



**WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT ALBANIA!**

**IAIA2019 Brisbane**

**Tim O'Donnell – Senior Environmental Consultant**



# We need to talk about Albania; Achieving net gains in the shadow of the iron curtain

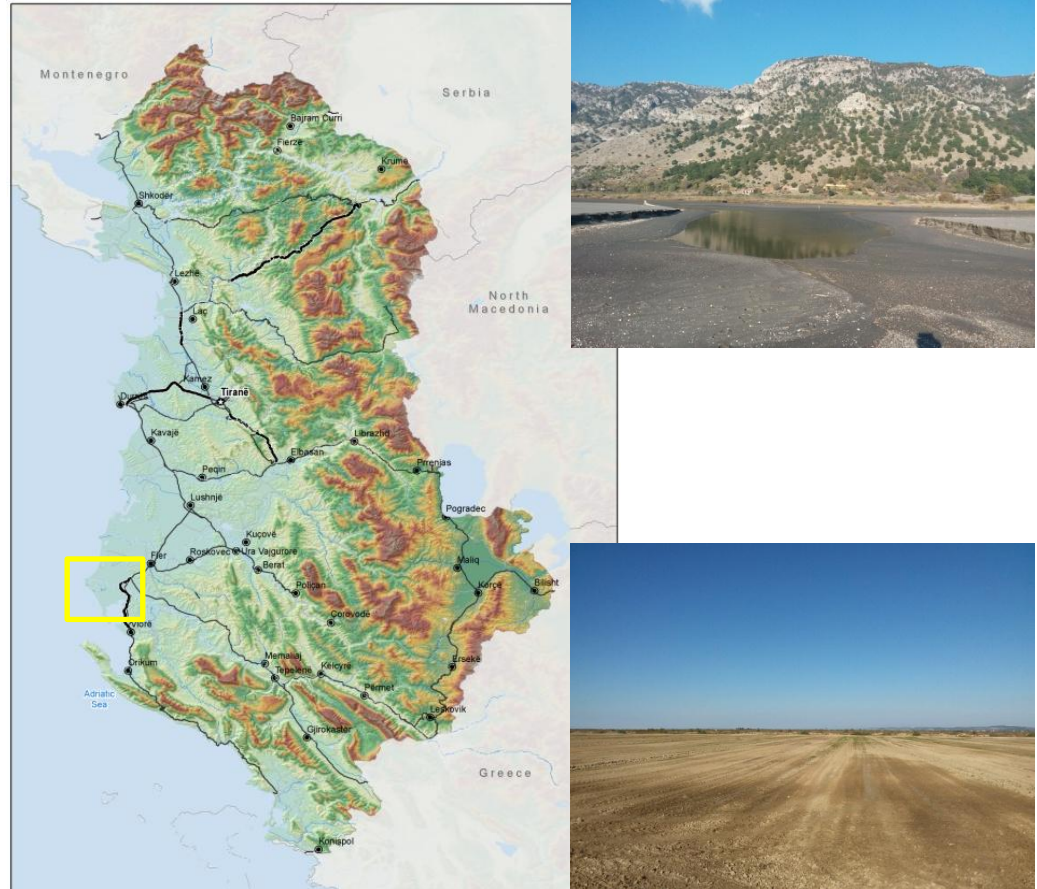
## Why?

- Limited exposure to global issues
- One of Europe's less developed nation
- High levels of environmental and cultural values requiring appropriate impact assessment



