



SUPPLEMENT  
TO THE DIGEST "GREEN BELARUS"

ENVIRONMENTAL INFORMATION CENTER  
"ECO-INFO"  
CENTRAL SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY NAS BELARUS

№ 1 (16),  
January, 2015  
MINSK, BELARUS



## ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES OF BELARUS, LATVIA SIGN COOPERATION AGREEMENT

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The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB) and the Latvian Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences (LAAFS) have signed a cooperation agreement, BELTA learned from the NASB press service.

"Chairman of the NASB Presidium Vladimir Gusakov and President of LAAFS Baiba Rivza inked a cooperation agreement on 22 January. The document is aimed at boosting the scientific and technical potential of Belarus and Latvia in agriculture and forestry," the press service explained.

The agreement provides for the development of joint projects and joint use of national and international grants. Besides, Belarusian and Latvian scientists will be able to run scientific training programs, publish the



results of joint research in scientific editions of both countries, and exchange scientific and other kinds of information.

A delegation of the Latvian Academy of Agricultural and Forestry Sciences is currently on a visit to Minsk. It has been invited by Belarus' Academy of Sciences to take part in the international seminar "Innovations, Creativity and Equality" held by the National Technology Transfer Center. The delegation has already visited a number of NASB's agricultural organizations such as the Institute of Meat and Dairy Industry and the Scientific and Practical Center for Foodstuffs.

BELTA,  
22.01.2015

## STAKING A CLAIM ON BIOFIELD

The National Strategy for Sustainable Development-2030 (NSSD-2030), which was recently published for public discussion, contains one point that stands apart. The authors of the document suggest putting an emphasis on the creation of a high-tech sector of the economy with mainly V and VI technological modes. The task is quite ambitious. The fact of the matter is that it is very difficult to reach such high levels in the development of science. And without having proper centres, it is almost impossible. At the same time, our scientists state that during recent years the country has seen quite significant breakthroughs in terms of the establishment and development of biotechnologies, which are the basis of many innovations of the new VI technological mode.

The word 'biotechnology' sounds obscure to the majority of us and most likely reminds us of scenes from American horror films, when experts in white chemical protection suits grow dangerous things in top secret underground laboratories. This is not the case; the rapid progress, which has occurred in biology over the last few decades, has expanded boundaries of application of biological processes in manufacturing. Today they are practically all of the economy: agriculture, public health services, food, light, the chemical and pharmaceutical industries. Biotechnology is used to produce antibiotics, hormones, vaccines, diagnostic systems, bioplastics and for cell production. For the needs of agriculture, new species of plants and animals, forage additives, amino acids, ferments for the production of fodder and probiotic agents are produced. In the food industry, bacterial ferments, food ferments, yeast, spirit and products for functional and dietetic therapy are made.



It is clear that the economy of Belarus depends on importing various kinds of biotechnological products. According to Belstat (the National Statistical Committee of Belarus), in 2011, the volume of imported forage mixes, lactic acid, biopreservatives, bacterial concentrates and ferments cost over \$220 million. Some varieties of biotechnological production are manufactured here, but it will still be an enormous task to escalate

biotechnological manufacturing to satisfy the needs of the Republic, without mentioning any exports.

The first attempt to resolve the issue was the state programme for Innovative Biotechnologies for 2010-2012 and for the period until 2015. It is already possible to sum up the results. For the last three years, seven new factories were created and nearly 30 new products were developed using Belarusian innovations. The strategy was to replace imports for the huge common market of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. The agricultural and pharmaceutical sectors especially have the potential for the introduction of technologies. In the agricultural sector, it covers biotechnology for burns, ulcers, sclerosis, leukaemia and joints etc. using stem cells. In December of this year, the Academy of Sciences will launch the centre of regenerative medicine, which will be engaged in the treatment of diseases with the use of various cells, and the first to use stem cells at a moderate cost.



Our technologies are already used for the production of modern generics and pharmaceuticals, including antiviral and antitumor medications. These are 'clever' medicines, preparations that are new not only for Belarus, but also for the post-Soviet countries. By 2015, 10 new manufacturers will be created following the norms of GMP, and this will allow the production of pharmaceuticals with more than 300 names, to increase the volume of its manufacturing at least three-fold.

