

December 2025

# Newsletter



## Kosovo Hosts Its 1<sup>st</sup> National Forum on Wood Biomass

In December, Kosovo took an important step toward a cleaner and locally driven energy future.

The 1st National Forum on Wood Biomass in Kosovo, organized within the **SUNREED** project implemented by **CNVP Kosovo** and funded by the **Embassy of Sweden in Prishtina (Sida)**, brought together national institutions, municipalities, international experts, financial institutions, civil society, and private sector actors around a shared question: *how can Kosovo transform its traditional use of wood into a modern, sustainable and circular bioenergy sector?*

SUNREED is a five-year project focused on sustainable forest management, poverty reduction in remote forest areas, and climate action. A core pillar of the project is the development of forest product market systems - including wood biomass - as a way to increase incomes from sustainably managed private forests, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and strengthen rural economies. Through its market-systems development approach, SUNREED works to create long-term, systemic change by improving access to markets, strengthening supply chains, and encouraging responsible forest management by Private Forest Owners (PFOs).

Wood biomass already plays a role in heating across the country, yet it remains fragmented and in need to be integrated into energy and forestry policies. The Forum's goal was to change that by connecting policy with practice, and local Kosovo realities with European experience.

The Forum was **officially launched by H.E. Ambassador Jonas Westerlund**, Ambassador of Sweden to Kosovo, who emphasized

Sweden's strong support for Kosovo's **green transition**. He noted the country's potential to turn **forest residues into clean energy**, create jobs, and strengthen rural communities.

He commended the **SUNREED** project for fostering collaboration between government, businesses, and researchers, and emphasized that a stable **biomass market** depends on clear policies, reliable supply chains, and active private sector participation.



**H.E. Jonas B. Westerlund**

Ambassador of Sweden in Kosovo

*H.E. Ambassador Westerlund speaking at the launch of the National Wood Biomass Forum.*



After the Ambassador's remarks, **Mr. Xhevat Lushi, Country Director of CNVP Kosovo**,



*Mr. Xhevat Lushi, CNVP Kosovo Country Director, addresses the audience at the Forum.*

and rural economic development. He noted that wood biomass, when responsibly managed, represents not only an energy solution but also a driver for rural employment, forest health, and local value creation.

The Forum was brought together by SUNREED's international and national experts to share tested models, concrete lessons learned, and real-world solutions drawn from both Europe and Kosovo.

By connecting Kosovo's current realities with SUNREED-backed experience from countries such as Sweden, Austria and Slovenia, the session helped participants visualize how Kosovo's wood biomass sector can move toward an efficient and climate-friendly system.

All presentations, expert contributions, and feasibility studies featured in this session were developed and supported under the SUNREED program.

The opening session also included remarks from **Mr. Imri Demelezi**, then Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFRD), and **Ms. Leonita Shabani Mullarama**, General Secretary at the Ministry of Economy, both of whom reaffirmed institutional commitment to renewable energy development, sustainable forest management, and cross-sectoral cooperation.

Mr. Demelezi described the Forum as "crucial for the forestry sector and for clean energy, which is entering a new phase of transformation in Kosovo," emphasizing that it opens the path toward the circular bioeconomy Kosovo aims to build.



*Deputy Minister Mr. Imri Demelezi addressing the Forum on forestry and clean energy.*

He highlighted recent legislative and strategic progress led by the Ministry, including the adoption of the new Law on Forests, the Forestry Development Strategy 2022–2030 and its Action Plan, as well as the National Afforestation and Reforestation Plan, key foundations for the sustainable use of forest resources.

The Forum was also linked directly to the objectives of Kosovo's National Energy Strategy 2022–2031, as highlighted by Ms. Leonita Shabani Mullarama, General Secretary at the Ministry of Economy.

She noted that the heating sector remains one of the country's most pressing challenges due to the lack of sustainable heating sources and emphasized that biomass can provide a real and meaningful contribution when developed within clear, sustainable standards, reinforcing its role in advancing Kosovo's clean energy transition.



*General Secretary Ms. Leonita Shabani Mullarama addressing the Forum.*

## SUNREED's Approach to a Sustainable Biomass Economy

SUNREED expert Niall Condon shared the project's strategic approach to developing a sustainable wood biomass energy sector in Kosovo. He highlighted the global importance of wood biomass, Kosovo's alignment with EU renewable energy targets, and the potential of sustainably sourced wood biomass to contribute to a 32% renewable energy share by 2030.

