



NIBR Report 2008:4

Jørn Holm-Hansen,  
Aadne Aasland  
and Elena Dybtsyna

# Building Neighbourhood

**Evaluation of the Barents Secretariat's  
grant programme**



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# Building Neighbourhood

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and Elena Dybtsyna

# Bulding Neighbourhood

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Secretariat's grant programme

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**Title:** **Building Neighbourhood**  
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Secretariat's grant programme

**Author:** Jørn Holm-Hansen, Aadne Aasland  
and Elena Dybtsyna

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**Abstract:** The evaluation covers the period of 2002-2006, during which the "aid" perspective on the co-operation with Russia became obsolete to the benefit of mutual benefit, equality and partnership. The Barents project co-operation has kept pace with the development, but is in need of clarifying its overall objectives. The Norwegian Barents Secretariat handles the generation of good projects, surveillance of project implementation and reporting in an excellent way. The evaluation report concludes with a set of recommendations.

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# Preface

This report evaluates the Barents Secretariat's grant programme during the period from 2002 to 2006. The evaluation was commissioned by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat, and was carried out within a framework of ten and a half man weeks. Field visits were made to Northern Norway, Arkhangelsk and Murmansk.

The research was conducted by a team of senior researchers, two of them from the Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research and one from the Institute for Statistical Studies and Economics of Knowledge (ISEK), State University – Higher School of Economics (Moscow). The team was headed by Jørn Holm-Hansen, who wrote chapter 1. Aadne Aasland wrote chapter 2, whereas chapter 3 and 4 were co-written by the three evaluators.

The team would like to thank all interviewees for sharing their time, information and insights. Also the respondents of the web-based survey deserve thanks. The reference group consisting of representatives from the MFA and the Barents Secretariat has been of help for the evaluators. The staff of the Barents Secretariat offices in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk were helpful in setting up meetings with the informants during the field visits. Thanks are also due to Aleksandra Wacko for assistance and to NIBR secretary Inger Balberg, who has contributed to the technical editing of the report.

Oslo, February 2008

Arne Tesli,

Research Director

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# Summary

*Jørn Holm-Hansen, Aadne Aasland and Elena Dybtsyna*

## **Building Neighbourhood: Evaluation of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme**

NIBR Report 2008:4

On behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) the Barents Secretariat distributes public funds to bilateral, regional projects between Norway and Russia within the Barents Euro-Arctic Region. Altogether, 2800 projects have received funding through the Barents Secretariat since 1993. The overall objective of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme is to create cross-regional trust and welfare. In the early years of the Barents co-operation cross-regional interaction in itself was highly valuable. This evaluation covers the years 2002 – 2006, a period in which the project co-operation has become more focused on attaining particular goals set by the project holders.

The co-operation concentrates on five areas of work:

1. Business development
2. Competence-building and education at all levels
3. Environmental protection
4. Welfare/Culture
5. Indigenous people

The evaluation made use of two major methodological approaches, a quantitative electronic survey among project leaders and participants, combined with qualitative case-studies of 14 projects.

## The scope

The web-based survey indicates that more than 70 percent of the projects involve competence-building and education, one of the five priority areas for projects funded by the Barents Secretariat. More than half of the projects include welfare issues or culture. More than one third includes commercial issues and a similar proportion environmental protection. About one out of four projects involved issues directly pertaining to indigenous peoples. In other words, there is a good distribution of projects on the priority areas, and a great deal of thematic overlap within each individual project.

Most of the projects supported by the Barents Secretariat are mostly bilateral, involving at least one Russian and one Norwegian partner. More than one third of the projects involve one Norwegian and one Russian partner only whereas more than half the projects involve more than one partner from each of the two countries. About three in ten projects involve partners from other countries as well.

Survey data confirm that competence transfer and capacity building are important elements in the projects funded by the Secretariat. Competence transfer from Norway to Russia is more common than the other way around, but the difference is perhaps smaller than could have been expected. Nine in ten of the projects include transfer of competence from Norway to Russia at least to some extent. Transfer the other way round takes place in eight out of ten projects, according to the respondents. Russians are more likely than Norwegians to say that there is competence transfer from Norway to Russia, while respondents in both countries give more similar evaluation of the extent of competence transfer in the other direction.

Two third of the projects involve development of professional networks to a great extent. In fact, hardly any project does not include elements of network-building.

Co-financing seems to be the rule in the projects that receive funding from the Barents Secretariat. One in two projects has less than 40 percent of their funding from the Barents Secretariat, according to the survey. Only one in four had more than 75

percent from the Secretariat, and 14 percent of the respondents stated that the Barents Secretariat was their only source of funding.

Despite not being the only or even major financing source for the projects, the funds from the Barents Secretariat are important for the projects. Only two percent of the respondent reported they would have been fully capable of carrying out the project without the funding from the Secretariat.

Material support is not considered a priority in the project portfolio. Nevertheless one in five projects has included material support to a large extent, and in half the projects to some extent. Project that started up recently include material support to a much smaller degree than those started up previously. The economic situation in Russia has improved according to more than two thirds of the Russian respondents.

What are the outcomes? Almost all respondents answered that the project had been (very or rather) successful in reaching its goal. Of course, the answer will not be found solely by asking the project leaders and others involved. Nevertheless, they may give an idea of what objectives that have been reached. Almost all respondents answered that the project had been very or rather successful in establishing Russian-Norwegian contacts and networks, of which about 45 answered "very successful". The percentage of respondents answering that the project had been very or rather successful in establishing regional and international networks was about 85, of which about 30 percent found it to be very successful.

Questioned about the most important impacts for their own project, no less than 88 percent answered "learning about Norwegian/Russian experiences in the field". This must be said to be a positive finding since exchange of knowledge and exposure to each others' practices are conceived as basic elements in the programme theory of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme .

The projects are relatively small, and effects depend on good dissemination. Only 15 percent found the project to have achieved this, although the number indicating at least a certain level of success in this respect is high.

In some cases the project leaders experience that projects simply stop, are delayed, or have little progress on the other side of the

border. In fact, a majority of the respondents (55 percent) had experienced such situations. Among those who had experienced them, altogether 42 percent said they were rare incidents while 14 percent ascertained that they had happened often. Two thirds of the relevant respondents had confronted their partners with these occurrences.

The Barents Secretariat administration plays an important role for project implementation. One of two respondents had had contact with one of the offices several times a year, while one of five had contact on a monthly basis or more often. Russians were over-represented both among those with most and those with least contact with the offices. The respondents were asked to indicate with which office they had had most contact. Altogether 62 percent mentioned the Kirkenes office, 13 percent Murmansk, and eight percent Arkhangelsk.

The respondents were generally satisfied with the performance of the Barents Secretariat administration. The respondents appreciate the programme staff. Both for its accessibility and flexibility no less than 60 percent were very satisfied. A similar score was given for application procedures. The content with the information about the funding was less strong, about 45 percent were very satisfied. There were remarkable differences between Russian and Norwegian respondents. Russians are on average more satisfied with the information about funding opportunities (66 percent are 'very satisfied' in comparison with 29 percent of the Norwegians), application procedures, access to Secretariat staff and funding levels, while the Norwegian respondents express much more satisfaction than Russians in terms of the flexibility and the level of bureaucracy of the Secretariat staff.

### **Findings from the 14 case-studies**

The case-studies found that projects tend to be successful in reaching their own goals. There may, however, be reason to discuss whether they contribute efficiently enough to the overall aims of the Barents co-operation. In particular, there is reason to watch out for the possibility that unintended adverse effects result from the projects. In particular, this may be the case for projects in the field of business development, making use of the asymmetry between the Norwegian and the Russian side regarding wage levels and welfare benefits. The two business projects and one of the

projects on indigenous peoples presented as case-studies below may be criticised on the grounds that the Norwegian project holders simply make use of the gap, even at the cost of the Russian side. Of course, this criticism may be countered by pointing at the mutual gains resulting from the projects. Given the overall, cross-border confidence-building objectives of the Barents co-operation, mutual gains should be made an explicit pre-requisite for a project to get funding. In most of the project applications and reports, the focus is on the beneficial effects on the Russian side, whereas the benefits for the Norwegian partner are less clearly depicted if at all.

When the Barents Secretariat outsources programme administration to other institutions, as has been the case with the Barents Plus programme, it is particularly important that the Secretariat keeps a close eye on the programme implementation and makes sure that changes in the programme surroundings, such as the introduction of new competing programmes, are reflected in the programme set-up.

The projects aiming at implementing projects and bringing about change in smaller settlements and scarcely populated areas on the Russian side are particularly liable to producing unintended negative effects. In particular, this is a danger while working with vulnerable indigenous peoples.

The evaluation shows that there is a need to consider an updating of the overall objectives and a clarification of the programme theory. This would help the Barents Secretariat's grant programme find its identity among other financing sources. For project holders it would help applying and reporting become easier, and first of all probably lead to even more expedient projects.

---

# Sammendrag

*Jørn Holm-Hansen, Aadne Aasland og Elena Dybtsyna*

**Naboskap bygges: Evaluering av Barents prosjektsamarbeid**  
NIBR rapport: 2008:4

På vegne av Utenriksdepartementet fordeler Barentssekretariatet offentlige midler til bilaterale, regionale samarbeidsprosjekter mellom Norge og Russland innenfor Barents euro-arktiske region, kjent som Barentsregionen. Alt i alt har ikke mindre enn 2800 prosjekter mottatt støtte fra Barentssekretariatet siden 1993. Det overordnede formålet med Barentssamarbeidet er å skape tillit og velferd på tvers av grensene. I de første årene av Barentssamarbeidet hadde det stor verdi i seg selv å møtes og gjennomføre prosjekter på tvers av grensene. Denne evalueringen tar for seg årene 2002 til 2006. I denne perioden er det blitt lagt økende vekt på å oppnå spesifikke mål fastlagt av prosjektinnehaverne.

Barents prosjektsamarbeid konsentrerer seg om fem arbeidsområder:

1. Næringsutvikling
2. Kompetanseoppbygging og utdanning på alle nivåer
3. Miljøvern
4. Velferd/kultur
5. Urfolk

Evalueringen har i hovedsak benyttet to metodologiske tilnæringsmåter: en kvantitativ, web-basert spørreundersøkelse og kvalitative case-studier av 14 prosjekter.



## Omfanget

Den web-baserte spørreundersøkelsen tyder på at mer enn 70 prosent av prosjektene omfatter kompetansebygging og utdanning, som er ett av fem prioriterte områder i prosjektsamarbeidet. Mer enn halvparten av prosjektene dreier seg om velferd eller kultur. Mer enn en tredel tar for seg næringsutvikling, og en tilsvarende andel er miljøprosjekter. Ett av fire prosjekter er rettet inn mot urfolksproblematikk. Med andre ord er det en god fordeling av prosjekter på tema. Det er også en god del overlapp, der enkeltprosjekter kombinerer ulike prioriterte temaer.

De fleste av prosjektene finansiert gjennom Barentssekretariatet er bilaterale. Mer enn en tredel av prosjektene har bare én norsk og én russisk partner mens mer enn halvparten har flere enn én partner fra hvert av de to landene. Om lag tre av ti prosjekter har prosjektpartner fra tredjeland.

Data fra spørreundersøkelsen viser at kompetanseoverføring fra Norge til Russland er mer vanlig enn motsatt vei, men forskjellen er kanskje mindre enn forventet. Ni av ti prosjekter inneholder kompetanseoverføring fra Norge til Russland i det minste til ”en viss grad”. Tilsvarende overføring den andre veien skjer i åtte av ti tilfeller, i følge svarene fra spørreundersøkelsen. Russerne er noe mer tilbøyelige enn nordmennene til å svare at overføringen går fra Norge til Russland.

To tredeler av prosjektene omfatter utvikling av profesjonelle nettverk ”i stor grad”. Faktisk finnes det knapt ett prosjekt der det ikke er elementer av nettverksbygging.

Samfinansiering later til å være regelen i prosjekter som mottar støtte fra Barentssekretariatet. Ett av to prosjekter har mindre enn 40 prosent av finansieringen fra Barentssekretariatet, i følge spørreundersøkelsen. Bare én av fire hadde mer enn 75 prosent fra Barentssekretariatet, og 14 prosent svarte at dette var deres eneste kilde til finansiering.

Til tross for at finansieringen fra Barentssekretariatet ikke er den eneste eller viktigste kilden til finansiering, er den viktig for prosjektene. Bare to prosent svarer at de vill ha vært fullt ut i stand til å gjennomføre prosjektene uten støtten fra Barentssekretariatet.

Materiell støtte er ikke noen hovedprioritet i prosjektsamarbeidet. Ikke desto mindre har ett av fem prosjekter hatt elementer av slik støtte ”i stor grad” og i halvparten av dem ”til en viss grad”. Interessant nok er det klart mindre innslag av materiell støtte i prosjekter som er igangsatt nylig enn de som ble opprettet for en stund siden. Dette kan ha sammenheng med at den økonomiske situasjonen har bedret seg i Russland, noe som mer enn to tredeler av de russiske respondentene mente hadde innvirket positivt på prosjektsamarbeidet. .

Hva er resultatene av prosjektsamarbeidet? Nesten alle svarte at prosjektet hadde vært (veldig eller nokså) vellykket når det gjelder å oppnå målene. Selvsagt kan ikke svaret på et slikt spørsmål utledes bare ved å spørre prosjektlederne selv eller andre som er involvert. Likevel gir det en pekepinn om hvilke målsetninger som er blitt oppnådd. Så å si alle svarte at prosjektet hadde vært vellykket i å etablere russisk-norske kontrakter og nettverk (hele 45 prosent svarte ”svært vellykket”). For regionale og internasjonale kontakter svarte 85 prosent at det hadde vært vellykket (hvorav 30 prosent ”svært vellykket”).

På spørsmålet om den største virkningen av deres eget prosjekt, svarte hele 88 prosent ”lære om norske/russiske erfaringer i felten”. Dette må sies å være et positivt funn ettersom utveksling av erfaring og eksponering for hverandres praktiske daglige arbeid regnes som et grunnleggende element i Barents prosjektsamarbeid.

Prosjektene er relativt små, og virkingene av dem avhenger av godt arbeid med å spre erfaringene til andre. Bare 15 av de spurte syntes imidlertid at de hadde oppnådd slik spredning.

I noen tilfeller erfarer prosjektlederne at aktivitetene ganske enkelt stopper opp, blir forsinket, eller viser få framskritt på den andre siden av grensa. Ikke mindre enn 55 prosent hadde erfart slike situasjoner. Blant de som hadde erfart det, svarte 42 prosent at det dreide seg om sjeldne tilfeller mens 14 prosent svarte det skjedde ofte. To tredeler hadde konfrontert partnerne sine med hendelsene.

Barentssekretariatets administrasjon spiller en viktig rolle for prosjektgjennomføringen. Én av to spurte hadde hatt kontakt med ett av kontorene flere ganger i året, mens én av fem hadde hatt kontakt én gang i måneden eller oftere. Russere var

overrepresentert både blant de som hadde mest og de som hadde minst kontakt med kontorene. I spørreskjemaet ble respondentene bedt om å oppgi hvilket kontor de hadde mest kontakt med. Kirkenes-kontoret ble hyppigst kontaktet av 62 prosent mens 13 prosent kontaktet Murmansk-kontoret og åtte prosent kontoret i Arkhangelsk.

De spurte var jevnt over godt fornøyd med den jobben administrasjonen i Barentssekretariatet gjør. Programstabens arbeid blir verdsatt. Både med hensyn til ”tilgjengelighet” og ”fleksibilitet” var 60 prosent veldig fornøyd. Tilsvarende tilfredshet gjelder for håndteringen av søknadene. Informasjonen omkring finansieringsordningen var det derimot noe mindre tilfredshet med, om lag 45 prosent var veldig fornøyd. Her var det påtakelige forskjeller mellom norske og russiske respondenter. Russerne er i gjennomsnitt mer fornøyd med informasjonen om finansieringsmulighetene (66 prosent av russerne er veldig fornøyd mot 29 prosent blant nordmennene). Russerne er også mer fornøyd med søknadsprosedyrene, tilgangen på folkene i sekretariatet og nivået på bevilgningene. Nordmennene på sin side er mer fornøyd enn russerne med fleksibiliteten og nivået på ”byråkrati” i Barentssekretariatet.

### **Funn fra de 14 case-studiene**

Case-studiene fant at prosjektene i det store og hele lyktes i å nå de målene de selv hadde satt. Likevel er det grunn til å se nærmere på om de bidrar effektivt nok til de overordnede målene i Barentssamarbeidet.

Det er spesiell grunn til å ha øynene åpne for at prosjektene fører til utilsiktede negative virkninger. Spesielt gjelder dette for næringsprosjektene. Noen av disse prosjektene tar utgangspunkt i asymmetrien mellom den norske og russiske siden når det gjelder lønnsnivå og sosiale ordninger. De to næringsprosjektene og ett av urfolksprosjektene presentert som case-studier nedenfor, kan kritiseres for å utnytte forskjellene, også når det er til ugunst for den russiske siden. Slik kritikk kan ofte imøtegåas ved å vise til at prosjektene likevel i bunn og grunn er til gjensidig nytte. Gitt de overgripende målsetningene bak Barentssamarbeidet om å skape tillitt på tvers av grensene i regionen, bør det kreves av hvert prosjekt at det er til gjensidig nytte. I de fleste prosjektsøknadene og rapportene rettes fokuset på nytteeffekten på russisk side.

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Hvilken nytte den norske siden har av samarbeidet, er ofte mer uklart formulert, om det nevnes overhodet.

Når Barentsregionen setter bort deler av programadministrasjonen til andre institusjoner, slik tilfellet har vært med Barents Pluss, er det ekstra viktig at sekretariatet holder et årvåkent øye med programgjennomføringen. Når det skjer endringer i omgivelsene, må det reflekteres i programmets oppbygning. Slike endringer forårsakes for eksempel når det blir lansert nye, konkurrerende programmer.

Prosjekter som tar sikte på aktiviteter som skal føre til endring i små bosetninger og tynt befolkede områder på russiske side, står i fare for å frambringe utilsiktede, negative virkninger. Spesielt er det fare for dette i arbeidet med sårbare urfolk.

Evalueringen viser at det er grunn til å vurdere å oppdatere de overordnede målsetningene ved samarbeidet samt å klargjøre programteorien. Dette vil kunne hjelpe Barents prosjektsamarbeid med å finne sin nisje blant andre finansieringskilder for norsk-russisk samarbeid. For prosjektinnehaverne vil det kunne bidra til å gjøre søknadsskriving og rapportering lettere, og framfor alt føre til mer formålstjenlige prosjekter.

# 1 Background

## 1.1 The evaluation

The evaluation was assigned by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat. As a matter of standard procedure the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), funding the project co-operation, wanted an assessment of the projects as well as the Barents Secretariat's processing of them. A joint steering committee for the evaluation was established with representatives from the MFA as well as the Barents Secretariat.

### **Methodology**

The evaluation made use of two major methodological approaches, more precisely case-studies of 14 projects and an electronic survey among project leaders and participants. In all, the evaluation team carried out 55 interviews, some of them background interviews with advisors and decision-makers.

*The case study* – The cases were chosen on the basis of a list presented by the commissioning institution. The choice was made in co-operation with the steering committee. The 14 cases covered all the priority areas of the grant programme and included small as well as large projects. Each of the case studies aimed at depicting the “intervention logic”, the assumed links between activities and results, and results and overall impacts. Field visits were made to Alta, Kirkenes, Murmansk, Lovozero and Arkhangelsk.

*The electronic survey* – Whereas the case studies provided a detailed insight into the functioning of various types of projects within the co-operation, the electronic survey gave an overview of the overall picture. With 140 respondents, half of them Russian, and covering between 40 and 50 percent of the projects, the survey must be considered representative.

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The combination of the qualitative case study approach with the quantitative survey technique provided a sound fundament for drawing conclusions since findings were corresponding.

## 1.2 The Barents Euro-Arctic Region

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) was established by the Kirkenes Declaration 11 January 1993, in which the foreign ministers of Norway, Russia, Finland and Sweden signed an agreement on co-operation. On the basis of the Kirkenes Declaration the Barents Council and the Regional Council were established.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region includes 13 regional entities in the four countries that signed the Kirkenes Declaration. The region is rich in natural resources, like oil, gas, fish and forest. The main activities within the Barents co-operation consist in improving the cross-border infrastructure and supporting contacts between people living in the BEAR.

## 1.3 The Barents Secretariat

### 1.3.1 The role of the Barents Secretariat

The Barents Secretariat serves the Norwegian-Russian relations in the North. The other states taking part in the BEAR have no similar agency.

The Norwegian Barents Secretariat was established in October 1993, originally with three executive officers with the task of assisting the Norwegian chairmanship of the Regional Council. Since November 1998 the Secretariat is owned by the three northernmost Norwegian regions, Nordland, Troms and Finnmark, and was made an Inter-regional Company on 1 January 1999. In the period covered by this evaluation (2002 – 2006) the Secretariat has had a staff of ten in Kirkenes and one or two in each of the four field offices, in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Narian-Mar and Petrozavodsk, the latter closed from 2008.

The main task of the Barents Secretariat is to:

- co-ordinate national priorities with regional political priorities within the Barents co-operation
- be a competence centre and co-ordinator of project processing within the Barents Secretariat's grant programme
- inform about the opportunities for project co-operation within the BEAR
- inform the Storting, ministries, business and organisations about the BEAR
- make the co-operation visible and create a general understanding of its importance
- carry out studies and write reports, e.g. on the issue of indigenous peoples carry out studies
- serve as a resource and competence centre for the organs within the BEAR co-operation

On behalf of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) the Barents Secretariat distributes public funds to bilateral, regional projects between Norway and Russia within the BEAR. Since its beginning, no less than 2800 projects have received funding through the Barents Secretariat.

The Barents Secretariat receives funds annually from the MFA and the Ministry for Local Government and Regional Development. These funds are financing concrete projects on the regional level as well as the operation of the Secretariat.

The Barents Secretariat administers the Norwegian project funds under the Barents Programme, and processes the applications on behalf of the Barents Regional Committee and the Barents Regional Council. In addition, the Barents Secretariat administers a multilateral Youth Programme in co-operation with the Ministry of Children and Equality and a Health Fund with the Ministry of Health and Care Services. The Secretariat also finances the exchange programmes Barents Plus junior (for students in upper secondary schools), Barents Plus (for students in higher educational institutions), and the north2north programme under the University of the Arctic. Furthermore, the Secretariat administers the Barents Regional Youth Programme that has partial funding from the Ministry of Local Government and

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Regional Development. Together with the MFA and the Eurasia Foundation the Secretariat finances the American-Norwegian Northwest Russia Small Grants Initiative.

The Board of the Barents Secretariat consists of one representative from each of the three Northern Norwegian regions and two observers from the MFA and the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development respectively. The board makes the final decision on approval or rejection of applications. Smaller projects (amounts less than 200,000 NOK) have been left to the Secretariat to approve, but the Board has the opportunity to comment on the dispositions. In 2008 the sum was raised to 400,000 as a measure to strengthen the strategic role of the Board.

### **Multilateral co-operation**

The fact that Finland, Russia and Sweden do not have a similar agency like the Norwegian Barents Secretariat is frequently mentioned as an important reason why the regional project co-operation within the BEAR is primarily a Norwegian-Russian matter. In order to among others boost multilateral links and co-operation the International Barents Secretariat was established (in operation since January 2008). It is headed by a Russian diplomat with one Swedish advisor. The International Barents Secretariat will be more than 60 percent funded by Norway. The other three Barents Countries will fund the secretariat on a 12.5 percent basis.

#### **1.3.2 The Barents Secretariat as a centre of competence**

Being a resource and competence centre for the various stakeholders in the Barents co-operation is one of the Secretariat's two main functions, the other being the administrator of the project co-operation.

The Barents Secretariat is an increasingly popular counterpart for lectures, advice and arrangement of study tours in the BEAR. First of all, the Secretariat serves its owners in their contacts with the Russian regions. With the increased interest for the High North nationally and internationally the number of visits to Kirkenes has increased, and the Barents Secretariat is often used as a facilitator for visitors to the Norwegian MFA. Frequently visits to Kirkenes



are combined with visits to Murmansk, and also here the Barents Secretariat helps arrange travel and meetings in close co-operation with the Norwegian Consulate in Murmansk. Moreover, the northern regional authorities of Finland and Sweden contact the Secretariat for advice.

On a regular basis the Barents Secretariat organises study tours for, among others, two committees (environment and health respectively) under the Nordic Council of Ministers, the participants at MFA's trainee programme, and the Norwegian National Defence College.

