



**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
10th 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 17th 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 ecoefficient 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

2. Subgroup on Water issues

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 SWI has under the Swedish Chairmanship adopted a Work Program where the main activities and priorities for the chairmanship are outlaid. It is stressed that the projects and activities in the Work program will be addressed as time, resources and opportunity permit and 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 comprehensive 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 activity to the project on UNECE Protocol on Water and Health of a multilateral cooperation was held in Komi in June, 2011 and May in Arkhangelsk. Norway participated in the conference of the UNECE Protocol and made a presentation of the UNECE Protocol. 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 has also been reported to be carried out from the members of the work group. These projects are mainly bilateral projects between a Nordic country and the Russian Federation.

3. Subgroup on Hot spot Exclusion

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.

This report reflects the efforts and achievements made by SHE during the Swedish chairmanship of the Working Group on Environment during 2010-2011 and refers to the objectives and activities set in the SHE Work Program for 2010-2011.

SHE was given the mandate from the Barents Environment Ministers, 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, and therefore also encouraged further efforts to:

1. Explore possibilities to develop and implement projects together with the Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption (CPESC Subgroup) as well as with the NEFCO Barents Hot Spot Facility (BHSF),
2. Strengthen and build on the work of existing regional working groups on "hot spots" in the republics of Komi, Karelia and in Murmansk Oblast and Nenets Autonomous District,
3. Explore possibilities for synergies with the work carried out in the Arctic Council, including its Project Support Instrument and NPA Arctic, and other sources of financing,
4. Rise awareness about the Barents Environmental "hot spots",
5. Safeguard the development of an information system about the Barents Environmental "hot spots" list as part of the Barents Euro Arctic Councils web site by the end of 2010.
6. Review the criteria and procedure for hot spot exclusion before the 2011 Ministerial meeting.

The above is reflected in 2010 Ministerial Declaration, points 9 – 15.

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, have

- appointed regional Hotspot Exclusion Groups, HEGs, in five Federation Subjects included in the Barents co-operation,
- elaborated and agreed Mandates for the HEGs which in turn have appointed their members in accordance with these Mandates and 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.

- Based on the priorities expressed by the regional HEGs, Minpriroda RF with support from SHE, has drafted a first “General Exclusion Plan”, guiding the further work of 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 till 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 attached 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 proposes BEAC WGE to recommend the Ministers to exclude the following hotspots from the Barents Environmental Hot Spot List:

K10 – Stocks of Obsolete Pesticides

A10 – Stocks of Obsolete Pesticides

M8 – Mercury containing wastes

The revised Barents Environmental Hot Spots List from 2011 thus will contain only 39 hotspots. Proposals from the HEGs to change the names of some of the hotspots to more appropriate names will not be 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 organisational entities (constellation of authorities) that are responsible for different steps and “sub-steps” of the Exclusion Procedure as well as the formulation of these “sub-steps”. For management purposes as well as for an enhanced communication between SHE and the HEGs, a new column with “deliverables” has been added to the Exclusion Procedure where the documentary output required as “evidence” for the completion of each step and sub-step is reflected. In order to promote the production of such outputs, Templates were elaborated which later were refined to formal documents that were/are to be issued by the different organisational entities foreseen to implement the Exclusion Procedure.

The lastly up-dated version of the Exclusion Procedure is attached to this SHE Report in Appendix 2. Some additional refinement of the Exclusion Procedure though is likely in follow of the further implementation work, in particular with the Steps 3 –

Steps 6 that has not been implemented during the period of the Swedish Chairmanship.

4. Subgroup on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Production

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 work is based on the principles and methods outlined in the strategy document on Cleaner Production and Environmentally Sound Consumption as an element of a life cycle perspective and a Work Program developed and adapted by the group and acknowledged by the WGE for the Swedish chairmanship of the Working Group on Environment during 2010-2011.

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 ACAP WG on Hot Spots, 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 main activities and priority projects within the CPESC Subgroup for the Swedish Chairmanship 2010-2011 are described below.

1. Strengthening the interlinkages between the work on cleaner production and energy efficiency, finding synergies with the joint Working Group on Energy in light of the Ministerial Meeting on Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy to be held in 2010, as well as the opportunity to develop projects under the Barents Window funding facility;
2. Contributing to the hot spots elimination through the work of the subgroup and in cooperation with the temporary Subgroup on Hot spot elimination and with ACAP WG;
3. Following-up the Marrakech Task Force Seminars on Building and Construction, Sustainable Lifestyles and Green Public Procurement in order to promote engagement in the Marrakech Process, and the development of a global 10 Year Framework of Program on Sustainable Consumption and Production;
4. Further developing training on cleaner production and environmentally sound consumption for engineers in industry as well as for authorities and agencies, and developing seminars on efficient tools and instruments for SCP
5. Seeking opportunities for strengthening education, training and awareness rising on cleaner production and not at least sustainable consumption, involving universities and other educational institutions in the Barents region.
6. Mainstreaming of Cleaner Production and Sustainable Consumption aspects through cooperation between different actors and levels.

The CPESC subgroup have had 4 meetings during the Swedish Presidency 2010 and 2011. All decisions of the subgroup have been made in consensus and the meetings have been summarized in meeting reports.

The Subgroup work has resulted in a number of documents: Work group Strategy, Working Program, Short List of projects, Long List of projects, Project Sheets (describing each project in more detail), reports from seminars.

