

Jørn Holm-Hansen

# **Russian and Norwegian Environmental Youth Activists Cooperating: Evaluation of Natur og Ungdom's Russia Project**



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Russian and Norwegian  
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Jørn Holm-Hansen

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# Preface

This evaluation has been carried out for Natur og Ungdom (NU) – *Young Friends of the Earth Norway*. It is based on interviews in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and NU's head quarters in Oslo as well as document studies.

The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research would like to thank all those having shared their time, information and insights with the evaluator. Everybody has been very helpful.

Thanks to secretary Inger Balberg at NIBR for her contribution to the technical edition of this report.

Oslo, April 2013

Marit Haug

Research Director

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## Summary

Natur og Ungdom (Nature and Youth – NU) is one of Norway’s most influential environmental movements. It has 7000 members in no less than 80 local chapters all over the country. NU’s main focus is on environmental issues at home, but has cooperated with likeminded young people in Russia since 1988. In the beginning the involvement was centred on committed individuals, but gradually it was institutionalised. In 1999/2000 the Murmansk-based *Priroda i Molodëzh* (PiM) and the Arkhangelsk-based *Aetas* were officially registered as environmental youth organisations. These have been NU’s partners since. The two organisations are far smaller than NU and are operating mainly in their home cities. PiM and Aetas represent two different approaches to environmental activism, confrontational and cooperative respectively. Both approaches are represented within NU.

This evaluation has been carried out on assignment for NU. The Norwegian organisation wanted to know more about the results and sustainability of the cooperation. To what extent are PiM and Aetas dependent upon NU? Are they capable of finding alternative



funding? Does NU's support restrain the two Russian counterparts from entering into new fields of work?

The cooperation between NU and its two partner organisations in Northwest Russia mainly addresses the environmental issues of nuclear power and renewable energy, but several environmental aspects in addition to this give rise to project activities. NU's Russia project is financed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU).

Whereas NU is nation-wide, traditional organisation, PiM and Aetas are mainly local, although with some regional activities. Aetas and PiM clearly fulfil the formal requirements for being officially registered organisations, but operate more like groups of volunteers. This has worried NU, who wants the organisations to follow formal democratic and organisational procedures.

Another worry on the part of NU has been the two partners' organisational sustainability, but the evaluation found that PiM and Aetas are self-going organisationally and technically, and to an increasing degree capable of raising funds from a variety of sources. Aetas makes use of the opportunities offered through the newly established domestic financing mechanisms for NGO's whereas PiM is more oriented towards European funding, notably German. This reflects the two organisations' different outlooks. Aetas is cooperative. PiM is more confrontational in their relations with the Russian authorities. Environmental protection is more

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controversial in Russia than in most other European countries, due to Russia's strategy of relying on incomes from natural resources and extractive industries until at least 2050.

The two organisations' skills in developing project proposals can to a large degree be attributed to the training NU has provided in grant writing, among others through the Project Pot. In other words, the worries in NU that PiM and Aetas are leaning heavily on the Norwegian support are correct, but perhaps exaggerated.

The organisational structure of the cooperation reflects the cooperation's character of being a hybrid between hierarchy and partnership between NU and its two Russian counterparts. NU is still the driving force behind the cooperation and takes most of the initiatives. Recently, PiM and Aetas have not even made full use of the funding opportunities in the Project Pot. The two organisations appreciate the Ground Support (core funding) of their activities through NU. This enables them to set their own agenda at times, not merely operating as project implementer on behalf of funders. For NU, on the other hand more emphasis on project funding may be welcome because it makes it easier to identify and report results. NU is very serious about reporting results. NU is still providing basic support to PiM and Aetas, but it aims at replacing this with a purely issue-based cooperation, in which support mainly is given to concrete projects.

The Russian Project is being implemented on the background of a political atmosphere that has been less accommodating for foreign-funded projects since Vladimir Putin's inauguration as a president in May 2012. The legal provisions of late 2012 that all non-commercial organisations involved in politics and receiving funds from abroad would have to register as "foreign agents" do not necessarily affect nature protection projects, but creates insecurity. On the other hand, new domestic financing mechanisms have been established to allow within-system NGO's to operate without foreign funding.

The evaluation recommends that NU's Russian Project continue. The project has proven to be a very cost-efficient way of upholding an interface between Russian and Norwegian environmentalists.

Secondly, it is recommended that Aetas and PiM are not pushed together if they not chose to cooperate. NU should find ways to encourage both organisations to seek closer cooperation with likeminded organisations elsewhere in Russia. Funds from the Project Pot could be used for this purpose, and NU should be included in such projects in order to widen the organisation's interface with Russian environmentalism.

Thirdly, the Strategy Meetings should be less ambitious when it comes to joint strategies, or alternatively, be carried out separately with the two organisations.

Fourthly, instead of applying for funds *from* NU's Project Pot, PiM and Aetas should be encouraged to apply for funds *together* with NU.

Fifthly, NU, PiM and Aetas should consider whether urban planning issues could be a new field of project development and cooperation.

Sixthly, NU should strengthen their Northern chapters with the aim of preparing project proposals to the Barents Secretariat. Older members of NU in Northern Norway could take on this responsibility.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The aims of the evaluation

This report provides findings and analyses of use in the three organisations' endeavours to update and develop their cooperation. In line with the Terms-of-Reference the report concentrates on identifying results of the cooperation, but also on the two Russian partners' organisational sustainability.

Sustainability issues are highlighted as NU's engagement will have to be phased out at some point in the future. The report will conclude with a set of workable recommendations.

## 1.2 Background on the project and its goals

Natur og Ungdom (NU) perceives its Russia Project primarily as an organisation building endeavour. The intention is to contribute to the establishment of a strong and independent environmental movement in Russia. NU's two Russian partners are *Aetas* in Arkhangelsk and *PiM* (Priroda i Molodëzh – literally Nature and Youth) in Murmansk. Being a rather small organisation in a Russian context Norwegian NU has chosen to concentrate its cooperation on two organisations in the two Russian regions of Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. This way, the project between NU,

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Aetas and PiM enter into a context of wider and deeper Russian-Norwegian cooperation.

NU's cooperation with PiM and Aetas is financed from two sources, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU).

Nuclear power safety, traditional industrial pollution and extensive forestry on the taiga are among the most prevalent environmental challenges in these regions. Thematically, nuclear issues and renewable energy are core elements in the cooperation. But there is also a strong organisational element in it. One of the goals, stressed by NU, is that all three organisations carry out annual meetings in which basic documents are adopted, and new leaders elected according formal procedures.

