

**Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection
of Belarus**

UNDP/GEF Project

**National Self-Assessment for Global Environmental
Management in Belarus**

R E P O R T

**Assessment of Capacity Existing in Belarus to Meet the
Commitments of the UN Framework Convention on Climate
Change**

**Minsk
2004**

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1. Introduction

Meeting the commitments made by Belarus under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, UN Convention on Biodiversity, and UN Convention to combat desertification/land degradation should be considered an important opportunity to make sure that the government does its best in managing natural resources and protecting the environment, assisting stakeholders in making their interactions and coordination more efficient, promoting research and scientific studies in the areas of expertise that pertain to the conventions.

However, it will be possible to take this opportunity, provided the whole range of issues the conventions try to address have been quite understood and an action plan has been developed and adopted, which would:

- be based on the existing capacity in the country;
- be aimed at addressing key (root) problems;
- create conditions for meeting respective convention commitments in a systemic manner.

A review of the situation with implementing the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol at the system, institutional and individual levels was done in the first place within this NCSA project (Stage 1). The conclusions arrived at during Stage 1 have been used as a basis for a thorough analysis, the results of which are presented here (Stage 2). In their turn, the conclusions and recommendations contained herein may serve a nice basis for taking practical steps to build the country's capacity in implementing UNFCCC as well as the other two UN conventions. These conclusions and recommendations may also provide a starting point for an in-depth review and analysis of cross-cutting issues of the three conventions, so as to create conditions and set up required mechanisms for setting any existing synergies between the conventions to work, within a single national action plan or three interlinked ones (Stage 3).

The key objective of Stage 2 is to identify relevant problems, pinpoint constraints and factors that hamper building the capacity in the country to implement UNFCCC at the system, institutional and individual level. This report and the conclusions contained herein are addressed in the first place to the specially designated government body responsible for environmental protection - the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus – and, secondly, to any authorities, institutions and individuals that might be concerned, including non-governmental organizations.

To form a judgment on the existing capacity, each relevant area of action pertaining to specific UNFCCC commitments Belarus has made was duly reviewed, and compared to what is required. Key constraints (causes) were identified and specific action suggested to enhance the capacity so as to further facilitate meeting the UNFCCC commitments. Analysis in each area of expertise was carried out by a single expert or a group of experts, as appropriate. Reports produced by the individual experts or groups of experts assigned a common task were used to prepare this aggregate Stage 2 report.

Chapter 2 of this report outlines the methodology which has been used. In Chapter 3 the results of an analysis of legal framework are presented along with law enforcement practices as pertains the thematic area of UNFCCC. Chapter 4 offers an analysis of national policies, programmes and plans of all levels, cooperation and coordination between relevant authorities and other stakeholders. A detailed assessment of the existing practices and capacity in inventorying GHG emissions and sinks is the main focus of Chapter 5.

The results of an analysis of existing capacity as concerns public education, professional training, and awareness raising in climate change are given in Chapter 6. Capacity to meet Belarus' commitments in terms of information provision and research is discussed in Chapter 7. The report is concluded by a chapter on synergies between the three conventions and cross-cutting issues they share (Chapter 8).

Monitoring the climate is one of the key areas of action within UNFCCC, however, the issues of improving the National Environmental Monitoring System (NEMS) are left outside the scope of discussion in the report, since they were reviewed in great detail in 2003 when developing 'The concept for optimizing the National Environmental Monitoring System', and there is reference to the fact in Chapter 10.

Chapter 10 contains a short description of draft documents developed within the project lifetime. The full texts of the documents are given in Annexes 1 through 4.

Each of the said chapters (3 through 10) are concluded with a set of practical recommendations on enhancing capacity, which are then overviewed in Chapter 8. The recommendations include measures on improving legal framework in the areas of UNFCCC which includes development of new and amendment of existing legal acts in order to fill up the gaps in the legislation of Belarus, one of key ones being the lack of the legal term 'climate' as well as lack of legal provisions aimed at controlling impacts on the climate.

