Composed of many nations, tribes, and cultures, Southeast Asia has been home to some of Asia's most significant civilizations and empires. Many historic sites remain, attesting to the region's accomplishments and attracting millions of visitors.

Unfortunately, the popularity of these historic sites has helped threaten their very existence. “With the region’s burgeoning economic development and the rise of global tourism, we’ve reached the stage where there are tremendous concerns about the effects on cultural heritage,” says Jeff Cody, a senior project specialist at the Getty Conservation Institute (GCI) who is heading the GCI's Built Heritage in Southeast Asia: Conservation Education and Training Initiative.

Launched in 2004, the initiative helps practitioners in built heritage conservation throughout Southeast Asia confront the challenges that face them, from the need for education in basic conservation theory and principles, to management of cultural tourism, to long-term planning, policy and decision-making that integrates the needs of a site's surrounding communities.

The initiative was designed after a two-year assessment of built heritage conservation education and training needs in Thailand, Cambodia, Myanmar, Vietnam, and Lao PDR. Three areas of particular need were identified: conservation and management of archaeological sites; integrated conservation and urban development; and conservation education in academic programs.

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To meet those needs, the initiative offers training for conservation professionals and information for decision makers. It advances built heritage conservation education and strengthens existing networks of heritage professionals in the region.

To date, the initiative has held a series of workshops and an experts meeting in the area. “Many domestic and international organizations are working in Southeast Asia, but focused conservation education opportunities remain a critical need. For that reason, we consider increasing these opportunities key to improving the quality of conservation practice in the region,” said Tim Whalen, director of the Getty Conservation Institute.

**About the Getty Conservation Institute**

The Getty Conservation Institute works internationally to advance conservation practice in the visual arts—broadly interpreted to include objects, collections, architecture, and sites. The Institute serves the conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professional conservation community through scientific research, education and training, model field projects, and the dissemination of the results of both its own work and the work of others in the field. In all its endeavors, the GCI focuses on the creation and delivery of knowledge that will benefit the professionals and organizations responsible for the conservation of the world’s cultural heritage. To learn more, visit [www.getty.edu](http://www.getty.edu), or subscribe to the GCI’s E-Bulletin by visiting [www.getty.edu/subscribe/gci_bulletin](http://www.getty.edu/subscribe/gci_bulletin).

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