### 1.3 The history of NU's Russia Project

NU has been involved in Russian environmental issues since 1988. Together with Swedish counterparts some NU activists had taken the initiative to suggest environmental protection to be included in the programme of a peace festival to be held in Murmansk one year later<sup>1</sup>. This was in the midst of the perestroika period that saw an upsurge of environmental initiatives all over the Soviet Union. Much general grievance against the existing system gave vent to the environmental movements. The festival – in which no less than 70 members of NU took part – gave NU an opportunity to

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<sup>1</sup> For an account in Norwegian, see <http://arkiv.nu.no/30ar/index46.htm>

protest against the sulphurous emissions from the Nikel works and the poor security measures in the nuclear ice-breaker fleet, the two issues – that together with security at the Kola Nuclear Power Plant – came to be the pillars of Norway’s environmental policies towards Russia in the decades to come.

The festival resulted in the establishment of contacts between NU and several environmental groups in Murmansk and Apatity, like Friends of Greenpeace”, For a Nuclear Free North”, the Christian Green League, Kola Ecological Centre and the group that later established Gaia.

The small town of Apatity hosts the Kola Science Centre, a branch under the Russian Academy of Science. In February 1990 NU co-arranged a seminar in Murmansk with local counterparts, but this did not result in structured cooperation due to the lack of organised youth groups on the Russian side and general difficulties in transferring NU’s working methods to a context that still was Soviet despite the liveliness of public life after the introduction of *glasnost*. Contacts were retained, however, with Gaia, that ran a youth project throughout the 1990’s. And the seminar was significant by being the first time NU received funding for its involvement with Russian environmentalists. Funds were made available by the Norwegian Ministry of Environment.

In 1993 NU made another initiative to encourage the establishment of an environmental youth organisation, touring the

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Kola peninsula twice, arranging meetings on environmental protection and the work of NU. Gaia was helpful as a local contact, and PiM was established. The idea was to engage NU chapters in Norway's Northern provinces in this work to facilitate twinning.

NU was able to attract further funding for its work with Russia and the number of visits to Russia increased. Internally in NU, the Russian project enjoyed prestige. Several local chapters of Natur og Ungdom, not only in the north, got involved.

Much of the work consisted in transferring NU's organisational skills to the small and 'primordial' Russian groups. For this purpose self-confidence trainings were carried out for Russian participants and a Handbook for local chapters was written. In 2000 NU and Aetas got in touch and the latter was included in NU's Russian project together with PiM that had been officially registered with the regional Ministry of Justice in 2000. Aetas had already been registered in 1999. Since then, the two organisations have cooperated closely with NU. The financial support provided through NU has been important for the survival of Aetas as well as PiM, and the organisational support offered by NU has secured continuity despite the fact that PiM as well as Aetas, like most youth groups have a large turnover of members.

In 1993, for the first time, NU was able to hire one person to work on Kola-related issues. Since then, NU has had a staff member



working exclusively on the Russian project, and in 2005 an additional staff member was employed to work on nuclear issues. This latter position is financed by the Norwegian government's Action Plan for Nuclear Security, which in practice meant working with NU's Russian activities. For several years NU rented a flat in Murmansk, in which NU staff stayed while following up PiM. The degree to which NU was the motor in the beginning is illustrated by the fact that it was recruiting members to PiM and Aetas. In 2006-2007 Aetas entered into a period of internal crisis. NU's Russia secretary stayed there for a longer period to assist the organisation in establishing a new board.

A majority of those having been involved in NU's Russia Project come from the Norwegian North. Earlier, the North Norwegian NU chapters were actively engaged in the Russia Project, but for the time being they are too weak to take on the responsibility for international projects. In 2007 a Northern Conference was arranged together with PiM. Leaders of local chapters in NU's Northern regions have taken actively part in summer camps arranged by PiM and Aetas. There have been arranged joint activities on renewable energy in Kirkenes.

There is a certain division of labour between the foreign organisations supporting the environmental sector in Murmansk, WWF, Bellona and NU. NU's niche is to support the development of organisational activities among environmentally concerned youth.

## 2 On the three organisations involved and their objectives

### 2.1 Natur og Ungdom

NU is a member-based organisation for environmentally conscious young people between the age of 13 and 26 years. Its 7000 members are active in more than 80 local chapters all over the country. NU holds the increasing consumption of resources to be the main cause of environmental problems. NU members work primarily at local level, but also put pressure on politicians and bureaucrats at national level.

Nature and Youth work in the following fields, and it is worth noting that Russia is one of the organisation's eleven thematic foci:

- i. Climate change
- ii. Energy
- iii. Oil
- iv. Nuclear energy
- v. Transport
- vi. Wildlife protection
- vii. Sustainable trade

- viii. Russia
- ix. Agriculture
- x. Fishery
- xi. Toxic chemicals

## 2.2 Aetas

Aetas was established in 2000. The organisation's official name is Arkhangelsk regional societal youth environmental organisation – Aetas. Today it claims to have 100 members, of whom 20 are taking regularly part in activities. 29 people took part at the annual meeting in 2012.

The Statutes of Aetas clearly state that its main focus is on environmental education and information. Everything the organisation does is linked to these core functions. Aetas has its roots in a youth club, and the then leader of the club still takes part in Aetas, which contributes to continuity, and he has long-standing contacts with the environmental sector in Arkhangelsk. The organisation's decision-making structures, however, are solely made up of young people themselves, a requirement set by NU to be able to cooperate.

Aetas' profile is quite traditional within a Russian context, and although environmental/ecological issues are put forward clearly by the organisation, it does not challenge prevailing expectations of what a Russian youth organisation is supposed to do. Aetas is

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one of several groups all over Russia that arrange summer camps, train school children in ecological consciousness, removes rubbish from the streets, arrange street actions to protect the trees, protest against bus drivers smoking while driving and the like. Aetas has been working with inmates of an orphanage assisting them in setting up their own student self-government and a nature club. Aetas organises a School of Volunteers ('volontërskaia shkola') focusing on environment, but also social work, in which participants learn to work in groups, interactive communication among others.

The positive types of action in which it has been involved has earned Aetas good relations with the regional Ministry of Youth Affairs, and in January 2013 Aetas was awarded two prizes from the regional government, one of them to Aetas as such and one to the organisation's coordinator, Tatiana Lefman, for her contributions to youth policies.

Aetas has also taken part in other types of positive actions. Together with the environmental organisation Biarmia, Aetas took part in a so-called Public Nature Protection Inspection (Obshchestvennaia prirodookhrannaia inspektsiia) against illegal cutting of spruce before the New Year celebrations, i.e. against a form of illegal nature use (among others poaching) by individual citizens, a fight against which has dominated much of the environmental control sector of Russia for decades. The public

inspections (reidovaia rabota) were organised in cooperation with the local forest administration.

