



United Nations Development Programme

Government of Belarus

Project Document

Project Title	Building capacity for Strategic Environmental Assessment and environmental conventions implementation in Belarus.
Expected CP Outcome:	11. Biodiversity, ecosystem services, protected areas and other commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and other multilateral environmental agreements integrated into national governance and production systems.
Expected Outputs:	Strengthened professional and institutional capacity for SEA and environmental conventions implementation and mechanisms for sustaining and developing this capacity in the long term.
Implementing Agency:	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus

Brief Description

The project aims to assist Belarus in developing domestic capacity to integrate effectively environmental concerns into national decision-making through introduction of strategic environmental assessment and enhancing environmental conventions implementation in the country.

Programme Period: <u>2006-2010</u> Key Result Area: Mainstreaming environment and energy Atlas Award ID: 00062796 Start Date: 22 September 2008 End Date: 31 December 2010 PAC Meeting Date: 15 August 2008 Management Arrangements: national implementation	Total resources required: US\$ 642,388 Total allocated resources: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TACIS US\$ 573,355 • UNDP US\$ 69,033

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Aarhus Convention	Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
Espoo Convention	UNECE Espoo Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
MoEnv	Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NPC	National Project Coordinator
NSSD-2020	Belarusian National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Belarus until 2020
PMG	Project Management Group
PSC	Project Steering Committee
REC	Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SER	State Environmental Review
ToR	Terms of Reference
UNDP Regional Centre	UNDP Regional Centre for Europe and CIS (Bratislava)
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

PART I: SITUATION ANALYSIS

INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a widely used term that refers to a systematic process of analyzing the environmental effects of policies, plans and programmes. SEA is considered internationally as an important tool that facilitates sustainable development. Two mile-stone documents, AGENDA 21 and the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, have reflected the importance of SEA for sustainable development. In AGENDA 21, *Integrating Environment and Development in Decision Making* is identified as a major programme area; and the Rio Declaration in Principle 4 stipulates that “to achieve sustainable development, environmental protection shall constitute an integral part of the development process and cannot be considered in isolation from it”.

The use of SEA is implied by the Plan of Implementation, agreed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, in Sub-section 136 dedicated to promotion and development of methodologies at policy, strategy and project levels for sustainable development decision-making.

The international legal framework for SEA includes mainly the European Union SEA Directive (2001/42/EC) and the SEA Protocol to the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (agreed at Kiev in 2003). The two instruments prescribe a procedure for SEA for proposed plans and programmes.

Practical application of SEA has grown substantially during last several years. A number of international agencies have employed various approaches of SEA. The UNDP developed the Environmental Overview, a form of SEA tool, as a response to new challenges posed to environmental assessment of aid projects, which require tools operating at a more strategic level. The World Bank has been involved in a number of SEAs, mainly in the form of sectoral and regional environmental assessments.

The majority of the SEAs were conducted by European and other industrial countries. However, there is growing interest in SEA in developing countries and the countries in transition. Promising experiences, mainly from pilot SEAs, are emerging there as well.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

Within the current planning system and practice of formulating strategic initiatives applied in Belarus, a majority of developments at the national and/or local levels result from the implementation of a national, sub-national or local policy, programme or plan for socio-economic, sectoral or spatial development. The elaboration of national or sectoral strategic initiatives in Belarus is the responsibility of respective ministries, research institutes, which belong to these ministries, and of the local authorities. The governmental institutions formulate a significant number of policies, strategies, plans and programmes that would provide a basis for SEA application in the country.

Considering the mechanisms of taking into account environmental issues during the planning process, the ministries or their research institutions within their structures have special units or individuals whose responsibilities include consideration of issues related to the efficient use of natural resources and environmental protection.

The Belarusian Council of Ministers Decree on Economic and Social Programmes¹ (2004, amended in 2005) obliges the developers of strategic initiatives to get approval of their newly proposed programmes with the MoEnv on the issues that are within the competence of the environmental authorities.

