



## **Terms of Reference for an International Barents Secretariat for the Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region**

### **1. Introduction**

Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region is anchored under the two political organs: the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the Barents Regional Council (BRC).

The Working Group of the Indigenous Peoples has, in addition to its operational role as a working group, also an advisory role in relation to both the BEAC and the BRC.

The BEAC Chairmanship and the BRC Chairmanship rotate every two years. The BEAC acts through its Committee of Senior Officials (CSO) between the Ministerial Meetings, and the BRC between the BRC meetings through its Regional Committee (RC).

In order to make the Barents cooperation more coherent and efficient it was decided to establish an International Barents Secretariat (IBS). The objective of the IBS is to provide technical support to the multilateral coordinated regional activities within the framework of the BEAC and the BRC, recognizing the important role of the national secretariats in the Barents Region and the division of labour at the regional level decided by BRC .

The BEAC and the BRC aim at strengthening the multilateral efforts of the Barents cooperation and enhancing its practical content, inter alia by securing continuity in the work, by better utilising available administrative and financial resources as well as by promoting more effective coordination and implementation of the decisions of the BEAC and the BRC.

The scope of the IBS, in addition to the organizational setup, and the financial arrangements, are described in these Terms of Reference.

The location of the IBS will be in Kirkenes, Norway.

The working language of the IBS shall be English.

### **2. Scope**

The IBS shall perform secretarial and administrative service within the framework set forward in these Terms of Reference.

To this end the IBS shall:

- Provide administrative and organizational support to the BEAC and the BRC Chairmanships, to the CSO and the RC and to their subsidiary bodies, including the Working Groups, as decided by the CSO and supported by the RC in each individual case. Administrative support may include organising meetings, preparing written material and summary reports, maintaining updated registers and mailing lists, and providing other technical services.
- Keep records, files and documentation from relevant meetings, conferences and projects, including databases, and in this way constitute an "institutional memory" for the Barents cooperation. All documents and files shall be available to the BEAC and the BRC .
- Maintain, service and update the [www.barentscooperation.org](http://www.barentscooperation.org)<sup>1</sup> and [www.barentsinfo.org](http://www.barentsinfo.org) websites, including their regional segments and relevant links, and any other websites or databases to be decided, and to promote the dissemination of information on Barents issues in general. The tasks of the IBS in the area of information and data cooperation may be outsourced to a contractor chosen by the CSO in consultation with the RC.<sup>2</sup> To this end a separate joint development contract will be concluded between the IBS and the contractor(-s) chosen for these tasks.
- Upon written request by the CSO Chairmanship, or by the RC Chairmanship, prepare specific information material and analytical or descriptive background documentation.
- Assist in getting financial support from different financial sources to the CSO and RC Working Groups, and as agreed upon assist in project implementation. Project leadership shall however, remain the responsibility of the relevant BEAC and BRC structures, or lead country/regional administration.

### **3. Head of the Secretariat**

The IBS shall be led by a Head of Secretariat, who shall be selected among qualified individuals and who shall be a citizen of a state of one of the Parties to the Agreement on the Establishment of an International Barents Secretariat for the Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

The RC will assist the CSO in evaluating the candidates. The CSO, with the support of the RC, will make the decision to appoint a Head of the IBS. An Ad Hoc Group with balanced representation could be established to assist in the evaluation of the candidates.

The Head of the IBS, as the chief administrative officer, shall have an overall responsibility for the proper management and efficient use of the financial and staff resources. Depending on the nature of the issue, he/she shall receive tasks from and report to the Chairs of the CSO and the RC. The Head of Secretariat shall consult the Chairs of the CSO and the RC in all matters of importance or doubt according to the established division of labour.

The Head of Secretariat shall be responsible for the day-to-day functioning of the IBS and shall represent the IBS externally as instructed by the Chairs of the CSO and the RC, depending on the established division of labour.

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<sup>1</sup> Amended by the BEAC CSO 22 March 2016. Change of domain name.

<sup>2</sup> The contractor chosen for the period 2016-2019 is the Arctic Centre, University of Lapland, Rovaniemi.

