



AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY PHNOM PENH

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AUSTRALIA INVESTS IN FISH-SAVING TECHNOLOGY IN CAMBODIA

The Australian Government, in partnership with the Cambodian Government, is investing in technology to protect fish, boost river health and increase climate resilience in Cambodia.

Today Australian Ambassador Pablo Kang, joined by Professor Andrew Campbell, Chief Executive Officer of the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), and His Excellency Khun Savoeun, Under Secretary of State of Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, announced the FishTech project in Kampong Thom Province. The project will facilitate fish passages, or “fish ladders” to sustain fish migration in irrigation and weirs, leading to stronger fisheries production, biodiversity and local income generation.

“Managing and protecting water and related resources is becoming increasingly critical in this region, with its fast-paced economic development, population growth, and changing climate. Fisheries are key to Cambodia’s food security, and also provide work and livelihood benefits for around two million Cambodians. Australia is partnering with the Government of Cambodia to protect fish, boost river health, and increase climate resilience through the FishTech project,” Ambassador Kang said.

ACIAR will manage FishTech, which is led by Professor Lee Baumgartner from Australia’s Charles Sturt University.

“Fish provide 60 per cent of all protein consumed by humans in the Mekong Basin. Typically, Mekong fish species migrate upstream to breed and come back down again to complete their life cycles. Structures like irrigation weirs or hydroelectric dams block fish migration upstream or downstream, ultimately threatening the food security of the region. This investment is a clear example of the Australian Government working with country partners to deliver innovative new technology to protect native fish and boost river health across the Mekong Basin,” Professor Campbell said.

“Previous research funded by ACIAR has proven that well-designed fish passages mitigate the impact of irrigation development on fish migration, with lasting economic and social benefits for river-dependent communities.”

Through the Mekong Australia Partnership, Australia will provide AUD 5 million over three years (2022-2025) toward the FishTech project. Most activities will be implemented in Cambodia and the Lao PDR, with Vietnam and Thailand participating in training activities.

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