The legal and regulatory basis for environmental assessment of proposed initiatives in Belarus is composed of the following laws and regulations:

- Law on Environmental Protection;
- Law on State Environmental Review;
- Regulation on the Procedure for Environmental Impact Assessment of Economic and Other

¹ Decree of the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Belarus # 1404 on Adoption of the Regulation on the Procedure of Formulating, Financing and Implementation of Economic and Social Programmes.

Activities in the Republic of Belarus;

- Regulation on the Procedure of State Environmental Review.

Belarus is a party to the Espoo Convention (1991)² and the Aarhus Convention (1998)³ and the provisions of these conventions have become a part of national legislation.

Among the above-mentioned documents, only the Law on State Environmental Review contains provisions related to SEA. In accordance with this law, “concepts, programmes (including investment ones) and schemes of sectoral and spatial social-economic development” are subject to State Environmental review (SER) (Article 6).

The Belarusian system of environmental assessment of economic initiatives comprises two interrelated processes: Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and SER. EIA deals with initiatives at the project level and does not address strategic documents, whereas SER deals with proposed projects, plans and programmes for socio-economic, sectoral and spatial development. SER employs an “engineering” approach that is based on technical norms and thresholds.

National environmental assessment specialists possess adequate knowledge and intensive experience in environmental assessment of proposed projects. However, knowledge of methods for the environmental assessment of proposed strategic initiatives, and professional experience in evaluating plans and programmes is limited.

Belarus committed itself to introducing SEA. The Belarusian National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Belarus until 2020 (NSSD-2020) recognizes the importance of improvement of mechanisms of integration of environmental concerns into policy and planning processes among the conditions for country’s transition to sustainable development. The Strategy states that at the first stage it is necessary to build adequate institutional capacity for SEA in Belarus.

The Belarusian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection (MoEnv) has elaborated the National Action Plan for Efficient Use of the Natural Resources and Protection of the Environment of the Republic of Belarus for the period of 2006-2010. In this Action Plan the MoEnv plans preparing in 2007-2008 documents necessary to join the SEA Protocol.

In 2004-2006, a group of national experts conducted study on the current situation with SEA in Belarus and performed needs assessment with respect to building capacity for SEA in the country. Based on the needs analysis, a strategy for building capacity for SEA in Belarus was developed. The strategy identifies raising stakeholder awareness of SEA and enhancing expert capacity of Belarusian professionals in the field of SEA as priority actions, which should be focused on at the first stage of developing capacity for SEA in Belarus.

PROBLEM ADDRESSED

The existing Belarusian decision-making system and practice of formulation of strategic initiatives does not provide an adequate policy framework for the effective application of SEA. As mentioned above, programme developers are obliged to seek approval of their proposed programmes with the MoEnv on issues that are within the competence of the Ministry. However, there are no clear requirements for consulting with the environmental authorities. In the Decree on Economic and Social Programmes the environmental authorities are referred to as “other governmental institutions responsible for implementation of national socio-economic policy in a particular sphere”, but it is the programme developers who decide whether the authorities responsible for environmental protection should be consulted. Additionally, the time available for consultations is insufficient for the effective assessment of possible environmental consequences from a programme implementation. A self-assessment of the country’s capacity⁴ to implement three UN environmental conventions⁵, conducted by a team of national experts, also highlighted poor consideration of environmental issues in governmental planning and decision-making in Belarus.

² UNECE Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (1991)

³ Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters

⁴ The GEF National Capacity Self Assessment project was implemented by the UNDP Office in Belarus in 2003-2005.

⁵ UN Convention to Combat Desertification & Land Degradation (1994), UN Convention on Biodiversity (1992) and UN Framework Conventions on Climate Change (1992).

