



**BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL**  
**WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENT**

Meeting of the Working Group on Environment  
May 24th, 2018  
Storforsen, Norrbotten, Sweden  
Venue: Storforsen Hotel

*Final*

## **Minutes**

### **Opening of the meeting**

The WGE Chair **Elin Kronqvist**, welcomed participants to the WGE meeting in Storforsen, Norrbotten. The agenda of the current meeting was adopted with the following additions under the AOB section: to include report on Climate change and Biodiversity prepared by SYKE, update on coming activities of the Arctic Council and information about a new initiative ACAP on waste management.

**The Chair** informed the WGE about Swedish priorities for 2018-2019. The WGE will continue focusing on climate change issues, hot spots exclusion process and nature protection and water. Work on climate change will concentrate on concrete regional cooperation and to highlight opportunities to contribute to the Paris Agreement for the regions, using findings of the Barents 2050 report. Cooperation on nature protection and water issues will prioritize development of green infrastructure, protection of intact forests and to facilitate knowledge exchange on the impact of tourism on Barents ecosystems. Work on hot spots will be targeted on promoting environmental progress, i.e. through supporting activities.

### **Information from the Chair of BEAC,**

**[https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE\\_Meeting\\_Piteo\\_PPP\\_Swedish\\_Chairmanship\\_BEAC.pdf](https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE_Meeting_Piteo_PPP_Swedish_Chairmanship_BEAC.pdf)**

**Eva Ekmehtag** from the Swedish Ministry of Foreign Affairs informed about the Swedish Chairmanship of BEAC in 2017-19. Sweden has been chairing the BEAC for about 7 months, and much has already been done. Sustainable regional development, respect for human rights, gender equality and active youth engagement are in focus of the Chairmanship. People-to-people contacts and structure of the organization make Barents cooperation unique, as it combines national, regional and local levels. Priorities of the Chairmanship include positive and sustainable agenda, taking into account environmental, social and economic dimensions and making Barents cooperation more visible. Continuation of work on cultural scholarships for cooperation between four countries is also among the priorities.

To mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Barents cooperation, a conference on youth issues was held in Luleå in April 2018. The next important event is the Barents day arranged in Brussels in June to raise awareness of cooperation outside of the region. In addition to this work, the Chairmanship has developed a Communication plan, which will be implemented in coordination with the IBS.

### **Presentation of current environmental initiatives in Norrbotten (Elinor Bomark)**

[https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE\\_Meeting\\_Piteo\\_Environment\\_Norrbotten.pdf](https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE_Meeting_Piteo_Environment_Norrbotten.pdf)

The County Administrative Board of Norrbotten is leading the work on climate plans in the region, including inventories of GHGs emissions from the main economic sectors. Norrbotten is a large county with small population, but due to steel and mining industries, GHGs emissions are higher than in other parts of Sweden. The mining industry is essential for Norrbotten's economy, and it continues to expand; several new mining areas have recently been opened. In order to cut the emissions, the regional administration has set a goal to reduce energy use by 2045 and increase energy efficiency for 50% by 2030.

Another important task for Norrbotten is restoration of wetlands, which is also among national priorities. About one third of all Swedish wetlands are located in Norrbotten, and they are threatened by agriculture and forestry, which lead to loss of biodiversity. Other environmental activities include restoration of boreal Nordic rivers that were utilized for timber floating, protection of marine environments, forest preservation, management of the protected areas (including 8 national parks and around 400 nature reserves) and control over predator population (such species as lynx, wolf, bear, golden eagle etc.).

