in Battambang) need to improve access of information to tourists. International and domestic tourists require clearly identifiable, efficient, vibrant centres, stocked with up-to-date information on accommodation, day trip options, local festivals and events, timetables for buses, a register of reliable tuk-tuk drivers, how to access medical services, and tourist police 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 the tourism businesses (e.g., 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 fully service tourist information and assistance needs by: (1) promoting Battambang Province both locally and internationally; (2) promoting and demonstrating Battambang's heritage identity; (3) continuing to use the universally accepted logo for information centres; and (4) providing a central location for tourist to obtain information, make bookings and arrange transport. Tourist information centres can recuperate operation costs through commissions on bookings; however, this will require effective e-communication between tourists, wholesalers, retailers and tourism service providers.

**Goal: Well equipped tourist information centres that serve as go-to points for tourists, which complements other tourism promotion activities**

Number	Action	Priority
E2.2.3a	Acquire a French colonial building (at least the ground floor and preferably on Street 1 within the Special Heritage Tourism Zone) and establish it as the Tourist Information and Booking Centre for Battambang.	1
E2.2.3b	Refurbish the building to demonstrate how the French colonial building can preserve its key heritage elements and still have a contemporary use.	1
E2.2.3c	Provide a comprehensive information service to visitors and reliable internet and telecommunication services for booking for tourist service providers through membership and commissions.	1
E2.2.3d	Include in the roles for the Centre, on a commission basis:	1

Number	Action	Priority
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>coordinating booking of group visits to heritage sites with registered and approved guides,</li> <li>making accommodation and travel bookings,</li> </ul>	
E2.2.3e	Ensure Centre staff have: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>visited and used all tourist facilities and services promoted within the Centre;</li> <li>basic training to effectively communicate information, recommend and encourage visitation to an increased number of sites and activities within the Province, and operate the booking service system.</li> </ul>	2
E2.2.3f	Facilitate opportunities for visitors to experience and learn about the natural and cultural heritage values of Battambang and specific attractions with accredited guides registered with and endorsed by the Centre.	2
E2.2.3g	Develop a suite of authentic, community developed visit mementos and souvenirs that facilitate positive recollection of the visit and benefit local economies.	2
E2.2.3h	Develop brochures on tourism attractions, cultural history and natural environment to enrich the tourist experience through enhanced knowledge.	3
E2.2.3i	Provide advice on appropriate ways tourists can assist the disadvantaged and contribute to ensuring natural and cultural protection.	3

### E2.2.4 Engage the community in realising a heritage-tourism vision for Battambang

All actions proposed under Strategic action 13 have precedents in tourist destinations around the world, including ASEAN countries. There is strong evidence that the actions proposed are effective in presenting and marketing a heritage town for tourists. However, they call for a major change in the structure of Battambang and how businesses advertise and present their premises and products at point of sale. The focus of commerce in the heart of the municipality will change significantly from how it appears and operates now. Force of law is needed to underpin visionary change; but the community, especially the business community, must proactively support the heritage tourism vision for Battambang.

**Goal:** A community actively supporting Battambang’s transition to a heritage tourism town

Number	Actions	Priority
E2.2.4a	Gain the support of Battambang’s commercial and business sectors for the proposed tourism vision and actions (and their implications) needed to achieve the vision.	1
	Demonstrate government commitment through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>united presentations by the Governor of Battambang Province and Mayor of the Municipality, endorsed by relevant Cambodian Ministries, for the heritage tourism vision for Battambang,</li> </ul>	
E2.2.4b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a social and economic impact analysis of proposed changes,</li> <li>a clear government investment plan,</li> <li>financial benefits provided by government for business cooperation,</li> <li>engagement of the business sector in guiding implementation detail,</li> <li>establishing and supporting the Battambang Traders Association with a sub-group to advise on implementation, and</li> <li>early implementation of government action.</li> </ul>	1
E2.2.4c	Gain the support of the Battambang community for the proposed tourism vision and the actions (and their implications) needed to achieve the vision.	2
	Demonstrate government and business united support for proposed actions through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>joint announcements,</li> </ul>	
E2.2.4d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>jointly endorsed publications on changes and their economic and social impacts,</li> <li>establishing streetscape signage of artist impressions of future Battambang streets,</li> <li>establishing a representative community advisory group, with the role of providing community input to decisions.</li> </ul>	2

