



## ***Joint Working Group on Education and Research***

### **NARRATIVE REPORT - 2014**

#### **Introductory Part:**

**Organizational structure:** network of Barents universities and research units

**Co-chairmanship by:** co-chairmanship by Northern (Arctic) Federal University (Arkhangelsk, Russia) and University of Lapland (Rovaniemi, Finland)

**Chairmanship period:** 2014 - 2015

**Co-Chairs:** Marina Kalinina, NARFU Vice-Rector of International Cooperation

Ms. Outi Snellman, UoL Director of International Relations

#### **NARRATIVE REPORT**

In 2014 JWGER activities were continued to be coordinated by the Northern (Arctic) Federal University as a Chair and University of Lapland as a Co-Chair. The partner universities were committed to continue implementing the positive initiatives undertaken during the previous co-chairmanships aiming generally at strengthening academic cooperation in the Barents Region in response to growing local, regional and global challenges and needs in the field of human resources, research and innovation. In 2014 the JWGER overall performance and concrete actions were targeted to achieve the JWGER general tasks outlined in the JWGER Mandate. The special emphasis was made on meeting the specific JWGER chairmanship priorities for 2014-2015 defined by JWGER members, in particular:

*Priority 1:* Strengthening the JWGER membership and streamlining the strategy in response to new challenges and needs

*Priority 2:* Mapping-out synergy potentials and interacting with other thematic BEAC working groups

*Priority 3:* Contributing to solving climate change challenges

*Priority 4:* Enhancing academic cooperation and mobility programmes in the Barents Region

*Priority 5:* Supporting activities of consortia and networks (BEAR, EU, University of the Arctic)

The current Narrative Report covers the period from January 1, 2014 till December 31, 2014 and is based on the previous interim reporting and member institutions' contribution. The Report provides a brief overview on the WG performance in general and under each priority in particular, institutional issues as well as challenges faced.

***Priority 1: Strengthening the JWGER membership and streamlining the strategy in response to new challenges and needs***

Compared with other Barents Working Groups, the JWGER has a specific status in terms of its operating on the both levels – national (BEAC) and regional (BRC), its co-chairmanship approach of the group coordination by the two partner universities and its membership based on the networking of educational and research institutions. In 2014 the JWGER co-chairs continued to take efforts to ensure organizational sustainability of the WG and involving new members out of Barents HEIs and research institutions. In total, around 15 Barents academic and research organizations were covered by JWGER activities and information dissemination. It was also important to achieve better communication between the members, create discussion arenas and update the JWGER strategy for the next chairmanship period.

**Activities undertaken and interim results:**

Planning NArFU and UoL co-chairmanship: defining priorities and challenges, drafting the work plan, planning organizational, human and financial resources;

JWGER Action Plan and Work Plan for 2014-2015 was developed and circulated to JWGER members;

JWGER meeting was held on October 9, 2014 in Arkhangelsk and hosted by NArFU. The JWGER meeting got the strongest representation than ever before of the Russian universities from Arkhangelsk, Murmansk, Apatity, Petrozavodsk, Syktyvkar, Ukhta. In total 12 delegates from 11 Russian and Finnish institutions attended the meeting. Unfortunately, there were no representatives from Norway and Sweden at the meeting due to overlapping of other important events at home organizations and visa problems. The agenda covered the following issues:

- overview of the JWGER status, activities and key results
- Barents HEIs and research centers contribution to implementation of the Barents Action Plan on Climate Change and Barents Joint Transport Plan
- searching for synergy with other formats of international cooperation in the North
- on-going projects status
- planning JWGER activities for 2015.

(please, see the Minutes of the JWGER meeting at [http://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/document\\_database/wg\\_documents.aspx?ID=8](http://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/document_database/wg_documents.aspx?ID=8))

Participation in BEAC CSO meeting on December 17, 2014 in Rovaniemi, Finland. Interim reporting.

Dissemination of JWGER activities, interacting with International Barents Secretariat. The JWGER web-page has been updated in a regular basis (<http://www.beac.st/in-English/Barents-Euro-Arctic-Council/Working-Groups/Joint-Working-Groups/Education-and-Research>).

***Priority 2: Mapping-out synergy potentials and developing concrete actions with other thematic BEAC working groups.***

In the reporting period the previously undertaken initiatives with other BEAR thematic WGs were successfully developed and concrete results achieved through interaction with the three working groups – Regional Working Group on Environment, Joint Working Group on Tourism and Joint Working Group on Youth.