The existing legal basis for SEA in Belarus does not meet the international standards and is internally inconsistent. In accordance with the Law on State Environmental Review this law, “concepts, programmes (including investment ones) and schemes of sectoral and spatial social-economic development” are subject to SER. In practice, although plans and schemes for spatial development undergo SER on a regular basis, proposed programmes for socio-economic and sectoral development are examined only occasionally. This discrepancy between the current practice and the requirements of the legislation can be attributed to a lack of mechanisms to enforce effectively the legislation and a lack of professional expertise to conduct environmental assessment of strategic initiatives. The development of a legal and regulatory basis for SEA is one of the main preconditions for successful introduction of SEA in Belarus.

SEA practice in Belarus is fragmentary. Belarusian professionals lack knowledge of SEA methodology and practical experience in applying SEA. The “engineering” approach, based on technical norms and thresholds and used for environmental assessment at the project level, is not effective at the strategic level. Absence of systematic and generally applicable in the country SEA methodology adds to the above-mentioned deficiencies.

Very limited stakeholder awareness of the SEA process and the benefits of SEA application is among the main issues that hinder SEA introduction in the country. Decision-makers and programme developers, for example, are hardly aware of SEA as a tool which supports the due consideration of environmental and health issues in the process of formulation of policies, plans and programmes.

BENEFICIARIES AND STAKEHOLDERS

The project beneficiary is the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus.

LINKAGE TO UNDP PRIORITIES

The project will promote sound decision-making and environmental sustainability in Belarus by providing support to build domestic capacity for SEA in the country. Environmental sustainability has been identified as a key thematic area under the UNDP Country Program for Belarus 2006-2010, approved by UNDP Executive Board in 2006.

The project will complement the ongoing efforts by UNDP and the Government of Belarus in the area of environmental protection and will add to the ongoing stakeholder dialogue in the field of environmental protection and encourage sound and transparent decision-making in Belarus.

Furthermore, the UNDP's assistance to Belarus is fully in line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The project activities supporting integration of environmental concerns into national decision-making reinforce UNDP actions in support of the MDGs achievement.

PART II: STRATEGY

PROJECT RATIONALE

The Belarusian Government recognizes the importance of introducing in the country mechanisms that would facilitate integration of environmental concerns into national decision-making. The existing planning system does not provide an adequate policy framework for the effective application of SEA.

To introduce SEA and ensure its effective operation in the future in Belarus, it is necessary to build domestic capacity for SEA in the country.

Introduction of SEA in Belarus is closely connected with the issues of planning actions related to meeting by Belarus the obligations imposed by the key environmental conventions, ratified by the country. Among these key conventions are the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention on Biodiversity, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and other international environmental agreements. The Belarusian Government recognizes the importance of improving coordination of the actions on implementing the conventions and presenting consolidated country's position on the conventions' related issues at international meetings. To develop country's capacity in the fields of SEA and environmental conventions implementation in Belarus, it is necessary to focus on the problematic issues described below.

Weak and internally inconsistent legal framework for SEA requires a detailed professional analysis of the Belarusian legislation with subsequent formulation of recommendations for the framework modification in

order to establish an adequate legal basis for SEA, along with mechanisms to enforce effectively the SEA related legislation.

Lack of expertise of Belarusian professional with respect to SEA requires actions aiming to educate and train environmental assessment practitioners in contemporary SEA approaches and techniques. National guidelines on SEA methodology and procedure, including guidelines on public participation, should be developed to support SEA practices in Belarus.

Lack of support to SEA introduction from the key stakeholders in the country can be attributed to poor stakeholder awareness of the benefits of applying SEA and the SEA process in general. An intensive information campaign explaining the SEA process and SEA benefits to the main stakeholders, especially decision-makers and programme developers, should be conducted.

To enhance the implementation of environmental conventions in Belarus, it is necessary to improve coordination of activities performed by numerous national agencies. Effective cooperation with the international agencies responsible for implementation of the environmental conventions needs to be improved. To ensure efficient use of limited national and international resources available to scientific support of the environmental conventions, effective coordination of pertinent scientific research should be established and maintained.

