

Event 6th JMC Meeting of the Kolarctic CBC 2014–2020 Programme
Date 29.11.2018 (09:32 – 15:20)
Location Hotel Katajanokka (Merikasarminkatu 1 A, Helsinki, Finland)
Language The meeting was held in English.

PARTICIPANTS OF THE MEETING

Members and Deputy Members

Finland Petri Haapalainen, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
 Helinä Yli-Knuutila, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment
 Birgit Autere, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (left the meeting after lunch)
 Olli Mourujärvi, Lapland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment
 Taina Torvela, Lapland Entrepreneurs (left the meeting at 15 o'clock)

Norway Lisbeth Nylund, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation
 Elin Eikeland, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Remi Strand, Finnmark County Council
 Irene Dahl, Troms County Council
 Sonja Alice Steen, Nordland County Council

Russia Syuzanna Vatfa, Ministry of Economic Development
 Igor Kapyrin, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Ilya Ostapchuk, Murmansk Region
 Sergey Kungurtsev, Nenets Autonomous District
 Elena Demidova, Arkhangelsk Region

Sweden Maria Eriksson, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation
 Johan Antti, County Administrative Board of Norrbotten
 Glenn Berggård, Region Norrbotten

Other participants

Karine Leroy, TESIM
 Colm McClements, PARTICIP (left the meeting after lunch)
 Zdenek Dvorak, NO RAG, deputy member
 Sergei Khalizov, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
 Kari Rouvinen, Ministry of Finance, Finland (was present 13:05 – 13:35)
 Päivi Ekdahl, Regional Council of Lapland
 Kairi Pääsuke, Luleå Branch Office
 Jan M. Solstad, Vadsø Branch Office
 Linda Mosand, Vadsø Branch Office
 Julia Korshunova, Murmansk Branch Office
 Olga Klisheva, Arkhangelsk Branch Office
 Riikka Oittinen, Managing Authority
 Marjaana Lahdenranta, Managing Authority
 Renata Musifullina, Managing Authority (left the meeting at 15 o'clock)
 Katja Kursu, secretary of the meeting, Managing Authority

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

1. Opening of the meeting, approval of the Agenda of the meeting

The Chairman of the JMC Petri Haapalainen opened the meeting at 09:32. The updated list of JMC members and deputy members (**Annex 1**) and the meeting Agenda were presented. A few additions to the Agenda were announced. Colm McClements from Particip gives an overview on the ROM mission and the report in the point 6 of the Agenda. Ari Huhtala from the project 'Kolarctic Food Refining CBC Project' gives a short presentation on their project right after lunch. Päivi Ekdahl from Regional Council of Lapland gives a short overview on Arctic Cooperation in the point 11 of the Agenda.

Decision:

Participants of the meeting were notified and the quorum was established. The changes in the list of the JMC Members and Deputy Members were presented by the Chairman and noted by the meeting. The Declaration of Impartiality and Confidentiality was not handed out because no funding applications were discussed at the meeting. The additions to the meeting Agenda were approved.

2. State of Play of the Kolarctic CBC 2014–2020 Programme

Syuzanna Vatfa (Ministry of Economic Development) told that the estimated timetable of transferring the Russian co-financing to the Programme is December 2018.

Riikka Oittinen (Programme Manager, MA) gave a presentation on the status of the contracting of the projects from the 1st and 2nd Calls for Proposals and committed financing (**Annex 1**): There are 10 standard projects and one LIP contracted. The remaining 8 standard projects will be contracted by the end of 2018, and the 2 LIPs at the end of 2018/beginning of 2019. The name of the Lead Partner of Raja-Jooseppi LIP will change at the beginning of 2019 from the Finnish Transport Agency to Transport Infrastructure Agency.