***Activities undertaken and interim results:***

**i) Joint Project with Subgroup on Clean Production and Environmental Consumption of the Regional Working Group on Environment** (funded by Swedish Environmental Agency)

Objective: Introducing clean production methodology into the educational process of Russian Barents universities

Coordinators: NArFU and Moscow Center for Clean Production

Project milestones:

2013-2014: a series of international workshops in Arkhangelsk, Syktyvkar, Murmansk held

2014: development of new interdisciplinary courses on CPESC in each Russian university involved (e.g. in NArFU the courses are developed by experts from 4 NArFU institutes within the two educational programmes “Ecology and Land Use”, “Heat Power Engineering and Heat Technology”).

2014-2015: publication of academic materials, teaching process, sharing experience

December 9, 2014 (Arkhangelsk, Russia): Participation of JWGER representatives in Regional WG on Environment / Subgroup of Clean Production meeting with the presentation of the project results.

The cooperation between JWGER and RWGE/SCPEC under the above project can be considered as a good example of achieving the synergy and getting much benefit by using the existing networks and uniting the resources in order to meet the goals of the both groups. The experience is worth disseminating and transmitting to other WGs.

**ii) Joint Working Group on Tourism:** cooperation under ENPI CBC Kolarctic Project “Public-Private Partnership in Tourism / BART” in 2010-2013:

Joint elaboration and publication of Barents Action Plan on Tourism. The following Barents universities were involved in research and Action Plan development as the key executors: RAMK, UoL, LTU, NArFU, UiT, MSTU. In 2014 the Action Plan implementation was carried out by Barents HEIs by developing new joint educational programmes and summer schools for training specialists for tourism industry (e.g. the improved Travel and Tourism Management Bachelor program run by NArFU, Harstad college and Lapland University of Applied Sciences). The JWGER sees more potential for expanding collaboration with JWGT in the form of organizing joint workshops, developing joint projects on marketing BEAR as an attractive tourist and educational destination.

iii) The first steps were made and potential cooperation fields outlined with **Joint Working Group on Youth** during the JWGY meeting held in Helsinki in November 2014 where JWGER chair was invited to participate. Two projects were planned for 2015 between JWGER and JWGY supported by RF Agency ROSMOLODEZH.

### **Priority 3: Contributing to solving climate change challenges**

The JWGER Action Plan for 2014-2015 defined the JWGER contribution to implementation of Barents Action Plan on Climate Change as a special priority. The JWGER considers important to continue the activities towards increasing collaboration in the related applied interdisciplinary research projects to address climate challenges timely and in a proper way.

#### ***Activities undertaken and interim results:***

In order to achieve the task the JWGER addressed the issue closely during its meeting in October 2014 and initiated the questionnaires for the JWGER members to provide the information and data that would help to get a comprehensive picture on Barents academia related expertise in general and the achieved interim results for 2014.

The questionnaire covered the five parts based on the expectations from HEIs specified in the Action Plan on Climate Change, namely: expertise of institutions in the related field, on-going projects, educational programmes available, dissemination and outreach and proposals for further actions.

As a result about 10 Barents HEIs and research centers provided the information that was summed-up and analyzed. The lists of on-going projects, educational courses, dissemination and outreach activities were made. The overview was presented by JWGER chairs at the meeting of Regional Working Group on Environment on December 9, 2014 in Arkhangelsk as well as at BEAC CSO meeting on December 17, 2014 in Rovaniemi.

The work will be continued in the next period, however, the universities pointed out to the following challenges that make some serious barriers and hinder the activities:

- Lack of financing. The projects and activities in process are mostly carried out within on-going projects financed by universities themselves or thru application to funding programmes. However, all the JWGER members point out to the necessity of

establishing a special fund for implementing concrete tasks of the Action Plan on Climate Change;

- Less active involvement and communication with Swedish universities;
- Insufficient interaction with Working Group on Environment for concrete joint actions (projects, conferences, workshops);
- Absence of data-base on research of the Barents Region.

#### **Priority 4: Enhancing academic cooperation and mobility programmes in the Barents Region**

In 2014 it was viewed crucial to further develop Barents cooperation in the field of education, research and innovation by facilitating further internationalization of HEIs, enhancing students and staff exchanges, developing international educational programmes, summer schools, addressing recognition issues, initiating new educational and scientific projects, organizing discussion arenas and meeting points.

#### ***Activities undertaken and interim results:***

Actions and measures aimed at increasing the quality of education and training in BEAR were undertaken by all the Barents universities.

Participation of Barents HEIs in Intergovernmental Working Groups on Education, in particular: Russian-Norwegian Intergovernmental Working Group on Education, Russian-Finnish Intergovernmental Working Group on Education and Research providing academia active role in decision-making on recognition issues, academic mobility, joint programmes and bilateral academic cooperation enhancement.

The work was started by JWGER towards developing Barents Action Plan on Research and Education. The JWGER members were involved in planning a joint project “Barents Academic TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More” to be applied for ENI CBC Program Kolarctic 2016-2020.

October 7-9, 2014, NArFU: International Professional Development Workshop: Global Access to Higher Education in the North aimed at promoting Northern universities in the global educational market.