The recommendations reflect issues related to the need to improve the planning and project development system in the country so that to take due account of

impacts on the climate, include measures to enhance cooperation and coordination between stakeholders in their common effort to implement UNFCCC, measures to improve the national GHG emissions and sinks inventory system; as well as there are recommendations on improving public education, professional training and awareness raising as concerns climate change.

In conclusion (in Chapter 9) the recommendations made in the whole report are further systematized and assigned relative priority as well as likely funding sources are indicated which is expected to help while developing action plans, programmes etc.

The recommendations cover key subject areas as concerns UNFCCC implementation, and following them will assist in solving the tasks and achieving the objectives set by UNFCCC.

2. Methodology used for assessment of existing capacity to meet the commitments of Belarus under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change

The work to carry out the self-assessment of the existing capacity was done in strict adherence with a workplan approved by the Ministry of Environment, which is the government body primarily responsible for implementing UNFCCC in Belarus.

To take, to the fullest extent possible, into account different opinions and positions on issues related to UNFCCC and its implementation, stakeholders have been actively involved both at the stage of establishing working groups and that of reviewing achieved results upon specific phases of work (through workshops, mini-seminars, peer review of interim reports, etc.). In pinpointing stakeholders such things were taken into account as: having interests in the area at issue, being competent, participation in similar work in the past, any existing cooperation and coordination mechanisms shared by stakeholders.

Capacity assessment was carried out article by article of UNFCCC. Existing capacity was reviewed in the light of each article to identify constraints for meeting commitments, to make proposals so as to enhance the capacity at the individual, institutional and system level.

Collecting and reviewing information was done by individual experts and groups of experts by means of document reviews, interviews, field missions (eg Luninets district), mini-seminars.

Specific work objectives in each area were set out in a terms of reference approved with Minpriroda according to agreed procedure.

SWOT analysis was used to identify strengths and weaknesses in selected areas of implementing the Convention.

To identify high priority issues in each area of UNFCCC, a priority-setting matrix was used. Criteria to evaluate priority were the scale of a problem, level of its topicality and possibility of addressing it adequately.

To pinpoint constraints for building capacity needed to meet commitments under UNFCCC and identify possible solutions an analysis of root causes was carried out. For this the problem tree method was used. Stages included: identification of a problem, evaluation of its relative significance, and identification of its possible sources. In carrying out such analysis primary focus was placed on the cross-cutting problems among the three conventions, not special cases.

A methodology similar to the ones described above was used in conducting cross-cutting problem analysis.

3. Analysis of legal framework, enforcement practices and proposals on improving it with the thematic area of the UNFCCC

The chapter includes an analysis of legislation existing in Belarus as far as UNFCCC is concerned and is concluded with proposals to improve it.

Legal framework and procedures to enforce it are largely the factors that determine the efficiency of existing capacity both at system, institutional and individual levels, as well as are called to create conditions for as-full-as-possible involvement of all stakeholders in implementing UNFCCC.

Belarus signed the UNFCCC on 11 June 1992 and became a full party to the Convention on 9 August 2000¹. All aspects of Belarus' acceding to Kyoto Protocol are at present discussed and reviewed in the most active manner. Current forecasts show that GHG emissions in Belarus will remain below the 1990 level till 2020. It is further estimated that the growth of GHG emissions will be slower than that of GDP. Bearing in mind that meeting UNFCCC commitments and the requirements of the Kyoto Protocol lie in the mainstream of achieving objectives of social and economic development and addressing priority problems (such as reducing energy consumption within GDP, improving the mechanism for controlling use of natural resources and environmental protection) there is great likelihood that Belarus eventually accedes to the Kyoto Protocol.

For this reason while making an assessment of legal framework we placed focus on issues pertaining to both UNFCCC and the KP.

The provisions of UNFCCC and the KP in the main do not contradict the Constitution and legislation of Belarus as a whole. Some acts in Belarus legislation contain provisions which have direct links with UNFCCC provisions. The key documents that regulate issues pertaining to climate change are as follows:

- Law 'On Environmental Protection', 26 November 1992, # 1982-XII (the

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