All relevant documents from the subgroup are posted on the BEAC webpage to secure availability and transparency.

Reports and recommendations from the subgroup have been submitted to the BEAC WGE for information and approval.

The CPESC-group contributes to the reduction of environmental impacts from the way products are produced and consumed and to the work on elimination of Hot Spots and best available technology (BAT) through case studies (in mining industry), dissemination of knowledge on SCP tools, cooperation with ACAP on facilities for hazardous waste destruction and by providing a support package for enterprises. The group has further contributed to sustainable consumption through a number of seminars disseminating best practices, methodology and guidelines under different themes. Multilateral cooperation has been prioritized as well as cooperation and cooperation with other Barents groups like the Hot Spot Group, Regional Group and ACAP.

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-labelling and Green Public Purchasing. St Petersburg 29 March 2011
2. Case studies and good examples of cleaner production and Environmentally Sound Consumption approaches from the Barents Countries put together in a report by Norway.
3. Seminars on Sustainable Lifestyles, St Petersburg 11 November 2010 (Swedish Task Force) and Green Public Purchasing (Swiss Task Force) St Petersburg 30 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 2011 St Petersburg.
4. 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:

1. Project on Best Available Techniques and Permit Granting – based on a permit procedure case study in Pajala. Lead Country is Sweden (EPA) and with consultant as project manager.
2. 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 EPA.

The following projects are under preparation:

1. Cooperation with ACAP through an overview of facilities for environmentally sound destruction of hazardous substances in the Barents region/Barents countries as a first step. Lead country is Norway.
2. Contribution to Hot Spot exclusion through recommendations and activities on Cleaner Production, including a support package for business (training, development of business plans etc.) in cooperation with the Hot Spot group and responding to the needs identified by the regional Hot Spots groups.

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

The Work Program 2010-2011 of Subgroup for Nature Protection includes the following priority projects and other activities:

- * International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region (HCF) – HCF VI - Archangelsk, Russia June 2010
- * HCF/NPS project list – updating
- * Barents Protected Areas Network (BPAN), including climate issues
- * Treriksrøysa – trilateral protected area (Finland, Sweden, Norway)

* ECORA follow-up

The Sixth International Contact Forum on Habitat Conservation in the Barents Region was successfully hosted by the Regional Administrations in Arkhangelsk 2010 June 1 – 4.

The resolution of HCF VI support the next Habitat Contact Forum (HCF) VII to be organized in northern Norway 2012. The preparations have started in 2011.
HCF/NPS project list – updating

The most important part of Work Program is Barents Protected Areas Network (BPAN). The support for BPAN and its progress is very good. All countries and regions are participating. Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) has given a much appreciated financial support to BPAN for the year 2011. NCM noted that BPAN has a strong political support and gave maximal support. Finland prepares a new application for support next year 2012. National funding is also provided and of course needed.

The focus of BPAN work 2010 – 2011 is threefold:

1. Reporting format connected to CBD

A small project group developed the format for reporting in all project. It was developed and adopted in Nagoya at CBD-COP 10, 2010.

2. Geographical Information System to analyse and present data

Transparent World is leading this work with support from national specialists.

3. Communication in BPAN. BPAN frequently use Skype to facilitate communication. BPAN was presented at a side event in Nagoya at CBD - COP 10.

During the BPAN work it has become obvious that it is possible to continue the Green Belt into Scandinavia to also include Sweden.

In the fall 2010 it was agreed to make a feasibility study on Trieriksryisa – trilateral protected area (Finland, Sweden, Norway). The study is done but conclusions for continued work is not yet available.

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. Wetlands was a subject at HCF VI and will be kept for HCF VII.

A Conference on Cooperation between Botanical Gardens in the Barents Region was hosted by the Komi Republic in Syktyvkar 2010. NPS held an informal meeting in Botanical Garden of Syktyvkar in June 2011.

Any follow up project after ECORA in Nenets AO has not been possible to launch so far. A new GEF project is included in the CAFF Work plan “Biodiversity, traditional nature use and climate change in the Russian Arctic: assessment and adaptation strategy development”. The project has been presented to CAFF but no further information is available at present time. However such a project is relevant to NPS.

The More Yu project proposal for 2012 is up for possible inclusion in the HCF/NPS project list. This project is located in the Nenets AO.

Progress has been achieved on World Heritages Sites in the Barents Region in this period. A possible cooperation between Laponia and Yugid Va National Park has been discussed.

At HCF VI the issue of Sacred Sites was presented and discussed. This issue is linked to IUCN-UNESCO Sacred Natural Sites – Guidelines for Protected Area Management. The Forum expressed the need to consider cultural and spiritual values but did not prioritize further actions in HCF.

The Swedish County Administrative Board of Västerbotten chaired NPS between the ministerial in Tromsø 2010 and Umeå 2011 and also HCF until June 2010. The next chair in NPS will be provided by Finland and the chair in HCF is now from Norway.

NPS has had four meetings between ministerial meetings. The meetings have been in Arkhangelsk June 2010, in Umeå December 2010, in Syktyvkar June 2011 and in St. Petersburg November 2011.

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

The **Regional Working Group on Environment (RWGE)** held a meeting back to back with the WGE meeting in Komi June 2011. 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.

During 2011 the work of revising the Strategy and Action Program 2011-2014 has continued and many bilateral activities between the Nordic countries and a partner in the North-West of Russia are noted.

Within the group (RWGE) there is unfortunately a lack of participation of members from the North-West of Russia.