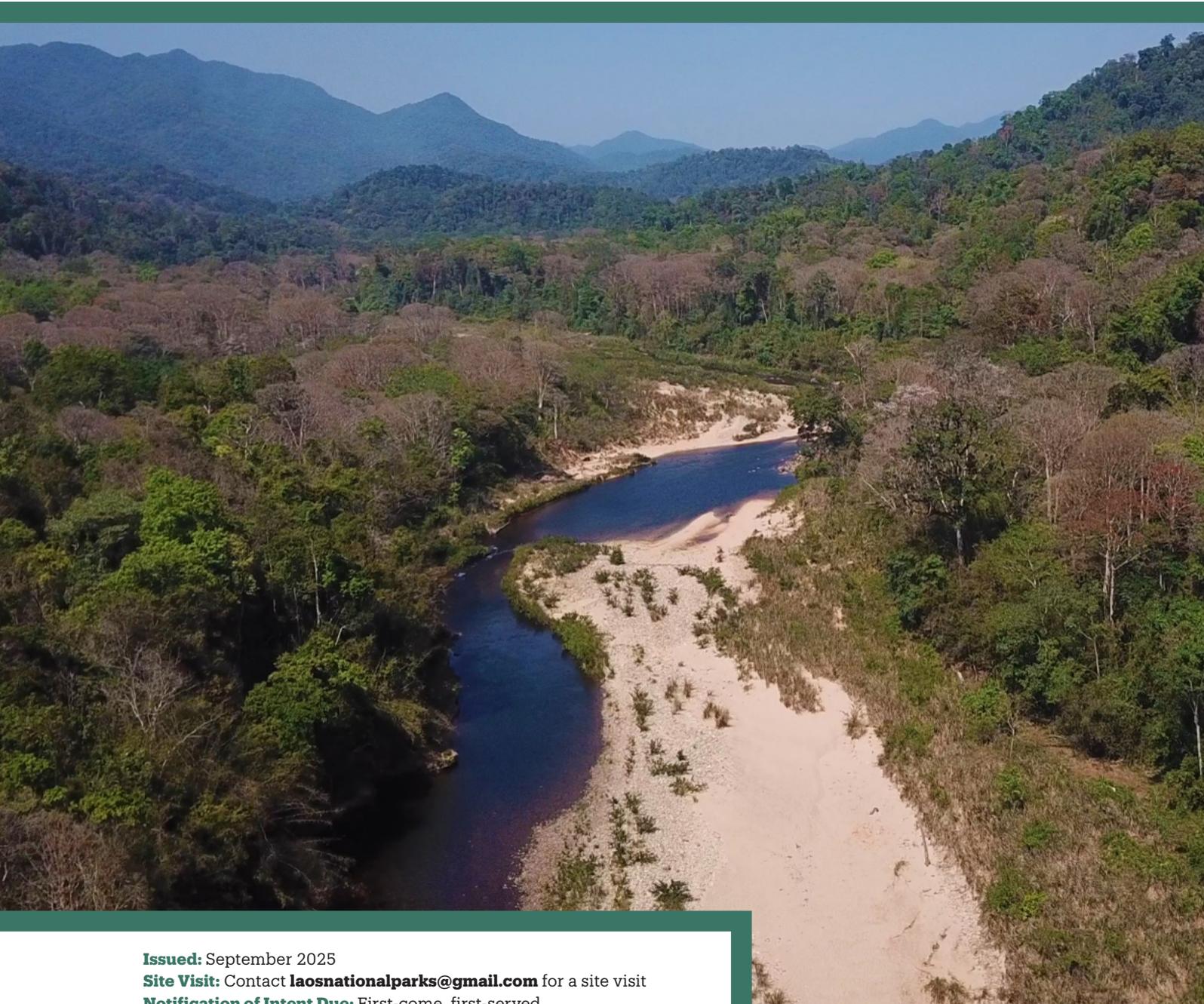


Private Sector Tourism Investment Opportunities

Nakai Nam Theun National Park

Investment Highlights 2025

- ➔ Wild Elephant Experience
- ➔ Nam Xot Night Safari
- ➔ Khoun Waterfall & Birdwatching



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



Nakai-Nam Theun National Park
Lao PDR
laosnationalparks@gmail.com
www.laoparks.la



We can never have enough of nature.