There is EU financing left 5,45 M€ in total, Programme financing 16,53 M€. The sums of remaining financing will be adjusted during the contracting process. In the 3rd Call there will most probably be a lot of applications in TO6 and TO1, but quite small amounts EU financing left. In TO7 and TO10 there is more EU financing remaining, but applications are expected less, especially in TO10. The JMC discussed about transferring some EU financing from one TO to another, within the permitted limit of 20%. The JMC will make the decision about possible transfer in the meeting when making the decisions on the projects.

Kairi Pääsuke (Senior Advisor, BO Sweden) gave a short overview on the Sweden Branch offices' work. There are many project negotiations going on in TO1 and TO6 categories, but it is harder to find good projects in TO7. Anyhow, there are interesting project applications coming.

Jan M. Solstad (Programme Coordinator, BO Norway) gave an update on the Norway Branch offices' work. There will be a good number of applications, small companies are encouraged to participate.

Julia Korshunova (Head of the Russian BO) gave an overview on the Russian Branch offices' work. Round table discussions and a several face-to-face consultations were organized in Arkhangelsk, Naryan-Mar and Murmansk. Project applications are coming especially to TO1 and TO6.

Olga Klisheva (Coordinator for the Arkhangelsk region and Nenets Autonomous District, Arkhangelsk) gave an overview of the public events that were organized for applicants in Arkhangelsk: International conference “Nordic and Russian NGOs building bridges” in May; thematic section at the 10th International Conference of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Russia and Finland in September; an open lecture on international project management and cooperation possibilities in October; a round table discussion within the framework of Strategic Leaders Forum in Saint-Petersburg in October. About 100 participants at events listed above (4 events jointly). Olga Klisheva has also translated Programme’s documents in Russian language and they are published in the Programme’s website.

Petri Haapalainen (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment) told that the situation of transfer of responsibilities of external cooperation programmes from DG NEAR to DG REGIO need more attention and time from EU representatives. The transfer will not take place at the beginning of 2019, as was indicated earlier.

Decision:

The JMC took note of the presentations and information. The JMC expressed its deep concern about the situation of transfer of responsibilities of external cooperation programmes from DG NEAR to DG REGIO.

3. Presentation on Programme progress indicators.

Renata Musifullina, CBC Expert, MA gave a presentation on Programme progress indicators (**Annex 2**) and highlighted the importance of monitoring the implementation of the Programme by using progress indicators. The monitoring results will be presented to JMC in spring 2019.

Decision:

The JMC took note of the information.

4. Approval of the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan 2018-2019 (on the new template, to be annexed to the Annual Report 2017-2018), Annex 2

The JMC approved the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan 2018-2019 in its 7th Written Procedure in June, 2018. After the JMC’s approval, the European Commission launched a new template for Monitoring and Evaluation Plan, to be taken into use already in the M&E Plan 2018-2019. The data from the approved M&E Plan 2018-2019 is transferred to the new template, and the required additional information according to the new template is added.

Decision:

The JMC discussed about discrepancies in the scores given by different RAGs, and dealing with possible ones in the 3rd Call. It was found that the evaluation process in the 3rd Call will show whether the updated evaluation grid is able to narrow the differences. It was decided that the MA will send the applications with big differences in RAG scores to the JMC in two weeks after 21.2.2018, right after the RAGs have finished the evaluation process. The JMC approved the Monitoring and Evaluation Plan with no changes.

5. Approval of the Annual Report 2017-2018

The Annexes to the Annual Report 2017-2018 (Work Programme 2018-2019, Financial plan and planned use of the TA 2018-2019, Information and Communication Plan 2018-2019, Risk Management Plan 2018-2019) have been approved in the 7th Written Procedure in June, 2018.

The latest Audit Strategy is updated 29.9.2017. The Audit Authority will send an update to the Group of Auditors for comments in December, and the updated Strategy will be sent to the European Commission by 15.2.2019, as an annex to the Annual Report 2017-2018.

Riikka Oittinen gave a presentation on the Financial Part of the Annual Report (**Annex 3**).

