



BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL
WORKING GROUP ON ENVIRONMENT
Norwegian Chairmanship 2016-2017

Meeting of the Working Group on Environment
September 28, 2017
Kjerringøy, Nordland, Norway
Venue: Kjerringøy Bryggehotell

Final

Minutes

Opening of the meeting

The WGE Chair **Ingrid Lillehagen**, welcomed participants to the WGE meeting in Kjerringøy. The agenda of the current meeting and the Minutes of the previous one were adopted without comments.

Presentation by Count Governor of Nordland, Environmental Department

Sveinung Bertnes Råheim, Director of the Environmental Department of the County Governor of Nordland, presented activities of the department in climate and environment. One of the main environmental challenges in the county is dramatic decline in the population of sea birds, influenced by climate change effects, such as water temperature rise, sea acidification and others. The Department is dealing with land use planning, water management, pollution and climate change. See attached the presentation for further details.

The Chair thanked Mr. Råheim for participation and reporting. There are obviously many links between the work of Nordland and the WGE/RWGE work. If Nordland and Mr Råheim wants to participate further in the Barents environmental cooperation, this will highly be appreciated.

Report from the Subgroups on Nature and Water (NPS and SWI)

Bente Christiansen, chair of the subgroups, presented the main topics discussed at the subgroups' meeting. See presentation for details. WGE discussed the following issues:

Habitat contact Forum: The forum in Oulu in June was successful, and the main theme of the forum, climate change and biodiversity, is highly relevant. Ms Christiansen advised that there should be a review of results of the Habitat Contact Forums, in order to reflect about the main results achieved and discussion on a future format of the event. The next Habitat Contact Forum will be arranged in in 2019. WGE welcomed evaluation review of results of the Habitat Contact Forums.

The strategy for Protection of intact Forests: The strategy has since been under consideration in the Russian Forestry Agency since the Ministerial meeting in Sortavala in 2015. The Agency submitted questions and comments to the strategy in September 2017. Sweden suggested three options that the NPS presented for further WGE consideration: a) to develop a new strategy under the RU-SWE leadership, b) to continue cooperation without any strategy, and c) to re-write the existing strategy to include the Russian comments, with Russia leading the work.

Maria Dronova added that comments for the Russian Forest Agency (Rosleshoz) should be considered when working with the document, aiming at adopting it in the coming years. The goal of the Strategy has to be clarified – whether it is protection of intact forests or both preservation and restoration. **Elin Kronqvist** said that Sweden has a preference for the option to develop a new strategy, based on

existing work. She also confirmed that Sweden, as incoming chair of the WGE, is ready to lead the work to update the current Strategy or to develop a new one in close cooperation with relevant authorities from Russia. Contributions from all countries are needed. A taskforce should be appointed to continue the work. **Saija Vuola** agreed that a Finnish specialist would be available to support the work, and mentioned that the comments from Roslezhov did not seem dramatic and concerned mainly terminology. **Ingrid Lillehagen** expressed gratitude to Sweden for being willing to take a lead in the further work. Norway has limited resources as the Environment Agency is not a part of the NPS, but Norway will look into the possibilities to contribute.

The Chair concluded that the alternatives A or C will have the priority. Sweden will send an e-mail on forming a taskforce for further work on the document to Finland, Norway and Russia. As proposed by Maria Dronova, Russia will involve Roslezhov, as well as regional representatives and scientists (Karelian Research Center of the Russian Academy of Sciences) to the work.

Jari Pasanen presented a new INTERREG project, which aims at improvement of environmental status of the Tana River within the frames of the Norwegian-Finnish bilateral cooperation. This two-year project with a budget of 476 951 Euro will focus on establishment of joint fish database; research on migration barriers for fish; water monitoring programme and biodiversity.