The Head of Secretariat shall be authorized by the CSO to sign a Host Country Agreement with the Government of Norway. The Head of Secretariat shall also be authorized to sign any subsequent amendment to that agreement as approved by the CSO. The CSO shall consult with the RC before such authorization is granted.

The Head of Secretariat shall:

- propose working plans and activities as instructed by the Chairs of the CSO and the RC ;
- present budget proposals for each calendar year to the CSO;
- prepare and submit accounts and other reports to the CSO and the RC;
- submit annual reports to the to the CSO and the RC;
- employ and manage the IBS staff;
- enter into and manage contracts regarding acquirement of goods and services to the IBS;
- monitor the performance of contractors that perform tasks that have been outsourced by the IBS.

#### **4. Interim Head of Secretariat**

If the Head of Secretariat has not been appointed by 1<sup>st</sup> of January 2008, the IBS shall be lead by an interim Head of Secretariat to be appointed by Norway in concurrence with the Parties to the Agreement until this position has been properly filled. The interim Head of Secretariat shall *inter alia* sign initial employment contracts on behalf of the IBS and shall ensure its legal registration under Norwegian law.

#### **5. Staff Members**

The IBS shall be staffed commensurate to its tasks. In addition to the Head of Secretariat or the Interim Head of Secretariat, there shall initially be one executive officer and one secretary /accountant.

Based upon prior consultations with the RC and final approval by the CSO, Permanent Staff Members shall be employed by the Head of Secretariat. A balance among the nationalities of the Parties to the Agreement shall be sought through a rotation when appointing the Permanent Staff Members of the IBS.

Contracts for Permanent Staff Members of the IBS shall be offered for a period of up to three years, with the possibility of prolongation for one year. Permanent Staff Members can re-apply only once for their own position. Prolongation excludes renewed application.

Since the work of the Secretary/Accountant requires local knowledge of prevalent practices in dealings with the authorities of the Host Country, the Secretary/Accountant can reapply for this position without limits.<sup>3</sup>

Additional staff members may be seconded from other entities upon the acceptance of the CSO after prior consultations with the RC. Acceptance of seconded personnel is subject to the condition that the sending government, regional administration or sponsoring institution covers all the expenses except the use of office facilities which are covered by the Secretariat. Seconded personnel are considered legally employed by the sending entity.

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<sup>3</sup> Amended by the CSO, 4-5 September 2013. Additional paragraph.

Internships may be offered to young professionals or other individuals who for a fixed period of maximum of three months will be affiliated with the activities of the IBS. Monthly allowances for internships are to be included in the annual budget of the IBS.

## **6. The Roles of the BEAC and the BRC**

The CSO shall, in close cooperation with the RC, instruct, supervise, and provide further guidance of the activities of the IBS.

To this end the CSO and the BRC/RC shall, depending on the established division of labour:

- participate in the process of appointing and dismissing the Head of the IBS;
- approve work programmes, accounts and budgets for each calendar year;
- ensure that the composition and qualifications of the staff of the IBS are adequate to fulfil the tasks of the IBS and
- approve the Financial and Staff Rules of the IBS .

## **7. Financial Contributions**

The operating budget for each calendar year shall be financed through assessed contributions based upon the payment scheme as defined in Article 5 of the Agreement on the Establishment of an International Barents Secretariat for the Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

Any programme or project activities to be managed or supervised by the IBS shall be financed outside the budget.

## **8. Accounting**

The Head of Secretariat shall ensure that accounting records are kept in accordance with generally accepted accounting practice and standards and the specific requirements under the Norwegian law.

## **9. Auditing Procedures**

The CSO shall appoint an external auditor upon proposal by the Government of Norway. The auditor shall be a registered state auditor in Norway. The report and findings of the external auditor shall be submitted to the CSO for review and consideration.

## **10. Amendments to these Terms of Reference**

The CSO and, the BRC and the Head of the Secretariat may propose amendments to these Terms of Reference. Amendments supported by the BRC may be approved by the CSO.

**Adopted by the Barents Regional Council on 6 September 2007 in Tromsø and by the Committee of Senior Officials of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council on 9 October 2007 in Helsinki**