

## Green VDP Process

The PNKB Region Project has developed a conservation-oriented participatory village development planning process (the **Green VDP**) to achieve the two complex objectives

- reduce pressure on the natural resources PNKB NP
- improve the livelihoods of target groups living in and around the park

It ensures that both, local people's needs and the conservation needs of the park, are taken into account in socio-economic development plans for the area. The planning process is a collaboration between local people, local authorities, and the National Park administration. Additional detailed steps at village level are integrated into the Participatory commune SEDP guidelines (PSEDP) of the province finally resulting in the green VDP. The key steps of the process are described as follows:

**Step 1** An awareness-raising meeting is held in each village, prior to the selection of up to 20 villagers with experience of planning and well understanding about the community. These volunteers are selected to form a VDP working group.

**Step 2** A two -day meeting with the working group is held, facilitated by the PNKB NP management board and local staff to carry out a Participatory Impact Assessment (PIA), which identifies land use, current livelihood opportunities and their impacts on the park, constraints, and possible solutions.

## Green VDP Process

Activities within the PIA include

- Identification of threats, from current livelihood activities to the natural resources of the core zone (i.e. hunting, trapping)
- Identification of drivers i.e. why local people conduct these activities
- Ranking of livelihoods in terms of importance to the local population and conservation impact
- Identification of priority development activities that could reduce or even remove threats to the biodiversity of the core zone.

**Step 3** A five-year development plan with an annual breakdown of activities is drafted, based on the results of PIA.

**Step 4** A village meeting is held to present the draft Green VDP to villagers, where it is discussed and agreed upon (*The following steps onwards closely follow the PSEDP of the province*).

**Step 5** The finalised VDPs are integrated into Green Commune Development Plans (Green CDPs), then submitted to the Commune People's Committee for discussion and approval through a commune workshop.

**Step 6** The Green CDPs are submitted to the District Planning Department for integration into District Socio-economic development plan.

**Step 7** Biannual evaluations are carried out at the village, commune and district levels to ensure the investments meet the objectives of the plans.

## Green VDP Benefits

- conservation is mainstreamed in socio-economic planning
- local people's voices and priorities are heard and their real life challenges are taken into account
- sustainable forms of socio-economic development, thereby protecting the future of the Park
- nature conservation at the grassroots level which is vital for the protection of biodiversity in the surrounding area
- cooperation and collaboration between local villagers, local authorities and National Park authorities for a better understanding
- raising awareness of conservation in local communities
- development in the buffer zone does not exacerbate threats to the biodiversity of PNKB NP
- priority given to livelihood activities with the potential to reduce threats
- capacity building of National Park staff in socio-economic development and management
- long-term view for village planning (5 years), with annual breakdowns
- ownership and responsibility for the plans

## Green VDP Achievements

GIZ has supported to integrate the sustainable management of natural resources and biodiversity conservation-oriented approach into the Provincial participatory socio-economic development plan (PSEDP) guidelines. This considers as a crucial requirements for the development of buffer zone. Until now, the project has assisted in finalizing the Green VDP guidelines, Green VDP handbook as well as providing training on Green VDP methodology and facilitating skills for about 40 staff of districts, communes, PNKB NP management board and project staff at all levels.