In the first half of the 2000 Aetas was more inclined to protests, and it took actively part in the anti-nuclear campaign when the issue was on the agenda in Arkhangelsk. Aetas, PiM and NU arranged a conference on the issue. Immediately after Aetas' was given the order to close its offices due to lack of fire-extinguishers. Newspapers brought defamatory articles about the organisation, and schools with which Aetas had been cooperating on environmental education, closed their doors for the activists.

As it were, the plans of setting up a floating nuclear energy plant in the White Sea were shelved and Aetas does not emphasise the issue any more. Since then Aetas tends to avoid controversial issues.

Aetas' offices is a former kindergarten in the outskirts of Arkhangelsk that has been put at the organisation's disposal at a favourable price by the city authorities in line with policies for supporting non-commercial organisations. The rent and maintenance, however, is paid through the cooperation with NU. Aetas has added to the building to include a large meeting room. In all, the offices are functional both as a working place and as a friendly meeting place for activists.

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Aetas is a membership based organisations although attempts at introducing membership fees have been turned down by the annual meeting. In addition to Arkhangelsk city Aetas has local chapters of voluntary participants in Onega and the Ustianskiy, Kholmogorskiy, Vinogradovskiy, and Primorskiy municipalities. In addition, there is a chapter in Velsk which at the time of carrying out the evaluation only has erratic activities.

### 2.3 Priroda i Molodëzh (PiM)

PiM has its roots in initiatives taken in the late 1980's when a group of young Norwegian environmentalists, members of Natur og Ungdom, met with a group of rebellious Murmansk youth calling themselves the Christian Green Union to be as contrary as they could imagine to the existing order. Its full name today is Murmansk regional societal youth environmental organisation, Priroda i Molodëzh. Throughout its existence, PiM has had 10-15 core activists. Today, PiM has 24 activists formally, of which ten are active (handing out leaflets and the like). Three activists are involved in writing proposals and reports. The membership fee is 100 rubles per year, but the exact number of paying members is unclear.

The establishment of a formal environmental youth organisation took some time, but under the auspices of NU and Gaia, PiM was officially registered with the regional authorities in 2000, which

means it meets the minimum requirements for being an organisation, having statutes, a board, an accountant etc. It is the only environmental youth organisation run by young people themselves in Murmansk. It has gradually loosened its dependence on Gaia and NU, although without the economic support through NU, PiM hardly would survive in its present shape.

Just like Aetas, PiM emphasises environmental education and information. PiM is more geared towards actions and cultural events with the aim of raising young people's consciousness about environmental issues than on trying to influence authorities through cooperation or doing more traditional 'enlightenment' work. This latter branch of youth work is represented in Murmansk by groups that promote a healthy lifestyle, patriotism, and useful hobbies. PiM belongs to the 'alternative' and 'informal' branch of youth activities. PiM's lack of interaction with the authorities is not based on a fundamentalist repudiation, however, but on a lack of access. When Murmansk had a governor who emphasised policies in favour of energy efficiency, PiM was able to arrange a Round Table with him. This event is considered by PiM to be one of its major breakthroughs.

PiM's offices, in a former flat, but with a separate entrance, have been made available through the city administration to the favourable price for non-commercial, voluntary organisations. The rent and maintenance is financed through NU. Although peripherically located – in “Murmansk's last building, where the

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city ends” as the taxi driver told the evaluator – the premises function as a place for work, meetings and informal gatherings – a *‘pimovskaia túsovka’*, or PiM hang-out.

PiM is closely interlinked with several other youth initiatives as well as human rights initiatives in Murmansk. Much of this takes place in a loosely knit network called the Murmansk Regional Youth Human Rights Council like the Committee of Soldiers’ Mothers, the local Red Cross and others take part. So far, the activities have consisted in preparing joint project proposals. PiM activists tend to be active in these other initiatives, like for instance the Humanist Youth Movement (Gumanistícheskoe dvizhénie molodëzhi). PiM cooperates with Mr. Pink, a newly opened youth cultural centre inspired by Tromsø’s Tvibit centre. The PiM summer camps are carried out in cooperation with the Red Cross. In the town of Kandalaksha at the White Sea there is a teacher-run child environmental movement, with which PiM has good relations. In general personal links play a role for PiM. PiM has good relations with two Apatity-based environmental centres, Kola Environmental Centre and the Kola Centre for Wildlife.



### 3 Environmental protection and environmental activism in Russia

Unlike the impression that at times may be given by international environmental groups and their beneficiaries in Russia, environmental protection existed in Russia prior to 1991 (Holm-Hansen 2005: 99-144). Within the state structures sanitary-epidemiological as well as meteorological services played an important role in keeping an eye on the environment.

Gradually, the concept of ‘rational nature use’ (rational’noe prirodopol’zovanie) gained ground, and as the Soviet Union entered the period of perestroika in the second half of the 1980’s environment issues were highlighted by reformers to illustrate the old system’s lack of efficiency. In addition to this technocratic approach on the part of economists and state bureaucrats, the environmental movements brought in a variety of approaches to environmental protection, ranging from romantic nationalism (protect the culture and “sacred soil”) to democratic humanism (against “brutalism”). To sum up, in Russia environmental

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protection has a tradition for being linked up with other concerns than pure ecology.

Today, environmental protection is managed by the Ministry for Nature Resource Use and Environmental Protection. In other words, environmental protection is “co-located” with nature use. Although having their own, somewhat bureaucratic, umbrella organisation – the All-Russian Society for Nature Conservation (Vserossiiskoe Obshchestvo Okhrany Prirody) established in 1924, and the embryonic Russian Socio-Ecological Union – the environmental movement mainly consist of single groups and initiatives with a local and at most, regional, impact area. The formal, legal, appellation of these groups is ‘social organisation’, or *obshchestvennaia organizatsiia*. The tradition of linking environmental protection to other agendas is being continued, not least among foreign donors who see their support to environmental groups as a way to promote an independent (from Russian authorities) civil society, thereby counteracting the increasingly authoritarian way Russia is being ruled. The agenda of linking environment to political opposition is shared by parts of the environmental movement, but does not remain undisputed among Russian environmentalists.

In her book on environmental organisations in Russia, Laura A. Henry (2010: 30) argues that Russian environmental groups and organisations have developed into three organisational types: professionalised, grassroots and government-affiliate. Aetas and

PiM clearly belong to the grass root-type of organisations, and seem to attract young people from different professional interests, but generally with a university background (and not necessarily from the natural sciences). In their relations to the political authorities, the grass root organisations find themselves somewhere on a continuum from cooperative to confrontational. Aetas is closer to the cooperative end of the continuum than PiM, which tends more towards confrontation, at least in its style.

