

Factsheet 14:

Lengarica HPP endangers the Lengarica Canyon natural monument and a national park

Description	<p>The Hydro Power Plant (HPP) Lengarica & Energy sh.p.k is a Run-Of-River type Hydropower Plant, which was built at the lower part of the Lengarica River basin in Permet district, Gjirokastra Prefecture. It is situated in a hilly and mountainous terrain, in Banja's Canyon zone at the elevation of 410m above sea level, about 7 km from Vjosa River.</p> <p>The project is co-financed by Green for Growth Fund Technical Facility Fund (Lender) and IFC (20% - 6 Mill EUR). The project has been controversial being situated inside the Hotova and Dangelli National park (<i>declared with DCM no.1631, dated 17.12.2008</i>). The Lengarica River is characterized by an impressive canyon 7 kilometres in length and 80 meter in depth, which was designated as natural monument in the 1970s. Due to its low water temperature and its river bed rich in gravel, the Lengarica serves as spawning ground for many fish species. Furthermore, 8 thermal springs are located along the river, attracting hundreds of tourists each year. The construction of the third hydropower plant caused the springs to temporarily run dry in the beginning of October 2014. As a result, dozens of people took to the streets in Tirana demanding a stop to construction. At the time, the Minister of the Environment promised to appoint a working group as a reaction to the protest. For this reason the Ministry of Environment rejected firstly the environmental permit on 4 October 2011 but then issued an environmental permit on 24 January 2012. The CSOs and environmental activists have protested in various forms regarding the project and appealed all the governmental instances (Ministry of Environment, Energy and Prime Minister Office). In addition, many national and international organizations have been mobilized to declare the Vjosa river a national water park free of dams. Constructions were finalised in 2015.</p>
Basic data	<p>Lengarica & Energy Shpk</p> <p>Installed capacity 8,900 KW and expected production 28.4 GWh. Project water flow to be exploited is 7.15m³/s and will be used 137 days/year. The project consists of a regular (side intake type, opening for ecological flow, about 13m height and 60 m length). About 4 km tunnel (concrete lining 2.4m width, 4m height), a forebay (concrete basin to collect the water coming from the tunnel), about 3.7 km penstock (6 river crossings), a powerhouse (8.9 MW), and about 6.5 km 35KW transmission line to Përmet substation. The powerhouse is located in the north of the village of Petran about, 2 Km from river Vjosa.</p>
Source of conflict	<p>Environmental impact and national park -1st level of conflict Water management - 2nd level conflict Water diversion - 3rd level of conflict</p>
Project details and actors	<p>The Lengarica and Energy shpk is owned by EnsoHydro GmbH, Austria (100%) which was bought by the Albanian Hasi Energy shpk in 2012.</p>
Project area	<p>Eco Albania, local activists, local media, Mayors, Center for Justice and Solidarity (Ilia Kondi), International NGOs (Bank watch, River Watch, Euronatur)</p>
Level of investment	
The conflict and mobilization	<p>Petitions; complain letters; press articles; reports; street protest; lawsuit.</p>
Conflict impact	<p>Potential Environmental impact: landscape loss, thermal water threat, biodiversity loss, water diversion.</p> <p>Potential Social –economic impact: tourism decrease.</p>
Conflict outcome	<p>Constructed; No institutional changes; Not successful as the project was constructed and prosecution dismissed the case.</p>
Sources and materials/References	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - http://balkanrivers.net/en/key-areas/vjosa-river - IFC Project Database http://ifcextapps.ifc.org/ - Hydropower Plant financed by World Bank threatens Lengarica Canyon; http://www.reporter.al/hidrocentrali-financuar-nga-banka-boterore-kercenon-kanionin-e-lengarices - http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/albania-greens-rally-against-world-bank-financed-power-plant - Sikorova. K. and Gallop. Pippa. 2015, “<i>Financing for hydropower in protected areas in Southeast Europe</i>” Euronatur and Bankwatch, December 2015. - E.Mazreku (2016), - Dismissal of the Lengarica case”, District Prosecution Tirana Office, filed on 24 June 2016