Actions are required to strengthen the weak national system of monitoring and evaluating the Belarus's performance with regard to the environmental conventions implementation.

It is necessary to develop a set of respective indicators. The country's reporting capacity also needs to be improved.

Among the most needed are the actions aiming to improve the processes of collecting, processing and storing of information related to environmental conventions' implementation, and to facilitate timely and easy access of the stakeholders, including the general public and NGOs, to this information. To do this, the stakeholder information needs should be identified and an information system should be developed.

The Belarusian MoEnv, which is responsible for building capacity related to environmental protection in the country, lacks of resources needed to build domestic capacity in this field. This necessitates external assistance in developing capacity for SEA and for environmental conventions implementation in Belarus; and the project will provide such support. The project will promote West-East and East-East cooperation because it is anticipated that international experts from Europe will be involved to transfer relevant knowledge and experience to Belarusian professionals.

Furthermore, the project will create preconditions for Belarus to join the SEA Protocol to the UNECE Espoo Convention.

PROJECT GOAL, OBJECTIVE, OUTCOME, OUTPUTS AND ACTIVITIES

The project **overall goal** is to promote due consideration of environmental issues at all levels of governmental decision-making in Belarus through building domestic capacity for SEA in Belarus. The following tasks will be undertaken:

- a) Development of a legal and regulatory basis for SEA;
- b) Building national expert capacity for SEA;
- c) Raising stakeholder awareness of the SEA benefits.

The following activities will be conducted:

Output Enhanced capacity for SEA and environmental conventions implementation in Belarus.

Activity 1. Developing capacity for SEA in Belarus.

The project will assist the MoEnv in building domestic capacity for SEA in Belarus. Focus will be given to training Belarusian specialists in methodology and approaches of environmental assessment of strategic documents, development of a SEA institutional framework, and to raising stakeholder awareness of SEA benefits.

1.1. Development of a manual on SEA for decision-makers and program developers. To make governmental officials, decision-makers and developers of strategic initiatives acquainted with SEA, a manual will be developed. The manual will provide systematic and user-friendly guidance on the SEA process. The manual, which is to be published and disseminated among the targeted groups, will (i) provide examples from international SEA experience, (ii) demonstrate how SEA can facilitate more environmental friendly outcomes and prevent major environmental problems, (iii) demonstrate that SEA techniques and principles are practical and effective. The manual will be published and disseminated among decision-makers and program developers

1.2. Organizing a study tour to a country that has introduced and effectively implemented SEA. The project will provide Belarusian decision-makers and program developers with an opportunity to meet their foreign counterparts that have successful experience in applying SEA and discuss with them their experience in SEA implementation and applying.

1.3. Development and support of an Internet-page on SEA on the project's Internet-site. A web-page on SEA will be used to disseminate information on SEA to the widest possible Belarusian audience. The information on the upcoming project events and the results achieved will be also placed on the project's web-site. The site's forum will facilitate wide discussion among the stakeholders of a draft SEA methodology and recommendations for creation legal SEA framework, developed in the project course.

1.4. Organizing a summer school on public participation in the SEA process. Representatives of Belarusian NGOs will be informed about SEA and the opportunities provided by the SEA framework to the general public to be involved in public decision-making processes.

1.5. Theoretical training of Belarusian professionals in SEA methodology. The project will assist the MoEnv through five training workshops in developing expert capacity of Belarusian specialists in SEA methodology, approaches and techniques (including application of environmental objectives in SEA; identification of the SEA scope and baseline scenarios; analysis of possible substantial environmental impact, including cumulative impact; comparison of alternatives; consultations with environmental and health authorities and with the general public; analysis of trans-boundary effects and arranging trans-boundary consultations; and managing an SEA process).