Since the third inauguration of Vladimir Putin as Russia's president that took place in May 2012, there have been worries that working conditions for NGO's will deteriorate. The 2012 Law on NGO's caused some concern in the two organisations while this evaluation was written. The new law was supported by all fractions in the State Duma, except the social-democratic party A Just Russia (Spravedlivaia Rossiia). The law regulates the activities of non-commercial organisations involved in politics and who receive funds or property from foreign sources. Such organisations will have to register themselves in a special register as "foreign agents". Moreover, their informational material will have to be accompanied by information stating that the information comes from an organisation "fulfilling the function of foreign agent". The formulations in the law are clear, but how it is going to be applied is still unclear. The regulation based on the law has still not been published. There have, however, been examples of "warnings". Environmental groups with project funding from abroad are being

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informed informally that things would be easier for them if they avoid controversial political issues.

In order not to, for instance, comprise the Orthodox Church, that receives considerable funds from co-religionists in Northern America, among the organisations having to register as “agents”, the law refers to non-commercial organisations involved in political activities. In fact the law explicitly states that the concept of “political activity” does not include science, culture, art, health, social protection, protection of motherhood and children, support to disabled citizens, information about healthy lifestyles, sport, protection of flora and fauna, charity and volunteerism.

In the narrow sense of the word, Aetas and PiM do not engage in politics. They do not have a position on whom to elect as political leaders of the country and region, but of course have strong ideas on what decisions the politicians ought to make on issues that affect the environment. In this latter respect, the two organisations are political. Their commitment reaches far beyond the mere protection of flora and fauna referred to in the law on NGO’s and foreign agents.

Aetas and PiM, like other foreign-funded environmental organisations are awaiting the situation, but they admit the law has created an unpleasant atmosphere. At the time of writing this report there were no signs relevant authorities, i.e. primarily the regional ministries of justice, and of youth affairs, were in a rush to test the implications of the law.

Although the recent tightening of the NGO legislation may give rise to concerns as seen from the point of view of Russian civil society organisations, there may be reasons not to be too alarmed. In an article on Russian youth voluntary work, Julie Hemment (2012) gives an ethnographical account of developments since 2005, when the Putin administration placed its first constraints on NGO's, primarily aimed at foreign funded organisations. However, constraints were combined with new openings. The new Russian NGO policy borrowed freely from the toolkit of international democracy support, and a new financing mechanism of funds and grants was established. Later in this report, the ways Aetas and PiM make use of these opportunities are analysed.

The core element in the new mechanism is the Civic Chamber (Obshchestvennaia Palata) set up in 2005 on Putin's initiative. The Chamber has consultative powers and functions like an oversight organ, including carrying out appraisals of draft laws. Its stated goal is to enable cooperation between citizens and authorities in the field of defending the rights of the citizens. The Chamber's 146 members is a mix of well-known personalities and representatives of various federation-wide or regional civil society organisations. Arranging grant competitions belongs to its tasks.

At this point we will take a closer look at the system introduced in 2005 in order to give a picture of some of the context in which Aetas and PiM operate. In this context, the authorities are not

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*against* the concept of a civil society. Instead they borrow it, as Russia has borrowed so many ideas from the West since Peter the Great, but the authorities make it their own, and they make it a domestic thing. The civil society is to serve the overall interests of Russia, among others by pressing for modernisation, but not necessarily for democratisation, and in close cooperation with the authorities.

At least if observing this on the surface a Nordic observer would nod in recognition. Nordic NGO's are closely interlinked with the state apparatus, that often is their main funder, and even commission work from them, within a pattern that has been branded as "network governance" by political scientists, and that also include business<sup>2</sup>. This tendency in the "West" is closely linked to developments within the environmental movements themselves from "ecological ideologies" to "ecological modernisation". The move towards ecological modernisation consisted in a compromise between the environmentalists who hitherto had been presenting uncompromising criticism and the authorities, hitherto underestimating the profundity of environmental problems.

In Russia the authorities and environmental movements have somewhat different starting points from what was the case in the

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<sup>2</sup> The Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research (NIBR) is conducting research on the applicability of "network governance" perspectives on Russian policy-making in a project financed by the Research Council of Norway. The project's name is NETGOVRU 2013-2016.

countries in which the concept of ‘ecological modernisation’ was coined, but cooperation between the authorities and environmental groups does not necessarily mean that the latter are overrun, even in Russia<sup>3</sup>.

Putin’s hostility to liberal democratic values makes the Russian case different, though. Russia’s current NGO policy has to be understood in the light of the Putin administration’s fear of “colour revolutions”. The colour revolutions took place in Russia’s near abroad, and were largely helped by Western democracy promotion channelled through local NGO’s that linked up with oppositional groups to topple the regimes in power. The Putin administration wants to avoid similar scenarios. Instead of banning NGO’s as such, it wants to cultivate a loyal, or at least not threatening, NGO sector. The Putinist concept of “sovereign democracy”, coined in 2005, does not leave much leeway for foreign-funded NGO’s pursuing a political agenda. In 2006 formal requirements for all NGO’s in Russia to present all kinds of documentation were made more rigorous.

The somewhat heavy-handed methods applied by the authorities allegedly include take-over of nature protection groups by individuals loyal to the government’s environmental policies and manipulation of environmental organisations’ access to documents needed to take part in the process of environmental impact assessments (Lorentzen 2010).

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<sup>3</sup>This is discussed in Holm-Hansen (2005).

As for the organisations evaluated here, Aetas has good relations with local and regional authorities, and relations are reportedly improving. The authorities are ready for dialogue, Aetas sums up. At this point Aetas is in line with the trends elsewhere in the world that environmental groups leave fundamental, system critical approaches to the benefit of within-system approaches in which business and authorities are conceived as potential partners. Natur og Ungdom itself has undergone a similar development reflected in its withdrawal from system critical umbrella organisations in Norway. Aetas was invited to take part when the law on environmental education was prepared and the regional level legislative assembly invited to talks. The evaluator was able to take part in a meeting with the Ministry Youth Affairs, which is Aetas' major counterpart on the authority side, and witnessed very open and constructive relations.

PiM is less involved with the authorities and has experienced being rejected when trying to approach them. Nonetheless, PiM has an intention to keep on trying. Being solely dependent upon foreign funding creates a bad image of the organisation, and leaves it open for accusations of being a so-called '*grantosós*', or grant sucker. In fact, this is exactly what so-called patriotic organisations call PiM.