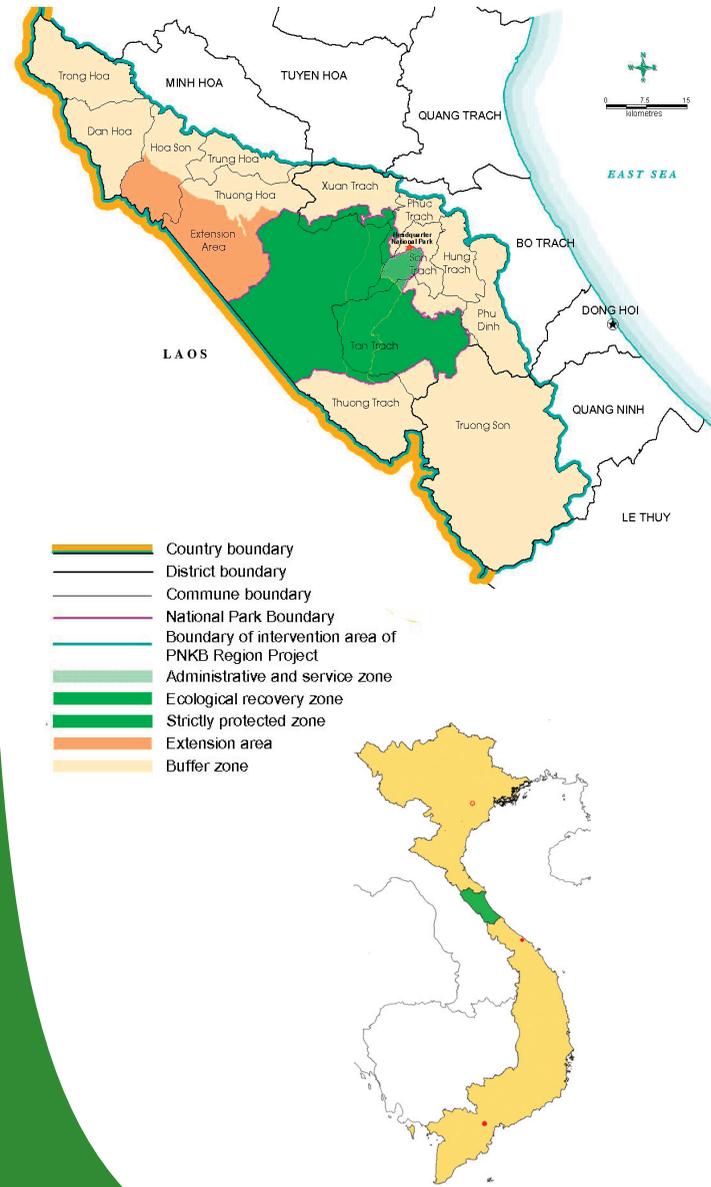
As of June 2011, all 157 villages in the PNKB NP buffer zone had completed the Green VDPs which were integrated into commune level plans and endorsed into 13 Green Commune Development Plans. Prioritized alternative livelihoods include reforestation activities, off-farm activities and improvement of roads and water/hygiene facilities.

The Green VDPs are important inputs for the process of elaborating the **Buffer Zone Development Plan** for the period of 2011-2020, visioning 2030. This is an important strategic document, focusing on improving the management of the forest and other natural resources to increase alternative incomes for communities, for households and contributing to the conservation of biodiversity in the National Park.

## Green VDP

participatory and conservation-oriented village development planning process





## Project

Nature Conservation and Sustainable Management of Natural Resources in the Phong Nha - Ke Bang National Park (PNKB NP) Region is a joint project of the Vietnamese Government and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. It is implemented by the People's Committee of Quang Binh Province and two German development organisations "Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit" (GIZ) and the "Deutsche Entwicklungsbank" (KfW).

The specific goals of the project are to reduce pressure on the natural resources of PNKB NP, and to improve the livelihoods of target groups living in and around the park. The project has been funded for eight years, through to September 2015.

## Location

The project is based in the core zone and surrounding buffer zone of the National Park, which is situated in the North West of Quang Binh province. The core zone of PNKB NP has an area of 85,745ha (excluding extension area) and the buffer zone of 225,000ha with a population of around 60,000, in 13 communes.

