

BEATA 2012-2013 Draft Work Plan

Dear Members of the Steering Committee of BEATA,

Norway has taken over the chairmanship for the Steering Committee of Barents Euro-Arctic Transport Area (BEATA) for the same period as for the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). In this draft work plan we invite the Steering Committee to discuss the role of BEATA and the distribution of work between BEATA and Northern Dimension Partnership of Transport and Logistics (NDPTL). We also present an action plan for the BEATA activities, including a proposed working group to follow up of the different strategic studies carried out by the national transport authorities. The action plan will also present a meeting calendar which includes a planned conference and Ministerial meeting in Narvik spring 2013. The final element in the action plan is to carry out an evaluation of BEATA based on input from the parties.

Framework

The BEATA framework consists of the MoU from May 1998 signed by the Governments of Finland, Russian Federation, Sweden, Norway and the European Commission. The duration of the MoU is five years, and is automatically prolonged for another five years if none of the parties object. BEATA is now in its third five year period, a period which covers most of the Norwegian chairmanship. The chair proposes a Ministerial meeting in spring 2013, just before the third period ends, to set a direction for the future Barents co-operation on transport.

Norway took over the chairmanship after Sweden. According to the rotation of chairs Finland is next to chair the Steering Committee of BEATA from autumn 2013.

A new institutional landscape

During the Swedish chairmanship the NDPTL has been under construction. NDPTL has been fully operable since September 2011. NDPTL has ambitious objectives for improvements of infrastructure and border crossings and will be supported by 11 partner countries as well as the European Commission. The basic principles for a NDPTL Support Fund were agreed upon in November 2011. One can expect a good financial base and close relation to international financial institutions for developing and implementation of NDPTL projects in coming years. NDPTL will establish a regional transport network, which will be based on an extension of the TEN-T network into Russia and Belarus. The network will be supported by GIS-based maps with information on traffic flows and planned projects.

The main objectives of BEATA coincide strongly with the objectives of NDPTL. Both institutions aim to establish an efficient and integrated multi modal transport system that supports sustainability and regional development. But it is not a total overlap between the two institutions. Three major features divide the two:

- the geographical scope is limited to the High North for BEATA while Northern Europe is the scope for NDPTL.
- BEATA has neither a secretariat nor financial resources, while NDPTL is equipped with both. This gives the NDPTL better opportunities to develop projects from premature and loose initiatives to projects ready to be financed.

- BEATA is an arena for the national and regional level, while NDPTL consist of governmental representatives.

BEATA must be adjusted to take the NDPTL into account when plans are made for coming years. It is important to avoid duplication of work and parallel structures. BEATA must define its role and find a fruitful distribution of work between NDPTL and itself.

The role of BEATA

The overall objective for BEATA stated in the MoU is to: "... promote international transport of goods and passengers..." This is very much in line with NDPTL. We see two main roles for BEATA to play, in the light of the new institutional landscape:

1. BEATA as an arena for information exchange, between the Ministries of transport and between the national and regional level. Information sharing on new and current transport strategies, state of the border crossing connections and other subjects of mutual interest is one of the most important tasks for BEATA. We regard the representation with national and regional authorities to be fruitful and ensures fulfillment of this task.
2. BEATA as an arena for discussing and promoting projects of mutual interest. The specific geographical scope of BEATA gives a unified platform to discuss and promote projects and forward them to NDPTL. The transport administrations can support us in this work. BEATA can be a meeting ground where the national transport administrations can join their efforts to make plans for a Barents Transport Network. This work must be in accordance with NDPTL, but we believe BEATA gives the specific geographical focus that is tailored for this region.

The Barents regional working group on transport and logistics has been activated in the former period and there should be a close co-operation between the Steering Committee of BEATA and the working group. According to the MoU the counties of Nordland, Troms, Finnmark, Norrbotten, Vesterbotten, Lapland and Oulo, as well as the oblasts of Murmansk, Archangelsk, Republic of Karelia and the Nenets Autonomous Okrug are invited to the Steering Committee of BEATA.

Work plan 2012-2013

At the BEAC meeting in Kiruna October 2011 the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs, mr. Støre, underlined the role Barents co-operation can play to improve transport and logistics in the region when he presented the incoming chairs priorities. In addition the Norwegian chair notified the BEAC community that a major conference on transport and logistics will be arranged during spring 2013. To follow up this will be a task for BEATA.

The national transport administrations in Norway and Sweden have published strategic studies of the need of infrastructure in the High North. Finland is in the pipeline with a similar study. On the Russian side the Barents area is included in the national/federal strategic plans for infrastructure. When all the studies are finished a joint report/plan should be worked out, addressing the cross border connections in the region. To develop such a plan should be a responsibility for BEATA. We will propose a working group with representatives from the transport administrations and give them the assignment to make a proposal for a joint plan for developing the transport network in the Barents region. The draft plan must address all transport modes and build upon the recommendations and analysis from the studies. A mandate for a working group will be communicated to the Steering Committee of BEATA in

due time before the meeting in May 2012. If one agrees on making this joint plan through a working group, a proposal could be delivered by the end of 2012 and discussed at a BEATA meeting in February 2013. This will give time to establish consensus before the next step, a Ministerial meeting.

It has gone some years since the transport ministers of the Barents countries gathered to discuss joint issues. We wish to invite the transport ministers in the four countries to a ministerial meeting in spring 2013, in connection to the planned conference. Time and venue will be decided later, but Narvik in April is an option. One issue for the ministers to discuss is the draft plan for a future transport network. We foresee the ministers to sign a document giving support to the proposed plan for a joint Barents transport network and stating common views on the development of the transport system in the region. A ministerial declaration should also point out the direction for the co-operation on transport for coming years and decide in principle whether this should be incorporated into NDPTL or continue in the frame of BEATA. As mentioned earlier in the document, the duration of the MoU is of May 2013. This gives us a good opportunity to discuss the format of the future co-operation in the High North.

In order to have a solid foundation for a discussion on the future of BEATA we propose to carry out an evaluation of the BEATA cooperation. The evaluation will be based on the parties experience and in the light of the newly operative NDPTL. The evaluation will be useful for the parties when a new five year period is under consideration. If the parties agree on the evaluation, the Norwegian chair will send out a simple questionnaire to the members of the Steering Committee of BEATA and to the regional working group and collect the input by the end of 2012. A brief report with the findings will be on the agenda for the BEATA meeting in February 2013, preparing for the ministerial meeting in April.

Meeting calendar 2012-2013

We are planning the following events for BEATA in 2012 and 2013:

- Steering Committee meeting in Tromsø May 23.-24. Ev 22.-23.
 - The work plan from the Norwegian Chair, decision
 - Presentation of the different strategic studies and plan of future need of infrastructure
 - Sweden
 - Finland
 - Russia
 - Norway
 - Discussion on how to follow up these studies and plans, proposal of a joint working group and a mandate for the assignment

- Steering Committee meeting in Oslo February 2013
 - Preparations for the ministerial meeting
 - Discussion on the evaluation of BEATA
 - Discussion on the deliverable from the working group on a joint Barents transport plan
 - First draft for a ministerial declaration

- Possible Steering Committee meeting in connection to the conference on transport and logistics in the High North, probably Narvik April 2013. Will have the format of a pre-

meeting, finalizing the ministerial declaration the day before the ministerial meeting. If consensus is reached earlier the meeting can be dropped.

- Ministerial BEATA meeting, Narvik April 2013, issues mentioned above
- Steering Committee meeting in October 2013, handing over the Chair to Finland. (To be decided)