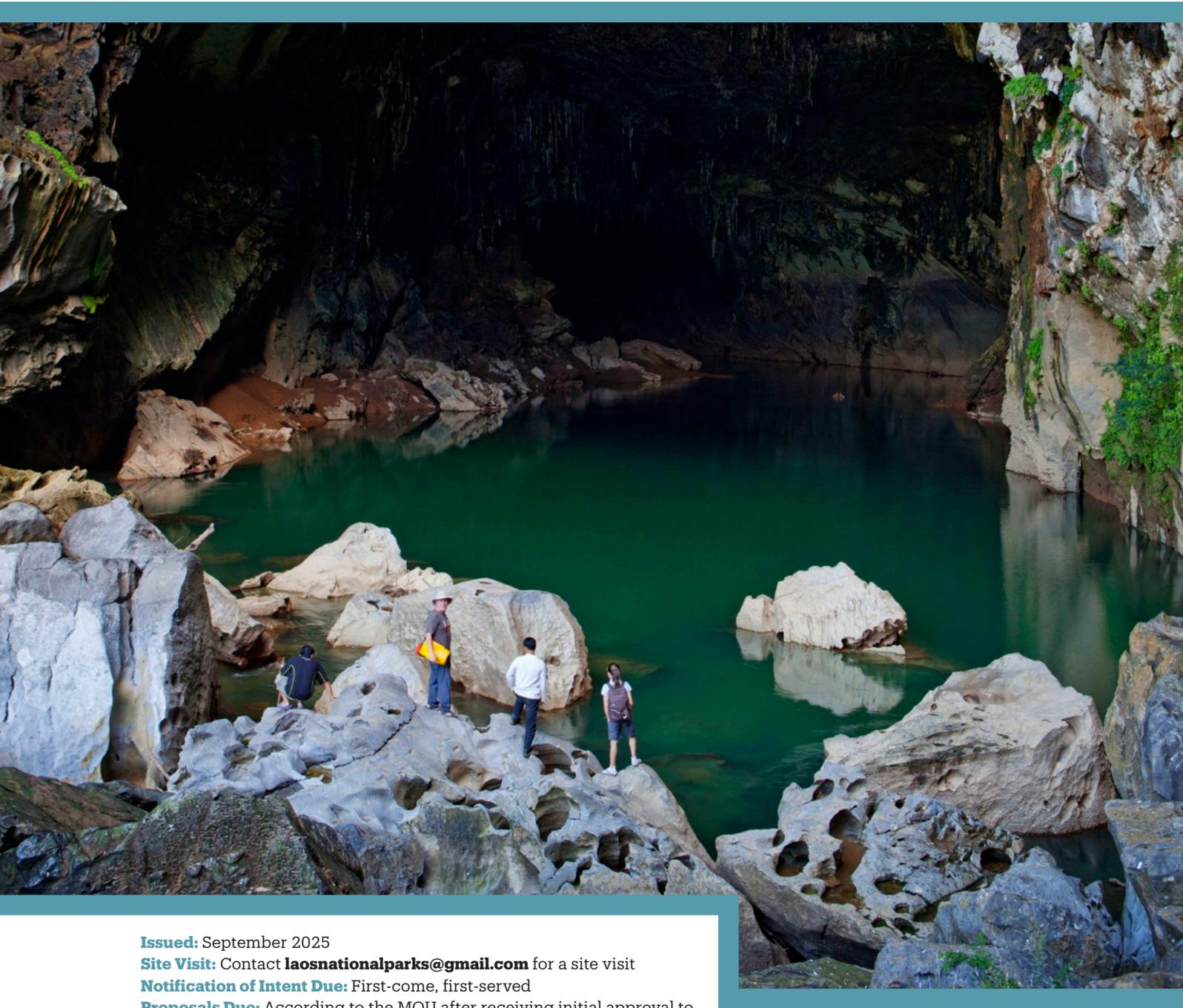


Private Sector Tourism Investment Opportunities

Hin Nam No National Park

Investment Highlights 2025

- Xe Bang Fai Cave & Nong Ping
- **Zone 1:** Accommodation & Restaurants
- **Zone 2:** Rock Climbing Activities
- **Zone 4b:** Kayaking Expeditions



Issued: September 2025

Site Visit: Contact laosnationalparks@gmail.com for a site visit

Notification of Intent Due: First-come, first-served

Proposals Due: According to the MOU after receiving initial approval to move forward