Decision:

It was found that the Technical Assistance budget is limited and must be used economically. Savings will be made for example in travelling costs by using Skype meetings, and in translation costs by translating documents by the Programme staff.

The JMC approved the Annual Report with the following changes in the Technical Part:

- Page 13, paragraph about the Norwegian BO to be replaced with this text proposed by Lisbeth Nylund (Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation) :
"The complexity of the Program makes it very useful having a contact point in Norway, serving applicants and potential applicants. The BO assists in applying to the programme and offer technical assistance for writing applications. Larger organizations have resources dedicated to writing applications, and have more experience with cross border cooperation. There is huge potential, though, for recruiting SMEs, NGOs and other small organisations, and the Norwegian BO tries to give additional assistance to the sectors less represented in the project portfolio."
- Information about the designation of the MA to be added.
- Page 13, paragraph about the Financing Agreement negotiation to be replaced with this text proposed by Syuzanna Vatfa (Ministry of Economic Development) :
"Time consuming procedure applied for the ratification process of the Financing Agreement by the RF and designation process of the MA by the EC delayed launching of the approved projects which affected the implementation phase of the Programme . The Financing Agreement was ratified on 03.08.2018. The designation notice from the EC was received by the MA on 28.3.2018. According to the article 13 of the FA, the Agreement shall enter into force on the first day of the second month following the date on which the Commission receives the last notification from the Russian Federation or the Member State or the other Participating Country confirming the completion of the internal procedures necessary for its entry into force. Thus, the FA entered into force on October 1st 2018. National Authorities ensured the necessary national procedures that were required."
- Page 17, paragraph about the National Authority work to be replaced with this text
"The Finnish National Authority has been responsible for allocation of the Finnish national co-financing to the Programme."

For dealing the Annual Report 2018-2019, the MA will provide the JMC with a summary of the Financial Part, and check which annexes inevitably have to be sent to the JMC. The MA

will also prepare a presentation for the JMC for orientation, bringing up questions to which the JMC has to pay special attention.

6. Information about the ROM mission carried out in the Programme

Colm Mc Clements (ROM Quality Control, Particip) gave an overview on the ROM mission made to the Programme in October 2018. The ROM expert is currently working with the report and will send it to the EU Commission in the nearest days, and the Commission will send it to the MA for comments by 15.12.2018.

Decision:

The JMC took note of the information. The MA will send the ROM report to the JMC as soon as gets it from the EU Commission.

The JMC had a lunch break 11:40–13:06.

After lunch, Ari Huhtala (Senior Consultant, NordConsult Oy) gave a presentation on ongoing Kolarctic Food Refining CBC Project (KO2072). The overall objective of this project is to improve the viability of the economy in arctic regions Murmansk, Nenets and Lapland, by developing the use of the ecologically pure and healthy nature products from these regions. More information can be found on project's website www.kolarcticfood.com.

7. Presentation of the audit activities

Kari Rouvinen (Ministry of Finance, Finland) from the Audit Authority gave a presentation on the implemented audit activities (**Annex 4**). Audit Authority performs in 6 programmes, and is a member of the Group of Auditors in 7 Interreg programmes. Its responsibilities in ENI CBC Programmes are to make audit strategies and system audits, to audit operations, the use of technical assistance and annual accounts, to give audit opinions and annual audit reports. Audit Authority performs annually 5-8 system audits and 80-100 sample audits. Audits in the ENI CBC Programmes in the Russian Federation will be outsourced. The Terms of Reference for the audits in the Russian Federation will be developed together with the AA and GoA. All the CBC Programmes have the same auditor in Russia, in Finland nearly the same.

Decision:

The JMC took note of the information.