Henry David Thoreau



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PHOTOS WMPA/ALEXMCWILLIAM / ASSOCIATION ANOUACK/PAUL ESHIO



Lao Landscapes and Livelihoods



Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) is developing sustainable, private-sector driven nature-based tourism (NBT) as one of the cornerstones 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 protected area 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 Lao PDR's 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 positive force for lasting economic growth, local employment, and sustainable conservation financing. The Lao Landscapes and Livelihoods (LLL) Project is working towards promoting inclusive private sector investment to leverage the natural assets of Lao PDR for sustainable tourism growth that benefits investors, local people, and conservation.

Nakai-Nam Theun National Park represents Lao PDR's largest and most diverse natural forest habitats, spanning two provinces, and is renowned for its rare endemic Annamite species, including the large-antlered muntjac. The park is seeking investors to work with ethnic minority communities to develop, market and manage nature-based tourism attractions, including wild elephant spotting, tracking nocturnal species, and birdwatching tours. Entrepreneurs with a love of nature, a long-term vision for sustainable ecotourism development and an eye for an investment opportunity should apply.



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



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Nahao Village

TAPPING INTO THE TOURISM POTENTIAL

“The Loop” to Nakai-Nam Theun



Thong Kha Chaeng Trekking

- Nakai-Nam Theun National Park is located along “The Loop”, one of the main attractions in Central Laos that is popular for road trips and nature-based adventures.
- Most visitors travelling on “The Loop” stay overnight on the edge of the protected area at Thalang Village or Nakai town (Oudomsouk Village). From there, the park is accessed by crossing the NT2 reservoir by local boat.
- The park was officially opened for tourism in 2021-22 with a pilot trekking & camping program managed by guesthouses in cooperation with local communities.
- Many of the park’s attractions remain undeveloped, including wild elephant viewing, wildlife safaris, hot springs, bird watching and multi-day expeditions to some of the remotest and most pristine wilderness in the region.



KEY ATTRACTIONS

Nakai-Nam Theun National Park – the largest and most diverse park in Lao PDR

- A diverse ecosystem with elevations of 600m to more than 1000m that stretches from the pine forests of the Nakai Plateau to the mountainous dry evergreen forests surrounding the main rivers, the Nam Theun, Nam Xot, Nam Mone and Nam Awn.
- Endemic Annamite species, including the largest population of large-antlered muntjac.
- One of largest, remaining wild Asian elephant populations in Lao PDR.
- Good opportunities for seeing wild primates including red-shanked doucs and southern white-cheeked gibbons.
- One of the most important areas for birds in Lao PDR and Indochina with more than 400 confirmed species, including the crested argus and five recorded species of hornbills.
- Anthropological evidence suggests that Nakai-Nam Theun is one of the longest continually inhabited upland areas of Laos and Vietnam. There are three major linguistic groups found in Nakai-Nam Theun National Park with the main ethnic minority groups comprising the Makong, Saek and Kri, each having their own unique language, religious beliefs and culture.

PHOTO P. ESHOO / WMPA



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Red-shanked douc

Key Markets

- Independent travellers and FITs/small groups touring "The Loop" by motorbike, bicycle or car;
- All visitors passing through in Thalang village or Nakai Town;
- Thai visitors and motorbikers from Nakhon Phanom;
- Visitors to the Rock Viewpoint, Green Climbers, Tham Kong Lor Cave and other 'Loop' attractions;
- Travelers heading to Southern Laos.