Hin Nam No National Park
Lao PDR
laosnationalparks@gmail.com
www.laoparks.la



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PHOTOS: LUKAS WAHLGIZ



Lao Landscapes and Livelihoods



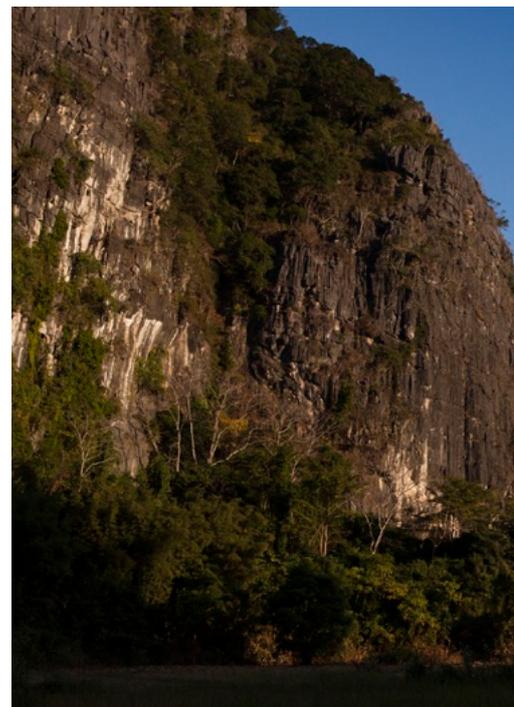
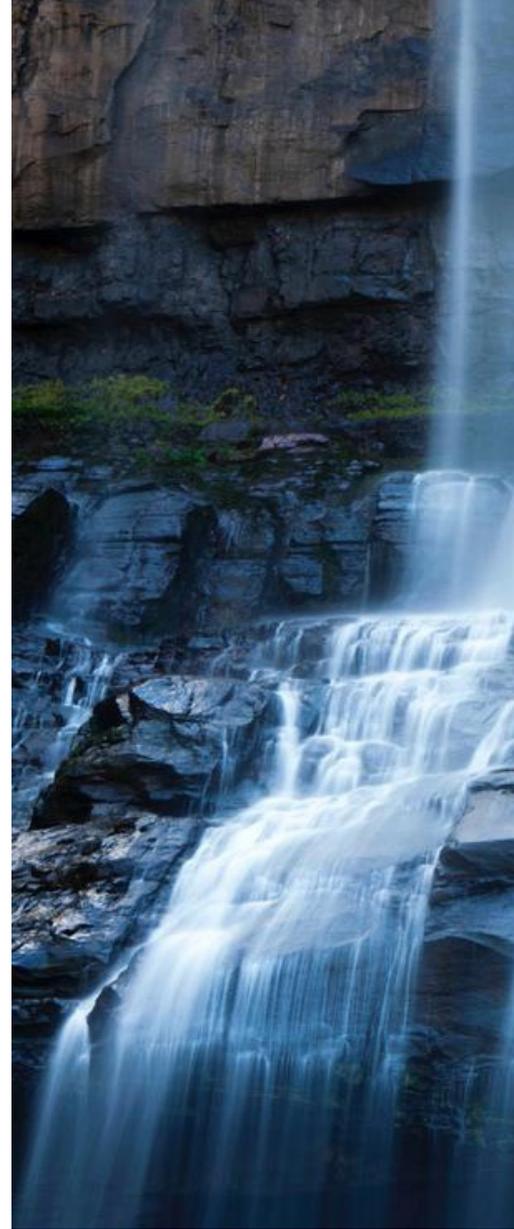
The Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) is developing sustainable private-sector driven nature-based tourism (NBT) as one of the pillars of its 5-Year National Socio-Economic Plan and 2030 National Green Growth Strategy (NGGS). With an impressive diversity of natural capital, Lao PDR's comparative advantage in NBT is a reflection of its expansive national protected area (NPA) network, which covers roughly 20% of the country's total land mass. The Lao PDR's NPA system plays an essential role in protecting endangered wildlife species, including endemic species of the Annamite Mountain range, a global biodiversity hotspot. It is also home to a diverse group of ethnic minority peoples, whose history, culture and religious traditions are intertwined with nature.