Magnus Johansson presented the ReArc project (Ecological Restoration of the Arctic Rivers) approved by Kolarctic CBC Programme. Norrbotten is the lead partner in this project. Other partners include ELY centers in Lapland, NVE in Norway and Russian organizations. Total budget is approximately 3 mln Euro, and launch of the activities is planned for 2018 (after the Russian State Duma ratifies the agreement on funding of the Kolarctic and Karelia CBC Programmes).

Anna Prakhova expressed gratitude of the WGIP to the projects' networks for initiating multilateral projects – having more projects of this kind is one of the WGIP ambitions reflected in their Action Plan. She was disappointed that the Norwegian-Finnish bilateral project lacks a working package on traditional knowledge. **Ms. Christiansen** answered that the initial project proposal contained work packages on traditional knowledge and culture, but the Interreg programme managers recommended applying for their funding separately. Indigenous peoples inhabit the territory of the Tana River basin, therefore they will be involved in the project's implementation as local managers, but there is always room for more efficient cooperation.

Handing over the chairmanship of the Regional Working Group on Environment

The chair of the RWGE, **Vasily Fedorov** had been invited, but was not able to attend the meeting at Kjerringøy. On behalf of Russia, **Maria Dronova** handed over the Chairmanship of RWGE to the County Governor of Finnmark, Norway. **Ms. Christiansen** thanked for the opportunity to lead RWGE activities in 2018-2019, and hoped for enhanced cooperation with the Barents Regional Council.

Report from the Subgroup on Hot Spots Exclusion (SHE)

Hanne Aronsen, co-Chair of the subgroup, presented the summary of the discussion at the SHE-meeting. See her presentation for details. WGE discussed the following topics:

Hot spot A4, Arkhangelsk Pulp and Paper Mill: Rosprirodnadzor has confirmed compliance with the Russian legislation. SHE has agreed that the water part of the hot spot can be excluded through fast track procedure, while there is no joint recommendation on exclusion of the air emissions part. This will have to be discussed and decided by the WGE. **Ms Dronova** stated that the official Russian position on A4 is to exclude this hot spot from the list as a whole (partial exclusion of the water discharges component is not supported). She referred to that APPM is actively introducing BAT, and Rosprirodnadzor Statement shows positive changes at the factory.

The Nordic countries were not ready not make a decision in the meeting. **The chair** referred to the fact that the Russian official position became known to WGE just short time before the meeting. The Rosprirodnadzor statement confirms compliance with Russian legislation, which is a central document to decide if the main criteria for fast track exclusion have been fulfilled. At the same time, the Nordic experts have outstanding questions regarding the emission to air. Ms Lillehagen further referred to a letter from the Vice Governor of Arkhangelsk to the Norwegian Minister of Climate and Environment, Mr Vidar Helgesen, asking for Norway's support to exclude APPM from the list. The chair suggested that WGE should aim for a decision in the next WGE-meeting 2.-3. November, which was supported.

Hot spot Ko7, Wood waste in the Komi Republic. Specific exclusion criteria have been agreed between SHE and the Komi hotspot exclusion group (HEG), and will be submitted to WGE for consideration along with the Action plan (Road map). WGE agreed that the Specific exclusion criteria for Ko7 would be considered by the WGE by 5 October.

Support activities: a list of support activities for 2017-2018 had been approved in principal by SHE, including a Russian-Finnish seminar on waste issues in Moscow (November 2017) and a Russian-Norwegian seminar on waste issues in Arkhangelsk (December 2017). Several activities are expected in 2018, for instance branch-wise seminars on BAT.

Ms Dronova said a concept note on the RU-FIN waste seminar in Moscow is awaited, so that experts from the MNR could be involved. **Johanna Laaksonen** promised to distribute a draft programme of the coming seminar. **Åke Mikaelsson** mentioned that in addition to the waste seminars, there would be a conference on waste management at the MNR on 22 November and a workshop on BAT on 23 November. Representative of the Barents region (regional authorities, Rosprirodnadzor and enterprises) will be invited to all three events, and NEFCO will cover their expenses if required.

