

Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve

Alternative site name(s)

Pia Oac, Pia Bioc

Province(s)

Cao Bang

Area

10,000 ha

Coordinates

22°32' - 22°40'N, 105°49' - 105°57'E

Agro-ecological zone

North-eastern

Decreed by government

Yes

Management board established

No

Investment plan prepared

Yes

VCF eligibility criteria met

A, B

Social screening criteria met

None

Conservation needs assessment prepared

No

Operational management plan prepared

No

Tracking tool completed

No

Map available

Yes

Management history

Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve is located in Tinh Tuc town and Quang Thanh, Thanh Cong, Phan Thanh, Mai Long, Ca Thanh, Vu Nong and Hung Dao communes, Nguyen Binh district, Cao Bang province (Tordoff *et al.* 2000). Nui Pia Oac was included on Decision 194/CT of the Chairman of the Council of Ministers, dated 9 August 1986 (MARD 1997), which decreed the establishment of a 10,000 ha nature reserve for the protection of "subtropical mountain forests" (Cao Van Sung 1995). An investment plan for Nui Pia Oac was prepared by Xuan Mai Forestry College in 1994. This investment plan was approved by Cao Bang Provincial People's Committee in the same year but has not yet been approved by MARD. This investment plan proposed establishing a 13,312 ha nature reserve, comprising a 5,244 ha strict protection area, a 8,053 ha forest rehabilitation area, and a 15 ha administration and services area (Anon. 1999). Nui Pia Oac is included on a list of Special-use Forests to be established by the year 2010, prepared by the FPD of MARD, as a 10,000 ha nature reserve (FPD 2003); this list has not yet been approved by the government.

To date, however, a management board has yet to be established for Nui Pia Oac Nature reserve, and the site is under the management of Nguyen Binh District FPD and Nguyen Binh Forest Enterprise (Cao Bang Provincial FPD *in litt.* 2003).

Topography and hydrology

The nature reserve is centred on Mount Pia Oac (1,931 m) and characterised by steep topography. In the west of the nature reserve, there are patches of limestone karst (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Biodiversity values

According to the investment plan (Anon. 1999), Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve contains 11,839 ha of natural forest. However, 1998 land-use data provided by Cao Bang Provincial FDD and ground-truthed during a rapid field survey in 1999 indicate that the nature reserve supports only 3,174 ha of natural forest, which is mainly distributed above 1,000 m. The forest has been subjected to high levels of disturbance in the past and is secondary in places. Natural regeneration does, however, appear to be taking place. Below 700 m, the vegetation is dominated by scrub and grassland. In the west of the nature reserve, there are areas of limestone karst without forest, and, at lower elevations in the south, there are *Pinus massoniana* plantations (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Mammal diversity at Nui Pia Oac has been severely reduced by hunting, and it would appear that the site supports few viable populations of species of global conservation importance. However, the nature reserve supports a number of bird species restricted to

broadleaf evergreen forest above 800 m, and may support one of the few remaining areas of suitable habitat for such species in north-eastern Vietnam (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Conservation issues

Below 1,000 m, most of the natural forest in the nature reserve has been cleared for cultivation. Above, 1,000 m, however, the natural forest is distributed on steep hillsides at high elevations, which are unsuitable for cultivation. Consequently, clearance for agriculture is not a major threat to biodiversity at Nui Pia Oac (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Mount Pia Oac and the surrounding area are rich in minerals, particularly zinc. Mining activities during the French colonial era resulted in clearance of large areas of forest and high levels of disturbance to remaining areas. Although these activities have now largely ceased, the forest is under continued pressure from local people, who extract bamboo, bamboo shoots, medicinal plants and firewood from the nature reserve. Uncontrolled exploitation of forest products threatens to impede the process of forest regeneration in the nature reserve. Nguyen Binh District FPD has, however, allocated almost all of the forest land in the nature reserve to individual households for protection (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Another threat to biodiversity at Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve is hunting, as a result of which population sizes of large and medium-sized mammal species have reportedly declined dramatically (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

The proposed boundary defined in the investment plan for Nui Pia Oac Nature Reserve (Anon. 1999) includes 10,073 ha of non-forest land, a town, a zinc mine and several thousand people. Consequently, both Wege *et al.* (1999) and Tordoff *et al.* (2000) recommended that the boundary be revised to exclude all areas of scrub, grassland, agricultural land and habitation.

Other documented values

Cao Bang Provincial People's Committee are considering developing the area around Mount Pia Oac as a site for tourism. The potential for the development

of tourism in the area is high for several reasons: the area is easily accessible from Cao Bang town by surfaced road; there are several ruined French villas that could be renovated; there is a colourful ethnic minority market in the area; and the summit of Mount Pia Oac is easily accessible on foot (Tordoff *et al.* 2000).

Related projects

No information.

Conservation needs assessment

A conservation needs assessment has not been conducted for the site.

Operational management plan

An operational management plan has not been prepared for the site.

Eligibility against VCF criteria

The site is currently ineligible for VCF support because it is not under appropriate conservation management.

Criterion	Eligibility
A _I	NH2 - Northern Highlands Limestone
A _{II}	
B _I	Decision No. 194/CT, dated 09/08/86
B _{II}	Nature Reserve
B _{III}	Under provincial management
C _I	
C _{II}	

Social screening requirements

A social screening report has not been prepared for the site.

Criterion	Eligibility
A	
B	
C	
D	

Literature sources

Anon. (1999) [Investment plan for Pia Oac Nature Reserve, Cao Bang province]. Xuan Mai: Xuan Mai Forestry College. In Vietnamese.

Tordoff, A. W., Vu Van Dung, Le Van Cham, Tran Quang Ngoc and Dang Thang Long (2000) A rapid field survey of five sites in Bac Kan, Cao Bang and Quang Ninh provinces: a review of the Northern Indochina Subtropical Forests Ecoregion. Hanoi: BirdLife International Vietnam Programme and the Forest Inventory and Planning Institute. In English and Vietnamese.

Tran Hong Viet and Le Van Chien (1999) [Contribution to the establishment of Pia Oac Nature Reserve, Cao Bang province]. Unpublished report to Hanoi National University. In Vietnamese.

Tran Hong Viet and Le Van Chien (2000) [A hand to help protect animals in the Pia Oac Natural Reserve area, Cao Bang province.] Tap Chi Sinh Hoc [Journal of Biology]: 22(15)CD: 164-172. In Vietnamese.