Year	Total Visitors	Visitors by Site
2022	73	
2023	124	Nam Xot Camping: 63 Nam Jae Trekking: 31 Lan Hai Boating: 30

Accessibility

Getting to Nakai-Nam Theun National Park hubs in Nakai town or Thalang:

- **Nakhon Phanom Airport, Thailand:** Fly from Bangkok (1 hour) + 2 hours (100km) drive.
- **Dong Hoi Airport, Quang Binh, Viet Nam:** Flights from Saigon (1.5 hours) and Hanoi (1 hour) + 4 hours (150km) drive to Na Phao border + 2 hours (92km) drive to Nakai from Na Phao on an all-weather road.
- **Thakek, Laos:** 1.5-hour drive (78km). Option: Boating on the Xe Bang Fai River (1-2 hours) from Pak Phanang Village to Nong Ping village.
- **Vientiane, Laos:** Fly to Savannakhet (1 hour) + 3.5-hour drive (203km) OR 7-hour drive direct (392km).
- **Getting to the park from Nakai town or Thalang:** Cross the NT2 reservoir by boat (1-2 hours) with opportunities to see primates, wild elephants, and birds along the way.



Link with the Rock & the Loop



Homestay in Nahao Village



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Highlighted Opportunities

There are three featured tourism investment opportunities based on park management and stakeholder input:

- **Wild Elephant Experience**
- **Nam Xot Night Safari**
- **Khoun Waterfall & Birdwatching**

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.

Pine forests near salt licks



Wild Elephant Viewing

Houay Sangong Substation Area, Nakai District, Khammouane Province
Totally Protected Zone of Nakai-Nam Theun National Park

The Investment Opportunity

Nakai Nam Theun National Park has one of the largest remaining wild populations of Asian elephants in Lao PDR and the region. Elephants can be seen along the reservoir's edge where there are a few, large salt licks that they frequent. A private sector operator is sought to develop a low-impact sustainable wild elephant tour in partnership with local communities that supports wild elephant conservation through visitor education and awareness raising among communities.

Unique Selling Points

- One of the best opportunities to see wild Asian elephants in Laos;
- One of the most accessible areas of the park, requiring only a short boat ride across the beautiful Nam Theun reservoir;
- Beautiful pine forests for camping, trekking and the development of an elephant watch tower overlooking the large salt lick;
- Assist the park in monitoring elephants at the salt licks;
- Tours can include kayaking, fishing and bird watching.

Investment Needs

- Construct an eco-friendly elephant watch tower that minimizes potential impacts on elephants and the environment, while at the same time maximizes viewing opportunities and ensures visitor safety;
- Equipment for kayaking, camera trapping, camping, fishing and bird watching;
- Train local guides on best-practice elephant behavior interpretation and improve their knowledge of other natural attractions for visitors;
- Conduct training courses on kayaking safety and first aid.

Accessibility

- One of the closest attractions to the park headquarters;
- Boats launch from the park headquarters or Thalang;
- Elephant salt licks are a short walk from the reservoir.

Partner Communities

- Navang Village (multi-ethnic Lao Teung)
- Sop On and Bouama vilages (Makong & Bo ethnicities)

PHOTO ALEX MCWILLIAM



Asian elephant

PHOTO PAUL ESHOO

Salt lick frequented by wild elephants



PHOTO PAUL ESHOO



Nam Xot Night Safari

Nahao Village

Nakai District, Khammouane Province

Totally Protected Zone of Nakai-Nam Theun

The Investment Opportunity

The Nam Xot River is easily accessible from Thalang and is one of two locations that has been opened up for tourism already. There are two campsites already constructed and short hikes to the Swamp Cypress and Tad Nyim Waterfall operated by the local community, Ban Nahao village, where there are local guesthouses. The upper Nam Xot River has not yet been developed but has excellent potential for wildlife tourism and adventures. A private operator is sought to develop a night safari similar to the Nam Nern Night Safari but with rafting or kayaking opportunities.