To the point

By 2020, the biotechnological sector of the economy should have reached the volume of production equivalent to \$500 million, and export deliveries of biotechnological production up to \$100 million. It is planned to continue the development of domestic biotechnologies and the creation of new enterprises using these technologies. Low-tonnage manufacture on the removal of human lactoferrin from genetically modified goat milk is one industry that will appear in the country.

The Minsk Times,  
14.01.2015

## BELARUSIAN EXPLORERS RAISE NATIONAL FLAG IN ANTARCTICA

**Belarusian polar explorers have raised the flags of Belarus and the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus (NASB) in Antarctica to mark the Day of Belarusian Science, BeITA learned from the press service of the NASB.**

"In the run-up to the professional holiday, the flags of the Republic of Belarus and the National Academy of Sciences were raised at the field camp of the Belarusian Antarctic expedition, near Mount Vechernyaya. This is a kind of tribute to all the scientists of the country," the NASB noted.

Belarusian scientists are not new to Antarctica.

They are working hard to make an appreciable contribution to the global science.

They want to help our country strengthen its



positions among the signatories to the Antarctic Treaty, the press service noted quoting the message of the participants of the 7th Belarusian Antarctic expedition.

The National Polar Research Center of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus is conducting the 7th Antarctic expedition in 2014-2015 in line with the government program "Monitoring of polar areas of the Earth and providing support for Arctic and Antarctic expeditions in 2011-2015". On 20-21 December the Belarusian research team and the cargo of the Belarusian and Russian Antarctic expeditions were delivered to Antarctica by the expedition ship Akademik Fedorov. One of the key tasks of the 7th Belarusian Antarctic expedition is to equip the site with the necessary engineering equipment in order to install the first

modules of the Belarusian Antarctic station in 2015. The work will be underway until mid-April 2015. The Belarusian polar explorers will carry out various kinds of research, including for the national space program. Members of the expedition will also test new hardware designed in Belarus for remote environmental probing.

The plan to build the Belarusian Antarctic station was drafted in 2012 upon the instruction of the Council of Ministers of Belarus. It was approved by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry, and endorsed by the Finance Ministry. The first phase of the Belarusian Antarctic station is to be commissioned by 2018. The facility will comprise eight to ten modules fitted out with everything necessary for the polar explorers to live comfortably and work.

**BELTA**  
23.01.2015

## BELARUS' WEATHER CENTER, ENVIRONMENTAL MONITORING CENTER MERGED

**The system used to collect hydrometeorological information will be improved, BeITA learned from Maria Germenchuk, Deputy Head of the National Center for Hydrometeorology, Radioactive Pollution Control, and Environmental Monitoring of Belarus, on 6 January.**

According to the official, in accordance with the relevant decision of the Belarusian Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry the national weather center was merged with the national center for radiation control and environmental monitoring as of 5 January 2015. The new agency is already operational.

The merger is expected to contribute

to the consolidation of means and money that were available to the two agencies before the merger. In

The scientific component will be enhanced. It was present in both agencies to a lesser or greater de-



particular, the merger will combine and streamline data collection and guidelines for environmental monitoring across the country in addition to improving the data collection and dissemination system, said Maria Germenchuk.

**BELTA**  
6.01.2015

## ALTERNATIVE WAYS TO MAKE MONEY FOR BELARUS' WILDLIFE RESERVES

**Alternative ways to earn money will be suggested to Belarusian national parks and wildlife reserves in line with the international technical aid project "Assistance to the Republic of Belarus in its transition to the green economy in 2015-2017", BeITA learned from head of the information and public relations department of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus Tatyana Yevdaseva.**

"The objectives of the project include sustainable use and commercialization of biological resources. A grouse nursery will be set up at the Nalibokyy national landscape reserve. The grouses raised at this nursery will be later given to other wildlife reserves in Belarus and abroad," Tatyana Yevdaseva said.

The international technical aid project "Assistance to the Republic of Belarus in its transition to the green economy in 2015-2017" was launched in January 2015. The project is estimated at €5 million. The funds for the project will be provided by the European Union.

