



## ENERGY AND BIOMASS

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# Nº6

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# Moldova Energy and Biomass Project Newsletter

### Moldova Energy and Biomass Project

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# PROJECT NEWS



## KEY FACTS

Energy and Biomass Project is present in 20 districts and ATU Gagauz Yeri

121 schools, kindergartens and community centres from 104 villages were selected to switch to biomass-based energy

During this winter, half of them will be heated with the new fuel

By 2014, the Moldova Energy and Biomass Project will install modern biomass-based heating systems at least in 130 villages from entire Republic of Moldova

## UNDP LAUNCHED COLLECTION OF INNOVATIVE DEVELOPMENT STORIES IN EUROPE AND CENTRAL ASIA

**The Energy and Biomass project from Moldova featured as one of the successful initiatives in the region**

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), New York, launched in September a new publication showcasing transformative development achievements in Eastern European and Cen-

tral Asian countries. The publication, **Empowering Lives, Building Resilience**, provides vivid examples of “triple-win” strategies that aim to advance social, economic and environmental objectives simultaneously. As a result of these often innovative strategies, UNDP – always in partnership with governments, the private sector and civil society – has helped to create jobs, meet the needs of the most vulnerable, manage the environment responsibly and provide for the prevention of and recovery from crisis and disaster.

*“There are common qualities to transformational change, regardless of the context or country in which it takes place,” said Helen Clark, who heads UNDP. “Some critical characteristics of successful transformational change include measurable results, strong partnerships with governments and civil society and improved national capacity to manage development projects autonomously.”*

*“Each story documents how UNDP responds to the demands of governments in Europe and Central Asia, delivering sophisticated policy support that mitigates the impact of economic and environmental shocks that have the potential to push populations back into poverty,” said Cihan Sultanoglu, Director of UNDP’s Bureau for Europe and the Commonwealth Independent States.*



### Some highlights from the publication:

- 1) A joint UN programme – with UNDP as one of its five partners – helped set up 16 jobs centres in Bosnia and Herzegovina, where currently 60 percent of young people cannot find jobs in that country. The centres provided career counselling and skills training to more than 6,800 young people within the first 14 months of operation; and its Facebook page had 11 million hits in its first year.
- 2) In Moldova, UNDP is helping 60 villages in 12 districts to convert heating systems in public institutions and residences to use biomass, made from readily available agricultural wastes; the switch has led to a profitable industry in biomass fuel making.
- 3) In Kosovo (2), Montenegro and Serbia, UNDP has helped over 34,000 Roma and their families to access health care and other social services thanks to a programme that provides them with much-needed legal status. UNDP's strategy included embedding Roma coordinators in local government institutions and assisting the Roma in organizing their own livelihood-improvement projects.

You can download the publication at:

<http://bit.ly/PTUjeJ>

The Moldova Energy and Biomass Project story can be found on page 6 of this newsletter.

### 25 OCTOBER: LAUNCH OF THE LEASING MECHANISM FOR THE BRIQUETTING EQUIPMENT

On October 25, during a public event, will be launched the leasing mechanism for the briquetting equipment. The event will be headed by Valeriu Lazar, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Economy; Nicola Harington, UN Resident Coordinator, Representative of UNDP in Moldova; and Mihai Stratan, Energy Efficiency Agency director.

The EU provided EUR1 million (through the Energy and Biomass Project) to stimulate the private sector development in producing solid biomass fuel. The Energy Efficiency Agency is the subcontracted institution to provide the briquetting equipment in instalments. The 2KR PIU is the organisation contracted to provide the straw baling and handling equipment in instalments. All equipment will be exempted from customs charges, with zero rate VAT.

The procurement conditions will be made public on 25 October during a press conference and widely publicized after the event.



