



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



***Building Regional Capacity in Bioethics and Ethics of Science and Technology (Regional BEST Capacity)***

<p><b>Geographical scope/benefitting country(ies):</b></p>	<p><u>Asia and the Pacific Region</u> Nepal, Mongolia and Thailand as well as other member countries of the UNESCO Coalition in the Asia and the Pacific</p> <p><u>Central and Eastern Europe Region</u> Countries of Central and Eastern Europe have expressed interest for assistance to strengthen ethics education</p> <p><u>Latin America and the Caribbean Region</u> The UNESCO Bioethics Regional Programme has already received expressions of interest from Uruguay, Paraguay, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Dominican Republic, Jamaica, and Trinidad and Tobago for assistance to build capacities of new NBCs; even more states have expressed interest for assistance to strengthen ethics education.</p>
<p><b>Duration (in months):</b></p>	<p><u>Asia and the Pacific Region:</u> 36 months <u>Central and Eastern Europe Region:</u> 24 months <u>Latin America and the Caribbean Region:</u> 24 months</p>
<p><b>Name and unit of project officer</b></p>	<p><u>Asia and the Pacific Region</u> Sue Vize, Regional Adviser for SHS in Asia and the Pacific (FU/BGK)</p> <p><u>Central and Eastern Europe Region</u> Alla Ampar, FU/MOS (SHS)</p> <p><u>Latin America and the Caribbean Region</u> Susana M. Vidal, FU/MTD (SHS)</p>
<p><b>Partner(s) institutions:</b></p>	<p><u>Asia and the Pacific Region</u> Local Authorities in Asia and the Pacific</p> <p><u>Central and Eastern Europe Region</u> National governmental and non-governmental institutions</p> <p><u>Latin America and the Caribbean Region</u> Universities, Ministries of Health, Ministries of Education, Ministries of Science and Technology, NGOs</p>
<p><b>Total estimated budget inclusive of Programme Support costs</b></p>	<p>USD\$1.2 million</p>

## ***Rationale and background***

### **Asia and the Pacific Region**

In 2014-2015, the bioethics capacity-building activities in the Asia and the Pacific region will focus on two areas: Assisting Bioethics Committees (ABC) Project and Ethics Education Programme.

The ABC Project's main purpose is to ensure support for the establishment and consolidation of new institutions established by government decree, which we generically call "National Bioethics Committees" (because they aim to a larger advisory purpose in the domain of bioethics, and they can be attached to a Ministry of Health or of Research). National Bioethics Committees are already established in some countries in Asia such as Singapore, Philippine and Malaysia. New countries are seeking technical support and capacity building from UNESCO to establish committees in their countries. To receive support from UNESCO the countries are requested to sign a MoU agreeing to a three year program of collaboration and capacity building under which a series of trainings are held.

Additionally for 2014-2015, the Asia-Pacific region will also focus on the EEP. The main components of this programme will be:

- a) Core Curriculum in Bioethics – promoting the core bioethics curriculum developed by UNESCO to be introduced in the Universities across the region;
- b) Ethics Teachers Training Course (ETTC) – training a new generation of young scientist and professionals in the teaching of ethics at the University and School levels.
- c) Establish and link networks to promote the teaching of ethics in Asia and the Pacific.

To further this activity, UNESCO will collaborate with Universities in Asia Pacific to promote the core curriculum and sign MOUs of partnership for its use.

To encourage further partnerships in Asia and the Pacific we are planning to work with at least three countries, Nepal, Mongolia and Thailand. These countries have already expressed interest in establishing National Bioethics Committees and requested support from UNESCO for capacity building. The experiences from current committees and UNESCO experts will be used to build up the capacity of new committees, and to encourage member states to establish a statutory basis for the establishment of National Bioethics Committees.