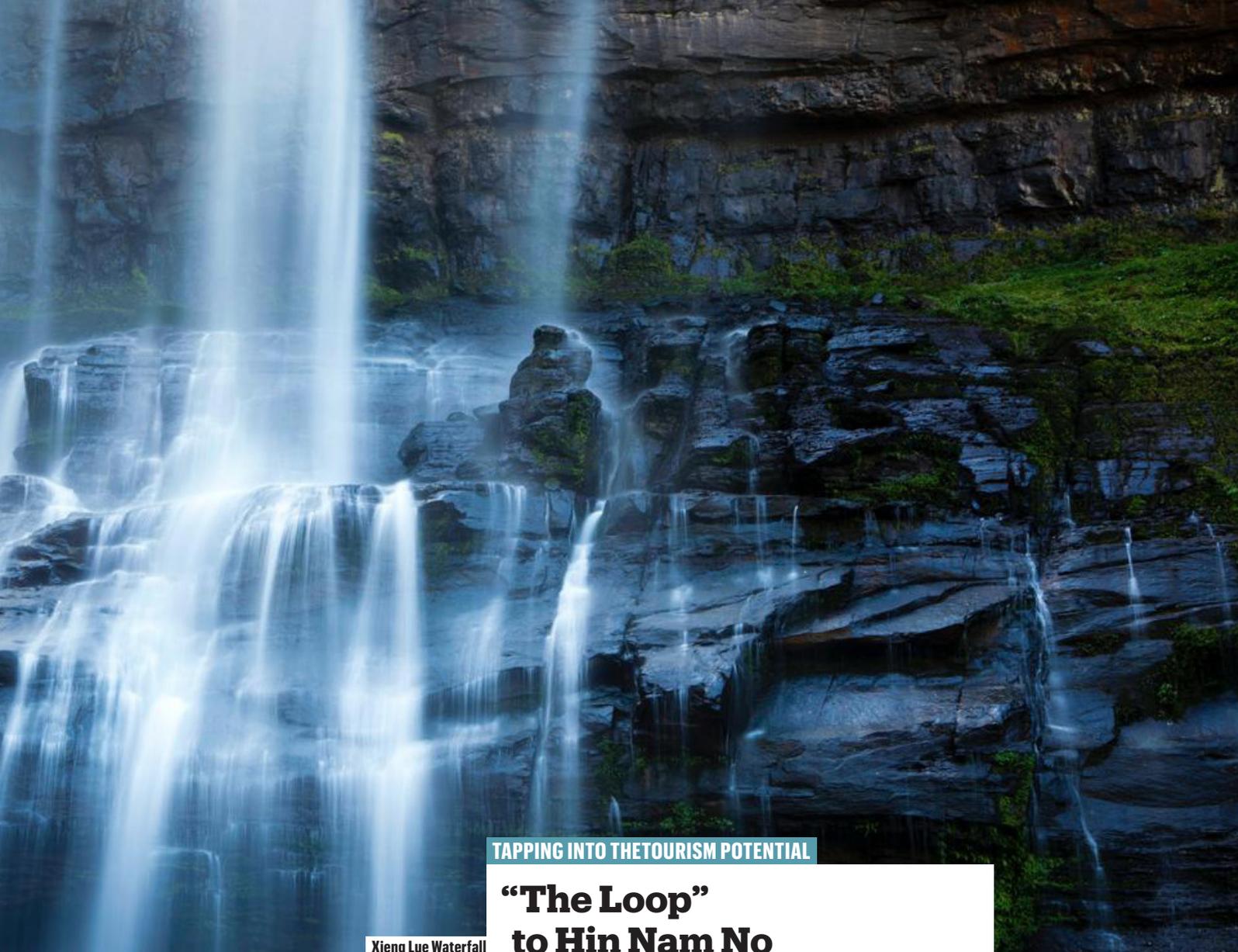
Laos has been making a name for itself as an international and regional destination for NBT, adventure tourism, ecotourism, and community-based tourism. Tourism has the potential to become Laos' top export and revenue earner, but this will require sustainable private sector investment and proactive public-private partnerships (PPP). With the right planned investments, tourism in protected areas has the potential to be a positive force for sustainable economic growth, local employment, and sustainable conservation financing. The Lao Landscapes & Livelihoods (LLL) Project is working towards promoting inclusive private sector investment to leverage the' natural assets of Lao PDR for sustainable tourism that benefits investors, local people, and conservation.

Hin Nam No National Park is Lao PDR's first natural UNESCO World Heritage site, forming the world's largest contiguous limestone karst landscapes with Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park in Vietnam. The park is seeking investors interested in working together with ethnic minority communities to develop, market and manage the park's many nature-based tourism attractions, including the Xe Bang Fai Cave, a truly spectacular river cave that stretches for 6.5km. Entrepreneurs with a love of nature, a long-term vision for sustainable ecotourism development and an eye for a responsible investment should apply.