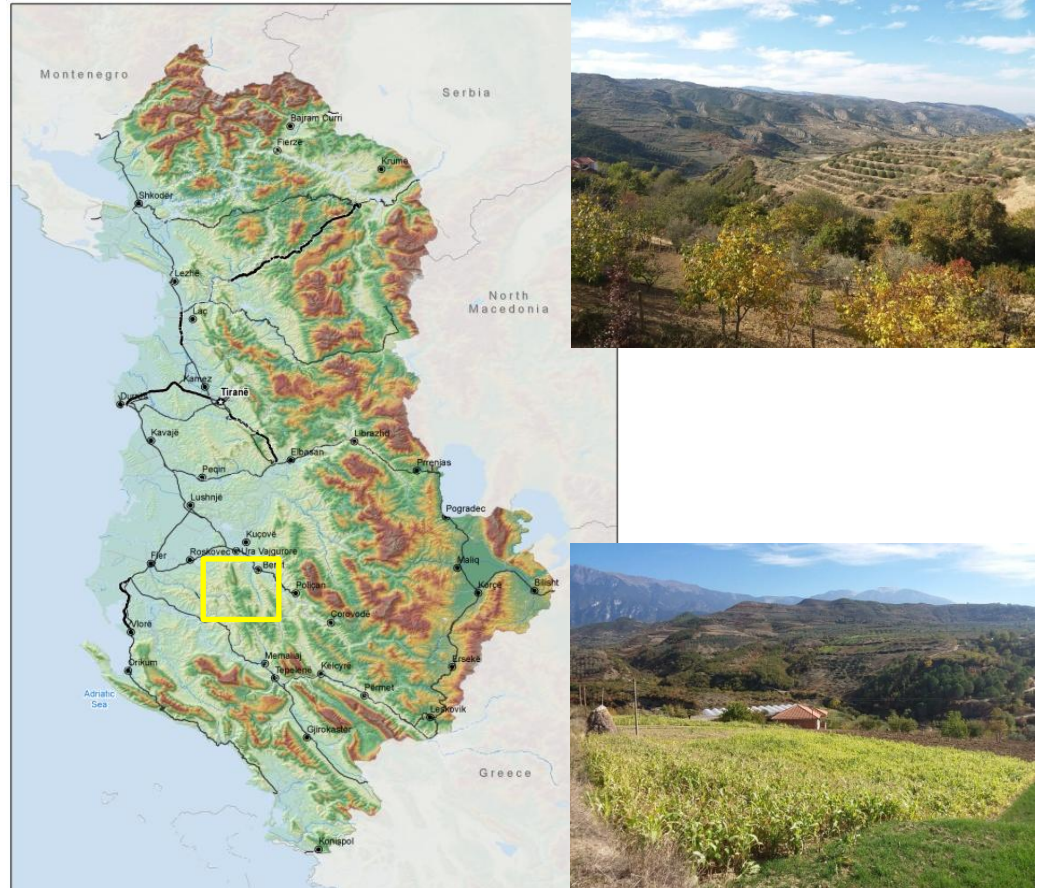
# Geography

- Three distinct bioregions:
  - **the coastal plains**



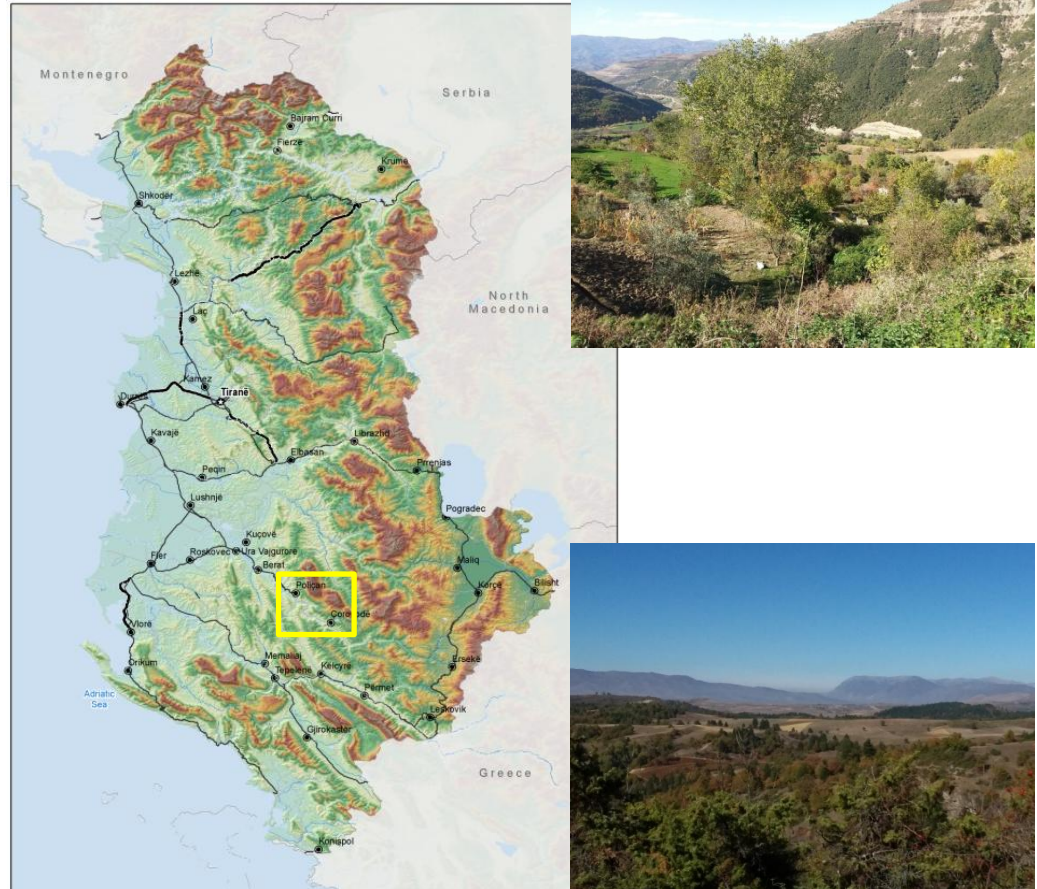
# Geography

- Three distinct bioregions:
  - the coastal plains
  - the foothills



# Geography

- Three distinct bioregions:
  - the coastal plains
  - the foothills
  - the mountains