In addition to working at the national level in establishing bioethics committees, UNESCO through its existing network with Local Government Authorities (LGAs) has an opportunity to strengthen understanding and participation in bioethics at this level. Various target groups are included, such as the Mayors, Governors, Councilors of the member countries of the UNESCO Coalition in the Asia and the Pacific (at the present there are more than four thousand members from twenty-one countries – Australia, Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Kiribati, Maldives, Nepal New Zealand, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Republic of Korea, Philippines, Solomon Islands, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Viet am and Republic of Uzbekistan). The LGA level has so far had limited opportunity to be involved in UNESCO's bioethics activities and through the Coalition we propose to hold a regional consultation with LGAs on opportunities in this area.

In addition to the new program element targeting LGAs, UNESCO will organize a Regional Ethics Experts Consultation to review the UNESCO Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights which was issued by UNESCO at the 29<sup>th</sup> Session of the General Conference in 1997, so as to analyse and evaluate the issues and terms in the Declaration to match with

the current situation of the sciences, technologies and people in the region. As the pace of scientific research has been fast, and knowledge is expanding in this in this field, it will be timely to review and update the Declaration.

### **Central and Eastern Europe Region**

UNESCO's Ethics Education Programme (EEP) is a key implementation tool of the Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights, which calls Members States to "foster bioethics education and training at all levels as well as to encourage information and knowledge dissemination programmes about bioethics (article 23)". To implement this mandate, UNESCO has developed a multifaceted but cohesive capacity-building strategy initiatives, such as the Core Curriculum in Bioethics, and Ethics Teachers Training Course, have been piloted during the past biennium, giving the Bioethics programme an opportunity to measure their effectiveness and impact, and make the necessary adjustments to further strengthen their effectiveness.

The Ethics Teacher Training Courses (ETTC) project is an important component of EEP, which complements the practical ethics teaching tools developed by UNESCO by focusing on the methodology and pedagogy behind ethics education. It aims particularly at building capacity of a young generation of teachers who can serve as agents for expanding and improving ethics teaching programmes in their countries in the near future. In the past, the Ethics Teacher Training Courses in CE and EE countries have been held in the following locations:

- Bucharest, Romania (2006)
- Bratislava, Slovakia (2007)
- Minsk, Belarus (2008)
- Dubrovnik, Croatia (2010, 2011, 2012)
- Belgrade, Serbia (2011)
- Baku, Azerbaijan (2012);
- Vilnius, Lithuania (2012)

The 2014-2017 quadriennium will be an opportunity to significantly expand these programs for a global impact on the quality ethics education introducing innovations and improvements. A critical aspect of this effort will be the synergy with the other elements of Bioethics programme, especially the IBC and IGBC, and the mobilization of all UNESCO's resources in Bioethics, such as UNESCO Chairs network and the UN interagency Committee on Bioethics.

Also in the framework of EEP, since 2006 the Moscow Office's activities were focused on sensitizing the public, promoting ethical principles, raising the awareness of bioethics among journalists and introducing bioethical issues into the agenda of mass media in the region. Since 2011, the application of advanced communication and information technologies made this ongoing work distinctive from that carried out in the last years. To maximize training cost-effectiveness and extend the audience, e-learning distance education programmes were combined with conventional approaches. Thus, in 2011 -2012 the Moscow Office of UNESCO, in partnership with UNESCO's Institute of Information Technologies (IITE, Moscow), developed the e-learning module on bioethics for journalists, which is available in Russian and English from the IITE platform <http://lms.iite.unesco.org/>

In the 2014-2017 quadriennium, the module for training journalists in bioethics will be further expended and fortified by the input from the CI sector, which has developed training modules for journalists, and by the collaboration with other regions of UNESCO with experience of

similar training, as well as with the UNESCO Chairs in bioethics at various universities around the world.

### **Special Considerations:**

Priority Gender Equality: Special consideration will be accorded to promoting gender equality in terms of the themes and the content of the materials used for training. Moreover, gender balance will be an important consideration when identifying the beneficiaries of the educational initiatives in bioethics.