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Associate Professor Dr. Somvang Phimmavong
Director General, Department of Forestry, Lao PDR





Xieng Lue Waterfall

TAPPING INTO THE TOURISM POTENTIAL

“The Loop” to Hin Nam No



Dramatic mountain landscapes in Hin Nam No NPA

- ➔ Hin Nam No is part of the “The Loop”, a motorbike circuit in Khammouane Province that starts in Thakek and links caves, ziplines, waterfalls cultural villages and other attractions.
- ➔ Visitors to the park stay overnight in Nong Ping Village at the main entry point to the Xe Bang Fai Cave at a campsite managed by the women’s group, or in guesthouses in Boualapha Town.
- ➔ Community-managed boat tours into the Xe Bang Fai Cave are organised in Nong Ping Village, Kayaking tours through the entire cave system are organized by Green Discovery.
- ➔ Hin Nam No is located along the the historic Ho Chi Minh Trail, which begins near the Vietnam-Lao border on Route 12 at the Mu Gia Pass and continues south to Savannakhet Province.
- ➔ Hin Nam No is also the gateway to Khoun Xe Nong Ma NPA, one of the key areas for endemic Annamite species.
- ➔ Although annual visitors to Hin Nam No have been increasing, numbers remain relatively low.
- ➔ Many of the park’s attractions remain undeveloped, with no tour services available for most attractions and only very basic services on offer.



KEY ATTRACTIONS

Hin Nam No National Park – the first natural World Heritage Site in Lao PDR



Tree resin has medicinal use in Laos

- The Xe Bang Fai Cave is renowned for one of the largest river cave passages in the world (6.5km) and one of the largest gour pools (around 65m long).
- There are many other caves in the park that can be visited, many of which were used as shelters from bombing during the war in Laos, including Tham Nam Awk Cave, Tham Nok Aen Cave, and Tham Pak Tham Cave.
- The park is situated where the Central Indochina Limestone meets the Annamite Mountains within the Northern Annamites Rain Forest Ecoregion, one of the Global 200 Ecoregions and is crucial to the conservation of endemic species.
- With the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park in Vietnam, the area forms one of the world's largest karst regions, and is Lao PDR's first natural UNESCO World Heritage Site.
- Hin Nam No has a rich ethnic diversity, including Makong, Tri, Yoy, Phoutai, Kaleung, Vietic, and Salang (also known as Kris) peoples.

PHOTOS LUKAS WAHL/GIZ





Hin Nam No NPA has rugged landscapes

Key Markets

- Independent travellers and FITs/small groups touring "The Loop" by motorbike, bicycle or car, including tours to the Ho Chi Minh Trail;
- Thai visitors and motorbikers from Nakhon Phanom;
- Vietnamese FITs/groups adventurers and history buffs;
- Add-on to Rock Viewpoint, Green Climbers and Tham Kong Lor Cave;
- Travelers heading to Southern Laos.

Year	Domestic	International
2018	605	633
2019	337	328
2020	n/a	n/a
2021	2,338	85
2022	4,670	52
2023	1,182	413

Accessibility

Getting to Nong Ping village, Hin Nam No:

- **Thakek, Laos:** 3.5-hour drive (145km). Option: Boating on the Xe Bang Fai River (1-2 hours) from Pak Phanang Village to Nong Ping
- **Vientiane, Laos:** Fly to Savannakhet (1 hour) + 5-hour drive (192km) OR 8-hour drive (445km)
- **Nakhon Phanom Airport, Thailand:** Fly from Bangkok (1 hour) + 5 hours (185km) overland.
- **Dong Hoi Airport, Quang Binh, Vietnam:** Flights from Saigon and Hanoi + 4 hours (150km) to Na Phao border + 2 hours (68km) overland from border on all-weather road.

PHOTOS LUKAS WAHL/GIZ



Trekking is a popular activity in Hin Nam No NPA



Kayaking into the Xe Bang Fai Cave



The entrance to Xe Bang Fai Cave

INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Highlighted Opportunities

Xe Bang Fai Cave & Nong Ping

- **Zone 1:** Ec lodge & Restaurants
- **Zone 2:** Rock Climbing
- **Zone 4b:** Kayaking Expeditions

Other Opportunities:

Investors are free to propose other activities or areas inside or around the protected area that have high potential and follow park regulations and guidelines.



Ecolodge & Restaurant

Xe Bang Fai Cave Zone 1:

Nong Ping Village, Boualapha District,

Khammouane Province,

Buffer Zone of Hin Nam No

The Investment Opportunity

According to the Nong Ping-Xe Bang Fai Cave Tourism Master Plan, Zone 1 is allocated for tourism businesses, including private accommodation, restaurants, handicraft shops and other tourism services. Private sector investors are invited to develop eco-friendly lodges, restaurants and other services in Zone 1 that employ local people.

Unique Selling Points

- Located near the main entrance to the world-renowned 6.5km Xe Bang Fai Cave;
- Beautiful karst mountains and river views;
- A unique opportunity to open the first private-sector operated ecolodge in the region;
- Promote sustainable tours to the Xe Bang Fai Cave and Hin Nam No area;
- Multi-ethnic cultural attractions of the village.