Somewhere around 100 Norwegian firms have set up companies in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk. Practically all of them have made use of the Barents Secretariat's know-how, or have received project funds to cover the "softer" aspects of the establishment, like for instance training the Russian staff.

The Barents Secretariat has the ambition of making use of its competence on Northwest Russia to "develop robust Norwegian applicants", as formulated by the General Secretary.

Also, internationally the Barents Secretariat's competence in transboundary activities has been noticed, and the Secretariat has been contacted to assist initiatives in the Middle East as well as in Transcaucasia.

The demand on the Secretariat for assistance naturally has increased, and made the workload of the advisors grow. The money received from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development has not been adjusted according to the price index since the late 1990's, and the request to the MFA for an additional staff earmarked for information, has not been fulfilled.

The function of competence centre will soon be separated more clearly from the function of administrator of MFA's project funds. There will be one project department and one department for reporting and information.

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## 1.4 The project co-operation with Russia

The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is responsible for the project co-operation with Russia financed by the Norwegian *Storting*. The project co-operation covers the fields of:

- Regional projects in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region
- Projects in the fields of health and social welfare
- Environmental protection and resource management
- Democracy-building
- Energy and industrial development
- Research and higher education

The MFA considers, approves or rejects applications in the subject areas of democracy-building, business development, energy and resource management. For other policy fields the task of processing applications for individual project has been delegated to other ministries and institutions, like the Ministry of Health and Care Services, the Ministry of Environment, the Research Council of Norway and the Barents Secretariat.

The administration of the funds for projects on the regional level within the Barents Euro-Arctic region has been delegated to the Barents Secretariat. This evaluation report assesses the use of these funds.

## 1.5 Aim of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme

The grant programme aims at stimulating regional co-operation on several areas of commitment in order to boost a common identity and to contribute to a better social and economic development. Priority is given to projects that are carried out in the Russian part of the BEAR, but also projects that are carried out on the Norwegian side with Russian participation are eligible for funds. Projects that are unilaterally taking place on the Norwegian side have a relatively low priority.

The funds from the Barents Secretariat are given to projects within five areas of work:

1. Business development
2. Competence-building and education at all levels
3. Environmental protection
4. Welfare/Culture
5. Indigenous people

## 1.6 The programme theory of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme

In order to structure an assessment of an intervention, e.g. a project, it is necessary to have an idea of the *theory* behind the intervention. Evaluations often refer to programme theory. Theory in this context should not be understood as an intricate academic exercise, but be used a practical tool to help bring forth the assumed relations between the interventions (inputs) and their outputs and outcomes, and the relations between the outcomes and the solution of the problems that the intervention seeks to reduce or solve. Programme theory, like other theory, suggests links between causes and effects. One could also think in terms of configurations of context, mechanisms and outcome (CMO): What outcomes are results of what mechanisms under what preconditions?

The following questions are helpful in structuring the analysis of a project's effects and impacts:

**1) Is there reason to believe that the intervention, measure or project will lead to the anticipated output?** Outputs are the direct results of the activity (the "input"). In the context of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme the number of people trained in welding, or the time transmitted in Saami on the radio would be considered outputs.

**2) Is there reason to believe that the output will lead to the desired outcome?** Will the trained welders use their recently acquired skills for the purposes sought by the project, i.e. work migration? Will someone listen to, and understand, the Saami radio transmissions?

3) **Is there reason to believe that the outcome will lead to the wanted impact?** Will work migration of skilled welders and a Saami awakening on the Kola Peninsula make the regions of the BEAR come closer to each other? Will it contribute to a common identity and to a better social and economic development within the BEAR?

In other words, what mechanisms leading to the desired goal will the project bring into play? What makes A (the input) lead to B (the output)? What makes B lead to C (the outcome), and what is the link from C to D (the impact)?

**A definition frequently referred to defines programme theory as** "... a specification of what must be done to achieve the desired goals, what other important impacts may also be anticipated, and how these goals and impacts would be generated"<sup>1</sup>.

What then are the assumptions underlying the Barents Secretariat's grant programme, what is its programme theory? The overall assumption is that regionally based projects will bring the Norwegian and Russian parts of the BEAR closer to the desired goals, which the Guidelines and Conditions for Grants from the Norwegian Barents Secretariat identify as a common identity and a better economic and social development.

On a general level well-run cross-border projects in themselves are a mechanism that lead to a common identity and more economic activity. Therefore, the grant programme encompasses projects from a wide variety of fields. Also, there is great variation as to the *type* of projects supported by the Barents Secretariat. Not only large and prestigious project initiatives receives (co-) funding, but the Barents Secretariat's granting policy also considers the needs of small, enthusiastic groups, like organised housewives in small Norwegian fishing villages and their Russian counterparts. So-called people-to-people co-operation has been considered a useful mechanism to create a common, trustful identity in the Barents region.

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<sup>1</sup> Chen, Huey-Tsyh, Theory-Driven Evaluations, Newsbury Park CA, Sage Publications, 1990, p. 43.

## 1.7 Types of support

The Barents Secretariat finances projects that are initiated in the Norwegian and Russian regions of BEAR and taking place in the Russian part. The co-operation is based on vigorous interaction incorporating local authorities, institutions and private individuals. In order to receive funds from the Barents Secretariat the proposed project must be a genuine co-operation between a Russian and a Norwegian partner within the BEAR. Moreover, the contacts between the partners must have been well established before the application is submitted.

In its project funding the Barents Secretariat gives priority to small scale operations, like pre-feasibility studies, smaller projects, networking, transfer and exchange of competence and participation at meetings and conferences in Russia and Norway. In other word, the Barents Secretariat is not a major financing source for large projects or activities, but it often co-finances such projects together with other financing sources, like the MFA or the Nordic Council of Ministers.

## 1.8 How the Barents Secretariat processes the project applications

### 1.8.1 Resources in the Barents Secretariat

The Barents Secretariat is well manned and well equipped for its purposes. Besides, the Secretariat is to an increasing degree finding itself physically in the midst of institutions working in the same field. The local office of Innovation Norway, the Barents Institute and the International Barents Secretariat are co-located together with the Barents Secretariat.

#### **The staff**

The Barents Secretariat staff in Kirkenes is composed of ten specialists and generalists with professional backgrounds that cover the field of activities of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme . The staff is experienced when it comes to working with Russia, and most of the advisors know Russian.

## **The Russian offices**

During the period covered by this evaluation the Barents Secretariat had four field offices – originally information offices – in the Russian part of the BEAR, in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Narian-Mar and Petrozavodsk (31 December 2007 the office in Petrozavodsk was closed). The offices were established to serve the Norwegian-Russian project co-operation and also assist other Norwegian-Russian co-operation in the region. The offices provide BarentsObserver.com with local and regional news items. At times the offices assist local initiators preparing applications, and sometimes they are asked by the Barents Secretariat in Kirkenes to write a note on a specific application. On the whole, however, the Norwegian Barents Secretariat's offices in Russia have not had a very active role in identifying promising individuals, groups or institutions for project application. Neither have they had an active role in the processing of project applications and follow-up of project activities.

### **1.8.2 The relations between the MFA and the Barents Secretariat**

The final decision on what project proposals to approve is made by the Barents Secretariat's board, in which the MFA is an observer. In other words, the MFA leaves the processing of project application, approval and follow-up of project implementation to an organisation not formally controlled by the ministry (the three North Norwegian regions). Hypothetically, the central government and the regional authorities might differ as to their priorities. So far, however, the possibility of discrepancies has not caused problems. The guidelines set by the MFA for the Barents Secretariat's grant programme have been general and open. The MFA is represented in the Barents Secretariat Board as an observer, and the communication between the MFA and the Barents Secretariat is good.

On the other hand, the open and general guidelines for the project co-operation may complicate the monitoring of the funds. As a result of recommendations from the Office of the Auditor General in 2007, performance measures will be introduced. This implies that the objectives of the project co-operation will have to be formulated in a more specific way than what has been the case so

far. More specific objectives for each of the areas of work will be identified.

### 1.8.3 The routines for handling applications

The Barents Secretariat receives roughly 400 applications each year, and around half of these are approved. The applications are distributed to the advisors according to each advisor's main policy field of responsibility (environment, youth, industrial development etc) or type of project competence.

Applications for projects with a budget below 200,000 NOK are treated when they are received in the Secretariat. Applications above 200,000 NOK must be submitted before a deadline (four deadlines each year). Board meetings that decide upon the applications are called four to five weeks after the deadline, and after the decision is taken a letter is sent to applicants within a week. This must be considered a relatively fast procedure. For the applicants and project holders this is very useful and allows them to work without unnecessary delays.

Some of the respondents in the web-survey (see next chapter) would like the final decisions on approval/rejection of applications to be announced on the Barents Secretariat web-site immediately after the decisions was made. Others would have liked to have more thorough explanations for rejections and clearer criteria for selection of projects. Others found the communication with the Barents Secretariat to be open and un-bureaucratic.

The advisors in the Secretariat benefit from the fact that project co-operation has gone on for 12 – 13 years. This means that most applicants and their project record are already known to the advisors. In most cases, the Russian applicants have been in contact with the offices in Russia (Murmansk, Arkhangelsk, Narian-Mar and Petrozavodsk). The role of the field offices of the Norwegian Barents Secretariat in Russia in handling applications are less clear than that of the Head office in Kirkenes.

When assessing the applications, the Barents Secretariat advisors draw on each others' knowledge and experience. No external reviewers are invited to assess the applications. With very few

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exemptions the Board approves the recommendations presented by the advisors.

The prevalence of small projects characterises the Barents Secretariat project portfolio. This is explained by the need to allow for people-to-people co-operation.

Some of the receivers of funds through the Barents Secretariat would like to have the Secretariat included in the project group. Most often, such offers are declined in order for the Secretariat not to mix roles. However, the Secretariat is not categorically against joining in a project.

### **Reports and follow-up**

Reports are being used as a monitoring tool. The advisor who examines the individual project application is the one who reads the project reports. The advisors follow up their projects by visits.

The Barents Secretariat practices a relatively strict policy as to the reports, and do not approve them before all items in the report form have been completed satisfactorily. The Secretariat's economist goes through the expenses in detail before the report is approved, which secures control of the economic aspect.

Nevertheless, when it comes to the description of the project activities the reports are often sub-optimal. The close communication between the advisor and the applicants, especially the Norwegian applicants, secures the flow of information between these actors. But for external institutions or observers, having to rely on project documentation, the written material is unsatisfactory. Moreover, there does not appear to be any systematic compilation of information from the reports that are used for learning processes about successful or more problematic aspects of project implementation.

### **Recruitment of project holders**

There has been a certain recycling of project holders. Over the last few years the circle of project holders has not been significantly expanded. More recently, however, new applicants have started to submit project proposals. Most probably the Norwegian government's Strategy for the High North has called forth new interest in co-operation.



It has been more difficult to get applications from regions far from the border than from the neighbouring Finnmark and Murmansk regions. From the Norwegian side approximately 60 percent of the applications come from Finnmark, 30 percent from Troms and only ten percent from Nordland.

## 1.9 Developments in Russia

Compared to the situation in 1993 when the Barents co-operation was initiated, Russia has changed dramatically in important fields. The economy is in a much better state, companies are earning money. The public institutions have developed their administrative capacity. In other fields Russia has developed slower towards a European standard. The political and administrative culture of Russia is still imbued with top-down, vertical and, in some respects, authoritarian ways of thinking. Russia's foreign policy is more self-assertive than it was in 1993. Combined with the stronger emphasis on reasonable self-interest in Norway's foreign policy, the somewhat "idyllic" attempts at creating a common identity and mutual benefits across the borders in the North might have been expected to be at peril. This, however, does not seem to be the case. As late as in November 2007, at the Organisation of Security and Co-operation in Europe's meeting in Madrid Russia's foreign minister brought up the cooperation within the BEAR as an example of how Russia wants to co-operate with neighbouring countries.

The improvements in the economic and social situation in Russia make the programme theory of the grant scheme more likely to be even more relevant than before since partners from both sides of the border now can meet and co-operate on more equal terms. Russian partners already raise more funds for common activities than they used to do. However, still Russian contributions may be difficult to get, like in the case of a youth initiative, where all involved regions were to contribute 3,000 € each. The Russian side was reluctant to put in their share on the grounds that it was formally difficult to spend money on the other side of the border.

The Barents Secretariat is hesitant to cover the costs of activities carried out by Russians who are able to pay, such as private companies, but still see the need to cover the costs of musicians

and others involved in cultural work. It should be noticed that it is easier for the Norwegian side to be flexible in the granting of money and do it on a short notice. The financing system is much more flexible on the Norwegian side since the MFA allocates funds that can be used for general purposes.

There is no big need or relevance of charity actions from Norwegian groups any more and their – most probably unintended – paternalistic patterns of co-operation that went contrary to the core ideas of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme .

## 1.10 Assessment

The Barents Secretariat's grant programme 's niche is regionally initiated projects. The initiatives and project proposals may come from the Norwegian or the Russian regions of the BEAR, and activities can take in Russia and/or Norway. Another special feature of this grant programme is its readiness to fund small-scale projects, often with a people-to-people character. Both when it comes to the types of projects and their subject matter, there is great variation. The aim of the project funding is to boost Russian-Norwegian cross-regional interaction in order to create trust and welfare.

The mechanisms that assumedly are set in motion through the project activities are more likely to function today than in the 1990's. Today Russian and Norwegian partners meet on much more equal terms than earlier, and this encourages the reciprocal interaction that forms a core element in the underlying programme theory of the Barents co-operation.

As a result of the improved private and public economy in Russia, it is reasonable to require a larger share of Russian financing. The Russian side already contributes considerably more than before. However, the budgetary system in Russia is less flexible than the one which applies for the Norwegian MFA's funding of project activities. Sometimes, therefore, there is a long way to go for untraditional and innovative projects to get funds from relevant Russian authorities, while there is a considerably faster track to obtain Norwegian funds. In other words, there could be a possible

unintended effect of making substantial Russian contributions a requirement for all projects.

The processing of project applications and the follow-up of project activities are taken care of by the Barents Secretariat staff in a qualified way. The staff in Kirkenes is relatively large and there have been local offices in four Russian towns in the period covered by this evaluation. The role of the Russian offices in terms of practical functions regarding project processing and follow-up remains somewhat unclear. Knowing how to prepare a good application requires great skill, and particularly so when applications are submitted abroad. Therefore, the offices in Murmansk, Arkhangelsk and Narian-Mar should have a more specific role serving potential project holders on the Russian side. As one experienced Russian interviewee put it: “We Russians do not have project mentality”.

The circle of applicants and project holders has not changed much in the period covered by this evaluation. In particular, it has proved difficult to develop applications from regions far from the Russian-Norwegian border, Nordland and Komi region for instance. The fact that the individuals and institutions involved in project activities have been stable should not, however, only be seen as a problem. Continuity and long-term commitment are key factors for success, given the objectives of the Barents Secretariat’s grant programme . Project veterans should be taken well care of in combination with a constant search for new project holders.

The Secretariat’s staff has a dual role. Partly, the advisors function as a competence centre, partly they administer the MFA’s project grant. This dual role is potentially sensitive, because at times the Barents Secretariat is invited by applicants to take part in projects. In some cases, the Barents Secretariat even appears in the applications. The two functions of being a competence centre on the one hand, and administrator of state grants on the other, are in the near future going to be split into two departments, according to the Barents Secretariat’s general secretary.

The Barents Secretariat has operated under quite general guidelines, but on the recommendation of the Office of the Auditor General it will have to report results, not only activities, in more specific terms than what has been the case so far. Distinguishing between activities and results, and focusing on the

latter, is conducive to success. As shown in later parts of this evaluation, not all project reports meet the required demands. Nonetheless, there is reason to warn against spending too much effort on trying to identify results (outcomes) immediately after the activity has taken place. Results take time to develop. Contextual factors play a role on the way between the project activity and the result. Therefore, when results are searched for, they should not be sought on a very general level, but close to the project activities. In other words, there must be a link between the project activity and the result.

## 2 A survey on the Barents projects

### 2.1 Distribution of respondents

This chapter analyses findings from a web-based survey that was sent out to project leaders and others involved in direct project implementation. The survey was sent out to both Norwegian and Russian project leaders, and their partners in respectively Russia and Norway. Of the 140 respondents, 69 came from Russia, 67 came from Norway, while the four remaining respondents came from Sweden (3) and Finland (1) (Table 2.1).

#### **Box 2.1: About the web-based survey**

A web-link to the survey questionnaire was distributed to 433 unique e-mail addresses, of which a large number were covering the same projects. Of these 61 bounced, indicating that these addresses are no longer in use based on lists of addresses obtained from the Barents Secretariat and additional searching for the partners in the project on the Russian (in the case of a Norwegian project leadership) or Norwegian (in the other case) side of the border. Sometimes we had joint e-mail address to the institution as well as an address to a concrete person (project leader or contact person). Moreover, many of the same institutions have been involved in several projects, thereby reducing the number of potential respondents for the survey. Respondents who had been involved in more than one project were asked to fill out project information for the project that they had last been involved in.

A total of 136 respondents answered more or less all the questions and fully completed the questionnaire. In addition, we included in the analysis 4 respondents who answered more than 75% of the questions in the questionnaire but did not, for various reasons, complete it until the end. Those who filled out less than three quarters of the questionnaire have been excluded from the analysis. The total number of respondents is therefore 140. However, the exact number of respondents will vary from one question to another. Not all questions were asked of all respondents. Some were asked only of project leaders, others were asked only of Russian partners in the projects. In such cases, this is reported in the text or survey tables (see n for number of respondents in each table/figure).

Since we out of reasons of securing anonymity of the respondents do not have any ways of linking the responses to a questionnaire with a specific respondent or project, it is not possible to provide an exact response rate. However, based on the list of projects, we estimate that around 40-50 percent of projects are covered in the survey. This is a satisfactory result taking into account the typical response rates of web-based surveys. Moreover, as will be shown below, we have a high number of respondents from both Russia and Norway, and from different categories of respondents.

One could speculate if only the most positive respondents or those with the greatest commitment to their projects have answered, or that the respondents in other ways differ markedly from those not responding to the survey. It cannot be excluded that there are certain patterns of this kind. Nevertheless, there are no indications that this is the case. We deliberately asked for critical comments and stressed the anonymity of the survey response. Therefore, there should be no reason for the respondents not to give their true opinion about the projects and the Barents Secretariat. Some may have a personal or professional interest in preserving the programme and would therefore give more positive responses when they evaluate their own projects or the programme than their true assessments would suggest. This is a risk with this kind of survey data, and should be kept in mind when results are analysed.

Since the sample is not randomly selected, tests of statistical significance are not quite accurate. Nevertheless, significance tests

were performed to give an indication of the robustness of the results in the survey. They are not, however, referred to in the text. Normally only differences that are statistically significant at the 10% level are commented in the text.

Table 2.1 *Survey respondents by country.*

Country	N	%
Russia	69	49
Norway	67	48
Other	4	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100</b>

There are equal numbers of men and women in the survey (51 vs. 49% respectively), indicating a gender balance in the programme at the aggregate level. This is confirmed by looking more thoroughly at the distribution of roles within the project. Women are, for example, just as likely to be project leaders as men are. There is one noteworthy difference, however, which is that external experts to the project are virtually all men according to our survey data.

The majority of the survey respondents fall in the age categories between 30 and 59 years of age (see Table 2.2). In Russia the average age of the respondents was clearly lower than in Norway (42 vs. 52 years). This is probably due to the fact that the majority (65%) of project leaders was from Norway, among whom levels of age and seniority are likely to be higher.

Table 2.2 *Survey respondents by age group*

<i>Age group</i>	n	%
- 29 yrs	10	8
30-44 yrs	41	32
45-59 yrs	61	47
60 yrs +	18	14
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>100</b>

Not only project leaders were asked to fill out the questionnaire, and survey respondents could, as mentioned above, be recruited

among ordinary project participants as well. This gave the following distribution of roles in the survey (Table 2.3):

Table 2.3 *Survey respondents by role in the project*

<i>Role</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Project leader / main coordinator	75	55
National / local project leader	18	13
Project participant	36	27
External advisor / specialist	5	4
Other	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100</b>

On the Norwegian side, 73% respondents were project leaders, whereas the same was the case of only 36% of the Russian respondents. More than half the Russian respondents were either national/local project leaders (15%) or ordinary project participants (41%). This could affect distribution of responses to various questions when comparing Russian and Norwegian respondents, as we will come back to later. The seniority level of those responsible in the projects appears to be quite high: Almost four in five of the respondents defined themselves as having a senior professional level, 14% an intermediate, while only 2% thought of themselves as juniors. An additional 5% found it hard to define their professional level. Despite Norwegians making up the majority of project leaders and their on average higher age, Russians are more likely to characterise themselves as seniors (87%), than are Norwegians (72%).

The survey furthermore contains information about the year of start-up of the projects. Projects throughout the whole programme period are included, as illustrated in Table 2.4. The first project started up as early as in 1994. A large number of projects started up in the 1999-2001 period, while 22% of the projects have started up in 2005 or later. Almost one third of the respondents did not know or remember the year their project had started up. This could be due to the fact that some projects are far back in time, that some joined the projects at a later stage, or have difficulties identifying the exact project from other related activities. Although this distribution is not an exact distribution of funding in the different time periods, it is worth noting the distribution when we



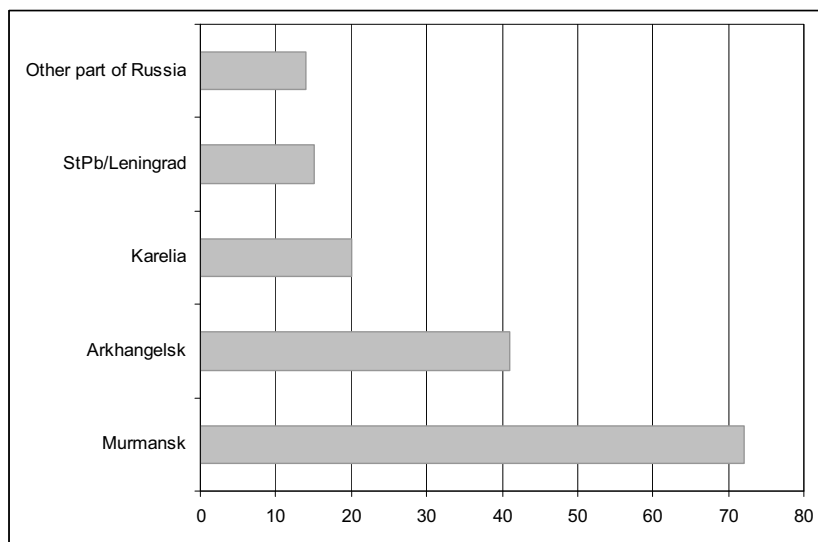
later look into whether attitudes of those who received funding in the early programme period are different from those who have received funding at a later stage.

Table 2.4 *Year of start-up of project*

<i>Year</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
1998 or earlier	13	14
1999-2001	16	17
2002-2004	22	24
2005 or later	42	45
Total	93	100

The Norwegian Barents Secretariat's funds are granted for projects primarily aimed at the Russian part of the Barents Region. Survey respondents were asked about the regional setting of their projects. Murmansk *oblast'* stands out as the region in Russia with the clearly largest number of activities with funding from the Barents secretariat. Figure 2.1 shows that close to three quarters of the projects included this *oblast'*, followed by Arkhangelsk *oblast'*, the Republic of Karelia and St. Petersburg/Leningrad *oblast'*. Almost two thirds (64%) of the projects included only one federal district of Russia, 29% included two or three districts, while the remaining 7% included four or more districts.

Figure 2.1 *Geographic distribution of projects (survey data), in percent (n=132). Several federal districts may be included in one project.*



## 2.2 Programme portfolio

Although a variety of organisations have been included in projects funded by the Barents Secretariat, the majority represent public organisations at the municipal or regional level.

Many different types of institutions are involved in the collaboration projects, as is shown in Table 2.5. However, the most typical organisations involved are municipal or regional public institutions. This is particularly the case for Russia, where 65% of the respondents represented such an organisation. Other differences between the countries include involvement of business and private institutions being more common in Norway than in Russia. NGOs involved from the Norwegian side as a rule are national/international, while from the Russian side they tend to be locally based. Taking into account the regional focus in the collaboration, this is hardly surprising. More than half of the rather large 'other'-category is represented by educational institutions, research institutes and universities.