### 3.1 Sum up

The tightening of the general political atmosphere since Vladimir Putin's inauguration as a president in May 2012 is combined with measures to impede foreign interference on political decisions made in Russia. Aetas and PiM, like other Russian social organisations, are operating under circumstances that first of all should be characterised as being *unsettled*. Russian leaders are not against NGO's, but want them to be within-system, and Russian. The Russian political leaders acknowledge the importance of voluntary, non-commercial, non-governmental, social organisations, but much like authorities in countries with a longer history of democratic governance than Russia has, prefer them to be cooperative rather than confrontational. What is new is the force with which the present authorities reject foreign funding of political activities in Russia. More likely than not, the rejection is based on an analysis of the so-called "colour revolutions" in other former Soviet republics. Here, Western governments supported – Russian authorities would say "operated with the help of" – NGO's to overthrow regimes that were unfavourable to integration with the West.

The cooperation between NU, Aetas nor PiM consist in organisational training and environmental capacity-building with the aim of strengthening environmental consciousness and activism among young people in Arkhangelsk and Murmansk. Environmental protection is more controversial in Russia than in most other European countries, due to Russia's strategy of relying

on natural resources until at least 2050. However, the cooperation between NU, Aetas and PiM does not address the issue of who is governing Russia and will not necessarily be considered 'political' under the new law.

## 4 The organisational structure of the cooperation

The organisational structure of the cooperation reflects the cooperation's character of being a hybrid-like combination of hierarchy and partnership between NU and its two Russian counterparts. NU is the driving force behind the cooperation and takes most of the initiatives. This is to be explained by NU's closeness to the financing sources, and not least its main responsibility for submitting reports to the financing sources. NU is a very conscientious project holder, eager to deliver what they have promised.

Moreover, the organisations involved are hardly comparable. NU is a nation-wide and formal organisation. Aetas and PiM are formal in the sense that they comply with all requirements for being registered as social organisations in their regions, but they are not nation-wide, have a small number of active members, and they operate mainly in informal ways and have no employed staff. Consequently, NU is by far the strongest of the three partners when it comes to organisational resources. This latter fact

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contributes to, what NU holds to be slow response to their emails on administrative issues, just to mention one example.

Also, at times NU would have liked their partner organisations to devote more time to them while in Russia. NU has two secretaries working on the Russian Project, while the two Russian partners bases itself on voluntary work. Moreover, NU has a separate committee for its Russia Project – the NU Russian Group – consisting of seven committed members. The Russian Group’s responsibilities are limited to project implementation whereas the political aspects belong under NU’s Central Board.

The Russia Project is a central element in NU’s overall portfolio of activities. In this respect NU differs from the large majority of Norwegian organisations that have projects abroad, but keep them in the margins of the organisation.

#### 4.1 The Strategy Meeting

Earlier NU, Aetas and PiM met bi-annually for Strategy Meetings, including a preparatory meeting for planning. This model was costly, and the attempts at coordinating activities came to nought as the two Russian organisations found little common ground in terms of working methods. The attempts to overcome the lack of enthusiasm on the part of PiM and Aetas for cooperating with each other drained the three organisations of energy. Therefore, they decided to have one Strategy Meeting a year, and without the

preparatory meeting. The switch to annual meetings is also to be explained. The agenda of the annual Strategy Meeting consists of a discussion of the criteria for the Project Pot (see below) and next year's parallel activities of the three organisations. Activities are parallel – and not a joint project – in the sense that they are carried out individually by the three organisations. Parallel activities have been carried out on the occasion of the Global Wind Day and the Chernobyl Action. During strategy meeting experiences are exchanged, and e.g. mass media strategies discussed.

There is an apparent lack of enthusiasm for the annual Strategy Meeting on the part of Aetas and PiM. The lack of mutual sympathy between PiM and Aetas is one reason, but could be temporary. Another, more important reason, is that PiM and Aetas “have a life” separate from the cooperation with NU. And they have a more diversified network of contacts and activities than NU tends to see. Therefore, strategic planning is something they do on the level of their own organisations. The NU-PiM-Aetas triangle is not the most functional scene for strategy development.

## 4.2 The Project Pot

Ever since its beginning the Russia Project has been conceived as a temporary undertaking, and PiM's and Aetas' sustainability and NU's future exit has always been a concern if not always spelled out. In 2007 the Project Pot – one for each of the two Russian organisations – was introduced in order to spur PiM and Aetas to build their capacities in developing project ideas and getting them

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funded – and carrying them out. Each of the two pots is 80 000 NOK (11 000 €) with three deadlines annually. Project proposals are submitted to NU, and NU's Russian Group does an assessment and decides whether the proposal should receive grants. According to NU, its two Russian partners clearly improved their capacities in developing project ideas into project designs ready to be funded. Their capacities in reporting them lagged behind, though. For Aetas and PiM the Project Pot means that they have to submit several small reports instead of one annual report.

The first years of the Project Pot, PiM and Aetas were making full use of the pot, but gradually they have applied for fewer funds. In 2012, for instance, both organisations applied for not more than 50 000 NOK (6900 €) of the 80 000 NOK (11 000 €) they were eligible to. The relative importance of the Project Pot is illustrated by the fact that PiM receives 120 000 NOK (16 500 €) in basic support whereas Aetas receives around 90 000 (12 000 €) NOK.

Operating with a Project Pot has the unintended effect of making NU a kind of grant-giver by delegation from the funding agencies. This runs contrary to the partnership model between equals that is how the cooperation has been conceived. Through the Project Pot NU is a partner that receives applications for funds from its partners and demands reports from them. This, of course, is linked to NU's responsibility to answer for the use of funds vis-à-vis the funding agencies.

### 4.3 Relations to the financing agencies

The Russia Project has two sources for funds. On recommendation from the Norwegian Radiation Protection Agency, the Ministry of Environment provides funds through the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The second source is the Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU). Around one fourth of the total funding come from LNU. Yet LNU is the funder with which NU has the most close interaction. Among others, LNU has pushed for an exit strategy.

Sum up: The cooperation is still marked by imbalance between NU and its Russian counterparts. The model is ambiguous and vacillates between partnership among equals and hierarchy. The introduction of a Project Pot unintendedly gave NU a confusing function as sponsor (by delegation from the funding agencies) and partner.

## 5 The contents of the cooperation

The activities under the cooperation could be summed up as organisational strengthening (through improving organisational practices and recruitment) and informational work directed at the larger public, but young people in particular.

