

## Terms of Reference

# Study on the different governance models for managing protected areas in Lao PDR

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## I- KARST Project

### *a) Context and strategic issues of the project*

This study is part of the Khammouane-Ardèche Territorial Strategy (KARST) project, led by the NGO Tétraktys and the local government in charge of the management of the Chauvet Cave (SMERGC); it is funded by the French Agency for Development.

The KARST project consists in supporting the Khammouane Province in the sustainable management of the natural and cultural heritage and eco-tourism development. It is a comprehensive approach dealing with issues related to education, conservation and preservation and aiming at developing the economy on a long-term basis in sensitive natural areas.

The Khammouane Province wishes to become more attractive through territorial branding especially on sites related to karstic landforms. The relevant territory of the KARST program is key to reach these goals. A management plan will enable the development of local and international tourism in the area while protecting it from the potential negative consequences of an increase in tourist flow. With the KARST program, the Khammouane Province is challenging its coming management and needs to ensure a sustainable tourism development in surface and subterranean karst areas.

The Province of Khammouane has significant tourism development potential with the presence of spectacular karst sites shaped by its tropical savanna climate and natural areas rich in flora and fauna. With the development of tourism in this region, issues are emerging and call for adapted answers. The main objective of KARST is to support Khammouane Province local authorities in the sustainable management of their territory. In this framework, geological heritage located in the national protected area of Phou Hin Poun will be preserved and promoted, by strengthening local authorities' capacities and by creating space for exchange of experience enabling for the emergence of new ideas related for sustainable tourism development.

The drafting of a management plan is a relevant way to guide this development in order to offer a qualitative touristic destination to visitors but also to control externalities linked to tourism. Some destinations in Lao PDR have failed in controlling the touristic development of their territory. The issue for Khammouane Province is to focus on this global and innovating approach for steering its development.

### *b) Partners involved*

KARST project counts with funding partners (AFD) and technical (Tétraktys and IFREEMIS). Tétraktys benefits from a knowledge of the field and of an expertise related to nature and community based tourism. IFREEMIS has a wide network and expertise related to promotion of subterranean environments.

## II- OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

### *a) General objective*

The main objective of the project is to enable an exchange of experience between Ardèche and Khammouane, whom are sharing common geological and natural heritage features. Ardèche is facing / has faced face the same issues to which Khammouane is currently facing.

During this first 3 years phase, the idea is to raise awareness of local authorities, institutional stakeholders and communities on the stakes related to protection and promotion of geological heritage.

### *b) Specific Objective*

- i) To allow the preservation and promotion of karst landscapes thanks to the development of information and communication tools around the main sites
- ii) To share knowledge about geological heritage during events and awareness raising workshops towards institutional, youngsters, tourists' audience
- iii) To strengthen tourism local authorities' capacities in the sustainable management of their territory

### *c) Expected results*

Activities planned in the frame of the project:

- Drafting of a complete territorial diagnosis (geoheritage, anthropology, tourism)
- Drafting of a management plan for geoheritage and identified touristic sites
- Organization of trainings, awareness raising workshops and implementation of communication and information tools
- In a reflection initiated on the benefit and need to set up a governance adapted to Phou Hin Poun territory in order to address this triple objective of protection of natural heritage, knowledge sharing on karst landscapes and local economic development thanks to nature based tourism.

## III- Context of the study

This study of the natural tourist sites' governance systems in Lao PDR will complement the territorial diagnosis of the Phou Hin Phoun carried out within the framework of KARST project. The results will be linked together with the recommendations provided by the studies on geo-heritage, tourist infrastructures and anthropological characteristics of the Phou Hin Phoun protected area.

In addition to this study, another research will be carried out on governance models within various Asian and European natural tourist sites and protected areas. The expertise mission presented here is to be considered in parallel of the other in order to provide an overview of the existing systems for natural sites' collective governance.

At the end of the two studies led in parallel, their results will be pooled and cross-referenced in order to be able to identify the collaborative and participatory management model(s) that best suit the local dynamics. It is a question of figuring out what are the principles of governance which would involve the local communities in the good management (preservation, development and promotion) of Phou Hin Phoun area, by imagining at least mechanisms for consulting these populations.

