

# Green Belarus News & Events in Belarus

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## BELARUS AMONG LEADERS IN NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT IN POST-SOVIET SPACE

Belarus is considered among the leaders in the management of natural resources in the post-Soviet space, UNDP Deputy Permanent Representative in Belarus Yekaterina Paniklova told media at the Expanded Constituency Workshop of the Global Environment Facility (GEF) in Minsk on 23 September, BelTA informs.

"The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the government of Belarus demonstrate their strong commitment to the implementation of the sustainable development goals. All the programs and projects we implement together get high assessment. In the management of natural resources Belarus is one of the leaders in the post-Soviet space. It is good that today's workshop in Minsk is attended by representatives of other countries who can see everything with their own eyes," Yekaterina Paniklova said.

According to representative of the GEF Secretariat at William Ehlers, Belarus has been making an efficient use of the allocated funds. "Over the 20 years of co-operation we have allocated about \$45 million on different projects, including the use of renewable energy resources and chemical waste treatment. All of them have been successfully implemented," he said.

First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environment of Belarus Iya Malkina stressed that Belarus has been consistently developing the corresponding institutional and organizational framework for sustainable development. "We are

implementing the National Sustainable Development Strategy based on the Agenda 21 and the main forecast documents. The main objective of the strategy is a comprehensive integration of economic, social and environmental components. At the same time environment is the goal-directed component in economic development," she stressed.

According to the First Deputy Minister, over 10 nature protection strategies and programs have been developed at the legislative level. Their main goal is to secure a comprehensive and sustainable management of natural resources and ecosystems alongside with the development of the economic, social and environmental sustainability of the country.

Minsk is hosting the GEF Extended Constituency Workshop which is attended by representatives of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Armenia, Switzerland and Russia. Attending the event are also representatives of the GEF Secretariat, international organizations, including

UNDP, UNIDO, UNEP, FAO and WB, secretariats of the GEF conventions. The workshop aims at keeping the GEF national focal points, convention focal points and other key stakeholders, including civil society, abreast of GEF strategies, policies and procedures and to encourage coordination. One of the main issues of the agenda is new areas of GEF activity through 2020.

Founded in 1991, the Global Environment Facility (GEF) is the biggest source of financing projects aimed to address global environmental issues.



**BELTA**  
23.09.2015

## GEF TO ALLOCATE \$10.5M FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROJECTS IN BELARUS

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) will provide \$10.5 million for the implementation of environmental projects in Belarus until 2018, Belarusian First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Iya Malkina told journalists during the Expanded Constituency Workshop of the GEF on 23 September, BelTA has learned.

"The sixth replenishment period of the Global Environment Facility started in 2014 and will run for four years. The GEF has plans to provide around \$10.5 million for the implementation of environmental projects in Belarus until 2018. We will focus on three major areas: climate change (\$8.5 million), land degradation (\$0.5 million), and biodiversity (\$1.5 million)," Iya Malkina noted.

As for some concrete projects, Iya Malkina said that great attention will be paid to energy-efficient illumination of Belarusian cities and towns. "For example, we are holding talks with the State Committee for Standardization to use a part of this sum for installation of energy-efficient lighting. The project is under development. The money will also be used for the restoration of peatland. Some of the money will probably be given to co-finance the project of the Belarusian meteorological service," she added.

Iya Malkina pointed out that Belarus is making every effort to attract foreign loans and win grants. "The project currently conducted by the Belarusian Forestry Ministry is a good example. The ministry received a substantial loan from a bank. Besides, it will get \$1.5 million from the GEF

for the implementation of the environmental part of its project," she explained.

Iya Malkina noted that the GEF also provides small grants. "Last year alone, more than 125 projects in Belarus were subsidized by the GEF. All in all, we received \$12 million," she stressed. Iya Malkina cited the project related to the treatment of persistent organic pollutants as an example. "The project was quite demonstrative in terms of the efficient utilization of the funds of the World Bank. As much as 99.94% of the \$5.5-million grant was used. Now we are cooperating with the Food and Agricultural Organization," Iya Malkina said.



Minsk hosted the Expanded Constituency Workshop of the GEF on 23 September. Partaking in the event were representatives of Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Switzerland, and Russia. Besides, the list of participants included representatives of the GEF Secretariat, UN organizations (UNDP, UNIDO, UNEP, FAO, WB), and the GEF convention secretariats. The workshop was aimed at informing the GEF national coordinators, convention coordinators and other parties concerned on the strategies, priorities, rules, and procedures of the GEF. Apart from that, the participants of the workshop discussed new directions of GEF's work through 2020.

