



**Report 2010-2011**  
**of the Barents Euro- Arctic Council (BEAC)**  
**Working Group on Environment (WGE) and the**  
**Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE) to the**  
**10<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Ministers of the Environment,**  
**Umeå, November 9, 2011**

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# 1. Working group on Environment – Summary of the activities 2010-2011

At the ninth meeting of the BEAC Environment Ministers, held in Tromsø, Norway February 17<sup>th</sup> 2010, the Ministers endorsed the report from the Working group on Environment (WGE) 2009-2010 and adopted a Declaration and the chairmanship rotated from Norway to Sweden. The declaration gave a renewed mandate to the WGE for the Swedish Presidency and directions for further work.

- Based on the declaration the Swedish Presidency has given priority to the following issues: Playing an active role during the coinciding Swedish chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council which is focusing on i.e. climate change and an eco efficient economy.
- Further strengthening the cooperation between the Working Group on Environment (WGE) and the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE).
- Seeking opportunities for activities with other BEAC groups, indigenous people, non-governmental organisations on for example climate change and cleaner production and sound consumption.
- Cooperate closely with the International Barents Secretariat on for example a development of the hot spot information system.

The Group has had 5 meetings during the period – in Kiruna April 2010, in Petrozavodsk October 2010, in Syktyvkar June 2011, in Piteå September 2011 and in Stockholm November 2011. In connection with the meetings in Kiruna, Petrozavodsk and Syktyvkar, seminars with regional participation on various themes were organized – in Kiruna on environmental concerns in mining, in Petrozavodsk on eco-efficient communities and in Syktyvkar on the regional environmental “hot spots”. The seminars were attended by 50-80 people, with good participation from the regions.

The main bulk of concrete project work has taken place in the subgroups of the Working Group on Environment and will be reported in the section of each of the subgroups:

- Subgroup on Hot spot Exclusion
- Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sounder Production
- Subgroup on Nature Protection
- Subgroup on Water issues

Based on the declaration adopted in Tromsø, February 2010, the subgroups have developed strategies and action plans/working programs. The subgroups have worked according to these work programs that were adopted for each subgroup by the WGE in 2010.

## 2. Subgroup on Water issues (SWI)

In the Tromsø Declaration the Environment Ministers emphasised the need for improving the quality of drinking water in the Barents Region and also recognised the relation between clean water and socio-economic factors, as treated under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe/World Health Organisation (UNECE/WHO) Protocol on Water and Health; welcomed the plans for a comprehensive water project in Arkhangelsk Oblast, with the possibility of exchanging experience with other parts of the Barents region. Furthermore it was also underlined in the declaration the need for further studies on the correlation between climate change and the condition of water bodies and wetlands and continued the importance co-operation on transboundary water. The work of the SWI is carried out in close cooperation with the Regional Working Group on Environment. During the Chairmanship the SWI has held meetings in Kiruna (April, 2010), Arkhangelsk (November-December, 2010), Komi (June, 2011) and Piteå (September, 2011).

A conference on Water Management Resources was arranged in November and December 2010 in Arkhangelsk together with the Arkhangelsk Region Government. The Swedish Environmental Agency funded the conference. The Conference gathered experts from both the Nordic countries and the North-West of Russia and app. 90 persons attended the conference.

Back to back to the meeting a joint meeting for the Subgroup and the Regional Working Group on Environment was organized. At the meeting the subgroup identified two modules for cooperation where Sweden was prepared to cooperate on waste water and drinking water and Finland and Norway was prepared to cooperate with Russia on exchanging information on the European Union's Water Framework Directive and the Russian governmental program on Clean Water.

The SWI has continued the work to seek possibilities to develop a multilateral project on Water Management Initiatives in Arkhangelsk and other Barents regions, . Meetings to discuss the development and to seek opportunities to link the project to the Norwegian initiative aimed at implementing the UNECE Protocol on Water and Health in North West Russia, were held in May in Archangelsk and Komi in June, 2011. . A presentation of the Norwegian initiative regarding the UNECE protocol was made in the conference in Archangelsk November/December 2010. The SWI has supported the Norwegian initiative.