### HEATING PLANT INSTALLATION PROCESS WILL BE STARTED IN BASARABEASCA, CAHUL, CIMISLIA, AND FLORESTI DISTRICTS AND IN ATU GAGAUZ YERI

The works aimed at biomass-fired heating plants installation will be launched in communities from Basarabasca, Cahul, Cimislia, and Floresti Districts and in ATU Gagauz Yeri in the weeks to come. Thus, 22 schools and kindergartens located in 20 selected communities will be heated with alternative energy. The selected communities opted for briquette-fired heating systems. Therefore, the Energy and Biomass Project will install briquette-fired heating systems. The installation works are envisaged to be completed in 2013.

Out of 22 institutions suggested by those 20 communities to be connected to modern biomass-based heating systems, most of them are schools and kindergartens currently heated with coal and natural gas.

*"Local authorities request to install alternative heating systems to the existing ones, so as to be sure of energy security when the price for fossil fuel is constantly going up. Communities opt for new heating systems that use the fuel produced locally or regionally from agricultural waste, such as briquettes or pellets, which are affordable and ecologic",* says Tatiana Craciun, expert in community mobilization within the Energy and Biomass Project.

Until currently, 104 villages from 20 districts and ATU Gagauz Yeri were selected to connect their



public institutions to modern biomass-based heating systems. In more than half of them, the installation of the new heating systems will be finished at the beginning of the heating season. Hence, during the next winter, about 60 schools, kindergartens, mayoralties, community centers will be heated using biomass-based energy. The largest part of the costs incurred for installation of the alternative heating systems will be covered by the Energy and Biomass Project, the villages contributing with minimum 15% of the total value of the investment.

By 2014, the Energy and Biomass Project will cover all the districts of the Republic of Moldova. In total, at least 130 schools, kindergartens, and other public institutions will install alternative heating biomass-based systems with European money.

More information about the selected rural communities, the type of boiler plant installed, the investment value, and the number of beneficiaries is available at:

<http://www.undp.md/projects/Biomass/Sisteme%20de%20incalzire%20instalate%20in%20institutiile%20publice%20rurale.pdf>

### THE EVALUATION OF APPLICATIONS REGISTERED IN MOLDOVA ECO-ENERGETICA CONTEST STARTED

Over 60 participants compete for 11 out of 12 categories of the biggest prize contests in the area of renewable energy and energy efficiency in Moldova.

Moldova Eco-Energetica Contest is unrolled at the initiative of Moldova Energy and Biomass Project, funded by the EU and co-funded and implemented by UNDP Moldova. The submitted applications, depending on the category, are reviewed by four

assessment panels. „Each panel is made up of a minimum of 5 people that represent state institutions related to the field of renewable energy and energy efficiency, renowned specialists in the field of energy, academia and civil society representatives, journalists, experts in the area of mass-media and communication,” said Mihai Stratan, Director of the Energy Efficiency Agency, one of the organizers of the Moldova Eco-Energetica contest.

The applications registered in the competition will be examined in three stages: (1) examination of the submitted applications by the evaluation panels (2) verification visit in the field and (3) decision of the Coordination Council of Moldova Eco-Energetica Contest.

Each application submitted will be evaluated based on specific evaluation criteria for each category, contained in the Regulation on contest organization and conduct, made public in July, when the contest was launched.

Awards of MOLDOVA ECO-ENERGETICA Contest, 2012 Edition, along with other valuable prizes will be granted in December during a festive event. The participants enrolled in the contest are competing for the title of:

The Best Solar, Wind, Hydraulic and Geothermal Energy Project

The Best Biomass, Biogas and Biofuel Project

The Best energy efficiency project in public and/or private sector

The Best Communication and Awareness Initiative

The Best Educational Initiative

The Best Youth Initiative

After determining three finalists for each category, the members of the evaluation panel are to carry out field visits in order to analyze the project development/result. Subsequently, the applications of



the three finalists will be submitted for examination to the Coordination Council that will designate the winners of the Moldova Eco- Energetica contest. The decisions of the Coordination Council are adopted based on the majority vote of the present members. The members of the Coordination Council will withdraw from voting on the projects in which they were donors, co-initiators or were involved in their implementation.

