



## PRESS RELEASE

### **WWF-Cambodia and Partners Launch Green Tourism Initiative to Protect Mekong Flooded Forest and Strengthen Community Livelihoods**

**Kratie Province, 29 January 2026** — WWF-Cambodia, in partnership with the Provincial Department of Tourism and partner organisations, today officially launched the Blue-Green Riverine Tourism in Mekong Flooded Forest project for natural resource protection and community livelihood enhancement through a dissemination workshop in Kratie Province. The Initiative promotes Blue Green Tourism in the Mekong Flooded Forest Landscape (MFF), linking conservation of critical ecosystems with sustainable economic opportunities for local communities

Funded by the International Organization of La Francophonie (OIF) under the Destination Eco-Talents Project, the initiative builds on WWF-Cambodia's long-standing experience in community-based conservation and sustainable tourism. The 14-month project aims to develop low-impact ecotourism products that showcase Kratie's riverine ecosystems and cultural heritage, while creating sustainable livelihood opportunities particularly for women and youth.

“This initiative demonstrates that conservation and livelihoods do not have to be in conflict,” said Dr. Dipankar Chyau Patnaik, Country Director of WWF-Cambodia. “By strengthening community-based ecotourism and improving market linkages, we are creating tangible incentives to protect the Mekong Flooded Forest. This landscape is one of Cambodia's most vital ecosystems-home to the famed Irrawaddy dolphin and a wealth of biodiversity and our goal is to ensure that local communities, especially women and youth, benefit directly from these conservation efforts.”

Project activities will be implemented in Koh Prumacharey and Koh P'dao, two river island communities located close to the core Irrawaddy dolphin habitats. Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) groups in these areas will receive support to diversify tourism products, improve service quality, and connect more effectively with tour operators and wider tourism market both nationally and overtime internationally.

The Director of the Provincial Department of Tourism in Kratie Province highlighted the project's alignment with provincial development priorities: "By strengthening cooperation between communities, the private sector, and government institutions, this initiative

supports Kratie's ambition to become a leading ecotourism destination while protecting natural resources."

Key expected outcomes of the project include a greater number of environmentally responsible tourism products in Kratie and the Mekong Flooded Forest, increased community awareness of biodiversity conservation, enhanced income opportunities for Community-Based Ecotourism (CBET) members, and stronger connections between local and national ecotourism actors.

Representing the donor, Ms. Adjara Diouf, Coordinator of the Destination Eco-Talents Project – Promotion of Sustainable Tourism at OIF, stated that the project reflects a shared commitment to green growth: "Through the Destination Eco-Talents Project, OIF is pleased to support Cambodia in promoting tourism models that value nature, culture, and people, while empowering women and youth."

The workshop, held at Hor Bunny Hotel in Kratie Province, brought together representatives from provincial line departments, local authorities, ecotourism communities, tour operators, private sector actors, and partner organisations to share project information and strengthen collaboration for effective implementation.

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**For more information, please contact Sambo Chheng, Head of Communications and Knowledge Management, WWF-Cambodia, at [pressdesk@wwf.org.kh](mailto:pressdesk@wwf.org.kh).**