



## Activity Update

# Establishing a Tourism Marketing and Promotions Board for Cambodia

**The USAID Cambodia MSME Project is facilitating discussions between the public and private sectors to establish a Cambodian Tourism Marketing and Promotions Board**



*Ms. Muna Haddad, formerly of the Jordan Tourism Board, provides insights on the set-up and operation of the Jordan Tourism Board and explains how Cambodia can benefit from lessons Jordan has already earned.*



*Mr. Ho Vandy, Steering Committee Chairman of the Cambodian Association of Travel Agents, seeks advice from Ms. Muna Haddad during the USAID Cambodia MSME funded workshop.*

**A Tourism Marketing and Promotions Board will help Cambodia market itself as a stand-alone destination.**

The Ministry of Tourism and the tourism private sector recognize the importance of establishing a Tourism Marketing and Promotions Board for Cambodia.

International experience demonstrates that the most effective marketing and promotions boards are those that are developed through a public-private sector partnership. In recognition of this, the new Tourism Law mandates that a board be developed as a public-private sector entity.

The Ministry of Tourism requested the USAID Cambodia MSME Project assistance to coordinate private sector input and feedback on the draft sub-decree to establish the Cambodian Tourism Marketing and Promotions Board. On March 23, 2010, the Project facilitated a workshop to raise private sector awareness about the functions and operations of a tourism board. The workshop included examples of international best practice for 44 members of the tourism private sector including accommodation providers, tour operators, and airlines.

Participants appreciated the opportunity to provide their input into the sub-decree. “The private sector has not previously been asked what they want from a marketing and promotions board.” said Mr. Ho Vandy, Steering Committee Chairman of the Cambodian Association of Travel Agents. “This is an important opportunity for us to have more input into the direction of the Cambodian tourism industry, as well as how the Board should market and promote the country.”

To broaden awareness about international best practices for tourism boards, the project invited Ms. Muna Haddad, formerly of the Jordan Tourism Board, to provide insights, and to share her practical experience in establishing a functioning board. “A key point Ms. Haddad drove home was the necessity to market Cambodia as a standalone destination, and not to ‘ride the back’ of our neighbors,” said Mr. Stefan Voogel, Vice-President of the Cambodian Hotels Association and General Manager of Hotel Intercontinental. “The Jordan experience is mirrored here in Cambodia with a heavy reliance on the neighboring countries of Thailand and Vietnam to deliver direct flights and customers”.

A final lesson that Ms. Muna Haddad imparted at the workshop, was that setting-up the board is not a simple and quick process--it involves a series of feedback and negotiation steps between the private and public sectors.

The workshop elicited a list of practical recommendations that will become part of a ‘Private Sector Position Paper.’ The Paper will be submitted to the Ministry of Tourism by the presidents of the Cambodian Hotels Association and the Cambodian Association of Travel Agents.

The USAID Cambodia MSME Project will continue to facilitate discussions and promote agreements on the final structure of the marketing board.