In line with the project, technological capacities will be created to produce office

paper by means of deep processing of wastepaper. There are plans to purchase equipment to expand the output of sapropel, which will allow enabling waste-free production of highly-efficient organic fertilizers and reducing greenhouse gas emissions. There are plans to build a facility in Brest to make biological fuel from refuse wood. "Green vehicles" will be purchased and "a green map" will be elaborated for the purpose.

Tatyana Yevdaseva noted that Belarus' participation in international environmental protection agreements is one of the ways to address the most pressing issues in the field of environmental management. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus is working to expand cooperation with international organizations and other countries. "Every now and then we come across Internet publications containing unverified, biased and false information coming from environmentalists working for some NGOs. The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection hopes

that such materials will not affect the high level of cooperation between Belarus and international organizations," Tatyana Yevdaseva said.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus closely collaborates with the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Environmental Programme, the World Bank, the European Commission, the UN Food and Agriculture Organization, the United Nations Industrial Development Organization and other international organizations. The collaboration resulted in legislation in various fields of environmental protection, strengthening of the country's positions in the international environmental community, adoption of the best environmental protection and resource conservation practices, improvement of the environmental situation in the country.

In 2012-2014 the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus implemented over ten international technical aid projects.

**BELTA**  
10.01.2015



## EU ALLOCATES €452,500 TO PROMOTE FAMILY CLUBS IN BRAGIN DISTRICT

**The EU has allocated some €452,500 for the international technical assistance project to develop the network of family clubs in Chernobyl-affected territories in order to improve the social and economic situation, BeITA learned from the EU Office in Belarus.**

The abovementioned sum accounts for 90% of the project's budget designed to run for four years. All in all, Bragin District is planning to set up eight family clubs and hold a hundred of different events in the local area. "The model of family clubs is easy to be implemented in any enterprising local com-

munity. Representing a form of self-mobilization for the improvement of the quality of life, this model is able to earn people's confidence. We will invite local authorities to participate in our events in order to consolidate local communities and achieve more stable results," the EU Office explained.

Special attention will be paid to single

mothers, families with many children, needy families, people with disabilities, and elderly people. The representatives of the EU Office also noted that the practical aim of the project is to promote local initiatives for the solution of regional problems, to create new opportunities for the development of the local community, small businesses, and social enterprises. "The network of family clubs will unite active citizens, families, and public-interest groups ready to take actions to improve the quality of life in their region," the diplomatic mission believes.

Family club is an informal association of members of the clubs meet every week to discuss the current issues, plan joint activities, exchange experience of farming in nuclear-contaminated territories, and organize cultural, educational and sports events for children and adults.

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meet every week to discuss the current issues, plan joint activities, exchange experience of farming in nuclear-contaminated territories, and organize cultural, educational and sports events for children and adults.

**BELTA**  
12.01.2015

# BRINGING SECOND LIFE FOR VILLAGES

Around eight years ago, the chance of earning your living by running a homestead was viewed as the ultimate idyll by Belarusians. Agroecotourism has been steadily developing, with the range of services on offer ever growing – beyond mere accommodation and food. Guests seek new experiences and knowledge, which cannot be acquired in the city.

Rural businessmen are creative and meticulous, always eager to stand out from their neighbours, proposing unique products. In addition, they have to be competitive: from 2006-2013, the number of homesteads rose 10-fold – reaching 1,881 in number. Interestingly, despite most people thinking that pensioners tend to run such accommodation, many young people are now moving from the large cities, to undertake the rural dream.

Belye Luga (White Meadows) farm is being run by the Radyukevich family, in the Korelichy District, bringing new life to the almost 'dead' village. In 2010, the family (with help of the local authorities) began its search for heirs of abandoned houses in the village of Tinevichi, to try and purchase the properties. Those which were impossible to restore were demolished and new blockhouses used instead. At present, the complex comprises three buildings for accommodation; by the New Year, repairs will be complete on another seven. Interestingly, the new owners are attempting to revive an early 20th century atmosphere, covering roofs with wood lath, and returning to high ceilings, whitewash painted walls and stove



owner hopes to achieve something unique, regardless of outside help. Another farm, in the Volozhin District, certainly has its own flavour and it's impossible for guests to become bored, since neighbouring farms pull together to offer a variety of activities. All own-

Economic Development project, being realised by the UNDP, to offer ideas and support to prospective homestead owners. As a result, 17 destinations have been created in the Brest and Grodno regions. The Stoln District calls itself the 'Polesie Amazonia', inviting guests to explore the marshes, while the Kobrin and Zhabinka districts are proud of their 'From the Varangi-

heating.