8. For information: The transfer of the planned additional ERDF funding from CBC Programmes to Interreg Programmes

Päivi Ekdahl (Development Director, the Regional Council of Lapland) gave information before lunch. The additional ERDF funding that was planned to be given to the CBC Programmes within midterm evaluation can not be used in CBC Programmes after all, because the lack of the matching ENI funding. Due to this, the ERDF funding reserved for the Finnish-Russian CBC Programmes will be allocated to Interreg Programmes. The funding reserved for Kolarctic CBC and Karelia CBC Programmes (18 million) will be allocated to Interreg North at the beginning of year 2019. The CBC Programmes didn't have to perform anything in this regard. Despite an unfortunate situation for CBC programmes, it is from the viewpoint of the North good that the funds remain to be used in the same programme area.

Decision:

The JMC took note of the information.

9. Biannual Stakeholders' Conferences in Russia in 2019, 2021 and 2023

Riikka Oittinen told about the common initiative of SEFR CBC, Karelia CBC and Kolarctic CBC Programmes to organise a biannual Stakeholders' Conference in Russia. The aim of the conferences would be to increase the visibility of the CBC Programmes, to promote their achievements and to demonstrate the added value of the cooperation to the programme stakeholders and key decision-makers in Russia. The conferences would also offer a platform for discussions on the future of the cross-border cooperation and other initiatives. The MAs of the Programmes preliminary propose that the Conference would take place in Murmansk 22-23.5.2019, the second in Petrozavodsk in 2021, and the third in St.Petersburg in 2023.

Decision:

There will be a joint working group (WG) established for the development of the concept, planning and preparation of the event. The Russian National Authority and the Russian BOs (Kolarctic, Karelia, SEFR) will be involved in participation in the working group, together with the MAs of the three RU-FI Programmes. The possible date of the first Stakeholder Conference is under negotiations. The concept, date and place will be also agreed with the Norwegian and Swedish National Authorities.

10. Information and discussion on the plans on Post2020.

The Chairman gave an overview on the situation of planning of the next programme period. The preparation is in a starting phase and the discussion will continue during the next year. The Financial framework of the new programmes is planned to be decided before summer 2019, but most probably, it will take more time. EU funding of the external border cooperation will come from two sources (50/50), Cohesion Policy funding and funding for the Neighbourhood Development and International Cooperation Instrument. CBC on the EU external border and Interreg programmes will be placed under the same regulation. The preparation of financing agreement should start now, not after the approval of the programme document. The Chairman noted that it's important to consult Russia and Norway at early stage of the process. The Chairman's presentation on EU budget 2021-2027 is annexed to the Minutes (**Annex 5**).

Decision:

The JMC discussed and took note of the information.

11. Any other business

Päivi Ekdahl gave a short overview on Arctic Cooperation. The Arctic Programmes were presented in the European Week of Regions and Cities held in October 8-11 in Brussels. During the week, the Regional Northern European Arctic Partnership organized in Scotland House a network event on sustainable development of the Arctic Region for the benefit of all Europe, and the Arctic Award winners were published and the prize was given in the event. The second Arctic Programmes Clustering Event was held in November in Rovaniemi, with almost 120 participants gathered together to discuss cooperation between the Arctic projects.

Johan Antti (County Administrative Board of Norrbotten) informed about changes in the SE RAG members: new member Per-Anders Jonsson and new deputy member Iris Mäntyranta will replace former members Pontus Grahn and Junaid Rabail from County Administrative Board of Norrbotten.

12. Next meeting

The next JMC meeting will be held on 11-12 of April 2019 in Stockholm.

13. Closing of the meeting

The Chairman closed the meeting at 15:20 Finnish time.

Petri Haapalainen
Chairman of the JMC

Katja Kursu
Secretary of the JMC

List of Annexes:

- Annex 1** Presentation on the status of contracting and committed financing (Riikka Oittinen)
- Annex 2** Presentation on the progress indicators (Renata Musifullina)
- Annex 3** Presentation on the Financial Part of the Annual Report 2017-2018 (Riikka Oittinen)
- Annex 4** Presentation on the Audit Activities (Kari Rouvinen)
- Annex 5** Presentation on the EU budget 2021–2027 (Petri Haapalainen)