Unique Selling Points

- High chance of seeing wildlife, including rare sambar deer, otters, civets and primates;
- Long stretch of remote river perfect for adventure rafting or kayaking;
- Similar potential of the award-winning Nam

Nern Night Safari but with easier access;

- Hike to see the rare Swamp Cypress forest and camping along sandy river banks.

Investment Needs

- Training and equipment for rafting or kayaking, camera trapping, camping and bird watching;
- Improve existing campsite and existing trails to the Swamp Cypress forest;
- Train local guides on interpreting wildlife, forests and rivers;
- Training on water-based safety and first aid.

Accessibility

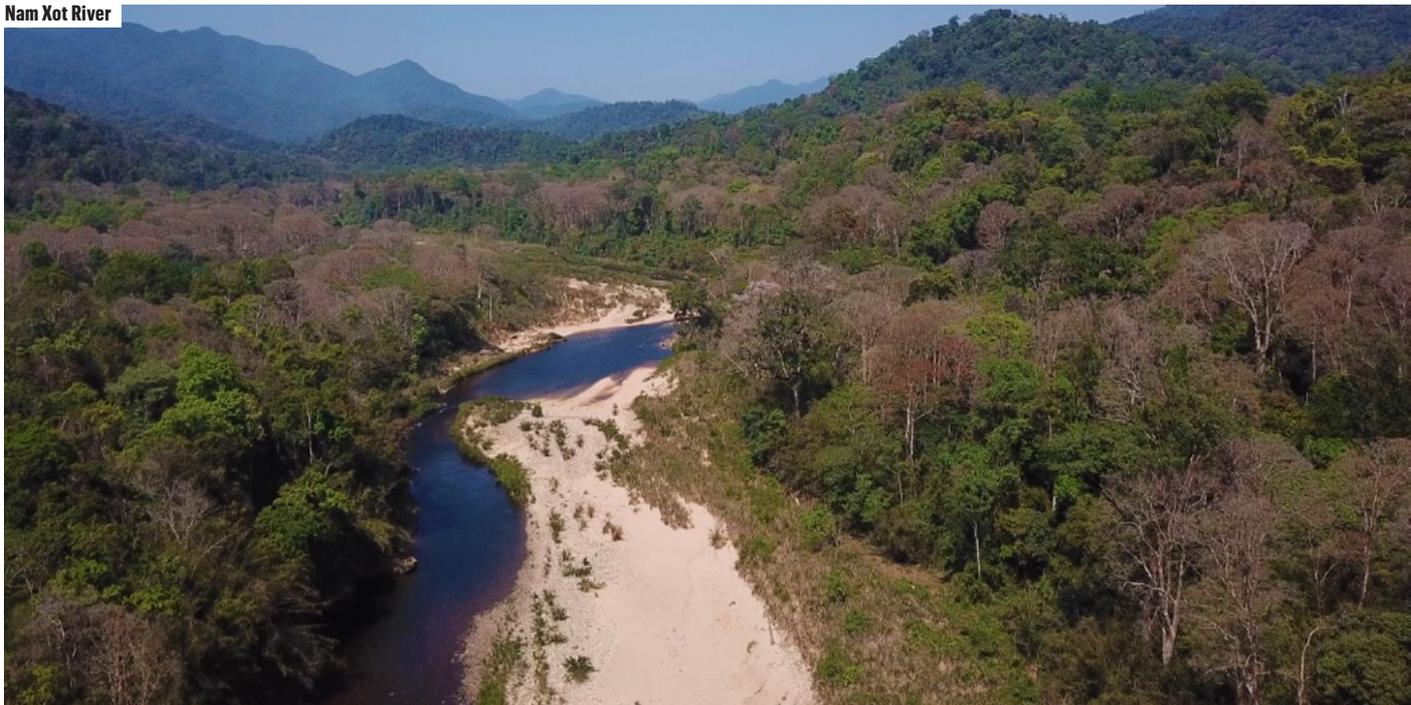
- One of the most accessible trips inside the park, located about 1.5-2 hours by boat from Thalang to the main village and 1-2 hours north to the night safari starting point;
- Boats can also be arranged from the national park headquarters.

