

Minutes from the meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE)

Time: Bodö, Norway

Place: 26-27 April 2005

Participants: Kari Kinnunen, Lapland, Chairman
Ann-Britt Ylinen, Ministry of the Environment, Finland
Heikki Aronpää, Kainuu
Tero Väisänen, North Ostrobothnia
Eija Salmi, North Ostrobothnia
Roar Högset, Nordland
Christian Brun-Jenssen, Nordland
Tatiana Tiupenko, Komi
Bente Christiansen, Finnmark
Amund Beitnes, Finnmark
Trond Skotvold, Tromsø
Gunnar Nilsson, Norrbotten
Jari Pasanen, Lapland

26.4.2005

1. Adoption of the agenda and presentation of new members and participants

Kari Kinnunen opened the meeting and welcomed the participants. The agenda was adopted.

2. Environmental status in Nordland County

Roar Högset gave a presentation on the status of the environment in Nordland County in which he covered the state of the environment and biodiversity. Many protective actions have been taken in Nordland, among these marine protection. At present, 13.9 percent of the land area and 3.8 percent of the sea area are protected. There are plans to establish three new protected areas in the future. Metal, mining and the shipping industry are the main sources of pollution in the county. The overall pollution situation in Nordland is good.

3. Election of new vice chair of RWGE

Tatiana Tiupenko from the Komi Republic was elected as vice chair of RWGE.

4. Report on Work Package 4 (Barents 2010), Water Quality

Jari Pasanen gave a presentation dealing with the actions taken on water issues in the Barents 2010 project. Milestone IV is currently in progress and the year 2005 is the last working year of the project. A joint workshop with the biodiversity group was arranged in Helsinki in March in order to work on the strategy report. The final seminar of the project will be in the autumn. The main principles of the strategies for water issues have

already established and will be discussed along with other work packages at the Rovaniemi meeting in May. The main principles of the water strategy are the following:

- decreasing pollution and restoring of damaged areas
- improving environmental monitoring systems and legislation
- keeping unspoiled areas in good condition
- increasing the use of ground water based drinking water

5. Report on Work Package 4 (Barents 2010), Biodiversity

Roar Högset gave a presentation on the biodiversity issues in the project. There has been co-operation between the forest and biodiversity groups in the Barents 2010 project. The main ideas in the biodiversity strategy are:

- monitoring and mapping with the aim of setting up a joint database
- a Barents standard for forestry
- GAP analysis
- joint Red Data Book

Opinions on the Barents standard and overall standardization were presented and the conclusion was that the standardization process is very difficult nowadays. Many ready-made standards are available in the forest sector. This matter can perhaps be most effectively handled through best practices. A model forest approach would also be good.

6. Present situation with NEFCO Hot Spots

Ann-Britt Ylinen presented the NEFCO AMAP "hot spot" list. Implementation of the list is in progress and fact-finding missions to the Russian regions are underway whose most important task is to prioritize the projects on the list. NEFCO has three million euros for project studies and small-scale project implementation in the near future. There has been co-operation with ACAP in "hot spot" implementation.

7. Action program

The action program for the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE) is being drawn up and should be ready before the WGE meeting in St. Petersburg on 25-27 May. The draft text will be asked for comments from Mats-Rune Bergström after the meeting.

8. Future work between RWGE and the Regional Council

Tatiana Tiupenko reported that co-operation between the RWGE and the Regional Council should be increased. More co-operation with other regional working groups (health and indigenous peoples) will be needed in the future. A social focus will also be important in future projects. In future Barents co-operation, more collaboration is needed with the working group on Health and Related Social Issues on drinking water questions.

There were also discussions on the future tasks and function of the RWGE. The conclusion was that the group will work as before, but joint meetings with the (national) working group for the environment (WGE) will be increased. There should be at least one meeting with the WGE annually. National backup for the RWGE work is very important and that's the reason why co-operation with ministerial level will be strengthened.

Future work of the RWGE should be based on the implementation of projects. The most important requirements for projects are:

- prioritization by the local authorities and people
- benefits for the local people and environment
- a reasonable scale for the work of the RWGE (financing)

The work of the RWGE needs an annually updated plan.

9. Barents environmental ministerial meeting

The Barents environmental ministerial meeting will take place on 19 October in Rovaniemi. Ann-Britt Ylinen presented the arrangements and the agenda for the meeting, one item on which is the publication of a book commemorating the tenth anniversary of the ministerial meeting and the implementation of the ACIA report. The next chairman will be Russia. The three main focuses of the meeting will be cleaner production, the AMAP "hot spot" list, and nature protection.

27.4.2005

10. Project ideas from regions for Barents co-operation, presentations by regional representatives

Tatiana Tiupenko presented two drinking water projects in the Komi area. The financing for each project is on the order of two million rubles. The planning has already been carried out for both projects but financing is a problem. The project plans will be translated into English, after which the RWGE will comment on the proposals.

Cultural heritage and ecotourism projects were discussed and many projects in this area have already been implemented in Finland, Norway and Sweden. Co-operation with these projects is also recommended. Kari Kinnunen and Heikki Aronpää presented examples of the ecotourism projects in Finland. Gunnar Nilsson told about planned GIS and PREP projects in the Archangelsk area.

11. Implementation of project ideas

Regions should make a list containing 1-2 most important environmental projects in the region for the base of the project prioritization and implementation. Projects should be at reasonable scale for RWGE work (financing). After getting the project proposals, the RWGE will discuss the projects and start looking for the funding to implement them.

12. Any other business

No other business

13. Next meeting

The next meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE) will be in Norrbotten (Kiruna or Luleå) in week 40.

14. Closing of the meeting

Kari Kinnunen closed the meeting and thanked the participants for their contributions.

Decisions made in the meeting:

- Tatiana Tiupenko from the Komi Republic was elected vice chair of RWGE.
- The action program of the RWGE should be ready before the WGE meeting in St. Petersburg on 25- 27 May.
- More attention will be paid to co-operation among regional working groups.
- Joint meetings with the (national) working group of the environment will be increased.
- Co-operation with ministerial level will be strengthened.
- Regions should make a list containing 1-2 most important environmental projects in the region for the base of the project implementation.
- After getting the project proposals, the RWGE will discuss the projects and start to find funding for implementing the project.
- The next meeting of the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE) will be in Norrbotten (Kiruna or Luleå) in week 40.