The contents of the cooperation reflect the major objectives of the Russian Project. Therefore, organisational strengthening and nuclear issues have been in the forefront.

Natur og Ungdom is very eager to help PiM and Aetas comply with the principles of good organisational practices, and has chosen organisations' Annual Meetings as the point of departure. NU would like to see practices more similar to those in more established organisations and more like things are done in Norway. For instance, in the Recommendations from the Russian Group within Natur og Ungdom of 2011, three items were singled out as suggestions for the 2012 annual meetings: the introduction of a) a moderator at the meeting to ensure a fair access to speak; b) discussion notes/case documents to enable more informed and prepared discussions and c) systematic invitations to the meeting.



Natur og Ungdom seems to take on a role as advisors, but it is unclear how much they convey in terms of actual advice. For instance, the report from the 2011 annual meeting ends with several questions (does Aetas have local chapters, were they represented, what is the role of the financial statement etc) that could have been formulated in conversations with Aetas.

High membership turnover (*'utéčka'*) is a normal thing in youth organisations, but could be reduced. NU arranged a workshop in Oslo on how to keep members which was repeated by Aetas in Arkhangelsk later. Here, they made use of LNU's course material on organisational culture.

NU has put considerable efforts into helping PiM and Aetas become more sustainable, and representatives of NU spent much time in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk to assist. The Project Pot (see above) is a major tool to reach the objective of sustainability through diversifying funding.

Thematically, nuclear issues and renewable energy are emphasised. In practice, nuclear issues have been highlighted more than renewable energy. The latter used to be an item on all study trips to Norway, though. On nuclear issues the activities envisaged are lectures/informational meetings with experts. This included so-called Chernobyl lectures for teachers who can retell the story for the students and demonstrations and informational activities on the Chernobyl day (also Natur og Ungdom will do this).

After the plan of constructing a floating nuclear power plant in the White Sea was abandoned, nuclear issues in Northwest Russia mainly amounts to security issues at the Kola Nuclear Plant, transport of nuclear waste from abroad via Murmansk to be stored in the nuclear facilities of Maiak in the interior of Russia. PiM is very much engaged in anti-nuclear issues on which the organisation has a lot of competence. Aetas has skipped the nuclear issue as a core priority, but takes part in marking the Chernobyl Day.

Arranging summer camps belongs to the repertoire. Summer camps have been arranged by all three organisations, in which among others nuclear energy is one of the themes. For PiM and Aetas, just like for NU, the summer camps are major events to attract attention and get in touch with people. PiM and Aetas take part during Natur og Ungdom's summer camp in line with Natur og Ungdom's local chapters.

In 2010, NU, Aetas and PiM arranged a Forum in Arkhangelsk to discuss democracy. One of the success criteria was to gather a relatively large number of young people from Russia and Norway. The Barents Secretariat supported the event financially. The event gathered more than 100 participants (called '*obshchestvenniki*' = social activists/volunteers) by Aetas. Some of them came all the way from Belarus and Finland, leading to good contacts in Minsk and a project with a Finnish counterpart. For Aetas this gave a

boost, and the organisational self-confidence grew. Some of those taking part have continued being active in Aetas, among them several students from the Arkhangelsk-based Northern Arctic State University. Nonetheless, NU is not fully satisfied with the event, and points at the fact that Aetas and PiM spend too much time before replying to NU's requests. Therefore, several important issues had not been sorted out on beforehand. PiM found the Forum to be too much top-down, and would have preferred to work through a grass root platform (*ploshchádka*) like Mr. Pink.

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## 6 The results of the cooperation

The main result of the cooperation with NU is probably that the two organisations – PiM and Aetas – have been able to survive. Both organisations have found a niche in which they operate, and for which they are known. Although being small, they set their own agendas with self-confidence, and are no longer to be considered “offshoots” of NU. Interestingly, the two organisations have been able to diversify their sources of funding. Fund-raising skills can to a large degree be attributed to NU’s training activities, among others organised through the Project Pot.

As a result of NU’s activities an interface between young Northwest Russian and Norwegian environmental activists has existed for almost 25 years, since 2000 with PiM and Aetas. Being a cooperation between young people, the turnover of people involved has been high, which means the total number of people having gained experience from Russian-Norwegian environmental activism is higher than in most other people-to-people cooperation.

Thanks to the assistance rendered through – and by – NU, the two organisations have been secured continual work. The basic funding provided through the cooperation with NU has given Aetas and PiM working conditions that many other environmental organisations of the grass root type do not have. For instance, 60 percent of Russia's environmental grass root organisations do not have their own premises, and only 50 percent of the grass root activists have access to a computer (Henry 2010: 100-101). Aetas and PiM have functional premises, paid by the project (and subsidised by the city authorities), computers and wifi.

The fact that PiM and Aetas primarily is involved in environmental information and education makes it difficult to pinpoint physical results, but the two organisations have been incubators of several young people who have later continued their activities. For instance, a former leader of PiM works in the Kola Environmental Centre. Former activists in PiM or other groups tend to be entry points for PiM's cooperation with public administration and business. Today, several former PiM activists are involved in Russian-Norwegian cooperation within the framework of NGO's like WWF and Bellona. For instance, former PiM activist, Vitaliy Servetnik, is now involved in Kola Environmental Centre. It is to be noted that a similar pattern is discernible on the Norwegian side, as for instance in the cases of Thomas Nilsen and Yngvild Lorentzen, who were among the initiators of the cooperation back in 1988. Nilsen has been working with Russian-Norwegian environmental cooperation in the Barents Secretariat since then,

and Lorentzen is head of the international project department of Naturvernforbundet (Friends of the Earth Norway).

PiM brings up the Roundtable on energy efficiency arranged in 2008 with the then governor as one of its main achievements. At the Roundtable a declaration on renewable energy was agreed. This testifies to the impression that although being “alternative and rebellious” PiM is ready to cooperate with the authorities on specific issues, but that the authorities tend to be less willing. The fact that Aetas was awarded two prizes for good youth work could also be mentioned.

## 7 Sustainability issues

Achieving organisational sustainability without the support from NU has proved to be difficult. For NU sustainability has been a concern since the beginning of the cooperation, that at the outset was thought of as going to be of limited duration. The Norwegian Children and Youth Council (LNU) has asked for an exit strategy, but this has been postponed several times. The reason why NU has not withdrawn is primarily to be explained by NU's understanding that their support has been needed for Aetas and PiM to cope with difficulties that emerge, like the requirements for documentation in order to be legally registered.