Partner Communities

- Nahao Village (Makong and Salang ethnic minority groups)

PHOTO WMPA

Nam Xot River



Khoun Waterfall and On River Nature

Kon Kaen Village

Nakai District, Khammouane Province

Totally Protected Zone of Nakai-Nam Theun

The Opportunity

Tad Khoun is one of the parks' most iconic attractions and its most impressive waterfall. The waterfall can be visited as either a one- or two-day trip, depending on the type of boat used and interests of visitors. A longer trip provides good opportunities for bird watching, hiking and camping. A private sector operator is sought to develop the waterfall for both local and non-local visitors, including tour itineraries that include bird watching and wild flower treks.

Unique Selling Points

- The most iconic waterfall in Nakai Nam Theun National Park;
- Enjoy bird watching along the Nam On River on the way to the waterfall;
- A nearby national park substation can be used as a base for camping;

- Soft-adventure activities good for all ages and interests that include camping and nature trails around the waterfall.

Investment Needs

- Refurbish the existing campsite at the ranger station near the waterfall or develop a new campsite if preferred;
- Training and equipment for boating, birdwatching, and camping;
- Safety and first aid training for local guides;
- Build a nature walk loop around the waterfall and a trail to see wild flowers unique to the area.

Accessibility

- Boats depart from the park headquarters in Nakai town or Khon Kaen village located about 20 minutes from town;
- Access to the Nam On River and Tad Khoun Waterfall requires special permission.

Partner Communities

- Khon Kaen village (Makong ethnic minority)

PHOTOS PAUL ESHOO

Khoun Waterfall



Other Areas

There are many other areas with tourism potential in Nakai-Nam Theun, which investors may also consider:

- Thong Khouang area for 2-3-day wildlife trekking tours;
- Thong Khachaeng area for multi-day wilderness expeditions;
- Nam Theun River and reservoir for camping, kayaking and fishing;
- Nam Phiew hot springs in Khamkeuth District;
- Phou Aak Trail in Boualapha District;
- Teung area for trekking, mountain biking and ethnic minority homestays;
- Nam Nien Waterfall in Khamkeuth District for local visitors and soft adventure.

Investors are also welcome to propose for investment and development other attractions in Nakai-Nam Theun not listed in this investment prospectus.

PHOTOS PAUL ESHOO



Environmental & Socially Responsible Investment



Trekking through local villages



Multi-ethnic villages in Nakai

PHOTOS PAUL ESHOO

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.

