

The outsourced consultant contract was tendered in the spring and contract signed 4.4.2013.

**The consultant led by Pöyry Finland Ltd. has started the work and are investigating the Global trends and preparing the SWOT of Barents Region Transport Strategy based on that.**

The aim is to produce the concept of the Strategy by the end of September 2013.

**The process needs stakeholders participation** and therefore a two-day seminar (originally two separate seminars, one for Nordic Countries and one for Russia) will be organized in Murmansk in the end of August 2013.

**Objectives of the seminar are:**

+ to identify the World and Northern Dimension **tendencies affecting transport**

+ to **compare main elements** of national transport strategy documents as orientation for Barents Transport Strategy

+ to notice **preliminary results of ongoing Joint Barents Transport Plan –work (to be completed in September 2013) as an input to Barents Freeway work**

+ to **introduce and discuss the preliminary results and next steps (modal analysis) of the Barents Freeway**

BEATAs expert working group responsible for the Joint Barents Transport Plan has been working mainly on cross-border transport corridors.

**Barents Freeway has offered help to the expert group so far in two ways.**

**Firstly**, the expert group has been given some information about the corridors from Russia through the connections of BF.

**Secondly**, the transport flow modeling work, which was originally a part of the expert group's work, has now been forwarded to BF. BF was also originally committed to do a transport flow analysis. The modeling experts from three countries have already been discussing together the principals of the work in the future.

**BF has kept a low profile as far as Barents transport policy is concerned.** It has been agreed between the working group and BF that BF shall wait for the results of the work of the expert working group but at the same time offer to assist where ever needed.

The Joint Barents Transport Plan, the contents of which shall be ready **by September**, will most likely point out several items for BF to develop further and deeper.

Since the **participation of the Russian national level specialists** to the work of the expert group **has not been as frequent** as hoped for, one of the issues for BF will be to involve the Russians more deeply to the common transport planning work on regional level.