Aetas has applied three times for funds from the Ministry of Regional Development that supports civic initiatives. The applications have been without success so far. There are also possibilities to apply for funds for social activities, with 300 000 rubles as a maximum amount per project. All funds will have to be spent on the project, i.e. not for running costs of keeping the organisation going.

## 7.1 Aetas and sustainability

The cooperation with Natur og Ungdom has enabled Aetas to keep up permanent activities. The organisation is successful in obtaining funding from a variety of sources Russian, Finnish, Norwegian and European in addition to funding through the cooperation with Natur og Ungdom. The latter source is by far the most important in terms of the amount of money granted. And importantly, the Ground Support through Natur og Ungdom enables the running of the office and thereby permanence. The Ground Support amounted to 80 000 NOK (11 000 €) in 2012 as compared to 70 000 NOK (9 600 €) in 2011. Other support presupposes the existence of an organisation and funds only the project activities as such.

The fact that Aetas is able to keep its offices – in fact a separate kind of bungalow in between blocks of flats in the outskirts of the city – gives the organisation several advantages, especially after they enlarged the building to include a meeting room.

Hitherto, Aetas' main counterpart on the authority side is the regional Ministry of Youth Affairs. The relations are good. There is a regional level law on youth organisations that states that they should be supported if they serve the region. The present minister is newly appointed, and the mechanisms of how youth organisations are to be supported has still not been made public. First of all a register of eligible youth organisations must be set up for a new system of financing to be introduced. Aetas expects this



mechanism to finance not only project activities but also the organisational structure of the registered organisations.

As of now, the Ministry of Youth Affairs distributes funds, but only to project activities. There is also a regional youth programme Molodëzh Pomor'ia (Pomor Youth), but it mainly gives support to small groups on smaller places than Aetas and Arkhangelsk city. Aetas is actively seeking funding from a variety of sources. The opportunities for Russian funding is increasing from year to year, Aetas reports. The Public Chamber operates with several funds, all on federal level. Aetas submits proposal to these funds on an annual basis. In 2009 Aetas was successful in getting funds from this source – more specifically its National Charitable Fund – as the first organisation, including non-youth organisations – in the Arkhangelsk region. The experience of Aetas is that it is far more difficult to report to Russian funds than to the European and Nordic ones, especially on financial matters, but Aetas takes this as useful experiences.

Table 7.1 Aetas' sponsors in % of annual contribution

	2008	2009	2010	2011
NU	59	62	58	35
LNU	18	-	-	-
Barents Secretariat	14	-	-	-
Arkhangelsk city	1	4	-	-
Arkhangelsk oblast	15	-	-	-
Centre of NGO support Garant	-	2	4	-
Rosneft	3	-	-	-
Norwegian Consulate	-	5	1	-
Nordic Council of	-	25	-	1

Ministers				
Other sponsors	-	2	-	-
Civic Chamber	-	-	29	36
Luontto Liitto	-	-	6	3
Centre of independent sociological researchers, Petersburg	-	-	2	1
Matra Programme, Netherlands	-	-	-	23
% in all	100	100	100	100
In euro	33,000	36,075	78,333	63,780

## 7.2 PiM and sustainability

The cooperation with NU enables PiM to exist as an organisation, and not merely a group of activists. It has received funding from the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung, Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, the Nordic Council of Ministers, the Barents secretariat, the Norwegian consulate in Murmansk, and Oxfam. The opportunities of getting funds from the new Russian sources have not been explored, but the Murmansk Agency for Energy Efficiency has supported the organisation. The telecommunication company Beeline has provided free internet.

The regional Youth Committee has supported a project on tolerance run by the Humanist Youth Movement with PiM as a partner, but after having failed to get funding some years ago, PiM has not submitted project proposals to the committee. The committee is considered to grant small amount to the price of heavy accountancy work in the aftermath (ogromnoe kolichestvo

ochëtnosti). PiM has no relations with the regional Committee on Nature Use and Environmental Protection.

PiM has not yet tried out the opportunities offered through the funds under the Civic Chamber.

## 8 Conclusion and recommendations

### 8.1 Conclusion

NU is cooperating not only with two different environmental youth organisations in Northwest Russia, but with two different *types* of organisations. Aetas is operating very much within the framework where NGO's are seen as having an "elevating" function, adding to the general moral in society. Therefore, Aetas is channelling much of its activity towards inspiring children and young people to love and respect nature. PiM's approach is more directly pointing at concrete political choices affecting the environment, and does not shun conflict. PiM cultivates the critical function of the NGO. Both policy styles, that of Aetas as well as that of PiM, can be found within NU.

Not surprisingly, Aetas has better working relations with authorities dealing with environment and youth issues than what PiM has. Both organisations are capable of raising funds in addition to those provided through the cooperation with NU. Aetas has developed skills in acquiring funds from the Russian

sources that are being set up, whereas PiM is better at working with foreign, primarily German, sources.

Being closer to the funding sources, and being a much stronger organisation than its Russian counterparts, NU has taken a leading role in the cooperation from the outset. This role has been retained throughout the years. The relations between Natur og Ungdom and the two Russian organisations is not a horizontal partnership. Still, after 12-13 years of cooperation Natur og Ungdom reports a wish to convey basic skill to Aetas and PiM, in particular regarding organisational procedures within the organisations. The Project Pot, in which Natur og Ungdom serves as a fund distributor, to whom the two Russian organisations submit project applications further strengthens this picture.

The evaluator was positively surprised to see how independent PiM and Aetas were of NU. At times NU may fail to see the relative strength of their two Russian partner organisations and worry too much about how they are doing. This is perhaps aggravated by a certain unwillingness to see the individuality of Aetas and PiM. They are *not* nation-wide organisations. Although having all formalities in place – in order to be officially registered and fulfilling basic functions as organisations, they are regional – mainly local – groups of activists. At times one may get the impression that NU is worrying that Aetas and PiM differ too much from NU in their organisational practices. However, Aetas and PiM are having the function that that is needed at the moment

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in Russia, as local idiosyncratic and genuine initiatives that at a later stage may unite in a federation-wide organisation.

Although being small and economically weak, both Aetas and PiM are viable organisations with an ‘ego’ independent of what is given through the cooperation with NU. Despite the fact that NU has been the major sponsor over time, the two organisations are ideologically and organisationally self-going. This makes for a good step towards sustainability. They are far from the typical foreign-funded organisation that often appear in developing countries, where the organisation primarily caters for its donor, and not for its constituency. This should be born in mind by NU. What may appear as NU’s “lack of control” may turn out to be a result of the organisations being embedded in their real-life context in which they pursue their own strategies. In this perspective the cooperation with NU is but one, although important, enabling factor. To the extent this holds true, Aetas and PiM should improve their skills in communicating this to NU.