The Global Environment Facility (GEF) founded in 1991 is a major source of financing for projects aimed at solving environmental challenges.

**BELTA**  
23.09.2015



## BELARUS EMPHASIZES NEED FOR MORE ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS IN OSCE

The Belarusian delegation stressed the need to intensify economic and environmental efforts in the OSCE member states at the 23rd Economic and Environmental Forum of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), BelTA learnt from the press service of the Belarusian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Speaking at the opening of the forum, the Belarusian delegation emphasized the necessity for further intensification of the OSCE efforts in the economic and environmental dimension which makes an integral part of the OSCE Con-

cept of Comprehensive and Cooperative Security, the ministry informed.

There was also stressed the need to discuss the issue related to the water governance in the OSCE area, including the exchange of advanced experience and strengthening of international cooperation in the areas of efficient water use, prevention and mitigation of the consequences of natural calamities, the study of the climate change influence on the state of water resources. Belarus presented its national practices in water governance at the forum.

The Concluding Meeting of the 23rd OSCE Economic and Environmental Forum that is underway in Prague on 14-16 September focuses on the water governance in the OSCE area: increasing security and stability through cooperation. Partaking in the forum is the Belarusian delegation that has comprised representatives of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and the Permanent Delegation in the OSCE.

BELTA,  
15.09.2015

## SPECIAL KITCHEN GARDEN FOR ICE CONTINENT

Belarusian scientists able to grow vegetables on ice continent, as Russian polar researchers confirm

The Belarusian polar kitchen garden comprises two small greenhouses: around 1 square metre each. This high-tech bio-complex of enhanced productivity grows salad, fennel, parsley, basil and other herbs. The technology has been developed at the National Academy of Sciences' Centre of Photodiode and Optic Electronic Technologies, and at the V. Kuprevich Institute of Experimental Botany. The establishments have provided arctic workers with seeds and special soil and instructed them on how greenhouses should be used.

It's not easy to grow greens in the Arctic

"The Antarctic kitchen garden has met our expectations, so we are thankful to its developers," says the Head of the 7th Belarusian Antarctic expedition, Alexey Gaidashov. Having just returned from the ice continent, he explains, "It's great that polar researchers can eat greens. Their kitchen garden is experimental and not large but we plan to increase its size."



Russian colleagues appreciate the development, having provided the Vechernyaya Gora (Evening Mountain) base to Belarusians for free use. The station has been operational since Soviet times. "They are our dear guests and, each time, we treat them with fresh greens — ever new," Mr. Gaidashov smiles.

Russian stations boast nothing of the kind as yet, although the USA, France, Italy, China and the UK run kitchen gardens at their arctic bases. Greenhouses for hydroponic cultures are envisaged within their station projects. "The secret to our high-tech kitchen garden is the lighting system; which uses a special spectrum to ensure a good harvest," explains the acting head of the laboratory at the Institute of Experimental Botany, Lyudmila Obukhovskaya. "Various reactions in plant cells are inspired by waves of different length. For example, the bio-synthesis of chlorophyll and the transportation of electrons, as well as the regulation of plant growth, have different spectra to those controlling seed growth and root development."

In manipulating waves of different length, it's possible to measure the speed of vitamin and carbohydrate accumulation and the intensity of protein production. These discoveries are helping scientists to develop light-emitting diodes, to

respond to plant needs more accurately than traditional lamps. For example, leafy salads and tomatoes needs different spectra. Each Belarusian expedition has a limited term so the plants chosen for growth must come to maturity quickly. However, other choices will be proposed for longer arctic trips.

Antarctic greenhouses allow us to apply new technologies, testing them under extreme conditions. Scientists hope to be able to apply their discoveries on a large scale, at industrial greenhouses. Special lamps for tomatoes are now ready and Minsk's Vegetable Factory is testing a 1km technological line.

### MT'S REFERENCE:

In line with the Arctic Treaty, any country has the right to set up its own station for scientific purposes, south of the 60° southern latitude. At present, 40 countries run polar stations in the most southern part of the globe. Overall, 45 all-year-round scientific stations operate in Antarctica. Belarus began conducting its arctic studies in 2006 but yet lacks its own base on the ice continent. The opening of a Belarusian owned base is planned by the Republic in the near future.

