

EVALUATION REPORT

on the implementation of

UNESCO project No. 2240116046

**“Capacity Building for the Safeguarding of Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources and Legal Regulation of Access to It in the Republic of Belarus”
under the Participation Programme for 2022-2023**

I. Evaluation submitted by:

The Project Implementing Agency: The State Scientific Institution “Institute of Genetics and Cytology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus”

II. Number and title of request:

UNESCO project No. 2240116046 “Capacity Building for the Safeguarding of Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources and Legal Regulation of Access to It in the Republic of Belarus”

The financial contribution of **10 480 USD (32 236,48 BYN)** received from UNESCO for the above request has been fully spent, in accordance with the purposes for which it was granted.

III. Evaluation of the project or activity implemented:

(a) Purpose and objectives indicating the original goals or expected outcomes as defined from the outset in the original project

The following goals and objectives we set to implement the UNESCO project No. 2240116046 “Capacity Building for the Safeguarding of Traditional Knowledge Associated with Genetic Resources and Legal Regulation of Access to It in the Republic of Belarus”:

The project goal:

Raising public awareness of the importance of traditional knowledge and practices associated with genetic resources; their role for the sustainable development of the country and the preservation of national identity; conservation of biological diversity; and the development of recommendations for legal regulation in the field of conservation, use, and transfer of traditional knowledge associated with genetic

resources for the effective implementation of the Law of the Republic of Belarus “On Genetic Resources Management.”

The main project objectives:

1. Raising awareness among the stakeholders of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources;
2. Preparing proposals for practical measures for the conservation of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources in the Republic of Belarus;
3. Preparing proposals for the legal regulation of issues related to access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and the fair sharing of benefits.

The main project elements:

Phase 1. The issues related to the conservation of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and the legal regulation of access to it within the framework of fulfilling the commitments of the Republic of Belarus as a Party to the *Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from Their Utilization to the Convention on Biological Diversity* (hereinafter referred to as “the Protocol”) and the requirements of Article 7 “Access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources” were discussed during the workshops held at the following state environmental institutions: the National Park “Belovezhskaya Pushcha” (Brest Region), the National Park “Braslav Lakes” (Vitebsk Region), the National Park “Pripyatsky” (Gomel Region) and the Republican landscape reserve “Yelnya” (Vitebsk Region). The employees of environmental institutions and the representatives of cultural departments of local authorities took part in the workshops.

Phase 2. In 2023, the draft Law “On Genetic Resources Management” (hereinafter referred to as “the draft Law”) was developed, which includes the following definition of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources:

“Traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources” means knowledge in relation to the use of the species (breeds, varieties) of animals and plants inhabiting (bred), growing (cultivated) in a certain area, their parts and/or derivatives; acquired on the basis of accumulated experience by the population living in this area and is transmitted from generation to generation.

Phase 3. In 2023, an expert (folklorist) organized 10 field expeditions and conducted 35 interviews with traditional knowledge holders to collect information about the traditional knowledge of Belarusians on the use of plants and animals to maintain the health of humans and domestic animals and about the holders of such knowledge themselves in all 6 Regions of Belarus: Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk, and Mogilev. The

information was collected in accordance with the international standards of the World Intellectual Property Organization.

Phase 4. Carrying out of activities for the project implementation. Development of proposals for government bodies (the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Belarus, and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus).

Partners to the project implementation:

- The Centre for the Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature Research, NAS of Belarus;
- Institute of Experimental Botany named after V.F. Kuprevich, NAS of Belarus.

Geographical representation of project participants: 12 Districts of 6 Regions of the Republic of Belarus: Dragichin District, Brest Region; Haradok District, Vitebsk Region; Chachersk District, Vyetka District, Mozyr District, Rogachev District, Pyetrykaw District, Lyelchytsy District, and Zhitkovichi District of Gomel Region; Dzyatlava District, Grodno Region; Kletsk District, Minsk Region; and Berezinsky District, Mogilev Region.

The project activities were as follows:

- Workshop: *Wormwood, bitter grass: Traditional Knowledge and Modern Youth Projects.*
- Two workshops: Interviews with traditional knowledge holders sharing the accumulated traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.
 - Round table: *Safeguarding of traditional knowledge and practices associated with genetic resources: strategy, tactics, and main actors.*
 - Round table: *Safeguarding and legal regulation of the management of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.*
 - Round table: Final discussion of the experts' reports on traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources. Proposals and recommendations.

The project target group included the following beneficiaries:

traditional knowledge holders, including women (living mainly in rural areas); the youth; scientific institutions involved in the conservation of biodiversity and the intangible cultural heritage; educational institutions; government bodies responsible for legal regulation in the field of environmental protection, culture, and education.

