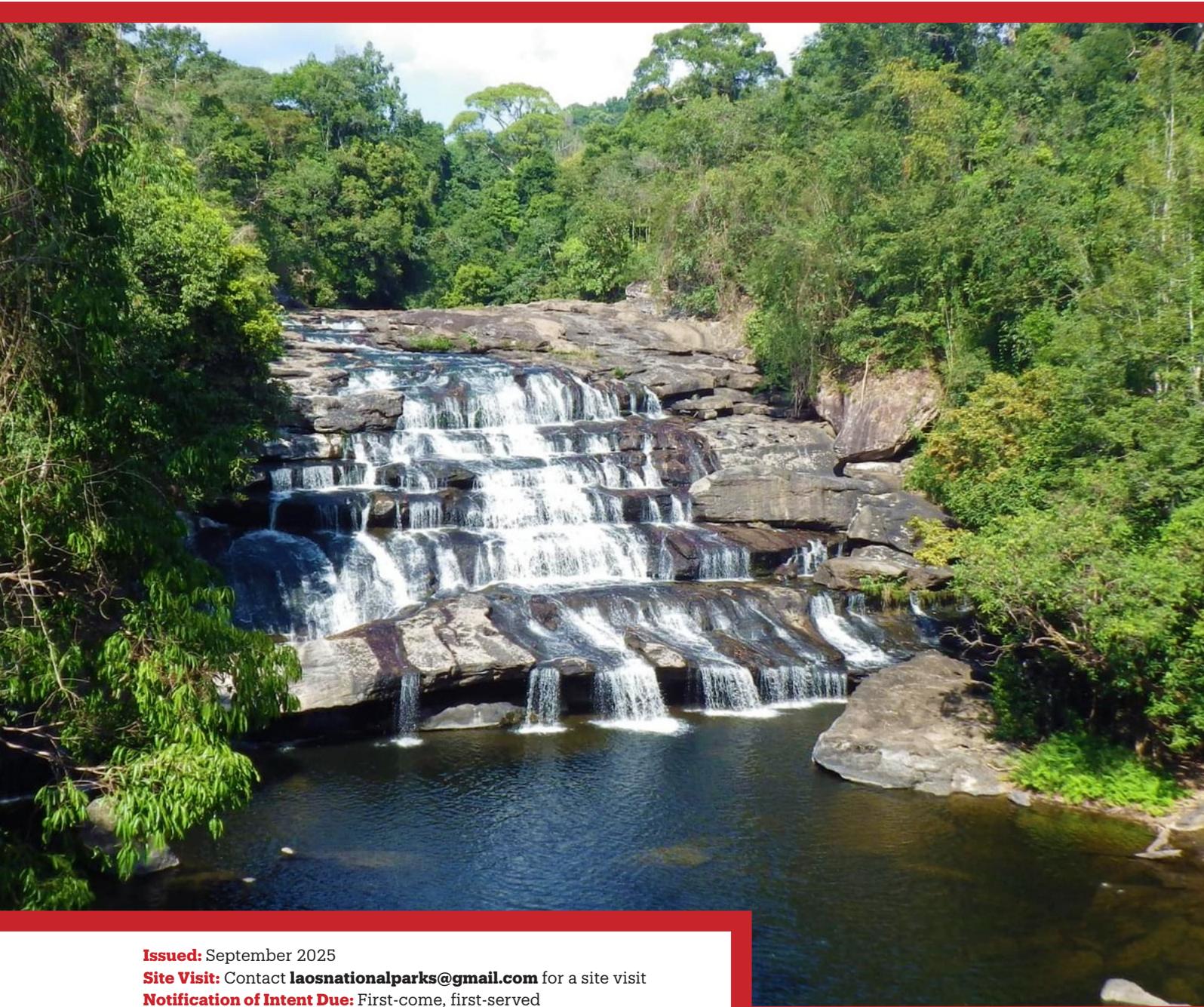


Private Sector Tourism Investment Opportunities

Phou Khao Khouay National Park

Investment Highlights 2025

- ➔ Xai Waterfall
- ➔ Leuk Waterfall
- ➔ Soy Voy Waterfall & Plateau



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



Phou Khao Khouay National Park
Lao PDR
laosnationalparks@gmail.com
www.laoparks.la



Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.