The Coordination Council is made up of 11 members representing the line ministries, local authorities, civil society, academia and donors.

### **SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM NINE DISTRICTS WILL LEARN ABOUT RENEWABLES AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY**

The Educational Initiative aimed at promoting renewables and energy efficiency has been launched in nine new Districts. More than 2,000 of 7th and 8th-grade school students from Glodeni, Donduseni, Soroca, Rascani, Soldanesti, Rezina, Orhei, Ungheni and Anenii Noi Districts will learn in the course of this school year that energy is embedded in everything surrounding us, i.e. the Sun, wind, plants, water, and they will be taught the secret of efficient energy consumption. The Educational Initiative will cover the communities envisaged to connect their public institutions to biomass-fuelled heating systems within Moldova Energy and Biomass Project.

For one year the school students will be involved in diverse educational events dedicated to renewables and energy efficiency: debates, discussion clubs, excursions, lectures in webinar format, watching and discussing films on alternative energy, exhibitions, project contests in the area of renewables and energy efficiency, etc. The young people will get a valuable resource to use and find out new approaches relating to all sources of renewables and energy efficiency – the **textbook titled “Sources of Renewable Energy”** – developed and launched this year by Moldova Energy and Biomass Project. Likewise, teachers will get their own Guide prepared for this course helping them bring the new subject in an interactive and memorable manner to school students.

By the end of the school-year the most active students will be awarded vouchers to Summer Camp “Energel” – the venue of Promoters of renewables and energy efficiency. Such Educational Initiative was launched last year for the first time at the initiative of Moldova Energy and Biomass Project. Thus, during 2011-2012 school year, the initiative covered 38 schools, which connected at that time their public institutions to biomass-fuelled heating systems with the financial support provided by Moldova Energy and Biomass Project, including Stefan Voda, Leova,



Falesti, Cantemir, Sangerei, Hincesti, Telenesti Districts and ATU Gagauz Yeri.

*“I was very glad when I learned that the Educational Initiative reached our community as well. Children need information and knowledge about renewables and energy efficiency, which is extremely necessary and topical”,* Ana Purice, Director of Gymnasium from Solcani Village, Soroca District stated after she participated to a training course on renewables and energy efficiency. Also, the aforementioned training was attended by teachers from all schools, which adhered to the Educational Initiative.

By 2014, the Educational Initiative aimed at promoting renewables and energy efficiency would be expanded to involve the districts across the Republic of Moldova, covering more than 130 communities to benefit from the installation of modern biomass-fired heating systems thanks to the financial support provided by Moldova Energy and Biomass Project. *“It is important to transfer knowledge to the young generation about green energy and rational consumption of energy resources. We shall contribute in this way to the education of responsible generation and, perhaps, eventual professionals in the area of renewables and energy efficiency who are in great demand both in the Republic of Moldova and across the world”,* Victoria Ignat, Training and Capacity Building Officer of the Energy and Biomass Project pointed out.

### **KEYS TO MAKING YOUR BRIQUETTE AND PELLET PRODUCTION BUSINESS A SUCCESS IN THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA**

*“We ventured to be the first who learns from own endeavour and risk to produce biofuel in the Republic of Moldova. We have started to produce briquettes and pellets in a country with underdeveloped market in this regard. People learned from us what briquette and pellet is all about, and what advantages they have relative to wood, coal and, why not, natural gas,”* Oleg Donoaga, one of the first producers of briquettes

in Moldova, President of the Association for Biofuel Promotion in Moldova, stated at a round-table sitting entitled "Optimisation of briquetting and pellet making business". The round-table sitting was conducted on 05 October 2012 at the initiative of Moldova Energy and Biomass Project. It was a first-time event that gathered together more than 30 solid biofuel producers from Moldova.

The national professionals and biofuel producers from Moldova shared their experience on organising the biomass briquetting and pellet making business, presented the technologies applied, having emphasised both their advantages and disadvantages, the opportunities to expand and upgrade the business, the possibilities to cut the production costs and ensure a high quality end-product.