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

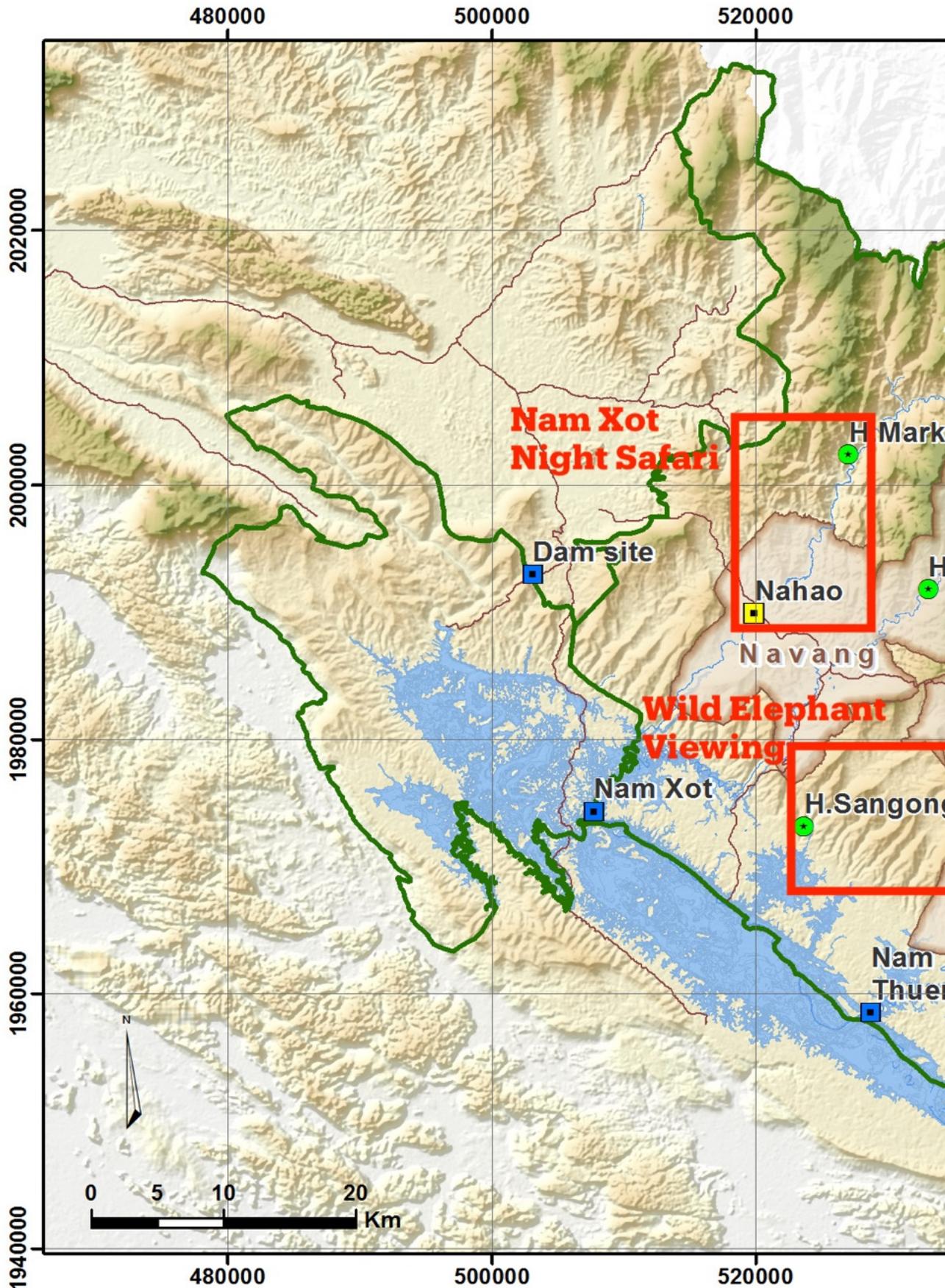
waste must be carried out, and no burning or burying waste allowed. For facilities in the CUZ and buffer zone, waste must be managed according to district waste management regulations, with maximum effort to reduce overall waste.

