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Valorization of geosites of Valbona National Park for geotourism development

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Valbona National Park is situated on the eastern Albanian Alps, about 25-30 km on the northwest of Bajram Curri town. An area of 8000 ha including Valbona river basin from the springs of Valbona to the Canyon of Shoshani surrounded by a crown of peaks reaching 2694 m (Peak of Jezerca) was designated National Park in 1996. The park has many glacial and karstic landforms such as glacial cirques, glacial lakes, glacial valleys, and karstic caves, besides canyons and waterfalls, making the area very attractive for the hikers, climbers and nature admirers.

This research project undertaken in the scope of the heritage study and promotion intends the recognizing and popularizing the geosites of Valbona National Park. Geotouristic values of this park are evidenced based on their valorization according to four criteria of Knapik.at.al modified by Anna Solarska and Zdzisław Jary (Solarska and Jary, 2010) such as accessibility, state of preservation, scientific value and education values. Besides valorization of the geosites, the geoinformation of geosites of Valbona National Park is created with the help of ArcGIS10. Geoinformation is a digital database about each geosite, where general and specific data about geographical position, geology, geomorphology, biodiversity, state of preservation, management, etc., are provided. An inventory card of each site containing pictures and descriptions divided in sections is created. The general data of the site is presented in the first section; pictures and text in the second, cultural values, curiosities and legends in the third section and state of preservation and risks in the last one. A database accessible directly from Web and a Web-GIS application is being developed to promote the geosites of this park to the public and stimulate geotourism development.