Human Rights Based Programming: The content of both ETTC and e-learning course for journalists conforms to international standards relating to bioethics, including references to relevant human rights dimensions, while the teaching methodology draws inspiration from HRBA

### **Latin America and the Caribbean Region**

The development of bioethics has become in recent years a need in low-income countries. This is mainly related to the need of promoting and protecting human rights in the health services, to the way in which of burdens and benefits from scientific, technological and biomedical development are distributed, and finally to the need of evaluating the consequences of the global environmental change, which is impacting at different levels, in particular the most vulnerable human groups.

The Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights (UDBHR) indicates the way to achieve some of these goals through the creation of ethics committees, ethics education and through the promotion of ethical principles in the design of public policies as well as in the public debate of related issues.

Strengthening the capacities of Member States in this endeavor is a priority, through providing assistance in building institutions such as national bioethics committees, networks of committees, and national systems of ethical evaluation of biomedical and health related research.

The national bioethics committees (NBC) are bodies which have the mission of advising decision and policymakers about ethical issues in the field of biomedicine, the sciences and new emerging technologies. In addition, their mission is to promote public debate about such issues in a democratic, participatory and pluralistic way. As stated in the UDBHR, the NBCs have three common characteristics: they are pluralistic (considering different moralities), they are interdisciplinary (taking into account different areas of knowledge) and they are independent (of any conflict of interest).

Similarly, education activities in bioethics aims at developing human resources capable of contributing to these activities, through becoming members of ethics committees, ethics teachers, and advisors in the design of public policies.

Finally networking at various levels will strengthen the capacity of Member States with a solidarity and cooperative attitude between those with more experience and those who have less. The experts' networks (e.g. Redbioetica) strengthen the development of bioethics at the academic level and encourage also the publication of academic papers and the elaboration and development of more and better educational programs.

Networks of different types, (experts, educational, committees, etc.) are an invaluable strategy to strengthen capacities at different levels. The short-term objectives of this CAP are mentioned above and they relate to the building of sustainable infrastructures in bioethics. At

the same time, it has a long-term goal: to achieve a broad respect for the dignity, human rights and fundamental freedoms of individuals and communities in the field of life, health care, biomedical research, science and emerging technologies taking into account their ethical, legal and social aspects.

## **Why UNESCO?**

UNESCO, being the primary United Nations agency with a specialized mandate in the social and human sciences, is strategically and appropriately positioned to promote a global ethics framework for science and technology. Through this approach, the Organization acknowledges that ethics need to be rooted in philosophical reflection; to be based on the framework of human rights; and to operate within the sciences while maintaining an independent and critical distance from them.

UNESCO has emerged as the lead UN agency in bioethics over the past 20 years, and has been at the forefront of global reflections and standard-setting on a number of important bioethical issues. UNESCO has also confirmed its standard-setting role in bioethics with the successful adoption of the *Universal Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights* (1997), the *International Declaration on Human Genetic Data* (2003), and the *Universal Declaration on Bioethics and Human Rights* (2005).

The Organization today also supports Member States in strengthening their ethics infrastructure, to ensure that it is not only interdisciplinary and pluralist, but also participatory and based on methods of deliberation that respect and encourage inclusion. It also stimulates ethics education and awareness-raising among specialists, decision-makers, and the general public.

In summary, UNESCO already has the **regional capacity building mechanisms** in place through its ethics education and national bioethics committee networks.

## **Overall Goal/Objective**

### **Asia and the Pacific Region**

The specific objective of the proposal for the Asia-Pacific region is to strengthen and/or establish national bioethics committees, and implement bioethics education in Asia and the Pacific, as well as review the UNESCO Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights (1997).

### **Central and Eastern Europe Region**

The proposal for the Central and Eastern Europe region is designed to promote ethics teaching in the institutions of higher education in the countries of the region.

