



Final 25.11.2013

Finnish Chairmanship of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council Working Group on Environment

Subgroup for "Hot Spots" Exclusion

Co-Chairs: Riitta Hemmi (Finland) and Maria Dronova (Russia)

Members: Henna Haapala (Finland), Åke Mikaelsson (Sweden), Nadezhda Maslova (Sweden), Anne Berteig (Norway)

Observers: Henrik Forsström (NEFCO), Ruslan Butovskiy (Fund for Sustainable Development)

SHE Report 2012-2013

The Subgroup of "Hot Spots" Exclusion (SHE) was established following the Ministerial Declaration, February 2010, Tromsø, Norway. The Barents Environment Ministers gave SHE the mandate to facilitate the process of Exclusion of the Russian Barents regions' hot spots (Murmansk, Arkhangelsk regions, Komi and Karelian Republics and Nenets Autonomous District) from the Barents Environmental "Hot Spots" List (the List), prepared by AMAP/NEFCO and Nordic-Russian Expert Group in 2003. The Ministerial meeting in Umeå 2011 declared to continue the mandate of the SHE-group in future.

Priority tasks achieved

Priority tasks of the Subgroup for Hot Spot Exclusion were determined in the Work Programme 2012-2013, May 25th 2012. The first priority was **to launch environmental measures in all of the hot spots in the List by 2013**. This task is fulfilled. The environmental improvements and activities were very different in character, stage of implementation and scale. The differences are due to the original selection and definitions of the 42 hot spots in the List. However, some forms of environmental improvements have been initiated at all hot spots. A lot of work and investments still remains to be done in many of the hot spots before the environmental issues connected to these hot spots are solved. The regional engagement (Regional Working Groups on "Hot Spots" exclusion, HEGs) has increased and further progress in many of the hot spots has been made.

The second priority was **to consider the revision and updating of the AMAP/NEFCO Hot Spot Report 2003**. The SHE group proposed and WGE approved to carry out an Assessment of the Barents Hot Spot Report, describing the state of all 42 originally included in the List of environmental hot spots. After a tendering and interviewing process with participation of Finland (as a WGE Chair), Russia and NEFCO *in December 2012 NEFCO assigned Consultant Akvaplan Niva AS, Norway, together with System Development Agency, ACP, Russia, to implement such an assessment.*

The Consultant's Assessment Report, May 2013, Part I, includes an *analysis of the environmental state of each of the 42 hot spots per May 31st 2013*. The assessment presents comprehensive information on each hot spot and the conclusion is that since the year 2003 certain measures aimed at tackling environmental problems associated with 42 hot spots have been launched at all 42 listed hot spots.

Part II of the Report gives the Consultant's *recommendations for the future*. The recommendations have been discussed thoroughly in the SHE group, with the HEGs and the Russian Federal Environmental Controlling Organisation, Rosprirodnadzor, and presented to the WGE. Based on these discussions SHE has launched discussion on how to continue the work with hot spots. (The Consultant also produced a Part III of the Report providing specific recommendations to NEFCO.)

The third priority set for the SHE group in 2012-2013 was **to strengthen information activities**. The SHE group's own *Communication Plan* was initiated during the Swedish Chairmanship and the work on the continued in 2013. The draft of Communication Plan defines objectives, stakeholders, key messages, channels of communication, level of transparency and deliverables with timelines for the communication efforts considered necessary to advance the further exclusion of "hot spots". The regional HEGs have not yet approved the plan. The checking of its relevance is going on. The SHE draft Communication Plan is compatible with the drafted WGE Communication Strategy 2014-2015.

Main activities and results

The SHE group has worked closely together with the HEGs in order to taking into account the priorities of the regions concerning individual hot spots. SHE has guided and encouraged the HEGs to provide appropriate Screening and Analysis reports on all hotspots within their respective area as well as well documented proposals on those hot spots that they regarded relevant for exclusion. The *General Exclusion Plan* has been a relevant tool to outline the regional priorities and update the status of each hot spot in the exclusion process. In 2012, SHE and the HEGs had two joint meetings, 10-11 April and June 26-27. Both meetings were organised as workshops to discuss the exclusion process and needed documentation to be supplied by HEGs for each hot spot. On February 14-15, 2013 in Helsinki, was arranged an expert workshop to discuss the hot spot exclusion proposals provided by the HEGs. It was arranged in a form of a video conference, where Nordic experts of specific fields were present. A joint meeting between SHE and the HEGs was organised in St. Petersburg, August 27 -28, to get acquainted with the Assessment Report, Parts I-II, May 2013. The SHE group has had 14 internal meetings during 2012-2013, both face to face and telephone meetings. The guiding principle has been to arrange meetings whenever necessary.