Lao Tzu



CONTENTS

Foreword.....	2
Tourism Potential.....	3
Key Attractions.....	4
Markets & Accessibility.....	5
Investment Opportunities	
➤ Xai Waterfall	7
➤ Leuk Waterfall	8
➤ Xoy Voy Waterfall & Plateau	9
➤ Other Areas	10
Zoning & Guidelines for Responsible Investments.....	11
Map of Zones & Investment Areas.....	12
Matching Funds Available.....	14
Terms & Conditions.....	15
Proposal Instructions & Process.....	16

PHOTOS DR. KLAUS SCHWETTMAN/DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY/PEŠHOJ



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 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.

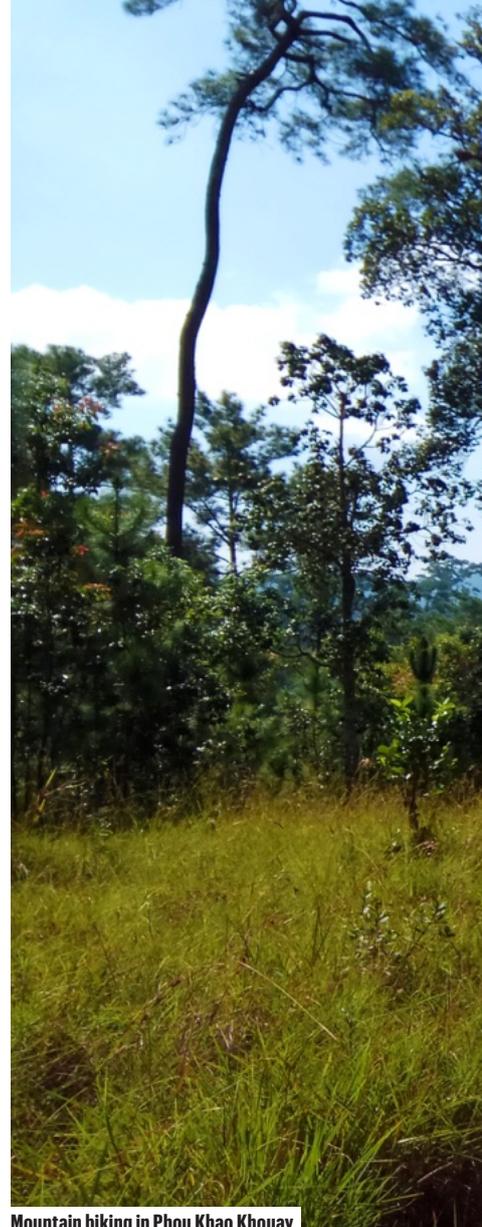
Laos has been making a name for itself as an international and regional destination for NBT, adventure tourism, ecotourism, and community-based tourism. Tourism has the potential to become Laos' top export and revenue earner, but this will require sustainable private sector investment and proactive public-private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

Phou Khao Khouay National Park is one of the closest protected areas to Vientiane and is popular for its iconic waterfalls, Tad Leuk and Tad Xay, as well as emerging as a leading mountain biking destination in Laos. Renowned for its rare orchid species, the park is seeking investors interested in working together with communities to develop, market and manage the park's iconic waterfalls in order to generate more value for local communities and visitors alike. Entrepreneurs with a love of nature, a long-term vision for sustainable ecotourism development and an eye for an investment opportunity should apply.



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



Mountain biking in Phou Khao Khouay

PHOTO RIK PONNE



Picturesque Tad Xay Waterfall





TAPPING INTO THE TOURISM POTENTIAL

Phou Khao Khouay - The most popular national park in Laos



- ➔ As one of the closest parks to Vientiane, Phou Khao Khouay has the greatest potential for attracting large volumes of both local visitors and international tourists.
- ➔ The park is located just 40 km to the east of Vientiane and can be reached by bicycle from the city center, regularly attracting weekend mountain bikers. It is one of the most popular mountain biking destinations in the country.
- ➔ Phou Khao Khouay is well-known for orchid treks, with more than 50 species of orchids having been identified around Tad Xay Waterfall alone.
- ➔ The park is a traditional destination for local visitors who visit the two main waterfalls, Tad Xay and Tad Leuk, which are easily accessible by car. The park has also been one of the only parks in the country where visitors can camp on their own.
- ➔ To the northeast the park borders the Nam Ngum Reservoir, Southeast Asia's largest manmade lake. Two smaller reservoirs, Ang Nam Leuk and Ang Nam Mang 3 inside the park, offer opportunities for recreation and tourism.
- ➔ A new resort, the Nam Pien Yorla Pa, has opened on the southern border of the park to tap into the growing local market for soft adventure.

