

Wood Energy Workshop, Belgrade, 26/27 November 2007 Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

- Serbia already uses significant volumes of wood for energy but no accurate statistics exist.
- There is a need for better data on wood availability and use and this could be included in the Marketing Information System for wood products, which is entering the first phase of development in Serbia.
- Most consumers in Serbia are completely uninformed about the advantages and beneficial effects of using wood for energy and the wood-based energy market is disorganized and has developed spontaneously, rather than in a coordinated way.
- Within the forestry and wood processing sectors, there is limited knowledge of modern systems for producing energy from wood: few people have had the chance to undertake study visits to fairs and to countries where modern systems are in operation and where they could become familiar with technical standards and other aspects of contemporary systems.
- Adopting modern wood energy systems would allow Serbia to produce between two and three times the amount of usable energy, for the same wood consumption.
- While currently there is no strong competition between wood used for energy and by other wood processing businesses, a revival of panel production and refurbishment of a pulp and paper mill could result in competition in the future.
- Expanding wood energy could help Serbia to use productively by products from the wood processing sector, (currently used to only a limited extent) and could also provide an outlet for harvesting residues, smaller diameter and poorly formed trees for which limited market opportunities exist at present.
- Increasing the use of wood for energy could help to support sustainable rural economic development in well wooded regions of Serbia as well as reducing greenhouse gas emissions from, and reliance on, natural gas and heavy fuel oil, both of which are widely used in Serbian households and industry.
- There is presently no clear Government policy for using woody biomass for energy: developing such a policy will require a high level of coordination between relevant ministries but is vital if wood energy is to succeed.

- Given the high cost of wood-fired equipment relative to gas or oil systems, it is highly unlikely that domestic consumers in Serbia would be able to switch to wood without government incentives.

Recommendations

1. The Serbian government should, as a matter of urgency, commission the preparation of a study of woody biomass availability as well as a biomass action plan, drawing fully on experience that exists within other countries and organizations.
2. The international organizations should work together to draw up a programme for assistance to support an expansion of modern wood energy systems in Serbia, and secure international donor support.
3. There should be a follow up workshop in Serbia during 2008, to maintain momentum and to build on the evident interest aroused by the November 2007 workshop.
4. In addition to any seminars, visits should be organized to countries where wood energy is highly developed, e.g. Austria, so that key people in Serbia can see for themselves wood energy systems in practical operation, including the wood supply chain and manufacture.
- 5: The government should draw up a programme to market the benefits of wood as a modern, clean, cost-effective fuel and this should include appropriate incentives to help consumers switch from more polluting fuels to wood.