



Barents Euro-Arctic Council
Barents Regional Council

Draft Terms of Reference Energy Working Group

Background

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region is very rich in energy resources, such as petroleum (oil, condensate and gas), biofuel (forest products, peat), hydropower, wind, wave and tidal power. The Region's energy plays, and will increasingly play an important role in the European and international energy markets, both in terms of volume and security of supply.

The Region is also a large consumer of energy, both in industry and for heating and transportation purposes. There are many challenges connected with the efficient use of and transport/transmission of energy. Energy extraction/production and transport should be done in a sustainable way in vulnerable sub-arctic and arctic areas. In addition comes the effect of energy activities on the indigenous peoples of the Region.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Council at its 5th session in Luleå on 19 – 20 January 1998 adopted an “Energy Action Plan for the Improvement of the Energy Situation in the Barents Region” and established an ad hoc Working Group on Energy. At its 8th session in Murmansk on 14 – 15 March 2001 the Council prolonged the mandate of the Energy Working Group (EWG) and dropped the “ad hoc” from its title. The CSO in February 2004 prolonged the EWG's mandate until the end of 2004. The last updating of the EWG-mandate was in December 2004. The existing mandate with minor modifications is being prolonged until 2011.

The EWG has since 1998 served to catalyst cooperative activities between the energy systems of the Region. A wide variety of activities have been carried out, either directly or indirectly related to the EWG. The main responsibility for implementation lies with regional and national governments, energy utilities, investors and other actors.

This ToR is a point of departure for the EWG plan for the period 2009-2011.

Objectives

The EWG shall promote multilateral cooperation on energy matters in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region, including regional cooperation in the energy system between authorities, energy entities, private sector companies and other actors. The EWG shall implement a Work Plan for Energy Cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region 2009 - 2011. The EWG shall serve as consultative body of the organs of the Barents cooperation and initiate appropriate initiatives in its field.

Specific objectives of the EWG shall include:

- Promotion of measures to improve energy efficiency in the production, distribution and consumption of energy, inter alia through the activities of the energy efficiency centres (Barents Energy Focal Points) in Kirovsk, Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Petrozavodsk, Syktyvkar;
- Coordination of energy efficiency and cleaner production activities;
- Promotion of renewable energy sources, particularly bioenergy and hydropower;
- Promotion of increased cooperation between regional electricity companies and system operators;
- Promotion of project financing, including the further development of financing instruments and the development of an investment framework by the Russian Partners. (EWG shall not assume responsibility for any project);
- Expansion of contacts between regional energy market actors including relevant service and supply industries for oil and gas activities;
- Promotion of Joint Implementation and other Kyoto mechanisms, including within the framework of the Testing Ground Facility¹;
- Examination of prospects and implications of hydrogen development;
- Coordination with other relevant initiatives, particularly with BASREC².

Composition and chairmanship of the EWG

Members and alternate members of the EWG should be nominated by:

- Each of the regions, counties, republics, oblasts, okrugs which are members of the Barents Regional Council;
- The competent national (federal) authority/ies of the countries which are members of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council

In addition, the European Commission and the Nordic Council of Ministers or other regional or international organizations, may be represented in the EWG.

The members of the EWG may invite specialists to assist them during meetings or other activities whenever necessary.

In order to enhance the active participation between the different actors in the Working Group, a shared chairmanship should be practised. The chairmanship should rotate within intervals of two years with a central government representative and a representative of a regional authority or administrative entity working together.

If deemed necessary, a smaller executive group or steering committee with one participating person from each country and national regional group may be established in order to manage tasks between the meetings of the Working Group

Methods of Work

The Working Group shall choose the working methods, which are the most appropriate in order to meet a particular objective and which are in line with financing possibilities. This may include a number of different actions such as using external experts, organising conferences or seminars, involving energy entities, universities and research institutions, and non-governmental organisations directly in agreed activities, etc.

¹ Testing Ground Agreement for Flexible Mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol, signed in Gothenburg on 29 September 2003.

² Baltic Sea Region Energy Cooperation

The Working Group shall meet at least once a year. If desired, sub-groups or task forces may be formed in order to perform special activities between the meetings of the Working Group.

The working language shall be English.

Each participant shall cover his/her own expenses for travel, accommodation and per diem. The joint chair shall agree on cost sharing concerning meeting expenses, expenses for any secretarial function and translation/interpretation in specific cases.

The EWG shall coordinate and cooperate, as appropriate, with other working groups of the Barents cooperation, such as on economic cooperation, the environment, indigenous peoples, etc., and with relevant subgroups of other regional bodies.

The EWG shall receive instructions and requests from the Barents Euro-Arctic Council and the Barents Regional Council through the Committee of Senior Officials and Regional Committee, and report on activities through the same channels. An annual progress report of the preceding year shall be submitted by 1 February of each year.

Duration

The Terms of Reference of the EWG shall expire at the end of 2011, before which an assessment of the working group, its organization and activities, shall be undertaken. The Committee of Senior Officials and Regional Committee may also before this time make changes in the Terms of Reference, should this be deemed appropriate.

Approved by the BEAC/CSO on 13 October 2009, Approved by the Barents Regional Committee
on ... 2009.