### **Presentation of a Report on traditional knowledge for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity**

[https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE\\_Meeting\\_Piteo\\_PPP\\_Swe\\_Sami\\_Parliament.pdf](https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE_Meeting_Piteo_PPP_Swe_Sami_Parliament.pdf)

Laila Öberg Ben Ammer presented the Sami Parliament in Sweden and its actions on preservation, development and promotion of the Sami culture. The Sami Parliament cooperates with the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency acting together to support the implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD; Articles 8 and 10). CBD puts obligations to respect and maintain traditional knowledge and customary use relevant to conservation of species. SEPA and the Sami Parliament were commissioned to propose measures to ensure long-term compliance with Articles 8 (j) and 10c of the CBD last year and the results are presented in the report. The purpose of the report is to point out organizational solutions and propose activities that are deemed to be able to strengthen the implementation of Article 8 (j) and 10 (c) in Sweden. The results of the report, which contains aspects such as management of predators, development of reindeer husbandry, support of traditional crafts and work with protected areas, were presented. The report (in Swedish only) can be found here:

[www.naturvardsverket.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/miljoarbete-i-sverige/regeringsuppdrag/2018/skr-uppdrag-traditionell%20kunskap-slutl.pdf](http://www.naturvardsverket.se/upload/miljoarbete-i-samhallet/miljoarbete-i-sverige/regeringsuppdrag/2018/skr-uppdrag-traditionell%20kunskap-slutl.pdf)

In the discussion that followed, representatives of regional administrations and WGIP supported the idea that indigenous population has to be consulted prior to new developments that may affect the environment (such as establishment of new protected areas or opening new enterprises).

### **Report from the Subgroups on Nature Protection and Water Issues (NPS and SWI)**

[https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE\\_Meeting\\_Piteo\\_PPP\\_NPS\\_SWI\\_Report.pdf](https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE_Meeting_Piteo_PPP_NPS_SWI_Report.pdf)

The Subgroups' Chair **Mats-Rune Bergström** presented the draft of the work programme for NPS/SWI and planned activities under the Swedish Chairmanship. The programme was worked through in the subgroups' meeting the day before, allocating actions in most of the regions.

At the NPS/SWI-meeting, members also reported on main activities in the regions, including new initiatives: Finnmark is starting a new Kolarctic project on multiuse planning for the Pasvik and Grense Jakobselv rivers; Lapland is involved in NATNET LIFE (connecting Natura 2000 areas) and land use planning for North Lapland; Västerbotten is opening a new wind power park; Norrbotten is discussing proposals about water power and dams; Murmansk region is expecting merge of three nature reserves.

Other issues discussed at the NPS/SWI meeting were footprint of tourism development and possible coordination with the Barents Joint WG on Tourism (this topic can be raised in the Habitat Contact Forum 2019); new BPAN report from Finland; upcoming meeting of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to be held in Montreal in July 2018 and COP 14 in Sharm El-Sheikh; priorities of the Swedish Chairmanship of the Barents Forest Sector Network. The NPS meeting was also attended by **Mika Aromäki** from the Sámi Educational Centre in Inari, who had presented the CLEO project and work under the ACAP Expert group on Indigenous People Contaminants Action Program, IPCAP.

Referring to tourism, **Åke Mikaelsson** noted that a platform for discussion the issue with other stakeholders should be found. Tourism development benefits to local businesses, including indigenous population, and it should be taken into account in addition to impact on the nature. **Alexander Druchinin** added that The Russian MNR pay special attention to support of eco-tourism. **Anna Prakhova** said that Barents JWG on Culture could also be involved in cooperation, as protection of local cultural heritage is an important task, and tourism industry often missuses indigenous culture. Reindeer as part of the nature should be protected as well, especially with the plan for a new railway between Rovaniemi and Kirkenes. Expanding of mining industry is another topic for discussion; it shouldn't create new environmental Hot Spots in the area. Concerning railway development (Arctic railway), **Bente Christiansen** mentioned that a steering group for its evaluation had been formed with representatives of the Norwegian Sami Parliament invited to participate; their first meeting will take place on 30 May.

**Olle Höjer** from the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency presented the work on the Strategy for Protection of Intact Forests, one of the priority areas for the NPS. Work on the Strategy started in 2011, and the latest version was presented in 2015 on the Meeting of Environmental Ministers in Sortavala, but due to the lack of support, it still requires revision. In the previous WGE meeting in September 2017, the WGE discussed the way forward and left to the task force to discuss whether to develop a new strategy under the Russian-Swedish leadership or to re-write the current one taking comments from Russia into consideration. In 2018, all four countries nominated members to the task force, and the first Skype meeting will be held as soon as all participants reply. A possibility of a physical meeting is also being investigated. **Elin Kronqvist** underlined importance of the first meeting in order to get the work started, plan schedule and divide responsibilities.

