



**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE BEAC AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON FINANCIAL MECHANISM
STUDY** **20.4.2015**

DATE: 18.3.2015, 12.00–16.00

LOCATION: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, Helsinki

List of participants

Finland

Birgit Autere, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Team for Financial Cooperation)

Marja-Leena Vuorenpää, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (BEAC Team)

Laura Quist, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (Team for Financial Cooperation and BEAC Team)

Tiina Kupiainen, Attaché, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Harry Ekestam, Ministry of Employment and the Economy

Sweden

Sven Hegelund, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Norway

Pål Erik Holte, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation

Russia

Sergey Petrovich, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Sergey Goncharenko, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Alexey Kalinin, Barents Regional Committee

International Barents Secretariat

Tomas Hallberg

1. Opening of the meeting and adoption of the agenda

Chair Birgit Autere opened the meeting and presented the agenda.

Decision:

Chair stated that the minutes of the previous meeting on 27 January, 2015 have been approved and sent to the members of the AHWG as well as to the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials. The meeting agenda was approved without any changes.

2. Drafting of the Final Report

The following timeline for the drafting process was presented:

- 1-2 drafting meetings during this spring
- The Final Report will be presented to the BEAC CSO, whose meeting will be held between 24.-28.8.2015.
- The BEAC Ministerial Meeting will be organised 14-15 October in Oulu. The outcomes of the Ad Hoc Working Group's Final Report will be reflected in the final communiqué of the Ministerial Meeting.

The Secretariat of the AHWG had received written comments on the final report from the EU External Action Service and Sweden prior to the first drafting meeting on 18 March 2015. Norway provided the Secretariat with written comments after the meeting.

The Chair reminded the participants that additional information, such as references, annexes, a list of speakers and a matrix illustrating the different funding sources will be added to the Final Report. The most relevant maps will also be added to the report. In order to guarantee that the report meets the Finnish MFA language standards, an English editor will revise the report in June 2015.

When compiling the report, the Secretariat has relied solely on the presentations and the answers deriving from the questionnaires and the internet survey. Facts were stated and opinions expressed in the hearing sessions and these sessions have been recorded in the minutes of the meetings. The report reflects the given information.

The uniformity of the information provided has been a challenge, since the presentations have not been commensurable. The matrix, on which the Secretariat is currently working on, will give a more extensive picture of the different funding sources available.

The Secretariat was granted the right to make slight editorial modifications to the structure of the Final Report, if needed.

The following general comments were made to the draft Final Report:

- The table of contents will be reviewed, once the text is closer to being finalised.
- Introduction: Norway proposed that the introduction should include an interpretation of the AHWG mandate. A prerequisite for the work of the AHWG is that all recommendations and changes must be of mutual benefit to all four countries. It was noted, however, that the mandate was agreed by the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials. Analyzing the mandate could possibly be part of the analysis section.
- Chapter 2: Normative statements will be deleted from this chapter. It was discussed, whether a country-specific description on the socio-economic situation in the Barents region is needed, or whether the chapter will be kept on a general level.
- Chapter 3:
 - Members of the AGWG will verify the chapter from their respective country's point of view and provide the Secretariat with additional information for the sake of uniformity of the text.
 - A footnote will be added to the section on the Nordic Council of Ministers to explain the current situation of the NCM offices in North-West Russia.

- The relevance of each existing financing source to Barents cooperation will be highlighted.
 - Sweden will verify the section on the financing sources for Barents cooperation offered by the international financial institutions in the context of the current political situation.
- Chapter 4: This chapter will be revised in order not to include general descriptions on the organisations that were heard, but to present the financing needs and gaps of these organisations.

The prospective analysis chapter will elaborate on the information stated in previous chapters. The analysis will serve as a basis for forming recommendations.

3. Next steps: meeting schedule in 2015

According to the Chair's proposal, the next two drafting meetings will be held on 27 April and 27 May in Helsinki. The next version of the revised Final Report together with a summary of the main points will be sent for comments to the members of the AHWG by 17 April 2015.

Members of the AGWG will verify "National Funding by the Member States" chapter from their respective country's point of view and provide the Secretariat with additional information for the sake of uniformity of the text. Additionally, each AHWG member is to provide the Secretariat with 1-2 draft recommendations for the Final Report. The Secretariat will attempt to make a synthesis based on the members' contributions to formulate an initial draft of the recommendations.