Investment Needs

- Develop high-quality ecolodge;
- Develop a restaurant or cafe serving a blend of local and international food;
- Improve boating and caving activities (with the existing village boat association);
- The development of rock climbing and nature walks with village guides;
- Tours to other caves and attractions around Hin Nam No National Park;
- Develop sustainable waste management facilities to support investment.

Accessibility

- The cave is closed in the rainy season;
- Year-round accessibility is via the paved road from Boualapha;
- The alternative access is via a scenic boat ride from Pak Panang (1-2 hours).

Partner Communities

- Nong Ping Village (Makong, Salang, Ngouan and Lao Loum minority groups);
- Pak Panang Village (Vietic minority group).

PHOTOS LUKAS MAHL/GIZ

Exploring Xe Bang Fai Cave



Rock Climbing

Xe Bang Fai Cave Zone 2:
Nong Ping Village, Boualapha District,
 Khammouane Province
Controlled Use Zone of Hin Nam No

The Opportunity

According to the Nong Ping-Xe Bang Fai Cave Tourism Master Plan, Zone 2 is set aside for visitor management, including a visitor center, ticket office, parking lot, campsite with bungalows, one restaurant and nature trails. Currently in Zone 2, the village women’s group manages the campsite, bungalows and restaurant, and the village boat group manages the small visitor center, ticket office and parking lot. An experienced private sector partner is desired for developing rock climbing activities on the karst cliffs around the cave.

Unique Selling Points

- Excellent karst walls for rock climbing;
- Promote rock climbing to existing visitor flow to cave to diversify visitor activities;
- Suitable climbing routes have previously been professionally surveyed and identified;
- Rare primates can potentially be spotted from the rock climbing area;

- The option to combine rock climbing with organised cave tours and nature walks;
- Promote rock climbing and overnight campsitestays with the local women’s group.

Investment Needs

- Rock climbing infrastructure, equipment, and training for local activity guides;
- Joint marketing of rock climbing, sustainable campsite, cave and local handicrafts;
- Construct cultural meeting hall to host groups;
- Electric vehicle transportation for Zone 2;
- Improved recycling and waste management facilities required in Zone 2.

Accessibility

- The cave is closed in the rainy season;
- Year-round accessibility on via a paved road from the town of Boualapha;
- Alternative access via a scenic boat ride from the village of Pak Panang (1-2 hours).

Partner Communities

- Nong Ping Village (Makong, Salang, Ngouan and Lao Loum minority groups)
- Pak Panang Village (Vietic minority group)

PHOTO: ADAM CLIMBING SCHOOL

Rock climbing has high potential in Hin Nam No NPA



Kayaking Expeditions

Xe Bang Fai Cave Zone 4b:

Nong Ping, Chalu & Laboy villages, Boualapha District, Khammouane Province

Totally Protected & Controlled Use Zones of Hin Nam No

The Opportunity

According to the Xe Bang Fai Cave Tourism Management Plan, Zone 4b is accessible only by kayak due to safety and conservation concerns and allows for specialist, low-impact kayaking tours and expeditions only. A private sector investor is sought to develop high-end kayaking tours (similar to Son Doong Cave in Phong Nha-Ke Bang National Park, Vietnam) in partnership with the communities on both sides of the cave.

Unique Selling Points

- World class, untouched cave on a par with the Son Doong Cave in Vietnam;
- Can be marketed to mid- and high-end small groups and FITs;
- Cultural attractions of remote host villages of Chalu and Laboy (Tri and Makong ethnic minorities).

Investment Needs

- Low impact, small-group multi-day kayaking expeditions in the Xe Bang Fai Cave starting in Chalu or Laboy village;
- Build basic campsite(s) near Chalu and Laboy;
- Equipment for kayaking, caving, and camping;
- Train local guides on caving and kayaking;
- Implement a sustainable waste management system for locals and visitors alike.

Accessibility

- The road to Nong Ping Village is paved. The laterite road to Chalu and Laboy villages is inaccessible during the rainy season. The project has matching funds available for minor road improvements;
- No motor boats in Zone 4b, kayaking only.

