

Private Sector Tourism Investment Opportunities

# Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum National Protected Area

Investment Highlights 2025

➔ Phou Sam Soum Plateau Viewpoint



**Issued:** September 2025

**Site Visit:** Contact [laosnationalparks@gmail.com](mailto: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



**Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum  
National Protected Area**

**Lao PDR**

[laosnationalparks@gmail.com](mailto:laosnationalparks@gmail.com)

[www.laoparks.la](http://www.laoparks.la)





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## 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, Laos' 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, 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.

Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum NPA is one of Laos' newest protected areas, established on March 15 2022. It represents high elevation habitat of the Northern Annamite Mountains and has one of the highest mountains in Laos, Phou Sam Soum, which stands at 2700m. The park's total area of 98,873ha is located in Xieng Khouang Province's Khoun and Mok districts, with 42 ethnic Hmong and Tai Phuan villages. The park is linked with the Nam Ngiep-Nam San-Nam Pheuk National Protection Forests and is important for protecting rare bird species and endangered plant species, including the Lao cypress tree. Entrepreneurs with a love of nature, a long-term vision for sustainable ecotourism development and an eye for an investment opportunity are sought to help promote this unique area.



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#### TAPPING INTO THE TOURISM POTENTIAL

## Phou Sam Soum and the Road to the Plain of Jars

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- ➔ Phou Sam Soum is on the route between the Plain of Jars, a World Heritage Site in Xieng Khouang Province and one of the country's most important historical attractions, and the capital city of Vientiane.
- ➔ It is only about 100km from Phonsavan town, which has daily flights from Vientiane, and is about 70km from one of the most iconic Buddha images in Laos in Muang Khoum District.
- ➔ Bird watching and nature enthusiasts living in Vientiane are visiting Phou Sam Soum in growing numbers with the destination just a one-day drive from the capital (6+ hours / 330km). Weekend birders typically do the trip in two days with an early departure from the capital.
- ➔ As Phou Sam Soum has no official tourism developed to date, it has great potential for first movers to invest.
- ➔ The viewpoint of Phou Sam Soum offers one of the best views of the Northern Annamite Range and one of the most spectacular morning and evening views of the "Sea of Clouds" in the region.



**KEY ATTRACTIONS**

# **Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum - Peaks of the Northern Annamite Mountains**

- High mountain peak with views of the “Sea of Clouds” and panoramic scenic views.
- Birding is growing in popularity as the destination is a one-day drive from Vientiane.
- More than 200 species of birds recorded on eBird since 2017 with key species including scarlet-faced liocichla, red-tailed minla, yellow-browed tit, green cochoa, and spot-breasted parrotbill.
- Endemic and resident species of the Northern Annamites found only at higher altitudes.
- Unique montane forest vegetation and unusual flora.
- Remote Hmong and Tai Phuan villages practicing traditional livelihoods.
- Cool weather year-round with reasonable accessibility from Vientiane.



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The "Sea of Clouds"

MARKETS & ACCESSIBILITY

## Key Markets

- Independent travelers traveling between Xieng Khouang (Phonsavanh and Plain of Jars), Vientiane and Central Laos (Bolikhamsay and Khammouane Provinces) by motorbike, bicycle or private car.
- Small adventure group tours interested in traveling the scenic route from the Plain of Jars to Vientiane or on to other attractions on "The Loop" in Bolikhamsay and Khammouane provinces.
- Weekend birders and nature enthusiasts from Vientiane, including both Lao and expatriate residents.

### Visitor Statistics 2021-2023

District	2021		2022		2023	
	Total Visitors	Foreign Visitors	Total Visitors	Foreign Visitors	Total Visitors	Foreign Visitors
<b>Khoun District</b>	5737	3972	5932	2971	11,200	3100
<b>Mok District</b>	3370	296				

## Accessibility

- Roads leading to Phou Sam Soum are paved.
- The park is about 70km from the Muang Khoun District turnoff (1-2 hours), which is about 30km from Phonsavanh Airport and the Plain of Jars.
- The park can be reach in a one-day drive from Vientiane (6+ hours/330km). Many birders leave the capital very early in the morning to arrive in the afternoon for same-day birding.
- Visitors can continue south to the Rock Viewpoint (5.5 hours/240km) for ziplining in the Stone Forest or on to "The Loop" in Khammouane and Bolikhamsay provinces.
- The Nam Phao International Border Crossing to Vietnam on Route 8 is also reached in one day (6 hours/260km).

