

Turtle breeding facilities in the Angkor Centre for the conservation of biodiversity

Münster

At present, Cambodia lacks the human resources, regulations and expertise to manage most of the issues related to nature and species conservation. For these reasons, the idea of a rescue and breeding centre for endangered Cambodian wildlife staged close to Angkor Wat addressing these problems was proposed by the Cambodian Government. In May 2002, a Memorandum of Agreement on establishing the Angkor Centre for the Conservation of Biodiversity was signed between the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (MAFF) as native first party and Münster Zoo and the Zoological Society for Conservation of Species and Populations (ZGAP) as foreign second party. The project will be run as well as be under the supervision of the second party as long as deemed necessary by both parties.

As location the site of Kbal Spean – about 30 km north of Siem Reap, near the archaeological site of the same name – has been assigned to the project by MAFF with an area of about 25 ha. This location and the greater Angkor area provide an excellent setting for the promotion of conservation issues.

The goal of the ACCB is to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity in Cambodia through the promotion of environmental education and wildlife conservation in Angkor. The centre's main focus will be on conserving endangered native wildlife and biodiversity by providing facilities for appropriate rescue, breeding and reintroduction programs. The project will also serve as a training and resource centre to increase the capacity for conservation and environmental management activities across Cambodia as well as to enhance the environmental awareness of the rural population in the area. Educational information will also reach out to native and foreign visitors.

In the course of the program, training and jobs will be provided for animal keepers, guides and environmental teachers. Through this and making use of the resources of the local communities wherever possible the ACCB will promote economic growth in an otherwise under-developed area. Throughout this program, environmental sustainability will be promoted wherever applicable.