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## Barents Forest Sector Task Force

### Background of Barents Forest Sector Task Force

The Barents Forest Sector Task Force (BFSTF) of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) was established by the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials, under the BEAC Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC) in May 2000. BFSTF reports to WGEC.

Implementation of the BFSTF first year's action plan was based on the work of an interim forest sector task force established already in 1999. The main tasks for the BFSTF from the start were establishment of three networks and preparation of a Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme (NDFSP). Each of the participating countries has appointed (1-3) members of the BFSTF, representing expertise in forestry and environmental issues.

Each member country has appointed a coordinator, and they constitute the BFSTF Core Group :

Finland: University of Joensuu, Paavo Pelkonen  
Norway: Norwegian Forest Research Institute, Kåre Venn  
Russia: Department of International Cooperation  
and Intergovernmental Programmes  
in the field of Use of Nature, Igor Korolev  
Sweden: National Board of Forestry, Clas Fries

Observer countries are: Canada, UK, USA. Representatives are to be nominated.  
BFSTF may invite also other countries, according to the topics being elaborated in the meeting.

### General objectives of Barents Forest Sector Task Force

To create necessary conditions for development of forestry, environmental care and wood based industries through co-operation, mutual concrete actions and projects and programmes within the forestry sector of the Barents region.

In order to achieve this the Barents Forest Sector Task Force will be focusing on the following five specific tasks.

- Initiate further development of *integrated model forests* and sites for sustainable forest management, to include the management of carbon flow and sequestration, and the conservation of biological diversity.
- Facilitate *access to modern technologies* for resource-conserving protection and utilisation of forest services. Prepare *guidance on multipurpose silviculture* and mixed land-use.
- Collect, disseminate and continuously update *key policy information* on the forest sectors of countries in the Northern Dimension, with a particular focus on: the normative and legislative environment; investment conditions and business rules; international opportunities and commitments related to forests, status of biological diversity and protected forest areas.
- Consolidate and further develop multi-stakeholder *national forest programmes* in countries of the Northern Dimension, and sub-national programmes where appropriate.

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- Strengthen mechanisms – principles, institutions and methodologies - for *democratic local decision-making* and communication between local, national and global actors

These five actions are key elements to develop the economic, social and ecological functions of the boreal forests. Indirectly it will also strengthen democratic processes in the region, since the five actions will foster face to face communication between forest authorities, NGO's, businessmen, politician's etc. The Task Force will meet when necessary for clarifying discussions and decisions.

### **1-year action plan for Barents Forest Sector Task Force**

#### **Key actions during year 2003**

The main tasks of the Barents Forest Sector Task Force will be to develop the three networks; establishment of Model Forest; and to follow-up the work on the Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme. The Task Force will collaborate and coordinate activities with different organisations and institutions, already working in these fields of cooperation.

The key actions during 2003 are:

1. General coordination and management of the work of the Task Force
2. Preparation for establishment of Model Forests
3. Strengthening the established three networks and hold networks meeting
4. Preparation of material to the WEB-site of Barents Forest Sector Task Force
5. Follow-up on the process of the Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme (NDFSP)
6. Enhance a close co-operation with CBSS and the Baltic 21 Forestry Sector Programme
7. Staying in contacts with other BEAC bodies, espec. CSO and WGEC

#### Description of the key actions

##### ***1. General coordination and management of the work of the Task Force***

During 2003 the Swedish chairmanship was handed over to Norway. According to routines Sweden will be co-chairing during Norway's chairmanship. Secretarial responsibility will be with the Norwegian chair. Finland will be responsible for updating of the website. The Norwegian chair will organize 4 Task Force meetings, and take part in other BEAC meetings when called upon.

##### ***2. Preparation of the establishment of Model Forests***

One approach for enhancing the Barents regional co-operation is the establishment of Model Forests, in order to illustrate planning and practices promoting sustainable forest management in the Barents Region area. Within the Model Forest concept some of the following key tasks have been identified as a framework for development. They indicate where gaps and problems are found regarding sustainable forest management. The Model Forest concept would comprise the following key issues and actions:

- Identify criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management
- Linking field level practices with policies and policy makers in order to improve both policy and practice
- Develop and demonstrate efficient multi-objective forest management planning
- Present and demonstrate methods for utilization of wood and non-wood resources appropriate for local conditions
- Support forest research, GIS development, and its application

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- Develop extension and training in forestry
- Strengthen mechanisms and methodologies for local decision-making
- Develop human resources on socio-economic and cultural basis
- Improve conflict management

Work on establishing a project for Model Forests is undertaken by Sweden. EU funding of the project is being explored. Specific tasks are:

- Project management to co-ordinate partners within the project
- Establishment of a network of experts and key actors within the field of Model Forests in the Barents region, closely connected to the Task Force
- Investigations and analyses of the concept and experiences of Model Forests
- Examples of Model Forests representing a wide range of values and activities being presented for local people, in order to increase understanding of basic principles

### ***3. Strengthening the established networks and hold network meetings***

Each network has a lead country, which is responsible for its establishment and maintenance. The work is financed through the respective host organization. The lead countries and their host organizations are:

Network 1: Norway, Norwegian Forest Research Institute

Network 2: Russia, Karelian Research Centre, Petrozavodsk;  
Finland, University of Joensuu

Network 3: Sweden, Regional Forestry Board of Västerbotten

Networks will be coordinated and their work supported by the Task Force members. Efforts are concentrated on establishment of the networks and on the first clearly focused activities. The evaluation of the networks will be based on results from their activities.

