

BARENTS FOREST SECTOR TASK FORCE

Time	Friday 23.5.2014, 9:30 – 16:00
Place	Meeting room "Hilla", at Lunch restaurant Pihapaviljonki (2 nd floor, Snellmaninkatu 5, 00170 Helsinki
Participants	Finland: Tatu Tornainen (chair) and Nilla Möller, Leena Saarikoski, Henna Haapala and Timo Karjalainen Norway: Terje Höel Russia: Natalia Demidova, Boris Romanyuk Sweden: Lars Andersson, Esbjörn Andersson

PROGRAMME**1. Opening of the meeting**

Chair opened the meeting and the agenda was approved.

Leena Saarikoski from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs gave an overview of the Finnish Chairmanship of BEAC.

There will be a new Head of Secretariat as the present Head, Ari Siren is leaving the post. The next meeting of SCO will be held in June 2014. A calendar of events has been up-dated. The planned and up-coming meetings include, e.g. a seminar on intelligent transport systems, in June in Helsinki, where over 1000 participants are expected, a seminar on mining and clean tech, Barents industrial meeting.

There are intentions to increase and further strengthen collaboration between the four sister councils: the BEAC, the Arctic Council, the Nordic Council of Ministers and Northern Dimension. For this purpose, there will be Deputy Minister meeting of the 4 sister councils in 2015. Also, in order to support implementation, there is going on a joint assessment on the establishment of a financing instrument. The outcome of assessment will be presented in the meeting of prime ministers in the end of 2015. In order to fully realize the potential of collaboration, the Northern Dimension (EU) is focusing more on the Arctic area cooperation, especially in terms of logistics. The Colarctic Funding is important for the Barents work and the level of funding is expected to stay at its current level.

It was noted that it would be important that BEAC and other regional bodies could offer seed money to further develop ideas and prepare joint activities.

2. Organisation of new working approach

The content of the draft mandate of the group was discussed. The main idea of the new working approach was to increase flexibility in the group's work in cost efficient way without losing the possibility to act at need. It was agreed that the Chair will distribute the amended draft after consulting the Secretariat and possibly other working groups on questions related to decision making and dispute solving.

The procedure of approval of the new mandate was discussed. The next steps include: treatment in the Economic Working Group and an approval by the CSO.

It was also unanimously agreed that the name of the Barents Forest Sector Task Force will be changed to Barents Forest Sector Network.

3. Presentation of the forest-related activities of the WG environment

Henna Haapala presented forest related activities of the Working Group Environment. Five co-operation themes are hot spots, cleaner production and environmentally sound consumption, nature protection, water issues and climate change. Promoting a representative and effectively managed Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN) and Developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia are examples of key projects in connection with forests and nature.

4. BEAC climate change action plan

Tatu Tornainen made a presentation of the BEAC Climate Change Action Plan. It was noted that there are several activities in the Action Plan that are addressed to the group or related to forests.

Natalia Demidova presented the Activity plan 2014- 15 of Archangelsk region, in which there are special plans and actions on forest related activities. Also, a regional climate strategy has been compiled and that will be completed in 2015. The main policy areas of the climate change cooperation consist of mitigation, adaptation, research and monitoring and related modeling, as well as outreach. Several topics for research projects related to forests' role in climate change have been identified and proposed for implementation.

5. Possible contributions from the forest group to the BEAC cooperation

Timo Karjalainen presented a proposal on Barents forest forum. The themes of the forum may include mitigation of the climate change, forest based energy and livelihoods in the forest sector in the Barents region. The main goal is networking, i.e. get stakeholders together and raise awareness of the potential of the forest sector and stimulate new cooperation between the actors. The forum also can contribute to the BEAC Climate Change Action Plan. Planned time of the meeting is in 2015. The primary financing will be sought from the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs. Other additional resources also are welcomed.

The proposal was supported by the group. Woodworking and construction from wood as well as water management as part of the green economy also were mentioned as interesting topics for consideration.

It was agreed that Forest Research Institute will prepare a concept paper to be circulated among the group.

6. Any other business

Other items

1. The web pages of the forest group should be up-dated. It was agreed that the Chair will collect contact information from the participants and up-date the texts.
2. The meeting notes will be sent to all participants
3. The new mandate will be circulated for comments
4. It was informed that FAO Committee on Forestry will have a meeting 23. -27.6. in Rome, where also Boreal Forest will be on the agenda.
5. If the seminar mentioned above, gets financed, the network should have its next meeting within one year.

The Chair closed the meeting at 15:00.