Broadening the range of joint academic programs and training courses.

Developing academic mobility programme North to North, encouraging involvement and co-financing from all the four Barents countries.

#### **Priority 5: Supporting activities of consortia and networks**

It is important to strengthen links with existing networks, institutions and associations in the North. With this regards, it is viewed useful to achieve more synergy and encourage the exchange of information, approaches and best results. Much work was done to identify

potentially prospective areas of cooperation between Barents Region and other international cooperation models and consortia, like the Arctic Council, the University of the Arctic, European Union / Nordic Dimension and others.

On the basis of the theme-wise synergy approach and coherent regional mandates, a lot was achieved by networking within the **University of the Arctic** under joint events, initiatives and concrete projects:

- UArctic membership
- Expertise for the Arctic Council Scientific Cooperation Task Force
- Expertise for the Arctic Business Council
- UArctic Thematic Networks
- North-to-North+ Project
- September 15-18, 2014: Participation in EAIE Conference, Prague
- October 7-9, 2014: International Professional Development Workshop: Global Access to Higher Education in the North

In 2014 a number of actions were undertaken in order to broaden interaction within **European Union** context. **EU/Northern Dimension** and its structures viewed as important instruments for expanding a dialogue of Barents Region with Baltic Region and European Union in general:

- On-going projects (Tempus, Erasmus Plus, Kolarctic ENPI, NCM)
- Planning joint projects within Horizon 2020
- June 2014: XX Conference of European Association of Research Managers and Administrators, making a speech on Barents Educational Cooperation as Story of Success (together with North-Sweden EU Office)
- Proposals to Kolarctic ENPI Programme 2014-2018 strategic document, participating in Kolarctic ENPI workshops, sharing best practices, acting as experts in the field of education (May, 2014 – Kirkenes, December 2014 – Rovaniemi).

**The Northern Dimension Institute** co-coordinated by NArFU (Russia), St-Petersburg Higher School of Economics (Russia) and Aalto University (Finland) is expected to provide an added-value to JWGER activities through establishing a link with Baltic Region academia and facilitating networking and experience exchange, fund-raising and project work, promoting cooperation and coherence in areas of mutual interest.

- Barents HEIs are members of NDI
- Expertise to Northern Dimension Partnerships
- Ensuring synergy and experience exchange between Baltic and Barents regional models
- Fund raising for joint projects.

### **Conclusion:**

In general the JWGER performance in 2014 has been evaluated as successful and productive. The Working Group has proved itself as an efficient tool of networking and intensifying cross-border cooperation in academic and research spheres in the Barents Region.

The JWGER meeting in October 2014 was crucial for ensuring the JWGER performance

and generating new working priorities and action plan for 2014-2015. In 2013 the meeting was not held due to financial difficulties and rotation of the co-chairmanship. The meeting gave impetus for new initiatives and projects and attracted new educational and research organizations to joint activities.

The co-chairmanship approach (NArFU/UoL) proved its efficiency in terms of uniting the efforts and resources of the partner universities as well as using the national (Finland) and regional (Arkhangelsk Region) chairmanships more strategically.

The cross-cutting nature of the knowledge that Barents academia generate and transmit lays grounds for further interaction with other Barents thematic Working Groups and regional stakeholders (authorities, business, local communities) for addressing integrated tasks set by the Barents chairmanships' programmes on national and regional levels. The JWGER management found the participation in other thematic WG meetings very useful for seeking common interests and tasks and initiating joint actions in line with the both groups' missions and strategies.

The JWGER has increased its role in uniting and promoting Northern academic expertise highly required for ensuring sustainable development of the Barents region in general and solving concrete tasks (e.g. Action Plan on Climate Change) in particular. JWGER will continue its mission as expertise centre in the next period.

The challenges and weaknesses are still to be addressed, namely: stronger commitment from the national and regional level; better communication of member institutions; low or no funding for JWGER as such; recognizing internationalization of HE&R as a tool of university development and excellence; achieving transparency of HE systems in BEAR, recognition issues; delays in launching Kolarctic CBC Programme viewed as the most efficient funding mechanism for the whole Barents Region, few bilateral funds; consolidation of research efforts for research-based education in member-institutions.

**JWGER activities visualization:**

[http://www.narfu.ru/en/news/?ELEMENT\\_ID=176166](http://www.narfu.ru/en/news/?ELEMENT_ID=176166)

<http://www.narfu.ru/life/news/university/176090/>

<http://www.beac.st/in-English/Barents-Euro-Arctic-Council/Working-Groups/Joint-Working-Groups/Education-and-Research>

[http://www.narfu.ru/international/news/?ELEMENT\\_ID=181152](http://www.narfu.ru/international/news/?ELEMENT_ID=181152)

<http://www.narfu.ru/international/news/>

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