*"What should be the biofuel productivity per hour to secure a lucrative business? What agri-industrial wastes are suitable to make briquettes and pellets? What are the differences between the briquetting technologies and the pellet making technologies? Which technology is the most efficient? What is the optimal area for biofuel production facilities? What are the requirements set for assembling a briquetting production line? What are the optimal conditions for the storage of raw material and end products?"* – these are just few of the topics debated by the Moldovan producers of briquettes and pellets.

Likewise, the participants to this event exchanged their experience relating to the use of equipment for biomass collecting and handling, methods enabling to achieve maximum and permanent production performance and trouble-shooting procedures.



Special focus was placed on marketing aspects of end products. Producers shared their opinions regarding the packages used depending on customers' needs and peculiarities. All participants to the round-table sitting supported the idea of devising field-related promotional materials.

And the last, but not the least, producers acquired useful information with respect to the solid biofuel standards adopted in early October, and concerning the requirements set and the mechanism designed by the Energy and Biomass Project with the aim to lease the briquetting machinery.

### **THE REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA HAS ADOPTED EUROPEAN STANDARDS FOR BRIQUETTES AND PELLETS**

The National Institute of Standardisation and Metrology has adopted European Standards in the area of solid biofuels. Thus, the solid biofuel producers will have to prove the quality of their products on the basis of European Standards when they market their merchandise either domestically or beyond the country boundaries. The Expert Group of the Technical Committee 32 "Biofuels", set by the National Institute of Standardisation and Metrology, is expected to develop and approve minimum quality technical regulations for solid biofuels in the coming months. These regulations will be mandatory for all solid biofuel producers, comprising: basic quality requirements, rules for placing the products on the market, conformity assessment, and market surveillance. It was the Energy and Biomass Project idea to launch the initiative on developing the standards and minimum technical regulations for biofuel producers.

### **THE ENERGY AND BIOMASS PROJECT WILL PROVIDE BRIQUETTE/PELLET-FIRED BOILERS TO HOUSEHOLDS ON ADVANTAGEOUS FINANCIAL CONDITIONS**

The Energy and Biomass Project will provide subsidies to the families willing to have locally assembled briquette/pellet-fired boilers installed in their households. Overall, 500 briquette/pellet-fired or combined boilers will be provided to them on advantageous financial conditions.

*"We take the initiative to encourage biomass consumption by households and to bring efficient technologies to heat the dwellings and produce hot water. The boilers to be purchased under this activity will be manufactured and/or assembled domestically, thus, fostering the development of a new industrial branch in the national economy",* Nicolae Zaharia, Business Development Expert of Moldova Energy and Biomass Project, has stated.

At present, the Moldovan partners from the renewable energy sector as well as the producers and distributors of biomass heating plants are consulted with regards to the subsidy granting rules. The Regulations regarding the marketing and assembling of the biomass heating scheme/ programme will be made public as soon as they are approved by the Ministry of Economy and by the Agency for Energy Efficiency.

#### **THE ENERGY AND BIOMASS PROJECT TOOK PART TO THE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE "MOLDOVA ENERGY SECTOR"**

The second edition of the International Conference entitled "Moldova Energy Sector – 2012. Regional Development Issues" unfolded its works on 4-6 October, organised by the Energy Institute of the Academy of Sciences of Moldova. At the event, the Energy and Biomass Project held a presentation on its accomplishments since the project launch, and

on its contribution to the building and promotion of renewable energy sources, especially the production and use of solid biomass.

The conference was attended by representatives of public institutions working in the area of renewables and energy efficiency, notorious professionals from the energy sector, representatives of Academia and civil society from Moldova, Romania, Belarus, Ukraine, Azerbaijan, Italy, and Lithuania. The International Conference "Moldova Energy Sector – 2012" pursued the objective to consider the energy sector situation, to devise and disseminate solutions aimed at sustainable development and promotion of processes related to the integration and enhancement of energy safety and efficiency in the country and in the region through the inclusion of renewable energy in the power system of the Republic of Moldova based on the experience achieved by countries from the region.