In fact, to the evaluator PiM and Aetas appear much stronger at close sight and *in situ*, than he expected after having spoken with NU representatives and from NU’s reports. To be sure, they are still relying on the funds channelled through NU, but they have sought out alternative sources of financing. Aetas has been successful in getting project funds through the newly established domestic Russian NGO financing system. This is a huge step towards sustainability for Aetas, but has two drawbacks. First,

there is reason to believe the Russian NGO financing mechanism is going to be unwilling to support environmental activities challenging extractive industries.

Secondly, at least so far the Russian mechanism demands huge paper work and extensive documentation from the recipients. Whereas Aetas primarily has looked for Russian funding, PiM has approached European, mainly German sources, with success. The drawback, here, as seen from NU's point of view, is that the projects in question do not primarily address environmental problems, but human rights issues more broadly. However, in all Aetas' ability to operate in the Russian setting is an achievement, just like PiM's ability to operate on the European scene. NU can share the credit for these successes. NU has run several trainings for PiM and Aetas in how to prepare project proposal and how to report them.

## 8.2 Recommendations

### **Funding to be continued**

Both PiM and Aetas have proven to be capable of fund-raising, but the problem of how to obtain core funding if not from NU has not been solved. The funding of basic activities, that make the organisation able to operate on its own initiative, responding on short notice, i.e. not always having to do pre-planned commissioned work for donors, is of great importance to be relevant as an organisation. Therefore, the funding from NU has

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been important. For the time being, this should be registered as a fact, and a problem, but not one that could be solved on short term. Therefore, NU should continue its cooperation, and Norwegian authorities should fund it. NU is a very conscientious project holder, eager to deliver what they have promised. This is a very cost-efficient way of upholding an interface between Russian and Norwegian environmentalists.

Recommendation: NU's Russian Project is continued with Ground Support (core funding) as part of it.

**Do not force PiM and Aetas to cooperate, but encourage wider contacts within Russia**

Aetas and PiM are very different and brought together solely through NU. For NU it would have been convenient to interconnect the two organisations, at least in their implementation of the activities with NU. So far, they have not been able to establish working relations. Both organisations see the requirements for cooperating with the other more as an obstacle than as an interesting widening of the network of relevant contacts. This is sad as a closer contacts between individual environmental initiatives, and youth initiatives, in Russia is overdue.

NU has proven to be able to convey much in terms of knowledge and organisational techniques. The organisation could be more ambitious in its approach to the work it does with Russian counterparts for instance by widening its geographical scope to



include other regions of Russia. Funding agencies should open up for this.

Recommendation: Instead of trying to push Aetas and PiM together, NU should find ways to encourage both organisations to seek closer cooperation with likeminded organisations elsewhere in Russia. Funds from the Project Pot could be used for this purpose if Aetas and PiM come up with good project ideas. NU should be included in such projects in order to widen the organisation's interface with Russian environmentalism.

### **Reconsider the Strategy Meeting**

PiM and Aetas are operating on their own and have a diversified network of contacts and activities. Therefore, strategic planning is something they do on the level of their own organisations. The NU-PiM-Aetas triangle is not the most functional scene for strategy development.

Recommendation: Lower the ambitions of the Strategy Meeting. Alternatively, carry them out separately with the two organisations.

### **Reconsider the Project Pot**

The Project Pot was introduced with the intention to create a framework for capacity-building in applying for grants, and in fact, this seems to have happened. On the other hand, the Project Pot aggravates the imbalance between NU and its Russian counterparts, a relationship that vacillates between partnership among equals and hierarchy. The introduction of a Project Pot

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unintendedly gave NU a confusing function as both sponsor and partner.

Recommendation: Find models in which PiM/Aetas, instead of applying for funds *from* NU, applies *together* with NU.

### **Consider urban planning as a field for project development**

PiM has gained some experience in working with local protest groups, like in the case of a planned construction of a drive-in MacDonald outlet in a recreational area. There is a lot of urban- and other - development projects in Russia that are carried out entirely on the developers' terms, ignoring environmental and human aspects. This is despite formal rules and regulations that requires that a wide variety of factors are taken into consideration. For PiM and Aetas it might be worthwhile considering taking a more systematic look at urban planning issues. Through urban planning issues the two organisations would be able to get more in touch with concerned inhabitants as well as with the authorities.

Recommendation: NU, PiM and Aetas consider whether urban planning issues could be a new field of project development and cooperation.

### **Strengthen the North Norwegian link**

Over the years since the Euro-Arctic Barents Region was established in 1993, a relatively fine-meshed network of organisational and personal contacts have developed between Northern Nordic, notably Norwegian, regions on one side and

Murmansk and Arkhangelsk on the other enabled by the Barents funds. These funds require that applicants are residents of the three northernmost Norwegian regions. For the time being, NU's chapters in the North consider themselves not being strong enough to take on project responsibility for a Norwegian-Russian project.

Recommendation: NU strengthen their Northern chapters with the aim of preparing project proposals to the Barents Secretariat. Older members of NU in Northern Norway could take on this responsibility.

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## List of interviewees

### Oslo:

Members of the NU Russian Group: Stian Taraldset; Sigrid Høeg;  
Hanne Kjærland Olsen; Aslak Bjørn; Stine Østnor  
Marie Sneve Martinussen, Russian secretary 2006-2008  
Yngvild Lorentzen, Naturvernforbundet

### Arkhangelsk:

Tania Lefman (coordinator), Nikolai Belugin, Masha Trofimova,  
Liuba Samylovskih and Nastia Andrianova, Aetas

Liubov' A. Lomteva, director and Liudmila V. Shoshina, , director,  
auditor-ekolog, Biarmia (Arkhangel'ski regional'nyi  
obshchestvennyi pravozashchitnyi fond) that forms part of  
Ekologicheskiiy Konsaltingovyi Tsentr – negosudarstvennoe  
obrazovatel'noe uchrezhdenie)

Kirill Sinitsky, Agency of Natural Resources and Ecology

Elena Demidova, Ministry of Youth Affairs, Arkhangelsk Region

Mariia Kumbysheva, centre for Voluntary Work at the Northern  
Arctic State University

Kirkenes:

Thomas Nilsen, editor Barents Observer/adviser Barents  
Secretariat

Murmansk:

Tatiana Kulbakina and Nailya Ibragimova, PiM  
Vadim Krasnopolsky, oil and gas projects coordinator, WWF  
Russia – Barents Sea Regional Office  
Andrey Zolotkov (chairman), Anna Kireeva and Jury Sergeev,  
Bellona – Murmansk