Partner Communities

- Nong Ping Village (Makong, Salang, Ngouan and Lao Loum ethnic minorities)
- Chalu and Laboy villages (both Makong and Tri ethnic minorities)

PHOTOS JOHN SPIES

Giant gour pools in Xe Bang Fai Cave



Kayaking past giant stalactites



Other Areas

There are many other areas with tourism potential in Hin Nam No, which investors may also consider:

- Thong Xam area caves and trekking on the Houay Hok Trail;
- Nong Seng area for primate-spotting treks;
- Ho Chi Minh Trail historical sites including locations at Vang Khone village;
- Phou Khao Nok-Phou Louang National Protection Forest, which forms the buffer zone and has potential for trekking and camping;
- Song Su Waterfall (Nong Bua village);
- Xieng Lue Waterfall (Gnaved village) ;
- Boat tours along the Xe Bang Fai River from Pak Phanang to Nong Ping Village and the Xe Bang Fai Cave entrance;
- Other caves around Nong Ping Village including Tham Pong; Tham Phaleusi, and Tham Kouan Kouay;
- Mouang Soum Village Waterfall.

Investors are also welcome to propose for investment and development other attractions in Hin Nam No not listed in this investor prospectus.

PHOTOS LUKAS WAHL/GIZ



Thongxam caves



Song Su Waterfall

Environmental & Socially Responsible Investment



Local boats can be used for river travel



Sunset over Hin Nam No NPA

Zoning

- For investments inside the **Totally Protected Zone (TPZ)**, no permanent infrastructure is allowed. Only campsites, toilets, trails, zip lines, boating, viewpoints and picnic spots are allowed.
- For investments inside the **Controlled Use Zone (CUZ)**, no large infrastructure such as hotels and resorts are allowed. Only low-impact infrastructure such as ecolodges, community guesthouses, and semi-permanent tented camps are permitted.
- For investments in the **buffer zone**, other tourism infrastructure types are allowed, including hotels and resorts.
- All investments must follow the Nong Ping-Xe Bang Fai Cave zoning plan, with private accommodations and restaurants allowed in Zone 1 only.

Sustainable Capacity

- The capacity of any tour area will depend on the sensitivity of the area and zoning.
- For trekking and camping tours inside the totally protected zone groups should be limited (e.g.: one group per area per day with approximately 10 visitors per group plus guides). Actual limits will be mutually agreed with the investor based to an impact assessment and needs of the investor.
- Investment proposals should provide details on the capacity requirements of the tour, and proposed facilities, balancing impact management, tour experience, and sustainable benefit sharing for all partners.

Environmental Guidelines

- For tours inside the TPZ, strict waste management procedures are required. All waste must be carried out, and no burning or burying waste allowed. For facilities in the CUZ and buffer zone, waste must be managed according to district waste management regulations, with maximum effort to reduce overall waste.
- Investment proposals that do not propose large infrastructure are not required to conduct a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) but must pass an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) according to MAE regulations. Proposals for lodging and larger infrastructure may be required to conduct an EIA.
- All investments must be designed to limit impacts on the environment, landscape, water resources, and biodiversity. Designs should demonstrate that potential impacts have been addressed.
- Infrastructure and tours should also ensure no loud noises or disturbances in natural areas or villages.
- All materials used for infrastructure inside the park must be reviewed by the park in advance to ensure that no prohibited wood or other materials are used.

Social Guidelines (Community Participation)

- Communities must be partners in developing and managing the investment.
- Communities must be consulted during the proposal and negotiation process
- Villagers must be trained and hired by the investor as local guides, cooks, camp managers, lodge or resort staff, etc.

Map of Nong Ping & Xe Bang Fai Cave Zones





Nature-based Tourism Business Leveraging Facility

The Lao Landscapes & Livelihoods (LLL) Project supports the Nature-based Tourism Business Leveraging Facility (BLF), which has matching funds available to support investments in tourism and tour service management cooperative contracts. Prospective investors can apply for matching funds as needed. The facility has three types of financing available:

Planning and feasibility work:

This will have no minimum amount per selected application, no matching required and a maximum contribution of US\$2500 to support surveys, consultations with communities and other field work required for preparation of proposals. Such funds will account for no more than 10 percent of the total funds available through the BLF.

Challenge Funds:

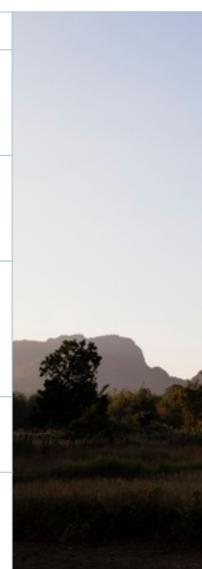
These will target investment in particular areas or for more specific investments, typically to attracting concession investments or public

private partnerships identified by the project as high priorities. Maximum contribution of US\$200,000 per challenge to support investments of US\$400,000 or more. Such funds will account for roughly 50 percent of the total matching grants (approximately nine challenge grants) available through the BLF.