As a joint cooperation with the Nordic Council of Ministers, a conference in Arkhangelsk on exchange of experiences on water management and climate change in the Barents region conference was held in June, 2011. SWI supported the development of the conference on "Climate Change and Water Management – meeting the challenges in the Barents region" which was jointly organized by the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Government of the Arkhangelsk Region and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

Other projects have also been reported to be carried out from the members of the subgroup. These projects are mainly bilateral projects between a Nordic country and the Russian Federation.

### 3. Subgroup on Hot spot Exclusion (SHE)

The temporary Subgroup on Hotspots Exclusion (SHE) under the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Working Group on Environment (BEAC WGE) was established in 2010 in order to facilitate the exclusion of the 42 "Hot Spots" from the Barents Euro Arctic Environmental "Hot Spots" List in accordance with the groups mandate and the Criteria and Procedures described in the Final Report to the Ministers of Environment, adopted in Tromsø on 17th of February, 2010.

- SHE was given the mandate from the Barents Environment Ministers in Tromsø 2010 (NO), in the period towards the next ministerial meeting, to facilitate the process of exclusion of the Barents Environmental "Hot Spots" in accordance with the Criteria & Procedures. The Ministers acknowledged the need to prioritize and initially focus on certain "Hot Spots" in order to ensure tangible results. During the Swedish chairmanship period, the BEAC WGE Subgroup for Hotspots Exclusion, SHE, together with the Ministry of Nature Resources and Ecology of the Russian Federation, Minpriroda RF, has, appointed regional Hotspot Exclusion Groups, HEGs, in the five Federal Subjects included in the Barents co-operation in North West Russia,
- elaborated and agreed Mandates for the HEGs which in turn have appointed their members in accordance with these Mandates.
- The HEGs have started their work, including a primary review of the respective sets of primarily selected hotspots for exclusion in accordance with the Exclusion Procedure adopted in Troms in February 2010.
- Started the work on a "General Exclusion Plan" which is supposed to guide the further work of the SHE and the HEGs.

During the three joint meetings between SHE and the regional HEGs, the HEGs presented reviews of their respective hotspots and proposed candidates for exclusion from the Hotspot list. From an initial list of eight hotspots in all five regions proposed in the first meeting in February 2011, the final proposals gathered until the third meeting in October 2011, comprised the following four hotspots:

Republic of Karelia:	K10 – Stocks of Obsolete Pesticides
Komi Republic:	Ko7 – Wastes from timber, pulp and paper industry
Arkhangelsk Oblast:	A10 – Stocks of Obsolete Pesticides
Murmansk Oblast:	M8 – Mercury containing wastes
Nenets Autonomous Okrug	No hotspots proposed at third joint meeting.

Based on the Applications for Exclusion and Screening & Analysis reports submitted by the regional HEGs to SHE and accounting the comments collected from the Technical Expert Committee, the Subgroup for Hotspots Exclusion proposed that the BEAC WGE exclude the following hotspots from the Barents Environmental Hot Spot List and that the decision is submitted to the Ministers for their concurrence:

K10 – Stocks of Obsolete Pesticides

A10 – Stocks of Obsolete Pesticides  
M8 – Mercury containing wastes

The BEAC WGE decided to exclude these three hot spots from the list, and the revised Barents Environmental Hot Spots List from 2011 thus contains only 39 hotspots. Proposals from the HEGs to change the names of some of the hotspots to more appropriate names was not approved. Instead it is proposed to up-date the hotspot list further during next Ministerial Meeting by a more thorough report, based on the work done by SHE and the HEGs in terms of completion of the Step 2 “Screening and Analysis” for all hotspots.

During the work with the implementation, in particular with the regional HEGs, the Exclusion Procedure has been refined. The refinement in particular concerned the definition of the organizational entities (constellation of authorities) that are responsible for the different steps of the Exclusion Procedure.