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Wild strawberries



Motorbike touring



## INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### Highlighted Opportunities

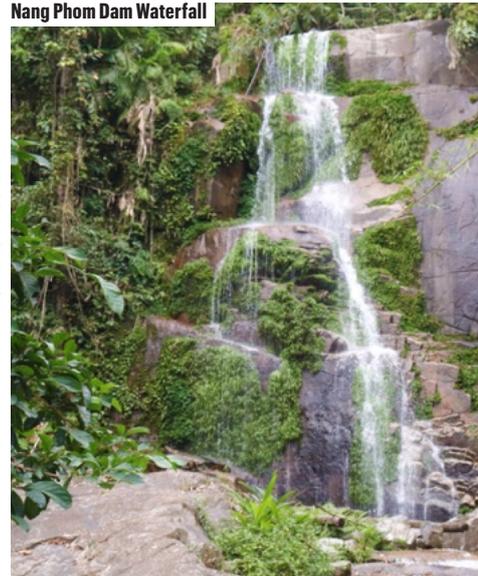
There are two featured tourism investment opportunities based on park management and stakeholder input:

- Phou Sam Soum Plateau Viewpoint
- Other Areas

#### Other Opportunities:

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

Nang Phom Dam Waterfall



PHOTOS: ALAOTHEWORLD



## Phou Sam Soum Viewpoint

Khoun & Mok Mai Districts, Xieng Khouang Province  
**Controlled Use Zone** of Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum

### The Opportunity

Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum NPA has the second highest mountain in Lao PDR, Phou Sam Soum, which has spectacular views of the Northern Annamite Mountain range. Visitors can see the “Sea of Clouds” at sunrise when camping at one of the popular viewpoints. The area is also important for birds species and is a growing attraction for birders from Vientiane. A private-sector investor is sought to develop facilities and tours at one of Phou Sam Soum’s viewpoints, including bungalows, camping and restaurant facilities, as well as bird watching and nature tours.

### Unique Selling Points

- Second highest mountain in Laos;
- Spectacular views of the “Sea of Clouds”;
- Excellent bird watching of endemic and resident species of Annamite high-altitude forests;
- Cool and refreshing climate year-round;
- Easy camping suitable for all ages and abilities;
- Remote ethnic minority Hmong and Tai Puan villages.

### Investment Needs

- Low-impact bungalows and campsite with key facilities: water tank, solar power (no electricity), toilets and showers, waste management system, parking area, tent platforms, as well as information and interpretation signage;
- Nature trail with bird watching tower;
- Equipment for camping and bird watching;
- Training for local guides.

### Accessibility

- Paved roads to both village starting points;
- 4WDs and motorbikes can take the dirt roads to the viewpoints, and some improvements may be possible with matching funds.

### Partner Communities:

- Viewpoint **Option 1:** Nahome village (Tai Puan ethnicity);
- Viewpoint **Option 2:** Nam Kaeng village (Hmong ethnicity).



Hmong villages near the viewpoint



## Other Areas

**There are other areas with tourism potential in Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum including:**

- Thong Waterfall
- Nang Phom Dam Waterfall (Black Hair Waterfall) at Peun village located 66km from Khoun District.
- Tham San Cave at Youak Moun village about 56km from Mok District center.

**Investors are also welcome to propose for investment and development other attractions in Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum not listed in this investor prospectus.**



Hmong Villages in Mok District



Motorbike touring

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## Environmental & Socially Responsible Investment



Scarlet-faced Liocichla



Sunset over the mountains

### 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, and other similar roles in the hospitality sector.

## 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	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b> (can include in-kind contributions of materials and labor)
Upgrade existing facilities and equipment	<b>70%</b>	<b>30%</b> (can include in-kind contributions of materials and labor)
Staff/Community Training	<b>90%</b>	<b>10%</b> (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)	<b>70%</b>	<b>30%</b>
New or improved websites, brochures, marketing campaigns, marketing materials/advertising campaigns	<b>90%</b>	<b>10%</b> (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**