PHOTO DR. KLAUS SCHWETTMAN



KEY ATTRACTIONS

Phou Khao Khouay National Park – A nature haven right on the doorstep of Vientiane

- **Waterfalls:** The two iconic waterfalls in Phou Khao Khouay are Tad Leuk and Tad Xai, which are popular spots for camping, picnicking, swimming, and nature walks.
- **Habitat:** Diverse array of habitat and forest types including pine, evergreen, mixed deciduous, and dry dipterocarp forests, grasslands and bamboo groves.
- **Orchids:** Hotspot for orchids with 250 species and one endemic (*Dendrobium lamyai*) having been identified so far. Experts believe there may be up to 300 orchid species.
- **Butterflies** are numerous in the park and easily identified with photographic guides.
- **Rivers:** Three major rivers (Nam Mang, Nam Gngong and Nam Leuk) dissect the park.
- **Birds:** A comprehensive list of “Birds of Phou Khao Khouay – A Checklist for Eco-tourists” compiled in 2004 recorded 174 species, including the rare Green Peafowl.
- **Mammals:** 26 mammal species have been confirmed including the rare Sunda pangolin, Malayan flying lemur, slow and pygmy loris, Payre’s langur, black giant gibbon, white-cheeked gibbon, Asiatic black bear, sun bear, hog badger, leopard and marbled cat.
- **Vat Phabath** is located at the entrance to the park and plays host to one of the largest and most vibrant Buddhist festivals in the greater Vientiane area.
- **Community-based tourism** is a hallmark of the park, especially in Ban Hat Khai & Ban Na.

PHOTO DR. KLAUS SCHWETTMAN



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Xay Waterfall in the dry season

Key Markets

- ↻ Domestic tourists and expatriate residents of Vientiane.
- ↻ Mountain biking enthusiasts and bird watchers.
- ↻ Independent travelers visiting Vientiane or en route to Central and Southern Laos.
- ↻ Thai weekend visitors entering Laos from Vientiane.

Visitor Statistics

Area	2021	2022	2023
Xay	300	400-500	500-1000
Leuk	100	150-200	150-200
Soy Voy	1500	3000	3000-4000
Total	1900	3550-3700	3650-5200

Accessibility

Located at the doorstep of Vientiane and at the crossroads between north and central Laos.

- ↻ **Vientiane:** Some of the park's mountain biking trails and key attractions such as the Nam Pien Yorla Pa are a short drive of 25-40km from city center, or 80km to Tad Leuk and Tad Xay waterfalls.
- ↻ **Plain of Jars:** Stop at the park when en route to Phonsavanh and the Plain of Jars (225km/6 hours) and Long Cheng.
- ↻ **The Loop & Central Laos:** Located on the path from Vientiane to Central Laos, including the Rock Viewpoint (185km/4 hours), Tham Kong Lor Cave (230km/5 hours), and Thakek (260km/5.5 hours).



Camping at Tad Leuk

Xay Waterfall



PHOTOS DR. K. SCHWETTMAN



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Featured Opportunities

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

- ④ **Tad Xai Waterfall**
- ④ **Tad Leuk Waterfall**
- ④ **Tad Xoy Voy Waterfall & Plateau**

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.



Tad Xai Waterfall and Cliffs

Ban Hat Khai Village, Thaphabhat District, Bolikhamxay Province.

Controlled Use Zone of Phou Khao Khouay National Park

The Opportunity

Xai Waterfall is one of the park's top attractions and the most iconic waterfall in any of the protected areas in Laos. Ban Hat Khai village has been managing community-based tourism around the waterfall with guided orchid treks, boat trips, homestays and a community guesthouse. However, services and facilities are quite basic given the waterfall's popularity and importance as a national tourism attraction. A private sector partner is sought to work with the community to improve and manage services and tours around the waterfall.