1.6. Practical training of Belarusian professionals in SEA methodology through pilot SEAs. Two SEA pilots will provide on-the-job training and develop the Belarusian specialists' practical skills of applying SEA methodology. It is expected that the pilot projects will result in optimization, from the environmental conservation point, of programs that will serve as object of pilot projects in SEA Strategic documents, subject to pilot SEAs, will be identified by the MoEnv through consultations with the agencies responsible for these documents elaboration.

1.7. In-depth training of Belarusian practitioners at a SEA centre of excellence. The project will provide in-depth training on SEA approaches and technique at a SEA centre of excellence (e.g. REC⁶⁷) to national a group of belarusian professionals. This will also provide the specialists with an opportunity to establish working contacts with SEA professionals from other countries. The trained specialists will be used as resource persons in the abovementioned workshops and pilots, and will be involved in the development of SEA manuals, regulations, laws and guidelines.

1.8. Analysis of legislation and formulation of recommendations to facilitate development of a legal framework for SEA in Belarus. To facilitate development of a legal framework for SEA in Belarus, an analysis of the Belarusian legislation as well as of international experience in building SEA-related legal frameworks will be carried out. Recommendation to modify the existing legislation in order to create a legal SEA framework in Belarus will be developed and presented to the MoEnv.

1.9. Development of methodological guidelines on SEA. To support the MinEnv and other Belarusian institutions in practical application of SEA, methodological guidelines will be developed, taking into account international experience. The guidelines will reflect the national specifics of the planning and decision-making system, along with the Belarusian environmental assessment system. It is expected that the methodological guidelines developed within the project will serve to MinEnv as a background for Regulation on the Conventions Center.

6 Regional Environmental Centre for Central and Eastern Europe

7 Central European University

1.10. Development of a database on SEA. A database on SEA will be created for use by relevant Belarusian sectoral and environmental agencies. It will provide information on SEA-related legislation, national SEA experts, past SEA experiences in Belarus etc. It is expected that the database will be an important step in the creation of a national environmental assessment information system.

Activity 2. Assistance in establishing an information and analytical Centre for environmental conventions.

The project will support the MoEnv in establishing a Centre for environmental conventions (hereinafter Convention Centre).

2.1. Finalization of documentation for creation of the Convention Centre. Analysis of the key stakeholder needs with regard to such a centre will be conducted and recommendations on Centre's operational aspects (directions of activities, its organizational structure and terms of reference, financing sources and mechanisms) will be elaborated. A comparative analysis of experiences related to organizing and operating of such centres (or similar agencies or structures) in other countries will be performed. The project will assist documentation necessary to establish the Conventions Centre (e.g. a regulation on the Conventions Centre and an economic substantiation for its creation) will be prepared and presented to the MinEnv. Analysis of the current legal framework with respect to the Convention Centre operation will also be conducted.

2.2. Procurement of equipment and software for the Convention Centre. As part of Convention Centre setup, equipment and software necessary for the its effective operation will be procured and handed over to the MinEnv. This will create opportunities for effective Centre operation and will facilitate the improvements in information gathering and processing as well as for conducting analysis of applicable data on environmental conventions with modern methods including with geo-informational systems. Procurement will be performed after the MinEnv has approved the regulation of the Convention Centre and will be conducted through a competitive bidding process in accordance with UNDP rules and procedures.

2.3. Convention Centre opening and operation. The Convention Centre will be established⁸ based on the establishing documents developed in the framework of project. The Centre will be equipped with the computer equipment, software and furniture, procured by the project and handed over officially to the MoEnv. The MoEnv will cover all the expenses related to the Centre operation.

Activity 3. Developing capacity for environmental conventions implementation in Belarus.

The project will contribute to enhancement of the Belarus's performance with respect to environmental conventions implementation. Focus will be given to building expert and institutional capacity.

3.1. Review of the national monitoring and evaluation system with respect to environmental conventions implementation. The MoEnv will get support in developing the national monitoring and evaluation system with respect to environmental conventions implementation in Belarus. The current situation will be analyzed and recommendations on strengthening the system, including improvement of mechanisms for collection, procession, storage and provision of information will be formulated. A set of relevant indicators will be developed.

