

4 October, 2012

Guidelines for the Steering Committee and the Working Group of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia by 2020

1. FRAMEWORK

1.1 Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) - Definition of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia was signed on 17 February, 2010, in Tromsø, Norway. It expresses and confirms the jointly agreed determination to invigorate cooperation in the development of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia on the basis of ecologically, economically, culturally and socially sustainable development. The MoU is not an international agreement and does not create any rights or obligations under international law for the Signatories.

The Green Belt of Fennoscandia includes physically the existing and planned protected areas of differing status and enables the inclusion of planned protected areas when established, along the Finnish-Russian, Norwegian-Russian, and Finnish-Norwegian state borders. The physical borders should be assessed more exactly at meetings of the Working Group. Each country follows its own established procedures in the designation of new protected areas.

The Green Belt of Fennoscandia enhances the ecological connectivity of the protected areas and offers a unique opportunity for studying and monitoring climate change.

In addition to being a physical entity, the Green Belt of Fennoscandia, as a concept, has a functional character, which can promote regional and municipal activities in the border areas. The Signatories promote cooperation on the Green Belt of Fennoscandia by regional and municipal border areas and their administrations, protected areas of differing status, enterprises, scientific institutions, non governmental organizations and other bodies. The Signatories, within the framework of their jurisdiction, express their intention to encourage cooperation at regional level and to make all necessary efforts to ensure that the existing and planned protected areas in question are equipped to address transboundary cooperation.

1.2 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) as the main framework for developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia

The Goals and Targets of the CBD **Decision X/2, Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020** have a great relevance in the context of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia. All three parties are committed to implement The CBD Strategic Plan and the Green Belt of Fennoscandia is recognized to be a priority area of trilateral cooperation in this regard. The Strategic Plan will be further analyzed and operational conclusions will be drawn on the basis of this analysis. Particularly relevant are following Goals and Targets:

Strategic goal A. Address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss by mainstreaming biodiversity across government and society

Target 1: By 2020, at the latest, people are aware of the values of biodiversity and the steps they can take to conserve and use it sustainably.

Strategic goal B. Reduce the direct pressures on biodiversity and promote sustainable use

Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced.

Target 9: By 2020, invasive alien species and pathways are identified and prioritized, priority species are controlled or eradicated, and measures are in place to manage pathways to prevent their introduction and establishment.

Strategic goal C. Improve the status of biodiversity by safeguarding ecosystems, species and genetic diversity

Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.

Strategic goal D: Enhance the benefits to all from biodiversity and ecosystem services

Target 14: By 2020, ecosystems that provide essential services, including services related to water, and contribute to health, livelihoods and well-being, are restored and safeguarded, taking into account the needs of women, indigenous and local communities, and the poor and vulnerable.

Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

Strategic goal E. Enhance implementation through participatory planning, knowledge management and capacity-building

Target 18: By 2020, the traditional knowledge, innovations and practices of indigenous and local communities relevant for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and their customary use of biological resources, are respected, subject to national legislation and relevant international obligations, and fully integrated and reflected in the implementation of the Convention with the full and effective participation of indigenous and local communities, at all relevant levels.

Target 19: By 2020, knowledge, the science base and technologies relating to biodiversity, its values, functioning, status and trends, and the consequences of its loss, are improved, widely shared and transferred, and applied.

Target 20: By 2020, at the latest, the mobilization of financial resources for effectively implementing the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 from all sources, and in accordance with the consolidated and agreed process in the Strategy for Resource Mobilization, should increase substantially from the current levels. This target will be

subject to changes contingent to resource needs assessments to be developed and reported by Parties.

1.3 Green Belt of Fennoscandia and the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas

The CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas (PoWPA) includes a specific goal for transboundary protected areas. Goal 1.3 reads as follows: **"To establish and strengthen regional networks, transboundary protected areas (TBPAs) and collaboration between neighbouring protected areas across national boundaries"** To reach this goal, the PoWPA suggests following activities of the Parties

1.3.1 Collaborate with other parties and relevant partners to establish effective regional networks of protected areas, particularly in areas identified as common conservation priorities (e.g. barrier reef systems, large scale river basins, mountain systems, large remaining forest areas and critical habitat for endangered species), and establish multi-country coordination mechanisms as appropriate to support the establishment and effective long term management of such networks.