More information about the Conference is available at: [http://www.ie.asm.md/img/pdf/EM\\_2012\\_index\\_rom.pdf](http://www.ie.asm.md/img/pdf/EM_2012_index_rom.pdf)



# SUCCESS STORIES



In its search for energy independence, Moldova is turning to locally available biomass fuels.

## MOLDOVA: BIG PLANS FOR BIOMASS

The kindergarten in the village of Ermoclia has declared its independence. Energy independence, that is. Instead of struggling to keep students warm with expensive imported gas, the kindergarten now heats up with locally produced biomass fuels made from readily available agricultural wastes such as straw, corn stalks and sawdust.

It's good for the children and the environment too. And the cost of heating the school has fallen by half. It is the first public institution in Moldova heated with biomass energy through a UNDP project to increase its use. Moldova has big plans for biomass.

*"(We are at) the beginning of the large-scale use of biomass fuels," affirms Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Economy Valeriu Lazar. "Besides reducing the consumption of imported energy sources, we are introducing agricultural residues into the economic cycle. These will no longer be perceived as wastes, but as a new business opportunity and source of income."*

## REDUCING ENERGY DEPENDENCY

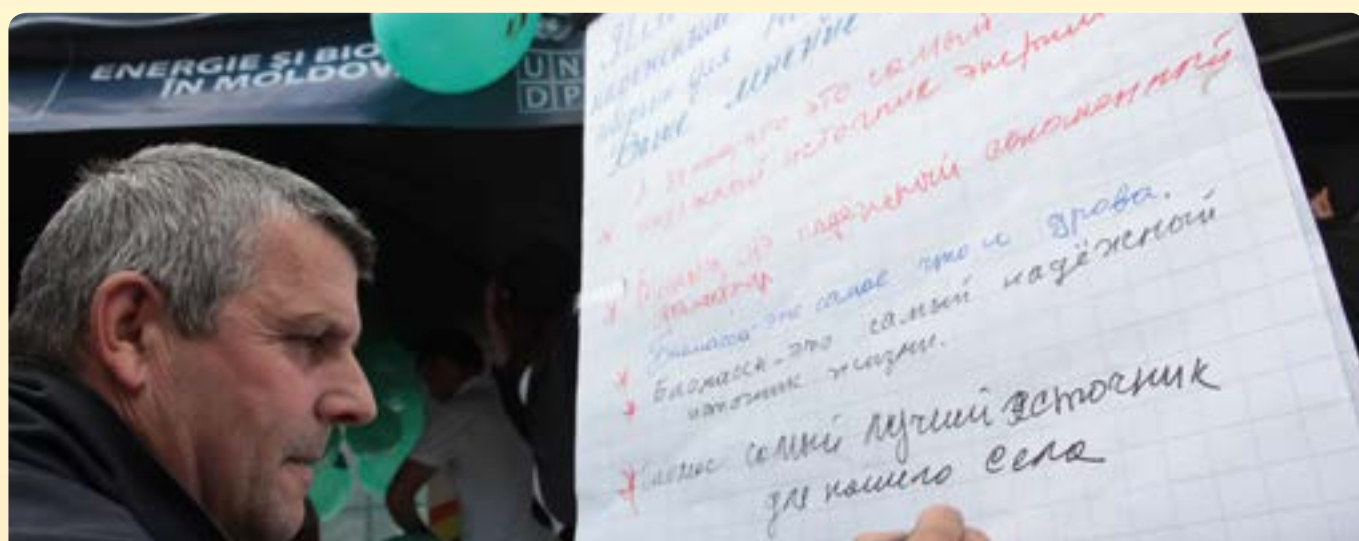
For years, Moldova has struggled with the burden of importing 95 percent of its fuel. When gas was cheaper, national policies promoted its use, including by connecting almost all rural communities to gas lines. Then prices began to soar, skyrocketing six times over the past six years. Rural Moldovans' dreams of economically heating their homes by pushing the button of a gas boiler disappeared; many found they could no longer pay their gas bills.