## E3.0 Integrating heritage that complements that of the French colonial era

Within the Municipality, the artefacts of the French colonial era are but a part of Battambang’s heritage. Linked to other tangible heritage assets (e.g., religious and other culturally significant sites) are the less

tangible assets of knowledge, culture, and social practices that distinguish the Battambang community from others, especially international visitors. Well-presented French colonial architecture by itself may create a pleasant environment for visitors, but it will hold the interest of most tourists for a very short time. What will make a memorable visit to Battambang will be the presentation and linking of other aspects of heritage to the 'old buildings'. The link is through presentation of contemporary traditions.

## E3.1 Strategic action 14 – Engage tourists in religious and secular traditions

Religious traditions are a daily part of life for most Cambodians, irrespective of the faith. They pervade all livelihoods and lifestyles, and most can be demonstrated to affect the nature, form and practices associated with other heritage assets, including the artefacts of the French colonial era. Cambodian celebrations have both religious and lifestyle roots and tourists will gladly join in both, provided they understand protocols and the reason for the celebration. Festivals can be a major attraction for tourists and these are promoted throughout Cambodia. Battambang can differentiate festivities in the municipality by clearly linking celebrations to religious sites and heritage elements of the Special Heritage Tourism Zone.

### E3.1.1 Revitalising Battambang’s pagodas and other religious sites

Religion is an important part of Battambang’s heritage. The Province’s pagodas are rich in history, art and culture. Tourist visitation to pagodas will ensure that this heritage is protected and create another selling point for the destination. Tourism development should be focused on the city pagodas: Wat Kandal, Wat Phepitaram, Wat Poruil and Wat Tham-rei-saw. This is a 'honey pot strategy' that will build their reputation and prevent rural pagodas, with less capacity for management, from being degraded by excessive tourist attention.

**Goal:** Revitalised pagodas and other places of religious significance that preserve their physical heritage values, present their contemporary value and attract a manageable number of appreciative tourists.

Number	Actions	Priority
E3.1.1a	Establish an Over-sight Group of all religious leaders to advise on the coordinated protection, maintenance, and presentation of Battambang’s religious sites and coordination of tourist visits.	1
E3.1.1b	With the assistance of the MCFA and under the Oversight Group, establish Working Groups to facilitate: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>restoration and maintenance of religious sites; and</li> <li>presentation and interpretation of sites, and coordination of tourist visits.</li> </ol>	1
E3.1.1c	Presentation and interpretation should include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>behavioural protocols when visiting sites,</li> <li>the core underpinnings and beliefs of the religions,</li> <li>the significance and role of specific parts and elements of the site,</li> <li>religious practices and annual celebrations, and their significance, within and outside of temples/churches, and</li> <li>links to Angkorian and other historic structures and sites, cultural practices, other religions and contemporary life.</li> </ul>	1
E3.1.1d	Facilitate site visits by tourist groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arranged through the Tourist Information and Booking Centre on commission,</li> <li>with approved guides,</li> <li>to an agreed schedule of days of the week and hours of the day, and</li> <li>to an agreed sequence to share opportunities and minimise site crowding.</li> </ul>	1
E3.1.1e	Include in defining the cost to tourists of a site visit: (a) a tour guide fee, (b) Information and Booking Centre commission, and (c) a site maintenance and restoration fee to be disbursed to the working groups to support their approved programs of works.	1
E3.1.1f	Put in appropriate places, at each site, donation boxes to support (a) site management, and (b) enrichment of religious practices for discretionary use by religious leaders.	1
E3.1.1g	Include on the agenda for consideration by working groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>site repairs (e.g., fixing the holes in the roof at Wat Tham-rai-saw, replacing/repairing broken tiles at all sites,</li> <li>scheduled maintenance (e.g., cleaning bird faeces from tiles at all sites),</li> <li>routine maintenance (e.g., employment of a maintenance team to mow grass and collect litter at each site).</li> </ul>	2