Table 2.5 *What kind of organisation do/did you represent in the collaboration project?*

	n	%
Municipal / regional public organisation / institution	74	55
Local non-governmental organisation (NGO)	14	10
National / international non-governmental organisation (NGO)	13	10
Business organisation	10	8
Other private institution / foundation	5	4
Other	18	13
Total	64	100

Certain areas are given priority among projects funded by the Barents Secretariat according to the programme documents. They are as follows<sup>2</sup> :

1. Industrial and commercial development
2. Competence/education (all levels)
3. Environment
4. Welfare/culture
5. Indigenous peoples

It is therefore interesting to analyse to what extent the different topics are reflected in the portfolio of projects. One way of doing it is to go through and analyse all project titles, applications and reports. Projects are not, however, necessarily confined to one of the priorities, and may include elements of several of these priorities, which is often ignored in project documents. Thus, by asking respondents about their definition, we are likely to get a more accurate picture, even if not all projects are represented.

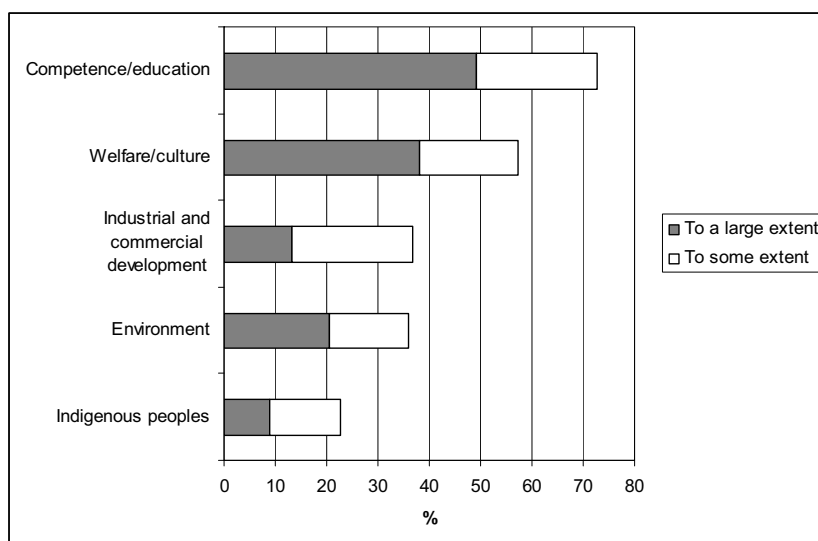
Our survey data reveal that competence and education (at all levels) stands out as the area where the largest number of projects concentrates. In fact, more than 70% of the projects include such

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<sup>2</sup> An additional area that has been included at a later stage is 'democracy', but in the English version of the project guideline, there are still supposed to be five and not six priority areas. The survey contains a question on the degree to which elements of democracy developments are included in the projects and will be discussed below.

elements at least to some extent, and close to half the projects to a large extent. Other areas are, however, also widespread. More than half the projects include elements of welfare or culture, more than one third commercial elements and a similar proportion include environmental aspects. Indeed, close to one quarter of the projects have elements that are of relevance to indigenous peoples at least to some extent.

Figure 2.2 *Distribution of the extent to which the three priorities of the programme are included in projects. Percentage responding 'to some extent' or 'to a large extent'. (n=136)*



The projects in the programme normally have at least one Russian and one Norwegian partner. Just over one third (37%) of the projects have one Russian and one Norwegian partner only. More than half the projects include more than one Norwegian partner (58%), and more than one Russian partner (56%). A large proportion of the projects (44%) had two or more partners in both Russia and Norway. Surprisingly few projects included partners from other countries: only 28 percent of the respondents reported such international partners in their project.

The projects differ substantially in terms of the number of months they have been planned to last for. The shortest time period was less than one month, the longest more than 12 years. The mean

amount of time that a project is planned to last for is 1 year and 10 months, and the median 1 year, indicating a large degree of variation. This variation is confirmed in Table 2.6 which illustrates the distribution of the projects according to their planned duration.

Table 2.6 *Planned duration of projects*

	n	%
Less than a year	30	32
1-2 years	43	45
3-4 years	15	16
5 years and above	7	7
Total	95	100

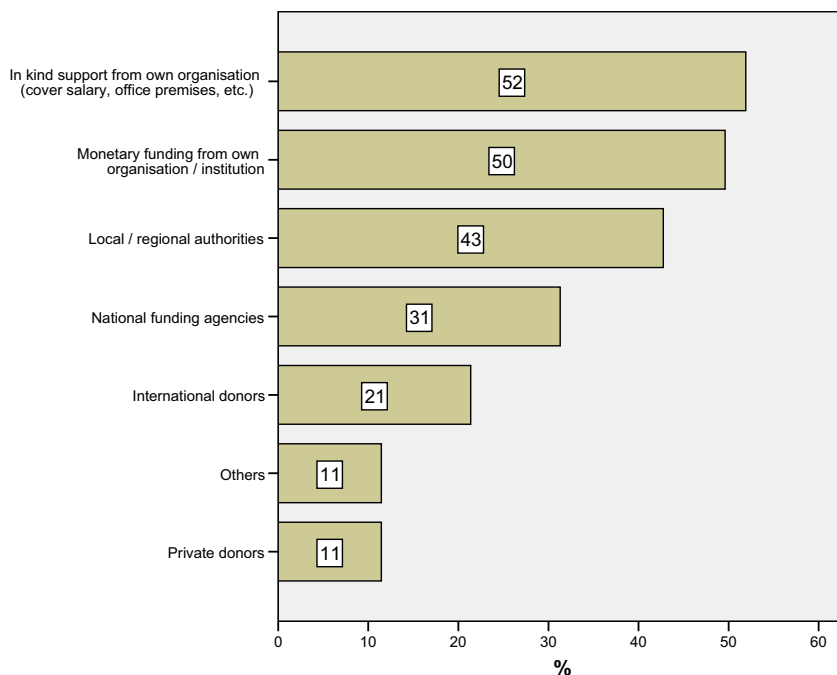
## 2.3 Funding issues and socio-economic context

To what extent have the project partners managed to mobilise financial support from donors apart from the Barents Secretariat? Apparently to a considerable extent, according to our survey data. The respondents were asked what share (in percent) of the total funding of their project they had received from the Barents Secretariat. Naturally, not all respondents were sure of the answer, since the project funding is sometimes only known to the project leader or the lead partner in the project. Nevertheless, 97 of the 140 respondents replied. The funding from the Barents Secretariat does not appear to be the main source of project funding for a majority of respondents. Half of the projects have received 40% or less of the funding from the Barents Secretariat. Only 25% had received 75% or more from the Barents Secretariat.

According to our survey data, only 14% of the projects had received funding solely from the Barents Secretariat. The sources of additional funding are mixed, as illustrated in Figure 2.3. In-kind and monetary support from own organisation are the most typical additional sources of funding for projects in the programme. A considerable proportion has received funding from local and regional authorities as well. Close to one third had received funding from national funding agencies, followed by international

donors. Private donors appear to be less common and had supported only 11% of the surveyed projects.

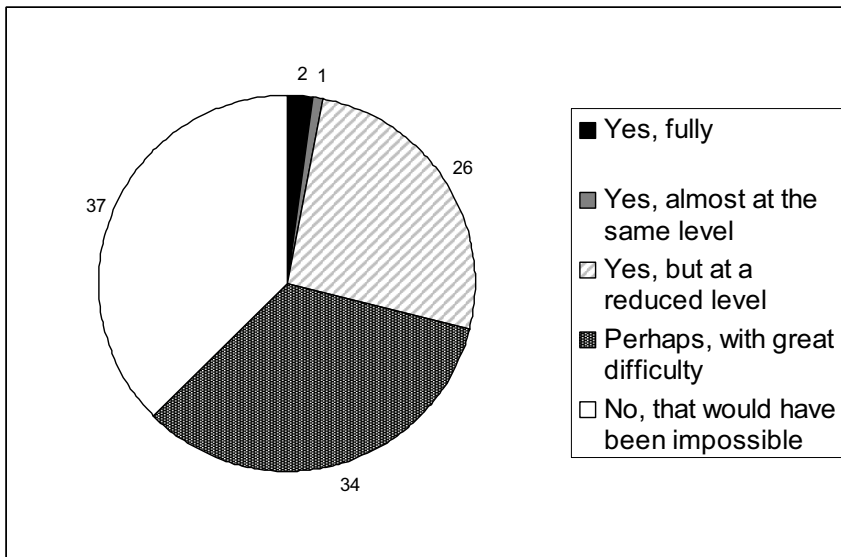
Figure 2.3 *Percentage of respondents reporting additional project funding from a variety of sources (n=131).*



Despite being a modest contributor to project funding for a large number of projects, only few of the projects would have materialised without support from the Barents Secretariat according to the survey respondents. Only 2% gave the reply 'yes, fully' when asked whether they would have been able to carry out their project without the financial support from the Barents Secretariat. The distribution of the other responses is shown in Figure 2.4. One third of the respondents would perhaps have managed to carry out the project, but with great difficulty. An even larger proportion (37%) believes it would have been impossible to carry out the project without such support. Russians appear to be more optimistic that they would have managed (but usually with great difficulty) without funding from the Barents Secretariat than

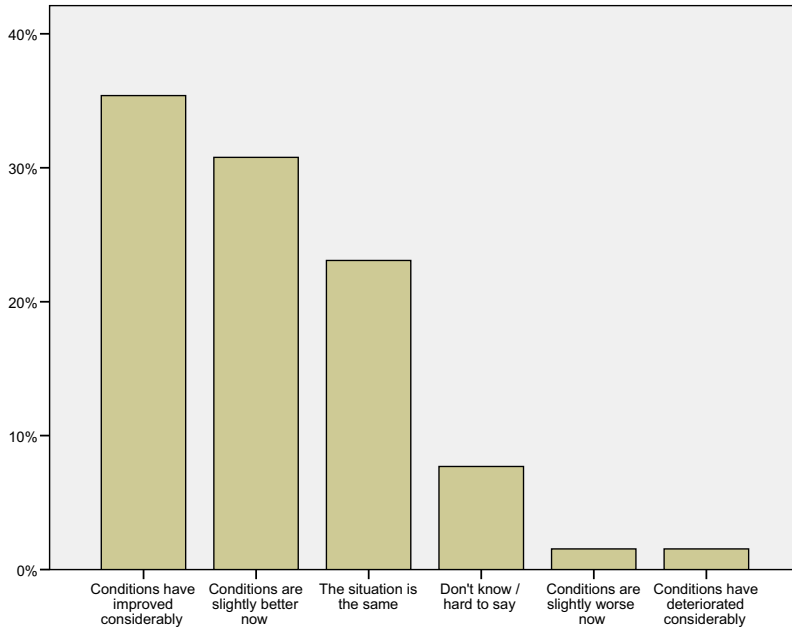
Norwegians: While 46% of the Norwegian respondents believe it would be impossible to carry out the project without support from the Barents Secretariat, the same is the case with only 26% of Russian respondents. This could indicate that the contribution supports already ongoing activities and programmes in Russia, and lifts them to a higher level.

Figure 2.4 *Ability to carry out the activity without support from the Barents Secretariat (in percent (n=131)).*



The projects funded by the Barents Secretariat take place within a larger context of social and economic developments in Russia. There is much evidence that the Russian economy has improved considerably over the last years, and the Russian state has access to revenues which have benefited both the public and the private economy. The survey gave us an opportunity to ask the Russian respondents to what extent the economic developments in Russia had affected their work project work. Figure 2.5 shows that more than two thirds of the respondents consider that conditions have improved, and that there are more people who think that conditions have improved considerably than only slightly. Only a very small share of the respondents, some 3% think that conditions have deteriorated.

Figure 2.5 *Distribution of opinions to the question: "To what extent have the economic developments in Russia affected your project work?" Percentage of respondents from Russia (n=65).*



## 2.4 Content of the activities

According to the guidelines for funding five criteria govern the arrangement and implementation of the projects that receive support from the Barents Secretariat:

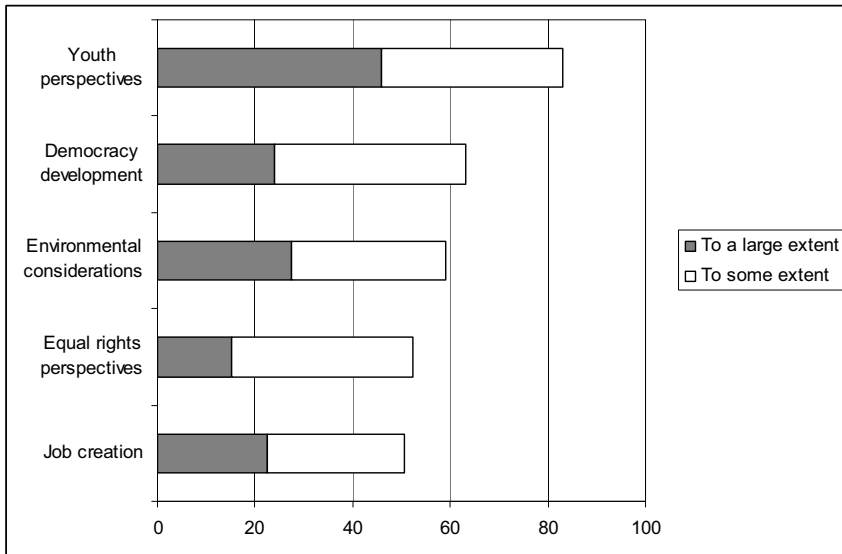
- Environmental considerations: To sustain a good environment while simultaneously creating employment opportunities through a cautious utilisation of the natural resources.
- Equal opportunities perspective: Community development based on men's and women's equal rights, diverse qualifications, needs and experiences.
- Youth perspective: Community development where the special needs of youth are given attention.



- Democracy development: To stimulate a strengthened democracy development through realisation of the projects.
- Employment perspective: The Barents Secretariat's project activity will promote increased employment and job creation.

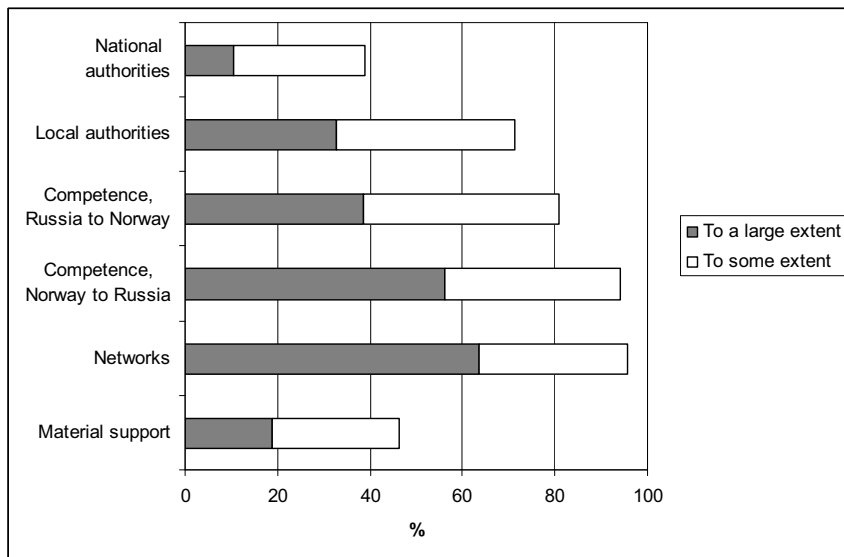
Figure 2.6 shows to what extent the projects have involved these perspectives according to the survey respondents. The perspectives seem to be overall well represented in the project portfolio. The figure gives the percentage of respondents indicating that the components have been present to respectively a large extent and to some extent. Youth perspectives are included in more than eighty percent of the projects at least to some extent. Democracy development and environmental considerations are correspondingly covered in about sixty percent of the projects, while equal rights perspectives and job creation are somewhat less widespread perspectives in the project.

Figure 2.6 *The extent to which different perspectives have been included in the projects funded by the Barents Secretariat. Percent of respondents indicating 'to a large extent' and 'to some extent' (n=119).*



In addition to these perspectives, the Barents Secretariat also puts emphasis on a number of other factors, and a number of these are collected in Figure 2.7, reflecting the extent to which a set of additional factors are present in the projects funded by the Barents Secretariat according to the survey respondents. They include involvement of the authorities in Russia (national, regional and municipal), transfer of competence (in both directions), and development of professional networks. Funding from the Barents Secretariat should not primarily be used for material support, but it is still interesting to find out to what extent such support is characteristic of the project portfolio, and one question was included on this issue as well.

Figure 2.7 *The extent to which different components have been included in the projects funded by the Barents Secretariat. Percent of respondents indicating 'to a large extent' and 'to some extent' (n=119).*



Collaboration with and involvement of regional and local authorities in Russia is more common than collaboration with national authorities, as could have been expected taking into account the regional approach of the project co-operation. It is still noteworthy that national authorities in Russia are involved in

almost 40% of the projects. Survey data confirm that competence transfer and capacity building are important elements in the projects funded by the Secretariat, and although competence transfer from Norway to Russia is more common than the other way around, the difference is perhaps smaller than could have been expected taking into account the focus on project implementation in Russia. More than eight in ten of the projects include transfer of competence from Russia to Norway at least to some extent. Russians are more likely than Norwegians to say that there is competence transfer from Norway to Russia, while respondents in both countries give more similar evaluation of the extent of competence transfer in the other direction.

Development of professional networks is the component mentioned by the largest number of respondents, and virtually all projects include this element at least to some extent. In close to two thirds of the projects such development takes place to a large extent. Differences between the respondents from different countries are insignificant.

Although material support is not considered a priority in the project portfolio, in almost one in five projects such material support takes place to a large extent, and in almost half the projects at least to some extent. Our expectations would be that such support was more common in the early stages of the collaboration, when the Russian economy was much weaker and the social conditions much more difficult than they are today. When checking for the start-up of the project, this appears to be the case. Material support appeared to be particularly widespread in 1999-2001, in connection with the Russian economic crisis which hit the country in 1998. As many as half the projects starting up in this period involved material support to a large extent, according to the survey respondents. Among the newer projects, and especially those starting in 2005 or later, there are much fewer projects in which material support plays a major role.

## 2.5 Self evaluation of projects

Even if project leaders might be inclined to exaggerate the positive and downplay the negative aspects of their projects, the survey contains information about the opinions of project leaders as to

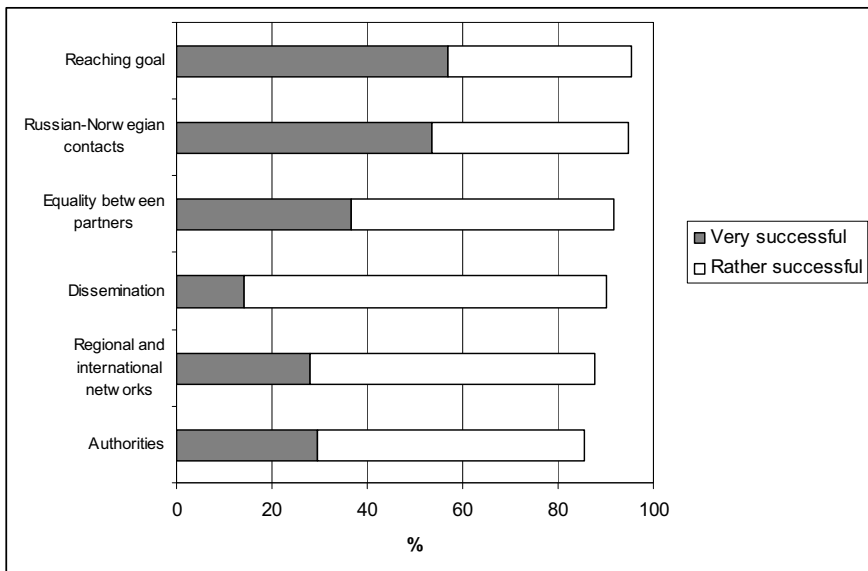
the level of success of various aspects in relation to their projects. By comparing the responses to each of the items, one may at least discern if there are specific aspects that are considered by the respondents to have been more successful than others.

We concentrated on the following aspects of the projects:

- Reaching the goals stipulated in the original project application
- Disseminating results of the project
- Establishing lasting Russian-Norwegian contacts and networks
- Linking up with relevant local and national authorities
- Linking up with relevant regional and international networks
- Equality between project partners

Level of perceived success is presented in Figure 2.8.

Figure 2.8 *Level of perceived success of the project. Percentage indicating that their project has been very or rather successful in terms of a number of aspects (n=135).*

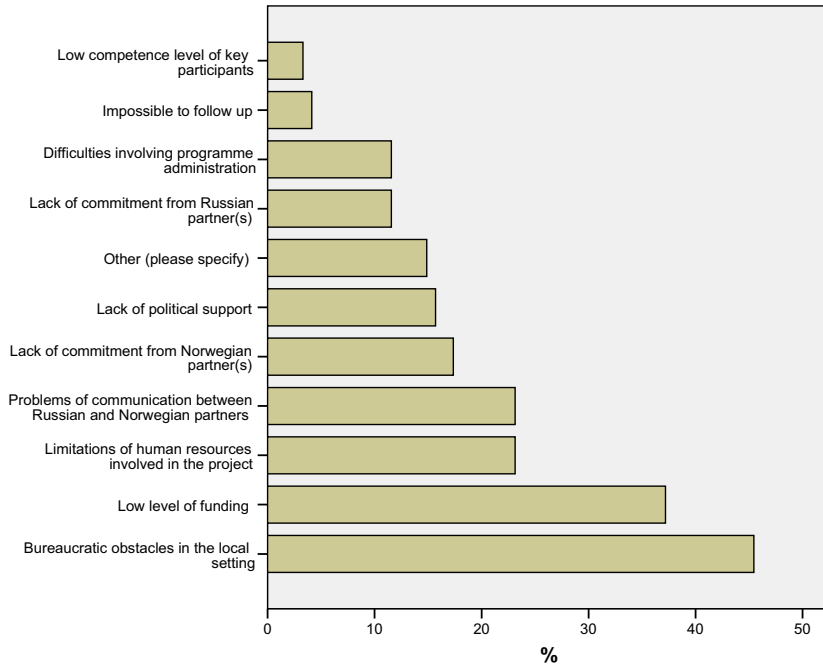


One could argue that in project implementation the most important success factor is to what extent the goals of the project are reached. Responses to the questions on degree of success according to the listed factors shows that this is the item that the respondents most often declare that they have succeeded with (see Figure 2.8). , closely followed by the establishment of Russian-Norwegian contacts and networks. Both of these items have a success rate (including ‘rather successful’) of between 90 and 100 percent, and over half the respondents consider their projects to be ‘very successful’ in these respects. Other items are also reported to have been successful, but for these items ‘rather successful’ is more common than ‘very successful’. One could argue that these aspects are less important than the first two mentioned, but they should not be disregarded. For example, for many projects there appears to be a greater potential for disseminating results, although the percentage indicating at least a certain level of success in this respect is high also for this item. Perhaps surprisingly, the projects that last less than two years report a higher success rate than those lasting a longer time period. It does not, however, follow from this that one should give priority to short-term projects, as the projects that last longer tend to be more complex and results are often less visible during the implementation phase. There are no systematic differences between Russians and Norwegian in their evaluation of success, but Norwegians tend to be slightly more prone to report that they have been *very* successful in reaching the initial project goals, and even more likely to report success in establishing contact with the relevant authorities.

## 2.6 Project obstacles

International project collaboration tends to be rewarding, and we will come back to many of the positive aspects below. However, there are also a number of challenges and obstacles that may be present to a larger or lesser extent. In the survey we presented a list of such obstacles that we believed could affect funded projects to a certain or substantial degree and asked the respondents to cross for the obstacle(s) that had most seriously affected their own project. They were allowed to mark as many obstacles as they would like.

Figure 2.9 *Obstacles in project implementation. Percentage indicating each obstacle as being among the most important (n=121).*



The figure shows that bureaucratic obstacles in the local setting is the most common perceived challenge experienced by nearly half the respondents. The funding level is also a challenge to nearly four in ten respondents. Other obstacles are less pronounced, indicated by less than one quarter of the respondents each. Among these limitations in human resources and communication problems are experienced by a significant number. Lack of commitment from Norwegian partners appears to be experienced somewhat more frequently than corresponding lack on the Russian side. Very few respondents complain about lack of competence of their partners, and it seems very few have problems following up their activities indicating hopes for project sustainability (we will come back to this issue later). There also appear to be few problems with programme administration, i.e. the relation to the Barents Secretariat, as less than 12% mention this as one of the major obstacles (see below for more on the administration).

Of the 15% mentioning other obstacles than those listed the most common were problems with formalities, such as customs and visa

requirements, transport costs and time constraints, as well as language problems. Other obstacles include differences in systems between the two countries affecting the projects, difficulties including partners from other countries (Finland/Sweden) without access to own funding, changes in project staff during the project implementation period, and others.