3.2. Enhance UNCBD implementation in Belarus through support to development of a new national strategy for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. A new national strategy for conservation and sustainable use of the country's biodiversity will be developed within the project. In the course of the strategy preparation, the results of implementation of the previous strategy, developed in 1997, will be analyzed. The new strategy will define priority directions for biodiversity conservation in Belarus and include an action plan that identifies top priorities of strategy implementation. The strategy will have an action plan defining strategic activities to be implemented at the first stage of the strategy implementation. The strategy will be published in Russian and English.

3.3. Enhance UNCCD implementation in Belarus through support in preparing a national program for combating land degradation. The project will assist the MoEnv in preparing a national action program for combating land degradation. The program will define the priority directions and needed actions for land

⁸ The actual commissioning of the centre will depend on the outcomes of stakeholder consultations and alignment of project implementation with the Ministry of Environment's budgeting cycle.

protection and its sustainable use. This will enable to improve planning and implementation of activities aimed at prevention and combating land degradation. The National Action Program will supplement the NSSD-2020 and will become an important tool in implementation of issues of sustainable land use.

3.4. Support in preparing a country report on implementation of one of the environmental conventions ratified by Belarus. The project will assist the MoEnv in preparing a regular report on environmental conventions implementation. The convention subject to this report will be identified through consultations with the MoEnv and other stakeholders. The manual will be developed in line with the set form and will contain description and analysis of the current situation as well as recommendations for improvement. Draft report will be discussed with the main stakeholders, including the general public, and finalized taken into account those discussions. The report will be prepared in Russian and English, published and placed at the Internet-sites of the project and of the MinEnv.

3.5. Preparation of project ideas with respect to environmental conventions implementation in Belarus. The priority actions with respect to environmental conventions implementation in Belarus will be defined. Relevant project proposals with regard to those conventions implementation will be prepared.

3.6. Preparation and dissemination of promotional materials dedicated to environmental conventions. A set of promotional materials on environmental conventions ratified by Belarus and progress in their implementation will be prepared, published and disseminated to raise stakeholder awareness about environmental conventions.

3.7. Information needs assessment on three environmental conventions and development of a database on these conventions. Stakeholder information needs assessment with respect to three conventions ratified by Belarus will be conducted and relevant database will be created. The conventions subject to assessment will be identified through consultations within the project implementation. The database will contain information on the regulatory framework related to the conventions, roster of experts, country reports and reports on national thematic programs related to those conventions implementation in Belarus and other information related to the conventions. The experience gained from this activity will be used to conduct similar activities for other conventions.

3.8. Development and support of an Internet-page on environmental conventions on the project's Internet-site. A web-page on environmental conventions, which will be designed, launched and maintained in the course of the project implementation, will be used to disseminate information on environmental conventions, and the process and results of the conventions' implementation in Belarus to the widest possible Belarusian audience. The information on the upcoming project events and the results achieved will be also placed on the project's web-page.

Activity 4. Effective project management and monitoring

Effective project management will be provided with recruitment of the project management group on a competitive basis. Project monitoring and evaluation will follow the established UNDP and relevant national procedures.

LINK TO OTHER RELEVANT INITIATIVES AND NATIONAL PRIORITIES

This project is linked to the following international initiatives: the EU Directive 2001/42/EC on the Assessment of the Effects of Certain Plans and Programmes on the Environment, the Aarhus Convention⁹, the UNECE Espoo Convention¹⁰ and its SEA Protocol, the Sofia Initiative on Environmental Impact Assessment, the Environment for Europe process and the Kiev Ministerial Declaration (2003).

The project is in line with the TACIS Action Programme 2005-2006 for Belarus, because it is aimed to strengthen domestic capacity for effective implementation of SEA and for implementation of the environmental conventions in Belarus.

