

Every Drop Matters Project Assists Remote Mountain Villages to Access Safe Water

Bucharest – 24 January 2008 – Three remote mountain villages in Suceava County are assisted in finding solutions to get access to safe water thanks to a new UNDP-Coca Cola initiative. The project is designed to ease future construction works by carrying out site assessments, helping local authorities develop eligible projects under EU funding mechanisms and raise awareness about water management.

The lack of access to safe water and adequate sanitation and the associated health risks is a major issue not only throughout much of the mountain areas of Romania, but also across South East Europe and CIS.



Traditional households in Suceava County



Wide view of the "Every Drop Matters" panel

The Environment section of UNDP Romania organized a day-long consultative workshop at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania to discuss the findings of an integrated study (feasibility and sociological research) about water challenges in Suceava County and to recommend the best solutions.

"Our objective is to find effective solutions to rural water and waste water management which can be replicated country wide," said Ms. Monica Moldovan, Head of UNDP Romania's Environment Section at the opening of the workshop.

The selected villages are small settlements with 2000 or less inhabitants and with limited or no water supply/water treatment systems. Real issues of concern are the poor waste water management systems, further deepened by lack of public awareness with regard to the health/environment hazards they pose.

The findings were shared with representatives of the relevant local, regional and national government and made the groundwork for future water and sewage related initiatives. John Taylor, Environment Expert for *Mott MacDonald*, presented the results of a feasibility study on potential construction of water supply systems in the three pilot areas, and discussed the most viable options during an animated Q & A session.

A second study, presented by Adrian Demian Groza of *Trend Communications*, described the communities of Dorna Candrenilor, Poiana Negrii, Dealu Floreni, Tesna and Romanesti based on sociological research. The study showed that about 80% of the local inhabitants have total household revenues between 100-300 Euros a month, and are oblivious to the health risks posed by the lack of safe water and sanitation.

The workshop was concluded with a recommendation of several financing mechanisms available to local and regional authorities to address their water challenges, especially the EU Rural Development Funds, which was presented by Ms. Camelia Iliescu, Councilor on EU programmes, Ministry of Environment and Rural Development.

The second phase of the project will conduct on-site training sessions on EU funding mechanisms available for these small rural communities, coaching on project development, and a local awareness campaign on local water management issues. The significant potential for country wide replication of the project's lessons learned will also be explored, including possible linkages with other UNDP projects such as *Local Agenda 21*, *Business Incubators* and *Small Grants Programme*.

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