



Article 10: GECKO for Education and Tourist Destination

The GECKO Centre is renovated and newly developed by Tonle Sap Conservation funded by UNDP/GEF since late 2006 and completed in July 2007. It is located in the heart of Chong Khneas on the lakeshore in Siem Reap province, approximately 15 km south of Siem Reap city centre.



The Centre is a non-commercial Tourist Information Centre with displays and designed for resource centre for environmental education and a tourist destination where it will show you the secrets of the lake, learning how the lake and its flora and fauna change with the seasons and you can also learn about the lives of the fishermen and their families, and how they have adapted to life on the water for several months of the year.

Photo outside the Centre

This is because of the seasonal changes, making the Tonle Sap Great Lake unique among the freshwater wetlands. This seasonal inundation is the reason why a large area is free of permanent human habitation. The vast flood plains are a haven for fish to spawn and water birds that attracts both local and international tourists. Moreover, it links to the Prek Toal of the Tonle Sap Lake is globally important for supporting endangered wetland species such as water birds. Inside of the Centre, we will see other displays showing the life of the fishermen and their families as well as the fishing equipment the fishermen were use, what the house would look like, how they cook. With this new found knowledge, you are now well equipped to take a tour of the lake, and have a better understanding of the sights around you.



Photo inside the Centre

Under funding from GEF/UNDP, the renovation and development of the Centre had been initiated through Tonle Sap Conservation Project. The Centre is classified as professional displays that describe the nature and human action. The Centre is appreciating from those who visit the Centre. As a result, just only in January 2008, there was 429 tourists visited GECKO in comparison to 2006 only 309 and 2007 only 377 tourists. This is evident that our media developed (i.e. GECKO leaflet are widely and effectively distributed) as well as all displays help them to well-understand about the natural phenomenon that occurs on the lake. However, our continuous efforts are to approach a sustainability of the Centre in the long run.