The project will act in synergy with the first phases of implementation of the National Strategy for Sustainable Socio-Economic Development of Belarus until 2020. The Strategy sets strategic objectives for environmental protection and efficient use natural resources. The Strategy recognizes importance of

⁹ Belarus joined the Aarhus Convention in 2000.

¹⁰ Belarus joined the Espoo Convention in 2005.

improvement of mechanisms for integration of environmental concerns into policy and planning processes at all levels of governmental decision-making.

The project will support implementation of the Strategy on SEA Capacity Development in the Republic of Belarus until 2012 approved by the MinEnv in 1997.

The project is in line with the Strategy and the Action Plan for Conservation and Efficient Use of the Biodiversity of the Republic of Belarus (1997). These documents consider strengthening institutional capacity and improving inter-institutional coordination in Belarus among the priority actions aiming at biodiversity conservation and sustainable use.

The project is in line with the National Action Plan for Efficient Use of the Natural Resources and Protection of the Environment of the Republic of Belarus for the period of 2006-2010, in which activities related to preparing by the MoEnv of the documents necessary to join the SEA Protocol to the Espoo Convention and for creation of an environmental conventions centre in the country are planned

The project is in line with the National Priority Action Plan for Enhancing of the Capacity to Implement the UN Conventions in Belarus for 2005-2010, elaborated in the framework of the GEF National Capacity Self Assessment¹¹. The Action Plan defines the development of the national capacity in the field of SEA in Belarus among the priorities set for the country in order to improve the current practice of planning and conducting actions in the course of implementation of the UN environmental treaties signed and ratified by Belarus.

The project's objectives reflect the recommendations aiming to enhance Belarus's performance with respect to international environmental treaties implementation, made by a team of international experts in the second environmental performance review for Belarus.

¹¹ The GEF National Capacity Self Assessment¹¹ project was implemented by the UNDP Office in Belarus in 2003-2005.

PART V: MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The project implementing organization is the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus. The project activities will be coordinated by a National Project Coordinator (NPC) appointed by the MoEnv.

For effective and timely implementation of the project according to the UNDP rules, a Project Management Group (PMG) will be created. The PMG will operate under the guidance of the UNDP Representative in the Republic of Belarus and the National Project Coordinator. After agreement with the donor, it is planned to integrate the PMGs of the three projects: (i) “Building Capacity for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Conventions Implementation in Belarus”, (ii) “Local Sustainable Development” and (iii) “Green Schools”, which will be implemented under the European Commission Programme “Support to Environmental and Sustainable Development in Belarus”. For effective management of the resources, these groups will have common administrative staff, and located in the same office.

Functions and duties on management and coordination of project activities

The overall coordination of the project activities will be conducted by the MoEnv. A Project Steering Committee (PSC) will be established, which main functions will include monitoring of the project implementation process, review and approval of annual work plans, annual and final reports, and other documents prepared by the project.

Main functions of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection

- Ensuring project implementation;
- Supervising operation of the PMG;
- Assisting in organization of procurement conducted within the project implementation and control of the use of the procured goods and services;
- Approval of technical assignments, tender bids, *etc.*;
- Ensuring the effective implementation of training and awareness raising actions;
- Ensuring preparation and submission of project implementation reports to the Ministry of Economy;
- Monitoring and evaluation of the project implementation;
- Operative management of the project together with the UNDP Office in the Republic of Belarus;
- Organizing PSC meetings;
- Informing the Council of Ministers, ministries and other national governing authorities about the project progress, on their request;
- Coordinating activities of the organizations taking part in the project actions;
- Analyzing effectiveness of the project implementation by different components;
- Developing proposals on improvement of the project implementation activities; and
- Approval of work plans, reports, terms of reference *etc.*

Main functions of the UNDP

- Timely funding all project activities;
- Administrative management of the project according to UNDP standards;
- Making procurement for the project according to the UNDP procurement guidance and the Project Procurement Plan;
- Hiring staff of the project according to the UNDP contract requirements and procedures and paying for delivery-related work and services according to rates specified by the UNDP for specific types of work and services;
- Participating in the work of the PSC, ensuring interaction with the PSC and the MoEnv to achieve the project goals and targets;
- Informing the PSC about the project progress and activities;
- Coordinating project activities with similar programmes and projects in Belarus.