When looking separately at responses made by Russian and Norwegian respondents, some important differences can be observed. Russians tend to stress bureaucratic obstacles in the local setting much more often than is the case with Norwegian respondents. This is hardly surprising since the projects are implemented in Russia and permissions are often needed from Russian authorities. Norwegians more often complain about problems of communication, low level of funding, and lack of human resources than is the case with Russian respondents. Other items have a more uniform distribution. For example, complaints of lack of commitment are equally likely to be directed towards people from own country as from the partners abroad.

## 2.7 The Barents Secretariat administration

Although applications are sent to the Barents Secretariat office in Kirkenes, the local offices have an important role in guiding the applicants before the submission of an application, and to follow up on the activities in the local setting. Nevertheless, of those who report contact with the staff of the Barents Secretariat, the office in Kirkenes is the one that the applicants have most contact with. Even a considerable proportion of Russian respondent have more contact with the Kirkenes office than any other offices, as shown in Table 2.7.

Table 2.7 *Office with which the respondents have had most contact.*  
*Percent.*

<i>Office</i>	All respondents		Russian respondents		Norwegian respondents	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
Kirkenes	83	62	18	28	62	93
Murmansk	18	13	18	28	0	0
Arkhangelsk	11	8	10	16	1	2
Narian Mar	2	2	2	3	0	0
Petrozavodsk	2	2	2	3	0	0
Don't know/hard to say	8	6	10	11	1	2
None of the above	10	8	7	11	3	5
Total	134	100	64	100	67	100

When asked about the frequency of contact with the Barents Secretariat offices, the majority (51%) of those answering this question<sup>3</sup> reported such contact ‘a few times a year’, while 20% had such contact monthly or more often. The rest are distributed between ‘about once a year’ (14%), ‘more than once, but not every year’ (11%) and ‘only once’ (3%). This shows a fairly high frequency of contact with project members for the staff of the Secretariat, especially in Kirkenes. Country differences between the respondents are small. In fact Russians are overrepresented both among those who have most frequent (monthly) and the least frequent contact with the Secretariat staff.

The Secretariat administration was evaluated by the survey respondents, in terms of the following aspects:

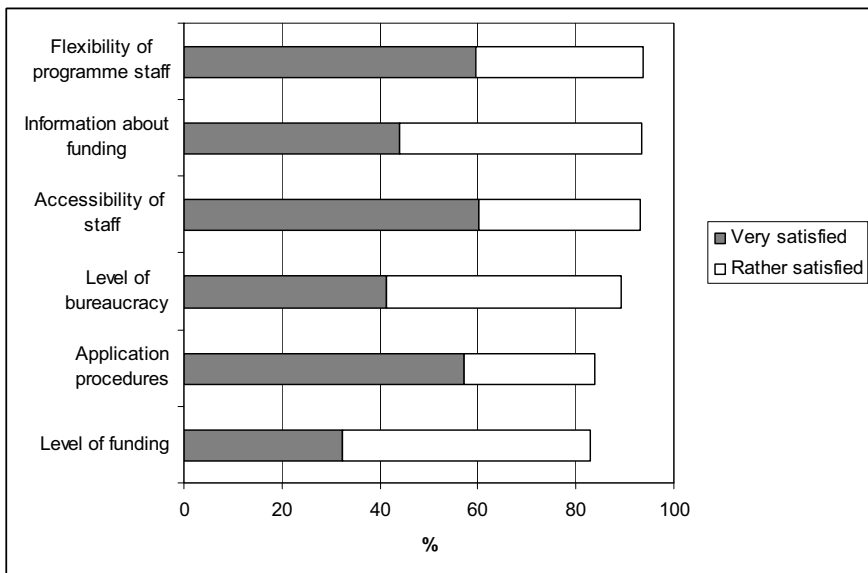
- Information about the funding opportunities and requirements
- Accessibility of Secretariat staff
- Application procedures
- Level of funding
- Level of bureaucracy in Secretariat
- Flexibility of Secretariat staff

<sup>3</sup> The 18 persons who answered ‘don’t know’ and the 7 persons who skipped the question are not included.



Only project leaders, who were thought to be the ones who were mostly in contact with the programme staff, were asked these questions. Those who were not sure (9-15% for each item) are excluded from the analysis. Figure 2.10 shows that the general impression of the administration of the Secretariat is very good. More than 80% of the respondents are at least 'rather satisfied' with all the aspects of the administration that were asked in the survey. Differences are discernable when we differentiate between 'rather' and 'very' satisfied, however. The funding level pleases the lowest proportion of respondents, and level of bureaucracy and information about funding opportunities and requirements are in an intermediate position, while close to 60% are *very* satisfied with flexibility and accessibility of project staff. The vast majority of the remaining respondents (who are not shown in the figure) answered 'rather dissatisfied' instead of 'very dissatisfied' (there was no neutral category); the latter category received at the most two responses, and for several items no one opted for this alternative.

Figure 2.10 *Level of satisfaction with various aspects of the Barents Secretariat administration. Percentage of project leaders indicating 'very satisfied' or 'rather satisfied' to each item (n=59).*



There are quite large differences between respondents in Russia and Norway in terms of their satisfaction with the Secretariat along the dimensions mentioned. Russians are on average more satisfied with the information about funding opportunities (66% are 'very satisfied' in comparison with 29% of the Norwegians), application procedures, access to Secretariat staff and funding levels, while the Norwegian respondents express much more satisfaction than Russians in terms of the flexibility and the level of bureaucracy of the Secretariat staff.

## 2.8 Perspectives on the collaboration

Collaboration between partners from different countries, with differences in culture, language, political and administrative systems and economic levels, to mention some of the most obvious, may be enriching but may also entail some difficulties. In the survey we wanted to find out to which extent the collaboration between Russian and Norwegian partners had been characterised by positive as well as negative features. Thus, we presented a battery of questions regarding collaboration (every other item a possible obstacle and every other a possible asset), and asked the respondents to what extent each of them had been characteristic of their own project. The following were the potentially negative aspects:

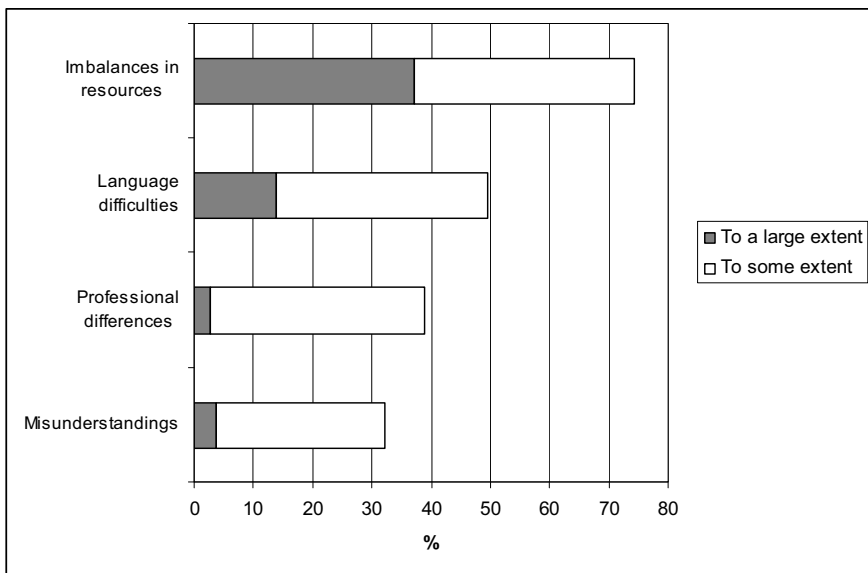
- Imbalances in resources
- Misunderstandings due to cultural differences
- Language difficulties
- Professional differences, diverging views on project implementation

while the potentially positive aspects listed were the following:

- Shared understanding of problems and challenges
- Openness and transparency between the partners
- A good balance between the different partners in the project
- Development of closer relations throughout the project period

First we look at the potentially negative aspects, where the results are presented in Figure 2.11. Imbalances in resources are perceived as the most critical obstacle to the collaboration. The fact that three quarters of the respondents see this as a problem for their collaboration, and close to 40% see it as a major problem, is a clear indication that such imbalances represent an important challenge. Other difficulties are much less widespread, as the figure shows. Language difficulties are there, but not to a large extent. Even fewer complain about professional differences and misunderstandings. We will come back to the question of possible misunderstandings below, however.

Figure 2.11 *Perception of potentially negative aspects of the collaboration between Norwegian and Russian partners. Percentage of respondents indicating that different aspects are characteristic of such collaboration, to a large extent or to some extent.<sup>4</sup>*  
(*n*=125)



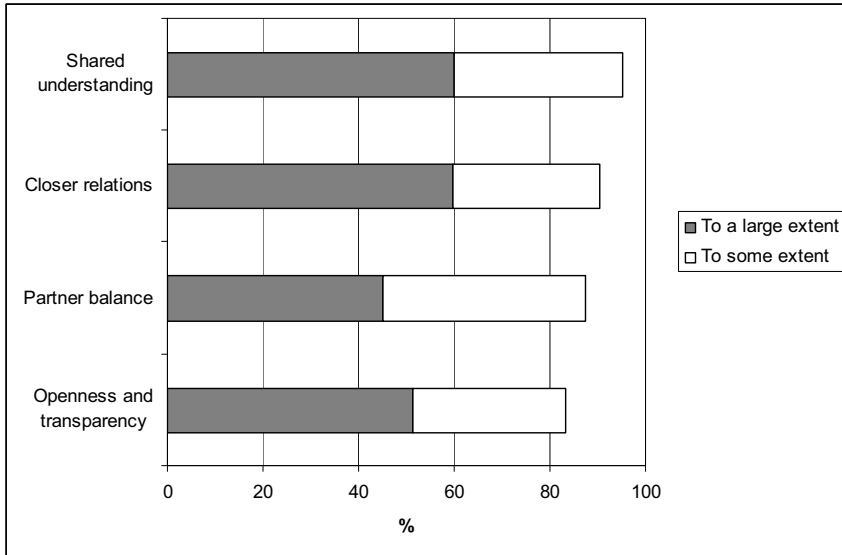
Positive impacts of the project collaboration are also easy to discern (Figure 2.12.). More than eighty percent indicate that each of the aspects are present at least 'to some extent' in their own

<sup>4</sup> The two other categories that are not reported here are 'to a minor extent', or 'not at all'.

project for all the four items, and a majority of them that this is the case 'to a large extent'. Most positive evaluation by project participants concerns an alleged shared understanding among the project partners, which is important if the project is going to be efficient. A vast majority also think that closer relations between the partners have developed throughout the project period, as can be seen from the figure. The slightly lower score for balance among the partners can probably be explained by the perceived imbalance in resources experienced by many respondents. Openness and transparency are important elements in international collaboration, and the proportion indicating this to be the case in their project is satisfactory: half the respondents ascertain that this is the case 'to a large extent'.

It is worth noting that for all the items on collaboration the Russian respondents give a more positive evaluation with, as a rule, substantially more support for the positive aspects and less for the negative aspects according to their own project experience compared to the Norwegian respondents.

Figure 2.12 *Perception of potentially positive aspects of the collaboration between Norwegian and Russian partners. Percentage of respondents indicating that different aspects are characteristic of such collaboration, to a large extent or to some extent.<sup>5</sup>*  
(n=125)



When interviewing project leaders on project collaboration during the field work of this evaluation, the evaluators encountered several cases where the respondents had felt that the project had stopped, been delayed, or had little progress on the other side of the border without understanding why it was the case. Thus it was decided to include a question in the survey on this phenomenon, to find out how typical such situations are for both Russians and Norwegians in the collaboration.

In fact, a majority of the respondents (55%) had experienced such situations, but of those who had experienced them, they were said to be rare incidents (42%) while 14% ascertained that they had happened often. Thus, this appears to be a rather frequent phenomenon in Russian – Norwegian project collaboration. We will discuss this phenomenon in more detail later in the report.

<sup>5</sup> The two other categories that are not reported here are 'to a minor extent', or 'not at all'.

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The problem is widespread in both countries, but slightly more so among Norwegian respondents.

When asked whether they have confronted their partners with these occurrences, two thirds of the relevant respondents had done so, why the remaining third had not. Norwegians are slightly more likely to ask their partners the reason for the perceived standstill. Norwegians, on the other hand were more likely to be either fully (44%) or partially (56%) satisfied with the explanation given for the lack of action. Russians, on the other hand were fully satisfied with the answers given only in 7 percent of the instances, while 87% were only partially satisfied and another 7% not satisfied at all.

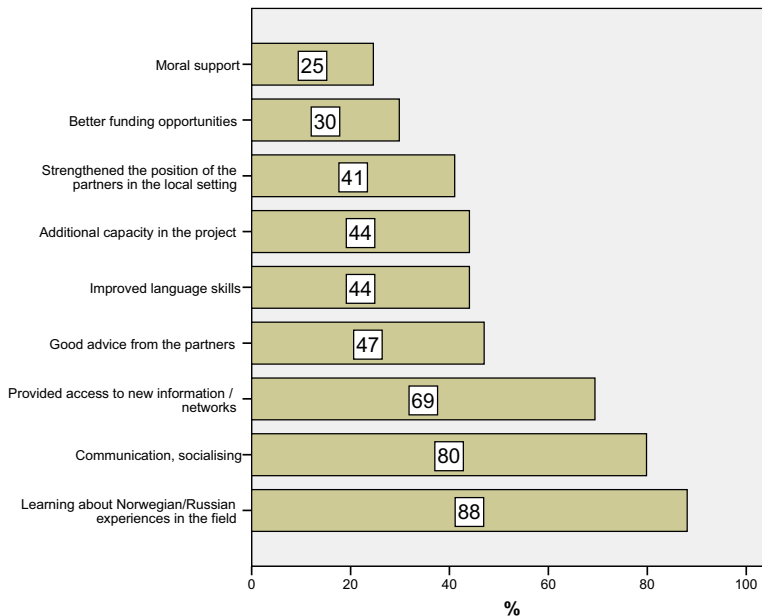
## 2.9 Cross-border contacts resulting from project co-operation

Professional networking among project participants also takes the form of developing closer personal contacts between project participants. Professional relations sometimes develop into more personal relations and even friendships. Survey data indicate that this has taken place to a large degree among participants in the projects funded by the Barents Secretariat. No less than 84% have exchanged private e-mail correspondence, and the same percentage has had a private meal or drink together with their partners. Almost a similar share (78%) have sent private Christmas or New Year cards to their colleagues in the projects, while two thirds (66%) have been invited to the home of their Russian or Norwegian partner. There is virtually no difference between the respondents from the two countries in this respect, with one exception: Norwegians appear to be less inclined to categorize their e-mail correspondence to be private, as 95% of the Russian respondents ascertain that they have engaged in this type of activity, while the corresponding percentage among Norwegians is 76%.

## 2.10 Positive impact

In order to evaluate the impact of the project portfolio as a whole, it is useful to find out what the project participants themselves consider to be the most positive impact of their own projects. The respondents were presented with a list of potential factors and were asked to select the most important (one or several). The results (presented in Figure 2.12.) show that the opportunities to learn from experiences in Norway and Russia are the highest rated impact of the project. Perhaps surprisingly, as many as 80% of the respondents considered the social aspects to be among the most important. Access to information and networks; advice from the partners; additional capacity in the project were also aspects that were mentioned by a very large share of the respondents. The same was the case with improved language skills! Moral support and better funding opportunities were mentioned by the smallest number of respondents. Responses were remarkably similar for Russian and Norwegian respondents, with more or less equal ranking of impact for the various items.

Figure 2.13 *Percentage indicating that different types of impact have been among the most important for their own project (n= 58).*

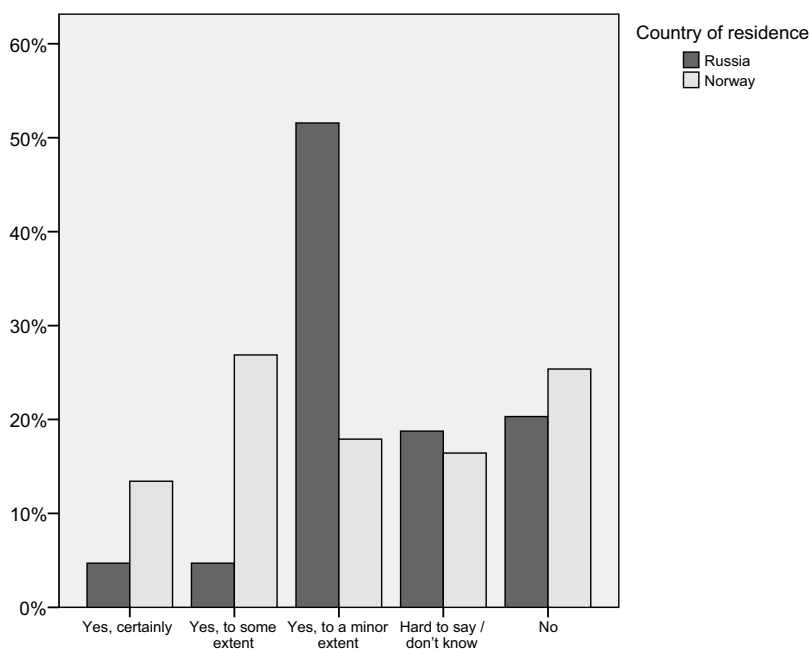


## 2.11 The future

Several of the questions in the questionnaire had a forward-looking perspective. One question relates to the sustainability of the projects. When asked about whether they are or will be able to follow up the project activities without the further support from the Barents Secretariat, rather few of the respondents believed this to be the case. Only one quarter thought they would be able to follow up at least to some extent. One third believe they would be able to do so to a minor extent, however. The rest are either unsure (17%) or categorical that they are not able to do so (23%).

There were quite different responses based on the country of living of the respondents, as shown in Figure 2.14. Norwegian respondents were much more likely to claim that they would be able to follow up at a significant level. Russian respondents were more inclined to be able to follow up only to a minor extent, while Norwegians were slightly overrepresented among those who did not believe it to be possible.

Figure 2.14 *Ability to follow up activities without further support of the Barents Secretariat by country of residence. Percent (n=134).*





People who receive funding from a programme are likely to say that they want the programme to continue. This is also the case in this web-survey according to the survey responses. A total of 59% would like to see the programme continued exactly the way it is today, and another 29% with some slight changes. Very few (5%) would like to see the programme continued with major changes, while just above 2% would not like it to continue (combined 'probably not' and 'definitely not'). An additional 5% found it hard to answer the question. Norwegians are more positive to a continuation of the programme according to the present guidelines than are Russians (57% vs. 41%). Respondents had a chance to substantiate their views in an open question, and some of the replies will be presented later in the evaluation.

Finally, respondents were asked how likely it is that they will apply for funding from the Barents Secretariat in the future. This is a very likely option for 71% of the respondents, while another 18% believe it to be 'quite likely'. Only 3% thought it was 'not so likely' or 'very unlikely', while 7% of the respondents found it hard to answer the question. 2% of the respondents do not work in the relevant field anymore. Country differences are rather small, though with Norwegians being more inclined to answer 'very likely' and Russians to answer 'quite likely'. The general mood, therefore, is Barents Secretariat continues to be a feasible and popular source of funding to those who have been involved in the programme already.

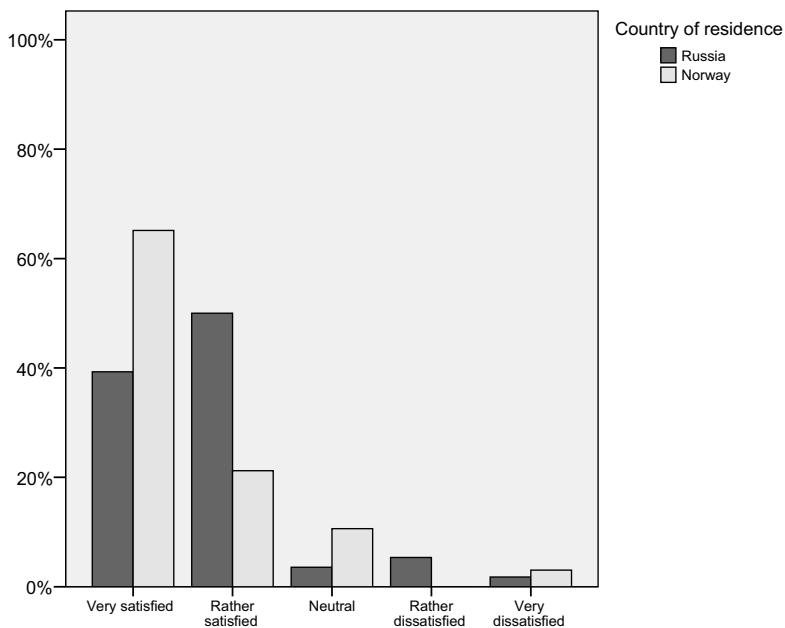
## 2.12 General satisfaction with the Barents Secretariat

Taking all these findings into account, one would expect a rather high level of satisfaction with the Barents Secretariat. This impression is confirmed in the responses to the question: "In general, how satisfied are you with the Barents Secretariat?" In total 88% of those who answered this question were either very or rather satisfied with the Secretariat. The distribution of responses by country of living is illustrated in Figure 2.15. Respondents in both Norway and Russia lean towards a high level of satisfaction, although in Russia the most frequent option is 'rather satisfied', while respondents in Norway more often opted for 'very satisfied'.

Few respondents in both countries opted for rather or very dissatisfied. Project leaders are, as a rule, more satisfied with the Secretariat than other categories of respondents, which strengthens the positive evaluation since they would be likely to have more knowledge of the work of the Secretariat than ordinary participants. Moreover, the longer the project duration, the more likely the respondent is to give a positive evaluation of the Barents Secretariat.

It is, however, worth noting that those who depend mostly on the Barents Secretariat for funding are those who are most satisfied with the Secretariat as well. There can be many reasons why this is the case. It could be an indication that the level of satisfaction depends on the ability to get access to funding from the Secretariat in order to keep up a high activity level.

Figure 2.15 *General satisfaction with the Barents Secretariat by country of living. Percent. (n=125)<sup>6</sup>*



<sup>6</sup> 'Do not know' and missing responses have been removed from the analysis.

## 2.13 Concluding remarks

The survey among project leaders and participants shows that the Barents Secretariat fills a niche for project collaboration among Russian and Norwegian actors. The co-operation funded by the Barents Secretariat has given opportunities for increased interaction between Russian and Norwegian partners that otherwise would have been unlikely to take place. The major achievement, according to the survey respondents, has been the networks established between a large number of Russian and Norwegian partners. These networks appear to have been strengthened and broadened throughout the project period. Project owners as a rule appreciate the possibility to learn about practices on the other side of the border, and the mutual learning aspects are stressed by project participants in both Russia and Norway. Although competence development has been most prominent from Norway to Russia than the other way around, there has been considerable exchange and perceived mutual benefits for all the partners involved.

The survey gives evidence of a number of important additional achievements, some of the most noteworthy being:

- a large number projects have been supported within all priority areas;
- the vast majority of projects are co-funded by other institutions, and a large number have Russian as well as Norwegian or international co-funding;
- the programme appears to be run efficiently, in a flexible and transparent manner, thanks to solid work by Barents Secretariat staff, who are also considered to be very accessible by survey respondents;
- the co-operation has an adequate gender balance;
- improved economic conditions in Russia have contributed positively to the project collaboration for a vast number of projects;
- projects involving humanitarian aid and material support have been reduced to a minimum.

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The survey results, however, also point to a number of challenges or areas that need to be taken into account when developing the co-operation scheme for the future:

- there appears to be a certain geographic imbalance, in Russia characterized by very much focus on Murmansk and less on parts of the Barents region further from the Norwegian-Russian border;
- rather few projects involve partners from other Barents region countries, including projects that undoubtedly would benefit from such multilateral participation;
- dissemination activities are perceived to be less developed than other project activities;
- there is room for a higher degree of equality between project partners, and imbalances in resources is perceived as an obstacle by many survey respondents;
- many Russian project participants experience bureaucratic obstacles in the implementation of their projects;
- although there appears to be a good collaborative climate in most projects, many project participants experience delays or obstacles on the other side of the border that are not sufficiently explained to them, most likely due to insufficient partnership and lack of full transparency between partners.

## 3 Assessment of 14 individual projects

The Barents Secretariat's grant programme has been built around project activities, and the achievement of the objectives of the collaboration therefore depends on a successful implementation of these individual projects. An important part of this evaluation is therefore to look more thoroughly at a number of individual projects. The projects selected are different types of projects in terms of their size, duration, thematic scope, Norwegian or Russian management, geographic scope, model of co-funding, and type of organisations. This chapter outlines some lessons learnt based on project visits, interviews with project leaders in Norway and Russia and document analysis (applications and project reports). The assessment of each project includes a description of the institutional collaboration, funding arrangements, the project background, objectives, the intervention, project results (assessed in terms of output, outcome and impact), the potential for a continuation of project activities, and a more general discussion of lessons learnt. More general conclusions based on the findings from these individual projects are presented in Chapter 4.

