

## Cambodia Hosts Gathering to Scale Up Ecosystem Restoration Across 20 Countries

*Conservation International together with UNDP Cambodia and the Ministry of Environment held the inaugural Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program (ERIP) Annual Conference in Siem Reap, bringing together around 80 participants from 20 countries to advance global restoration efforts.*

*Siem Reap, Cambodia – September 1-4, 2025 —* With one-fifth of the planet's land degraded—threatening food security, water supplies, biodiversity, and climate stability—Cambodia this week hosted the First Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program (ERIP) Annual Conference, an important step in scaling up solutions to reverse this crisis.

Organized by Conservation International, in partnership with UNDP Cambodia and the Ministry of Environment, and supported by the Global Environment Facility (GEF), the four-day conference convened more than 80 participants from 20 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean. Featured speakers included **H.E. Ms. Mom Thany**, Secretary of State, Ministry of Environment, who delivered opening remarks highlighting Cambodia's leadership in advancing global restoration goals.

**H.E. Ms. Mom Thany** said, "In Cambodia, the Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program (ERIP) is a vital instrument to realize the ambitions of our Third Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC 3.0) and the Cambodia Climate Change Strategic Plan 2024-2033. Ecosystem restoration is central to achieving these outcomes, particularly through enhanced carbon sink functions in land use and forestry sectors," **she continued**, "By connecting ERIP's collaborative network with national strategies like the Circular Strategy and NDC 3.0, we can drive transformative action that safeguards biodiversity, strengthens climate resilience, and delivers lasting benefits for future generations."

### A Global Push to Restore 1.8 Million Hectares

Globally, ERIP is targeting the restoration of 1.8 million hectares of critical ecosystems, while improving management of another 700,000 hectares of terrestrial protected areas. Collectively, these actions are expected to mitigate 145 million metric tons of greenhouse gas emissions and benefit more than 3 million people who depend on healthy ecosystems for food, water, and livelihoods.

The case for action is urgent: globally, 20 million square kilometers of land—area larger than the entire continent of South America—faces degradation, undermining climate resilience and biodiversity. By restoring ecosystems, countries can:

- Combat climate change by sequestering carbon and reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
- Protect biodiversity by conserving endangered species and habitats.
- Enhance water security by improving water quality and availability.
- Boost local economies by creating jobs and supporting sustainable livelihoods.

### Cambodia's Leadership in Restoration

Cambodia showcased its own ERIP country project during the Conference, implemented by UNDP Cambodia in partnership with the Ministry of Environment. Covering 255,000 hectares, the project is expected to mitigate 51 million metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent while



benefiting 32,000 people. Restoration activities include community-led agroforestry, biodiversity corridor development, and the use of Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) schemes to support long-term sustainability.

Conference participants also visited restoration sites in Phnom Kulen National Park, where communities are working together with government agencies to restore degraded landscapes while safeguarding cultural heritage.

### **Building Momentum for Global Restoration**

The ERIP First Conference in Siem Reap marked the first time representatives from all 20 ERIP countries gathered in one place, creating a global platform for collaboration, exchange, and shared problem-solving. Delegates included government focal points, civil society leaders, scientists, and international partners, all committed to scaling restoration at a pace that matches the urgency of the crisis. The Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program is a six-year, US\$ 200 million initiative funded by the Global Environment Facility and led by Conservation International. The program aims to restore 1.8 million hectares of ecosystems in 20 countries across Asia, Africa and Latin America. For more information about the program. Learn more at [erip.org](https://erip.org)

ERIP's mission is to restore degraded ecosystems to build a resilient future for people and the planet. By aligning with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration, the program supports global restoration commitments through policy, finance, capacity building, and international cooperation.

The Ecosystem Restoration Integrated Program (ERIP) is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and led coordination by Conservation International(CI), with implementation support from partners including the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), The World Bank, International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), and United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).