

Event: 12th JMC meeting of the Kolarctic CBC 2014–2020 Programme

Date: 2nd December 2021 at 10:00 – 15:10 Finnish time (with a break from 12:55 till 13:20)

Location: Online, using the conference tool Zoom

Language: The meeting was held in English

PARTICIPANTS OF THE MEETING

Members and Deputy Members

Finland

Tuulia Väliheikki, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment

Hilkka Halonen, Regional Council of Lapland

Leena Ruokanen, Lapland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment

Liisa Ansala, Lapland Chamber of Commerce (joined at 10:50 and left 11:52)

Norway

Lisbeth Nylund, Ministry of Local Government and Modernisation, chair of the meeting

Kristian Svanes, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Marta Hofsføy, Troms and Finnmark County Council

Tarjei Jensen Bech, Troms and Finnmark County Council

Sonja Alice Steen, Nordland County Council

Russia

Vsevolod Vovchenko, Ministry of Economic Development

Igor Kapyrin, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Ilya Ostapchuk, Murmansk Region (joined at 10:20 and left at 12:19)

Sergey Kungurtsev, Nenets Autonomous District

Denis Moskalenko, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Maria Astakhova, Ministry for Foreign Affairs

Maria Kropacheva, Arkhangelsk Region (left at 10:42)

Sweden

Isabella Palomba Rydén, Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation

Bror Martin Karlsson, Ministry for Foreign Affairs (left at 12:56)

Malin Ylinenpää, Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, Luleå office

Other participants

Gunn Heidi Henriksen, project Development of common approaches to involve youth into science and technical sphere, BeTech, KO2071 (points 1-2, left at 10:46)

Iveta Puzo, TESIM

Eilen Zakariassen, Nordland County Council

Riikka Holster, MA

Laura Mäki, MA

Katri Niska-Honkonen, MA

Svetlana Peltoperä, MA

Ekaterina Sujala, MA

Marjaana Lahdenranta, MA
Sari Peltoniemi, Secretary of the Meeting, MA
Kairi Pääsuke, Swedish BO (left at 12:56)
Linda Mosand, Norwegian BO
Jan Martin Solstad, Norwegian BO
Julia Korshunova, Head of the Russian BO, Murmansk
Olga Klisheva, Russian BO in Arkhangelsk

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

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

The Chair of the Joint Monitoring Committee (JMC) in 2021 Lisbeth Nylund opened the meeting at 10:00 Finnish time. The participants of the meeting and changes to the list of JMC Members and Deputy Members were notified.

Decision

Participants of the meeting were notified and quorum was established, the changes in the list of JMC Members and Deputy Members were noted and the proposed meeting Agenda was approved.

2. Project presentation: BeTech!

Project Manager Gunn Heidi Henriksen presented the central content of the project BeTech, *Development of common approaches to involve youth into science and technical sphere (Annex 1)*.

Decision:

Information was noted by the JMC.

The JMC praised the presentation and noted that it's valuable for the JMC to hear project presentations. According to the JMC, the project is considered highly relevant for the Arctic region, offering young people employment opportunities in their home regions, and successfully combining soft and hard values.

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

Riikka Holster (Programme manager, MA) presented current information progress and implementation of the projects (**Annex 2**):

- Norway has the largest number of lead partners and Russia has the largest number of partners. The Region of Komi is the only without partners in any approved projects.
- MA has received many addendums. Half of the projects have applied for, or are going to apply for an extension, of the implementing period. According to the modified Implementing Regulation, projects may continue until max August 2023.
- There are seven projects from the 4th /final call on the reserve list. The first ones from the list could be financed in early 2022.
- More than half of the Interim Reports have been submitted late during the reporting period 2020-2021. The delays are of different lengths and are due to different reasons. However, the situation looks better this autumn (1.7.2021-): There has

been 13 reports submitted, and only three of them were late. All these delays were agreed with MA beforehand.

- The EC representative pointed out that it takes time to learn the reporting. The effects of pandemic are also something that needs to be taken into account. It is good that the MA is aware of the situation, which seems to be improving.

Laura Mäki (CBC Expert, MA) presented the status of indicator targets (**Annex 2**):

- The Kolarctic CBC Programme 2014-2020 is behind the target values, and most likely not all the Programme targets are going to be reached. The target values are not directly linked to financial budget. Therefore, there won't be any financial consequences even though all of them would not be reached. This is a good lesson to be learnt for the next programme. Information about reaching or not reaching the target values will be provided and explained in the Annual Report and Final Report.
- There has also been misunderstanding on the calculation of the values by the beneficiaries. Some projects have for example started to calculate their participating people and organizations multiple times. MA has been guiding beneficiaries on the indicators. Projects have been revising their indicator calculation and target values.

Katri Niska-Honkonen (Financial Manager, MA) presented the current state of payments to the projects and the realization of the projects' budgets and funds released from ongoing projects & reserve list projects (**Annex 2**):

- 44 projects are contracted so far. There has been all in all 62 interim reports approved, including 270 partner reports. In Norway all the financing is paid after the end of the project, and therefore the amount of paid payments is low (14 % of contracted projects).
- Projects in the reserve list:
 - The Managing Authority has received pre-information about savings in KO2020, and KO1029 is deducting its budget. Both projects are financed under TO7. However, in the reserve list there are projects only from TO6 and TO1, so that an approval of the JMC for money transfer is needed.
 - In March-April 2022 we will know how much money will be released from those projects which just ended.
- The Technical Assistance budget is in a good level. There has been some savings due to COVID-19 situation.

