**Brief Report on Nakai-Nam Theun National Park Management**

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**1. Background**

Nakai Nam Theun National Protected Area was declared by the Prime Minister Decree No 164/PO dated on 29/10/1993 and then it was declared Nakai-Nam Theun National Park by the Prime Minister Decree No 36/PO dated on 15/02/2019. Nakai Nam-Nam Theun National Park (NTNP) has a total area of 427.770 ha straddling two provinces: Khammouane (Nakai, Gommalath and Boualapha districts) and Borikhamsay (Khamkert district). NTNP is largest of national park in Laos and is the most significant for biodiversity conservation.

A 25-year concession agreement was signed in 2002 between the Nam Theun 2 Hydropower Company (NT2) and the Government of Laos (GoL). NT2 started construction the dam in 2005 and electricity was commercialised on 3 April 2010. Concession agreement will be ending on 30 April 2035. As per concession agreement, NT2 will pay US$1.000.000 (one million dollar) (Adjusted CPI) to GoL for each year of operating phase to support environmental protection but on the condition that the request for payment must be approved by International Monitoring Agency and Nakai-Nam Theun National Park Management Committee.

Social and Environmental Management Framework of Operational Plan1 (SEMFOP1) was a 7-year plan (2005-2011). The preparation of this plan was supported by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and financial support by NT2 and the World Bank (WB). SEMFOP2 was a 5-year plan (2012-2017). The main context of the plan was based on the Prime Minister Decree No 471/PO. SEMFOP3 (2018 to 2021) was developed and implemented. So far, the park has been implementing the SEMFOP4 starting from 2022 to 2026.

**2. Location of the Park**

Location of the national is shown below:

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| Area: 427,770 ha |  |
| Straddle: 2 Provinces (Khammouane and Borikhamsay) |
| Border to Vietnam (length): 160 Km |
| Close to Vu Koung and Phongna-Kaibang in Vietnam |
| Close to Phou Hin Pou National Protected Area (Khammouane Province in Lao PDR. |
| Figure 1. Location of the National Park |

**3. Socioeconomic Development**

There are 42 villages in the side the national park in which there are 8.212 families with a total population of 49.953 (24.501females). People are living in harmony with seven ethnic groups including Lao loum, Hmong, Sack, Bru, Kri, Makong and Tai). Their living is based on natural resources-hunting and fishing, gathering Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) and agricultural development (rice field and livestock husbandry). However, the living standard is still poor and vulnerable to climate change due to (1) food insecurity, (2) poor access to government goods and service and market).

**4. Biodiversity**

Based on the study in 2019 found that (a) forest cover in the park is 86% (76.80% Evergreen and 9.20% Deciduous Forest) and (b) 917 species of NTFPs and (c) wildlife (92, 29,25, 403 and 69 species of mammal, reptile, amphibian, bird and fish respectively). Healthy biodiversity can assist local people to be more resilient to climate change.

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| Figure 2. Biodiversity (Forest and Wildlife) | |

**5. Threats**

Threat analysis revealed that they are (1) unsustainable hunting and fishing; (2) illegal forest clearing and logging and (3) unsustainable NTFP collection in the national park. Hunting and fishing were on the rise in 2019 and then they have been gradually declined until April 2023. Followed by illegal forest clearing and logging. Strict law enforcement contributes to the decline. Gathering of NTFPs is still a main threat to the park due to high demand of the market.

**6. Management Strategy**

**Vision**

The vision for the NNT NPas described in SEMFOP 4 is that, “the Nakai Nam Theun National Park is managed to effectively protect its biodiversity values, maintain and enhance its natural ecosystems, protect its rivers and soils and to improve the livelihood of the inhabitants of the National Park and Buffer Zone villages who rely on its resources”

**To achieve this vision,** the SEMFOP 4 sets the following biodiversity and livelihood **targets for the NNT NP:**

* **Wildlife:** Conserve viablepopulations of Annamite endemics and other nationally and internationally threatened species in the NT2 Watershed focusing on biodiversity priority zones.
* **Forest:** During the period of SEMFOP 4, the national park area of forest cover will be maintained at 86%.
* **Livelihoods:**increase livelihood by 50%

**To achieve these targets,** the NNT aims to achieve the following **threat reduction** **objective:**

* The overall number of threats to biodiversity (Overall Hit Rate) in NNT NP over the period 2022 to 2026 declines by an average of 10% per annum, resulting in an overall 40% reduction by 2026.

**To achieve the threat reduction objective,** the NNT NP Units are implementing the following **strategies** that are focused on **changing human behavior both inside and outside of the NP**:

* Law Enforcement
* Biodiversity Monitoring & Research
* Livelihoods for Conservation
* Tourism
* Conservation Outreach and Awareness Raising

The design and implementation of these strategies is guided by the **National Park Directors** under the supervision of the **Nakai-Nam Theun Board** and supported by the Finance and Administration Unit. (See figure 3)

Figure 3. Management Actions

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**7. Cooperation**

The park is open cooperation with all countries to promote biodiversity conservation, particularly with Vu Koung and Phogna Kaibang where Nakai-Nam Theun is nearby. The cooperation will focus on:

* Trans-boundary national park cooperation which put emphasis on curving illegal wildlife trade and illegal forest clearing logging along the border including exchanging information on forest and wildlife crime.
* Conservation of viable populations of annamite endemics and other nationally and internationally threatened species along the border.
* Exchange field visits to improve park management of the two countries.