1.3.3 Establish, where appropriate, new TBPAs with adjacent Parties and countries and strengthen effective collaborative management of existing TBPAs.

1.3.4 Promote collaboration between protected areas across national boundaries.

The MoU gives a robust guiding for Norway, Russia and Finland how to implement the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

2. ORGANIZING THE WORK

2.1 Steering committee of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia

Each country nominates the representatives of the Steering Committee. Also advisers will be invited to the meetings. The Steering Committee meets once – twice a year, and communicates between them by phone conferences, if/when necessary. Next meeting will be organized in late spring 2013.

The Steering committee is responsible of overall follow up of the Green Belt activities and general communication policy.

Steering Committee will follow-up and review these Guidelines frequently or as appropriate, in consultation with trilateral Working Group and National Authorities.

2.2 Trilateral Working Group of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia

Each country nominates the representatives of the trilateral Working Group (WG). This working group will meet frequently to coordinate and implement prioritized activities. Thematic task force groups may be established as appropriate. They may be project based.

2.3 National working groups of Green Belt of Fennoscandia

Each country organizes the work of the national working group for national and eventual international work other than mentioned in 2.2. Finland will establish a national working group in autumn 2012.

2.4 Relevant biodiversity cooperation bodies

According to the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Finland, the Ministry of the Environment of the Kingdom of Norway and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment of the Russian Federation on cooperation on the development of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia signed 17th of February 2010.

The main bodies that will develop and follow up the cooperation on the Green Belt of Fennoscandia are:

1. The Finnish-Russian Working Group on Nature Protection under the Joint Finnish-Russian Environmental Commission is working in Russia and Finland. It promotes the conservation of biodiversity and the development of a network of protected areas (PAs) in the Northwest Russia, in Finland near the border with Russia and in the Finnish-Russian territory of the Baltic Sea, while paying particular attention to the implementation of the Russian-Finnish-Norwegian Memorandum of Understanding on the development of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia.
2. Green Belt of Fennoscandia is a priority project of the Joint Norwegian-Russian Environmental Commission. The Commission was created under the Agreement between the Government of the Kingdom of Norway and the Government of the Russian Federation on Cooperation in the field of Environmental Protection of 3rd September 1992.
3. The Steering Committee welcomes the collaboration with the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Working Group on Environment, in particular its Nature Protection Subgroup, which has members from all the Barents countries: Finland, Russia, Norway and Sweden. Developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia is one of the priority projects in the Work Programme for 2012-2013, and in addition, it has strong links with the aim to promote the protection and secure the last remaining pristine forests in the Barents Region and develop the Barents Protected Area Network (BPAN) project. The activities under the Green Belt of Fennoscandia initiative will be followed-up in the subgroup meetings twice a year.

Initiative of the European Green Belt

Developing the Green Belt of Fennoscandia will be coordinated together with the European Green Belt initiative. Regional coordinator/NGO representative/national focal point will be nominated.

If needed, coordinated activities in collaboration with the other conventions and initiatives such as Ramsar convention and its regional initiative NorBalWet for wetland protection will be assessed and organized according to guidance given by the Steering Committee.

ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (CBD) of Finland 2012-2020:

Planned Activities of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia:

- Finland enhances the creation of the transboundary Green Belt of Fennoscandia in cooperation with Russia and Norway.
- Conservation, biological research and development projects including climate change and its consequences for habitats and species and invasive alien species will be launched. Active international research and expert cooperation will be continued to prepare possible climate change adaptation strategies in the Baltic Sea area.
- The Kalevala Park in Finnish side will be established and a plan for establishing other protected areas in Finnish side of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia will be made as a part of wider development project of protected areas. The twin park cooperation will be continued using EU funding. UNESCO's Biosphere reserve concept will be applied to Finnish - Russian transboundary co-operation to increase links to the society and actions across the border using experiences of North Karelia BR and Nature Park "Friendship" with main funding from regional and international EU sources.
- A National working group for the Green Belt of Fennoscandia will be established. A trilateral working group for coordinating initiatives and cooperation between Norway, Russia and Finland and with The European Green Belt initiative will be established.
- Regional Councils, municipalities, indigenous people and other local actors are encouraged to take part in development of Green Belt cooperation. Local stakeholders are encouraged to launch projects for regional development and ecotourism.

Responsible ministries in Finland:

Ministry of the Environment, Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry

[Time schedule: 2012–2020]