### 3.1 Barel Raduga

*#Institutions involved and funding.* Barel Electronics, OOO BR Electronics Russia.

Planned for 2002-2005. 330,000 NOK from Barents Secretariat in 2002 (200,000 NOK from MFA). Also funds from Interreg III Nord were added (369,000 NOK to support competence building). MFA supported a) training and b) Murmansk Technical University. 200,000 NOK 2003 and 330,000 + extra 130,000

NOK. NOK 2004. In 2005 up to 324,000 NOK is granted from the Barents Secretariat.

The pre-feasibility study was supported by 300,000 NOK. The Barents Secretariat did not ask for representation in the steering committee nor did it require formalised reports from the projects. The project itself suggested regular reporting of milestones to the Secretariat officer in charge. The suggestion aimed at creating an “ownership” to the project in the Barents Secretariat, which would hopefully contribute to a fast and flexible solution when problems possibly could occur.

*Background.* Barel a.s. was established in Kirkenes in 1993 and produces device electronics for the control systems of light and heating equipment. In 2001 the firm had 40 employees. To a large extent Barel’s competitors found themselves abroad, in low-cost countries, and in order not to loose out Barel investigated the potential for moving parts of the production across the border.

In 1999 Barel started co-operation with the Murmansk-based state company MGP Techmorgeo as a preliminary project to investigate the potentials for establishing a fully or partly Norwegian-owned production company for electronics in Murmansk.

As a result of a pre-feasibility study (co-financed by the Barents Secretariat, Kirkenes Utvikling as and SND) a business plan for the establishment of a production unit for electronics in Murmansk was presented in June 2001. Project responsible was Geir Torbjørnsen, managing director Barel as. Project leader was Frode Stålsett of Storvik & Co.

Localisation to Murmansk was seen as an opportunity to make use of low salaries (at the time 11 NOK/hour exclusive unproductive and fixed expenses, which was seven to eight times less than the corresponding Norwegian salaries) to carry out manual assembling operations.

The pre-feasibility study from 2001 calculated with a gross monthly salary of 3200 RUR (flat income tax at 13 percent). In addition to the gross salary 18 percent holiday allowance is added and in addition the employer will have to pay taxes and fees amounting to 41,2 percent. Normal working hours in the Russian North were 40 hours for men and 36 hours for women. Workers

in the North have altogether 45 days off, and total working days amount to 205. It should be noticed that the economic improvements in Russia has made the salary level increase considerably. Barel has had to increase wages to keep the employees with the firm. As of 2008, the employees do not earn the 3200 RUR of the pre-feasibility study, but between 10,000 and 15,000 RUR.

The pre-feasibility study recommended a step-wise establishment of a Norwegian-owned production company for electronics. The first steps would consist in competence-building. The business plan suggested a competence programme to be set up in co-operation between the MFA, Norwegian business promotion services, Murmansk Technical University and the Murmansk regional employment agency. The training would provide qualified workers to the firm and new subjects to be taught at Murmansk Technical University.

On the other hand, the Murmansk-based enterprise envisaged is not very advanced technologically. It is conceived as a traditional production enterprise for assembling electronics. Technologically it is going to focus on low machine utilisation and much use of manual processing. Moreover, Murmansk has very little experience in production of electronics. In fact MGP Techmergeo was the only enterprise in this field.

During the pre-feasibility study due attention was paid to anchoring the idea politically on Russian side (by informing the Governor, the regional administration, particularly the regional economy department, which is responsible for the economic growth zones) as well as on the Norwegian side (Finnmark regional authorities represented by special adviser Thor Robertsen and Sør-Varanger municipality). The business plan contained specific information on possible obstacles related to taxes and customs, and how to possibly overcome them.

Barel concludes that Russian customs are quite predictable and cause little delay if all documents and stamps are in order. The challenge lies in knowing how to comply with the requirements. Therefore, Barel recommends making use of a highly qualified Russian accountant and enter into dialogue with tax authorities at an early stage.

The company was established in 2003 with a director, secretary and chief of production, named OOO BR Electronics Russia. Training of production workers, among others SMD (surface-mount devices) operators was carried out. A course in soldering was carried out. The administration of the company stayed for several periods at Barel in Kirkenes for training in contemporary administrative routines. The ceremonial opening of the company took place in June 2004, and during the summer production started up.

Still Murmansk Technical University did not take part, and in August 2004 Barel made a request to the Barents Secretariat to transfer the allocation for b) co-operation with Murmansk Technical University to a) general training. It was argued that training had proved to be more time-consuming and required more direct follow-up than originally expected, which made it necessary to rely on trainers internal to the company. The link to the Technical University should not be broken, Barel, argued. However, Barel's initiatives received very little response from the Technical University.

By 2005 the OOO BR Electronics had 35 people employed, of which ten in the administration and 25 in production. Most of the workers were recruited from the local firm Mikrotech that was bought by BR Electronics in 2004. Mikrotech was established a few years earlier by the Pajala-based firm Mikromakerna and the personnel of Techmorgeo. The buy-out was industrially motivated as Mikrotech had overlaps with BR Electronics (it had supplied electronics to Mikromakerna). Today the company has 50 employees in average plus some more in particularly hectic periods.

In particular, Barel argued, there was a need for more training in administrative routines. The importance of this aspect had been underestimated. Focus was to be at simple administrative tools: systems for accounting and budgeting, wage payment systems, inspection systems, patterning systems, and quality control.

*Objectives.* The basic aim of BR Electronics' establishment in Murmansk was to establish a fully or partly Norwegian-owned production company for electronics in Murmansk. This was intended to strengthening the Norwegian firm and bringing new skills to Murmansk. The project supported by the Barents



Secretariat consisted in providing the training of the Russian personnel.

Barel itself explained its objectives like this in its project description (e.g. in the Final Report from 2005):

The establishment of production in Murmansk will strengthen the competitiveness of Barel. The enterprise will get access to cheap labour with a generally high level of education. This will make it possible for Barel to focus on products with a high degree of manual processing, where Barel's closeness to Murmansk and a low wage level in Russia will strengthen Barel's competitiveness

*The intervention.* The training strategy consisted in conveying basic knowledge on standards, production and administrative routines. Relevant competence from abroad, including Barel, was made use of. The training was module based. Some of the modules led to practical tests approved by Veritas, and was repeated regularly. To reduce costs, Barel wanted to train instructors at the Murmansk Technical University to carry out training and certification of the modules mentioned above. This would lead to a new line of study at the Murmansk Technical University, the business plan stated. This way, it was said, the region will acquire new industrial competence that may attract related activity. Material and Production Steering (MPS) is important in a modern production enterprise, which is dependent upon good logistics, and a good overview of stock, procurement, orders and production. MPS training was planned in two stages, the first being a minimal introduction.

Also administrative techniques was planned to be focused upon, like quality control, visualisation, accounting, payment of salaries and inspection systems.

The activities consist in: a) training, b) co-operation with Murmansk Technical University and c) establishment of Raduga production unit for electronics in Murmansk. These are termed "soft projects".

*Results.*

a) *Output:* Barel has had problems in its arguments for cost and production control and time-consuming “pedagogical processes” (citation from application 2005) with the leadership group of BR Electronics was initiated. These problems are classified as “cultural” (application from 2005). Nonetheless, the project resulted in the establishment of the planned production enterprise in Murmansk (on the basis of an already exiting enterprise).

b) *Outcome:* The outcomes of the project have been positive for the mother company in Kirkenes, that benefits from localising the manual work to Murmansk where labour costs still are considerably lower than in Norway. The Russian enterprise benefits from Norwegian capital to renew the manufacturing equipment.

c) *Impacts.* On the positive side the project is a contribution to the development of economic and productive interaction across the borders in the BEAR. There is also a possibly negative impact resulting from the fact that the project cements the old asymmetry between a high-tech, high-cost Norway and a manual, low-cost Murmansk.

*Continuation of the project activities.* The Russian enterprise has been established.

*Discussion.* Some of the project’s aspects may be in conflict with the overall aims of the Barents co-operation. The project has helped Barel Electronics establish a production unit in a (relative) low-cost country. What is special here, is that the low-cost location is next-door, a three hours drive from Kirkenes, and within the Barents Region. The project funding from the Barents Secretariat has enabled the training of cheap labour become compete tent enough to be employed by a Norwegian firm. The question here is not whether placing manual work to a low-cost country is good or bad, but whether it should be supported by funds under the Barents Secretariat’s grant programme .

Is Barel Electronics being subsidised by the Barents Secretariat in its competition with Russian business interests? If this question is answered in the affirmative the next question will be whether the Barents co-operation is the right place to be supported from. Is it

in accordance with the Barents programme theory, or “philosophy”? It should be noticed here that these questions do apply not only to the project run by Barel, but to several other Barents projects as well.

Notwithstanding the questions above, the project has several merits in terms of contributing to a cross-border region with an increased flow of labour and commodities. First of all, Barel works very seriously with the realities of the Russian system for certification, customs, and tax regulation. Already the business plan from 2001 gives good examples of insightful treatment of these questions, and since then Barel has coped professionally with the developments in the Russian legal and administrative surroundings. Dealing skilfully with not only the differences between Norway and Russia, but also with Russia’s intricate and rapidly developing legal context, Barel offers a good example to other Norwegian actors. Secondly, although it has taken time to install an efficient management in the company, Barel has been able to set up a firm that works.

### 3.2 Kimek – capacity building of Russian personnel within the oil and gas industry

*#Institutions involved and funding.* The project owner is Kimek Offshore as, Kirkenes, in close co-operation with Statoil. Kimek’s project partners were one Russian and one Norwegian training centre, the Training Centre of the Department of the Federal Public Employment Service in Murmansk and the Kirkenes Competence Centre. Both centres were experienced in vocational training at the outset of the co-operation. The steering group was set up of representatives from Statoil, the Barents Secretariat, Innovation Norway – Finnmark, Kirkenes Competence Centre and Kimek Offshore.

*Funding.* The Barents Secretariat granted 560.000 NOK in 2005. The total cost of the project was NOK 5.1 million, which is more than originally planned due to unexpectedly expensive materials to be used in the training of welders and, not the least, start-up and management costs. The extra costs were covered by Kimek Offshore itself. In the contract between Kimek Offshore and Statoil (signed December 2004) the costs were to be shared with

25 percent from Kimek Offshore and 35 percent from Statoil. The remaining 40 percent were applied for from Innovation Norway and the Barents Secretariat.

*Background.* Kimek Offshore was established in 2000 as a response to the development regarding offshore petroleum extraction. Given the small population in Northern Norway, skilled workers would have to be found elsewhere. In the neighbouring Northwest Russia there were no less than 60,000 or even 70,000 ship yard workers. Therefore, Kimek Offshore advertised for workers within relevant fields of work in Russian newspapers inviting to the training courses. There was a great interest locally in Northwest Russia, and Kimek could pick and choose among skilled and motivated applicants after having made interviews with them.

Through its ownership (50 percent) of Zvezdochka Engineering in Arkhangelsk, Kimek Offshore has long experience in working with Russian engineers.

*Objectives.* The overall aim of the project was to create a highly skilled Russian labour force for jobs within the development of onshore and offshore petroleum installations and petroleum fields in Russia. According to Russian legislation foreign companies' work force in the field of petroleum activities must include 75 percent or more Russian employees. For Kimek to take part in the Russian petroleum development it is necessary to train Russian workers. The training project was also motivated by a wish to have skilled Russian workers for a future development of oil and gas fields in Northern Norway.

*The intervention.* In order to reach its objectives, the project aimed at building up and carrying out competence building programme for 250 Russian industrial workers in order to qualify and certify them within fields of mechanics (welding, work with tubes, insulating, scaffolding) that are needed within petroleum industry in Russia, Norway and other countries. Training in health, environment and security (in Norwegian HMS for short) rules and practices formed an integrated part of the training. The initial stage of the training consisted in a four week intensive course in English language followed by an exam. Those who passed the exam continued to the professional course that lasted for two to eight weeks. All training courses were carried out in Arkhangelsk, Severodvinsk, Murmansk and Kirkenes.

Moreover, the project aimed at transferring technology and know-how to training institutions and enterprises that cooperate with Kimek in Murmansk and Arkhangelsk.

The training programme was meant to include 250 workers. The plan was to graduate 50 candidates each quarter of a year in the period January 2005 to March 2006. The training was focused on what would happen afterwards. Those participants who completed the course and passed the exam would be offered employment in Kimek Offshore or other companies. In case of employment in Norway, the trained workers will be employed by Kimek Offshore in Kirkenes with a Norwegian work permit and Norwegian working conditions.

The project's subcontractors in the field of HMS, Vest Bygg Sikring a.s., has later set up its own firm in Murmansk to offer HMS training to Russian and foreign companies involved in the oil and gas industry.

#### *Results.*

*a) Output:* The planned number of 250 trained workers was not reached. Altogether 150 workers were trained. The fact that the original number of trained workers was not reached is explained by Kimek Offshore as being the result of a certain competition with a project run by A-etat (project High 5) that offered training for free.

*b) Outcome:* Kimek Offshore has followed up the workers that they have trained, and offered them work, either in Norway or in Russia. Kimek Offshore now has a staff of 140 employees, of whom 70 are Russian. The Russians commute between the working site in Norway and their home in Russia. The project's first outcome was that Kimek offshore got altogether 120 employees (of which 17 Russians) on the Snøhvit development also much thanks to the fact that Statoil was project partner. Later Aker Kværner needed titanium welders and plumbers for the "Ormen Lange" gas field development on the Norwegian continental shelf. Kimek Offshore provided 50 workers (of whom 49 Russian). In the H 61 development 65 Russians from Kimek Offshore take part as trained workers.

The Russian workers have gained reputation for being accurate and having few days off sick, although in two cases workers have been sent home due to drunkenness.

The Russian workers have the same labour rights as the Norwegian colleagues, and are all organised in Fellesforbundet, which means that they have a collective agreement. Fellesforbundet is the largest trade union in the private sector in Norway.

*c) Impact.* Kimek Offshore holds the project to be crucial for the company's existence. "Without the project, we would most likely not have existed now", the company's chief of administration, Rune Johansen, told. In fact, during the project period, the company increased its turnover from three to 51 million NOK, and the permanently employed staff from two to 140. This makes Kimek Offshore one of Northern Norway's biggest contractors within the oil and gas sector.

As of today, the company does not train and employ new Russian workers. Instead those already employed by the company receive further in-service training. There is also a base of trained workers in Russia, and Russian enterprises with whom Kimek Offshore cooperates on exchange of trained workers in order to increase flexibility.

*Continuation of the project activities.* There is a newly started project on training engineers. Five promising students of engineering from the Murmansk Technical University and the Arkhangelsk Technical University have been selected for a one-year language training course at the Finnmark University College.

*Discussion.* The project ran into some obstacles at an early stage caused by the fact that the national employment office "Aetat" offered training courses that were cheaper, and therefore more attractive to the users, leaving Kimek with a recruitment problem. As seen from the point of view the overall aims of the Barents cooperation, however, the fact that Russians could choose between training offers must be considered positive.

Kimek's project has been carried out in a correct way, respecting the Russian workers' rights and making sure they are taken care of through trade union memberships. There is, however, reason to

discuss whether import of skilled labour from Russia to Norway should form part of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme . Recruiting the most skilled and able workers for jobs abroad, saving crisis-ridden enterprises in Norway, leaving local Russian enterprises with those less skilled and able, is hardly in line with the overall aims of the Barents co-operation. In order to reach its objectives, the Barents co-operation is heavily dependent upon being perceived as being equally beneficial to the Russian and Norwegian side.

On the other hand, it could be said that the project makes the skilled Russian labour even more skilled and attractive in the labour market, and since they have chosen not to settle permanently in Norway, they may easily move back and contribute with their improved skills to the industrial development in Russia.

### 3.3 Kola Saami radio

*#Institutions involved and funding.* The project owners are the Saami Council, NRK Sámi Radio, Yle Sámi Radio, SR Sámi Radio and SVT Sápmi. The owners of the Kola Saami Radio are the Saami Council (90 percent) and the two local Saami organisations, OOSMO and AKS (ten percent). The Saami Council is a voluntary Saami organization (NGO) with Saami member organisations in Finland, Russia, Norway and Sweden. It was founded in 1956.

The Kola Saami Radio is an Interreg-Sápmi project. The funding from the Barents Secretariat forms part of a larger financing scheme in which several sources contribute, and amounted to 670.000 NOK in the period 2002-2005. The project was financed by a wide range of sources – the Norwegian MFA, the Saami Parliament of Norway, the regional authorities of Troms and Finnmark, EU Interreg Sapmi, SIDA Öst, the Finnish MFA, the Barents Secretariat, Nordic Council of Ministers, Institusjonen Fritt Ord (the Freedom of Expression Foundation), Eurasia Foundation, the Swedish and Finnish sections of the Saami Council, Norrbotten region and the Lappin Liitto, as well as the project owners NRK, YLE and SR – Sámi radio. There has been no Russian financial contribution although in the pre-feasibility study the local radio, the GTRK Murman, was meant to have a role.

*Background.* The KSR was established in June 2002, located in Lujavv'r/Lovozero on the Kola Peninsula. According to the web site of its major owner, the Saami Council, the radio is considered a prestige project and is often referred to in official settings.

About 300 people in Lovozero speak Saami, according to the chairman of one of the local Saami organisations. In all, on the Kola Peninsula 700 people are able to speak Kildin Saami. Most of the people who use Saami are old.

In addition to the transmission in the KSR, Saami is spoken occasionally in Lovozero's municipal radio, will a licence to transmit in Saami since 1990. The municipal radio also transmits in the Komi language. In the municipality of Lovozero there are about 1400 Komi and 800 Saami out of a total 15,000 inhabitants.

Until 2000 the Murmansk Regional Radio (GTRK Murman) broadcasted Saami language radio programmes locally in Lovozero. Being holders of the licence to broadcast in Saami, the company had kept local emissions in Saami there also after the local branches of the regional radio companies were transferred to the municipality as a result of a mid-1990 reform. The GTRK Murman was envisaged a role in the pre-feasibility study from 2001 in providing assistance in obtaining licences to transmit, to provide necessary radio equipment, advice on technical issues, and work with journalists and technicians. Lately, GTRK Murman has contacted KSR with an offer to buy two weekly programmes in Saami.

*Objectives.* The overall aim has been to resuscitate broadcasting in Saami language on the Kola Peninsula. The project aims at establishing "a free and independent radio station on the Kola Peninsula" and a network for co-operation between the new radio station in Northwest Russia and the Saami radio and TV stations in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The support rendered by the Barents Secretariat was aimed at contributing to the project's specific objectives that were to be reached by the spring 2007:

- daily radio programmes in Saami
- weekly news items and features from Russia in Nordic Saami radio and television



- daily productions from Russia on the net-based news service of the Nordic Saami radios
- purchase of technical equipment and lines
- education and training of five journalists from Russia
- exchange Kildin Saami productions with Skolte Saami productions
- transmit selected Nordic Saami productions in Russia

*The intervention.* In order to establish the radio station the project intervenes in two basic ways, partly by arranging for training of journalists, partly by offering technical equipment.

The training has taken place at the Sámi Allaskuvla (Sámi University College) in Guovdageaidnu/Kautokeino where a number of Russian journalists have received courses in modern journalism (termed “Western journalism” in the project reports), including Saami language, Saami history, ethics, news journalism, cultural journalism and journalism on indigenous affairs. Both Northern Saami, which is dominant among the Saami languages, and Kildin Saami, which is spoken by Russian Saamis, is taught. Northern Saami is taught to enable the Russian journalists produce news items and features for the Nordic Saami programmes.

The technical intervention have consisted in installation of a radio studio, procurement of technical radio equipment, purchase of FM transmitting equipment, and the establishment of lines between Lovozero, Murmansk and Kárášjohka/Karasjok.

#### *Results.*

*a) Output:* The main objective has been to re-establish transmissions in Saami. This has been achieved, although less than half the sender surface is in Saami.

The Kola Saami Radio transmits 10 minutes per day, as it has been doing since its beginning. This is the amount of time the radio is given by the GTRK Murman, which is in charge of the cable net.

One of the project’s intermediary objectives has been to provide up-dated radio technology, and today the radio has what other journalists have classified as the Murmansk region’s most modern

studio and control room. In addition a 53 m radio tower has been erected to serve the FM system.

Altogether four journalists are employed by the radio, of whom two speak Saami (one of them speaks Northern Saami in addition to Kildin Saami). In addition, one interpreter and one bi-lingual announcer work with the radio. All have got training in Murmansk and in Norway through the project.

*b) Outcome and impact:* When FM is installed, the radio may transmit 24 hours a day. Today the radio reaches out in a radius of 50 kilometres. With FM it would reach farther and be listened to by the remote Saami settlements on the tundra, where Saami is still used in everyday life.

As soon as the KSR switches to FM it will be technically able to transmit 24 hours a day, but most probably, according to the director, the radio will transmit only some hours a day. Interestingly, it seemed that there was no clear idea about the potentials of switching to FM when it comes to reaching out to a larger audience, e.g. to reach out to the remote Saami settlements on the tundra.

The KSR sells news items to its Nordic counterparts, but does not use news items from its Nordic counterparts. Two-way exchanges of radio items would probably have been conducive to raise the awareness of the transborder character of the Saami population and to awareness-raising more generally, which must be seen as the underlying objective of the project.

*Continuation of the project activities.* The strategy for post-project survival (according to the Partial Report June 2002 – September 2003) consisted in an intermediary period of two years where the radio got support from the Barents Secretariat and the Norwegian MFA. After that period, the Kola Saami Radio was supposed to be “financed among others by the sale of radio and TV stories to the Nordic Saami stations”.

Having been planned as an NGO and a commercial company at the same time the radio has a particular sustainability problem. Being a company, the radio is deprived of many sources, like Tacis and other EU sources as well as support from the oblast.

Moreover, the project may have created a problem for itself insisting that the radio should be “independent”. Therefore, the evaluators would have expected a definition or discussion of this concept given the realities of Lovozero, Murmansk and Russia. Nowhere in the, otherwise extensive, project applications and reports, is this issue discussed. Since the main objective was to promote Saami language transmissions in Lovozero, it would probably have been more context-sensitive and cost-efficient to enter into co-operation with the municipal radio, offer training courses to its journalists, and supplying them with modern equipment? After all, the municipal radio already transmits items in Saami (and Komi).

The financial sustainability of the radio has hinged on its ability to sell news items to its Nordic counterparts. All the three national Saami radios and Ođđasat are interested in news items from KSR.

Moreover, there have been little effort and little results in anchoring the radio in the Russian, regional set-up of actors. The GTRK Murman was “forgotten” after the pre-feasibility study. Moreover, the Barents Region Working Group on Indigenous People seems to have been involved to a lesser degree than it usually is in Saami initiatives.

The only Russian actors with a stake are the employees and the two (rivalling) Saami organisations that together hold ten percent of the shares.

*Discussion.* The Kola Saami Radio stands out being a large-scale operation in a very small community. The KSR is a huge radio organised for a very tiny group of people (those understanding Kildin Saami), and a strategy to link up with the larger community would have been expected. The function of Northern Saami as a potential competitor to the autochthon Kildin Saami has not been examined or discussed. Neither have the potentially negative side-effects of promoting radio emissions for one of the two ethnic minorities in the area, for the Saami and not for the Komi, been discussed.

### 3.4 Educational Training Course of the Russian-Norwegian Youth Environmental Centre

*Institutions involved and funding.* The project is initiated and implemented by the Arkhangelsk regional youth environmental organisation *Aetas*. The project has been implemented in close collaboration with the Norwegian environmental organisation *Natur og Ungdom*. *Natur og Ungdom* has taken part in a number of seminars and activities and received visitors from the centre, but in this particular project their contribution has mainly been preparations for and lecturing in one of the seminar modules.

The main bulk of the funding for the project came from the Barents Secretariat (NOK 35,000). The coordinating organisation contributed in terms of office premises, some unpaid work, etc. which has not been specified in the final account. The application from *Aetas* was in the scale of close to NOK 49,000, and activities needed to be adjusted in accordance with the financial support obtained. The project lasted from November 2005 – June 2006 (but is part of a longer-term collaboration between the project partners).

