

Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region
2016-2018

Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (WGIP)

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PREFACE

The Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (hereinafter BEAR) 2017-2018 contains proposed measures and projects aiming at development of the indigenous peoples' communities and societies within the BEAR, that is the Sámi people in the Nordic states and small numbered indigenous peoples (the Sámi , the Nenets and the Veps) in the Russian Federation. Measures aiming at strengthening the cooperation between indigenous peoples in the BEAR are presented in the Action Plan, as well as measures and goals aiming for a wider cooperation between indigenous peoples in the BEAR and in the circumpolar area.

The Action Plan promotes measures within the fields of development of trade and business, language and media, health and social related issues, environment and culture.

This document also describes the goals and principles, of which the foundation for the proposals is made, as well as the current situation for the indigenous peoples of the region.

PART I

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Barents Cooperation

The Barents cooperation (the cooperation between the states in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region – BEAR) was established January 11th 1993. Representatives for Norway, Sweden, the Russian Federation, Finland, Iceland, Denmark, the European Commission and the Nordic Saami Council signed the Kirkenes Declaration. This document, together with the Jubilee Declaration of 2003, sets the framework, the structure and the official goals for the cooperation.

Territorially speaking, the cooperation includes the fourteen regions Nordland Fylke, Troms Fylke, Finnmark Fylke (Norway), Västerbotten Län, Norrbotten Län (Sweden), Kainuu, Oulu, Lapland (Finland), North Karelia (Finland), Murmansk Oblast, the Republic of Karelia, Arkhangelsk Oblast, Nenets Autonomous Okrug and the Republic of Komi (Russian Federation).

1.1.2 WGIP and BIPO

The Working Group of Indigenous Peoples in the BEAR (WGIP) was established on a permanent basis in 1995. WGIP has an advisory status to the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC) and the Barents Regional Council. The representatives from Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian side are appointed by the Sámi Parliamentary Council for a four-year period. The representatives for the Sámi, the Nenets and the Veps on the Russian side are appointed for a-four-year period by their own organisations (the Sámi Congress, Yasavey, and Vepsian Cultural society).

The Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress 2010 adopted a resolution regarding indigenous peoples' representation in the formal structure of the Barents cooperation. As of the decisions in the Barents Regional Council (Kajaani 2010) and the Committee of Senior Officials (Stockholm 2010), the three indigenous peoples are entitled to represent themselves in the mentioned bodies.

The Barents Indigenous Peoples' Office (hereinafter referred to as BIPO) was established in 2003. It is located in Murmansk Oblast and is the secretariat for the WGIP in the Russian side. BIPO is also a service- and information tool for partners and participants within the indigenous peoples' cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

The adviser on indigenous peoples at the Norwegian Barents Secretariat shares the secretarial function with BIPO and is responsible for the WGIP activities in the Nordic side.

1.1.3 Indigenous Peoples in the BEAR

Nenets, Veps and Sámi are the small numbered indigenous peoples of the region, according to the list of small numbered indigenous peoples, approved by the Government of Russian Federation with ancient traditions for habitation, and traditions for usage of the areas' resources in a trade context from the times before the national states were established. The indigenous peoples are characterized by own languages, own cultures and own traditions for trade and society. The Komi people have the status as an indigenous people within the Republic of Komi, but they are not recognized as "small numbered indigenous people" according to federal legislation. Karelians and Pomors are other minorities living in the region.

In the Kirkenes Declaration of 1993, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs emphasized their support for their indigenous peoples' rights in the north, in accordance with the goals of chapter 26 in Indigenous Peoples' Agenda 21.

The WGIP mandate for the development of an Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples in the BEAR is recognized through the appointing of the Working Groups in 1993.

1.1.4 Natural resources

The market economy and increased external access to – and exploitation of - natural resources, bring increased pressure on the renewable and non-renewable values. Traditional competence is not transferred to future generations due to lack of resources within elementary fields of society. Altogether, this constitutes a serious threat to indigenous peoples' livelihoods, culture, communities and further existence, as we depend on the right to use the land on which we live.

1.1.5 Distinct challenges

The situation of the indigenous peoples demands particular measures and priorities. However, the WGIP focuses on the possibilities within the BEAR. The indigenous way of trade, languages, identity and cultural background of the indigenous peoples, together with a cooperation based on equality between partners, make the foundation of the development of the BEAR.