All of this research will feed into the future management plan, constituting its bases, a document necessary for the sustainable development of tourist activities in the area.

Highlighting good practices, experiences in other provinces or regions of the world and the lessons that have been learned is key to explain how a model is useful and reassure local partners regarding its effectiveness and sustainability.

## IV- Description of the deliverables

This study should determine all the models of governance for the management of natural tourist sites existing in Lao PDR, as well as all the models currently developing. To do so, the legal frameworks will have to be carefully studied and the authorities and international organizations will have to be involved. Ultimately, it is about drawing up a complete picture of everything that could legally exist in terms of inter-municipal and cooperative management / shared governance, including models which do not yet exist for the moment but which are legally possible. The expert should pay particular attention to both successful experiences and failures, analyzing the reasons of the difficulties encountered.

The expert will have to identify Laotian natural sites presenting a tourist activity and of analyzing the way in which they function locally (inhabitants, local authorities, private actors, international organizations...), as well as on national level (ministries, international organizations), even international (if part of an international network. EX: UNESCO).

More specifically, it will be necessary to put these analyzes in perspective with the area of action identified, the north of the protected area of Phou Hin Poun, where the International Union for the Conservation of Nature is also working on the establishment of a sustainable governance. In order to avoid overlaps, to optimize information exchange and to involve local stakeholders from the start, it will be necessary to include the reflection on the management plan of the geological heritage and on the governance of the protected area, to the reflection developed by IUCN on Phou Hin Poun's management plan.

The general objective of the study is to take stock of the existing modes of governance for natural tourist sites in Lao PDR. It will first be necessary to adopt a didactic approach, of outreach around the basic topics which are:

- why should management be organized and planned,
- how the management plan and the governance structure work together,
- what is good governance (collective management of a territory),

- what characteristics of natural sites in Lao PDR justify the establishment of an appropriate management system (land pressure from private companies, pressure on natural resources, law enforcement), etc.

Indeed, the institutions in Lao PDR, in particular at the provincial level, are characterized by a weak institutional capacity. It will be important to explain and illustrate with concrete examples the need for good governance of natural spaces developed for tourism. In addition, special attention should be paid to the simplest management systems to set up / maintain and the less costly possible, in order to allow the targeted territory to carry out a sustainable action.

The specific objectives are to list the good practices which have been developed and are likely to be duplicated on Phou Hin Phoun territory; to identify the tools and mechanisms to implement to effectively involve all the stakeholders concerned (inhabitants, local authorities, international organizations, private sector, experts, academics) in the governance of the territory; to suggest viable models of governance for the authorities of the province of Khammouane. It is also a matter of identifying the applicable national and local laws, identifying the key institutions and entities (or even people) in order to develop a management method in adequation with the stakeholders on the territory (the populations, the authorities and IUCN).

### List of expected deliverables:

A summary document, which will then be translated into Lao and English / French, which must:

- Explain the different legislative frameworks applicable in Lao PDR and in the KARST project area of action related to the management of protected areas, national parks and natural tourist sites
- Describe the administrative organization of the area of action: administrative levels, skills, resources, budget, roles, organization, number, size scale, etc.
- Describe the stakeholders involved in the tourism development of the protected area located in the area of action: typology of actors (private, public, institutions, community), role, relationship between the different actors, place of activities, etc.
- Present the different forms of hybrid management possible in Lao PDR (intercommunality, local development association, development agency, federation of actors, etc.): statutes, composition, recognition of the State, role and responsibilities, size scale, skills, resources, budget, interest ...
- Develop a list of examples of tourism destination governance models in Lao PDR (case studies). See example in annex.
- Develop a list of examples of governance models for protected areas in Lao PDR (case studies). See example in appendix.

- A list of recommendations to support the authorities and methodological tools for the effective implementation of these recommendations, in order to guide the authorities, step by step in the various procedures to be carried out

## V- Calendar

Offers to be sent before September 1, 2021.

Selection of the expert by September 15, 2021 at the latest.

Start of the study in September and submission of all deliverables must be done in December 2021.



# TÉTRAKTYS

To send offers, please send financial proposal and document detailing the methodology to the following address: [tetraktys.recrutement@gmail.com](mailto:tetraktys.recrutement@gmail.com)