The Branch Offices gave an overview on their work.

During the round of comments, the Managing Authority was advised by the EC to encourage projects to write the Interim Reports already during the reporting period, and start the audit immediately after the reporting period ends. If the MA needs more help with this issue, the EC can provide it.

It was pointed out that from risk management point of view, projects to be funded from the reserve list should start the project implementation as soon as possible, as all projects must be finalised August 2023 at the latest. The EC representative expressed also the concern about the micro-projects which are not contracted yet. It would be good if the MA would contact the projects and advise them to start as soon as possible. Projects should not keep on waiting for better times.

EC representative informed the JMC that the EC is collecting lessons learned from the LIP projects. From Kolarctic Programme, KO3001 ROKK and KO3002 Raja-Jooseppi will be included in the review.

The Russian delegation has raised a concern regarding payments delays to the Russian project partners. One of the examples is the project KO2100 where the last interim payment was made after the project closure. The Russian delegation asked the Managing Authority to supervise timely money transfer to the Russian partners both from the Managing Authority and Lead partners and keep the Russian delegation informed. The RU NA will send to the MA, a list of projects with payment delays, and the MA will analyse it case by case. In the next programme, payments directly to partners are possible in exceptional cases.

Decision:

With the above comments, the information was noted by the JMC.

The JMC authorizes the MA to transfer funds between all four TOs as necessary, within the frame of 20%, to ensure flexible reallocation of released funds and financing of the projects on the reserve list.

4. Presentation and preliminary discussion of the Annual Report 2020-2021

The MA and BOs have prepared a draft Annual Report 2020-2021. Riikka Holster presented the Technical Part according to the Annex 2 of the Agenda, and Katri Niska-Honkonen gave a presentation on the Financial Part of the Annual Report according to the Annex 3 of the Agenda.

The MA and BOs will finalize the Annual Report 2020-2021 (Technical and Financial Part) according to the comments received from the JMC, and it will be approved by the JMC in a Written Procedure in January 2022.

Originally, it was planned that Annual Report would be submitted with its Annexes to the European Commission by the set deadline February 15, 2022. However, the Managing Authority has received a request from the Audit Authority to postpone the submission of the Annual Report until March 1. This request has been given to all the FI-RU CBC Programmes.

Decision:

The JMC discussed the draft Annual Report.

The EC representative noted that the quality of the Annual Report 2019-2020 was considered very good in the Commission, and it that it can be noticed that the EC observations have been taken into account in this Report. The Commission would like to see more cooperation with the EU delegations.

It was agreed to develop the Report according to the following comments:

- The text on the NO BO will be modified and shortened a bit (page 33-34)
- A Norwegian event to be added on page 49
- Year 2024 to be changed as 2023 on page 23.

A Written Procedure for the approval of the document will be launched in the second half of January 2022.

The JMC approved the Audit Authority's request to postpone the submission of

the Report until the 1st of March. The MA will send the request to the EC.

5. Events organised for the beneficiaries

Marjaana Lahdenranta informed that following events have been organised by MA and BOs for the project beneficiaries this autumn:

- 16th September: Event for projects about Final report
- 17th September: Event for micro projects about Final report

Decision:

The information was noted by the JMC.

6. Programme level visibility measures

Marjaana Lahdenranta gave an overview on the events and forums where the Programme and the projects funded by the Programme (**Annex 3**) have taken part and increased the visibility.

Decision:

Information was noted by the JMC

7. Overview on cross-programme cooperation

Riikka Holster gave an overview on the Arctic Cooperation, collaboration within the Northern Cluster network and between the Finnish-Russian CBC Programmes. The developed version of the Arctic cooperation Lessons learnt paper was shared with the JMC members as Annex 4 to the meeting Agenda, and the JMC members preferred to give their comments to the paper in written format.

Decision:

Information was noted by the JMC.

It was decided to change the testimonials to anonymous. The MA will contact the Russian delegation to discuss how to include in the paper the perspectives of the Russian Federation.

8. Presentation on the preparation of Kolarctic 2021-2027 Programme

Riikka Holster gave an overview of the stage of the programming process and expected timetables according to the presentation (**Annex 4**).

- Public hearing is open until Dec 11. To support the public hearing, information events were held last week and this week.
- The schedule of the 6th Coordination Group meeting is updated in the presentation (Annex 4): the meeting takes place in late January 2022, not the 16th of December 2021.

Draft resolution:

Information was noted by the JMC

9. Any other business

Sari Peltoniemi presented herself, she has started as a CBC Coordinator in August 16th.

10. Next meeting

Finland is taking over the chairmanship. The meeting will be held 8th or 9th of June, the exact date will be decided later. If it will be possible to meet face-to-face, the meeting will take place in Lapland. If not, the meeting will be arranged in Zoom. Karelia CBC Programme is having its JCM meeting on 7th of June, which will also be taken into account when deciding the meeting date.

11. Closing of the meeting

The chair closed the meeting at 15:10 Finnish time.

Lisbeth Nylund
Chair of the JMC in 2021

Sari Peltoniemi
Secretary of the meeting

List of Annexes:

- Annex 1 – BeTech Presentation
- Annex 2 – State of play
- Annex 3 – Events and visibility
- Annex 4 – Programming timeline