**The WGE Chair will send out the final draft version of the programme to the whole group. If no comments are received by June 1<sup>st</sup>, it will be considered as adopted. The next meeting of the NPS/SWI is tentatively planned in Petrozavodsk during week 43 (22-26 October).**

#### **Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE)**

RWGE Chair **Bente Christiansen** said that the group didn't have much time for discussion of RWGE plans. The new Barents Programme 2019-2023 developed by the Barents Regional

Council will be used to update the WG's mandate. Draft version of the mandate will be circulated after the meeting.

### **Subgroup on Hot Spots Exclusion (SHE)**

[https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE\\_Meeting\\_Piteo\\_PPP\\_SHE\\_Report.pdf](https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/WGE_Meeting_Piteo_PPP_SHE_Report.pdf)

SHE co-Chair **Åke Mikaelsson** reported on the SHE#66 meeting on the previous day. The work Programme for 2018-2019 was adopted by SHE, including activities for the coming two years.

The priorities under the Swedish chairmanship are:

- Continuing exclusion of environmental hot spots according to the exclusion procedure;
- Promoting progress in environmental performance at the environmental hot spots through supporting activities;
- Linking the work on hot spots exclusion process closer to the new Russian legislation on best available techniques (BAT);
- Strengthening the capacity to ensure efficient environmental protection work;
- Reviewing the hot spot exclusion process to be more in line with the new Russian legislation.

Planned Supporting Activities to promote Hot Spots exclusion procedure and assist Hot Spots owners will contain trainings on BAT legislation and permit granting, branch specific seminars and study visits to the Nordic countries, support of outreach activities and other measures. In addition to SHE physical and telephone meetings, SHE is planning to arrange meetings with regional working groups on Hot Spots exclusion in several Russian regions.

In the meeting, minutes from the three previous SHE meetings in 2018 were approved; update on most of the Russian regions was received (see **presentation** for details). Reports on 5 Hot Spots of the Murmansk region had been submitted to SHE in spring, including M1 and M2 - Kola GMK JSC in Nikel, Zapolyarny and Monchegorsk - and they will be reviewed by experts in the nearest future. Mondi Pulp and Paper Mill in Syktyvkar (Ko3-2) has express interest an exercise on pilot environmental permit granting. NAO presented a project proposal on improving on drinking water in the regional settlements and wastewater treatment in Naryan-Mar (N2 and N3).

During the discussion, **Ingrid Lillehagen** noted that the programme for SHE is ambitious, and that the introduction of support activities is a broadening of SHE's work. She underlined the importance of the one-week dead line for documents prior to meetings, so they can be assessed properly by SHE members. **Saija Vuola** added that further discussion of outreach activities and the value of Barents cooperation in Hot Spots work would be beneficial, and it should be initiated in the following meetings. **Henrik G Forsström** underlined that ambitious plans developed by SHE would require substantial funding, both from BHSF and other sources. A good example of combining resources is FI-RU AB-Waste project, which is arranging a workshop on solid waste management in Petrozavodsk on 14 June. Supporting activities are a good tool of achieving environmental progress; it is planned that Swedish-Karelian Business and Information Centre (SKBIC) will be responsible for their practical implementation in addition to IBS, NEFCO consultants and other actors.

**In conclusion, the WGE Chair underlined that implementation of the SHE Work Programme would be anchored to the feedback from the regions and that it might require a longer period than two years. SHE Work Programme for 2018-2019 was adopted by the WGE. SHE is planning several telephone meetings before the summer break.**

### **Climate Change**

**The Chair** opened the session by given the floor to **Henrik G Forsström**, who presented the Nordic Council of Ministers' (NCM) Programme for Environmental and Climate Cooperation (PECC). The programme is targeted at cooperation between regional and local authorities, NGOs and research organizations from the Nordic countries and North-West Russia. The budget of the first Call for Proposals (NCM+BHSF funding) was 1.1 mln Euro; nine projects (many of which related to forestry), have been granted support for implementation of activities until the end of 2018. The discussion on a possible second call for proposals (PECC-2) in 2019 will be initiated by the in June.

