

Terms of Reference for Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) Working Group of Indigenous Peoples

The Terms of Reference were revised at the WGIP meeting in Helsinki, December 17th, 2024.

1. The purpose of the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (WGIP) is to serve as a forum for indigenous co-operation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and to ensure the involvement of the indigenous peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region in the decision-making processes and their participation in the co-operation.

2. The WGIP has a permanent status with an advisory role for the central level and the regional level. The decisions of the WGIP are of recommendation character for the central and regional levels.

3. The WGIP determines the Action Plan of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region for four years, giving yearly priorities, proposing practical solutions, and recommending the decisions to be made, and submitting it both to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Regional Council. The WGIP follows the implementation of the Action Plan of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and reports on it both to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and Barents Euro-Arctic Regional Council. The implementation of the Action Plan of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region is the responsibility of both central and regional levels.

4. The WGIP consists in total of 3 members (permanent participants) and 3 vice members, including one Saami representative from Finland, Norway, and Sweden respectively.

In addition, a youth representative should be appointed by the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples to be a member of BRYC and also as an observer in the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples.

The WGIP is served by the International Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes.

5a. The members of the WGIP, representing the Saami in Finland, Norway, and Sweden, are appointed by the Saami Parliaments in Finland, Norway, and Sweden for four years. The Saami Parliaments may change its appointed member during this period.

5b: The members of the WGIP, representing the Saami, are nominated by the regional public indigenous organizations, by the board or at the general meeting of the regional public indigenous organizations. The mandate period for the elected member is four (4) years, with the possibility to be re-elected.

5c: It is a compulsory requirement for the candidates appointed from the Russian side, to be of Barents indigenous origin and live in the subject of the Russian federation, which is a constituent of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

6. The WGIP may host the "Summit of Barents Euro-Arctic Indigenous Sámi People" in cooperation with the WGIP members and other relevant cooperation partners.

7. The Chair of the WGIP is elected among the members of the WGIP by the members of the WGIP for two years with a possibility to be re-elected unanimously.

8. The WGIP meets at least once a year rotating the venue of the meeting between Finland, Norway, and Sweden.

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9. Each meeting sets the date and venue of the next meeting. The call-up and agenda should be distributed two weeks beforehand but approved at the meeting. The Chair of the WGIP determines the agenda of the meeting. The members and observers of the WGIP may propose a certain issue to be considered at the meeting of the WGIP having submitted it in a written form to the secretariat no later than two weeks prior to the meeting

10. The meetings of the WGIP are conducted either in Saami or English.

11. Decisions of the WGIP are taken unanimously by its members. Decision-making is possible only when there is a quorum at the meeting of the WGIP (three members of the WGIP are present).

12. The Chair of the WGIP represents the WGIP in the meetings of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO).

13. WGIP may appoint representatives to Barents Regional Council (BRC), Barents Regional Committee and all of the Barents Working Groups.

14. The WGIP may invite special participants and guests to contribute to its work.

15. The audit and costs related to the activities of the WGIP are coordinated by the International Barents Secretariat.

The WGIP must approve an annual report on its activities. Yearly expenses and income must be included in the report.

16. The WGIP will cover reasonable travel, accommodation and other miscellaneous costs related to mandated meetings for representatives for the WGIP.

The WGIP approves the budget for its hosted events.