

Minutes. Working Group on Barents Forest, September 7th, 2021

Agenda

1. Welcome and adoption of agenda
2. WGE project on protected areas and possible input from WGBFS
3. WGBFS input to Action Plan on Climate Change in the Barents Cooperation
4. Preparations for Barents Forest Forum 20-21.10.2021
5. Any other business
 - a. WGBFS participation in the International Junior Forest Competition, Federal Forest Agency, Russian Federation
 - b. Participation in WGBFS by organisations

Participants

Sweden:

Lars Andersson, Skogsstyrelsen

Camilla Widmark, SLU/EFI bioeconomy network

Kristina Nilson, Skogsstyrelsen

Finland

Sanna Paanukoski, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

Pasi Poikonen, LUKE

Jyrki Haataja, Finnish Forest Centre

Russian Federation

Maria Sokolenko, Federal Forestry Agency

Natalia Demidova, Northern Research Institute of Forestry, Federal Forestry Agency, Arkhangelsk

Norway

Anne Delphin, Ministry of Agriculture and Food

Knut Øistad, NIBIO

Working Group on Environment WGE

Henna Haapala, Chair of Working Group on Environment WGE / Ministry of Environment Finland

Welcome and adoption of agenda

Anne Delphin, Chair of WGBFS welcomed participants and expressed appreciation that Henna Haapala, Chair of the Working Group on Environment was able to join the meeting and inform the group on both agenda item 1 and 2.

The agenda was adopted with two additional topics under AOB.

WGE project on protected areas and possible input from WGBFS

Henna Haapala, Chair of the Working Group on Environment in Barents Cooperation presented plans and status for the project on “Forest biodiversity protection in the Barents region – paving the way for mainstreaming biodiversity into forestry”.

The project aims to update maps and analysis on protected area network publication. Plans also include a webinar in November or December. The intention is to do this in cooperation with WGBFS. Further is it an ambition to launch a dialogue with the forest sector in the region.

The full presentation of the project is attached these minutes.

WGBFS appreciated the presentation and the suggestion to develop relevant cooperation between Working Group on Environment and Working Group on Barents Forest Sector on the topic, and notably on arranging a webinar. The working groups will maintain contact and WGBFS intend to provide input in the preparation and participation in the webinar.

WGBFS input to Action Plan on Climate Change in the Barents Cooperation

IBS sent out a draft Action Plan on Climate Change in the Barents Cooperation in July for comments by working groups by end of August. WGBFS provided preliminary comments from Norwegian focal point before the deadline in August. WGBFS supported the preliminary comments and suggested in addition to amend the final action point on Barents Forest Forum so it also covers future Barents Forests Forums, not limited to the event in 2021. Other minor errors in the name of WGBFS are also corrected in the Action Plan. After these amendments, a new version of the comments from WGBFS was submitted to the IBS and the Chair of WGE. The submitted version is attached these minutes.

Preparations for Barents Forest Forum 20-21.10.2021

Status for the preparations for Barents Forest Forum was presented. Most speakers are confirmed. We still need additional young participants for the panel discussion on the first day. Camilla Widmark encouraged country representatives to secure one young participant from each country. Names should be provided to the organisers of BFF as soon as possible.

Finland suggested to include a speaker from the forest sector on the second day. Name should be communicated to the organisers of BFF as soon as possible. We will try to accommodate a timetable that allow for this.

The program should ideally be finalised by mid-September and included in the web site.

Any other business

WGBFS participation in the International Junior Forest Contest, Federal Forest Agency, Russian Federation

Maria Sokolenko informed about the upcoming International Junior Forest Contest. Additional information attached to these minutes.

Last year, WGBFS participated in the jury of the contest and it is a wish from Federal Forest Agency, Russian Federation, that this is also possible this year. WGBFS was positive to engage in the event and there is already contact between Federal Forest Agency and the upcoming Finnish chairmanship of WGBFS on the practical arrangements.

Maria Sokolenko also encouraged countries to nominate participants to the contest.

Participation in WGBFS by organisations

Prior to the WGBFS meeting, Jonas Rönnerberg addressed the future representation from SNS (Nordic Forest Research) in WGBFS. Jonas Rönnerberg is now in a new position and will not be able to continue participating in the working group. There is an interest from SNS to continue participate in the group. Jonas was involved in the group as a member from Sweden also representing SLU. His role in SNS has been an additional benefit for the group.

WGBFS did not conclude on the issue of including representation from SNS. That can be done in the next meeting. The considerations, however, should build on the [WGBFS mandate](#) recently adopted by the CSO.

Para 6 on membership in the mandate reads like this:

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.

It is clear from the mandate that the cooperation is intergovernmental by nature, and that it should primarily function as platform for cooperation between forestry related governmental bodies in the member countries. Any involvement of Nordic or international organisations in the cooperation must be based on this format. WGBFS will conclude on the topic in a later meeting.