Matching funds for MSMEs:

For product development and marketing work for businesses located in and around the project protected areas of up to US\$20,000 per application and a maximum of two applications per MSME (Micro, Small, Medium Enterprises). This type of funding will account for no more than 50 percent of the total matching grants (approximately 90 MSMEs). Businesses selected for challenge grants can recommend financing for its partner MSMEs in order to develop NBT value-chains. The following matching requirements can include in-kind contributions. Matching requirements will be as follows:

Type of work	Project funds up to:	Applicant will contribute:
Construction of new facilities/buildings	50%	50% (can include in-kind contributions of materials and labor)
Upgrade existing facilities and equipment	70%	30% (can include in-kind contributions of materials and labor)
Staff/Community Training	90%	10% (can include in-kind contributions of accommodation/food/travel for trainers and trainees)
Development of new or improved activities, attractions and tours (including upgrade to boats)	70%	30%
New or improved websites, brochures, marketing campaigns, marketing materials/advertising campaigns	90%	10% (can include in-kind contributions of accommodation, food and travel)



Agreement types

- For large investments that include significant infrastructure investments, concessions agreements are encouraged, which can be made for up to 30 years according to the Investment Promotion Law.
- For smaller investments that have only small-scale infrastructure, Cooperation Agreements with partner communities and the protected area authority are allowed, which can be made for up to 20 years.

Maintenance & Conservation Fees

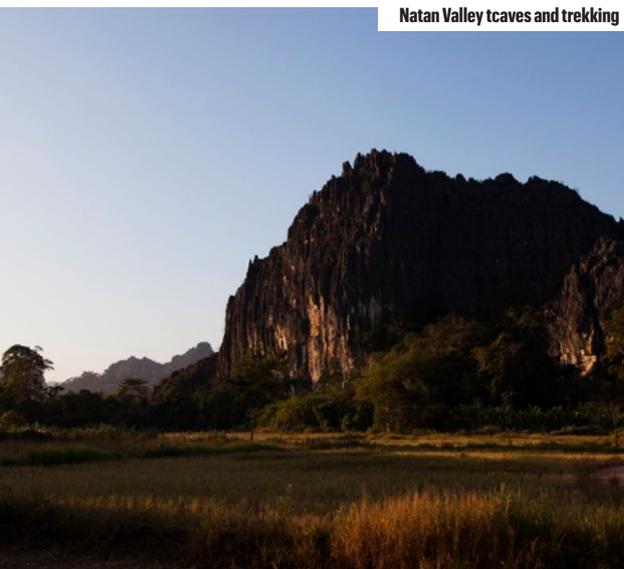
- The company is responsible for all maintenance costs of facilities, trails and other infrastructure or equipment used to manage and operate their tour services.
- Entry fees per visitor must be paid in addition to negotiated annual concession or cooperation agreement fees, unless otherwise specified in the agreement.

Taxes & Other Fees

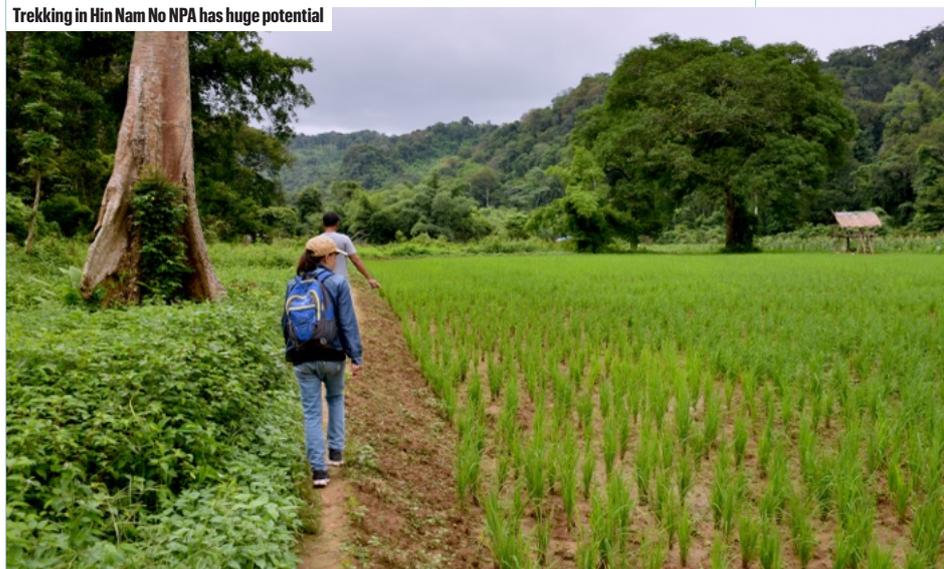
- Relevant taxes including 10% VAT are required according to VAT and other tax laws.
- Labour Law must be followed, including the payment of Labor taxes and fees.
- Investments in remote areas (Zone 1) are entitled to a profit tax exemption for up to 10 years.