(b) Benefits, major results obtained and impact of the project:

An expert's analysis of the species diversity of medicinal herbs used by Belarusians was carried out. For the first time, the species composition of higher vascular plants used by Belarusians in herbal medicine was established. The use in folk medicine of individual representatives of higher vascular plants by divisions, as well as the main methods of their application, were considered. The need to develop legal regulation mechanisms at the national level in the field of management of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources was noted.

An expert's analysis of the current situation in the field of conservation of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources in the Republic of Belarus was carried out. "Traditional knowledge" means knowledge, skills, experience that are of an applied nature and develop in the form of an intellectual response to the needs of life; transmitted from generation to generation, mainly verbally; are characterized from the perspective of a synthesis of two components: ideas about the environment and people in it, as well as practical life skills in appropriate natural and climatic conditions. International experience and best practices in legal regulation in the field of the management of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, as well as the state of things in this area at the national level, were analyzed.

Were the expected results fulfilled?

The expected project results have been fulfilled.

Information collected during field expeditions has been analyzed by experts and is presented in booklets. The booklets have been distributed both among the participants of the workshops and round tables, as well as the stakeholders in government agencies and among the public.

Analysis of the current situation in the field of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources in the Republic of Belarus has been carried out; international experience and best practices of legal regulation in this area have been analyzed.

Recommendations have been prepared to ensure the conservation of traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources and the legal regulation of traditional knowledge management.

The Law "On Genetic Resources Management", which includes a definition of traditional knowledge and proposes for the regime for genetic resources management, has been developed.

Were there modifications made to the initial objectives(s) and the factors that made such modifications necessary?

No modifications were made to the initial project goal and objectives.

The project was implemented in accordance with the originally developed implementation plan.

(c) What difficulties were encountered and how were solutions found?

No difficulties were encountered during the project implementation.

(d) As a result of the project what was UNESCO's visibility in the Member State?

Depending upon the nature of the project, did the Member State publicize the activity by means of announcements in the media/radio/television and/or posters?

The public was notified about UNESCO's activities in the Republic of Belarus through the publication of information about the project implementation in the media (the Republican newspaper "Zvyazda"); on the websites of the Center for the Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature Research of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus at <http://cbcll.basnet.by/rus/news> and the National Coordination Center on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing of the Institute of Genetics and Cytology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus at <http://abs.igc.by>; and the Telegram channel of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

Was the public at large invited to participate or be present? Were local non-governmental organizations implicated?

91 people took part in the events, including traditional knowledge holders in the field of herbal medicine, national cuisine; folk artisans, representatives of private business (individual entrepreneurs) and private stakeholders, scientists, students, and the representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

(66 women and 25 men)

(e) Was the UNESCO field office consulted? Did it assist in the implementation of the project?

The project was implemented in close contact with the National Commission of the Republic of Belarus for UNESCO.

IV. Were there or will be any follow-up? Are there long-term plans as a result of the project?

Did this event reflect on what is needed in the Member State in coming years in the fields of: education, culture, communication, science and the social and human sciences?

Proposals for improving interdepartmental liaison and recommendations were formulated:

- For state and local authorities: to ensure recognition and enhancement of the role and respect for traditional knowledge related to agriculture, livestock, fisheries, game management, traditional cuisine, as well as associated beliefs and customs contributing to ensuring the food security of the country;
- For scientific organizations: to improve the level of scientific research in the field of studying the intangible cultural heritage of Belarusians.

The proposals and recommendations are to be submitted to the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus.

To visualize the role of UNESCO in achieving the project goals and addressing the project objectives, a leaflet and two booklets were published in Russian/Belarusian and English using the UNESCO logo, distributed and advertised using online resources: the booklet “Traditional Knowledge of Belarusians: from the Past to the Future”; the booklet “Species Diversity of Medicinal Herbs Used by Belarusians”; a leaflet on the traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources.

The role of UNESCO was also visualized through the publication of information about the project implementation in the media (the Republican newspaper “Zvyazda”); on the website of the Center for the Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature Research, NAS of Belarus, at <http://cbcll.basnet.by/rus/news>; on the website the National Coordination Center on Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit-sharing of the Institute of Genetics and Cytology, NAS of Belarus, at <http://abs.igc.by>; and the Telegram channel of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

V. Was the project also financed through other funding sources? Kindly explain.

Funds of the State Scientific Institution “Institute of Genetics and Cytology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus” were allocated for the project implementation and were used to pay salaries to the institute’s employees involved in fulfilling the project goal and objectives during business trips, project management, and holding of events.