Number	Actions	Priority
E3.1.1h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>how to ensure equitable presentation and support of minority religious sites (e.g., the Chinese Temple and Christian Church) in line with other religious heritage sites.</li> </ul>	2
E3.1.1i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>installation of signage at the entrance of each site that interprets site values and significance (see E3.1.1c).</li> </ul>	2
E3.1.1j	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating a calendar of religious events and celebrations, with explanations of their meaning and significance, and/or</li> </ul>	3
E3.1.1k	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>creating a small booklet (<i>Pagoda Pass</i>) that acts as a tour ticket, memento, or for-sale item, and has pages on the values and significance each pagoda/temple/church including interpretation as indicated in E3.1.1c.</li> </ul>	3

### E3.1.2 Improving the tourist experience and appreciation of intangible religious heritage through participation in traditions

Religious practices and celebrations are opportunities for improving tourist experiences and fostering religious understanding. Traditional Khmer dancing, puppetry, music and other practices, such as fortune telling, are highly valued by tourists. Tourist participation in such activities allows them to experience a site rather than merely observing it. This leads to positive word-of-mouth marketing and repeat visitation. Provided religious propriety is not compromised, demonstrating religious links to secular practices and celebrations would enrich religious and cultural traditions, help ensure the continuity of both, provide opportunities for tourists and locals to interact, and create memorable experiences for tourists and locals.

**Goal:** Engaging tourist activities that present intangible religious heritage and its links to sectarian

Number	Actions	Priority
	With the endorsement of the Oversight Group, the Working Groups should consider:	
E3.1.2a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>facilitating 'Understanding Buddhism' workshops, as an example, for tourists – the workshops should include visits to Angkorian wats to explain religious and secular symbolism in the stone carving;</li> </ul>	3
E3.1.2b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>staging regular tourist-welcome religious-cultural performances at one of the city pagodas/temples/churches on a rotation basis;</li> </ul>	3
E3.1.2c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encouraging local teachers to use city pagodas/temples/churches as a teaching space for linking religion, customary practice, history and culture.</li> </ul>	3

## E3.2 Strategic action 15 – Re-establish Battambang as the centre for the arts

French colonial buildings alone will not make Battambang a must-visit place for tourists. A natural complement to, and use of, the colonial heritage is enhancement of Battambang's re-emerging art and craft tradition. With support, the already recognised artistic community can establish Battambang as the place to visit for fine art and craft.

### E3.2.1 Supporting and stimulating Battambang's local art community.

The independent art galleries and unique work of the artisans of Battambang have proved to be a significant attraction for tourists and have received considerable international recognition in *The Guardian* and *The New Yorker*. It is important for tourism that galleries and the artisans are supported and recognised for their contribution to the modern contemporary culture of Battambang.

**Goal:** Support the arts community, acknowledging the rapidly expanding role it plays in Battambang's tourism identity

Number	Actions	Priority
	Government, especially the MCFA and MOT with the Provincial and Municipality administrations, can jointly support the arts and realise their tourism potential by:	
E3.2.1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>regularly engaging with all contemporary art galleries and provide assistance with marketing strategies,</li> </ul>	1
E3.2.1b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing incentives for establishing galleries in the Special Heritage Tourism Zone,</li> </ul>	1
E3.2.1c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>seed-funding the costs of art supplies for established artists and galleries,</li> </ul>	1
E3.2.1d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encouraging and supporting the staging of art events and exhibitions in public areas, including efficient application processes,</li> </ul>	2

Number	Actions	Priority
E3.2.1e	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>engaging with local independent galleries and the Phare Ponleu Selpak School to assist in developing regular street art/performance events in the Special Heritage Tourism Zone,</li> </ul>	2
E3.2.1f	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>providing grants for start-up costs for Khmer-owned and managed galleries,</li> </ul>	2
E3.2.1g	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>senior members of government attending art gallery openings, exhibitions and events,</li> </ul>	2
E3.2.1h	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>sponsoring an annual 'artist-in-residence' program that supports and international artist to reside in Battambang one year, and local artist to reside in an overseas country for the next, and</li> </ul>	3
E3.2.1i	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>building international relations with foreign Ministries of the Arts to establish a cultural exchange programs so local artists can learn new techniques and exchange ideas with overseas artists,</li> </ul>	3

### E3.2.2 Improving access to performing arts and the business management skills of artists

The Phare Ponleau Selpak School of Visual/Performing Art is an established popular destination for tourists visiting Battambang, and provides a creative outlet for its large number of students. To ensure its continued success, a small number of minor changes would enhance the ease of access for tourists and equip artists with skills to ensure their commercial success.

