



Protocol of Regional Working Group on Investments and Economic Cooperation

Date: 3 September 2012, at 12.00-16.00 (local time)

Venue: Swedish Federation of Business Owners, Luleå, Sweden

Attendees:

Kjell Hjelm, Swedish Federation of Business Owners, Norrbotten, Sweden
Kari Huotari, Swedish Federation of Business Owners, Norrbotten, Sweden
Torbjörn Halvardsson, Swedish Federation of Business Owners, Västerbotten, Sweden
Jorma Teittinen, Joint Authority of Kainuu Region, Finland
Ilkka Yliniemi, Council of Oulu Region, Finland
Roman Gokkoev, Council of Oulu Region, Finland
Brynolf Tjärner, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten, Sweden
Sari Roininen, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten, Sweden

Not attending:

Sergey Mikhailovich Averin, Ministry of Economic Development in the Arkhangelsk Region, Russia
Trond Skotvold, Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise, Troms, Norway
Martti Kankaanranta, Organisation of SME-enterprises in Western Lapland, Finland

Agenda:

- 1. Opening of the meeting** The chair opens the meeting and brief presentations of the attending members were made.
- 2. Adoption of the agenda.** Some additions to the agenda were made. A discussion of the Russian participation in the working group was added as item 10.
- 3. Election of secretary of the protocol.** Sari Roininen was chosen as secretary.
- 4. Previous meeting and protocol.** The protocol from the previous meeting was recited and adopted.
- 5. Information from the chair.**
The chair started with information from the meeting of the national working group on economic cooperation (WGEC), which took place in April in Oslo, Norway. The chairs of both national and regional working groups agreed on continuing with future cooperation and the chair of the regional working group to participate on the national working group meetings. Kjell handled out a copy of the meeting in Oslo to all attendees of the meeting in Luleå.

He further announced that a conference on economic cooperation, with emphasis on cross border cooperation in the mineral sector, is planned to take place in spring 2013. More information will come from the WGEC.

The joint working group on education and research (JWGER) has invited RWGEIC to a meeting in end of November 2012, in Arkhangelsk, in order to exchange experiences and points of views. Brynolf Tjärner also told that the chairmanship of the Barents Regional Council and Committee plans together with North Sweden, the EU-office of Norrbotten and Västerbotten in Brussels, to create a project to extend and exchange knowledge, information and other things through Internet, IT and video conference techniques. The universities could thus develop their research together with small companies and authorities like us for instance. Funding for research and innovation could be sought from Horizon 2020 or FP7.

All working groups have an opportunity to comment on the Action Plan of on Climate Change by 10th of September. Ilkka Yliniemi stated that a consideration should be taken to the sulfide directives since it creates unfair conditions of competition. It will thus have some consequences for companies in North.

6. Information about the Russian-Swedish- Council.

Kari Huotari informed about the Russian-Swedish-Council and why it has been established. Nowadays there are large investments in Barents, mainly in mining, off-shore, infrastructure and energy. But small businesses are unable to make business or develop relations in Russia. Most of them need help with contacts and other things considering cross-border cooperation and contacts with authorities. There is a lot of misunderstanding between people and companies. Norrbotten and Murmansk has also in 2007 made an agreement on economic cooperation.

7. Information on High North Conference in Oslo.

Brynolf Tjärner informed about the 4th conference in industry, mining and minerals. It is ambassadors in Barents who will arrange this conference at Voksenåsen in Oslo on 14-15 November 2012. There will be high level participation and the Regional council and committee will also have their meetings in connection to the conference (13-14/11).

8. Discussion of an application on a Nordic Border Barrier Manual.

The funding for a Nordic manual on Border Barriers will be applied for from Nordic Council of Ministers.

One important discussion was how to include Russia in this project. The working group decided to use the Russian-Swedish-Council as an opening for Russian participation in the project.

The manual should be public, and Digipolis owns Partnerbook today. We don't thus yet know how to distribute the manual or the cost of it.

Partners should be Gränstjänst in Sweden, Finland and Norway, Russian-Swedish-Council and Digipolis.

All members of the working group are requested to send written feedback on the project application to Sari Roininen (sari.roininen@lansstyrelsen.se) **no later than 17 September 2012**. What can everybody contribute with and how can we make the application even better. Especially a calculation of a budget is important, and the commitment of partners. All members should also consider how to include Barents in the project in order to receive other EU funding.

Trond Skotvold, Norway, has through an e-mail declared his commitment to the project.

The continuance of the project application will be accomplished through e-mail and, if needed, telephone meetings.

9. Cooperation with the national working group on Economic Cooperation.

The cooperation will continue as agreed upon at the last meeting of WGEC in Oslo.

10. Discussion of Russian participation in RWGEIC

The working group regret the missing contact with Russian member of the group and wishes to include a representative from the Russian Federation of Business or Chamber of Commerce. There might be a need to contact the secretary of Ministry of Economic Development to give suggestions of members and make an official decision of that membership. Another option would be to contact Larisa Glasko in Arkhangelsk and ask for help in this matter.

Brynolf Tjärner suggested the chair of the working group to write a letter about the difficulties to the Regional Committee. The committee could then bring it up at the next meeting.

11. Any other business.

12. Next meeting.

Next meeting is suggested to take place in Murmansk or Arkhangelsk around 20th May 2013, in connection to some fair or other event. A wide range of contacts should be involved to make a good program.

13. Closing of the meeting.