# Geography

- Approximately 28,000km<sup>2</sup>
- Most rivers run west into Adriatic Sea
- Infrastructure close to coastline and valleys
- 43% Agriculture
- 28% Forest (Mostly State Owned)
- 29% Urban/Industrial/Sterile Land



## Very brief history

1912 – Independent Nation

1939 – Invaded by Italy

1943 – Invaded by Germany

1944 – Introduction of Communism

1967 – World's first atheist State

=====  
1991 – First democratic elections

2009 – Joined NATO

2017 – Invitation to EU accession



# Biodiversity Values

- Foothill and Mountain bioregions great for fauna
- Coastal Plain wetlands habitat for birds
- Additional value for migratory birds using the Adriatic Flyway



Hunting is illegal but still common



# Biodiversity Values

- Lots of nice flora too!!!

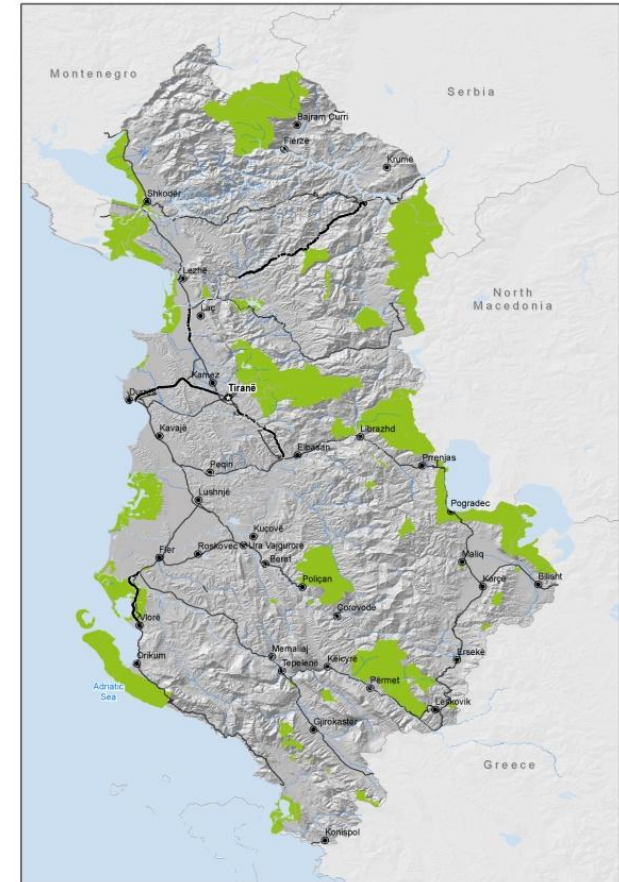


Firewood is still the primary energy source however in non urban areas



# Protected Areas

- 55 National Parks
- 6 Internationally designated sites
- Forests within protected areas managed for timber production within certain zones



# Challenges to Impact Assessment – Biodiversity Offsetting

- Compensation mechanisms for residual impacts to biodiversity that cannot be avoided, minimised or mitigated
- Evolving field with varying levels of success around the globe
- Demonstration of Net Gain/No Net Loss achieved through complicated accounting models and onerous data requirements
- Lots of other sessions to discuss effectiveness



# Challenges to Impact Assessment – Biodiversity Offsetting

- Establishment of a land based offset cannot occur without a stable land registry system...



# Challenges to Impact Assessment – Biodiversity Offsetting

- Establishment of a land based offset cannot occur without a stable land registry system...
  - Historically Albania's lands were owned in a feudal system
  - During Communist rule, land was confiscated and nationalised into farming cooperatives
  - Following the collapse of communism land redistributions occurred
  - Ongoing conflicts/appeals in courts over compensation and ownership



# Challenges to Impact Assessment – Inappropriate Development

- Regulatory Framework still evolving
- Impact Assessments being submitted without any baseline data
- Site selection for major infrastructure projects not considering environmental values



# Challenges to Impact Assessment – Inappropriate Development

- Disconnect between threatened species classifications (eg. Dalmatian pelican)
- Projects dependant on international financial lenders
- Delays in project delivery due to inadequacy in Impact Assessments



# Thank you



**RSK**

**SAFEGUARDING YOUR  
BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT**