

Projects Are Being Implemented, But Not At Word of Command



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The issue of energy efficiency in Moldova is extremely complicated. Therefore, it is not easy to solve as it requires much input, most significant being the hard-to-obtain financial resources. At present, energy efficiency projects are implemented chaotically. There is no single entity which manages and collects data relevant for the projects. Also, some of the most basic objectives which need to be a crucial part of the energy efficiency process are not identified. It is difficult to determine which government institutions support this process and which don't. Nobody denies the possibility that there might be objective causes which impede the implementation of projects - the lack of adequate mechanisms being a prime example. It is also true that there are various man-made barriers which suddenly emerge and obstruct project implementation (various legislative, financial, technical, organizational, and other types of barriers). It would be beneficial to have a program which would oversee all energy efficiency projects for a certain period of time.

At a recent round-table meeting organized by Alliance to Save Energy in Moldova, and assisted by a large number of energy experts, the issues of energy efficiency and implementation of projects were subject to detailed discussions, although many were quite conflicting. For instance, Mr. Vlad Raileanu, Director of the National Agency for Energy Conservation, does not agree with his opponents that there is no program for implementation of energy efficiency projects. Such a program exists, but it is being carried out extremely slowly. One of the reasons of the slow pace is the lack of incentives for those who get involved in the process. Another barrier is a lack of financial resources.

For example, a 4-square-meter solar collector costs \$600-800. Although it is good and efficient, it is generally used only in the summer time. Generally, such collectors are more appropriate in the private sector. However, this does not mean that solar energy should be dismissed. Some of the solar collection projects include work with the units of border troops and kindergartens. Negotiations with the Ministry of Finance are hardly moving ahead.

Mihail Socol, a representative of "Renovatia", a public organization which deals with energy saving within the housing sector, believes that there is a row of institutions in the Republic of Moldova which pursue the same energy efficiency objective. However, these institutions do so separately. The Academy of Science, the National Agency for Energy Conservation, the Technical University of Moldova, and a few businesses each draft separate plans to implement energy efficiency projects. Regretfully, there is no coordinating structure which could combine all these efforts in order to obtain more significant results. The mentioned institutions are acting as a "swan, pike, and lobster" in the famous Aesop's fable.

Approaching the issue from another perspective, Mr. Vitalie Postolati, Director of the Institute of Energy, considers that indices of energy expenses per production unit are important, rather than energy saving as the end in itself. Since energy is generated by burning fuel, it is necessary to consume the energy agent as rationally as possible.

A number of institutions in the world calculate energy consumption per capita within different countries. The biggest consumers live in the USA, Japan, France, and many other countries with high standards of living. They consume a lot, but they can afford it.

And Mr. Iurie Sobetchi, consultant at the Regional Development Agency, stated his own vision of the issue, one that does not coincide with that of the others. Mr. Sobetchi suggests that energy efficiency projects are being implemented in Moldova not according to top-down word of command of the totalitarian style, but in a self-regulating environment. Mr. Sobetchi agrees with the previous speaker that it is necessary to direct our attention to energy expenses per production unit.

Projects are being implemented in Moldova through the market mechanism of implementation, and we should adhere to it. Unfortunately, very few had noticed that “Apa-Canal” entity installed frequency-voltage converters at the pumping stations, which allowed for a significant reduction in the level of energy expenses for electricity as related to water pumping. The final result was reduction of water costs. In addition, “Apa-Canal” entities from throughout Moldova used Chisinau as a model. These projects contribute significantly to the strengthening of economic stability of enterprises. “Apa-Canal” of Chisinau already uses biogas in the production process, thus reducing consumption of thermal energy. But nobody has forced this entity to implement any projects. The entity reached the understanding on its own.

Of course, one can say without a doubt that the housing sector is still the biggest consumer of energy. Energy expenses in this area are enormous. This is exactly why the Community of European states requires each country to draft proper laws, and to target regulatory acts towards the reduction of energy expenses in the housing sector. This is envisioned to be carried out throughout the rest of the year. Because Moldova strives to join the rest of Europe, we have to make decisive steps in this sphere.