

## **Minutes, BFSN meeting December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2020. Teams platform.**

### **Participants.**

#### ***Sweden:***

Lars Andersson

Camilla Widmark

Kristina Nilson

Jenny Johansson

Jonas Rönnerberg

#### ***Finland***

Pasi Poikonen

Saana Paanukoski

Jyrki Haataja

#### ***Russian Federation***

Maria Sokolenko

Natalia Demidova

#### ***Norway***

Terje Hoel

Knut Øistad

### **1. Welcome and opening**

Terje Hoel wished welcome to the third and last BFSN meeting in 2020.

### **2. Report from the CSO meeting 9.12.2020 including information on plans for a revised Climate Change Action Plan**

The CSO Chair Gøril Johansen chaired the seventh CSO meeting under the Norwegian Chairmanship on 9 December, using the Zoom platform.

The first part of the CSO meeting was with all WG chairs as participants. WG chairs reported on the activities in 2020. Terje Hoel briefed CSO on the activities in BFSN in accordance to the draft annual report sent to all members of BFSN prior to our meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

The Working Group on Environment (WGE) Chair Henna Haapala presented the goal and the schedule of the update process for 2021 aiming at adopting the 3<sup>rd</sup> revised edition of the Action Plan on Climate Change in the BEAC Ministerial Meeting in October 2021.

The timeline for the update on the update on the Action Plan on Climate Change is as follows:

- December 9, 2020 Presentation of the plan of the update of the Climate Change Action Plan at the CSO meeting for the CSOs and the Chairs of the Working Groups [CSO Chair and WGE Chair]
- end of February 2021: first round of preliminary inputs from the Working Groups [WG Chairs and RC will send the inputs to IBS]
- March 2021: Climate Smart Barents Region Conference – [Norway]
- April 2021: Call/webinar between WG Chairs and RC to go through the preliminary plans and to find possible synergies [CSO Chair and WGE Chair]
- May 2021: Second round of inputs from the Working Groups and RC [IBS will compile the inputs in a plain text]
- June-July 2021: Compilation, drafting and editing – introduction, analysis etc [IBS together with the WGE or a consultant?]
- August 2021: round of comments for compiled draft [CSO, WGs, RC]
- Adoption of the Action Plan in October 2021 in the BEAC meeting [CSO]

Further information on the update of the action plan is described in a separate briefing document sent members of BFSN prior to the meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>.

BFSN had an initial discussion on the approach to the update on the action plan in the meeting on December 16<sup>th</sup>. Activities in the previous action plan (2017-2020) are completed. Members of BFSN are invited to provide ideas and input for the revision of the action plan by

January 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021. These should be submitted to BFSN Secretariat. BFSN first input to the Action Plan on Climate Change will be an agenda point for BFSN meeting scheduled for end of January or beginning of February 2021.

### 3. Progress report on the Study of BFSN and Biosphere Reserves

The main purpose of the pilot study is to investigate and describe potential for Biosphere Reserves and BFSN/BEAC cooperation as explained in the terms of reference for the study. The study is expected to collect information and present it in a structured way useful for the work of BFSN. Implementation of any recommendations emerging from the study must be decided later in a normal procedure within BFSN/BEAC and BR (biosphere reserves) respectively after their consideration of the outcome of the study.

Members of BFSN have received a first preliminary draft report on the pilot study prior to the meeting. Members are encouraged to provide their input and suggestions as soon as possible, and not later than January 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021. The final version of the report from the pilot study is scheduled for submission to BFSN by the end of January 2021.

An initial discussion by members of the working group revealed a need for clearer formulation on the objective of the work in the report and a wish to elaborate on possible funding sources for cooperative projects.

### 4. Discussion and decision on the name for BFSN as working group.

Barents Forest Sector Network changed status to a BEAC Working Group by the decision in CSO September meeting 2020. BFSN followed this up with a discussion on a new name based on suggestions submitted prior to the meeting. BFSN decided to seek approval of CSO to change the name to:

Working Group on Barents Forest Sector – WGBFS

The new name will be used after approval of the revised mandate by CSO.

### 5. Decision on the revised BFSN mandate for submission to CSO

The decision to change status from a subgroup to a full BEAC working group requires minor changes in the mandate for BFSN. The amended draft mandate was distributed to members of the working group prior to the meeting. BFSN mandated the Norwegian chairmanship and the Secretariat to make the necessary changes in the mandate and to seek approval of CSO for the revised mandate.

#### 6. Information on the International Junior Forest Contest

Terje Hoel participated as representative in the jury on the International Junior Forest Contest organised by the Federal Forest Service of Russia (Rosleshoz) in early December. A report from the contest was provided to the meeting. He emphasised the good organisation and broad participation in the contest. Maria Sokolenko thanked Terje Hoel for his contributions as a representative from BFSN in the jury.

#### 7. Preparations for the Barents Forest Forum.

BFSN Secretariat provided a brief update on the preparations for the Barents Forest Forum 2021. Planning is a challenge due to the uncertainties caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Members of BFSN indicated that a virtual version of Barents Forest Forum is most likely given the uncertainty of the development of national and international travel restriction due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A decision on the format will be taken early 2021 in cooperation with the conference “Skog i Nord - Forests in the North”, a national forest conference in Norway organised in cooperation with Barents Forest Forum. A meeting on the topic with BFSN Secretariat and the organisers of “Forests in the North” is scheduled for January 20<sup>th</sup> 2021.

BFSN Secretariat suggested two main headings for the full day organised by the working group in the upcoming Barents Forest Forum:

##### *Forest circular bioeconomy in the Barents region*

Rationale: Building on the report on Bioeconomy in Northern Europe coordinated by Camilla Widmark (SLU/EFI bioeconomy network) and current development in policies on Forests and bioeconomy in Europe. Focusing on how to utilise the opportunities for forests to contribute

to a circular bioeconomy in the region. Building on input from the research communities in the region and the wider research community.

*Climate change (adaptation?) and forests in the Barents region.*

Rationale: Based on the rapid development in climate change in the Arctic, focusing on the challenges it represents for the forest resources, ecosystems, and societies in the region. Building on the work on Barents Sector Action Plan on Climate Change and input from research communities in the region and the wider research community.

A more detailed suggestion for the structure will be provided for the BFSN meeting in 2021. Members of the working group emphasised the need to build on the connection and work on youth issues from Barents Forest Forum in Umeå in 2019. The idea is to integrate this in the headings suggested.

BFSN will also be part of the joint meeting with “Forest in the North” and provide input to this part of the conference.

#### 8. Exchange of information on (external) meetings and activities planned for 2021

Participants exchanged information on relevant upcoming meetings:

Due to the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been decided to postpone the XV World Forestry Congress, which was scheduled to be held from 24 to 28 May 2021 in Seoul.

8<sup>th</sup> Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (Forest Europe) is scheduled for 14-15 April 2021 (Bratislava, Slovakia – virtual)

#### 9. Any other business

Secretariat has developed a draft annual report of the work of BFSN in 2020 sent to the members of the working group. Participants are invited to suggest amendments in the report as soon as possible.

Terje Hoel informed the group that he has changed working place and that he from now on will be working at the Norwegian Forest Extension Institute. He plans to participate in the first meeting of the working group in 2021, but after that he will not be a part of the Barents cooperation work.