**Goal:** Improved access and presentation of information for tourists and students informed about business practices

Number	Actions	Priority
E3.2.2a	Ensure a transparent system exists for financial support of artists, galleries and art schools, and standard commission rates.	1
E3.2.2b	Provide a short-term loan or small grant to the Phare Ponleau Selpak School of Visual/Performing Art to upgrade the path from the school entrance to the circus big top with lighting and hard paving.	1
E3.2.2c	Clearly acknowledge the artists whose work is presented in galleries and exhibition spaces, including a biography of the artist and materials used.	2
E3.2.2d	Encourage the inclusion of courses/units in training programs that address promotion, marketing, use of social media and financial management to provide graduates with greater independence, autonomy and a thorough understanding of the business aspect of the art world.	2

### E3.2.3 Supporting local artisans to rejuvenate pottery, ceramics and silk weaving

Traditional Khmer pottery, ceramics, stone carving, silk weaving and literary and music arts are not readily found throughout Battambang, with a much stronger presence found in other provinces. The re-establishment of these traditional arts and crafts in Battambang will complement the existing strong contemporary art scene and reinforce its heritage emphasis. Specifically for tourism, a vibrant and creative arts and craft sector can replace imported souvenir products with high value authentic mementoes.

**Goal:** Revitalise traditional arts and crafts in Battambang.

Number	Actions	Priority
E3.2.3a	With the MCFA, identify community members willing to train youth in traditional arts and crafts.	1
E3.2.3b	Establish, promote and financially support a schedule of fortnightly workshops during which local community members pass on their traditional knowledge.	1
E3.2.3c	With the MCFA, and if necessary, initiate an exchange programme whereby Battambang local artisans are trained in traditional techniques by qualified artisans based in places such as Siem Reap, Phnom Penh and Kampong Chhang.	2
E3.2.3d	Implement a marketing campaign and guidelines to encourage retailers to replace imported products with traditional locally-made products as souvenirs.	3
E3.2.3e	Work towards establishing a Battambang School of Traditional Arts and Crafts.	3

### E3.2.4 Effectively using the Provincial Museum and exhibition space

The Battambang Provincial Museum is an established tourism attraction showcasing a good collection of historical artefacts. Feedback on tourist websites indicate that improving interpretation and curatorship would add value to the tourist experience of the museum. UNESCO's 'Museum studies training programme' is a useful tool for guiding the development of a tourist-friendly museum experience <sup>20</sup>.

The exhibition space next to the Museum is not utilised for much of the year and could be used for either: (a) providing space for teaching traditional arts and crafts, and/or (b) housing a permanent state-run art gallery; both would complement the museum experience. There is a world-wide trend for museums to be more than a repository for natural, historical and cultural artefacts and their display. While this is an important museum function, interpretation of displayed objects is gaining increased attention, along with a shift in emphasis towards making a museum a 'living place' for demonstration of traditions. The Battambang Museum could establish a reputation for being an innovative museum that focuses on identifying how the heritage from the past is influencing and being kept alive in contemporary society.

<sup>20</sup> <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/museums/unescoicom-museum-studies-training-package/>

**Goals:** An improved museum experience through themed interpretation and use of the exhibition space to support the arts and crafts sectors.

Number	Actions	Priority
E3.2.4a	Provide themed interpretation for exhibits and displayed artefacts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>identifying a pre-history and history chronology and heritage significance of displayed items,</li> <li>giving greater attention to the French colonial era and recent historical events.</li> </ul>	1
E3.2.4b	Clearly define, signpost and meet opening and closing hours.	1
E3.2.4c	Appoint a trained museum and gallery curator.	1
E3.2.4d	Establish a coffee shop and sales outlet for traditional arts and crafts to support museum activities, and a donation box for upgrading exhibits.	2
E3.2.4e	Use the museum exhibition site as either (a) a permanent official art gallery or (b) a teaching and presentation space for traditional arts and crafts.	2
E3.2.4f	Appoint a historian and tour guides.	2

## E3.3 Strategic action 16 – Re-establish Battambang as the centre for the culinary arts

A number of quality restaurants have established in Battambang, but diversity of dining experiences can be improved. As the historic centre for rice production in Cambodia, there are clear heritage links to all eras of history. For tourists, the ability to experience different cuisines at lunch and dinner can be a memorable feature of a visit, especially if this is presented in the context of the era the cuisine reflects, with emphasis on the source of ingredients used and the story of their local production.