As the indigenous peoples seldom are immigrants in our own areas of residence, the desire to move is replaced by the desire for improvement of living standard and possibilities within their community.

1.2 Implementation and responsibility

The Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples in the BEAR is promoted towards the state and regional level within the Barents cooperation, according to the mandate, status and field of responsibility of the WGIP. The plan constitutes the foundation for the follow-up connected to the high priority set by the governments and regions for different measures of cooperation towards the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

The Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples supplements the other work executed on state and regional level. WGIP and the other partners within the BEAR, share the responsibility for implementation of regional measures aimed at indigenous peoples, as well as the joint responsibility for conduct of the interests of the indigenous peoples. This means that each level in the cooperation shall initiate and implement indigenous peoples' projects within their administrative framework.

The plan is constantly evaluated by the WGIP. Priorities and measures will happen in accordance with the status each year. Reporting and description of upcoming activities happen through the annual reports and activity plans of the WGIP. This way, the plan has a dynamic nature, taking conduct of new needs and creating an overview of the efforts within the field of indigenous peoples, and it facilitates the long-term planning.

2. COOPERATION BETWEEN INDIGENOUS PEOPLES

2.1 The indigenous peoples' dimension

There is an interior and an outward perspective within the indigenous peoples' dimension of the work. The interior perspective comprises the cooperation between the indigenous peoples. The relationship between the indigenous peoples and the state, regional and local authorities constitutes the outward perspective. Both perspectives must be further developed and taken into consideration to succeed with this work.

2.2 Rights of the indigenous peoples

Indigenous peoples' work for our rights is about equality and acceptance. What is natural and reasonable for other peoples, must also be natural and reasonable for indigenous peoples. The existence of the Nenets, the Sámi and the Veps is attached to this specific region. Our way of living, our culture and languages have historical roots in the area, and future development of the region must take this into account.

Clarification and protection of indigenous peoples' rights to the land, water and belonging natural resources within their own areas, is a goal in the work of indigenous peoples. Questions regarding rights are important to maintain the indigenous peoples' areas for the future generations. Petroleum- and mining activities are important sources of income and employment, but the activities also have negative impacts on the original population of the areas. Land-based activities are established on pastures and other areas of important use to the indigenous peoples, and the marine extraction affect fishing areas.

International corporations and large monetary interests must have the mentioned facts as a starting point in their planning of new and extended activity in the areas of indigenous peoples. The foundation for the indigenous peoples' own innovation, business activities and cultural exercise shall not be diminished by industrial activities or planned actions.

3. GOALS

3.1 Main goals

The overall goal for the indigenous peoples' cooperation in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region is to secure indigenous peoples' rights, foundation for trade, society, culture and language through implementation of the Action Plan of Indigenous Peoples of the BEAR. The indigenous peoples' cooperation shall contribute to friendship and cooperation based on equality, co-existence and tolerance between the peoples of the region. In the light of Nenets, Sámi and Veps' status as small numbered indigenous peoples of the North, the cooperation shall secure solid health- and living conditions, as well as cultural continuity, in the future.

3.2 Interim goals

- to obtain satisfying influence on issues with impact on the indigenous peoples and their areas
- to develop strong and healthy local communities with well-developed health-and welfare services, work places and satisfying school-and education possibilities
- to secure a solid material foundation for the cultural exercise of the indigenous peoples
- to establish solid conditions for the growth and development of indigenous peoples' languages
- to implement measures and projects aimed at indigenous women, families and youth
- to secure solid conditions for further transmission and usage of indigenous peoples' knowledge and competence
- to secure solid conditions for development of necessary indigenous peoples' institutions
- to spread correct information to increase the understanding of indigenous peoples' cultural, economic and social situation
- indigenous institutions and indigenous organizations are entitled to prior information and consultation regarding statistical data, measures and interventions in indigenous peoples' areas

4. GENERAL CONDITIONS

4.1 International rights of indigenous peoples

Parts of the states in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region are established on indigenous peoples' areas. Through this fact are the indigenous peoples, as peoples, entitled to recognition of the right to determination over our own culture, communities and areas. However, there are distinctions among the member states concerning ratification of international legislation regarding indigenous peoples, and transmission of these to national legislations.