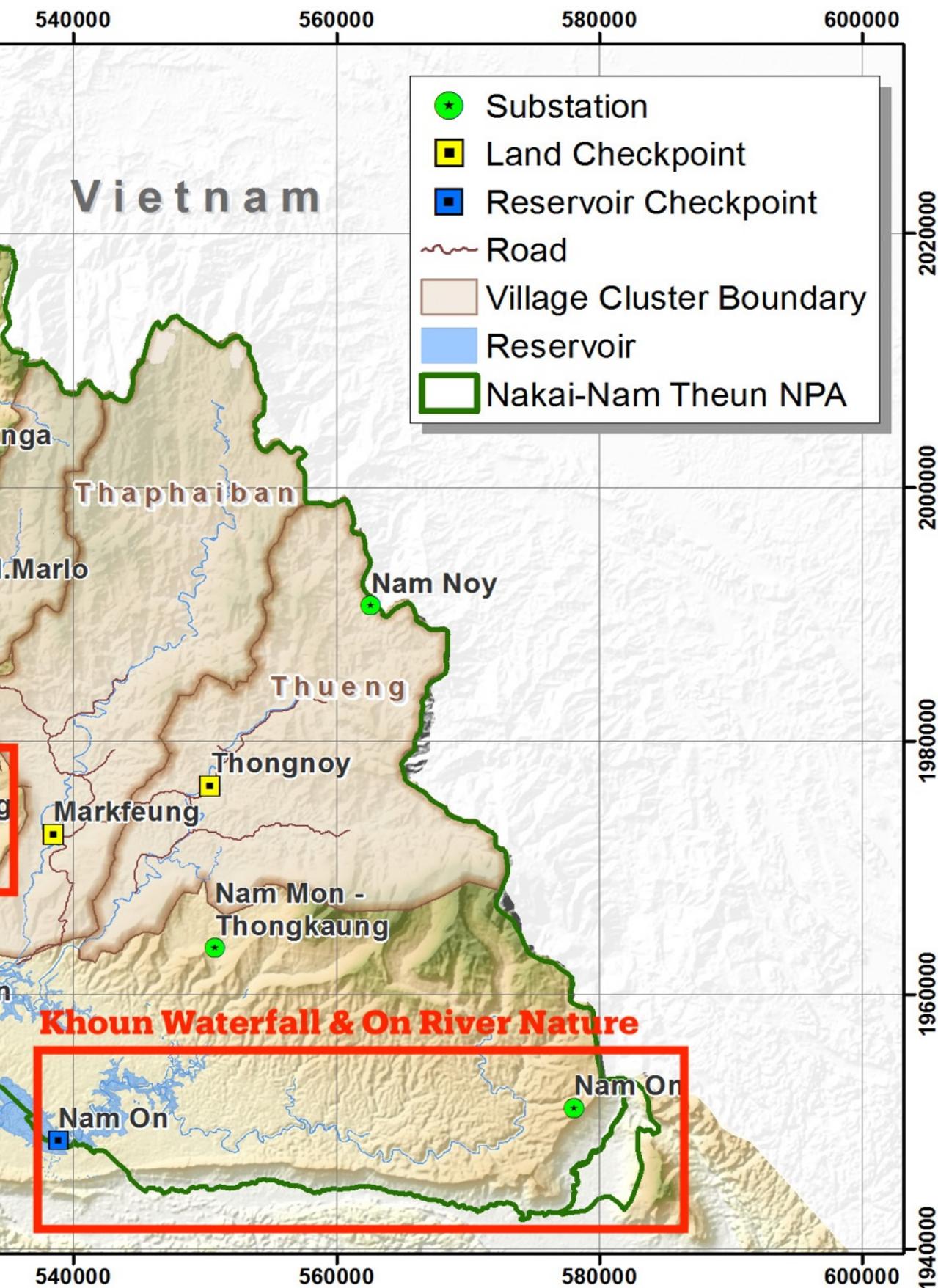
- Investment proposals that do not propose large infrastructure are not required to conduct a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) but must pass an Initial Environmental Examination (IEE) according to MAE regulations. Proposals for lodging and larger infrastructure may be required to conduct an EIA.
- All investments must be designed to limit impacts on the environment, landscape, water resources, and biodiversity. Architectural and landscape 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 and communities.
- All materials used for infrastructure inside the park must be reviewed by the authorities 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 Nakai-Nam Theun Zoning & Investment Areas





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 PAUL ESHOO



Trekking in the forest



Big rapids on the Nam Xot River

PROPOSAL INSTRUCTION AND PROCESS

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 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

