



BARENTS EURO-ARCTIC COUNCIL

BARENTS REGIONAL COUNCIL

Mandate for the Working Group on Economic Cooperation, WGEC

1. Objective

The main objective of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Working Group on Economic Cooperation (BEAC WGEC) is to promote sustainable and long-term economic development in the Barents region in line with Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals as well as the Paris Agreement. BEAC WGEC should aim to achieve this objective in close cooperation with the countries' private sectors.

2. Priority areas of cooperation

The WGEC aims to:

- be a source of information and network provider for the private sector in the Barents region in order to promote economic development in the region;
- promote sustainable economic activity and facilitate interaction between economic operators in the Barents region;
- increase interaction with other national and regional working groups as well as relevant sub-groups, by for example:
 - exploring ways of working closer with the Regional Working Group on Investments and Economic Cooperation (RWGIEC), including aligning mandates and facilitating joint or adjacent meetings,
 - encouraging increased cross-border cooperation in coordination with RWGIEC;
 - contributing to enhancing sustainable tourism in coordination with RWGIEC and the Joint Working Group on Tourism;

- establishing a platform for dialogue between young entrepreneurs in interaction with the Joint Working Group on Youth; exchanging best practices with the Barents Business Advisory Group (BBAG) and Barents Forest Sector Network (BFSN);
- build up the Working Group's interaction with the business circles of the Member Countries.

3. Method of work

Methods of work include:

- providing support to relevant regional and expert groups through for example, but not exclusively, the facilitation of meetings, policy support and access to networks;
- strengthening the knowledge base by participating in seminars and conferences, exchanging information and best practice as well as contacts in relevant areas or topics;
- cooperating with relevant international organizations/institutions where applicable;
- stimulating enhanced engagement of Member Countries in the current activities of WGEC.

The organizing and financing of activities should be agreed beforehand and include a clear description of the division of labour, time frame and budget.

Gender equality should be taken into account in the activities of the WGEC.

4. Decision-making

The WGEC has a consensus-based decision-making process.

5. Language

The working language of the WGEC is English.

6. Membership

Members of the WGEC are representatives of the governments of the respective member countries of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council. Each member country is responsible for nominating the delegate to the WGEC. If the delegate is unable to attend, it is the responsibility of the member country to nominate an alternate.

7. Chairmanship

The Chairmanship rotates between Finland, Norway, Russia and Sweden. The WGEC Chairmanship rotation is synchronized with the national BEAC Chairmanship. The Chair is responsible for proposing a work program for the WGEC during each two-year term. WGEC should select a vice-chair. The vice-chair should substitute when the Chair is unavailable. The Chair of the WGEC has the right and responsibility to convene the meetings. The WGEC should meet twice a year and have a continuous interaction between sessions. The Chair should circulate invitations to its meetings, a provisional agenda and related documents at least 30 days ahead of the meeting. The Chair is also responsible for drafting the protocol of the meetings. The duration of the WGEC Chairmanship is a maximum of two years.

The chairing country should facilitate events such as seminars or conferences which focus on business development and cooperation in the Barents region. The WGEC members should assist the host country in identifying and mobilizing potential participants from the business sector, organizations, institutions and authorities to the event in order to make it as relevant as possible.

8. Financing

The chairing country is responsible for financing the meetings of the WGEC. Each member country is responsible for financing the travel and accommodation of their own delegate/alternate as well as other national participants to the meetings. If a member country is in need of interpretation services, the costs and practical arrangements of the interpretation will be covered by that member country.

9. Communication

Regarding public communication, the WGEC should aim at utilizing the communication opportunities provided by the International Barents Secretariat. The WGEC should maintain an open and inviting communication policy, informing both the relevant regional groups as well as the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials on the activities of the group.

10. Reporting

Reporting of the activities of the WGEC should be done on a yearly basis using the reporting template provided by the International Barents Secretariat. The report is the responsibility of the Chair of the WGEC. If the report is due during the shift in Chairmanships, the former and new Chair should coordinate the report jointly.

11. Duration

This mandate is valid for five years from the date of its adoption.

12. Amendment and review

The BEAC WGEC should review its mandate at least once in every five years and make the needed amendments. The revised mandates should be approved by the BEAC Committee of Senior Officials (BEAC and Joint WGs) and by the Regional Committee (Regional and Joint WGs).

13. Other

This mandate has been approved and accepted by the Working Group on Economic Cooperation on the 13th of March 2019.