

Meeting of the Working Group on Environment (WGE#54)
27 November 2019
Stockholm, Sweden

Minutes

Adoption of the agenda and minutes from WGE on September 25th

The WGE Chair **Elin Kronqvist** welcomed participants to the WGE meeting in Stockholm, Sweden. The agenda for the meeting was adopted. Comments to the draft minutes from the WGE-meeting on 25th of September were reviewed. The drafted minutes will be forwarded by the IBS to participants of the meeting for further comments. The minutes will be circulated by silence procedure for adoption by the WGE.

Hot spots for possible exclusion: a. A9-1 b. possible exclusion of other hot spots

Åke Mikaelsson presented SHEs recommendation to exclude Hot spot A9-1– Dioxin releases from pulp and paper industries in Arkhangelsk oblast. The SHE Subgroup recommends WGE to exclude Hot spot A9-1– Dioxin releases from pulp and paper industries in Arkhangelsk oblast. The WGE decided to exclude Hot spot A9-1 and ask the Ministers of Environment to assent to the exclusion. **Åke Mikaelsson** provided a status report on other hot spots, which may be excluded by fast track or full track before the ministerial meeting.

The WGE Chair stressed that the schedule for possible exclusion of further hot spots is very tight before the Ministerial meeting; however, there is a possibility to exclude additional hot spots before February 2020. Mutual agreement on the time schedule for remaining exclusion administration is crucial.

Saija Vuola underlined the importance of providing correct information on financial mechanisms of HS exclusion process in the presentation to the Ministers.

Possible next meeting (telephone or physical). Proposed dates: 18/12 and 22/1

The WGE members agreed on having the next meeting by phone on 22 January 2020.

Ministerial declaration, drafting session

The second draft of the ministerial declaration was reviewed and discussed by the WGE members. The WGE members are invited to send further comments by e-mail. The third draft of the declaration will be sent out in December.

Project proposal - Educating excavator drivers in restoration

The WGE discussed an application by the Count Board of Norrbotten to the Swedish EPA about educating excavator drivers in restoration. The Swedish EPA had forwarded the application to WGE, as the EPA was willing to fund the project if the WGE was positive. The WGE was positive to the project proposal. **Saija Vuola** commented that the list of experts in the proposed project should be updated since some of them can be

soon retired. **Ingrid Lillehagen** commented that national grants to projects should not need to rely on the approval by the WGE.

Agenda for the ministerial meeting

The WGE Chair informed that invitations to the ministerial meeting were sent to the Ministers of Environment. A draft agenda of the ministerial meeting was presented at the meeting (a deadline for registration is 16 December).

Program for the ministerial meeting, including practical matters

The first draft of the program for the ministerial meeting presented to the WGE.

Outreach material and press

Gunilla Strömberg presented ideas for on press communication at the ministerial meeting. A press release will be published. **Rickard Nätjehall** and **Jessica Henecke Dahl** presented the second draft of the fact sheet on the environmental improvements of Barents HS. **Aino Lipsanen** proposed to add key figures, diagrams on each HS mentioned in the fact sheet. **Ingrid Lillehagen** commented that the language used in the brochure should be more accessible to external readers and should avoid abbreviations.

The importance of attracting regional public media for the ministerial meeting was highlighted by the WGE, which is however challenging to some extent. The newly appointed Communication Task Force is working on this issue, e.g. a workshop on increasing communication with regional media planned for 2020.

Finnish Chairmanship of the WGE - information

Saija Vuola informed that Helena Dahlbo will chair the SHE group; Aino Lipsanen will be assisting Helena on WGE work. The first meeting under Finnish Chairmanship in WGE will take place in Northern Karelia during the last week of May 2020 (tbc). According to Saija Vuola, the Finnish Chairmanship will focus on decreasing travel-related carbon emissions by arranging digital meetings.

The WGE Chair thanked everyone for the active participation. The Swedish Chairmanship of the WGE was highly appreciated by all WGE members presented at the meeting.

Meeting documents

Please follow the link to find meeting documents: [https://www.barentscooperation.org/events/Working-Group-on-Environment-\(WGE\)-meeting-in-Stockholm-27-November-2019/3cn33qja/6e65d375-7468-4fe9-9079-d9b8b4122c50](https://www.barentscooperation.org/events/Working-Group-on-Environment-(WGE)-meeting-in-Stockholm-27-November-2019/3cn33qja/6e65d375-7468-4fe9-9079-d9b8b4122c50)

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 27.11.2019

1. Elin Kronqvist, Deputy Director, Ministry of Environment, WGE Chair (SE)
2. Åke Mikaelsson, Programme Coordinator for Russia, SEPA, SHE Co-chair (SE)
3. Rickard Nätjehall, Policy Officer, SEPA, (via telephone) (SE)
4. Mats-Rune Bergström, Senior Adviser, County Administrative Board of Västerbotten, SNW-chair (SE)
5. Gunilla Strömberg, Communication officer, Ministry of Environment, (part of meeting) (SE)
6. Jessica Henecke Dahl, Communication officer, SEPA (part of meeting) (SE)
7. Saija Vuola, Ministerial Adviser, Ministry of Environment (FI)
8. Helena Dahlbo, Senior Researcher, Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) (FI)
9. Aino Lipsanen, Senior Specialist, Ministry of Environment (FI)
10. Ingrid Lillehagen, Senior Adviser, Ministry of Climate and Environment (NO)
11. Alexander Druchinin, Deputy Head of International Organizations Division, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Russian Federation, SHE Co-chair (via telephone) (RU)
12. Julia Bobina, Climate, Environment and Hot Spots Adviser, International Barents Secretariat (IBS)