

# Vision for Eco Resort Island Continues the Royal Group's Leadership



Bangkok – Cambodia's most dynamic and diversified business conglomerate The Royal Group has unveiled its vision to create Asia's 'first environmentally planned resort island' pioneering high-end international tourism on the country's idyllic coastline.

With interests ranging from telecommunications and IT to banking, international schools, media and entertainment, hotels and resorts, property and infrastructure development, The Royal Group has been at the heart of Cambodia's economic development for almost two decades.

Now the corporation led by visionary tycoon Neak Oknha Kith Meng, is setting its sights on transforming the country's tourism industry, which until now has almost exclusively depended on the attraction of world famous Angkor Wat.

The vision is to develop the pristine island of Koh Rong, 30 minutes by boat from the coastal city of Sihanoukville, into an ecologically sustainable resort paradise rivaling and beating established, iconic Asian tourism destinations like Phuket, Koh Samui and Bali.

The Cambodian government has granted The Royal Group a 99-year lease on the 78 sq km (30 sq mile) island to advance the plan.

Now international investors and partners are being sought to contribute to the development of the island including luxury resorts and residential infrastructure, such as transportation – the development of the island's international airport, and leisure projects such as golf courses and a marina.

Until now, Cambodia's archipelago of untouched tropical islands with white sand beaches, crystal clear blue waters and virgin rainforests has remained largely unknown to international tourism and real estate development. But this is about to change as The Royal Group develops an eco master plan for Koh Rong, in consultation with a team of top international architects and engineers.

"Cambodia's tourism has so far focused almost exclusively on the world famous temples of Angkor Wat," said Kith Meng, Chairman & CEO of The Royal Group, "but the potential of this beautiful coastline is the missing link in the development of our tourism sector."

Since The Royal Group is starting almost from scratch, a unique opportunity presents itself to learn from the experiences – and mistakes – of earlier developed 'paradise destinations' in Southeast Asia.

"It is our shared vision that the island be planned and developed in a way that results in the establishment of sustainable and commercially viable development models – whilst preserving and enhancing the natural environment," said Kith Meng.

Development of Koh Rong is the latest in a long series of high profile business ventures for The Royal Group. The company has achieved its success by focusing on bringing quality investment to the country, while at the same time providing investors with the platform to run successful and

profitable operations.

Now tourism is poised to play an ever increasing role in Cambodia's economy. With Angkor Wat, a UNESCO World Heritage site alone drawing tourists at an annual growth rate of 30%, and tourism poised to replace agriculture as the backbone of the national economy, The Royal Group intends to capitalise on its global business connections to attract investment in the infrastructure of its latest and most ambitious tourism related venture extending tourism to the idyllic, untouched southern coast.

"We are targeting forward looking investors within the region and globally who share The Royal Group's vision on sustainable development," said Mr. David Simister, Chairman of CBRE Indochina, the exclusive advisor and sole agent for developing the island.

Approximately an hour's flight from the international transport hub of Bangkok and Singapore and two hours from Hong Kong, Koh Rong is easily accessible for tourists from all over the world. "This is one of the last undiscovered paradises in Southeast Asia with the potential to become the next most visited island," said Mr. Simister. "As such, it represents a chance to invest in a future Phuket before the air connections and the initial wave of tourism drive land demand and prices."

Koh Rong is the largest of 22 islands in an archipelago off the 600 kilometer coastline known as the 'Indochina Riviera'. In addition to the international airport which is part of Koh Rong's master plan and will provide direct access to the island, a new airport at nearby Sihanoukville is currently open for chartered flights and private jets, is also expecting domestic and regional flights in the near future. "The airport, once fully operational, will be the principal gateway to Cambodia's southern coast and a critical catalyst for the area's development."

"Koh Rong is a rare opportunity to capture Cambodia's untapped tourism potential and offers unique investment potential in one of the first truly free-market economies in the Mekong Region of Asia," said Mr Simister.

#### About The Royal Group (TRG)

The Royal Group is Cambodia's premier investment and development conglomerate at the heart of the country's economic growth for almost two decades, attracting international investors and building market leaders in a wide range of industries including telecommunications, media, banking, insurance, resorts, education, property, trading and agriculture.

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