Each homestead has its own tavern and stage, with the hosts roping in their neighbours to help. Of course, each homestead

ans to the Greeks' route, with a dragon ship and raft available for 'cruising'. It's sure to prove a hit with tourists. Even language is no obstacle, since many hosts have learnt foreign tongues. Last year, just 18 percent of guests (271,000) came from abroad (mostly Russian) but the number is growing, so knowledge of foreign languages is a great help.

Independent development is great but experts do advise businessmen to consider their 'customers' carefully, to tailor services appropriately. The Chair of the Country Escape Agro-



and Ecotourism Public Association, Valeriya Klitsounova, explains that many of those running homesteads in Europe inherit a family business, so grow up

with knowledge of how to manage everything. Few Belarusian young people are eager to remain their reputation in the region.

The US International Development Agency has initiated a Local Entrepreneurship and

being realised by the UNDP, to offer ideas and support to prospective homestead owners. As a result, 17 destinations have been created in the Brest and Grodno regions. The Stoln District calls itself the 'Polesie Amazonia', inviting guests to explore the marshes, while the Kobrin and Zhabinka districts are proud of their 'From the Varangi-

with knowledge of how to manage everything. Few Belarusian young people are eager to remain in their villages and those who set up a business may be thinking primarily of commercial profit, rather than working with love and soul. Of course, such young heads may have good ideas for business promotion and, if successful, would be wise to encourage their children in learning the ropes, while showing them that rural life can be fun.

The Director of the Sports and Tourism Ministry's Tourism Department, Vadim Karmazin, notes that most hosts are self-employed, so need to make provision for their own retirement, since they won't qualify for a state pension. Regular savings can be made with a social protection agency but, at present, only 10 percent are making such preparations.

*The Minsk Times,*  
14.01.2015

## BRASLAV TO GET ITS FIRST RECREATION AREA

**A recreation area with the associated infrastructure will be developed in Braslav, BelTA learnt from Deputy Chairman for Construction, Architecture and Housing Utilities in the Braslav District Executive Committee Andrei Davydenko.**

Improvement of the technical capability of green zones in recreation areas has been chosen as one of the four priorities of the Local Environmental Action Plan (LEAP) under the STREAM program adopted at the meeting of the district executive committee and the Council of Deputies in November 2014. "We studied the public opinion in order to choose the main areas of work. We also addressed the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe and got financing for the project, Planning for the development and maintenance of green territories in Braslav, by 2014 yearend. The total of €50,600 allocated by European sponsors will be used to compile design and estimate documentation of the future recreation area," Andrei Davydenko said.



The currently idle area of almost 20 hectares in the regional center will turn into a cultural and park compound with landscape compositions, a system of artificial ponds and a water basin that will be used as an outdoor skating rink in winter. The recreation area will feature children's playgrounds, a mini stadium, a ropes course and many more. "A small Disneyland with its associated infrastructure will

appear between the zone of industrial companies and the residential area. Not long ago the district executive committee hosted a meeting with designers that made their proposals regarding the exterior of the future recreation area. Once the design and estimate documentation is ready (approximately in March 2015), we will submit

the design of the project and the action plan for public hearings," Andrei Davydenko added.

Such a recreation area will be a great progress for Braslav which still lacks a good park to have fun and take a rest. The implementation of the project will be supported by the local utilities services, companies and residents.

LEAPs have been developed in Belarus since September 2013 under the STREAM program – Strengthening the local environmental planning and environmental civil society organizations in the Republic of Belarus and Moldova. The program is implemented by the Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe and is financed by the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA). The STREAM program on improving environmental planning has included 10 Belarusian districts. Among them are Braslav, Glubokoye, Polotsk and Chashniki Districts. The final stage of the program envisages the implementation of the investment environmental project for every abovementioned district. The local fund to promote international dialogue and cooperation Interaction has been authorized for the administrative and technical support and management of the LEAP component in Belarus.

*BELTA,*  
9.01.2015