Murmansk Hot spots: The following four Hot Spots in Murmansk are aiming for fast track exclusion, as reported by **Igor Konyhov** in the SHE-meeting: M2 Monchegorsk industrial site of Kola GMK JSC, M4 Apatity Heat and Power Plant of TGK#1, M6 Water quality in the Kola River and Bolshoe Lake and M10 Oil-containing waste management; Statements from the Murmansk regional Rosprirodnadzor had been sent to Moscow Department and documentation to SHE can be expected within one month.

The chair welcomed progress on the hot spot-work in Murmansk. However, the time before the ministerial is short, so there is an urgent need to prepare the necessary documents if exclusion would be possible before the ministerial meeting.

The chair noted that there was potential for many deliveries from SHE to ministerial meeting: several hot spots are seeking exclusion (some in Komi, one in Arkhangelsk, possible also some Murmansk hot spots), it seems possible to finalize specific exclusion criteria for two hot spots (Ko7 and A3-1). Furthermore, support activities are planned for capacity building and outreach material is under development.

Cooperation in the area on climate change mitigation in the Barents region

Ylva Sårdén presented the project, which has so far focused on networking and sharing knowledge on regional climate strategies between Sweden (Norrbotten), Finland (Arctic Center) and Russia (Arkhangelsk Region) with the IBS involvement. A new project application to the NCM/NEFCO Programme on Climate and Environment Cooperation was submitted in May. Work on the application to the Kolarctic CBC Programme and elaboration of the climate strategy of Arkhangelsk Region will continue. Troms County will join the network.

Maria Dianova mentioned that the new project application was preliminary approved by NEFCO, and the expert costs allocated in the budget would allow Arkhangelsk to start practical work of the approaches to develop a climate strategy as a pilot for the whole Barents region. **Ms. Christiansen** added that she would provide the network with the information on climate profiles developed by Norwegian counties, which contain foreseen effects of climate change, challenges for land use planning etc¹. **Åke Mikaelsson** referred to the global policy on climate change that should be turned into practice by pilot projects, not only limited by Arkhangelsk/Barents Region, but also attracting other parts of Russia.

The Action Plan on Climate Change for the Barents Cooperation

The chair informed that Barents Forest Sector Network now have approved their proposals to the project list, and Joint Working Group on Transport and Logistics have come with a project on transport planning in the Barents Region to be funded by Kolarctic CBC Programme. Altogether, seven Working Groups have contributed to the Plan.

Maria Dianova added that she presented the draft Action Plan at the BEAC Committee for Senior Officials (CSO) in June 2017. CSO welcomed the work done and suggested that WGE should focus more on the outreach. Some of the WGs are not active, but the CSO underlined that it would be better to focus on realistic proposals, which would be implemented. Information event on climate change issues for representatives of relevant WGs is awaited in the first half of 2018. The Swedish Chairmanship of the WGE will arrange a workshop devoted to climate change issues.

It was discussed whether WGE should advise the BEAC CSO that BEAC should *adopt* the Action Plan. Norway would prefer this option. There were not any strong views on either options among the other countries. If BEAC *endorses* the Action Plan, it will be suggested for adoption by the environmental ministers in Vadsø.

The Chair concluded that the work on the Action Plan would be finalized in the beginning of October and submitted to the BEAC CSO. The wording in the foreign ministers' Declaration would be discussed by the countries with their national representatives in the BEAC CSO, if needed.

Barents 2050

Anne Berteig informed about the status of the study "**Barents 2050**", being conducted by the VTT Technical Research Centre of Finland. Representatives from Norway, Sweden Finland and Russia, as well as WGE, Barents Sector Forest Network (BSFN) and Working Group on Transport and Logistics (BEATA), have been involved on work of the Reference Group. The second draft of the study was sent out on 7 September with the deadline for comments on 27 September, extended for a couple of weeks to get more comments from the Russian side (Ministry of Transport) and other members of the Reference Group. VTT is invited to report on the main finding at the Ministerial Meeting in November.