Unique Selling Points

- One of the best-known waterfalls in the country, with a large domestic and expatriate market in nearby Vientiane;
- Famous for its seven-step cascades and large lagoon;
- Impressive giant trees and dense forest;
- Renowned for its orchids with established orchid treks;
- 50m-high Pha Xay cliffs and other natural attractions, ideal for soft-adventure
- Established community-based tourism program with experienced village

Investment Needs

- Restaurant and visitor center at the waterfall;
- Improved interpretation signage, viewing areas, picnic areas and campsite;
- Develop new activities, such as ziplining and mountain biking;
- Ecolodge or high-quality camping/glamping;
- Improved waste management facilities.

Accessibility

- 120km along paved Route 13, 11km on dirt road passing Ban Hat Khai village, and a short walk to reach the waterfall.

Partner Communities

- Ban Hat Khai Village, an ethnic Lao Loum village.



Pha Xay 1

PHOTO DR. K. SCHWETMAN



Rare orchids in Phou Khao Khouay



Stunning mountain landscapes

PHOTOS DR. K. SCHWETMAN / P. ESHOO



INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Tad Leuk Waterfall

Thaphabhat District, Bolikhamxay Province
Controlled Use Zone of Phou Khao Khouay National Park

The Opportunity

Tad Leuk Waterfall is one of the most iconic waterfalls in Laos and one of the closest natural attractions to Vientiane, making it very popular. The spacious area around the waterfall is ideal for a peaceful and quiet retreat, recreational group gatherings or family picnics. The park visitor center has some information about the flora and fauna of the park, but it is in need of modernization. It is a great place for camping and has many nature trails or varying lengths. A private sector partner is sought to revitalize the facilities and activities, including the visitor center, restaurant, campsite, and trails, and develop new activities such as ziplining.

Unique Selling Points

- One of the most well-known waterfall attractions in the country with a large domestic market from the nearby capital city;
- Existing infrastructure, including a visitor center, campsite, and nature trails as a base for any new investments;
- Potential for ziplining and adventure activities.

Investment Needs

- Refurbish the restaurant, visitor center, campsite and picnic areas;
- Develop new activities, such as ziplining and mountain biking;
- Improve interpretation signage at the waterfall and surrounding attractions;
- Training and equipment for camping and other activities;
- Improve waste management facilities.

Accessibility

- 120km along paved Route 13 from Vientiane and a short drive along a dirt road (17km) to reach Tad Leuk Waterfall itself.

Partner Communities

- Ban Houay Leuk Village, an ethnic Lao Loum village;
- Ban Thabok Village, an ethnic Lao Loum Village

PHOTO DR. KLAUS SCHWETTMAN





INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Xoy Voy Waterfall & Plateau

Xaythani District, Vientiane Capital
Controlled Use Zone of Phou Khao Khouay

PHOTO DEPARTMENT OF FORESTRY

The Opportunity

The most accessible area of the park from Vientiane, Tad Xoy Voy Waterfall is a popular spot for picnickers and mountain bikers. The site has a small restaurant operated by locals from Ban Nakhanthoung village, which caters to visitors and cyclists taking a break in this area. The plateau above the waterfall has spectacular views of the capital, rocky outcrops and forests with remaining rare hardwood species and wildlife. It is ideal for camping, orchid treks and bird watching. A private sector investor is sought to develop the full range of ecotourism offers aimed at the domestic, expatriate and international tourist markets.

Unique Selling Points

- One of the closest access points to Phou Khao Khouay from Vientiane with the potential for soft adventure for the domestic, expatriate and international markets;
- Existing flow of picnickers and cyclists to the site;
- Ban Khanthoung village is an ethnic Lao Loum community known for its Buddhist temple and large Buddha image.

Investment Needs

- Develop guided and self-guided walks, mountain biking and camping, including trail improvements, footbridge, road signs, railings, bird watching tower and campsite;
- Improve restaurant to serve both Laotian and international food;
- Local Eco-friendly accommodation with up to 10 units for overnight stays;
- Training for local tour guides and villagers employed in the restaurant or accommodation, as well as the purchase of equipment for use with visitors to the park;
- Support for the local vat (temple) and the community of resident monks.

Accessibility

- Easy access via a 62-km paved road from Vientiane to Ban Khanthoung village and 5km by dirt road to the waterfall;
- The attraction is located along a popular cycling route for cyclists based in Vientiane.