SUNREED's approach addresses the entire wood biomass supply chain:

- **Forest management:** Updated management plans, fast-growing plantations, and regular silviculture interventions.
- **Collection and processing:** Prioritizing forest residues for energy, using low-emission equipment, and producing high-quality wood fuels locally.
- **Distribution and consumption:** Focusing on local supply chains and promoting modern, efficient biomass heating systems, including district heating.

Key achievements include **management plans for over 1,000 hectares of private forests**, a five-hectare pilot plantation, partnerships with local biomass businesses, and feasibility studies for district heating investments.



Outlining the SUNREED's strategy for sustainable wood biomass development in the energy sector, by Mr. Niall Condon.

## Kosovo's Biomass Roadmap

The project's international experts from Slovenia, **Dr. Nike Krajnc** and **Matevž Triplat**, presented the **Roadmap on Wood Biomass Production, Marketing and Use in Kosovo**, developed under the SUNREED project.

The roadmap acknowledges Kosovo's strong forest base - covering 42% of the territory - while addressing challenges such as fragmented ownership, outdated technology and fossil fuel dependence.

Its three pillars are clear and practical:

1. **Sustainable biomass supply**, through forest management plans, certification, silvicultural activities, afforestation, forest inventories and training forestry professionals;
2. **Modern biomass consumption**, by establishing collection points, creating a transparent market, promoting high-efficiency combustion appliances, awareness raising about modern technologies;
3. **Develop local production chains**, built on short supply models, community engagement and creating an information exchange platform to improve coordination among stakeholders

Implementing the **roadmap** will **strengthen Kosovo's energy independence** and **reduce greenhouse gas emissions**. Modern biomass technologies will **improve air quality**, while local supply chains will stimulate **rural economies, create jobs and attract investment**.

To support the roadmap's implementation with concrete data, a targeted case study assessed biomass availability and logistics in Southeast Kosovo. Despite limitations resulting from outdated forest inventory data, the analysis, based on FAO's WISDOM project estimates and OpenStreetMap road data, confirmed that sufficient local biomass resources are available within a 10 km supply radius, even when competing demand is taken into account.



Presenting the SUNREED-developed Roadmap on Wood Biomass Production, Marketing and Use in Kosovo, by Dr. Nike Krajnc.



The study also emphasized capacity building, training national experts to use the study’s analytical tools, enabling them to independently update analyses, so future biomass investments can be planned and refined independently as new data becomes available.

### Sweden’s Journey: From Forest Residues to Circular Bioeconomy

SUNREED experts **Maria Iwarsson Wide** and **Mr. Anders Eriksson** offered a compelling long-term perspective.



*Sharing Sweden’s long-term district heating experience, by SUNREED’s experts Maria Iwarsson Wide and Anders Eriksson.*

Sweden’s district heating system, developed by municipalities over decades, has transitioned from oil dependence to a **nearly fossil-free model**, with bioenergy now accounting for 38% of final energy use.

Their message resonated strongly: forest residues and by-products, when combined with **combined heat and power**, circular use of waste streams and strong policy signals, can deliver energy security, grid stability and climate benefits. Sweden’s experience showed that bioenergy is not a shortcut, but a **step-by-step transition**, built on efficiency, local value creation and balanced forest management.

### Bioenergy in Austria: Market and Best Practices

Austrian (European) Biomass Association expert **Lukas Kudere**, presented Austria’s experience in developing a successful biomass heating market based on



*Discussing Austria’s decentralized biomass heating systems, Austrian (European) biomass expert Lukas Kudere.*

decentralized systems, strong and stable policy frameworks, and well-organized local supply chains.

He emphasized the key role of municipalities, long-term planning, and quality standards in ensuring reliable biomass supply, cost-effective heating, and sustainable forest management.

Austria’s model demonstrates how locally sourced biomass can strengthen rural economies while contributing to decarbonization and energy security.

The session concluded with a video presentation showcasing SUNREED-supported interventions at partner NTSH “Dardani”, illustrating practical examples of biomass value chain development on the ground.

### Policies and Practice: Kosovo’s Biomass Discussion

The **first panel discussion on legal frameworks and policies** brought together representatives from energy, forestry, public agencies, the private sector and civil society. Moderated by Mr. Egzon Tahirukaj, SUNREED’s Wood Biomass Energy Intervention Manager, the discussions were honest and grounded in reality.

