

MEMO 20.11.2015

JOINT WORKING GROUP ON TOURISM

Date: 16.11.2015

Venue: Hotel Thon Opera, Oslo

Participants:

Thomas Hallberg, Barents Secretariat
Kairi Pääsuke, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten
Andreas Lind, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten
Virpi Souninen, Ministry of Employment and Economy
Tuomo Tahvanainen, Kainuun Etu Oy
John-Steve Linløkken, Northern Norway Tourist Board
Arne Trengereid, Northern Norway Tourist Board
Kristiina Hietasaari, Visit Finland
Satu Luro, Regional Council of Lapland
Sverre Miøen, Ministry of Culture in Norway

(Obs! All the sections in the agenda were not addressed because of the lack of time. Also the order was different. The numbers refer to the sections in agenda)

1. Opening of the meeting and approval of the memo from the previous meeting

John-Steve as a regional chairman welcomed the participants. After short Introductions, the chairman summarized the task and significance of the JWGT work for those who attended the meeting for the first time.

The memo from the previous meeting was accepted with small corrections (attached).

2. National Chairmanship - Who will take over?

After the Finland's chairmanship the JWGT has not had a national level chairman. Norway is now a regional chairman, but in order to make an influential development work, it's essential that we have also a national level chairman. The rotation in our working group doesn't follow directly the chairmanship rotation of the national level bodies. It's also problematic that in Sweden and Norway they do not have a clear counterpart on the national level; in other words, it's not fully clear which ministry takes care of the tourism business. In Russia the tourism development now belongs to the Ministry of the Culture.



The participants in the meeting concluded that the next national chairman of the JWGT could be Russia. Thomas Hallberg stated that the question of the chairmanship should be brought to the Committee to the Senior Officials (CSO). That's the channel we can try to activate the Russia for the chairmanship.

It was decided that John-Steve will contact the Norway Foreign Ministry and the representative of the CSO about the matter. Virpi and Nina will use their contacts.

The participants discussed the organizational chart of the Barents co-operation. Thomas opened the chart a bit. The group suggested that the chart should be made clearer. For instance, it should communicate who reports to whom and what is the body that we should turn to in different situations (like the national chairmanship).

The group also pointed out that in a changing environment Barents co-operation needs clearer and more formal structure. The significance of the Barents co-operations should be communicated more and its connections to arctic level co-operation should be clarified.

At this point Sverre Miøyen from the Ministry of Culture in Norway joined the meeting.

3. Status of Infographics

Making of the infographic has proved to be very difficult, because the data is not comparable. For instance, statistic data from Russian is different. They follow number of tourists, whereas in other countries the most common statistic is the numbers of the overnight stays.

The group decided that the Infographic should be illustrated differently, using a map and highlighting the fact that figures are not comparable. In statistics we should stick to registered overnight stays and not to use any estimations about total number of overnight stays. The infographic could also include comparisons or arguments that describe the significance of the tourism, e.g. "one euro in tourism brings x € to other businesses".

Kairi will make the changes to the infographic.

4. Sustainability - How shall we go forward based on the discussion in March

In the last meeting the group decided that we will make an overview and evaluation about existing eco labels. Because of the lacking resources, the matter has not moved ahead.

The group discussed the matter and concluded that we need to contact the MTI (Multidimensional Tourism Institute) and ask if they could help us in this work. Also the Norbotten länsstyrelse have some interns that might also be helpful in collecting the data. Satu will contact the MTI.

There was also suggestion that this could be one of the co-operation initiatives with the Working Group of Research and Education.

Tuomo informed that there has been an Ecotour project in Kainuu and the project has collected best practices about the existing labels. Information can be found from the link:

<http://www.ecotourproject.com/>

Because the time was limited, the group decided at this point to go through the sections 9, 5 and 10 in the agenda.



9. Future meeting with JWGC and TWG Transport - Discussions on points of common interest and actions

The JWGT members had received an invitation from Russia to participate to the International Culture Forum. The conference will be arranged in Saint-Petersburg in the mid of December. Unfortunately, the forum comes too soon for most of the members so they are not able to participate. Since starting the co-operation with another WG needs time and discussions, it's better to arrange a separate meeting with the JWGC.

It was decided that we will try to arrange a meeting with the JWGC in Kainuu next May. Sverre Miøen will send us a report that describes the work of JWGC. We will also invite Mrs. Levanova.

The JWGT also discussed the co-operation with other groups:

Joint Working Group in Transport > Russia is the new chairman. Current issue at the moment: What will be written about tourism in the Joint Barents Transport Plan? (John-Steve and Virpi)

Working Group on Research and Education > Maybe they could do some research for us concerning the statistics? (John-Steve)

Sverre told us about the JWGC work. This working group works more on the national level. Culture can be used in different ways in tourism. It's not only festivals, but also lifestyle, food, cultural competences, content design, service design... etc. There are many possibilities. Sverre regarded the knowledge exchange as one of the most important tasks of the JWGC from the ministry point of view. Business can work on projects.

5. Planning activities for 2016

- Infographics (Kairi)
- Eco labels (Satu)
- Meetings with other WG's (John-Steve, Virpi)
- Following the Visit Arctic Europe (All)
- Following the new Kolarctic programme ENI that will start in summer 2016 (All)
- Contacting the Russian Ministry of Culture and trying to active them to the national chairmanship (John-Steve, Virpi)

10. Date and place of the next meeting

Next meeting will take place in Kainuu in May 2016.

The JWGT members thank Arne Trengereid from Northern Norway Tourist Board for his excellent work in the group and wish him the best of luck when retiring!

The memo was written by:

Satu Lairo
Senior Adviser in Tourism
Regional Council of Lapland