Partner Communities

- Ban Nakhanthoung village, Xaythani District, Vientiane

Other Areas

There are many other areas with tourism potential in Phou Khao Khouay, which investors may also consider:

- Houay Thao Waterfall, Thaphabath District, Bolikhamxay Province
- Sa Wa Waterfall, Thoulakhom District, Vientiane Province
- Phou Pha Daeng, Thoulakhom District, Vientiane Province
- Ban Na Watchtower
- Many mountain biking and hiking routes found throughout the park.

Investors are also welcome to propose for investment and development other attractions in Phou Khao Khouay not listed in this investment prospectus.



Mountain biking



Ban Na Watch Tower

PHOTO RIK PONNE / DR. K. SCHWETTMAN

Environmental & Socially Responsible Investment



Idyllic stretches of river

Zoning

- For investments inside the **Totally Protected Zone (TPZ)**, no permanent infrastructure is allowed. Only campsites, trails, walkways, and viewing platforms 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 of waste is allowed. For facilities in the CUZ and



The way to Phou Khao Khuay

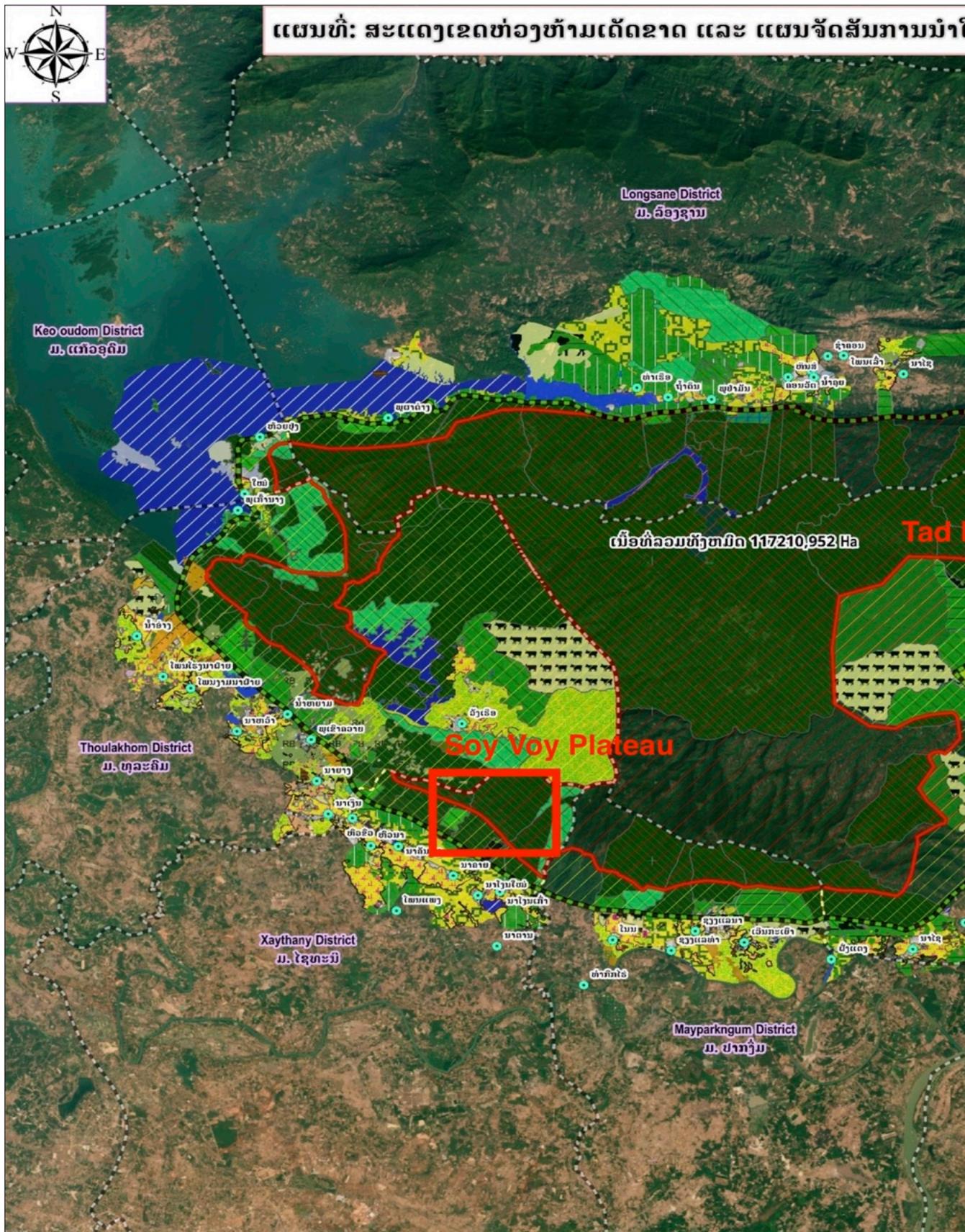
- buffer zone, waste must be managed according to district waste management regulations, with maximum effort to reduce overall waste and recycle as much as possible.
- Investment proposals that do not propose large infrastructure are not required to conduct a full Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) 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 surrounding 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)

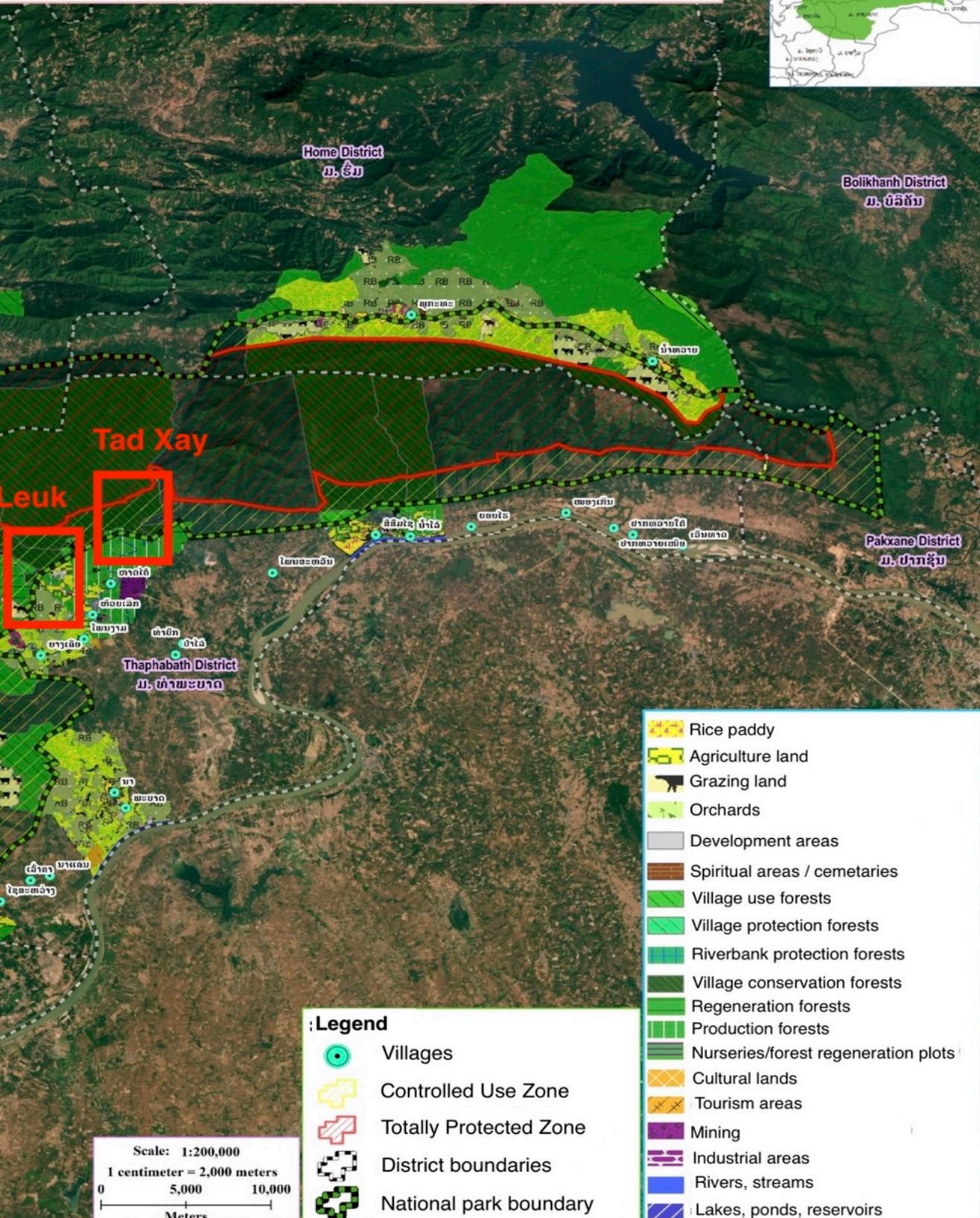
- Local communities in the vicinity of the national park must be partners in developing and managing the investment.
- Local communities in the vicinity of the national park must be consulted during the proposal and negotiation process.
- Villagers must be trained and hired by the investor as local guides,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