*Background.* The collaboration between *Aetas* and *Natur og Ungdom* goes back to 2000 when representatives of the two organisations met at a seminar in the context of the Barents collaboration in which *Aetas* presented the idea of an informational environmental youth centre in Arkhangelsk, which *Natur og Ungdom* supported. The organisations started more formal collaboration through a joint application to the Barents Secretariat for a Youth Environmental Centre, which resulted in funding. This was *Aetas'* first experience with international project funding. The collaboration between the two institutions developed to become of a more permanent nature, and joint projects included the establishment of a library and an educational training course. The project evaluated was based on a joint idea to strengthen the impact of the organisation in its institutional and contextual setting.

*Objectives.* The objectives of the project “Educational training course of the Russian-Norwegian youth environmental centre” –

which is evaluated here – was to develop and strengthen the ability of Arkhangelsk youth working in the voluntary sector (not only within the environmental sphere) to work with mass media, politicians, civil rights of youth, fund raising, etc., and thereby train the young volunteers for building the management capability for work in the NGO sector.

*Intervention.* The project intervened by organising an educational training course. The course was organised in several stages. At first an introductory seminar was organised. The seminar brought up issues such as the role of youth in civil society, and how to develop well-organised professional work of NGOs. A second seminar was devoted to the work with mass media. In this seminar the links between the NGO sector and the mass media were problematised, and practical exercises introduced. A third seminar was devoted to the work of NGOs with politicians, where representatives from *Natur og Ungdom* participated as lecturers. Themes that were brought up were e.g. lobbying, civil rights, differences between Norway and Russia in dealing with politicians, etc. Practical exercises were introduced. A fourth seminar was called “Interior work of a volunteer organisation”, and was devoted to the role of the NGOs in modern, democratic society, how to attract new members, how to get funding etc. By combining each of these four elements it was thought that one would be able to strengthen the youth organisations’ work in their local setting.

### *Results*

a) *Output:* All seminars were carried out in accordance with the plan. A total of 20 persons from a variety of youth organisations in Arkhangelsk participated in the training course. They got practical training in dealing with the mass media, political lobbying, organisational issues. There is no name list of people who took part in each of the seminars, so it is hard to establish how many of the participants who were present throughout the whole series of seminars, and how many took part in individual events.

b) *Outcome:* Although developing the NGO sector takes time and depends on a number of factors not under the control of the NGOs in question, the participants of the training courses the seminar raised and discussed issues in a way that makes the participants likely to be better able to deal with the mass media and local politicians in their daily work. Representatives of *Aetas* gave

several examples of politicians listening to the opinion of the organisation and of having succeeded in influencing political decisions. Through the project the already well established links with *Natur og Ungdom* were also strengthened.

*c) Impact* The impact of the project will to a large extent depend on the development of the civil society sector in Russia, which at the moment is rather weak. However, the capacity of the civil society organisations themselves will influence this development. The ability to work with politicians, mass media and to have organizational capacity are all important elements in making the voice of civil society heard. Although the future of the organisation depends on external factors outside of the organisation as well, the links with NGOs in other countries, capacity building and a high activity level are likely to make such organisations more viable.

*Continuation of the project activities* Although the project itself is completed, it is likely that the collaboration between *Aetas* and *Natur og Ungdom* will continue. The two organisations have already established a sustainable collaboration with regular visits, joint activities and many plans for future work. They have managed to obtain funding for their joint activities, mainly from the Barents Secretariat. However, gradually *Aetas* has obtained funding also from other funding organisations. *Natur og Ungdom* obtains support from other funders than the Barents Secretariat for their activities in Russia (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of the Environment and others). One problem is that it has proven difficult to obtain funding from Russian sources, and support for the voluntary NGO sector is weak in Russia. This may foster some form of dependency on external support. Nevertheless, it seems that this particular organisation has a high level of commitment and is mainly based upon voluntary work for which external funding is not required.

*Discussion.* The concrete projects developed by the collaborating institutions within a framework of building a long-term, sustainable collaboration appear to be a good model. The two organisations meet on a regular basis and take a keen interest in each others' activities, also outside of the concrete activities supported by the Barents Secretariat. The projects have dealt with

concrete steps in strengthening the rather weak civil society organisations in Russia.

There are several very positive elements in the project collaboration between *Aetas* and *Natur og Ungdom*. Firstly, the project was initiated from Russia, and has been guided by the perceived needs from the Russian side. Second, the project itself is well suited for the objectives. These objectives appear to be relevant in the Russian context today, when it is even more important than before to strengthen civil society.

There are, however, also a number of challenges. As mentioned above, the NGO sector in Russia is quite weak at present. Therefore, the impact of the efforts may be affected by the organisations finding it difficult to get access to arenas where their voices are heard and they may influence developments.

With little funding from Russia, the organisation *Aetas*, like many other NGOs, may become too dependent on external funding. This makes them susceptible to be taken less seriously by Russian authorities, who are often sceptical of western influence on the civil society sector. Another danger - which however does not appear to have been very prominent in this case - is the inclination to adjust to the wishes of the donors rather than basing the activities on own concerns and needs. The new legislation on NGO work in Russia also makes life harder for many NGOs, with more reporting and stricter rules for receiving funding from foreign donors.

Another challenge to the project is the dependence on personal links between *Natur og Ungdom* and *Aetas*. Some of the more experienced staff of *Aetas* has left, and for a time there was a vacuum where relations with *Natur og Ungdom* needed to be reinforced. The fact that the *Natur og Ungdom* activities in Russia, which were formerly placed in Tromsø have now moved to Oslo also slightly reduces the *Barents* subtext of the activity. Finally, the amount of funding is rather small, and although valuable in terms of being able to carry out a concrete project, is too small for long-term or more large-scale interventions.

Taking the limitations in resources into account, the project has successfully responded to the need of youth NGOs to work on increasing their political influence and organisational capacity in a

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situation where many politically active and critical Russian NGOs experience different types of hardship.

### 3.5 Capacity-Building on Joint Implementation for Energy Efficiency Centres in Russia

*# Institutions involved and funding.* The project was coordinated by *Norske Energi* – and the project director was Gabriella Samuelsson. It also included an additional Norwegian partner, ECON Analysis, which contributed with expertise for the workshop session. These institutions carried out the training programme. At the Russian side they collaborated with the Regional Energy Efficiency Centres (REECs) in Arkhangelsk, Petrozavodsk, Murmansk and Komi. The REECs are centres of expertise that provide technical assistance on energy and environmental matters to local actors in the region.

The project was carried out in the first half year of 2006. The project mainly received funding from the Nordic Council of Ministers. Funding from the Barents Secretariat was 100,000 NOK and was earmarked for providing all Russian participants free transportation and accommodation and for imbursement of participation for the REECs.

*Background.* In February 2005, the Russian Federation adopted an Integrated Action Plan for the Implementation of the Kyoto Protocol. Having worked on, and succeeded in, the establishment of REES in NW-Russia over a number of years, *Norske Energi* took the initiative to build on this collaboration to carry out capacity building courses on Joint Implementation (JI) for REECs and municipal and industrial stakeholders in NW-Russia. The development of energy efficiency and cleaner production projects, which are prime candidates for development into JI projects, had already been an integral part of the capacity building process. The REEC, having close contacts with the regional administrations and industries, were considered to be actors that could play a very central role in the identification and developing of JI-projects in the future. The Nordic Council of Ministers (NMR) sponsored such a capacity building project during 2006. In order to increase the participation of local stakeholders at the workshops, Norsk Energi applied to the Barents Secretariat for additional funding for



travel and accommodation, which based on experience, could be a major barrier to participation.

*Objectives.* The objective of the training programme was to strengthen the local capacity for developing and implementing JI projects in Northwest Russia. The ultimate goal of the project was to facilitate successfully implemented projects which would result in a larger reduction in greenhouse gas emissions. Each seminar and workshop had a specific objective supporting the major objective of the project.

*The intervention.* In order to reach the objective the project team carried out a series of capacity building courses on JI for REECs and municipal and industrial stakeholders in NW-Russia. Representation was to be ensured from all regions of NW Russia, in order to allow for the information to be disseminated to a wider audience. The activities consisted in three information seminars in which an introduction was given to the Kyoto Protocol and the flexible mechanisms, as well as information about the training programme and who should and could participate. The seminars furthermore discussed criteria that had to be met by projects and which projects that could benefit from the JI mechanism. The first workshops informed the participants about the JI project cycle and discussed what was expected from the project participants in regard to the development of a JI project. The second workshop discussed how to set the baseline and monitoring plan, what should be included in the boundary and what could be considered as leakages. Finally, in the third workshop the project participants presented their individual projects, and they received feedback from the organizers and other participants.

### *Results*

*a) Output:* The three seminars and three workshops were organised according to the plan. Participants were present from all regions of NW Russia. The REECs were responsible for inviting relevant stakeholders to each seminar. They were also responsible for the practical arrangements of the seminars. A very similar agenda was used in all the three seminars, mostly with input from the Norwegian partners.

Workshops were then held in the two locations where the interest for the project was the largest (Petrozavodsk and Arkhangelsk).

Participants from Murmansk travelled to Petrozavodsk, which had the highest number of participants. The number of participants from Arkhangelsk was lower than anticipated, explained by the organisers as due to time constraints.

In between the workshops the participants had homework, and needed to present their project for the following workshop. They were developed from Project Note Ideas to Project Design Documents (PDD).

The third workshop took place in Petrozavodsk in which participants from the workshops in the two locations met for the first time, and in which buyers from a variety of countries, including the Nordic, were participating in order to link buyers to sellers.

*b) Outcome:* The interest from both the regional administrations and the industry was large. To ensure success it was important to have participants from both the industries, local administrations and NGOs. This goal was met. Despite the barrier to finding suitable JI projects in the region due to the low number of large-scale projects, the partners were able to identify relevant participants. High travelling costs and time constraints prevented some participants from the more remote regions from participating.

A number of relevant project ideas were identified in the workshops. The motivation from the participants was high, resulting in the project surpassing its target by developing 13 JI projects that were developed and documented in an English standardized format. This was higher than the initial goal of 3-4 projects in each region. This must be considered a good result since the funding was smaller than usual for similar projects in Russia.

Another indicator of success is the large number of buyers that attended the third workshop and showed an interest in the projects.

*c) Impact:* The interest in the programme from the Russians is reflected in the high participation and success rate of the projects that were identified. Awareness and knowledge were raised through the capacity building programme. The impact was particularly great in Petrozavodsk, where the awareness of JI was

generally lower at the outset both among the participants from the industry and the municipalities, resulting in a steeper learning process. The more long-term impact, however, is hard to monitor, as the project was a one-time event and there is no systematic follow-up on the next phases of the projects.

*Continuation of the project activities.* Norsk Energi is still active in Russia, and has a long-term strategy to follow up the project activities. One example of a direct follow-up of the project activities is that Norsk Energi a short time after the JI project was engaged by one of the carbon credit buyers, NEFCO, to further develop the fuel convention project Zheshart in the Komi Republic towards a Project Development Document (PDD).

However, also others among the concrete projects that developed as a result of the project are still running. Moreover, the NW-Russian REECs have developed their capacity to act on their own without the competence transfer from Norway.

*Discussion.* The project was very concrete in terms of objectives and criteria for success. The project team managed to reach the majority of targets, and as such must be considered a success. However, the number of participants in Arkhangelsk was lower than had been anticipated, and according to the organisers this was due to time constraints.

There are a number of challenges in the implementation of a project like this in the Russian setting. One barrier is the bureaucracy and lengthy process of developing JI projects in Russia. The lack of national JI procedures and the uncertainty it creates also creates a barrier, as project owners tend to view JI somewhat sceptically. Many are hesitant to get involved in the JI process. Project owners often see big hurdles and up-front costs instead of future possibilities and benefits. There is lack of transparency in the process as well. Lack of guidance from the Russian government is an additional complicating factor. The organisers were well aware of these barriers, however, and tried to accommodate them to their best ability into the programme.

After the project is finished, there has been no systematic follow-up or even information gathering from the side of the organisers as to how the projects have developed. Long-term effects are therefore harder to monitor. Some projects appear to have been

developed successfully and are still viable, while others have gradually been scaled down or stopped. There is no list indicating which of the 13 projects that found buyers. A more long-term collaboration between the Russian and Norwegian partners would have made it easier to monitor the final results of the projects. The local Energy Efficiency Centres could for example have taken on this task.

Another critical comment is the one-sided Norwegian input to the seminars and workshops. The lack of time is probably the main reason for this, but the programme would undoubtedly have benefited from more systematic input from the Russian side as well, as the Norwegians normally lack the intimate knowledge about the situation in Russia which is critical for a successful project implementation.

### 3.6 Barents Co-operation in the field of sports

*#Institutions involved and funding.* The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympics Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF), its member associations and branches at local level, and the Murmansk Regional Committee of Sport are the partners of this project. Representatives from other Russian regions within the BEAR take part in competitions and conferences from time to time. The project co-operates with Kalottidrotten in Finland and Norrbottens Idrottsförbund.

The project dates back to the 1990's. It has been co-financed by the Barents Secretariat, NIF, the individual sports associations, and the three regions of Northern Norway. In the period covered by this evaluation the project has received 590,000 of which 160,000 from the Barents Secretariat (2002), 545,000/160,000 (2003), 550,000/160,000 (2004); 550,000/200,000 (2005), 665,000/230,000 (2006) (source: Annual Report 2006).

*Background.* The sports co-operation has its roots in the North Calotte (Nordkalotten) co-operation established as early as 1950 (existing until 1997) and in the bilateral sports co-operation between Finnmark and Murmansk dating from 1959. In 1994 the Kalottcentralen in Finland, NIF/Kalottutvalget, Norrbottens Idrottsförbund and Murmansk Regional Sports Committee

approved a joint action programme for a Barents Sports Co-operation.

Originally the Executive Committee for Barents Sport (in Norwegian: Kontaktutvalget) had an intention of having the four Barents states co-finance a position as co-ordinator one day a week. The model for this arrangement was the co-operation between the Sports Committee St.Petersburg and Södra Savolax Idrott in Finland.

Some branches of sport have their own exchanges outside the framework of the NIF project or in addition to it.

*Objectives.* To develop the co-operation in sports to become an even better tool for developing the quality of sport in the region; increasing the exchange of athletes, trainers and leaders; building tolerance and cultural understanding among the inhabitants of the region.

*The intervention.* The target group is young people between 15 and 25 years. The main activity within the project consist in arranging sport competitions in a wide variety of sports, such as athletics, orienteering, badminton, swimming, ski, biathlon, power lifting, skating, wrestling, basketball, judo, tennis, bowling, gymnastics, volleyball, shooting and archery. Also seminars and training of coaches and sport organisers form parts of the project. The project does not only aim at arranging the activities themselves, but also to create a transborder framework for sport co-operation. The project functions as an organisational and administrative structure for sports co-operation in the Barents Region. The Executive Committee has one representative from each state. It was established in 1994 by the Region Committee with the aim of being an ad hoc committee to prepare a strategy plan for the future sports co-operation. The Barents Conference is arranged every three years with six representatives from each country. In each of the two years between the Barents Conferences there are Leader Conferences, with three representatives from each country.

The idea is that matches and competitions constitute an important platform for co-operation. Through the contact made at these events it is possible to generate activities within education and organisational development.

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## *Results*

a) *Output*: Many sport meetings have been arranged. Training seminars have been arranged for sport organisers. Regular meetings in the Barents sports co-operation have been arranged.

b) *Outcomes and impact*: The organisational structure of sports co-operation in the BEAR has been strengthened, or at least kept up during the period covered by this evaluation. Young athletes have met each other and competed against each other within a Barents framework, which most likely have given an impetus to the development of an attachment to the Barents Region. Also among sport organisers the meetings and seminars have contributed to making the Barents framework relevant. It should be noticed, however, that sport cooperation between Murmansk and its Nordic neighbour regions had taken place for several decades before the Barents sport project.

*Discussion*. The project has the function of being an umbrella for sports exchanges between young athletes in the Barents Region.

The project has suffered from difficulties in getting activities financed. In particular, financing the participation from Finland (the Ministry of Education) and Sweden (Riksidrottsförbundet) has involved problems. In fact, this is a major obstacle to the project implementation. Visa costs are another serious obstacle. Luckily, the Russian consulate in Kirkenes and the Norwegian consulate in Murmansk have introduced reductions in the visa fees for sport and culture arrangements within the BEAR.

The sports co-operation suffers perhaps more than many other activities from the weak multilateralism within the Barents co-operation. Sport events gain more from including more than two countries than many other activities that in fact may be more efficient when being purely bilateral. Sport events with participants from four countries attract more athletes than an arrangement between two countries. The enthusiasm for the Barents sport events varies between the athletic disciplines, wrestling and badminton being the most popular.

### 3.7 Finnmark KFUK-KFUM: Dream, dance and democracy in the borderland

*Institutions involved and funding.* Responsible for the project was *Norges KFUK-KFUM Finnmark krets*, in collaboration with the two other district organisations of northern Norway, Troms and Nordland. Project leader was Randi Karlstrøm. The partners on the Russian side were the YMCA organisations in Murmansk, Apatity and Moscow, and Ilya Scherbakov, YMCA district secretary in Apatity was the main contact person. The Norwegian side was responsible for the overall activity, while the Russian partners coordinated the Russian participation, gave presentations, and assisted in organizing a trip to Pechenga Nickel’.

The project took place in the summer of 2005 (22 - 26 June). The overall budget was 193,000 NOK, of which 85,000 was participants’ fees. The project received funding of NOK 20,000 from the Barents Secretariat, while the amount applied for originally had been NOK 40,000. Other financial contributions came from the LNU (The Norwegian Children and Youth Council), NOK 40,000. The account showed expenditure of 206,000 NOK. Thus, the contribution from the Barents Secretariat made up less than 10 percent of the total expenditure for the project. The deficit was covered by the three district organisations that were responsible for the project.

*Background.* KFUM-KFUK had collaborated with YMCA in Russia over a number of years. A European network gives financial support to the YMCA organisations in Apatity and Murmansk city. In 2000 and 2004 delegations from Russia took part in KFUK-KFUM conventions in Norway. According to the project leader there was a lack of interest and curiosity from the Norwegian youth (especially in Finnmark) towards Russia, and the project indented to increase the youth of Northern Norway’s interest in Russia and Russian culture by focusing on Russian culture, language, history and politics in the bi-annual *Nord-Treff*. The *Nord-Treff* 2005, at Svanvik Folkehøyskole in Pasvik would focus on Russian issues, contain an optional trip to Russia for the Norwegian participants, and a Norwegian-Russian meeting at the end of the four-day event.

*Objective.* The objective of the project was to further develop the contact with Russian YMCA and to increase the Norwegian youth's interest in Russian culture, language, history and politics. The aim is to establish strong links between the two organizations through building up personal links between young people in the two countries. By offering an opportunity to meet Russian youth, it was hoped that Norwegian youth would be inspired to study Russian or to go to Russia to study, which again would increase the likelihood of long-term collaboration between the two organisations. The project initiators hoped that the links between KFUK-KFUM and Russian YMCA could develop from short annual visits to more substantial international youth collaboration between church organisations.

*The intervention.* The intervention to achieve the objective consisted in three separate but interconnected activities in connection with the five-day summer camp:

1. Presentations of Russian culture, history, politics and language at the first two days of the summer camp.
2. A trip to Russia to familiarise the young Norwegians with Russian society and culture on the third day.
3. A conference for Russian and Norwegian young leaders to discuss issues of common concern and familiarise each other with the partners' organisation, values, and discuss ideas for joint future collaboration on the last two days.

## *Results*

### *a) Output:*

Most of the activities took part in accordance with the initial programme. A total of 71 participants took part in the camp, in addition to leaders, lecturers and guests. There was a great interest in the Russian focus of the camp. The programme was varied and included presentations by specialists on Russian history, culture, language and current Barents affairs.

Half of the participants went to Russia (Pechenga Nickel') for a one-day trip. Several of the participants had problems obtaining a visa in time for the trip. Due to summer vacation the young participants were not able to meet with Russian youth, and delays at the border crossing gave much less time than anticipated in



Nikel'. Nevertheless, the participants got the chance to familiarise themselves with the city, and Russian guides and Norwegian specialists took part in the trip which added valuable insights. Cultural differences were confronted and discussed (for example the requirement for girls to cover their head before entering a Russian Orthodox church).

The conference with young Russian and Norwegian leaders was organised so that people of the same age and with corresponding responsibilities in their organisations could meet and discuss issues of joint concern, establish contacts and learn more about each other. Language problems were avoided by using an interpreter (of dubious quality) for the conference. Many controversial issues were brought up, and cultural differences challenged.

*b) Outcome and impact:*

If a long-term collaboration with Russian YMCA and KFUK-KFUM is to be viable, there is a need for young people to take a greater interest in such collaboration. According to the project leader – and this was unknown to the evaluators – especially in Finnmark there is a widespread lack of motivation for entering into collaboration with Russians among the youth. The programme gave an opportunity for young people from both sides to learn more about each others, and for the Norwegian participants to learn more about Russia and Russian culture. This increases the likelihood that they will engage in more long-term collaboration at a later stage.

It is, however, doubtful whether a one-time event like this will have a large effect on the Finnmark youth interest in Russian culture, history and language. However, it may represent a small step in this direction by increasing contact between Russian and Norwegian organisations. This, however, requires more stable and less sporadic contacts over time.

*Continuation of the project activities.* There are mixed expectations as to the continuation of project activities. Personal contacts between youth on the Norwegian and Russian side of the border continue by the young leaders' own initiative (especially young people from Nordland appear to have established sustainable contacts and visit Russian partners). However, at the institutional level the situation is more complicated.

One of the problems appears to be lack of human resources to follow up from the Norwegian side. The initiative appears to depend on one person on the Norwegian side, and this person has many other competing commitments.

A second challenge is a complex situation regarding the partner organisation on the Russian side, where there is lack of coordination and internal tension between partners and lack of transparency. Thus, more effort is needed in order to clarify this situation.

A third challenge is the funding situation, where KFUK-KFUM centrally has not shown a great level of commitment to the collaboration with Russia, at least in terms of allocation of resources. Thus, the district organisations in the North will need to push for more resources if their aim for more institutionalised contacts with Russia is to be achieved.

Nevertheless, the project leader expresses clear ambitions to strengthen the organisational links with Russia, and the platform established through the summer camp and other similar events could make it easier to make such contacts more regular and institutionalized in the future.

*Discussion.* The aim of increasing the young people's knowledge about Russia appears to have been a success. The interest shown by the young people on both sides was notable. The commitment from the project leader is evident, and she has also put a lot of non-paid work time into the project. Although the project was not fully financed, the district organisations gave it enough priority to pay from own resources to cover the deficit. Contacts have been followed up on an individual basis. The contacts that have developed over the years have given a platform for more collaboration between churches in Norway and Russia, and there are intentions to strengthen this collaboration, which so far have been rather sporadic. However, due to constraints discussed in the previous section, the continuation of the activities is pending.

The project is an example of an activity where true partnership between Norwegian and Russian partners has yet to be developed, and for which time to work together and resources have been too scarce to provide for proper understanding between the partners. The project leader on the Norwegian side expresses a need for a

better understanding of internal organisational issues and the true motives on the Russian side. The division of roles of the project partners in Russia appears to be somewhat unclear. On the Russian side insecurity in terms of developments in the NGO sector and centralization of the YMCA appear to be a serious concern.

Another issue exemplified by this project is the extent one should use interpreters for the communication between Norwegians and Russians in these types of activities. The Norwegian project leader is convinced that the use of Norwegian and Russian and the use of interpreter give the best opportunity to communicate in order not to exclude anyone (not everyone is fully capable of speaking English, especially among the Russian youth). On the other hand, the communication then tends to become more formal, less spontaneous and creates a filter in the contact between the two groups. The quality of the interpretation also is of relevance. The Russian leaders were inclined to support the use of English without interpretation, even if it would affect the opportunity of some of the Russians to participate fully in the event.

### 3.8 Break dancers from Russia at the Hamarøy Night

*# Institutions involved and funding.* Hamarøy Church Office and North YMCA Council (Murmansk). The project took place in 2006, and was supported by the Barents Secretariat with a total sum of 20,000 NOK.

*Background.* The region in which Hamarøy belongs has experienced ethnic tensions among young local people among others between Lule Saami and non-Saami youth. Besides, Hamarøy has young people with a background from Russia living there permanently.

The young Russian break dancers were invited to Hamarøy to take part in the traditional Hamarøy Night, which is an annual event for youth between 14 and 18 years old. The Hamarøy Night is the biggest youth event arranged by the Church in Northern Norway. Usually 700 young people take part (Hamarøy has 1750 inhabitants).

The contacts between the local church office in Hamarøy and the Russian counterpart went through the Norwegian KFUM-KFUK.

