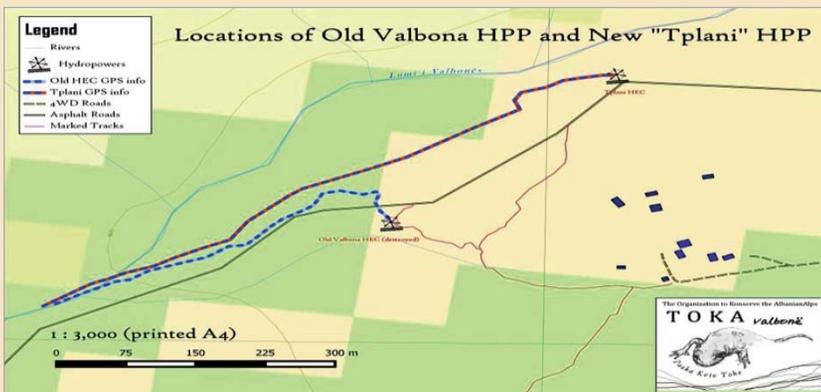


### Factsheet 3:

HEC Valbona (Tplani) deviates project design and faced with protests

<p><b>Description</b></p>	<p>In January 2016, a local NGO <i>Toka</i> in Valbona valley learns of a hydro-power project that will be developed in the National Park of Valbona. In March 2016, after questioning and several requests with respective Government agencies ( the National Environmental Agency (NEA), National Protected Areas Agency) the local NGO <i>Toka</i> supported by the consortium "Protect the Rivers"<sup>18</sup> learnt of another company <b>T-Planishpk</b> who is developing another HPP named HPP Valbona (T-Plani named after the same village allegedly using a former existing HPP built in 1969. Local NGO <i>Toka</i> supported by a group of other national environmental NGOs has opposed the developments of such HPPs arguing that the company has built new concrete channel, expanded the volume of water it takes thus rejecting the name of being built on the same foots of the previous HPP. Valbona HPP started construction in 2013 and has almost finalised the works. The protests and complaints by CSOs, activists, scientists, media and international professors and nature-lovers and international community have been staged as part of the fight for the protection of the whole Valbona Valley without splitting among the various HPPs that are being planned in the valley.</p> <p><i>The civil society has demanded permits and project documents for HPP Valbona from the National Environmental Agency which has resulted unsuccessful due to lack of documents for the project. A complaint was registered by Lex Ferenda on 22.12.2016 with Prot.No.1435 with the Commissioner of Information demanding the concessionary contract for HPP Valbona together with 10 other concessionary contracts on HPPs. The contract is still pending at the reporting time.</i></p> 
<p><b>Basic data</b></p>	<p>T-PlaniShpk Installed capacity 2-4 MW. The project is a run-of-river scheme, which means that there is no water storage, no dams, and the production of energy depends on the seasonal water flows. The project is comprised of one penstock which will take the water from the Vabona River through a diversion channel and down to the power house.</p>
<p><b>Source of conflict</b></p>	<p>Environmental impact and national park - 1<sup>st</sup> level of conflict;  Landscape and tourism impact - 2<sup>nd</sup> level conflict;  Water diversion - 3<sup>rd</sup> level of conflict.</p>
<p><b>Project details and actors</b> <b>Project area</b> <b>Level of investment</b>  <b>The mainactors engaged in the conflict:</b></p>	<p>The Concessionary Company T-planishpk fully managed by FlamurBucpapaj</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- NGO Toka;</li> <li>- <i>Protect the Rivers</i> NGO consortium, composed of (INCA, Mileukontakt Albania, EcoAlbania, REC Albania, EDEN, Ekolëvizja, Association for Organic Agriculture, Institute for Environmental Policy, Network for the Protection of Nature, Illyria)<sup>19</sup>;</li> <li>- International NGOs (WWF, River watch, EuroNatur, Leeway Collective, Patagonia);</li> <li>- Scientists and professors.</li> </ul>

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<p><b>The conflict and mobilization</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On 11 April, citizen's protest in front of town hall asking for cancellation of hydro-plants and focus on tourism and protection of Valbona Valley;</li> <li>- April 2016, position paper by WWF Adria on "Hydropower development in Valbona National park, Albania;</li> <li>- On 8 May, kayakers paddling Valbona to protest against dams tsunami threatening Balkan rivers and Valbona led by the Slovenian Olympic athlete Rok Rozman;</li> <li>- On 20 May in Tirana protest in front of Prime Minister Office to cancel all HPPs licenses in Vjosa and in Valbona;</li> <li>- Online petition collection of more than 1, 870 signatures;</li> <li>- On 25 June 2016, the local people protested in front of the Prime Minister Office. The local community from Vjosa River supported the protest too;</li> <li>- 18 requests sent by the group "Protect the River";</li> <li>- One local expert review of EIA report for Dragobia HPP;</li> <li>- On 21 September 2016, the starts of construction works for Dragobia HPP;</li> <li>- On 29 October, a Protest Concert in Valbona for the protection of Valbona valley with famous singers Elina Duni, Elda Zari and many activists;</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- On 19 December, a protest in Tirana in front of the Ministry of Energy was organized by "Protect the Rivers" consortium, asking for information which HPP-s will be cancelled under the motto "Have you decided to destroy Valbona".</li> </ul>
<p><b>Conflict impact</b></p>	<p><b>Potential</b> Environmental impact: landscape loss, biodiversity loss, water diversion.</p>
<p><b>Conflict outcome</b></p>	<p><b>Potential</b> Social -economic impact: tourism decrease. 9 HPPs of Valbona Energy Company have been allegedly cancelled, whereas three HPPs will go forward.  The battle is still ongoing for the cancellation of the remaining 3 HPPs through strong diplomatic efforts with Government of Albania and possible litigation measures.</p>
<p><b>Sources and materials/References</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <a href="http://www.journeytovalbona.com/good/river-initiatives/">www.journeytovalbona.com/good/river-initiatives/</a></li> <li>- <a href="http://www.reporter.al/lufta-per-zemren-blu-te-alpeve-shqiptare">www.reporter.al/lufta-per-zemren-blu-te-alpeve-shqiptare</a></li> <li>- <a href="http://radionacional.al/sqarim-lidhur-me-ndertimin-e-tiplani-hec-valbona-nga-xaje-sinani">radionacional.al/sqarim-lidhur-me-ndertimin-e-tiplani-hec-valbona-nga-xaje-sinani</a></li> </ul>