A successful implementation of the Action Plan depends on adaptation of general framework conditions regarding indigenous peoples' situation. The cooperation between

indigenous peoples in the BEAR must be seen about the international ongoing processes on the rights of indigenous peoples and minorities. Internal and national legislation in each state must adapt to international decisions. An important point is the rights of indigenous peoples to natural resources as a material foundation for our culture.

A main aim for the preservation of indigenous peoples' rights is to implement the principles of the Rio Conference (UNCED 1992) and the principles of the ILO Convention No. 169 (on indigenous peoples and tribal peoples in independent states). The UN Covenant for Civil and Political Rights (of 1966), mentioning minorities in independent states, is another important international agreement with large importance for indigenous peoples. Further, there is the UN Convention on Biodiversity of 1993. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2007.

UN General Assembly has, by declaring the period of 1995-2004 as International Decade of Indigenous Peoples, expressed will of raising indigenous peoples' issues on the international agenda and, by declaring the period of 2005-2014 as following International Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples, acknowledged that implementation of measures aimed at indigenous peoples is time-consuming. The UN member states are, through the Decade, obliged to put efforts into the work of improving the living conditions of the indigenous peoples. The UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples also challenges the indigenous peoples on adding a concrete and focused content to the Decade.

It is a challenge for the member states of the BEAC to frame a corresponding policy on indigenous peoples, in which the principles of the peoples' right to self-determination are followed. The UN Decade of the World's Indigenous Peoples is an excellent opportunity to strive for such harmonisation. It is essential to point out that planned and executed measures and projects in the indigenous peoples' areas, must not be characterized as aid or missionary work towards indigenous peoples. Conditions must be facilitated so that the population participates actively.

4.2 International cooperation between indigenous peoples

The success of the Action Plan implementation depends on a solid cooperation between different partners/institutions.

The Saami Council, consisting of members from all four national states, is central in the cooperation, through its observer status in the WGIP and the status of Permanent Participant in the Arctic Council. Coordinating the cooperation in accordance to activities initiated by the Arctic Council is important.

Strengthening the Sámi Parliamentary Council, as well as the establishment of a joint Sámi Convention between Finland, Norway and Sweden will also strengthen foundation and framework for the future work on indigenous peoples' issues in the BEAR. A future objective must be a cooperation between the four member states, based on the foundation of the Nordic Sámi Convention. The WGIP emphasizes the importance of transferring information regarding the work on the Nordic Sámi Convention to the indigenous peoples on the Russian side.

The indigenous peoples are collectively prepared to accept the following obligations, by promoting own initiatives towards the member states of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. The present Action Plan is a contribution in this context. It is the responsibility of the national states to facilitate the follow-up of the initiatives promoted by indigenous peoples.

4.3 The EU, the Nordic countries and the Arctic

The development in the indigenous peoples' areas in the BEAR must also be seen in a Nordic, an Arctic and a European perspective. Planned measures and programmes must be coordinated and implemented, and the initiatives promoted through the Arctic Council and the Nordic Council of Ministers should be coordinated with the actions taken within the Barents cooperation. In addition, there is potential in the work executed by the European Union, as the Northern Dimension has a certain focus on indigenous peoples' issues and direct cooperation between people.

4.4 The Barents Euro-Arctic Council

WGIP and the indigenous peoples of the region still claim strengthened representation of indigenous peoples within the formal structures of the Barents cooperation, although the WGIP has a status regarding the Barents Regional Council and the BEAC.

The WGIP established the Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress in 2010, which gather indigenous representatives from the BEAR every fourth year, for discussions about approaches and challenges concerning the indigenous peoples of the region. The Congress' mandate is to adapt the Action Plan of Indigenous Peoples in the BEAR and to promote the issue of direct representation of the indigenous peoples in the Barents Regional Council and the Barents Euro-Arctic Council.

The First Barents Indigenous Peoples Summit was held in Moscow (April 2017), as a collaboration between the WGIP and the Russian Chairmanship of the BEAC. The WGIP welcomes the initiative and encourages future chairmanships of the BEAC to follow the example and initiate similar events, emphasizing the indigenous peoples of the BEAR.

PART II

5. PRIORITISED AREAS AND MEASURES

5.1 Background

Cooperation between equal partners is the starting point for the work on indigenous peoples' issues in the BEAR. The ambition is to develop more multilateral projects with participation from most of the cooperating states. Municipality cooperation, institutions and organisations, as well as official bodies, are important pieces in this context.

