

Environmental groups express delight following report that German development bank KfW has abandoned plans to finance a hydropower plant near Zenica that NGOs said would damage the local environment.

Bosnian green NGOs on Friday welcomed a reported decision by German development bank KfW to drop plans to finance the disputed Janjici hydropower plant.

Bosnia in September 2014 negotiated a 30-million-euro loan from KfW to build the 15.75 MW Janjići plant, near Zenica. Local and regional NGOs protested about the likely damaging consequences for the environment.

One of local NGOs, Eko Forum Zenica, said they, the local community and other NGOs started proceedings before the bank's appeals office in January 2021, and were notified on Friday that "the procedure for terminating the loan agreement has been initiated".

"Without these credit funds, JP Elektroprivreda will most likely not be able to build the Janjici hydroelectric power plant, which wins us one battle to save the Bosna River, the Janjicka Ada and waterfalls," Eko Forum Zenica said on its website. "Our struggle continues, with a campaign to delete this energy facility from the spatial plan," it added.

Ulrich Eichelmann, from RiverWatch, said: "This is a very promising step by Germany's KfW and wonderful news for the Bosna River and the people who live along it. However, we will remain vigilant to ensure that no other financier backs the project."

According to electric company Elektroprivreda Bosne i Hercegovine, the hydropower plant on the river Bosna was planned to have a capacity of 15.75 MW as a flow-through power plant and to annually produce 77.26 GWh of electricity. The value of the project was estimated at around 56 million euros.

Source: balkaninsight.com