PHOTO DR. K. SCHWETMAN / P. ESHOO

Map of Nakai-Nam Theun Zoning & Investment Areas



ໃຊ້ທີ່ດິນຂອງບ້ານເປົ້າໝາຍ ໃນເຂດ ອຸທິຍານແຫ່ງຊາດ ພູເຂົາຄວາຍ



Legend

- Villages
- Controlled Use Zone
- Totally Protected Zone
- District boundaries
- National park boundary

- Rice paddy
- Agriculture land
- Grazing land
- Orchards
- Development areas
- Spiritual areas / cemeteries
- Village use forests
- Village protection forests
- Riverbank protection forests
- Village conservation forests
- Regeneration forests
- Production forests
- Nurseries/forest regeneration plots
- Cultural lands
- Tourism areas
- Mining
- Industrial areas
- Rivers, streams
- Lakes, ponds, reservoirs

Scale: 1:200,000
 1 centimeter = 2,000 meters
 0 5,000 10,000
 Meters

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

Boat trip into the park from Hat Khai



Local trails for motorbiking and cycling



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 attached 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%
- Support for sustainable conservation 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 DR. K. SCHWETTMAN



Signage for visitors



Local guides in Phou Khao Khouay





Nature always wears the colors of the spirit.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Contact us for further enquiries about private sector tourism investment opportunities

**Protected Area Management Division,
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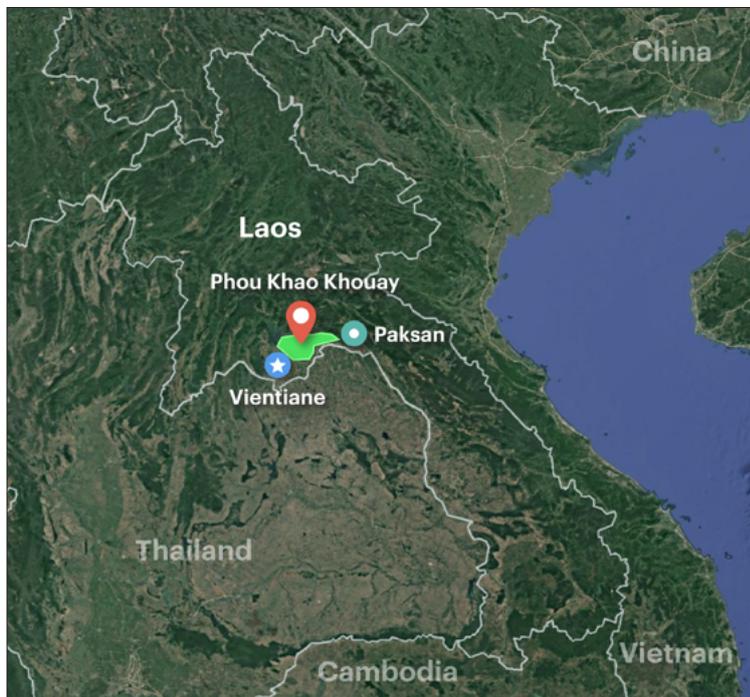
🌐 laoparks.la

Phou Khao Khouay National Park

Location: Central Laos

Province: Vientiane, Bolikhamxay and Xaisomboun Provinces

“Phou Khao Khouay National Park is one of the closest protected areas to Vientiane and is popular for its iconic waterfalls, Tad Leuk and Tad Xay, as well as emerging as leading mountain biking destination in Laos. Renowned for its rare orchid species, the park is seeking investors interested in working together with communities to develop, market and manage the park’s iconic waterfalls in order to generate more value for local communities and visitors alike.”



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.