Elin Kronqvist underlined that the conclusions and recommendation given by the VTT should be more concrete and applicable to be useful in the future work of the WGE. She confirmed that Sweden is ready to arrange an activity under 2018 based on the Barents 2050, if conclusions and recommendations are implementable, under the Swedish Chairmanship. Such an activity should combine the results from Barents 2050, the work on regional climate strategies and the Action Plan on Climate change and it should include other BEAC working groups. Proposals from the WGE are welcome. **Saija Vuola** agreed that the recommendations of the study are very general and could better

¹ On this link below you find the Climate profiles developed for Norwegian Counties:
<https://klimaservicesenter.no/faces/desktop/article.xhtml?uri=klimaservicesenteret%2Fklimaprofiler>

be taken up by decision-makers if they were more concrete. The Finnish Ministry of Environment arranged a meeting with VTT earlier in the summer and made this comment. VTT highlighted a point which makes Barents 2050 a valuable piece of research: the analysis is based on diverse statistical data from municipalities / regions in all countries. It has taken a lot of effort to form comparable statistical data comprising exactly the Barents region.

It was concluded that VTT would be encouraged to give more clear recommendations and proposals, so they can be used as a basis for concrete actions.

Barents Forest forum

Ms. Anne Berteig had participated on behalf of the WGE at the International Barents Forest Forum, held in Arkhangelsk 21. September. The forum was devoted to climate change issues and gathered around 50 participants from four Barents countries, as well as UNECE Committee on Forests. The speakers focused on effects of climate change on forests and increasing demand for the regions to adapt to these changes: longer droughts increase risks of forest fires and melting of permafrost damages roots of trees and makes them more vulnerable in case of strong winds. Another challenge is the use of relatively untouched forests in the forestry in the Russian parts of the Barents Region. Cooperation between the WGE and BFSN becomes especially relevant in this context. The Swedish Chairmanship of the BFSN will prioritize the role of forests in sustainable bio economy and more visible and stronger Barents cooperation on forestry. Sweden is planning to arrange a Ministerial Meeting and Boreal Summit in June 2018. Recommendations adopted by the Barents Forest Forum have been sent out to WGE before the meeting. Link to the recommendations and presentations from the Forest Forum: http://www.sevniilh-arh.ru/forest_forum/.

IBS suggested that BFSN should be invited to the WGE ministerial meeting in Vadsø. The WGE chair replied that this could be considered.

The WGE expressed readiness to enhance cooperation with the BFSN. Coordination of activities will be discussed at the meeting of coming Swedish chairs in November.

Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic, Barents Overview report

AMAP chair **Marianne Kroglund** from the Norwegian Environment Agency joined the meeting via Skype to present the Arctic Council report ***Adaptation Actions for a Changing Arctic (AACA)***, developed by AMAP, with the focus on the Barents regional study. Her presentation is attached. The report raised interest of the WGE, and the Chair concluded that the AACA Barents Area Overview Report would be relevant in the further work of the WGE and the study should be distributed among relevant stakeholders. The full report was published 12 October and can be downloaded from this website: <http://www.amap.no/documents/doc/Adaptation-Actions-for-a-Changing-Arctic-Perspectives-from-the-Barents-Area/1604>

Ministerial meeting in Vadsø 29.-30. November.

The chair referred to the draft programme of the meeting that had been circulated. There were no comments to the programme.

The first draft of the Ministerial Declaration had been circulated for comments, input from Finland and Sweden have been received. The chair supported Sweden's proposal to make the declaration shorter, but it is a challenging task. The chapter on Future Work can be incorporated into other parts of the Declaration. The new proposals to include such topics as marine littering, plastics and tourism need to be discussed. Marine littering and plastics are high on the agenda in all four countries and should be mentioned in the declaration. But the issue is addressed in many forums, and new projects should only be developed if they produce added value.

