

Minutes from the Meeting of the Joint Working Group in Tourism of the Barents Euro Arctic Council

Date: November 13th, 2018

Venue: Elizabeth Hotel Riga

Chair: Monica Lejon, Regional Council of Norrbotten

Minutes: Satu Luro

Time: Lunch 11.30, meeting 12.30 - 16.00, workshop 16.00 - 18.00, networking dinner 19.00

Participants:

Kairi Pääsuke, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten

Monica Lejon, Norrbotten County Council

Erika Rosander, Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth

Heikki Ojala, Council of Oulu

Anna Isäeva, Federal Agency for Tourism, International Cooperation Department

Satu Luro, Regional Council of Lapland

Hanna Mari Kuhmonen, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment in Finland

Tuomo Tahvanainen, Region of Kainuu

Eva Furmark, Swedish Transport Administration

Roman Gokkoev, IBS

Fredrik Runsiö, Consultant, Reformklubben

1. Opening of the meeting

Introduction: Monica welcomed the participants

Minutes: Satu will write the minutes

Participants: listed above, everybody introduced themselves

Approval of the minutes from last meeting: Approved

Approval of the Agenda: Approved

2. Mandates approved with modified changes

Decision: The mandate was approved by the participants

3. Introduction – Information from Sweden

Erika Rosander from the Swedish Agency for economic and Regional Growth, presentation attached.

Decision: To be noted for information

4. The State of Play from countries

Each participant gave a short summary of the situation and breaking news from their own region/country:

IBS, Roman Gokkoev: Presentation attached. Website Barentscooperation.org as an information channel. If you notice that something should be changed/added on JWGT's website, please contact Roman. Greetings from Komi: Accessible Arctic Tourism Forum. Tourist Forums also in Sotshi and Murmansk.

Sweden, Monica Lejon and Kairi Pääsuke:

Elections have brought many changes. Cross sectoral regional level co-operation in environmental and tourism issues. Improvement e.g. to trail conditions. Excellent and fruitful co-operation.

Finland, National level, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, Hanna-Mari Kuhmonen:

- National Tourism Strategy will be updated next year
- European Tourism Forum in Helsinki
- Helsinki won the award: European Smart Capital on Tourism

Kainuu, Tuomo Tahvanainen: Good year, growth +17 in international overnight stays. Chinese are interested about sport facilities, also Russian market is growing.

Northern Ostrobothnia, Heikki Ojala: Presentation attached.

Lapland, Satu Luiro: Statistics show good development and growth in Lapland, reg. overnight stays +2,2. Also the coming winter seems very good. 680 charter flights expected in December and there are many direct flights as well.

Russia, Anna Isaeva:

- Agency is moved under the Ministry of Economic Development
- General Assembly of UNWTO in Autumn
- Gastronomic Tourism Map, Pilot region Murmansk

Decision: To be noted for information.

5. An update on the Barents WG activities

IBS, Roman Gokkoev: Presentation attached. Website Barentscooperation.org as an information channel. Important information is available on the website, like minutes from all the WG's meetings and event calendar.

Greetings from Komi: Accessible Arctic Tourism Forum. Tourist Forums also in Sotshi and Murmansk.

Decision: To be noted for information. If you notice that something should be changed/added on JWGT's website, please contact Roman.

6. The Arctic Destination Programme

Hanna-Mari Kuhmoisen's presentation attached. Programme aims to increase sustainable tourism in the Arctic. Target markets Germany and UK.

Discussion about "one pager" and informative seminars and/or communication campaign. One pager is under work, Kairi will send the first version to WG for comments. It should be ready in December. The goal is to spread information further, maybe even organize a seminar of the sustainable tourism.

Decision: One pager will be made ready and the IBS will help in spreading the information. Planning will be started, how to spread the communication further.

7. Winter Wonders 2018 in Brussels

Tuomo Tahvanainen's presentation attached.

Kainuu will represent Finland in the Winter Wonders event. It is the biggest event ever representing Finland in Brussels and it will be arranged on 30.11 - 6.1.2018. Huge international visibility. Christmas market, but also more. Christmas market in the spirit of Kalevala.

Barents Nature photography exhibition 30.11. - 6.1.2018 in the Finnish Embassy of Belgium in Brussels.

8. Gastronomic tourism

Anna Isaeva: Project on gastronomy tourism in Russia. Murmansk has been selected to be the pilot region. Actions include e.g. Identification of the arctic cuisine as a brand, developing the gastronomic map, organizing events and festival (Taste of Arctic) etc. Next gastronomic map will be made from Arkhangelsk.

Other Barents regions are invited to participating the project and present their products and cuisine.

Decision: To be noted for information. Anna will send the information about the event dates and others will spread the idea to their own networks. The discussion also with the WG's of Youth (and food?).

9. Tourism Quality and Sustainability Programmes, Labels and Criteria in the Barents Region

The proposal of "one pager" was already discussed in the section 6.

10. Further steps in cooperation with WG on Transport

Eva Furman: presentation attached. JWGT as an expert group for the Joint Barents Transport Plan. VAE project has produced good data, but the more is needed, especially from the Ostrobothnia and Kainuu regions and from Russia. From the whole Barents region is needed e.g. commercial guest nights, numbers of flight passenger, tourism related investments, tourism hot spots and descriptions about the tourism in different regions. Data is needed by the end January 2019.

The JWGT can also make suggestions about what could be included to the plan.

There was discussion about who could collect the data. Kainuu is leading the project "Barents Region Transport and Logistics". Rauno Kurtti is a project manager. They have an extra person making the data collection. Maybe this project could help in data collection.

Satu Luiro told the news from VAE2 project and informed the group about Open Arctic MaaS project that has started in Lapland. There's also an initiative from VAE2 to start developing cross border public transportation. As a start VAE2 has invited all the traffic authorities from three countries to the meeting in Rovaniemi.

Decision: For data collection it was decided to arrange Skype meeting with the key people and ask WG on Transport more time for the data collection.

Tuomo, and Satu will contact Rauno Kurtti and will investigate if is it possible to make those studies within the ongoing project. To get more information how the studies was made in the VAE (Visit Arctic Europe), Rauno Posio is the key person to say that.

Anna Isaeva will contact the needed authorities in Russia to gather quickly the required data for future Barents Transport and Communication Plan.

11. Other matters

12. Date and place of the next meeting

The next meeting will be held in Norrbotten, Kiruna 10-11 of June 2019 with study visits.

13. Workshop for a new action plan

Fredrik Runsiö, Consultant, Reformklubben

14. Summary and close

Monica Lejon thanked everybody for the very productive meeting.

Networking dinner at 19.00 o'clock (County Administrative Board of Norrbotten)

Memo by Satu LUIRO