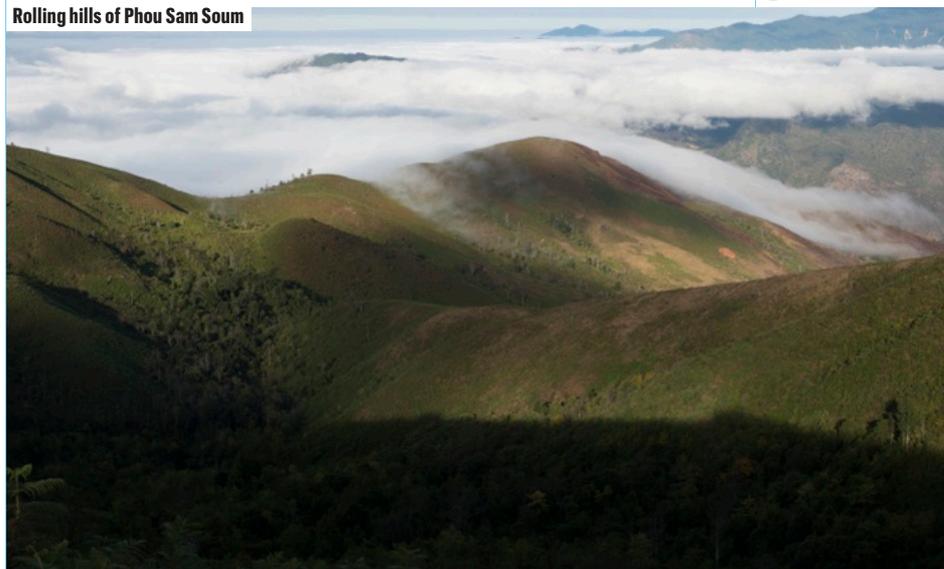
- Relevant taxes including 10% VAT are required according to VAT and other tax laws.
- Labour Law must be followed, including the payment of Labor taxes and fees.
- Investments in remote areas (Zone 1) are entitled to a profit tax exemption for up to 10 years.

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Trekking in YNPSS



Rolling hills of Phou Sam Soum



## 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](mailto: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](mailto: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).

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Paved road leading to Phou Sam Soum



Sea of Clouds from the viewpoint





**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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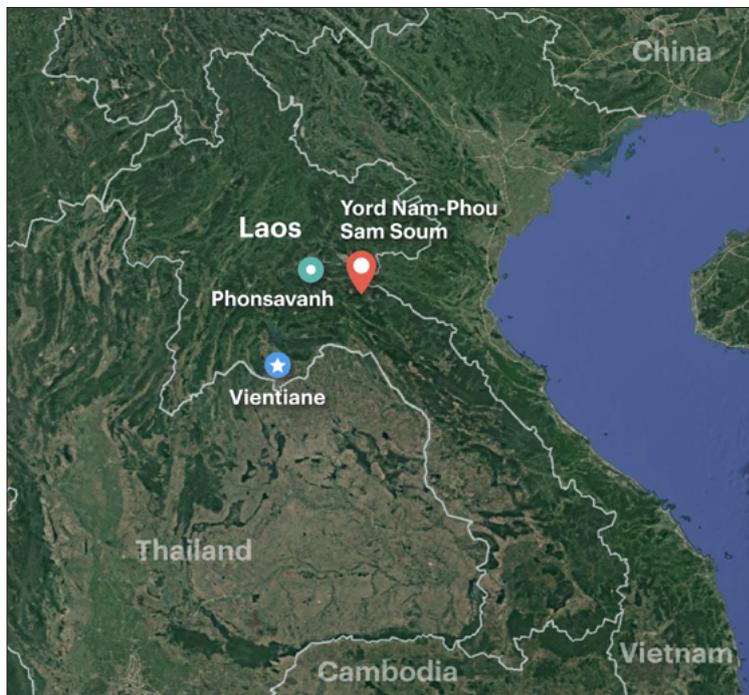
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#### **Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum National Protected Area**

**Location:** Northern Laos

**Province:** Xieng Khouang Province

“Yord Nam Mo-Phou Sam Soum NPA was established in 2022. It represents high elevation habitat of the Northern Annamite Mountains and has one of the highest mountains in Laos, Phou Sam Soum (2700m). The park’s total area of 98,873ha is located in Xieng Khouang Province’s Khoun and Mok districts, with 42 ethnic Hmong and Tai Phuan villages.”



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.