By 2010, a National Human Development Report sponsored by UNDP warned that energy prices would weigh down development. It called for introducing renewable energy to relieve the pressure, contribute to rural incomes and help mitigate climate change—all together, a set of triple 'wins'.

The Government subsequently committed to increasing the share of renewable energy to up to 20 percent of national consumption by 2020. Much of this can come from biomass fuel. To start moving towards its objective, the Government enlisted UNDP's help. With support from the European Union, and in partnership with national authorities, UNDP launched the Moldova Energy and Biomass Project, the country's most ambitious attempt to promote renewable energy. Started in 2011, the initiative is designed to help 130 public institutions, including schools and health centres, heat themselves with biomass fuels, all in compliance with European Union emissions standards. Already, nearly 60 villages in 12 districts have begun the conversion, with benefits for over 23,000 people—such as the children of Ermoclia.

Much of the work of the project involves direct engagement with localities to define conversion priorities. This builds on a community mobilization model that UNDP developed in 2007 under an initiative to foster more effective local governance. Diverse constituencies in 150 municipalities—18 percent of the total in Moldova—came together in focus groups and public hearings to plan and carry out projects to improve social services and basic infrastructure for water, sanitation and waste collection. In meeting after meeting, people cited shortfalls in heating and the cost of energy as top local concerns, providing further impetus for the introduction of biomass.





At the 2012 Europe Day, people shared perspectives on the benefits of renewable energy.

### NEW WAYS, NEW BUSINESSES

Besides encouraging cleaner, more accessible and more secure supplies of energy, the biomass project has another aim: new businesses and jobs. Initially, small subsidies are assisting the installation of imported biomass heating systems, but as people see the benefits and demand increases, there will be growing incentives for local production. Once installed, the systems require the regular production of biomass briquettes and pellets—here small-scale manufacturing is already growing. In Carbalia, a small village with 500 inhabitants, the local community centre went unheated in the winter until a biomass system arrived. A local entrepreneur saw an investment opportunity to produce briquettes.

At first, Igor Chirilenco was not sure that such a business would be viable, since biomass heating is so new to Moldova. But once the systems were in place, both at the community centre and at a local kindergarten, he approached the UNDP project for support. It helped him develop a business plan, calculate when investments might be recouped, and acquire the technical skills for transforming plant wastes into usable fuel. Nationally, the number of biomass fuel makers increased four times in the first year of the project. To foster this momentum, a new mechanism allows manufacturers to lease part of their equipment and pay back the cost over time, without any interest charges or taxes.

Other incentives to invest in change come from public recognition. The Ministry of Economy and the Energy Efficiency Agency, assisted by UNDP, have begun providing annual awards to private companies, public institutions, non-governmental groups and others making significant contributions to green energy and energy efficiency in Moldova.

### GREATER PUBLIC DEMAND

Biomass use will take off in Moldova once the supply of new equipment and fuels is matched by public demand. As a start towards encouraging private consumption, the UNDP project has set up a preferential pricing scheme to help 500 households install biomass heating systems. Once word gets out that the systems are cheaper and equally effective in heating homes, friends, neighbours and broader communities are more likely to adopt them as well.

To reach the next generation, an educational initiative in schools teaches children about new technologies and the importance of renewable energy, with the colorful Energel mascot making learning fun.

*"Children are the best advocates for alternative energy in Moldova,"* says Natalia Halaim, a biology teacher and coordinator of the initiative. *"They see what it is, and how it works in their school or community centre, and promote it to the people they know."*

So far, over 2,500 students from 39 schools have engaged in discussion clubs, debates, field trips, exhibitions and other activities. Students in the 7th and 8th grade can even attend a Bioenergy Summer Camp.