The Minsk Times,  
16.09.2015

## ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY OF BELARUSIAN OIL, GAS PIPELINES PRAISED

Belarusian enterprises set a positive example in terms of the environmental safety of oil and gas pipelines, Lesya Nikolayeva, a project manager at Zoi Environment Network, said during the seminar "Environmental safety of gas and oil pipelines in Belarus" on 18 September, BelTA has learned.

The expert noted that Zoi Environment Network prepared a draft survey of the environmental safety of the main Belarusian pipelines on the initiative of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus. "We visited a number of Belarusian enterprises involved in transit of gas and oil, such as Gomeltransneft Druzhba. I should say that Gomeltransneft Druzhba uses the most cutting-edge technologies to enhance the environmental and industrial safety. Other enterprises can take it as an example to follow," she emphasized.

Lesya Nikolayeva said that the survey touches on a wide range of issues such as the improvement of the legal framework in the field of environmental safety of gas and oil pipelines and the relevant cross-border cooperation.

"Today's seminar gathered all the parties concerned, including environment experts, specialists from oil companies, and representatives of government agencies. I hope the seminar will help promote the development of the dialogue between them," Lesya Nikolayeva stressed.

UNDP project manager Natalia Gubskaya explained that, according to the survey, the number of accidents inflicting serious damage has reduced. "Over the past five years, there has been only one accident in the system of gas and oil transit, which attests to the improvement of environmental safety of the pipelines on the territory of Belarus," she pointed out.



"Environmental safety of the pipelines in Belarus is an important objective for the Belarusian government agencies, civil society, and the neighboring countries. Belarus is a key gas and oil transit hub on the post-Soviet space. Some 11,000 kilometers of pipelines connecting Russian oil and gas fields with the main markets of Central and Western Europe run across the country," Natalia Gubskaya added.

The environmental safety of gas and oil pipelines in Belarus was discussed during the two-day seminar hosted by Minsk on 17-18 September. The list of participants included over 50 representatives of the Belarusian Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the Emergencies Ministry, other government agencies concerned, Zoi Environment Network, UN agencies, Belarusian universities, public associations, and operators of gas and oil pipelines.

BELTA,  
18.09.2015

## SOLAR ENERGY ON DISTRICT SCALE

Grodno Region's first solar power station opens in Shchuchin

Agrokhimsvet has finished the last stage of construction of a solar power station in the Shchuchin District's village of Rozhanka. The first panels were launched in 2014, with more installed by late June 2015. These have an output capacity of 230-250W, covering an area of over two hectares. The power station generates about 8,500kWh of electricity daily.

The Rozhanka-based power plant is the first solar power station in the Grodno Region.

The same investor plans to implement another alternative energy project in the Shchuchin District by 2018. A former airfield is the construction site for the new solar power station, generating up to 2.5MW of energy. Design specifications and estimates are now nearing completion.

The third solar power installation in the region is to be built in the Grodno District's village of Rogachi.

The Minsk Times,  
8.09.2015





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## NUTRITION ON GENETIC LEVEL

Joint efforts are being made to develop new products, as the Deputy General Director of the National Academy of Sciences' Scientific-Practical Centre for Food, Alexander Shepshelev, tells us. Their Science Food – Products of the Future project is to be presented at the 1st Eurasian Forum of Young Scientists, to be held in Minsk from December 1st-4th.

Many are interested to see new ranges such as these. Already, there are supplements available in shops and pharmacies for children and new mothers, those wishing to lose weight or build muscle. Mr. Shepshelev explains, "Food security has virtually been achieved in Belarus. We've now reached the stage where food is going beyond the function of providing energy. We want to replenish micro- and macro-nutrients which our bodies may lack. Moreover, we need to help those who are unwell, ensuring their recovery. Our project envisages the production of individual vitamins and minerals but we'd like to progress even more, creating food at a genetic level."

The task is topical since over half of all deaths are thought to stem from diseases connected with the circulatory system. The interrelation of nutrition is evident; however, hereditary

aspects also matter. The Belarusian National Academy has been studying genomes from birth, to predict certain diseases – such as obesity and heart disease. Products would then aim to correct these tendencies.

Belarusian scientists have made much progress, jointly solving important research tasks and implementing sci-tech programmes. Regarding the latter, the Scientific-Practical Centre for Food has developed highly efficient equipment to utilise former waste products from the milk, brewery and spirit industry. In addition, scientists have managed to extract components from this 'waste' which are beneficial to human health. Scientists from around the world have jointly created a solid basis for producing such nutrients in the future.