Panelists highlighted that while **57% of heating in Kosovo already comes from wood biomass**, most of it is still used inefficiently in households. The



*Panel discussion on legal frameworks and policies bringing together public, private, and civil society representatives.*

new **Law on Forests**, allowing longer-term contracts of up to 10 years, was recognized as a major breakthrough for enabling private investment in forestry operations and modern equipment.

The experience of the Gjakova biomass district heating plant showed both challenges and progress, moving from reliance on imported fuel to almost full use of local biomass, and more recently introducing cogeneration.

Civil society representatives reminded participants that efficiency and public health must remain priorities, pointing to indoor air pollution risks and the need for public awareness and modern technologies.

A key takeaway was that biomass can only be scaled sustainably when forestry policy, energy planning, and market incentives are aligned.

### Feasibility Studies and PPP Opportunities

In the afternoon, the focus shifted to implementation.

SUNREED expert **Josef Petschko** presented feasibility studies prepared by the project, for **five municipalities and five private companies**,



Outlining SUNREED feasibility studies for municipal and private biomass heating projects – expert Josef Petschko.

showing that biomass heating systems with a combined capacity of 15.5 MW are not only technically viable, but

economically attractive.

The numbers spoke for themselves:

- Over **€1 million per year** in heating cost savings,
- Up to **97% CO<sub>2</sub> emission reductions**,
- Nearly **€13 million in triggered investments**,
- Significant relief for the electricity grid during winter peaks.
- These projects were described as potential **“lighthouse investments”**, capable of inspiring replication across Kosovo’s rural areas.

Presenting **Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs) for biomass heating systems**, was SUNREED’s

energy sector expert, **Visar Vokrri**, who showed how collaboration between government and private investors can expand sustainable, efficient heating



Discussing biomass heating PPPs – SUNREED energy expert Visar Vokrri.

infrastructure, increase

local biomass use, and reduce reliance on imported fuels.

### Financing the Green Transition

The **second panel**, moderated by **Ardian Fazliu**, MEP Construction Manager, addressed one of the most critical questions: **how to finance sustainable energy**. Representatives from the Kosovo Energy Efficiency Fund, the Energy Regulatory Office, municipalities and international finance institutions highlighted a range of tools that are available but not yet fully used.



Experts discuss available but underutilized tools for sustainable energy financing during the second panel.

Energy efficiency audits, long-term repayment schemes for municipalities, regulatory support for renewables, and international financing aligned with green transition goals all point to one conclusion: **financing exists, but coordination and project readiness must improve**. The private sector should lead, with public institutions providing support.

## A Shared Conclusion

As the Forum closed, one message stood out: Kosovo does not need to invent a new path - it needs to connect existing potential, proven European experience and local commitment.

The discussions confirmed that Kosovo now needs to move decisively **from potential to practice**, building on knowledge, partnerships, and concrete investment pathways established through the SUNREED project and beyond.



The First National Forum on Wood Biomass succeeded in doing what it set out to do: **bringing the right actors to the same table, grounding ambition in evidence, and turning dialogue into direction**. It now sets the stage for partnerships and concrete action toward a greener, locally powered energy future in Kosovo.

*The SUNREED project is implemented by CNVP Kosovo and financed by the Embassy of Sweden in Pristina (Sida).*



CNVP Kosovo – SUNREED local and international project team at the Forum.

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## SUNREED Presentations & Materials

As part of the session *From Potential to Practice: Learning from Kosovo and Europe*, all presentations and materials were prepared and delivered by SUNREED experts, showcasing practical experience and best practices in sustainable wood biomass and circular bioeconomy development.

### *Presentations from this session include:*

- SUNREED's vision for a sustainable biomass economy in Kosovo – [SUNREED's Strategy for Wood Biomass](#)
  - *From Forest to Energy: Kosovo's Biomass Roadmap* – [Roadmap on Wood Biomass in Kosovo](#)
  - *From Forest Residues to a Circular Bioeconomy – Sweden's Journey*
  - *Bioenergy in Austria: Markets and Best Practices* – [Bioenergy in Austria](#)
  - *Feasibility Studies for Wood Biomass Heating Systems in Kosovo* - [Feasibility Studies](#)
  - *PPP for Biomass Heating Systems* - [PPPs for Biomass Heating Systems](#)
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