The dimension of indigenous peoples in the Barents cooperation, and measures aimed at indigenous peoples' communities bring positive consequences for the remaining population as well. Certain existing conflicts might be erased through visualisation of the diversity in the indigenous peoples' communities.

5.2 Geographical limitation

The cooperation between indigenous peoples in the BEAR includes Nenets, Veps and Saami areas of living on the Russian side of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region.

5.3 Prioritised areas and proposed measures

5.3.1 Innovation

Indigenous peoples' participation in business development, as well as increased activity, is decisive for the survival of the indigenous peoples' communities. The population must have a framework for protection and development of their communities in a long-term perspective.

The economic development of the region must increase the participation of the indigenous peoples in the fields of protection and development of their own communities. Primary industries, such as fisheries, reindeer husbandry, catching and traditional handicraft are the ground pillars for the indigenous peoples' business activity. These industries constitute the foundation for further development of new and modern industries, such as tourism and production- and trade business based on local indigenous peoples' traditions. This depends on access to the nature and securing of quality through a clean and sustainable environment. Solid multilateral projects is a tool for value creation through processing of raw materials and trade in the global market. This might create the foundation for future business activity in indigenous peoples' communities.

Reindeer husbandry has a special position among indigenous peoples of the north and among Sámi and Nenets in the BEAR. Production and processing of reindeer meat and reindeer hides has a large potential on the Russian side, as the demand for reindeer meat increases and the global market wants access to raw materials for production.

Proposed measures:

- Follow up on Ethical guidelines (Arran Lule Saami Center)
- International Center for Reindeer husbandry – indigenous food traditions (Eallo)
- Indigee Arctic as a follow up on the two previous Indigee projects
- Cooperation with RAIPON to get more information about business and indigenous rights in Russia (juridical consultation between Nenets, Sami and Veps representatives and RAIPON)
- Marketing courses and developing of products (handicrafts etc.)
- Further development of reindeer husbandry education (Kautokeino/Inari, Lovozero and Naryan-mar)

5.3.2 Indigenous peoples languages (research and education)

Education is the key to transmission of indigenous languages. Research produces new knowledge, and this creates a ground for growth and development of indigenous peoples' communities. A satisfying level on indigenous peoples' educational institutions is a central

point for further development of the competence level among indigenous peoples. Saami educational institutions possess a responsibility for development of indigenous peoples' languages – also in the Russian side. The Kildin Saami language – and other indigenous languages on the Russian side - is threatened. Teaching in Kildin Saami must be intensified both on elementary level and as adult education, for the language to have a real chance of survival.

The stream of information between indigenous peoples in the BEAR must be improved, but it also depends on external factors. Kola Saami Radio is no longer a project, but an independent enterprise based on financing through news production aimed for sale to cooperating Saami media stations in the Nordic countries. Transmissions in Saami must be further developed, but there is also a demand for expansion of transmissions in Russian, to reach other indigenous peoples in the region. An improved informational service will strengthen the cooperation between indigenous peoples, and another point is to include existing networks of indigenous media in the circumpolar area.

Proposed measures:

- Place names in indigenous languages
- Indigenous broadcasting (Nenets Radio), Nurash Inn and veps journalists
- Blogging and communication training (innovation)
- Computer games and developments of useful applications
- Journalist training (Karelia, St. Petersburg)
- Barents Eco film festival cooperation (Karelia)
- Nomadic kinder gardens (Nenets) and languages nests (Finland)

5.3.3 Health and social related issues

The curative health service in areas populated by indigenous peoples in the Russian side is variant, and absent in certain areas, in areas outside larger cities and towns. Lack of personnel and funds for maintenance of the services are among the reasons for this.

Parts of the indigenous population in the Russian side live nomadic lives, while others are resident in cities, towns and smaller villages and settlements. This leads to a varied need for health care among indigenous peoples in the Russian side. With that, it is important to secure a satisfying health service for the population irrespective of residence. The largest challenge for mobile health care is expenses connected to transport and equipment. The indigenous peoples inhabit areas with imperfect infrastructure, and this presupposes use of extraordinary measures (such as helicopter).