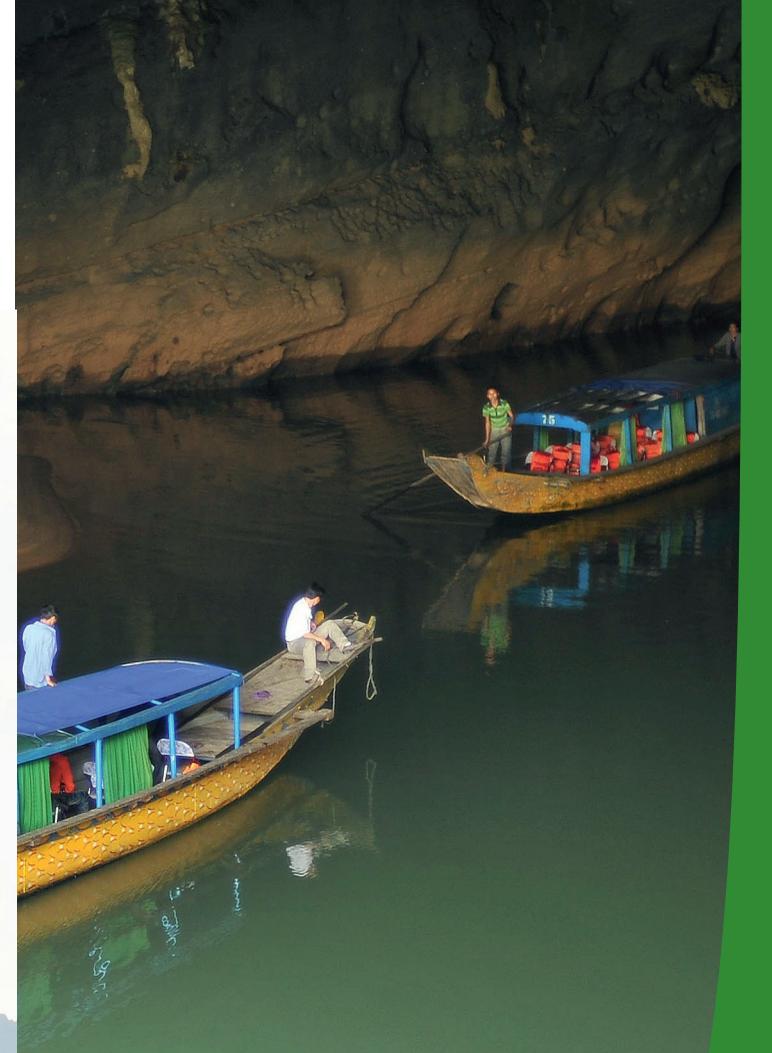
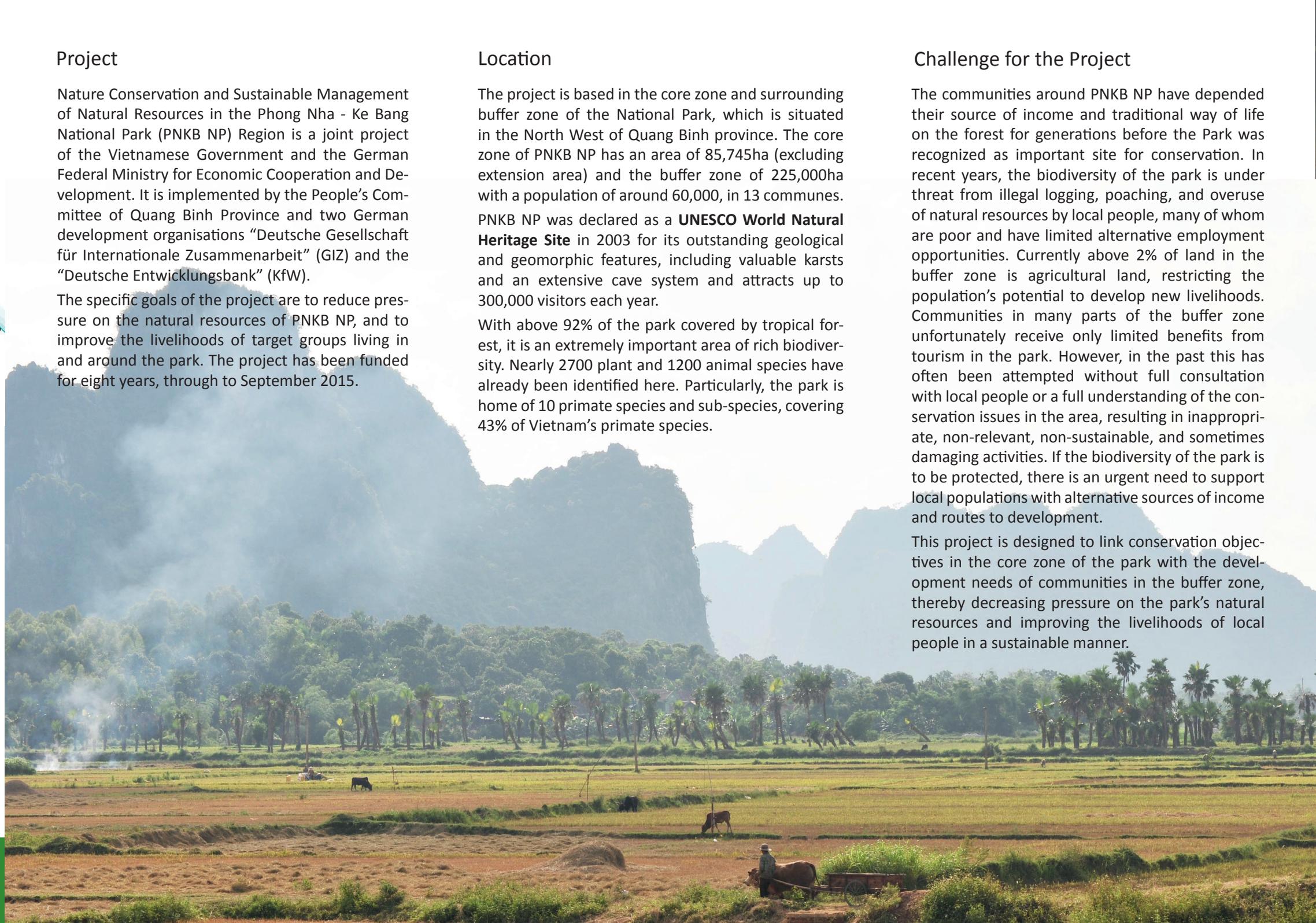
PNKB NP was declared as a **UNESCO World Natural Heritage Site** in 2003 for its outstanding geological and geomorphic features, including valuable karsts and an extensive cave system and attracts up to 300,000 visitors each year.

With above 92% of the park covered by tropical forest, it is an extremely important area of rich biodiversity. Nearly 2700 plant and 1200 animal species have already been identified here. Particularly, the park is home of 10 primate species and sub-species, covering 43% of Vietnam's primate species.

## Challenge for the Project

The communities around PNKB NP have depended their source of income and traditional way of life on the forest for generations before the Park was recognized as important site for conservation. In recent years, the biodiversity of the park is under threat from illegal logging, poaching, and overuse of natural resources by local people, many of whom are poor and have limited alternative employment opportunities. Currently above 2% of land in the buffer zone is agricultural land, restricting the population's potential to develop new livelihoods. Communities in many parts of the buffer zone unfortunately receive only limited benefits from tourism in the park. However, in the past this has often been attempted without full consultation with local people or a full understanding of the conservation issues in the area, resulting in inappropriate, non-relevant, non-sustainable, and sometimes damaging activities. If the biodiversity of the park is to be protected, there is an urgent need to support local populations with alternative sources of income and routes to development.

This project is designed to link conservation objectives in the core zone of the park with the development needs of communities in the buffer zone, thereby decreasing pressure on the park's natural resources and improving the livelihoods of local people in a sustainable manner.



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