PHOTOS LUKAS WAHL/GIZ

Natan Valley caves and trekking



Trekking in Hin Nam No NPA has huge potential



According to the Agreement on Tourism in Forest Areas of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, No. 1926, 03/06/2025, steps for cooperative agreements are as follows:

1. Send Letter of Intent

Send a letter of intent to the National Protected Area Management Division (PAMD), Lao Department of Forestry.

E-mail: laosnationalparks@gmail.com

2. Forms to Complete:

Fill out application forms:

- Application form (Form #1) that includes technical and financial proposal

E-mail: laosnationalparks@gmail.com

- Business Registration and Tax ID
- Company description and CVs of owner, manager and experts
- Please submit the application to the Tourism Unit, National Protected Area Management Division (PAMD) in hard copy directly to the PAMD office. Your documents will be stamped and you will receive a receipt slip.

3. Evaluation of Proposals

- Proposals will reviewed by relevant departments and evaluated using the application Evaluation Form (Form #1).

- Within 10 working days, you will receive a response on the initial proposal evaluation.

4. Criteria for Proposal Evaluation

- Ecotourism experience (company profile & expert staff) **20%**
- Business vision, marketing strategy and itineraries/packages **20%**
- Involvement of local communities **20%**
- Benefits for conservation & environment **20%**
- Financial Plan & Terms & Conditions **20%**

5. Village Consultations, Site Visit and IEE

If the proposal is agreed to in principle, an MOU will be signed and a site visit, village consultations (Form #2), initial environmental examination (IEE), and feasibility study must be completed.

6. Final Approval & Contracting

- Final approval will be announced 10 working days after receiving the final proposal.
- Contracting will follow a standardized form (Form #3).

PHOTOS LUKAS WAHL/GIZ



Camping in Hin Nam No NPA



Exploring the Xe Bang Fai Cave by torchlight



Contact us for further enquiries about private sector tourism investment opportunities

**Protected Area Management Division,
Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture and Environment,
Khouvieng Road, Vientiane, Lao PDR**

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☎ +856-021-215000

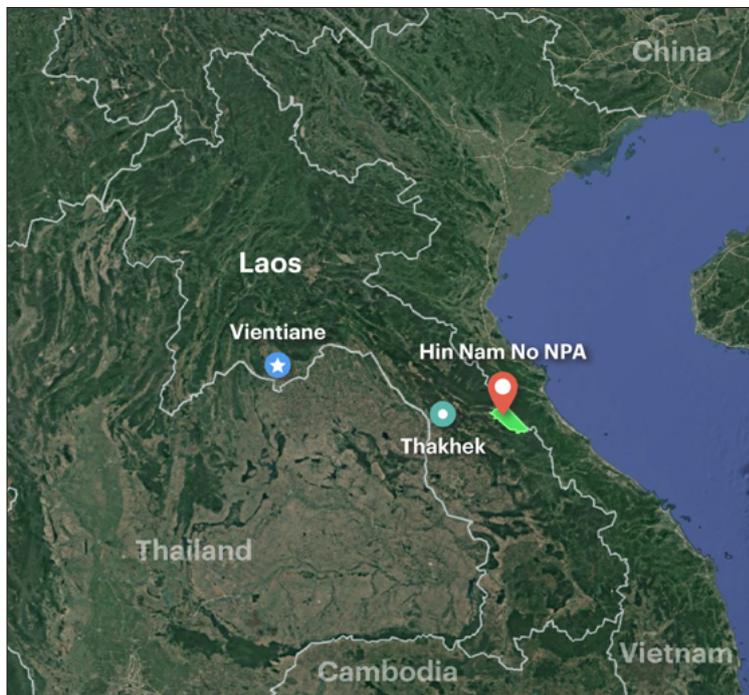
🌐 laoparks.la

Hin Nam No National Park

Location: Central Laos

Province: Khammouane Province

“Hin Nam No National Park is set to become Lao PDR’s first natural UNESCO World Heritage site, forming the world’s largest contiguous limestone karst landscapes with Phong Nha-Ke Bang in National Park in Vietnam. The park is seeking investors interested in working together with ethnic minority communities to develop, market and manage the park’s many nature-based tourism attractions, including the Xe Bang Fai Cave, a truly spectacular river cave that stretches for 6.5km.”



Supported by the Lao Landscapes & Livelihoods Project, funded by the World Bank with contributions from the Global Environment Facility and the Canada-World Bank Clean Energy and Forest Climate Facility.