Proposed measures:

- Joint activities with the working group on health and social related issues. Together we could develop prioritized areas
- Krasny chum – encouraging the regions to learn from the Nenets experiences and develop the project further
- Mental wellbeing– join forces with others (Sami Council and Arctic Council's projects concerning suicide and how to prevent this from happening)

- Drug and alcohol prevention

5.3.4 Environment and climate change

Indigenous peoples are attached to the nature and usage of natural resources. Renewable resources in indigenous peoples' area have constituted the living conditions for indigenous peoples in the BEAR, and there is a close connection between nature, resources and habitation. That is why the areas of population can not be considered as wilderness or so-called untouched nature, but rather as areas of usage with an adjusted harvest of the natural resources as the regulating element.

The present increased selection of resources does not necessarily lead to development of the local communities and indigenous peoples' communities, but rather to problems of industrial, environmental and social kind. National and international corporations establish activities in the areas of the indigenous peoples without involving the local inhabitants and the users of the areas in a overall strategy. The regional administrations often prioritise development of central areas, and that leaves the indigenous population with next to nothing. It must be emphasized that it is the reindeer herders in the Nenets tundra who surrender land areas for petroleum activities, and the mining industry in the Kola Peninsula demand land areas from the Saami and Komi reindeer herders and fishermen.

The development of the north, and indigenous peoples' areas of usage and residence, must include a strategy with concrete prospects for the future, to secure sustainable societies when the industrial activities are finished. Protection of, as well as access to, areas of natural resources is decisive for the future of the indigenous peoples' cultures, which is an important part of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region and the global diversity.

Proposed measures:

- Follow up on the Action Plan on climate change in the Barents Region
- Use our observers more (ICR and others)
- Take part and follow international meetings concerning Climate Change
- Indigenous peoples' traditional knowledge must be implemented in international documents
- Coordinate WGIP work with already existing work on the topic (working group on Environment)
- Using guidelines Akwe: Kon (Akwe: Kon guidelines <https://www.cbd.int/traditional/guidelines.shtml>)

5.3.5 Culture

The habitation and culture of the indigenous peoples have been threatened by different national, regional and local efforts. Active assimilation policies have been executed towards the indigenous peoples of the region, with concrete measures aimed at destruction of expressions and symbols that characterizes the indigenous peoples' cultures. Indigenous peoples have, in certain areas, been forced to leave their home areas in favour of other areas that do not harmonise with their traditional way of living.

Indigenous peoples' cultures are closely attached to primary industries, the nature, their languages, traditions and history through solidarity, socialization and identity. Maintenance and development of the indigenous peoples' cultures must have an overall perspective including a focus on both society and individuals. Maintenance of cultural varieties within the region is a challenge, and culture does also include sports activities.

Proposed measures:

- Sustainable tourism based on indigenous traditional knowledge and livelihood
- Authenticity when it comes to developing products based on indigenous knowledge
- Establishment of culture grants handed over during a big Barents cultural event
- Use the existing festivals to promote the Barents cooperation and indigenous peoples culture

5.3.6 Political cooperation

The indigenous peoples of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region share challenges attached to their livelihoods and the development of their communities. Indigenous peoples of the BEAR must take active part in the global indigenous peoples' cooperation. Transfer of knowledge and competence regarding political work and international legislation regarding indigenous peoples' rights is a priority of the WGIP during the Action Plan period.

Proposed measures:

- Veps, Nenets and Sami representation on all levels in decision-making processes in the BEAC. WGIP must be visible and express thoughts and opinions on all topics (*representation in other BEAC working groups*)
- Barents Indigenous Peoples Summit should be a tool for dialogue between indigenous peoples in BEAC and authorities. It should raise issues relevant for all indigenous peoples in the BEAR
- Follow up the Barents Indigenous Peoples' Congress as a forum for discussion and cooperation between indigenous representatives in the BEAR
- Projects involving youth should be prioritized
- Information about indigenous peoples and our work in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region should be prioritized
- WGIP encourage BEAC chairmanships at all times to prioritize joint ventures and joint funding of indigenous projects

5.4 Economy

The measures of the Action Plan for Indigenous Peoples in the BEAR 2017-2019 include both concrete projects and proposals for further project development. Implementation of these measures depends on funding from national, regional and local authorities, as well as from Nordic, European and international financing instruments.