While Khmer, French and blended cuisines are obvious choices for boutique restaurants, Battambang has past and recent historical links with Thailand, China, Japan and Vietnam, and religious links to the Asia sub-continent and Indonesia. In addition, there can be variations of these to cater for visitors with special dietary requirements (e.g., halal, vegetarian).

The potential for highly specialised food shops and restaurants is worthy of exploration. For example, with the agriculture/farm tourism sector, there is opportunity for herb and spice, and rice variety shops, which can serve both the local restaurant and tourist memento markets.

### E3.3.1 Supporting restaurant diversification as well as primary producers and the arts and crafts sectors

Tourism activity diversification supports sustainable tourism and is necessary to provide accessible tourist experiences in both the wet and dry seasons. Food is demanded, regardless of the season.

The food production, restaurant and art and craft sectors have synergies that can make Battambang a unique tourist location rich in culture, arts and fine dining. This will provide businesses and employment opportunities and contribute to meeting objectives for poverty alleviation and diversified tourist experiences. Stimulating diversification and marketing is needed to restore Battambang in its traditional place as the gastronomic centre of Cambodia.

**Goal:** A vibrant restaurant sector, offering specialist cuisines, that supports diversified agricultural production and the arts and crafts sector.

No.	Actions	Priority
E3.3.1a	Support, with incentives, the establishment of a diversity of speciality restaurants within the Special Heritage Tourism Zone.	1
E3.3.1b	Update and upgrade existing tourist information websites and tourist promotion materials to highlight Battambang's gastronomic heritage, the diversity of specialised restaurants and their close links to the agriculture and arts and crafts sectors.	1
E3.3.1c	Encourage the restaurant sector to work with the agriculture and arts and crafts sectors to provide dining experiences that are uniquely Battambang.	1
E3.3.1d	With restaurateurs, encourage the growing of speciality produce and manufacture of food products to serve restaurants and speciality tourist memento shops.	2
E3.3.1e	Support the University of Battambang to research the food history of Battambang, including the collection of traditional meal recipes for all cultural groups that have resided in Battambang.	3
E3.3.1f	Discourage fast food chains establishing in the Special Heritage Tourism Zone.	3

### E3.3.2 Ensuring health standards within the food sector

Unsafe food handling practices threaten tourism as gastro-problems associated with contaminated food reduce tourist confidence. The closest professional training facility for food handling and preparation is located in Siem Reap. To ensure staff of restaurants, soup pot venues, market food stalls and others have access to formal training on traditional and contemporary food preparation, hygienic food handling practices and workplace health and safety protocols, training is necessary. The aim should be to establish a Battambang School of Fine Food. This will ensure quality chefs are available to meet expected growth in tourism. Initially, with health professionals, existing restaurants should be supported to host the training of staff of all food outlet types in hygienic and workplace health and safety practices. A certificate of completion should be provided to workshop participants for display to promote tourist awareness and confidence.

**Goal:** Best practice health standards exist in all Battambang's commercial food outlets

Number	Actions	Priority
E3.3.2a	Ensure regular inspections and certification of the cleanliness of food preparation areas, hygienic food handling, storage and preparation, and workplace health and safety practices at all commercial food outlets.	1
E3.3.2b	With the Ministry of Health, local compliance officers, health professionals and trained chefs from local restaurants, provide and require all food service providers to undertake food safety and hygiene training, with refresher courses every two years.	1
E3.3.2c	Work towards establishing a government, food sector or private Battambang School of Fine Food with the authority to provide food sector related certification.	2





STRATEGIC GUIDELINES  
FOR HERITAGE TOURISM  
IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

PART F: REFERENCES

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STRATEGIC GUIDELINES  
FOR HERITAGE TOURISM  
IN BATTAMBANG PROVINCE, CAMBODIA

PART G: APPENDICES

## PART G: APPENDICES

### Example brochure: Smart tourist guide

### Cambodian laws

Sexual exploitation of children under the age of 18 years is forbidden; punishable by 10-15 years jail.