Cooperation between Norrbotten and Arkhangelsk region on **regional climate strategies** was supported among other initiatives, and its activities were briefly presented by **Ylva Sardén**. The first meeting of the project was held in Arkhangelsk in February 2018, gathering representatives of the ten main industries of the region, including pulp and paper, energy sector and transportation. The next step is making inventories of GHGs emissions from these industries and estimating potential of reducing emissions as a prerequisite of further development of the Arkhangelsk regional climate strategy. First statistics came from Arkhangelsk in May, showing relatively low emission figures. Cooperation benefits to Norrbotten in their work on emission reduction. Results of the project will be presented to the WGE in one of the following meetings. **Åke Mikaelsson** added that the work done enables to start comparing regional emission data in all four countries, and that it should be followed by a seminar, where statistics on GHG emissions can be exchanged and further steps in the climate policy may be developed. **Saija Vuola** mentioned network of carbon-neutral municipalities of Finland, which may be involved in the awareness raising activities.

The WGE also discussed the follow-up of the **Barents 2050** study, conducted by the VTT and presented to the environmental ministers in November 2017. **The Chair** underlined the importance of spreading results of the study among other BEAC working groups and other relevant actors. To start with, VTT researcher Tomi Lindroos will report on the main findings in the coming meeting of the Working Group on Economic Cooperation (WGEC) held on 26 June in Haparanda. Prior to this event, Elin Kronqvist will present the study in the CSO meeting in May among other activities of the WGE. An idea of arranging a workshop for the working groups have been discussed among the WGE and IBS, but it should be held back-to-back with another event or completed by other topics. Proposals from the WGE will be appreciated.

**Ingrid Lillehagen** noted that Norway support presentation of the study to the WGEC, as one of the main stakeholders, and will look for other opportunities. **Bente Christiansen** added that Barents Regional Council are familiar with the report and have included some abstracts to their Work Programme for 2019-2023.

Referring to the information from the IBS, **the Chair** mentioned a **new EU project on environment and youth**, which could be a good tool for cooperation between Joint Working Group on Youth (JWGY), Barents Regional Youth Council (BRYC) and WGE. The project manager from Västerbotten's office in Petrozavodsk may get in touch for more details, if the pre-application is approved. Deadline for submitting of pre-applications (concept notes) is beginning of June.

To conclude the climate session, **Saija Vuola** said a few words about the report on Climate Change and Biodiversity, which was conducted by Juha Pöyry from SYKE as a result of the IXth Habitat Contact Forum in Oulu 2017. It is a scientific overview of research studies on climate and

biodiversity, which might help first of all Finnish researchers to identify their studies with the Barents and Arctic regions. The report may be spread among Subgroups on Nature and Water and scientists working with climate issues.

[https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/Climate\\_change\\_and\\_biodiversity\\_in\\_the\\_Barents\\_region\\_HCF\\_2017\\_Juha\\_Poyry.pdf](https://www.barentsinfo.fi/beac/docs/Climate_change_and_biodiversity_in_the_Barents_region_HCF_2017_Juha_Poyry.pdf)

### **Organization of work in WGE**

**The Chair** presented an updated WGE mandate using a new template adopted for BEAC working groups by the CSO. The draft was circulated among the WGE members for comments before the meeting, comments from Finland, Norway and Russia were received. The WGE mandate hasn't been updated since 2007.

The WGE discussed structure of the existing subgroups. Under the Norwegian Chairmanship, NPS and SWI had meetings back-to-back as two separate subgroups, and CPESC (Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption) was put on hold. Sweden proposed to make a revision of subgroups: merge NPS and SWI into Subgroup on Nature Protection and Water Issues and eliminate CPESC. The proposal was adopted by the WGE. It was also decided to enclose the mandate of the two subgroups to the WGE mandate as annexes. The Chair asked subgroups' chairs to circulate draft mandates in the subgroups and submit them to the Chair by 25 June. The completed mandate could then be circulated among the WGE for commenting by 25 August. The WGE mandate will be adopted either by the written procedure or in the November meeting. SHE was asked to look into the CPESC mandate and evaluate if tasks related to sustainability and cleaner production can be added to SHE work. Taking into account comments from Norway and Finland, the WGE will also consider how sustainability issues, including of Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals, can be brought to the WGE agenda.