5th October was set as a new dead line for comments. **Finland** will formulate a paragraph on black carbon, which is one of the priorities of the Finnish Chairmanship of the Arctic Council. Finland also wanted work done by the regions on new project applications to be emphasized. **Sweden** would review submitted comments about adding paragraphs about the CLEO project and transboundary cooperation. **Roman Gokkoev** noted that paragraph on funding mechanisms should be updated according to the present situation, and importance of ratification of the financial agreement on CBC Programme should be underlined (to be crosschecked with the Declaration of the BEAC foreign ministers, §31).

The first draft of the Activity Report for 2016-2017 was prepared by the Chair and sent out to the WGE. Subgroups will not be asked for separate reporting, but their comments are awaited by 6 October. A separate report from RWGE does not seem very likely, but the WGE-report will include aspects of the work in the RWGE.

The agenda of the Ministerial Meeting will include statements from the ministers, NEFCO and WGIP; presentation of the Hot Spots to be excluded and other progress of SHE; Pasvik-Inari Trilateral Park as a good example of cooperation; BPAN and climate change work (Barents 2050 by the VTT). Outreach material is under preparation by the subgroups. The meeting itself will be rather short, and it will be needed to prioritize between many positive projects and results.

Closing the meeting, the Chair mentioned that the next WGE meeting would be arranged on 2.-3. November 2017 in Oslo to make the final preparations before the Ministerial Meeting in Vadsø. The countries' representatives, current and coming chairs of the Subgroups, as well as representatives of NEFCO, IBS and WGIP had been invited to the meeting. The Agenda would include drafting the ministerial Declaration, and could also include WGE work report and coming Swedish Chairmanship of the WGE. Some other important issues like hot spots seeking exclusion, like A4, should also be discussed.

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 28.09.2017

1. Ingrid Lillehagen, WGE Chair, Ministry of Climate and Environment (NO)
2. Anne Berteig, Ministry of Climate and Environment (NO)
3. Hanne Aronsen, Norwegian Environment Agency (NO)
4. André Kammerud, Norwegian Environment Agency (NO)
5. Bente Christiansen, Office of Finnmark County Governor (NO)
6. Tiia Kalske, Office of Finnmark County Governor (NO)
7. Asbjørg Fyhn, Troms County Council (NO)
8. Sveinung Bertnes Råheim, County Governor of Nordland (NO)
9. Saija Vuola, Ministry of the Environment (FI)
10. Johanna Laaksonen, Finnish Environment Institute (FI)
11. Tapio Lindholm, Finnish Environment Institute (FI)
12. Jonas Liimatta, North Ostrobothnia Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (FI)
13. Jari Pasanen, Lapland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (FI)
14. Hannu Luotonen, North Karelia Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (FI)
15. Tatu Turunen, Kainuu Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment (FI)
16. Katja Sukuvaara, Regional Council of Kainuu (FI)
17. Elin Kronqvist, Ministry of Environment and Energy (SE)

18. Erica Grankvist, Ministry of Environment and Energy (SE)
19. Åke Mikaelsson, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SE)
20. Sofia Rantatalo, Swedish Environmental Protection Agency (SE)
21. Mats-Rune Bergström, County Administrative Board of Västerbotten (SE)
22. Magnus Johansson, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten (SE)
23. Ylva Sardén, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten (SE)
24. Maria Dronova, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of RF (RU) – via Skype
25. Igor Konyukhov, Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of Murmansk Oblast (RU)
26. Marina Trusova, Pasvik Nature Reserve (RU)
27. Anna Prakhova, Indigenous Peoples' Representative
28. Ruslan Butovsky, VNII Ecology, NEFCO Consultant
29. Vitaly Artyushchenko, NEFCO
30. Roman Gokkoev, IBS
31. Rosa-Maren Magga, IBS
32. Maria Dianova, IBS