Interfering with, purchasing or possessing cultural or archeological artifacts without a permit is a crime.

Illicit drugs are illegal; offences are punishable by lengthy jail sentences.

It is law to wear a helmet when riding a moto or motorbike.

Overstaying your visa is a serious offence.


#### National Emergency Contacts


Police: 117  
Fire: 118  
Ambulance: 119

Phnom Pehn Tourist Police  
No. 13, Street 158, near Wat Koh.

Siem Reap Tourists Police  
Charles de Gaulle Road, near Angkor Wat entrance.

All other provinces locate nearest police station for advice.





## Welcome to Cambodia

### Smart Tourist Guide



## Tips for a healthy & safe visit:

Cambodia is a country of incredible beauty, full of majestic temples and fertile plains marked with rice fields. The dominant religion is Buddhism, which places values on hospitality and kindness. Khmer food from ancient origin is a traditional cuisine of fragrant spices and flavoured treasures. Exercise caution and common sense during your visit. Keep your passport & other valuables in a safe place.

#### WEATHER

From July to November beware of severe storms and flash flooding.

#### DRIVING:

A Cambodian drivers license is required to drive in Cambodia. Your current license is needed to apply for a license in person at the Ministry of Public Works and Transport.

#### LANDMINE WARNING:

Landmines remain a danger in many parts of Cambodia. Caution required in rural and unpopulated areas.

#### CULTURAL AWARENESS TIPS

Buddhism values require modest attire. Always cover shoulders and knees specially females when visiting all Temples & Pagodas within Cambodia to show respect.

Seek permission before taking photographs of monks, other religious figures, members of the public, government buildings and military zones.

Public nudity particularly in sacred sites can result in arrest and deportation.

Public affection is disrespectful to Khmer people.

#### STAY SAFE

Avoid homemade, or unlabeled alcohol as it may contain methanol, which can cause serious illness or death.

Avoid mosquito bites at all times, as dengue fever, malaria, and Japanese encephalitis are common.

Practice safe sex to avoid STI's importantly hepatitis and HIV/AIDS.

Exercise caution, Rabies can be found in animals across Cambodia.

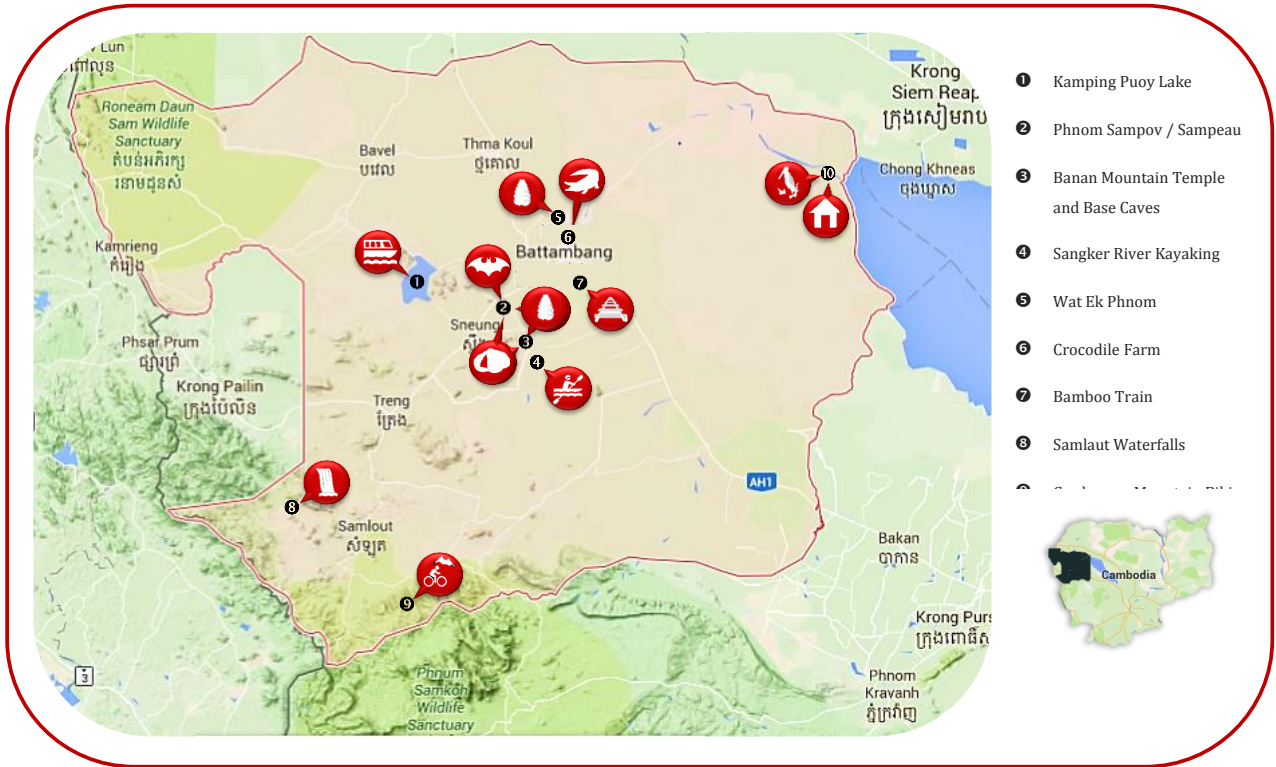
Always drink boiled or bottled water and identify source of ice before consuming.