The issue of rotation of the Chairmanship among the countries and streamlining it with the Chairmanship in the BEAC was discussed. It will require further discussions, as existing proposals on changing the order cannot be accepted by all countries.

### **Any other business**

**Åke Mikaelsson** informed about a project proposal on waste issues in the Murmansk region, presented by the Sami representative Ivan Matryohin at the recent ACAP meeting in Toronto. If approved by Moscow, the first stage of the proposal – inventory of solid wastes in the Kola Peninsula – will be supported by ACAP as a PSI project, bringing additional synergy between Arctic and Barents cooperation.

**Helena Dahlbo** mentioned FI-RU AB-Waste bilateral project and a planned seminar on the Arctic perspective to be arranged in November in connection with the next ACAP meeting.

**Saija Vuola** reminded about the Arctic Biodiversity Congress on 9-10 October in Rovaniemi: it will touch upon 20 topics, relevant for the WGE; BPAN and Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park will be presented. Registration will be re-opened on 1 July. Arctic Environmental Ministers meeting, arranged for the second time, will follow the congress.

Another priority of the Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council is black carbon, and new initiatives related to it are awaited. **Henrik G Forsström** added that new projects on black

carbon are being discussed with Karelia and Vologda within NDEP, which plan to re-start their activities in NW Russia.

**The Chair thanked everyone for active participation and concluded the meeting by announcing the date of the next WGE-meeting, which will be held on 13-15 November in Västerbotten, Sweden.**

#### LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 24.05.2018

1. Elin Kronqvist, WGE Chair, Ministry of Environment and Energy (SE)
2. Erica Grankvist, Ministry of Environment and Energy (SE)
3. Eva Ekmeahag, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (SE)
4. Åke Mikaelsson, SHE co-Chair, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SE)
5. Rickard Nätjehall, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SE)
6. Olle Höjer, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SE)
7. Mats-Rune Bergström, NPS/SWI Chair, County Administrative Board of Västerbotten (SE)
8. Britta Wännström, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten (SE)
9. Ellinor Bomark, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten (SE)
10. Magnus Johansson, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten (SE)
11. Ylva Sardén, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten (SE)
12. Ingrid Lillehagen, Ministry of Climate and Environment (NO)
13. Hanne Aronsen, Norwegian Environment Agency (NO)
14. Bente Christiansen, Office of Finnmark County Governor (NO)
15. Tiia Kalske, Office of Finnmark County Governor (NO)
16. Saija Vuola, Ministry of the Environment (FI)
17. Helena Dahlbo, Finnish Environment Institute (FI)
18. Tapio Lindholm, Finnish Environment Institute (FI)
19. Jari Pasanen, Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment of Lapland (FI)
20. Alexander Druchinin, SHE co-Chair, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of RF (RU)
21. Igor Konyukhov, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Murmansk Oblast (RU)
22. Vladimir Chizhov, Pasvik Nature Reserve (RU)
23. Yana Vojtsehovskaya, Department of Natural Resources, Environment and Agro-Industrial Complex of the Nenets Autonomous Region (RU)
24. Anna Prakhova, Indigenous Peoples' Representative
25. Laila Öberg Ben Ammer, Sami Parliament in Sweden
26. Mika Aromäki, Sámi Educational Centre in Inari
27. Henrik G Forsström, NEFCO
28. Ruslan Butovsky, VNII Ecology, NEFCO Consultant
29. Marianne Strøm, IBS

Meeting Documents: [https://www.barentscooperation.org/events/Working-Group-on-Environment-\(WGE\)-meeting/3cn33qja/6e9c447a-de0a-4d4b-96cf-91680ade162b](https://www.barentscooperation.org/events/Working-Group-on-Environment-(WGE)-meeting/3cn33qja/6e9c447a-de0a-4d4b-96cf-91680ade162b)