*Objectives.* The objective was to contribute to strengthening local identity and integration between ethnic groups in Hamarøy and in neighbouring municipalities.

*The intervention.* The intervention was a small one. A small group of Russian break dancers took part at the Hamarøy Night, impressed their peers and gave lessons in the art. They were assisted by local Russian young people.

*Result:* The participation of the Russian virtuosi at the Hamarøy Night made local youth with a Russian background quite proud. Others got acquainted with aspects of Russian life usually under-communicated, namely the “cool” and fun sides.

*Continuation of the project activities.* The project was conceived as a one-time event, but it could be repeated.

*Discussion.* The break-dance project in Hamarøy is an illustrative example of the small-scale, people-to-people projects that constitute a central element in the Barents Secretariat’s grant programme . With very small funding and little circumstantialities the project holder managed to arrange positive mutual experiences fostering an interest in the neighbour.

### 3.9 (Human Rights and) Multicultural Understanding in the Barents Region

*Institutions involved and funding.* The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) is the coordinator of the project, and on the Norwegian side it collaborates with the municipality of Sør-Varanger and (later on) the municipality of Tromsø. On the Russian side the Severomorsk city authorities have been involved from the start. Later on (at the same time as the municipality of Tromsø) the city administration of Murmansk joined the collaboration. The number of partners has expanded, the project now involves a number of departments in the city and regional (*oblast*) administrations. A later expansion includes journalists and the journalist association Barentspress. Indirectly, a number of NGOs and individuals, both

in Russia and Norway, are also participating actively in the project. The project leader is Enver Djuliman from the NHC.

The Barents Secretariat has been one out of three main funders throughout the project period. From 2002 the NHC has received an annual grant in the range of NOK 75,000-100,000 from the Barents Secretariat. This has amounted to a share of the overall funding in the area of 15-20 percent during the duration of the project. The main financial support has been from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition the project has received funding from the foundation *Fritt Ord*. The Russian side has contributed local transport, meeting facilities and some accommodation for participants when in Russia. For the current year the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has increased its support to the project substantially, which now amounts to 1.1 MNOK. The funding has continuously been below the ambitions of the collaborating partners, which has made adjustments of budgets and the project contents necessary.

*Background* The project was initiated in Norway in 2001 when the educational department of Sør-Varanger city administration wanted to include Russians in the human rights schools they were carrying out with the NHC among pupils in upper secondary education and courses for teachers. At the start-up of the project it was decided not to use the label 'human rights' and rather emphasise multicultural communication and understanding. This was done to avoid a misunderstanding implying that the aim of the project was to lecture about human rights values as seen in Norway or the West. Moreover, from the outset the idea of full partnership was stressed. Nevertheless, the project to a large extent is based upon similar schools and courses that have been carried out by NHC in Norway as well as in other regions, such as on the Balkans. At first the closed city of Severomorsk, which had already established collaboration with Sør-Varanger, was selected. Gradually the geographical scope of the programme was broadened to also include the cities of Tromsø and Murmansk, and more recently journalists became a third target group.

*Objectives.* The main objective of the project has been to create a dialogue in the Barents region on issues of human rights and multicultural understanding. Through schools for pupils in upper secondary education and courses for teachers the aim has been to

increase the consciousness about positive aspects related to living in multicultural societies; human rights and their role in preserving security and peace; and various models for conflict resolution. Gradually the objectives have been broadened to include not only pupils and teachers, but also journalists and more recently prison authorities and police. The dialogue between authorities in both countries on these issues has been an off-spring of the activities but, although not stated directly in project proposals and reports, has figured as one of the major objectives of the coordinating institution from the start of the project.

*The intervention.* In order to reach its objectives, the project from the start established collaboration at the level of municipal, city and regional authorities. It was recognized that only by involving the authorities on the Russian side would it be possible to establish a sustainable and thorough dialogue. The project collaboration involved committed individuals, with whom strong and reliable contacts were continuously developing. The project has organised a number of activities for youth, teachers, staff in municipal administration, activists and journalists, such as schools for multicultural understanding for Norwegian and Russian youth, courses for Russian teachers, training for trainers, international conference on teaching of human rights (Murmansk), development of Internet course in human rights; support of human rights work in the Murmansk (through Barentspress); and seminars for journalists. The dialogue on the organisation of these activities has brought about closer collaboration with authorities in Russia and increased the scope for collaboration also to new areas (penal institutions, police, etc.).

### *Results*

a) *Output:* Activities have been carried out according to annual and more long-term plans and resulted in a large number of human rights / multicultural communication schools, courses, seminars and meetings. More than 500 persons have been involved in these activities, the majority of whom have had both Norwegian and Russian participants. The fact that the funding has continuously been lower than budgeted, has to some extent been an obstacle to the progress of the project, but the project partners have adjusted the activities accordingly and emphasised the main objectives.

*b) Outcome:* A major outcome has been communication between key actors in local (municipal and regional) administration on human rights issues and gradual integration of human rights dialogue in education at various levels in Russia. The platform in Murmansk *oblast'* also makes it easier when NHC is now also entering the Arkhangelsk *oblast'* for collaboration projects. The sense of shared ownership, transparency and trust between the partners, has made it possible to gradually introduce more controversial issues.

*c) Impact:* Long-term presence, true partnership and shared ownership, as well as the decision to collaborate with the authorities, have all resulted in a remarkable outreach among a variety of Russian stakeholders. The atmosphere is characterized by true dialogue and two-way communication. While not agreeing on all issues, there is now a scope for discussion of issues that partners in the collaboration may look differently upon. However, this is recognized by the partners and is not seen as a threat to the continuation of the debate or the project activities.

*Continuation of the project activities.* The activities continue with an increased scope of collaboration. Building on the ongoing collaboration between Norwegian and Russian partners, in March 2007 an international conference on Human Rights education was organised in Murmansk by the NHC and the Murmansk *oblast'* administration. Participations were teachers, local administration, NGO and other civil society representatives, as well as persons responsible for education of police and prison staff. The conference resulted in a declaration on human rights education committing both Norwegian and Russian partners. An initiative supported by the regional administration in Murmansk is to open a NHC office in Murmansk, with a local employee. The strong commitment of the Russian authorities, and the increased funding to the project, makes a continuation and scale-up of project activities feasible and likely.

*Discussion.* The project has been extraordinary in that it has been able to foster trust and dialogue between Russian and Norwegian partners on potentially controversial issues surrounding human rights and multicultural dialogue while gradually increasing the scope of the collaboration. This has been done through a pragmatic analysis of opportunities, careful selection of partners,

transparency, and professionalism, true sharing of ownership of and input into the project, and keeping a long-term perspective.

To a certain extent the project has been vulnerable to the commitment of the partners in the project. For the most part this commitment has been strong, but at times the turn-over of people in key positions has resulted in a reduced role of at least one of the partners, although it is yet to be seen if this partner will become more active again. Continuous support from the authorities has facilitated the solution of organisational issues, such as access to the closed city of Severomorsk, visa procedures, etc.

One of the major achievements has been to open up for true dialogue on human rights and multicultural understanding. No ready-made solutions have been presented from the partners, and Norwegian and Russian participants (both pupils and teachers) have been able to discuss differences in e.g. human rights emphasis. While in the beginning the teachers were mainly recruited from Norway, during the last few years there has been a better balance, and a larger number of Russian trainers and lecturers have been recruited. Norwegian participants have benefited from learning the points of view and different accentuations of Russian partners in the dialogue.

The project has been visible in the local Russian setting, but there has been little coverage of the project by Norwegian media. The project partners on the Russian side have disseminated information about the activities to teachers in other parts of the Murmansk *oblast'* at seminars and meetings.

The evaluation team would suggest involving regional (county) administration also on the Norwegian side more strongly.

### 3.10 Work and Training for Deaf Youth

*Institutions involved and funding.* Project partner on the Norwegian side is *Døves Fylkeslag Troms*, and main coordinator is Knut Nilsen. On the Russian side the main partner has been “Children’s Creative House” in the town of Polyarny, and Boarding School no. 3 (for deaf youth) in Murmansk. The main coordinator on the Russian side is Irina Mel’nik (from Polyarny). The Norwegian partner has been the main initiator, has been in charge of finding



financial sources for the project, and contributed ideas and expertise. The project has mainly been implemented in “Children’s Creative House” in Polyarny, but closer integration with the School no. 3 is envisaged. The Russian partners are responsible for all practical implementation of the project on the Russian side. They also have a special role in pushing for integration of disabled into working life.

The Norwegian partner has received project funding from the Barents Secretariat before, but for this particular project *Døves Fylkeslag* received 105,000 NOK (the application was for 150,000 NOK). In addition to the funding from the Barents Secretariat, the project has also received funding (15,000 NOK) from Troms Region, and approx. 9,000 NOK from a Norwegian study grant. The project has benefited from voluntary non-paid contributions (in time) by the Norwegian project leader. The project has been running for three calendar years (2005-2007).

*Background.* The collaboration between the partners goes back to 1999 when the Norwegian partner took part in a Russian-Norwegian conference in Kirkenes. The partners discussed the isolated situation of disabled youth in Russia and the lack of opportunities for being integrated into the work life of society. Collaboration was started, and the partners have taken part in a number of projects and extensive exchange across the borders over a number of years. The idea behind this concrete project was to involve disabled and deaf people not only in traditional types of work, but also in future-oriented activities (such as advertising).

*Objectives* One of the stated objectives of the Barents collaboration is to contribute to job creation. This project aims at such job creation for a particularly vulnerable group of young people. Disabled young people in NW-Russia normally have few opportunities for taking part in working life, as specially designed work places are virtually non-existent. The aim of the project was therefore to establish a firm in advertising industry for disabled youth, in line with similar job creation initiatives in Norway. A concrete objective was to create work for 6 disabled youth in Polyarny. From the spring of 2007 the firm was supposed to be self-financing. The ultimate objective was to create opportunities for a life with dignity for the disabled.

*The intervention.* In order to establish the jobs for young disabled the project intervenes in two ways, partly by establishing job opportunities for young disabled, partly by offering technical equipment.

The idea was to create jobs for disabled at the “Children’s Creative House” in Polyarny. (Polyarny, being a closed city, is not accessible to foreigners, and the first trip for the Norwegian partners in the project for which they have been given permission to visit the premises took place 10 November 2007). The responsibility for training and the practical organisation at the location has been the responsibility of the Russian partner. Originally the idea was a closer integration with the Boarding School no. 3 in Murmansk (for deaf youth), but this is still to be developed. The municipality of Polyarny has contributed with a flat where the equipment has been located, and where the young disabled can work.

*Results.*

*a) Output:* The main objective to create job opportunities for disabled youth has been achieved. The disabled young people have received training in the use of the equipment, and produced T-shirts, business cards and graduation ribbons, although so far in a limited quantity. Although the number of workplaces has so far been lower than was envisaged in the project application, the benefits for those who have participated have been great.

*b) Outcome:* One of the aims of the project was to have an economically viable firm that is not dependent on external support. The Norwegian and the Russian side in the project appear to have somewhat different expectations about the long-term profitability of the project, however, where the Russian side is less concerned with the profitability of the activities. One hindrance is the low number of working hours that disabled people are allowed to carry out, which puts limits to the amount of time they are working in the project.

The project partners experienced greater challenges than envisaged for buying necessary equipment. To buy used equipment from Norway turned out not to be realistic due to bureaucratic (tax, customs, etc.) hindrances. Efficient and active search, however, resulted in good alternatives from St. Petersburg. The search is still going on for finding equipment for print on cups and lighters. It is

also expensive to buy T-shirts and other materials which are needed for the production. Nevertheless, the staff and the youth make an effort to meet these challenges by making use of the available resources in the best possible way.

*c) Impact:* The impact is apparent for the young disabled who get these alternative jobs. The project may serve as an example of how to think creatively to establish non-traditional jobs for disabled. However, the dissemination activities are rather limited, and attempts to exchange experiences with other institutions are not really developed. Thus, the impact, although substantial, appears to be more limited than a larger focus on outreach could have given.

*Continuation of the project activities:* The continuation of the project activities appears to be dependent on continuous external support. However, the project partners on both sides are very committed and active in seeking ways to follow up on the activities. The aim is now to integrate the project more fully with the Boarding School no 3 for deaf youth in Murmansk, so that some equipment will be located there and the business will be a true collaboration project between Murmansk and the town of Polyarny. There appear to be some differences in viewpoints between the local authorities (Committee on Youth in Murmansk) and the project partners about independence of the project in relation to the School no 3. The municipality in Polyarny seems to be willing to continue its support by keeping a flat for the activities for the project to develop. A next step in the project will be to disseminate the results of the project more actively so that other similar institutions in other parts of the Murmansk oblast', and possibly other parts of NW-Russia, can learn about the experience and get ideas for developing own initiatives for job-creation for disabled in the region.

*Discussion.* The project is a good example of creative thinking for ways to increase job opportunities for disabled youth in North-West Russia. It shows that it is possible with limited resources to establish a viable firm within an area which has not been a traditional niche for disabled, but within which there seem to be good opportunities for further development. The commitment from those involved in the project, both users and project partners is very strong, and it is likely that the partners will follow up, adjust, and develop the project activities further.

The project, however, has also encountered some challenges and problems, most of which are fully acknowledged by the project partners. Firstly, although the project is highly appreciated on the Russian side, for the future it would be good if the Russian side takes the lead in the application writing and have a stronger formal ownership of projects of this type. Their more intimate knowledge with constraints and opportunities in the Russian context could have been used to foresee challenges that appeared already at the start-up of the project. For example, the need for pedagogues to work with the disabled was very clearly expressed by the Russian partners in the project, and could have been stressed even stronger. Also, a stronger ownership of the project by the Russian partners would perhaps have induced stronger involvement from Russian local authorities. Different interpretation of objectives should also be avoided.

The technical equipment that has been purchased (a variety of equipment for design and printing of business cards, T-shirts, graduation ribbons) can be used for the young disabled people. However, due to strict legislation in terms of number of hours to be worked per week, the equipment is not used to its full potential. The project partners do not have the expertise to utilize the equipment fully, and some pedagogues with the technical expertise to use the equipment would have been an advantage. Equipment for printing on lighters, cups, etc. still needs to be purchased.

For the project to be economically viable, the evaluators believe there should be developed a business plan attached with the project application for projects of this type. At least, such a business plan would be useful for the next steps of the project. It would be an advantage if the disabled themselves are involved in working out such a business plan for the future viability of their firm.

Challenges caused by external circumstances, particularly in identifying and buying appropriate equipment, have been significant. However, the project partners have responded and adjusted to such challenges in an adequate way. The evaluators believe there are good prospects for the project partners to achieve their main goals of the project if funding is secured for the next stage. In the long run, however, there must be the aim that these types of projects are not dependent on continuous support from

Norwegian funding, particularly in a setting where the Russian economy has improved significantly and the budgets of local administration has increased. The true impact of projects like this will be seen if Russian authorities are willing to give priority to allocate own resources to these projects.

### 3.11 Barents Plus

*#Institutions involved and funding.* The Barents Plus programme is coordinated by Finnmark University College in Alta. The international secretariat of the college is responsible for the programme and has a staff of two that dedicate a substantial amount of their work-time to the programme. Collaborating partners are all the institutions of higher education in the Norwegian and Russian parts of the Barents region. The international secretariat is responsible for disseminating information about the programme, such as running the web-site. It also makes all the programme documents, and takes the final decision on grants and for economic reporting to the Barents Secretariat. The other partners (international offices at the institutions) disseminate information about the programme in their own institutions, establish links with the host institutions and set up a prioritized list of scholarship candidates to the Finnmark University College. There are regular (at least annual) meetings with coordinators from the universities/university colleges on the Norwegian side. A greater effort is now being put into establishing more formalized meetings and contacts with the Russian institutions.

The Barents Plus exchange programme has been administered by the Finnmark University College for more than a decade (see more on this below). The annual funding of the programme has varied. From 1999 the programme also included administration of a new programme area: the participation of Russian students from the Barents region at Norwegian *folkehøyskoler* (Svanvik and Øytun). *Folkehøyskoler* offer one-year courses, have no set academic curriculum, no grades nor exams. The idea is that the students learn through experience and social interaction. This method of teaching is a part of the philosophy of these schools.

As a result of the inclusion of the *folkehøyskoler*, the budget of the programme increased somewhat (although not enough to compensate for the increased costs). In 2002 the allocation for the project reached a peak at about 1.2 MNOK; after which it has been relatively stable at about 1 MNOK. The contribution from Finnmark University College has been around 50,000 NOK per year, meaning virtually full financing from the Barents Secretariat. The administration of the programme has been reduced from about 27 percent of the allocation in 1995/96 to about 10-12 percent at present.

*Background* The initiative was from the Barents Secretariat, which wanted a Norwegian-Russian exchange programme for students and teachers of higher education institutions but did not have the capacity to administer it itself. After a pilot project the Barents Secretariat made a call for proposals to run the programme, and Finnmark University College won the bid together with Sámi University College. The latter's role in the programme was gradually reduced, and the Finnmark University College has had the administrative responsibility.

*Objectives* The main objective of the Barents Plus Programme is to stimulate establishment and maintenance of cooperation within higher education and research between universities and other higher education institutions in the Norwegian and the Russian parts of the Barents region. The programme is thought to contribute to increased cultural understanding, mutual competence development, and increased institutional and personal contacts across the border. Mutuality in all its aspects is stressed in all programme documents.

The programme fits with the priority in the Barents collaboration on competence development.

*The intervention* The programme is aimed to intervene in a number of ways. The largest amount of funding is distributed to applicants within higher education. The main activity of the programme is to support student and teacher exchange. However, the project wishes to stimulate other types of collaboration as well. Thus, cooperation between Norwegian and Russian higher education institutions in developing joint curricula, translation and publishing of joint reports, data collection in research programmes, participation in conferences and organised student trips are

examples of other activities that are being supported. In addition to the traditional student exchange there is a support programme (20,000 – 40,000 NOK per year) to Russian students from the Barents region studying in Norway. Approximately 100,000 – 150,000 NOK per year are used for this purpose.

From 1999 an additional element was, as mentioned above, introduced, when the project started to include scholarships for Russian students at Norwegian *folkehøyskoler*. However, the administration of the Barents Secretariat is not involved in the selection of students, which it leaves totally to the two *folkehøyskoler* participating in the programme.

A programme staff is working at the Finnmark University College. Administration of the programme is, however, quite simple in comparison with other scholarship programmes. As we will see later, the administration is perhaps too simple, which hampers quality control of applications. Although the programme administration makes the final decision on selection of projects, it is based on a list of priorities from each of the collaborating institutions. Until present, Norwegian institutions have been much more active using the Barents Plus programme than the counterparts on the Russian side. According to the programme administration, this is likely to change in the future as more effort is now put on institutionalisation of the collaboration with the partner institutions on the Russian side.

### *Results*

*a) Output:* A large number of scholarships have been allocated. For example, from for the 2006 allocation to the project 103 students and 16 teachers received scholarships from the programme in addition to one administrative employee. One student participated at a *folkehøyskole*. Most of the higher education institutions are involved. While formerly it was most common for Russian students and teachers to go to Norway, the situation is different today with a large number of Norwegians going to Russia as well. As a rule, however, it is the Norwegian side in the collaboration that makes the application on behalf of the Russian institution.

*b) Outcome:* The outcome of the exchange can already be discerned. Many students have obtained academic or profession contacts on the other side of the border. They learn about their field of from a

country with different scientific, academic and cultural traditions. Some obtain credits for their further studies. However, the study systems are still quite different and this makes such credits quite hard to obtain. It remains to be seen to what extent the Bologna process of aligning educational systems and degrees in Europe will be conducive in this respect. Teachers and academic staff have obtained experience from lecturing or carrying out research in a different setting. Not the least, institutionalisation of collaboration between higher education institutions in Norway and Russia takes place.

*c) Impact:* There is strong reason to believe that the programme will achieve the desired effects, and some of these effects are already beginning to be noticeable. The programme has contributed to the long-term collaboration between higher education institutions in the north. In the long run one can expect it to be common for students to take into account study opportunities on the other side of the border when they plan their future studies.

*Continuation of the project activities:* Investments in student and teacher exchange programmes are very likely to yield a long-term return in a number of respects. Firstly, it leads to increased contact between Russia and Norway among those who have participated in the programmes. Equally important: Institutional collaboration between higher education institutions is strengthened and there are many examples of more formalized collaboration between institutions in Russia and Norway developing as a result. The knowledge and skills that are acquired are significant. The programme itself is likely to continue if the programme continues to obtain financial support from the Barents Secretariat. There is a programme administration with experience from running this – and similar – programmes. The institutional contacts with the Russian institutions in the project are being built up.

*Discussion.* The project has a number of strengths but also some not insignificant weaknesses. The administrative costs are reasonable. This, however, is based on the fact that the collaborating institutions' own priorities are adhered to. The administrative personnel running the programme do not have the capacity to make a true quality assessment of all the applications and get lists of priorities from participating institutions. Although there is no guarantee that the potentially 'best' projects and



exchanges are supported, the way of distribution at least secures a certain distribution of resources on the various institutions, which is positive in itself. On the other hand, the lack of quality assurance of the institutions' priorities can make the programme a 'last resort' for obtaining funding for a project or activity, since they know that there is no external competition. One may be tempted to put the second best projects on the priority lists.

The programme administration should also be aware of the potential for using programmes like this to support exchange of 'own' candidates, especially in Russia where illegitimate use of informal networks are known to be widespread. The evaluation team's impression, however, is that the selection of students and teachers in Russia for this particular programme takes place in accordance with principles of true competition and is based on competence. Even though the students' quality is an indication of the selection process, quality assurance of candidates should be discussed thoroughly with both Norwegian and Russian institutions.

Field visits in Russia revealed that the information and competence about the Barents Plus programme is very diverse. Some institutions are well aware of the programme and use it extensively, while others are either uninformed or consider other exchange programmes more attractive. As one of the international advisers at a Russian university stated: 'We use the programme when there are no other options'. The administration should, thus, pay more attention to establishing a sense of programme ownership or identity also at the Russian side of the border. The administration of the programme is aware of this problem and at present pays more attention to it. On the Norwegian side of the border there are annual meetings between the administration and the responsible staff at the higher education institutions. Similar meetings should be organized also in Russia.

Recent introductions of new exchange programmes in the North, such as the *North2North* programme (although including more countries in the circumpolar north and not only Norway and Russia), makes it even more important to strengthen the Barents Plus identity and information and knowledge about the programme also in the Russian part of the Barents region. The evaluation team's impression is that more could be done in this

respect, but that the administration is aware of the challenge and is now taking measures to strengthen this part. It was not ideal that at the time of the evaluation team's visit to Russia the programme web-site was down for an extended period of time.

Although it is understandable that the Barents Secretariat does not have the capacity to run an own *folkehøyskole* programme, and it may be a pragmatic solution to keep the administration of exchange programmes in one office, there is little value added for a higher education institution to run a *folkehøyskole* programme. The role of the Finnmark University College is simply to distribute the funding, since they do not take part in the selection of students and base it on the decisions of the *folkehøyskoler* themselves. This evaluation team would suggest that the two *folkehøyskoler* that are involved obtain earmarked funding from the Barents Secretariat in the future for Russian students without having to go through the Finnmark University College.

In order to strengthen the identity and sense of Russian ownership of the Barents Plus programme (in line with the mutuality underlined in the objectives of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme ) the co-operation should introduce a steering committee or other body that also includes participants from Russian higher education institutions. A seminar with representatives from Russia and Norway could be organized in the not too distant future in order to get feedback to the programme set-up. Staff dealing with international issues at the higher education institutions in NW-Russia and Norway would be the most appropriate participants at such a seminar. This seminar would in itself be a forum for exchange of ideas and opinions between these institutions.

The evaluation team furthermore suggests a more in-depth evaluation of the programme than is feasible through this evaluation. Aspects that should be looked into are

- perceived ownership and identity of the programme, especially in Russia
- quality assurance of selection of grants
- information and dissemination about the programme
- synergies with other exchange programmes in the north

- alternative models of the *folkehøyskole* part of the programme.

### 3.12 Mobile street work for children and youth in Murmansk

*#Institutions involved and funding.* The project was coordinated by *Redd Barna* (Save the Children Norway), Murmansk office. The project was carried out in close collaboration with the Youth Committee of the Murmansk City Administration. The project was also implemented through close cooperation with other stakeholders, such as the police units on minors, social protection authorities, commissions on minors, Red Cross, and others. The head of the *Redd Barna* office in Murmansk was project leader. During the initial years this was Bjørg Besteland, while during the last years it was Markus Aksland and Evgeniya Kamenetskaya. The two main partners had different roles in the project. *Redd Barna* provided informational resources, took part in competence building (methodology, social work, conflict resolution, legal framework, project management, etc.) applied to donors for project funding, and provided narrative and financial reporting. The Youth Committee had the responsibility for opening a Centre, elaborating operational guidelines for the Centre, organisation of outreach social work, developing competence building programmes, organisation of a telephone helpline for children, and numerous other activities.