The lastly up-dated version of the Exclusion Procedure is attached to the SHE Report for the period 2010-2011. Some additional refinement of the Exclusion Procedure is likely in follow of the further implementation work.

An information system about the Barents Environmental hot spots list has been launched on the web page of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council ([www.beac.st](http://www.beac.st)), to inform the public and decision makers of the Barents hot spots and the process to exclude the hot spots from the Barents Euro Arctic Environmental Hot Spots List. Initial documents have been posted in the information system that will be filled with more content as the work to exclude hot spots from the list progresses.

#### **4. Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Production (CPESC)**

The Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption Subgroup of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's (BEAC) Working Group on Environment is an arena for cooperation on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption in the Barents region.

The Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption has the mandate to contribute to the elimination of environmental hot spots, best available techniques (BAT), projects on reduction of anthropogenic greenhouse gases emissions, projects on cleaner production, energy efficiency and sustainable consumption, projects on prevention and reduction of the pollution of environment by dangerous and harmful substances.

The Goal under the Swedish Presidency was to promote CPESC through multilateral projects and strengthen co-operation and coordination with other BEAC WGE subgroups and with Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP) under the Arctic Council, the BEAC joint Working Group on Energy and the Barents Regional Working Group on Environment with the aim of reducing the environmental and social impact from the way products are produced, consumed and handled as waste in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

The goal was also to respond to the call from the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg which called for a global 10 year Framework on Program on Sustainable Consumption and Production (SCP) and national and regional action by promoting SCP at national and regional level.

The CPESC subgroup has had 4 meetings during the Swedish Presidency 2010 and 2011. The group has started a number of multilateral projects during the Swedish Presidency in order to meet, as far as possible, the priorities identified for the group and according to the Working Program.

The following projects are accomplished:

1. Seminar on CPESC instruments and voluntary tools with a focus on Eco-labeling and Green Public Purchasing. St Petersburg 29 March
2. Seminars on Sustainable Lifestyles, St Petersburg 11 November 2010 (Swedish Task Force) and Green Public Purchasing (Swiss Task Force) St Petersburg 28 March 2011 as follow up of the previous Marrakech Task Force seminars, and a new seminar on Sustainable Tourism (French Task Force and UNEP) in cooperation with the Regional Working Group. 6 October St Petersburg.
3. Contribution to the 10 Year Framework of Program on SCP by providing information on regional initiatives/activities to UN-organizations.

The following projects are running:

4. Project on Best Available Techniques and Permit Granting – based on a permit procedure case study in Pajala, Sweden. Lead Country is Sweden.
5. Case studies and good examples of cleaner production and Environmentally Sound Consumption approaches from the Barents Countries put together in a report by Norway.

The following projects are under preparation:

6. Overview of facilities for environmentally sound destruction of hazardous substances in the Barents region/Barents countries as a first step. Lead country is Norway.
7. Project on education with Russia as lead country/ project manager. The purpose is to promote training and implementation in curricula of cleaner production and environmentally sound consumption in universities within the Barents region. The project will build on previous projects, run by Finland and on an ongoing project run by the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency.

The Focus on energy and cooperation with the Barents working group on energy, as well as the opportunity to develop projects under the Barents Window funding facility has not been accomplished.

## 5. Subgroup on Nature Protection (NPS)

The Subgroup has a mandate from the Barents Environmental Ministers to work with projects on biodiversity conservation, ecosystem approach protected areas, conservation of natural and cultural heritage sites, co-operation with the task force on sustainable forestry management and forest protection under the Working Group on Economic Co-operation, projects on increase of absorption and deposition of greenhouse gases by natural ecosystems and of the projects on mitigation and adaptation to climate change.

The Swedish County Administrative Board of Västerbotten chaired NPS between the ministerial in Tromsø 2010 and Umeå 2011. NPS has had four meetings between the ministerial meetings.