The goal was to receive *Screening & Analysis reports* for each on the list remaining 39 hot spots on the List before the end of 2013. The 31 analyses were received. Those reports, which included a proposal for exclusion have been translated into English, and passed over to the Nordic experts for assessment and comments. The regions made reasonable proposals of those hot spots they consider ready to be excluded. The Nordic experts have done a lot of work in getting familiar with and understanding the differences in reporting practices and Russian legislation and regulations. The regional HEGs were asked some supplementary and clarifying questions. Answers were received in due time and the Nordic expert assessments were given to the RF Ministry of Natural Resources and Ecology (MNRE) and Rosprirodnadzor and further back to the HEGs. Rosprirodnadzor's statements, when received, have provided necessary view of control authorities as well as additional reasoning for excluding or not excluding the hot spots. The Northwest Russia District Rosprirodnadzor's experts have been actively involved since the video meeting of SHE with Nordic experts February 14.-15. 2013.

Based on the Nordic Expert opinions and Rosprirodnadzor's reports, SHE proposes WGE and the Ministerial Meeting, 4– 5 December 2013, to exclude the following hot spots from the Barents Environmental Hot Spots List :

A2 Arkhangelsk Heat and Power Plant (AHPP), Arkhangelsk

N4 Handling of Mercury-Containing Wastes, Nenets Autonomous District

K1 Gas emissions from Kondopoga pulp and paper combined mill

The search for synergies and cooperation possibilities with other institutions within Barents and Arctic Council framework was continued in 2012-2013. The cooperation with the Cleaner production and environmentally sound consumption working group, CPESC, has been on-going. SHE participated in the Conference of the Best Environmental Practices in the Mining Sector, the main organiser being CPESC, in April 2013, in Rovaniemi. A number of synergies and coordination possibilities are identified in multilateral and bilateral projects related to cleaner production and the Barents Environmental hot spots. In the framework of the Norwegian-Russian bilateral cooperation cleaner production programmes target hot spot Ko7 Wood waste in The Komi Republic. Further, waste projects in Arkhangelsk oblast and the Komi Republic target hot spots A6/A8 and Ko6 respectively. The Swedish-Russian international project "Training course on BAT-based environmental permitting for representatives of authorities and business in the Barents region. The mining and metallurgy sector", ("Pajala" project) was implemented in 2011-2012. Russian participants representing all administrative units of Barents region and hot spots, MNRE RF and State Duma RF were acquainted with the use of BAT in permit granting. The project internet platform is <http://www.pajalaproject.org> .

One of the activities of SHE in 2012-2013 aimed to strengthen the cooperation with the Arctic Contaminants Action Program (ACAP). The SHE group's tasks and activities were presented and information was provided concerning the progress of the hot spots exclusion process at the ACAP WG Steering Group Meeting, 12.-13 February 2013 in St. Petersburg. ACAP Chair informed about the work of ACAP for the Barents WGE and SHE at the WGE meeting, 4-6 September 2013 in Oulu. On November 7-8, 2013 ACAP Mercury Working Group's Steering Committee will have their meeting in St. Petersburg where a SHE representative will be present as observer.

Northern Dimension Environmental Partnership projects in the Barents Region were presented by the NDEP Manager at the WGE meeting, 4-6 September in Oulu. Exchange of information and experiences was also organised with the Helsinki Commission, HELCOM. A representative of HELCOM was invited to attend the SHE Workshop, 15 February 2013 to present HELCOM's hot spot work and results. A discussion on lessons learnt lead to a fruitful brainstorming on how to continue the work with the Barents Environmental Hot Spots.