Keep hydrated especially in summer and after consuming alcohol.

Helmet required when riding a moto or motorbike to prevent injury even death.

## Example brochure: A guide to half and full-day natural heritage sites around Battambang

Bundling tourist attractions into daytrip routes is well-known to enhance the tourist experience. It makes visitors aware of the attractions available in the destination, often encouraging them to increase their length of stay. This would benefit Battambang, where visitors currently stay for between one and two nights (MOT 2015). Organised, themed routes also allow tourists to learn more about the heritage and culture of an area. This creates a more meaningful experience and positive word-of-mouth marketing for the destination (Chalip et al 2009, p. 125). The following day trip examples would encourage visitors to discover more of Battambang, to stay longer and to have a more memorable experience.



1

### Kamping Puoy Lake

**Location:** Kamping Puoy Lake is situated between two mountains located approximately 30km west of Battambang City. Access to the lake is possible via NH57 and road 1570.

**Transport:** Accessible via car (45 min) or tuk-tuk (1 hour 15 min) from city centre.

**Highlights:** Boat tours are available across the lake for US\$10 / per 1 hour trip (group up to 10 people). A boat tour is an excellent way to immerse yourself in the Khmer history of the lake, though a translator is highly recommended. Some local food and drink stalls are available.




2

### Phnom Sampov / Sampeau

**Location:** Phnom Sampov / Sampeau is located approximately 12km south-west of Battambang City. Access to the mountain is possible via NH57.

**Transport:** Access to the base is via tuk-tuk (30 min) from city centre. Access to the summit is via a steep staircase or a US\$3 return trip with a local moto diver.

**Highlights:** Access to the mountain costs US\$2/ pp. The summit encompasses a pagoda, historic Khmer killing caves, monuments and is dotted with macaques. Bats emerge from the base caves at dusk, creating a continuous stream for an hour.





3



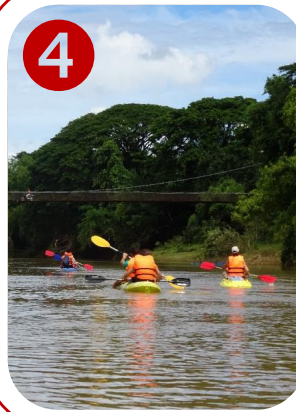
### Phnom Banan / Base Caves

**Location:** Banan Mountain and Base Caves is located approximately 20km south of Battambang City. Access to the mountain is possible via road 154.