The following projects have been accomplished or have been ongoing in 2010-2011:

1. The sixth International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region (HCF VII) was held in Archangelsk, Russia in June 2010. Main topics discussed were i) Protection of wetlands, ii) Protection and sustainable use of boreal forest, iii) Barents Protected Areas Network (BPAN), iv) Nature and spiritual values – sacred sites. The meeting was successful hosted by the Regional Administration in Archangelsk with about 100 participants. The next Habitat Contact Forum will be organized in Northern Norway in 2012, and will focus on coastal and marine habitats, conservation of forests and wetlands, Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN), and climate change issues.
2. Establishment of a representative network of protected areas – Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN) is a key project. The project will contribute to meet the Barents country's obligations to Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) through increased protection of biodiversity and maintain important ecosystem services in the region. All 13 Barents regions in the four countries are participating in the project, which in addition to the national funding also got financial support from the Nordic Council of Ministers. A steering group and expert group have been established. Main task for the BPAN project in the period has been to analyze the weaknesses of the established network to identify key areas for cooperation and further priorities. Recommendations for further work have been identified. BPAN was presented at a side event at the meeting in Nagoya, Japan, during the Conference of the Parties under the CBD in 2010.
3. Preparatory meetings and a feasibility study on Treiksrøysa – trilateral protected area (Finland, Sweden, Norway) has been executed. Conclusions and recommendations will be made available and followed up in 2012.
4. The Conference on Wetlands and flyways in Barents Euro-Arctic Region and the Green Belt of Fennoscandia was arranged in Murmansk city 2011 September 13 – 15. The conference was organized under NPS in cooperation with the Nordic Baltic Wetlands Initiative (Ramsar) with Pasvik Zapovednik as

host. Wetlands was a main subject at HCF VI and is still a priority for the NPS. Conservation of wetlands will be further looked into at for HCF VII in 2012.

5. A Conference on Cooperation between Botanical Gardens in the Barents Region was hosted by the Komi Republic in Syktyvkar 2010.

## **6. Report from the Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE)**

The **Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE)** receives its official mandate from the Barents Regional Council, and tasks are also given by the BEAC Environment Ministers. All 13 Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) member regions are represented, and a representative from the Working Group of Indigenous Peoples is invited as participant in the group. The County of Finnmark, Norway, chaired the RWGE until December 2010, when the chairmanship passed to Norrbotten, Sweden. The RWGE and the WGE works closely together, and RWGE has held four meetings during the period 2010-2011, back to back with WGE-meetings. Unfortunately, within the group (RWGE) there is unfortunately a lack of participation of members from the North West of Russia.

The RWGE has been working on revising the Strategy and Action Program 2011-2014. There are bilateral, trilateral and multilateral activities under the RWGE. RWGE supported the work to seek possibilities to develop a multilateral project on Water Management Initiatives in Arkhangelsk and other Barents regions, and to seek opportunities to link the activity to the project on UNECE Protocol on Water and Health.

Other projects that are of interest are the following projects that are ongoing, see appendix



## Appendix

Name of the project	Short abstract	Current status and duration of the project	Participants	Plan to be completed
<p>Kolarctic salmon (<i>Trilateral cooperation on our common resource, the Atlantic salmon in the Barents region</i>)</p>	<p>The Kolarctic ENPI CBC project “<i>Trilateral cooperation on our common resource; the Atlantic salmon in the Barents region (KO197)</i>”, aims to merge modern science with traditional salmon fishing knowledge to create a future sustainable, long-term and knowledge-based salmon management regime for the common Atlantic salmon stocks of the Barents region. Budget 3,1 mill €</p>	<p>Ongoing: 2011-2013</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Office of the County Governor of Finnmark (Lead Partner),</li> <li>- Institute of Marine research (IMR, Norway),</li> <li>- Norwegian Institute for Nature Research (NINA),</li> <li>- Polar Research Institute of Marine Fisheries and Oceanography (PINRO- Murmansk, Russia),</li> <li>- University of Turku – Kevo Research Station (Finland),</li> <li>- Finnish Game and Fisheries Research Institute</li> </ul>	<p>31.12.2013</p>
<p>TEC - <i>Trilateral Cooperation on Environmental Challenges in the Joint Border Area</i></p>	<p>Project is studying mitigation of the harmful effects of climate change, water level, flow regulation and contamination in the Finnish, Norwegian and Russian border region. Knowledge and information will be produced on environmental</p>	<p>Ongoing: 2012-2014</p>	<p>Lapland, Finnmark and Murmansk</p>	<p>31.12.2014</p>