### MT'S REFERENCE:

The establishment of BelBiograd is now complete in Belarus: a national sci-tech park focusing on the development of the newest technologies in the field of biochemistry, nano-technologies, and micro- and nano-system equipment. Belarusian scientists plan to realise around 200 investment projects there by 2021.

*The Minsk Times,*  
9.09.2015



## SHARK YOUNG ON THE WAY

Cat sharks Kai and Gerda – who received their new home at the Open Ocean Minsk's Centre of Oceanography – are soon to become parents: recently, they laid two eggs (each half the size of an adult's palm).

"This is a true event for us. Indian coral cat sharks give birth rarely in captivity," explains the Centre's Director, Alexey Azarov. It takes eight months for the eggs to hatch but visitors to the Centre can watch the embryos' development: daily changes are evident through the thin

walls of the shells. After a few months, they'll receive their tails and fins and, later, these small predators will break their shells, to begin searching for food.



Kept in a special incubator, the eggs and quality of water is being supervised by the local children's scientific oceanographic society. Some already boast experience: the first cat shark at the Centre was born in Minsk four years ago (its egg received from Indonesia).

*The Minsk Times,*  
2.09.2015

## PLAYING FOOTBALL ON THE MARSHES

Nature lovers from Belarus, Russia, Poland, Germany and elsewhere recently gathered for the 10th European Haymaking Championship – the key event of the grand festival. Fans anticipated surprises until the last minute and weren't disappointed.

Everything looked wonderful at Sporovo Reserve. A chain of cars was parked far from the marshes while trading tents were placed near the forest, selling cold kvass and ice-cream: a sure hit on the hot summer day. Those ready to scythe stood fixing their tools, and some addressed local master Alexander Levkovich to have their scythes clenched. He knows his business perfectly, having competed in the festival for several years. Last season, he took part but, this time, decided to help others.

On welcoming all the entrants, the Chairman of the Bereza District Executive Committee, Yuri Narkevich, joined the Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Andrey Kovkhuto, in wishing success to each team. He stated that the Sporovo Haymaking Festival is a calling card of the Bereza District. The international level event helps preserve the reserve's habitat for rare birds and animals, while protecting Red Book plants. In recent years, over 500 hectares of the reserve have been cleared of grass and bushes.

Last year, the reserve hosted the European Championship for the first time, including a team from remote Yakutia. Men brought their own scythes to the prestigious competition, covering thousands of kilometres by plane. Russia's Vyacheslav Okorokov and Fiodor Rokhlev admitted that, having taken part in such events for many years, they remain impressed by Sporovo's marshes. They were extremely tired after completing their line but, on looking at the winners – the Kartuziane team, from the Bereza District's Peskovskoe JSC –

they admitted that they'd met their match. Vladimir Zdanovich and Vasily Novik know the local marshes perfectly but, importantly, have trained hard in using scythes.

This year, Yakutia's team failed to attend, so Kartuziane's main rivals were from the Postavy District's Zhilinskies. Not long ago, the latter won first place at a similar event in Ural's Arti. Notably, the skilled scything men found a true challenge in defeating the Kartuziane pair. "I'd love to be taught a master class by these guys," admitted Piotr Korol, from Zhilinskies. "Their endurance and mastery are impressive!" The Bereza scythemen were acknowledged best in the team and personal competitions, finishing their team scythe in just 11 minutes and 15 seconds. Zhilinskies came second (yielding 4 minutes and 41 seconds behind) and third place was occupied by Kakorytskiya Asilki, from Belarus' Drogichin District (taking 17 minutes and 19 seconds).



The personal competition was won by Vladimir Zdanovich, Vasily Novik and Nikolay Yalchik, while Bereza Meat-and-Milk Factory JSC won the football tournament.

Of course, such events have no losers. All participants were in high spirits, being entertained by amateur troupes and culinary delicacies. Nature lovers were invited to an observation ground from where, using binoculars, they could observe aquatic warblers, bitterns, daker-hens, spotted flycatchers and other rare birds.

After the results had been announced, guests did not hurry to leave, enjoying the relaxed atmosphere of the occasion. Many have said that they look forward to the next European Haymaking Championship in Sporovo.

*The Minsk Times,*  
2.09.2015