A public awareness campaign has reached over a million people. It has included activities such as an event at the 2012 Europe Day in Moldova where ordinary citizens shared views about the social, economic and environmental benefits of renewable energy. Other forms of engagement involve municipal leaders—over 1,100 have attended technical training courses and hands-on demonstration projects on the advantages of switching to biomass fuel. The Ministry of Economy recently recommended that a renewable energy and energy efficiency module be incorporated in mandatory

training for all mayors. They can look towards a day when energy savings can be channeled to other local development priorities, such as expanded public services and greater environmental protection.

In 2012, the Government established the Energy Efficiency Fund to finance community projects on energy efficiency and renewable energy. Project proposals from authorities in towns and rural villages will be vetted for feasibility by technical evaluations and energy audits. As projects are implemented and more people come on board, momentum will build of its own accord.

#### HIGHLIGHTS

People in 150 municipalities—18 percent of the total in Moldova—came together to debate local development priorities, identifying energy costs as a top concern.

Nearly 60 villages in 12 districts have begun converting heating systems in public institutions to biomass, in compliance with European Union emissions standards, to the benefit of 23,000 people.

The number of biomass fuel makers increased four times in the first year of the project; new government incentives encourage biomass manufacturing.

Over 1,100 municipal leaders have attended technical training courses and hands-on demonstration projects on the advantages of switching to biomass fuel.

500 households are demonstrating the merits of biomass heating for personal use.

#### Communication materials produced within Moldova Energy and Biomass Project

- Leaflet promoting biomass based energy „Energia din biomasă –Energia de lângă tine”



[http://www.undp.md/projects/Biomass/Leaflet\\_biomass\\_RO.pdf](http://www.undp.md/projects/Biomass/Leaflet_biomass_RO.pdf)

- Textbook for children „Surse de energie regenerabilă”



[http://www.undp.md/projects/Biomass/Manual\\_Surse%20de%20Energie%20Regenerabila\\_RO.PDF](http://www.undp.md/projects/Biomass/Manual_Surse%20de%20Energie%20Regenerabila_RO.PDF)

- Guide for biofuel suppliers



<http://www.undp.md/projects/Biomass/Ghid%20pentru%20furnizorii%20de%20Bio-Combustibil.pdf>

To receive these materials please contact by mail: [ina.zglavuta@undp.org](mailto:ina.zglavuta@undp.org) or by phone 022 839985



## ENERGY AND BIOMASS PROJECT CALENDAR OF EVENTS

16 October	Signing Memorandums of Understanding with representatives of communities from Cahul district (Cahul District Council)
17 October	Signing Memorandums of Understanding with representatives of communities from Cimislia and Basarabeasca districts (Cimislia District Council)
19 October	Signing Memorandums of Understanding with representatives of communities from Floresti district (Floresti District Council)
23 October	<p>Training on Project Implementation and Management for LPA Representatives and Project Committee from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Cislita-Prut, Giurgiulesti villages, Cahul district</li> <li>-Izvoare, Gura Cainarului villages, Florești district</li> <li>-Gaidar, Tomai villages, ATUG</li> </ul>
24 October	<p>Training on Project Implementation and Management for LPA Representatives and Project Committee from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Vadul lui Isac, Valeni villages, Cahul district</li> <li>-Prodanesti, Stefaneti villages, Floresti district</li> <li>-Iordanovca villages, Basarabeasca district</li> <li>-Mihailovca village, Cimislia district</li> </ul>
25 October	Press Conference „ Launch of the leasing mechanism for the briquetting equipment”
25 October	<p>Training on Project Implementation and Management for LPA Representatives and Project Committee from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Chircani, Doina villages, Cahul districts</li> <li>-Cuhureștii de Sus village, Floresti district</li> <li>-Javgur, Costangalia, Porumbrei village, Cimislia district</li> </ul>
26 October	<p>Training on Project Implementation and Management for LPA Representatives and Project Committee from:</p> <p>Andrusul de Sus, Andrusul de Jos villages, Cahul district</p>

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**The views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union and UNDP.**