Australian Embassy
Cambodia

The Asia Foundation

Joint Media Release
Australia and The Asia Foundation Advance Cambodia's Knowledge Future

4 November 2026

Today, Australia and The Asia Foundation convened the National Policy Forum 2026 in Phnom Penh, bringing together more than 100 participants from government, research institutions, universities, civil society, the private sector, development partners and communities to discuss how Cambodia can sustain a strong and connected knowledge ecosystem toward 2030.

Under the theme "Cambodia's Knowledge Future: Sustaining Evidence, Talent and the Knowledge–Policy Partnership Toward 2030," the Forum focused on how Cambodia can continue to strengthen evidence-informed policymaking as the donor funding landscape shifts.

Delivering the keynote address, H.E. Dr. HANG Chuon Naron, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education, Youth and Sport, said, Cambodia's knowledge sector will be critical to the country's next stage of development, and its future will depend on investing in people, research skills and institutional capabilities.

Australian Ambassador to the Kingdom of Cambodia H.E. Derek Yip said, "Australia's investment in Cambodia's knowledge sector has been an investment in people, institutions and partnerships that will continue strengthening evidence-informed policymaking into the future beyond any single program."

The Asia Foundation's Country Representative, Ms Meloney C. Lindberg, said, "Cambodia's knowledge sector has come a long way, and this Forum shows what is possible when government, researchers and communities work from the same evidence."

The Forum featured plenary discussions on connecting evidence demand with evidence use and financing Cambodia's knowledge future, followed by Knowledge Sector Labs where participants explored practical ways forward. Discussions identified priorities for a Cambodia Knowledge Sector Agenda toward 2030 and options for a mechanism to sustain collaboration between the knowledge sector and government.

The National Policy Forum is an initiative of Ponlok Chomnes II: Data and Dialogue for Development in Cambodia, funded by the Australian Government and implemented by The Asia Foundation. The program strengthens Cambodia's knowledge sector by connecting policymakers, researchers and communities. With the program set to conclude in mid-2027 and Cambodia preparing for Least Developed Country graduation, this year's Forum was a valuable opportunity to discuss how the successes and functions of the program can be institutionalised by partners and how a strong knowledge sector will be critical to inform policymakers' decisions on the country's long-term development.

Media enquiries:
Australian Embassy: Media.Cambodia@dfat.gov.au
Ponlok Chomnes: ponlokchomnes@asiafoundation.org