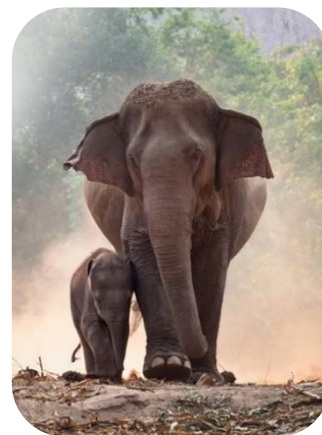


By providing free of charge veterinary services, we ensure that elephant owners across the region of Southern Thailand can access essential veterinary treatment for their elephants without financial barriers.



## Why Elephants Matter

Elephants play a vital role in maintaining biodiversity, shaping landscapes, and supporting the health of entire ecosystems. In Thailand, the Asian elephant holds deep cultural significance. It has been a national symbol for centuries and remains the official national animal today.



The role of the mahout—an elephant carer—is equally rooted in Thai heritage. Passed down through generations, it is regarded as a position of honour, responsibility, and profound emotional connection. Most mahouts form lifelong bonds with their elephants, caring for them as part of their family.

While concerns about elephant mistreatment in the tourism sector have led to stricter welfare regulations, many mahouts still face significant barriers to accessing veterinary care, education, and resources. STEF recognises and respects the cultural importance of the mahout–elephant relationship and works to support it through practical, non-judgemental assistance.

## Our Approach

STEF is not a campaigning organisation. We maintain a neutral, respectful stance to ensure that elephant owners—many of whom live at subsistence level—feel safe seeking help. Our focus is on:

- Providing free, high-quality veterinary treatment
- Sharing knowledge and practical guidance on good husbandry
- Supporting mahouts and owners with resources and advice
- Collaborating with local partners, including the regional university, to support wild elephant welfare

Our aim is simple: to improve the health and wellbeing of elephants across southern Thailand by working *with* the communities who care for them.

## The Need in Southern Thailand

Across Phang Nga and neighbouring provinces, more than 700 domesticated elephants live and work alongside humans. Yet the region has only one government-run elephant hospital, often requiring a journey of up to four hours. Transporting an elephant is expensive, logistically difficult, and highly stressful for the

animal. For many mahouts, accessing veterinary care is simply not possible. STEF was created to address this critical gap.



### STEF Veterinary Centre and Mobile Clinic

- STEF funded and established the first charitable elephant hospital in southern Thailand. The STEF Veterinary Centre in Khok Kloi is now home to our veterinary team and the base for our mobile outreach clinic.



### Our Services

- Free veterinary treatment for sick and injured elephants
- Mobile outreach for elephants unable to travel
- On-site hospital care for more complex cases
- Education and practical training for mahouts
- Support for government vets conducting annual health checks
- Collaboration on wild elephant welfare and research

The mobile clinic is central to our work. It allows our vets to treat elephants in their familiar environment, reduces stress, and enables us to observe living conditions and offer tailored husbandry advice.



### Impact (January–December 2025)

- 68 elephants treated at the hospital
- 228 elephants treated via mobile clinic
- 17,862 km travelled by our veterinary vehicles
- 75 visiting volunteers supporting our care programme
- 10 dedicated staff members now employed at the Centre
- Refurbished volunteer accommodation and kitchen
- Second hoist installed for weak or immobile elephants
- Construction underway on our new education building

These achievements have strengthened trust within local mahout communities and established STEF as a respected, reliable source of veterinary support.

### Why Funding Is Needed

STEF's work is entirely dependent on charitable support. To maintain our services, we must cover the operational costs of the hospital, mobile clinic, veterinary supplies, and essential staffing.

### Cost Overview (1 January – 30 June 2026)

- Total operating costs: £85,011
- Monthly cost of veterinary medicines and supplies: approx. £3,600 (including saline, gauze, sutures, wound cleansers, and other essentials)

A detailed budget can be provided on request.

### Future Plans

To strengthen and expand our impact, STEF aims to:

- Complete and equip our education building for workshops and training
- Purchase specialist veterinary equipment, including an X-ray machine

- Deliver a series of mahout training workshops (our next session will take place in April with a focus on elephant dentistry)
- Support research into genetic diversity and inbreeding concerns
- Contribute to the development of an EEHV vaccination programme
- Continue assisting government vets with annual elephant health checks

Our long-term vision is holistic: to improve welfare outcomes for both domestic and wild Asian elephants, ensuring healthier future generations.

**We recognise that the relationship between the Thai people and elephants is both ancient and intricate, shaped by historical and cultural factors. Our aim is to bridge understanding and aid whilst acknowledging the complexities surrounding this unique bond. We hope that you too will appreciate the multifaceted aspects of this story and support us in our efforts to ensure the well-being of these magnificent animals. Please consider helping us.**

Thank you from the STEF Team