Main functions of the Project Management Group

PMG will be established for the whole project implementation period. The project staff will be recruited through an open competitive process in accordance with the respective UNDP rules and requirements. A

MoEnv representative appointed by the NPC will be included into a selection panel to select project staff. The main PGM functions are:

- Project implementation according to approved annual work plans (AWP);
- Interacting with the MoEnv and the UNDP Belarus in the course of project implementation;
- Drafting AWP and facilitating their consideration and approval by the PSC;
- Organizing and execution of the project activities in accordance with AWPs;
- Preparation and submission to the MoEnv, UNDP Belarus and Ministry of Economy of Belarus reports on project implementation in accordance with the agreed schedule;
- Project efficiency monitoring and evaluation;
- Facilitation and participation in PSC meetings and implementing its decisions;
- Drafting ToRs, contracts, bidding documentation *etc.*, according to the UNDP requirements and procedures according to rates specified by the UNDP for specific types of work and services.

The PMG will be managed by the UNDP Representative in the Republic of Belarus as regards administrative management of the project according to the UNDP procedures.

PMG will comprise a Project Manager (see Annex 1 for the Project Manager’s ToR), a PR Coordinator, a Task Coordinator and a Financial and Administrative Assistant.

Project Management Levels

The first management level (administrative) will include:

1. Project Manager;
2. PR Coordinator.

For effective use of funds and human resources, all the three projects, (i) “Building Capacity for Strategic Environmental Assessment and Environmental Conventions Implementation in Belarus”, (ii) “Local Sustainable Development” and (iii) “Green Schools”, implemented under the European Commission Programme “Support to Environmental and Sustainable Development in Belarus” will have common Project Manager and PR Coordinator. The PMG of all the three projects will be located in one office.

The second management level (task related) will include a Task Coordinator and a Financial and Administrative Assistant.

The project staff will be selected through an open competitive process in accordance with the respective UNDP rules and procedures. Effectiveness of the project personnel work will be evaluated annually by the UNDP Belarus. Based on the evaluation results and consultations with the NPC, a decision will be made on renewal of project personnel contracts.

PART VI: MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Project monitoring and evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the established UNDP rules and procedures, as well as with the respective Belarusian legislation. Project Monitoring and Evaluation Plan is presented in Annex 3.

Project audit will be conducted in accordance with the UNDP requirements and rules, and with the requirements of the Belarusian legislation.

PART VII: LEGAL CONTEXT

This project document shall be the instrument referred to as such in Article 1 of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement between the Government of Belarus and UNDP, signed on 24 September 1992.

Consistent with the Article III of the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement, the responsibility for the safety and security of the executing agency and its personnel and property, and of UNDP's property in the executing agency's custody, rests with the executing agency.

The executing agency shall:

- a) put in place an appropriate security plan and maintain the security plan, taking into account the security situation in the country where the project is being carried;
- b) assume all risks and liabilities related to the executing agency's security, and the full implementation of the security plan.

UNDP reserves the right to verify whether such a plan is in place, and to suggest modifications to the plan when necessary. Failure to maintain and implement an appropriate security plan as required hereunder shall be deemed a breach of this agreement.

The executing agency agrees to undertake all reasonable efforts to ensure that none of the UNDP funds received pursuant to the Project Document are used to provide support to individuals or entities associated with terrorism and that the recipients of any amounts provided by UNDP hereunder do not appear on the list maintained by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1267 (1999). The list can be accessed via <http://www.un.org/Docs/sc/committees/1267/1267ListEng.htm>. This provision must be included in all sub-contracts or sub-agreements entered into under this Project Document.