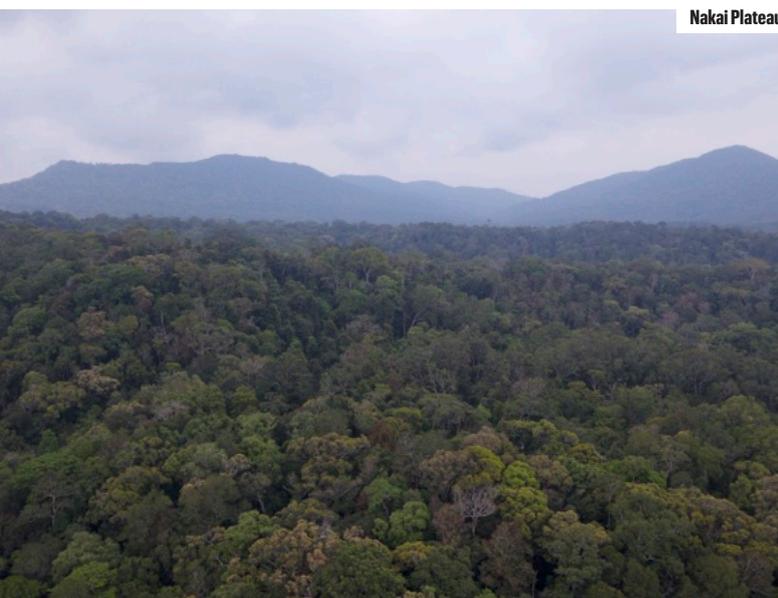
- Ecotourism experience (company profile & expert staff) **20%**
- Business vision, marketing strategy and itineraries/packages **20%**
- Involvement of local communities **20%**
- Benefits for conservation & environment **20%**
- Financial Plan & Terms & Conditions **20%**

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).



Nakai Plateau



Endangered swamp cypress

PHOTO ASSOCIATION ANOUACK / PAUL ESHOO





Nature is loved by what is best in us.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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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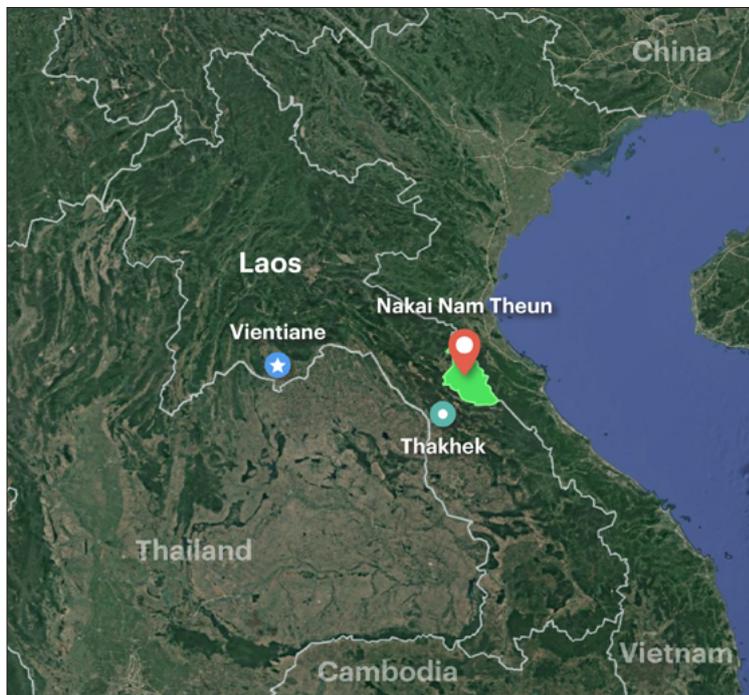
🌐 laoparks.la

Nakai-Nam Theun National Park

Location: Central Laos

Province: Khammouane and Bolikhamxay Provinces

“Nakai-Nam Theun National Park represents Lao PDR’s largest and most diverse natural forest habitats and is renowned for its rare endemic Annamite species, including the large-antlered muntjac. The park is seeking investors to develop, market and manage nature-based tourism attractions, including wild elephant spotting, tracking nocturnal species, and birdwatching tours. Nakai Nam Theun has a wealth of natural and cultural attractions....”



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.