



BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL

Mandate for the Working Group on Barents Forest Sector

1. Introduction

The forest sector is an important part of the economic, social and environmental development in the Barents region. The Working Group on Barents Forest Sector (WGBFS) (previous, The Barents Forest Sector Network, BFSN) is a Working Group under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) established in May 2000.

2. Priority areas of cooperation

The aim of the WGBFS is to promote sustainable management and utilization of forest resources and ecosystem services in line with The Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the United Nations Strategic Plan for Forests as well as the Paris Agreement, to follow and timely contribute to BEAC activities, to advocate a balanced and coherent view on forests as well as on products and services they provide. Activities of the WGBFS facilitate knowledge transfer and sharing on scientific results and best practices.

3. Method of work

The scope of the working group is, to follow and timely contribute to initiatives that are related to forests and the forest sector in the Barents region, to share relevant information and, when needed, to launch and implement activities with a view to promoting the priority areas of WGBFS.

The key principle of WGBFS is to facilitate collaboration in flexible and cost-efficient manner. Participants are expected to actively be engaged in the work of the WGBFS.

The WGBFS strives to increase the interaction with Barents working groups and strengthen cooperation, when appropriate and relevant to the WGBFS priority areas of cooperation, with other organizations, forums and platforms. By this, the WGBFS aims to find synergies as well as to strengthen the cooperation between regional actors in the member countries. The WGBFS will also contribute to raise the profile of the Barents region forestry at the international level.

4. Decision-making

Decision-making is done on a consensus basis.

5. Language

The working language of the WGBFS is English. Translation between Russian and English during meetings is provided if appropriate.

6. Membership

WGBFS is a part of intergovernmental cooperation under BEAC. The WGBFS is the platform for cooperation between forestry related governmental bodies of Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden, the current member states of the WGBFS. The working group is open for membership from all BEAC member states. The working group of Indigenous Peoples has the right to nominate representatives to the WGBFS as observes.

The relevant authority of each member state appoints participants to the WGBFS as country representatives, and if appropriate focal points. The representatives or their alternates are responsible for decision making. The main task of the focal points is to coordinate activities and to be the main channel for information exchange.

Member states could invite organisations and experts from their respective country as delegates to WGBFS meetings. Observers from other working groups, regions and relevant institutions may also take part in the meetings on request.

7. Chairmanship

The Chairmanship of the WGBFS is shared among the member states following the rotation of the BEAC. The WGBFS Chair

- a) coordinates the WGBFS work,
- b) suggests the thematic priorities for the WGBFS work for the period of the respective Chairmanship
- c) invites delegates and on request observers, to the WGBFS meetings and other activities after consultation with country representatives.
- d) takes part in the meetings of the parent body - the Committee of Senior Officials (CSO), and other BEAC working groups when appropriate.

- e) provides information from other BEAC working groups' meetings attended by the Chair.
- f) in consultation with country representatives, prepares WGBFS key documents when necessary – WGBFS annual report, protocols from the meetings, etc.
- g) ensures communication with the International Barents Secretariat (IBS) is held on regular basis, also between meetings.
- h) arranges Forest Forums biennially, if appropriate.

8. Financing

Each member state cover costs for travel and accommodation for their own delegation, unless otherwise provided. All other costs related to meetings, if nothing else is agreed upon, are borne by the Chairmanship.

9. Communication

The WGBFS may communicate the progress of its work to other BEAC entities, when relevant.

Outreach activities are performed by the WGBFS with the goal to upgrade the knowledge of general society and international forest community about the role of the forests of the BEAC region.

The Chair is responsible for providing updated information to the IBS website.

10. Reporting

Chairmanship is responsible for reporting about the progress in WGBFS work to the BEAC governing body when required.

WGBFS meetings are documented through protocols. The Chair submits meeting documentation and presentations to the WGBFS and to IBS for the inclusion in the internal document archive.

11. Duration

This mandate is valid until the WGBFS decides to amend it.

12. Amendment and review

The WGBFS will review its mandate at least once in every five years and make the needed amendments. Mandate comes into force when approved by the BEAC CSO.

This mandate has been approved by the Working Group on Barents Forest Sector on December 16th, 2020.