VI. Any other observations

Under the project, the following information resources have been prepared to implement the project goal and objectives:

- 3 videos about the events held (in Belarusian and Russian);

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1DQ-k-epS5l6XuVKuUTIWCj7nh5pyKgnU/view?usp=drive_link (video Part 1)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1RS6p_1OctvaOR4VHLT7t7D8GRXbcR_TU/view?usp=drive_link (video Part 2)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1P1h2gJgPkf2HENxdudHEgNzObKHmWUIj/view?usp=drive_link (Round tables 5-6 December 2023. Final video)

- Videos of interviews with traditional knowledge holders (in Belarusian, 9 in total);

https://drive.google.com/file/d/18sQyWcaUoNX6lNm_ZjbrbmGell4MTJ43/view?usp=drive_link

https://drive.google.com/file/d/14bpmyee_COyp6UaFlGldko6wGanJrszH/view?usp=drive_link

- Overview of information provided by traditional knowledge holders during the interview (Belarusian; English translation);

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1U_KqRu7QLj4kz6rhJSruff63IUxJ9EI7/view?usp=drive_link

- **2 booklets** and 1 leaflet (Belarusian and Russian languages; English translation);

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1R1ogpM1n4TN0B3YZZLZ3Z1loZPZSIN9v/view?usp=sharing> (booklet; Russian-English)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Mrdw1PU7BQo-nixZ0RnqR98zozjVrAjf/view?usp=drive_link (booklet; Belarusian-English)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1b0N2D9kn2UrVX3-RLkHtDPELLwxapY68/view?usp=drive_link (leaflet in English)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1YqNhsO_cfoW1O449hmg9IeaEoKFnrnmv/view?usp=sharing (leaflet in Belarusian)

- Acknowledgements for traditional knowledge holders (Belarusian);

https://drive.google.com/file/d/199CBw43KBIS0ER13bnaQTPulJ2eG8w7P/view?usp=drive_link

- Participant certificates (Belarusian);

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1WP6oD5y0UFHfPx6bZFnt5mVi8rvSnCln/view?usp=drive_link

- Presentations (Belarusian and Russian languages);

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1BRo9aqAC0QNvq431ULHgr3w6geb638jQ/view?usp=drive_link (presentation on wild-hive beekeeping in Belarus)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/15imTIj0OdXnNU1qpjuYVc2YPojYsSGO0/view?usp=drive_link (presentation on traditional knowledge)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FTCpog1UGBA1t1SYhLvrXPzHCafbmFzd/view?usp=drive_link (presentation on the traditional knowledge of Belarusians)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FQMxYhBUH-MIjhdXrgSB0qYhjtXQyNw6/view?usp=drive_link (presentation on the legal regulation of access to traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zu3Q-ANltJZKvNo8_CpFQaraFbbNAC4R/view?usp=drive_link (presentation about the folk culture museum)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1-g6QDPtmAxeDoRlkZuHOQnzOLtFbyrNB/view?usp=drive_link (presentation on phytotherapy in gynecology)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ina5upQVlht4rZO4ZSJX-EwgNINpnU3_/view?usp=drive_link (presentation on dishes from grated potatoes)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Cm5fm-p4UE32wicxi5joZJBLbl1xeRd-/view?usp=drive_link (presentation on traditional knowledge (video))

- Photos from events (see open sources links);
- Open sources' publications (Belarusian, Russian, English):

- website of the Center for Belarusian Culture, Language and Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus <http://cbcll.basnet.by/rus/news>

- website of the National Coordination Center for Access to Genetic Resources and Benefit Sharing of the Institute of Genetics and Cytology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus <http://abs.igc.by>

- Telegram channel of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus

- Republican newspaper 'Zvyazda'

<https://abs.igc.by/strong-safeguarding-of-traditional-knowledge-associated-with-genetic-resources-and-legal-regulation-of-access-to-it-strong-the-main-topic-of-the-round-tables-held-on-5-6-december-2023-under-the-strong/>

<https://abs.igc.by/proekty/strong-capacity-building-for-the-safeguarding-of-traditional-knowledge-associated-with-genetic-resources-and-legal-regulation-of-access-to-it-in-the-republic-of-belarus-strong/>

<https://abs.igc.by/addzel-falklarystyki-i-kultury-slavjanskih-naroda-razam-z-institutam-genetyki-i-cytalogi-30-kastrychnika-pravjali-sumesny-navukova-praktychny-seminar-palyn-trava-gorkaja-tradycyjnyja-vedy-i-suchasnyja/> (news; in Belarusian)

<http://cbcll.basnet.by/rus/news/> (news of December 12, 2023; in Russian)

<https://zviazda.by/be/news/20240108/1704720535-ad-chago-dapamagayuc-sushanyya-lisichki> (news in *Zvyazda* newspaper; in Belarusian)

<https://t.me/nanbelarus/7850> (Telegram of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus)

- Annex to the evaluation report on 6 pages (in Russian, Belarusian)

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1ppDhAE7lX49nDZO-XQSnI9y2CZgLKzKB/view?usp=drive_link

30 January 2024