**Transport:** Accessible via car (30 min) or tuk-tuk (50 min) from city centre.

**Highlights:** Access to the mountain costs US\$2/ pp. 358 stairs lead to the mountain summit where an 11<sup>th</sup> century temple remains. At the base of the mountain, a limestone karst cave system can be explored with a local guide, though a translator is recommended. Some local food and drink stalls are available.

4



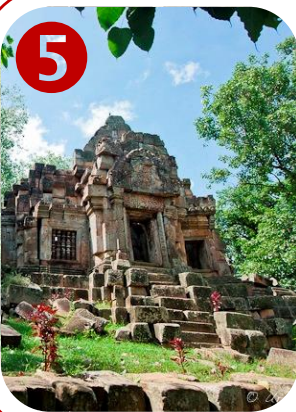
### Sanger River Kayaking

**Location:** Green Orange Kayaks rent kayaks from their office located 25km south of Battambang City.

**Transport:** Accessible via car (20 min) or tuk-tuk (30 min) from city centre.

**Highlights:** One-to-three-person kayaks can be hired for US\$12/ pp for an approximate 2 hour journey downstream. Life jackets, a dry bag and ample water is provided. The activity is self-directed, though a guide can be requested for an additional US\$3. It provides the opportunity to experience the transition from rural to urban communities.

5



### Wat Ek Phnom

**Location:** Wat Ek Phnom is located approximately 10km north of Battambang City centre. Access to the temple is possible via street 520 and 1734.

**Transport:** Accessible via tuk-tuk (10 min) from city centre.

**Highlights:** Access to the temple costs US\$3/ pp. The Ek Phnom ruins were built during the 11<sup>th</sup> century and have unfortunately become rundown with time. The partially collapsed structure is surrounded by the remains of the ancient wall and reservoir. The ruins are now located behind a modern pagoda.

6



### Crocodile Farm

**Location:** Anyan Crocodile Farm is located 8km north of Battambang City. Access is possible via street 540.

**Transport:** Accessible via tuk-tuk (15 min) from city centre.

**Highlights:** Entry into the crocodile farm costs US\$2 / per person. Upon entry, tourists are able to hold a baby crocodile. An English-speaking local employee will guide you around the facility which holds approximately 400 adult crocodiles. Information regarding female nesting and exportation of meat and leather can be provided upon request.

7



### Bamboo Train

**Location:** The Bamboo Train is located approximately 4km south of Battambang City. Access to the train is possible via road 159D and 700.

**Transport:** Accessible via tuk-tuk (15 min) from city centre.

**Highlights:** The Bamboo Train is a unique rail experience through Battambang's rice fields. The journey costs US\$8 per person and lasts for approximately 1 hour along a misaligned rail track left by the French. Midway through the journey, the train stops so tourists can purchase souvenirs from local stalls.

8



### Samlaut Waterfalls

**Location:** Samlaut Waterfalls is situated on the edge of the Samlaut Protected Area approximately 300m behind the Maddox-Jolie-Pitt Conservation Centre, located 85km south-west of Battambang.

**Transport:** Accessible via car (2 hours) or motorbike on poor quality road.

**Highlights:** The waterfall is situated in a natural depression of vegetation and presents a hidden spot for swimming. Overhanging trees provide ample shade in the picturesque surroundings. Rubbish bins are provided and some local food and drink stalls are nearby.

9



### Cardamom Mountain Biking

**Location:** The Cardamom Mountains are located along the western border of the Battambang province. Butterfly Tours office is located on Street 309 in Battambang.

**Transport:** The tour covers 190km cycling and 263km via mini bus.

**Highlights:** Butterfly Tours offers a four-day mountain bike tour commencing in Battambang, and travelling south through Phnom Samkos to Kampot province. This tour is recommended for experienced mountain bikers aged between 18 and 50 years. Price is \$599/ pp.

10



### Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary and Floating Village

**Location:** Prek Toal Bird Sanctuary and Floating Village is located in the north-eastern corner of the Battambang province.

**Transport:** Accessible via boat from Battambang, along the Sanger River (3 hours in the wet season; 4-5 hours in the dry season).

**Highlights:** Prek Toal is an area within the floodplains of the Tonle Sap - South-East Asia's largest freshwater lake. Boat tours operate from Battambang and home stays are possible in the floating villages.





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