Network 1: *Assessing the logistic chain and trade of timber and other wood products*

- The work will be linked to the activities of BEAC/WGEC Task Force II for Trade Barriers in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region
- The work will be concentrated on other possible related issues in addition to customs in order to identify problems to be solved such as disturbance in logistic chains of timber and other wood products
- The elements of the chain which need further assessment are, for instance: certification, origin, and environmental safety of timber, principles for wood measurement, logging and transportation, normative and legislative acts regulating forest activities including trade
- A network meeting will be organised during 2004 in Norway.

Network 2: *Utilisation of forest resources and wood-based energy*

- The role of forestry and forest industries in developing environmentally safe and carbon neutral, renewable energy production will be assessed
- The work has to explore how market based mechanisms involving the financial tools and practical management systems can be taken into account in forest based carbon sequestration affecting climate change and supporting sustainable development in the Barents region
- Taking into account the view points of local and indigenous peoples who are depending on forests, forest industries and/or multifunctional utilisation of forests, especially in rural areas, is essential in the work of the network

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- In developing wood-based energy production close cooperation with the BEAC Working Group on Energy and the BEAC Working Group on Environment will be maintained.

*: A network meeting in Joensuu, Finland will be concentrated on production and utilization of wood pellets in the Barents region and especially in N-W Russia. The network will prepare an application for the European Union in the field of bioenergy.*

### Network 3: *Co-operation and collaboration between forest authorities*

- To increase awareness of legislation's and policies in different countries and by this promote a sound framework for people to people exchange of experiences
- To get acquainted with administrative routines in different countries to promote removal of obstacles in the institutional frameworks
- The contribution of the Federal Forest Service of Russia in the work of Baltic 21 Action Programme and the experiences and results from the Finnish-Russian Development Programme on Sustainable Forest Management in the Northwest Russia, for instance, will offer good basis to further develop co-operation and networking.
- The lead country, together with Russian colleagues, will plan the organization of an expert meeting in Russia, probably in Arkhangelsk. The purpose of this meeting is:
  - To establish a functioning network of actors
  - To exchange experiences and know-how between forest authorities and organisations in the region of legislation's and policies
  - To get acquainted with administrative routines
  - To plan further joint activities

### **4. The WEB-site of the Task Force**

The WEB-site of the Barents Forest Sector Task Force is established and maintained by Finland ([www.forest.joensuu.fi/barents](http://www.forest.joensuu.fi/barents)) It includes basic information about the BFSTF and its activities during the past. The WEB-site has been widened and is now utilised more efficiently in the work of the Task Force. It will be developed to contain i.a. information on meetings, seminars and field excursions; the networks; progress of specific ad hoc working groups being established; and engagement of different stakeholders and local people in the next steps of implementation of the Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme and Model Forests

### **5. The process of the NDFSP**

The aim of the Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme is to increase the overall well being of the population in the Barents Region by using sustainably their forests and conserving forest biodiversity. All the regions who participated in the Barents Forest Sector Initiative would be partners in the Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme. The Barents Euro-Arctic Council Barents Forest Sector Task Force is one of the mechanisms of this programme, which addresses several topics such as expertise and profile of development, forest industries, research and technology transfer. All the programme activities should be based on national strengths. Partners participating in the programme, will direct their financial support to relevant areas in correspondence to national and organisational policies, strategies, interests and priorities.

The Task Force will assist the further processing and implementation of the Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme. Expertise of EU programme specialists will be used for preparation of documents. This task will include i.a.

- Improve *profiling of institutions* with effective capability in key needs for improving forestry and livelihoods in the region

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- Identify *centres of expertise and innovation* to lead key elements of NDFSP strategy, and strengthen networks of linked institutions around these centres
- Initiate and maintain regular *stakeholder engagement* on NDFSP strategy through the networks and a periodically convened multi-stakeholder NDFSP Forum

### **6. Enhance a closer co-operation with the Baltic 21 Forestry Sector Programme and the CBSS**

Representatives from BFSTF have participated in Baltic 21 Forestry Sector Programme meetings, and will continue to do so. Representatives from Baltic 21 Forestry Sector Programme and the CBSS will be invited to relevant meetings and workshops. Collaboration might be possible concerning several forestry issues, based on an existing action programme with Finland and Lithuania as lead parties.

## **3-year action plan for Barents Forest Sector Task Force**

### **Year 2005**

- One model forest within one of the Nordic countries in the Barents region is to be established
- Cooperation with the International Model Forest Network will be started
- The model forest concept in the Barents region will be further developed
- Increase efficiency and contribute to favourable development in cooperation between forest sectors of participating Nordic countries and Russia in context of the Northern Dimension Forest Sector Programme.
- Network 2 and 3 will hold network meetings
- The three networks will be evaluated
- One larger workshop or seminar will be arranged, based on important issues of the Barents region
- The chairmanship will be handed over to Finland, by the end of the year

### **Year 2006**

Continue the basic activity of BFSTF

- One model forest within one of the Nordic countries and one within North West Russia will be established
- Centres of expertise will be identified inside the Barents region
- One larger workshop or seminar will be arranged, based on important issues of the Barents region

### **Year 2007**

- Continue the basic activity of BFSTF
- Arrangement for continued Model Forests activity in the Barents region
- Further development of a network of centers of expertise
- One larger workshop or seminar will be arranged, based on important issues of the Barents region
- The BFSTF chairmanship will be handed over to Russia