### **Latin America and the Caribbean Region**

**Desired Change:** A genuine respect for dignity and the promotion of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the field of life and human health, in science and application of emerging technologies, in biomedical research as well as with regard to the social and environmental impact of innovations, both in these practices as well as in the public policies that guide and regulate those practices. It is also desired change to achieve a genuine inclusion of ethical principles in making ethically complex decisions, as well as a pluralistic and democratic participation of all parties concerned.

**Overall aim of the project:** The project aims to strengthen capacities and infrastructure in bioethics in Member States from LAC for a period of two years. This concerns the development of institutional infrastructures (CEI, CEC, CNB, etc.), the establishment of bioethics education and the promotion of the principles of UDBHR at different levels, to increase social participation in public debate, spreading the ethical principles and sensitizing the society.

**Expected Impact:** Within each Member State involved: to achieve greater capacity, promote bioethics through a human rights based approach (HRBA), taking into account social inclusion and gender equality in its development. Establishment of high academic standards for participants in educational programs, human resources trained to implement educational programs at different levels, creation and strengthening of committees and commissions, especially National Bioethics Committees and develop networks of ethics and research ethics committees. Public policies that take into account the principles of UDBHR.

**Long term legacy:** democratization of decisions that involve ethical values; design of public policies that include the ethical principles of the UDBHR; human resources trained; inclusion of education in bioethics at universities; committees established and functioning at different levels with efficient tools for decision making.

## ***Main expected results***

### **Asia and the Pacific Region**

#### **Expected Result 1**

Encourage the establishment of new Bioethics Committees in Asia and the Pacific and enhance bioethics capacities of countries in the region.

#### **Expected Result 2**

Consult with Local Government Authorities on the ethical issues they face and build capacity to understand and respond to these.

#### **Expected Result 3**

Review the UNESCO Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights and provide possible revisions for consideration to the International Bioethics Committee of UNESCO (IBC).

### **Central and Eastern Europe Region**

#### **Expected Result 4**

Quality education in bioethics and human rights promoted at the university level in the Central and Eastern Europe countries, with a special focus on women educators and gender issues in bioethics.

### **Latin America and the Caribbean Region**

#### **Expected Result 5**

New National Bioethics Committees (NBC) promoted, created and trained.

#### **Expected Result 6**

Quality education in bioethics and human rights promoted at different levels, with a special emphasis on gender issues in bioethics.

#### **Expected Result 7**

Promoting ethical principles and sensitizing the society.

<p><b>Activities and outputs/deliverables relating to the achievement of expected results</b></p>
<p><b>Activity 1 – Expected Result 1</b>  <b>Enhancing bioethics capacities of countries in the Asia and the Pacific region</b></p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 1.1</b>  Establish and train at least two National Bioethics Committees in Nepal and Mongolia</p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 1.2</b>  At least three universities and schools will sign MOU and use the UNESCO Core Curriculum to teach</p>
<p><b>Activity 2 – Expected Result 2</b>  <b>Building capacity of Local Government Authorities in the Asia and the Pacific region on understanding and responding to ethical issues</b></p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 2.1</b>  Regional Conference on Good Policies and Practice on the Bioethics which will collaborate with the mayors and local authorities of the UNESCO member counties of the Coalition of Cities in Asia and the Pacific</p>
<p><b>Activity 3 - Expected Result 3</b>  <b>Review the UNESCO Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights as related to the Asia and the Pacific region</b></p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 3.1</b>  Regional Ethics Experts Consultation to review the UNESCO Declaration on the Human Genome and Human Rights</p>
<p><b>Activity 4 - Expected Result 4</b>  <b>Strengthening bioethics skills in the Central and Eastern Europe region, especially amongst young bioethicists, educators, and journalists</b></p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 4.1</b>  20 additional ETTC organized in the region with at least 15 participants each</p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 4.2</b>  E-learning module on bioethics for journalists developed</p>
<p><b>Activity 5 - Expected Result 5</b>  <b>Creating and training of new National Bioethics Committees (NBCs), and mapping of ethics infrastructure in the Latin America and Caribbean region</b></p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 5.1</b>  At least two new NBCs created, and at least six trainings or promotion activities conducted</p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 5.2</b>  At least 50 experts included from 5 countries, and most of the PhD and master programmes in the region entered into the Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs)</p>



