

LAOS

KHAMMOUANE – ARDÈCHE TERRITORIAL STRATEGY (KARST)

Protection and promotion of Phou HinPoun's geological heritage

This program consists in supporting local authorities in the preservation and management of karst landscapes in order to enhance the local economy notably by implementing ecotourism activities. It is a global approach that aims to link and better grasp the challenges of knowledge, conservation and economic development of geological heritages.

PRESENTATION

This program is part of a strong and long-lasting strategic partnership (>10 years) that aims at strengthening local authorities' capacities and supporting communities through the development of ecotourism in the Province of Khammouane by focusing the actions on karst landscapes.

One of the main objectives is to design, jointly with local communities and authorities, a management plan for the preservation and promotion of geo-heritage, that would be an important lever for the development of the geo-tourism activities within the province. All the activities part of the KARST program could lead, in the long term, to a UNESCO Geopark registration carried by Laotian local authorities.

Although the area of the geopark still has to be defined, the Phou HinPoun National Protected Area has been pre-identified due to its geological and cultural heritage, and especially within Khoun Kham and Nakai districts.

The creation, in a long-term, of a UNESCO-Geopark will both contribute to preserving this geological heritage and be an appropriate answer to the social, economic and environmental needs.

This Management Plan will raise question about the governance, development, funds and partnerships within the Phou HinPoun area.

A LOCAL GOVERNMENTS COOPERATION



<http://grottechauvetardeche.org/en/>

KARST is a program jointly developed with the Province of Khammouane and led by French local authorities (Ardèche, a department located in the south-east and the Region Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes). The French Development Agency (AFD) supports financially this program.

The program will build on the knowledge of Ardèche department's representatives involved in the promotion of a sustainable nature ecotourism and who also conducted the UNESCO application for the Chauvet Cave in 2014.



DURATION AND DATES

3 years : 01/01/2020 – 05/31/2023

PROJECT TOTAL AMOUNT

321 800 €

TYPE OF FUNDING

Grants

PARTNERS

Tétraktys is an NGO based in the French Alps and specialized in local development that started to work in Laos and Khammouane province in 2009, and that developed a 3 years program co-funded by the AFD, in partnership with a community-based association, the Ecotouristic Association of Konglor-Natane (AEKN), from 2016 to 2019. KARST program is the institutional part of Tétraktys' project Khammouane Ecotourism Phase II.

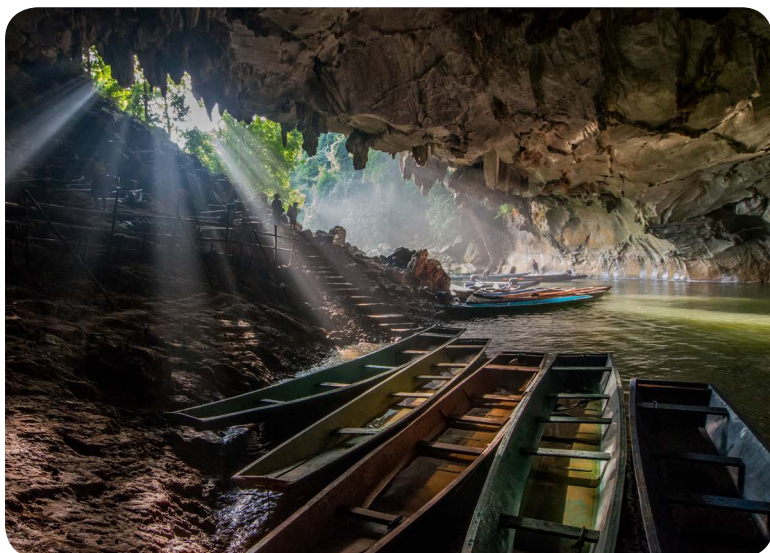
IFREEMIS is a resource, training, research and expertise platform on underground and karst environments that aims to improve knowledge, preservation and enhancement of these environments.



TÉTRAKTYS

MAIN ACTIVITIES

- Enhance knowledge around karst landscapes and subterranean environments of the Phou HinPoun protected area and raise awareness about the role of this karst on the conservation of biodiversity and its rich geological and cultural heritages.
- Draft a well-defined and operational management plan in order to improve the protection of the geological heritages and promote sustainable regional development for example: to set up a charter for the eco-responsible traveler in Khammouane signed by local authorities.
- Knowledge exchanges on natural heritage protection management and sustainable touristic development in a common geological context (organization of three study travels in France in order to identify the public policies that can be implemented to foster the preservation and valorization of the territory; trainings for local authorities).
- Develop new touristic activities and circuits (guided tours, tourist information center...).
- Draft a communication plan and develop promotion tools (improve the communication as from Thakhek; develop leaflets and create a dedicated website).
- Creation of a sponsorship with geo-heritage sites in Ardèche (in order to increase the visibility of Khammouane Province and generate additional financial resources).



EXPECTED RESULTS

- The department of Information, Culture and Tourism, the department of Agriculture and Forestry and the department of Environment and Natural Resources are working together at Provincial level for the management of Phou HinPoun protected area and Geopark Management Plan.
- The six Phou HinPoun districts and communities are associated to the management of the Phou HinPoun protected area and Geopark Management Plan.
- In partnership with local people and other funders, the access to places of interest is improved (waste and water management).
- New sustainable touristic activities generate revenues for communities.
- The local communities and authorities are aware of the role of natural resources in sustainable tourism.
- The number of tourists in the region increased and the Province benefits from a wide visibility at national, regional and international level.
- Local authorities of the Province serve as a model for the management of karstic landscapes in Laos.
- Programs contribute to strengthen the links between geological and cultural heritage as well as environmental education programs.
- Submission of a UNESCO Geopark application file carried out by Laotian authorities.

BENEFICIARIES

- Districts and villages located in the PhouHinPoun area. Coordination of different levels of governance and departments working together for the management of natural heritage.
- Local communities and villagers that benefit from the increase of tourists in the region.
- Provincial and national authorities benefit from a wider attractivity and serve as a model for ecotourism and sensitive landscapes conservation.
- Local entrepreneurs: guesthouse managers, ecolodges, homestays, local guides, handcraftworkers...