



Mitigation Hierarchy Assessment - Vjosa Wild River National Park
Hydromorphology and Freshwater biodiversity conservation

May 2024

In March 2023, the Vjosa Wild River National Park (VWRNP) in Albania was formally established, protecting a network of 400km of natural free-flowing rivers. The VWRNP covers the entire length of the Vjosa River in Albania, from the Greek border to its mouth in the Adriatic Sea, as well as three main tributaries: Drinos, including Kardhiq, Bënçë and Shushica.

The “Rural Water Supply IV” (RWS IV) project on the Shushica tributary was approved in 2019, and about

Assess cumulative impacts from other infrastructure, activities and processes e.g.:

- Water abstraction levels (irrigation, water bottling industry, other industry)
- Erosion due to deforestation, grazing, impact from fire, infrastructure
- Altered and irregular water flows (in consultation with the scientific community)
- Climate irregularities, flow and rainfall, water temperature (in consultation with the scientific community)
- Longer-term impacts on species behaviour and life cycles (in consultation with the scientific community)

Recommendations – based on expert judgement and qualitative assessment best available secondary data and information – to be provided on:

- Alternatives/avoidance
- Best-fit mitigation,
- Offsets (no net loss)
- Other long-term solutions

The tasks of the international experts in hydromorphology and freshwater biodiversity conservation will be carried out in close collaboration with IUCN – including the Regional Director, the Heads of the Protected and Conserved Areas Team and the Water and Wetland Team, and the Vjosa WRNP project manager – as well as an Albanian counterpart (national expert in freshwater ecology).

The work will require a field trip to Albania expected to be undertaken at the beginning of June 2024 together with the Albanian national expert. The fieldwork is estimated to take 5-6 days including meetings with relevant stakeholders in Tirana (scientists, authorities, NGOs and other stakeholders, but the expert is not expected to lead any community engagement or public consultation processes), a visit to the construction site on the Lepusha-Shushica tributary and potentially visits to the tourism development sites on the coast as relevant. Primary field data collection and modelling is not expected.



The anticipated start date of the work is 27 May, 2024. Anticipated duration of the contract: 10 weeks.

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