<p><b>Activity 6 - Expected Result 6</b>  <b>Strengthening ethics education in the Latin America and Caribbean region</b></p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 6.1</b>  Bioethics Core Curriculum implemented and evaluated in at least 10 new universities</p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 6.2</b>  At least 4 Ethics Teacher Training Courses developed and evaluated</p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 6.3</b>  Regional meeting on ethics education involving most of the universities in the region with Masters and PhD programmes in bioethics, including at least 70% of those with MoUs to implement the Bioethics Core Curriculum</p>
<p><b>Activity 7 - Expected Result 7</b>  <b>Promotion of networking at different levels within the Latin America and Caribbean region</b></p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 7.1</b>  Regional meeting of the Redbioetica/UNESCO organized and activities supported, with at least 20 members participating (from 10 countries), and at least 5 reports and impact evaluations of the activities</p>
<p><b>Output/deliverable 7.2</b>  Subregional meeting in the English-speaking Caribbean, with at least 10 countries represented</p>

### ***Beneficiaries and stakeholders***

Member States (members of the NBCs, etc.) will be direct beneficiaries of trainings offered through the ABC Project, and will be indirect beneficiaries of trainings offered through the EEP (through the strengthening of their bioethics education infrastructure). Individual participants (teachers, students, etc.) of the trainings offered through the EEP will be direct beneficiaries of this aspect of the proposal.

### ***Implementation strategy***

#### **Central and Eastern Europe Region**

Under this proposal, UNESCO will offer technical assistance and expertise (as under its regular programme) in organizing ETTCs and developing a new E-learning module on bioethics for journalists. UNESCO will offer networking opportunities to exchange experiences among teachers, specifically to improve skills and outputs.

#### **Latin America and the Caribbean Region**

As part of the ABC Project UNESCO has developed a methodology for strengthening the capacities of NBCs and for strengthening the infrastructure of the Member States involved. This methodology includes a previous diagnosis about the real situation of the country (the capacities at university level, experts, committees, trainings, regulations, etc.), with which the project could count. After that a MoU is signed with the NBC created to support and train their members for three years. UNESCO promotes the establishment of pluralistic, interdisciplinary and independent committees. Networking of the committees is a very



important step to increase the capacities of each of them, interacting, and exchanging experiences and promoting the democratic dialogue into the countries.

Under this proposal, it is very important also to increase the capacities in teaching programmes of the Member States through the Bioethics Core Curriculum and training ethics teachers. It will not only generate better educational resources, but also better experts being members of committees and advisers in the process of policy making.

Mapping local and regional expertise, experts, resources, and relevant regulatory and legal texts and professional codes will be a great help for the countries from the region, and making this data available through its existing online databases of the Global Ethics Observatory (GEObs) will be a strong tool for Member States.

Finally, UNESCO will offer grants to support specific NBC partnerships and offer networking opportunities to exchange experiences among NBCs and among teachers, to improve skills and outputs.

### ***Sustainability and exit strategy***

#### **Central and Eastern Europe Region**

The mapping line of action is designed with sustainability in mind. The partnership with a local institution is essentially geared towards transferring expertise to a local partner for long-term sustainable management after the initial funding has ended.

#### **Latin America and the Caribbean Region**

The UNESCO bioethics regional programme has experience in developing ways of sustainability for educative programmes ([www.redbioetica-edu.com.ar](http://www.redbioetica-edu.com.ar)), which need support at the beginning but then are able to survive for themselves. To have partners is very important to give continuity to the intervention, be it educative, capacity building or public policy design. One of the most important tools for sustainability is networks that are able to empower each of the members with the force of the group.