

Barents Forest Sector Network

15 October 2019, summary notes

Meeting place: County Administrative Board of Västerbotten office

Time: 18:00 – 19:30

Address: Storgatan 71 B, Umeå

Chairman: Staffan Norin

Participants

SE (Herman Sundqvist, Staffan Norin, Johan Eriksson, Peter Blombäck, Kristina Nilson, Per Hallgren, Mats Rune Bergström, Mikael Bergström, Rosario Garcia Gil, Göran Sjöberg, Camilla Widmark, Jonas Rönnberg), NO (Frode Lyssandtræ, Terje Hoel, Knut Øistad, Bjørn Helge Bjørnstad, Helge Molvig), FI (Pasi Poikonen, Sanna Paanukoski), RU (Vladimir Dmitriev, Maria Sokolenko, Natalia Demidova).

Agenda items

1. Introduction: Welcome and short presentation of participants

The chairman Staffan Norin opened the meeting. The aim of the meeting was to sum up the Swedish chairmanship and discuss the way forward during the Norwegian chairmanship. All participants presented themselves.

2. Information: Barents Regional Council chairmanship and its priorities.

Mikael Bergström, County Administrative Board of Västerbotten, informed that county of Västerbotten two weeks ago took over chairmanship of the Regional council, after Finnmark. The County governor Magdalena Andersson is taking over as chair person. Priorities will be:

- Environment and climate. The forest can contribute a lot.
- Young people who are the future of the cooperation.
- Gender equality – a prerequisite for regional prosperity and development.
- Indigenous people.
- Visibility: making Barents and development/actions here more well known.

Other important tasks:

- Predators, a seminar has already been held this year, with a follow up next year in Archangelsk
- Children's sport and health
- Telemedicine

There will be conferences about these topics throughout the Barents region.

A Barents forum will be organized. Cooperation will be strengthened between working groups, both National and Regional, and the Regional council. There will be financial support for the WGs. It is suggested that each country contributes with a small amount to the Barents secretariat, as seed money for meetings/projects.

3. Information: The Forum Oct 16th, including workshop

Camilla informed about the conference and the workshop on the Bioeconomy report the 16th as well as the excursions on the 17th.

4. Information: summing up Sweden's chairmanship of the BFSN

Staffan Norin presented the BFSN strategies, both the short and long term.

He reported that during the Swedish chairmanship there have been 3 meetings, and 1 tele-conference. Topics that were treated were wildfires, bioeconomy, young people in relation to forestry, as well as increased knowledge of climate change. The Action plan on Climate has been monitored, youth oriented recommendations has been developed and a bioeconomic report is soon to be completed. A new BFSN mandate has been approved. Staffan Norin as chairperson has also attended other Barents meetings.

5. Information: Norway's BEAC chairmanship and BFSN chairmanship priorities and plans

Frøde Lyssandtræ reminded that Norway also is taking the overall chairmanship for the Barents Euro-Arctic Council, with priorities in health, people-to-people contact, and knowledge.

In the BFSN, Norway will follow up and continue the work of the Swedish chairmanship. Topics will be climate change, adaptation to a low carbon society, resilience in northern regions, and youth participation and involvement. The secretariat for the work will be at the Norwegian Institute for Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) and headed by Knut Øistad. Meetings will be planned, experts invited, and research results exchanged. Meetings may be held at the research stations of NIBIO.

6. Discussion: BFSN chairmanship 2019-2021, priorities and activities; relevant information to consider in the continued work

Pasi Poikonen pointed out that it is important to continue to develop ongoing work and add values.

Vladimir Dmitriev confirmed that labour topics are of continued interest. He added that it will be important to work in parallel also with the Boreal Forest Network.

Natalia Demidova said that plans sounds good, and Russia will support the work.

Peter Blombäck stressed the need of strong involvement with science and its linkage to policy, also the contacts with IBFRA.

Rosaria Garcia Gil commented that she is looking forward to research cooperation/collaboration.

Frøde Lyssandtræ commented that there is a strong science community. Northern Norway have not got a lot of forest or forest industries but quite strong research institutes. He was looking forward to the BFF, to listen and pick up good ideas.

Terje Hoel mentioned that also the local forestry sector will be involved, where there is a growing interest.

Knut Øistad said that labour and education in a bioeconomy context is important.

Jonas Rönnerberg stressed the possibility of collaboration with the Nordic council of ministers.

Camilla Widmark invited all partners to participate in the new EFI network, Forest Bioeconomy Network. The new network will be focused on the theme, and not a geographic area. There will be online activities. It is not open only for research organisations.

Mikael Bergström welcomed close cooperation between the regional Council and the BFSN.

Mats-Rune Bergström informed that there was recently a bilateral meeting, Sweden and Norway.

7 Pre-conference workshops

Camilla Widmark informed that there were 3 workshops during the day on education, gender equality, and the labour market in the forest sector. A summary will be presented during the conference. There were approximately 50 participants, from several countries.

8 Instructions: Development of BFSN chairmanship summary and recommendations

Peter Blombäck informed about the development of the Chair's summary and recommendations. He invited each BFSN country to nominate one person to take part in the Drafting Committee that will meet during the lunch 11:30-13:30 and the afternoon coffee break on the 16th.

9 Information: The handover of the BFSN chair the 16th:

Staffan Norin informed that in a short ceremony tomorrow the chair will be handed over to Norway; to Frode Lyssandtræ.

10 Summing up of the meeting and reflections.

Peter Blombäck presented a list to consider in the continued BFSN work:

- Chairmanship priorities for the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC), NO
- Chairmanship priorities for the Barents Regional Council (BRC), Västerbotten, SE
- Barents Euro-Arctic Council, Umeå Declaration 3 October 2019
- Norway's chairmanship priorities/plans for the BFSN
- Chairmanship priorities for the Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC), and the Regional Working Group on Investments and Economic Cooperation (RWGIEC), NO
- Priorities for the working group of Environment (WGE) chairmanship 2020-23, FI

Other suggested WGE actions to consider: Action plan on Climate Change for the Barents cooperation, cooperation about regional climate strategies, cooperation for protection of intact forests in the Barents region.

Staffan Norin lifted the benefits of priority to a restricted number of processes and to continue with work that has started. It is also important to widen the network and identify new partnerships.

11 End of meeting

Chairman Staffan Norin thanked all participants.