	<p>impacts and strategies on adaptation to the climate change and other anthropogenic effects on a regional level.</p> <p><b>Budget 1,5 mill €</b></p>			
<p>ABCGheritage - <i>Arctic Biological, Cultural and Geological heritage</i></p>	<p>The Kolarctic ENPI CBC project <i>ABCGheritage (KO368)</i> will work for raised awareness of the natural and cultural heritage common to east Lapland, Norway and Kola Peninsula. Promote increased sustainable utilization of protected and recreational areas and active cooperation networks created by public and private operators in the mentioned fields.</p> <p>Budget 1,8 mill €</p>	2012-2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Metsähallitus Natural Heritage Services (Lead Partner),</li> <li>-Geological Survey of Finland, - Geological Institute of the Kola Science Centre (Russia),</li> <li>- Lapland State Natural Biosphere Reserve (Russia),</li> <li>- State Nature Reserve Pasvik (Russia),</li> <li>- Office of the County Governor of Finnmark (Norway),</li> <li>- Finnmark County Authority (Norway),</li> <li>- Bioforsk Soil and Environment Svanhovd (Norway),</li> <li>- Nordland Research Institute (Norway),</li> <li>- Centre for Economic Development, Transport and</li> </ul>	31.12.2014

Environmental Education and Enlightenment	Support activities in environmental education and enlightenment and cooperation between Norwegian and Russian schools in Pasvik – Pechenga area	Ongoing	the Environment Lapland (Finland) State Nature Reserve Pasvik (Russia) and the Office of the County Governor of Finnmark (Norway)	Ongoing
Water Management in the Joint Border Area of Norway, Finland and Russia.	Annual budget 10 000 NOK Transboundary Water Commission between Norway and Finland (Russia has participated as an observer since 1993-) and other cooperation between water management authorities and bodies in the three countries	Annual meeting and projects initiated. Ongoing since 1980-	Transboundary Water Commission Norway-Finland; The Office of the County Governor of Finnmark (Norway) and Municipalities of Tana, Karasjok and Sør-Varanger. -Centre for Economic Development, Traffic and the Environment Lapland (Finland) and Municipalities of Utsjok and Inari	Ongoing
Also including the Transboundary Water Commission between Norway and Finland.	Transboundary Water Commission Norway-Finland: Local, regional and national authorities in both countries have this cooperative body for the coordination of their interests in the common rivers; Tana, Pasvik and Neiden	Joint activities in the field of water management is ongoing. Two larger seminars between Environmental and water management authorities in Finland, Norway and Russia have been conducted in 2010 and in 2011. This work is planned for follow up in 2012- .	Other relevant authorities and management bodies are contacted when appropriate for activities and implementation.	

<p>Russian-Swedish teacher exchange on environmental pedagogics</p>	<p>watercourses. The Commission is an advisory body providing recommendations to the respective governments.</p> <p>The Commission may initiate projects. Projects carried out are; multiuse plans for the border rivers and the Pasvik programme.</p> <p>The aim of the project is to develop, promote and support a Swedish-Russian cooperation for teachers in both countries. The project is focusing on raising the level of knowledge of environment among teachers, the integration of this knowledge in every-day teaching and increasing curiosity of school children in environmentally related issues</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Workshop will be held in both Luleå and in Komi</p>	<p>The County Administrative Board of Norrbotten, the Municipality of Luleå and the Republic of Komi</p>	<p>Fall 2013</p>
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