The project started already in 2002 and was planned for a three-and-a-half year period (to the end of 2005). Due to some delay in implementation of the project, the project period was prolonged until the end of 2006. The main sources of financing were funds from the Barents Secretariat, the Nordic Council of Ministers and own funds from *Redd Barna*. The amount of funding from the Barents Secretariat has varied from 20 percent (first year) to 40 percent (later years). The Nordic Council of Ministers was the main contributor in 2002, while later its share was equal to that of the Barents Secretariat. *Redd Barna* has also contributed own funding (about 20 percent of the funding each year) mainly to cover salaries to project staff. The total project costs were in the size of 7-800,000 DKK per year. There are also significant funds from the municipal budget to adjacent activities.

*Background* The initiative to the project came from the Youth Committee of the Murmansk City Administration in 2001 as a reaction to the deteriorating situation of youth in the city at the time, with increased child neglect and juvenile crime. A project application was sent to the Nordic Council of Ministers, where *Redd Barna* was proposed as a project partner. An application was also sent to the Barents Secretariat from the Youth Committee, originally with the Finnmark University College as a Norwegian partner. Redd Barna decided in 2002 to develop a programme in North West Russia and to focus on Murmansk and possibly Karelia. The decision was based on a needs assessment undertaken in the region. When *Redd Barna* established an office in Murmansk, it also became the coordinator of the project.

*Objectives* The project objective is to act as a mediator between the community and street children for their social adjustment in the community and the representation of children's interests. The project has a number of operational objectives, some of the most important of which are:

1. To support children and youth at risk, individuals and groups in the city of Murmansk through a multisectoral programme.
2. To improve the living conditions for vulnerable street children and youth in Murmansk.
3. To prevent children and youth from being separated from their parents and families.
4. To initiate and implement activities for children and youth that prevent negative development connected to crime, drugs, alcohol, and becoming infected with STDs.
5. To develop and build competence among the different stakeholders in areas such as service delivery, project management, etc.

*The intervention* The project intervened in a number of ways in order to achieve the project objectives. Firstly, the project set out to identify street children and youth, as well as other children and youth at risk. Secondly, the MSW activities were attached to the umbrella organization (a Centre for social, psychological and pedagogical services to children and youth) to secure multi-sectoral involvement. A mini-bus was bought so staff could go out and

identify and seek the contact with the children in their neighbourhood. Development of methodology took place in collaboration between the Norwegian and Russian partners in the project for capacity building. A number of seminars and workshops, with involvement of children themselves, were organised to give feedback and continuously develop the project in interaction with the users. An evaluation for learning purposes was carried out.

### *Results*

*a) Output:* A data bank of identified street children and youth (11-18 years of age) has been worked out and is regularly updated. Social rehabilitative activities have been arranged. The MSW service originally had a staff of three, which was expanded to six, while in 2006 the Service Staff included 8 full-time positions of social pedagogues, 3 pedagogue-psychiatrists, 1 entertainment educator and 1 head of the MSW department. Policy guidelines and methodology has been provided, including job description of MSW specialists. A 24-hours telephone line was established.

*b) Outcome:* As a result of the project, from December 2004 the Mobile Street Work Service became a part of the municipal organisation “Complex Centre of Social Services to Youth”, which has a number of social, psychological and pedagogical services to children and youth which the street children can benefit from. This fosters multi-sector collaboration. Children, youth and their families within the MSW project are forwarded to appropriate bodies and organizations for necessary treatment and support though the collaboration of a number of stakeholders’ institutions of the rehabilitative social sphere. Children have been actively involved in the development of the programme and its evaluation. The Youth Committee has established a network of professional national contacts. This is partly a result of a number of seminars and informational work. Children have more contact with their families.

*c) Impact:* The project is in line with government policy on street children and neglected children. The President has mentioned neglected children as a priority in his President Address. This facilitates the work of the MSW staff. One can see several examples of increased awareness about street children and youth and their families among the authorities. Significant public

attention has been attracted to the project itself and to the issue. Mass media have been involved in and reported extensively from the project.

*Sustainability* Activities continue even without the financial support from *Redd Barna*. Salaries were never paid by project funding but came from local budgets. It has made the termination of the project easier. The municipality, thus, keeps the same amount of social pedagogues as before. The mini-bus (to identify youth) is still running. There is a continuous competence building through cross-sectoral collaboration. Children are coming regularly to the centre (although no statistics has been provided). Training equipment and inventory acquired throughout the project period are being kept and used.

The organisation *Redd Barna* has a long-term perspective in North-West Russia with a well established office (10 staff). Similar activities have been, or are being, developed in other parts of NW-Russia – and the Murmansk project has been an example for similar outreach projects in Arkhangelsk, Severomorsk, Pechenga and Kola districts of the Murmansk region. Through *Redd Barna's* project attention to and expertise on the social situation of children and youth has also been developed in Norway.

#### *Discussion.*

The project has undoubtedly filled a gap by providing services to marginalized and neglected children in Murmansk city at a time when the need for such services were in high demand. An external evaluation team (published in March 2007) has previously found that the situation for neglected children and youth in Murmansk has improved. The multi-sector involvement of the MSW is likely to have played a positive role in this improvement.

At the beginning of the project, there were some incidents of misunderstandings due to language difficulties, when the country coordinator of *Redd Barna* did not speak Russian and was dependent on an interpreter. It has also been a challenge for the Norwegian partner in the project to fully understand the chain of command in Russia, and what is feasible to achieve in the local context. This competence has gradually been improved, however. Moreover, the look from an external, experienced expert are likely to have contributed to rethinking methodology and working

routines on the Russian side at the beginning of the project, which several partners argue have been important to the implementation of the project.

The project is very complex, with a large number of objectives, interventions and outputs. There are also a vast number of documents, reports, evaluations and reviews. Reporting routines have not been systematic and uniform throughout the project period, which makes it difficult to assess achievements. Sometimes output, outcome and impact are all grouped together and mixed, while defined criteria for reaching the objectives are not always clear. The complexity of the project and the lack of conceptual clarity in the reports (a deficiency shared by many other project holders) make it difficult to identify the achievements in precise terms.

Despite these shortcomings, the project is a good example of the added value of the presence of the Norwegian partner in the local setting, being able to collaborate more closely and establishing a stable working environment. The long-term presence of the partner and the agreement with local and national policy priorities makes likelihood of success higher. The emphasis on multi-sectoral and multi-stakeholder involvement, which tended to be weakly developed in Russia, is one of the major achievements of the project.

### 3.13 The Barents Symposium 2006 – Our Homes in the North

*Institutions involved and funding.* The main coordinator of the project is *Husbanken* in Hammerfest. *Husbanken* collaborates with the Norwegian Federation of Co-operative Housing Associations (NBBL), the Finnmark county, the administration of Murmansk *oblast'*, as well as architect professional associations in Norway and Russia. The Barents Secretariat is also an active partner in the symposium. *Husbanken* has the overall responsibility for the organisation of the symposium, while the Russian partner takes the responsibility for all practical arrangements in Russia.

The symposium which was organised in 2006 is part of what is planned to be a series of symposia/conferences organised by the

same partners. A similar conference was carried out in October 2007 in Apatity. The symposium in 2006 had a budget of about NOK 740,000, of which 100,000 (14 percent) came from the Barents Secretariat. Other funders were Finnmark county (14 percent) while the rest was own contributions from *Husbanken*. The Russian side contributes with a significant amount of own work, which is not shown in the project finances.

*Background.* Russia is currently undergoing rapid transformations within housing and associated municipal services, which entails privatisation of the administration and operation of the housing stock. NBBL has from the beginning of the century collaborated with Murmansk and the town of Apatity on possible inputs and ideas from Norwegian experiences to guide such reforms.

*Husbanken*, being a partner in this collaboration, entered into discussions about increasing the points of contact between Norwegian and Russian partners in the area of housing and living conditions associated with housing reforms. A great degree of trust has developed between the partners since these contacts were established in 2001-2. The idea to organise a series of conferences came up as a joint initiative.

*Objectives.* Within the Norwegian policy on the northern areas, *Husbanken* and the Murmansk oblast' administration aim to increase the breadth and depth of collaboration in the North, in an area which is important for welfare and living conditions. The Russian side in the collaboration is interested in learning about Norwegian experiences with different ownership models of the housing stock. A secondary objective is to increase the potential for Norwegian involvement in business developments within the housing sector in the Murmansk oblast'. *Husbanken* itself does not have commercial motives for the collaboration, but establishes an arena for interested parties to meet and develop joint projects.

*The intervention.* The interventions take the form of organising conferences in different places in the Murmansk oblast' with Norwegian and Russian participants. The conferences are divided into plenary sessions and workshops with a variety of topics. Furthermore, for the Norwegians to be familiarized with various aspects of the Russian reality, they are taken to different parts of the *oblast'*. This is an optional activity.



### *Results*

a) *Output:* At the conference in the autumn of 2007 there were 27-30 Norwegian participants, while all in all 120 participants took part in the symposium. Five workshops with three chairpersons from Russia and two chairpersons from Norway were organized. From the Norwegian side the participants included municipal planners, professionals (e.g. architects), construction industry, municipal and county administration, business and others. On the Russian side there are fewer participants from the private sector, but more persons in charge of housing, planning and related areas from city and regional administration. There are also more Russian participants from the political level.

b) *Outcome and impact:* The conferences are first of all arenas where Russian and Norwegian partners can learn from each other, share experiences, discuss challenges and look for potential of collaboration. The assistance that the Norwegian side can give to the Russian reform process is better attuned when the Norwegians have some previous understanding of the challenges on the Russian side. At the same time the conference is an arena for developing joint projects. There are several examples of Norwegian participants in the conferences that have developed business activities in Russia, and where the conference has been a first arena for such contacts. The long-term impact, although likely, remains to be seen.

*Continuation of the project activities.* There can be no doubt that *Husbanken* has a long-term commitment in the Murmansk *oblast'* and will continue to support and coordinate activities in the region. The long-term commitment has materialized in a network of partners at a high level in the Murmansk *oblast'*. The interest from the Russian partners appears to be genuine and stretches far beyond the financial support achieved through the collaboration. The level and form of involvement from the Russian partners is very high, indicating a great commitment. Spin-offs can be seen in the form of institutional collaboration between participants in the symposia.

It is being discussed whether the planned broad annual conferences in the future will be replaced by semi-annual conferences of the 2006/2007 type combined with more targeted seminars/events in the years in between.

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*Discussion.*

The project has resulted in sustainable and viable networking between a variety of partners in the area of housing and municipal planning in the Murmansk region. The Russian side has learnt from Norwegian experiences but without pre-determined models for the best solutions presented by the Norwegian participants. Trust has been established between the project partners, and the commitment has been high from both sides.

So far the competence transfer has been relatively one-sided, with less transfer of competence from Russia to Norway than the other way around. This is to be expected taking into account the challenges in the area facing the Russian. Nevertheless, some of the Norwegian participants undoubtedly have a commercial interest in the region, and the seminars have been a means also for establishing business contacts.

The manpower involved in the collaboration on both sides has been relatively stable, which has enabled the development of personal relations and deepened the communications and understanding between the partners.

One of the main challenges in the project has been the practical organisation of the conferences (to obtain the necessary permissions for visiting field sites, etc.). The organisers appear to be well aware of the risk of potential mix between political and economic influence, and it is an advantage for the project that *Husbanken* itself is not commercially involved.

The large spread in types of actors and somewhat different actors from Norway and Russia creates the challenge that the topics to be covered must be rather broad and sometimes lack a clear focus.

After each symposium the organizers meet to evaluate the results and discuss adjustments and new approaches to be introduced in the future collaboration.

The Barents Secretariat's own involvement in the project at the same time as it is one of the organisers is worth mentioning. One could ask whether the leader of the Barents Secretariat should appear as the only contact person in the project application, and the application form missing information required for other applicants, as was the case in 2006. This, however, is a rather

formalistic objection. There are good reasons why the Barents Secretariat could engage and lend its name to this kind of dialogue, and the participation of the full board when decisions about funding take place is a good enough insurance that there are no conflicts of interest involved. Nevertheless, the evaluators would suggest the requirement of filling out the appropriate application form for all potential applicants, even in the cases where the Barents Secretariat is one of the partners in the project.

The long-term perspective of the partners of both sides makes a true evaluation of concrete results at this stage premature. The results, which will be of both a direct and an indirect nature, are likely to be visible in a longer time perspective. So far it appears that the partners have found a constructive modus of collaboration which facilitates the work towards the rather ambitious goals of the project.

### 3.14 Competence transfer between the sector of reindeer husbandry in Finnmark and Kola.

*Institutions involved and funding.* Neiden Rein a.s. and Vardø upper secondary school (formal project holder).

The project was financed by the MFA (200,000 NOK) and the Barents Secretariat (350,000 NOK), and Neiden Rein as (15,250 NOK) (source: Final Report to the Barents Secretariat).

*Background.* The project lasted from 2003 to 2005. Vardø Upper Secondary School (VUSS) was responsible for the organisation, co-ordination, and economy (budgetary accountancy) of the project. VUSS offers vocational training in food professions as one of its specialities, with a focus on sea food and locally produced food. The theoretical part of the project was carried out at Triumfs Turistsenter in Kautokeino, whereas the practical training took place in the facilities of the Smuk Nesseby as in Varangerbotn and Mikkell Triumf Slakt in Kautokeino and Neiden Rein as factory in Vadsø. In the beginning Neiden Rein was owned by reindeer Saamis in Tana and Varanger with two Tromsø-based forms holding 11 percent of the shares together (Johan Petter Barlindhaug as and H. Mydland as). The ownership of the company was changed in 2004. According to the project

description, the firm was dependent upon supplies of reindeer meat from Russia. The company also planned to process meat in Norway for export to Russia because the processing and marketing capacities in Nenets and Jamal allegedly were poorly developed.

*Objectives.* The project aimed at transferring competence from a Norwegian enterprise to Russian Saamis involved in reindeer husbandry. This was seen as a step towards closer contacts between people involved in reindeer husbandry in Norway and Russia, and subsequently commercial co-operation as a result of the project. The Russian reindeer companies Girvas and Rangifer were mentioned as potential partners of Neiden Rein. After the project a substantial number of Russian Saamis would have acquired the competence needed to meet EU standards of quality and hygiene. Another related objective was to develop the market for reindeer meat in Russia.

*The intervention.* Training of Russian Saamis and Nenets in reindeer husbandry, slaughtering and carving of meat, including quality control and hygiene. The training was planned to take place over two seasons.

### *Results*

*a) Output:* Seven young people fulfilled the basic course in slaughtering and meat processing (seven weeks). Four young people completed the follow-up courses in carving of meat and quality standards (15 weeks).

*b) Outcome and impact:* The young people who were trained have got jobs in the meat industry and some go to school for further training. Some have moved out of the indigenous areas.

The planned establishment of a Norwegian – Russian reindeer co-operation in the field of reindeer meat industry did not come into existence.

While being in Norway for training, the course participants were invited to work after hours “with the same meat carving that we were doing during training lessons”, as one put it. The after-hour work was paid, but due to a transfer of undertaking of Neiden Rein to another company (Boalvvir BA / Lulas AS), that latter declared Neiden Rein bankrupt, some of the salary payments are still outstanding. Two course participants have altogether 25,000

NOK in their favour. They are victims of a conflict between local business interests in Finnmark.

Although the project met its objectives of transferring meat processing skills to young people, there is a danger that the unfortunate non-payment of due salaries will be what the young people associate with Norwegian – Russian project co-operation.

*Continuation of the project activities.* The project holder considers initiating another project.

*Discussion.* If the project had been fully implemented, it could have contributed to the development of a stronger transborder business network in the field of reindeer husbandry. Although the project was conceived a primarily being to the benefit of Neiden Rein, among other because it aimed at creating a Russian market, there could have been positive effects on the Russian side too. Among others the project would have created a market for Russian reindeer meat to be sold to Norway, and the competence transfer could have made Russian reindeer industry more competitive. It is, however, not clear whether the project's insistence on only working with Saamis involved in the reindeer branch, excluding Russians and Komis, is a correct strategy in the Russian context. It should also be taken as a lesson that project holders must be rock solid. The fact that Russian Saamis trained through the project left Norway with salaries outstanding is harmful to the trust and good relationship that the Barents Secretariat's grant programme seeks to boost.

### 3.15 Lessons learnt

Ideally, all the individual projects are inputs to the overall objective of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme, which is to create cross-regional trust and welfare. In the early years of the Barents co-operation cross-regional interaction in itself was highly valuable. Later, the project co-operation has become more focused on attaining particular goals set by the project holders. Although, as this chapter has shown, projects tend to be successful in reaching their own goals, there may be reason to discuss whether they contribute efficiently enough to the overall aims of the Barents co-operation. In particular, there is reason to watch out for the

possibility that unintended adverse effects result from the projects. In particular, this may be the case for projects in the field of business development, making use of the asymmetry between the Norwegian and the Russian side regarding wage levels and welfare benefits. The two business projects and one of the projects on indigenous peoples presented above may be criticised on the grounds that the Norwegian project holders simply make use of the gap, even at the cost of the Russian side. Of course, this criticism may be countered by pointing at the mutual gains. Given the overall, cross-border confidence-building objectives of the Barents co-operation, mutual gains should be made an explicit prerequisite for a project to get funding.

When the Barents Secretariat outsources programme administration to other institutions, as has been the case with the Barents Plus programme, it is particularly important that the Secretariat keeps a close eye on the programme implementation and makes sure that changes in the programme surroundings, such as the introduction of new competing programmes, are reflected in the programme set-up.

The projects aiming at implementing projects and bringing about change in smaller settlements and scarcely populated areas on the Russian side are particularly liable to producing unintended negative effects. In particular, this is a danger while working with vulnerable indigenous peoples. The two projects on indigenous peoples presented above, are both based on insight in local affairs in the areas they operate, but the ways they have been carried out could have been more sensitive to the local context.

As this chapter illustrates, co-financing is common-place in the Barents co-operation. The particular *niche* of the Barents co-operation among all the other “donors” is, however, somewhat unclear to project holders. An updating of the overall objectives and a clarification of the programme theory would help applications and reporting easier, and first of all probably lead to even more expedient projects.

This chapter’s review of 14 projects shows that there could have been a stronger commitment on the part of the Russian project participants.

## 4 Conclusions and recommendations

This evaluation covers the period from 2002 to 2006, which was a period of rapid change in Russia. The Barents Secretariat's grant programme has its roots and identity in the immediate post-Cold war, when Russia was weak both politically and economically. The co-operation's objectives are to stimulate regional collaboration within selected areas of priority, to create a common identity and to contribute towards a better economic and social development.

The change into a more self-assertive, administratively efficient and economically dynamic Russia combined with the normalisation of travel and increase in labour migration across the borders, could have made the goals of the grant scheme co-operation obsolete, or at least made the typical Barents project "methodology" outdated. However, the evaluation shows that the project co-operation in the period from 2002 – 2006 on the whole was adapting to the new situation. As compared to the 1990's, there are less get-to-know-each-other activities and purely humanitarian projects funded by the Barents Secretariat. The element of material support from Norway to Russia within the project co-operation is decreasing. Projects that were stated up recently hardly include material transfers.

Having to process and follow-up projects that differ significantly in scope and design, covering five quite dissimilar areas of priority (business development, competence-building and education at all levels, environmental protection, welfare/culture, and indigenous people), the Barents Secretariat staff has a heavy workload. In addition to handling the projects, they function as a competence centre. The Secretariat has about ten employees in Kirkenes with special competence in the priority fields of the Barents Secretariat's grant programme. In the period covered by the evaluation small

field offices in four Russian cities/towns were operating (from 2008 the office in Petrozavodsk was closed). The Barents Secretariat “add value” to the project co-operation through their proximity to the actors and knowledge of the context. The Barents Secretariat’s grant programme is a vehicle for fast and flexible transborder project co-operation in the region. With four closing dates a year for applications the Norwegian authorities can set up projects fast and in a flexible way.

Project holders and others involved in project implementation are particularly satisfied with the opportunities offered through project co-operation to learn about each others experiences in the field.

Below the main findings of the evaluation will be presented, followed by a recommendation.

### **Objectives**

The programme theory of the Barents Secretariat’s grant programme has been unclear because the *objectives* of the Barents co-operation are very wide. The overall philosophy has been based on the principle of mutual benefits. Partly the co-operation aims at creating trust and communication on equal terms between various types of actors in the region. Partly the co-operation has pursued goals of regional development by strengthening the economy of Northern Norway, in particular Eastern Finnmark. In other words, the project co-operation has balanced between creating goodwill and mutual benefits on the one hand, and promoting Norwegian direct self-interest on the other.

As a result of the dynamics in the High North and normalisation of the relations between Russia and Norway into more mutual self-assertion and real business co-operation, there is reason to go through the objectives anew with the aim of making them more specific.

Recommendation: An extensive review of the policies and objectives of the Barents Secretariat’s grant programme should be carried out in the light of the ongoing development in the North.

### **Programme theory**

Programme theory is a practical tool to help bring forth the assumed relations between the interventions (inputs) and their outputs and outcomes, and the relations between the outcomes



and the solution of the problems that the intervention seeks to reduce or solve. The inputs in the context of the Barents co-operation are the concrete project activities. What are the objectives, and what makes the project activities contribute to the achievement of these objectives?

At times the evaluation team got the impression that the “programme theory” was unclear to many project owners, and probably more so among unsuccessful applicants for grants. Programme theory may be a tool to make project activities more goal-oriented. On a practical level it helps structuring applications and reports to focus on results and outcomes.

Recommendation: A specific programme theory of the Barents Secretariat’s grant scheme should be elaborated based on today’s realities. The concept of programme theory should be internalised in the activities.

### **Applications and reporting**

When there is a lack of analytical clarity as to what is the objective, and what are the activities to achieve them, there is a risk that the project implementation will suffer. Fortunately, there is a conventional “tool-box” of concepts that could be made active use of in order to improve the stringency of the project design.

Some of the project applications and reports suffer from a lack of clarity as to key concepts. For instance, objectives are mixed with activities (interventions). Direct results, like the number of people that have attended a seminar or a trip, are confused with the outcomes (outcome being the extent to which the situation has been brought more in line with the objective). This point could be illustrated by the following example: A project might have resulted in 15 Russians visiting a cultural event in Norway and ten Norwegians going to Russia for a cultural event. These figures combined with some data on number of days, number and type of concerts and other information of what happened during the visits would be the *outputs*. The *outcomes*, on their hand, would refer to the propensity of the project participants and others to go to, or read about each others’ cultural events, even when not financed to do so through a project. The *impact* is only observable after some time. One could imagine that after some years it was quite normal for consumers of cultural events to follow the cultural life in other

parts of the Barents Region. If at the same time it would be plausible to claim that the original project contributed to this situation, it would be possible to conclude that the project had had an impact.

**Recommendations:** Guidelines for application and reporting should promote accurate reporting, and a report should not be approved if activities and results/impacts have not been described. The good work being done by the Barents Secretariat desk officers in giving advice and guidance to project applicants should be continued and strengthened.

### **Visa**

The Barents Secretariat's grant scheme promotes cross-border cooperation, stimulates the flow of people, commodities and ideas within a geographical areas that is sharply divided by a strict and economically discouraging visa regime. When talking with project leaders and participants in Norway as well as in Russia, it becomes quite clear that they are concerned about practical obstacles. In particular, this is the case for visa regulations. In some cases the visa regime has been applied quite flexibly, like in the case of cultural exchange. These reliefs that are being practiced by the Russian consulate in Kirkenes and the Norwegian consulate in Murmansk are important for the everyday life of project leaders and participants. Business representatives, however, complain that visa regulations hamper reasonable exchange of labour between co-operating enterprises on both sides of the border.

**Recommendation:** The visa regime needs to become less strict, and visas cheaper, in order to ease the flow of people in the BEAR.

### **The role of the Norwegian Barents Secretariat's offices in Russia**

The Norwegian Barents Secretariat's offices in Russia have become more active during the last few years, and provide valuable support in providing necessary information as well as facilitating visits to Russia by Norwegian counterparts. On the whole, however, they have not had a very active role in identifying promising individuals, groups or institutions for project application. Neither have they had an active role in the processing of project applications and follow-up of project activities. This, of course, has to do with the field offices origins as *information offices*.

Nonetheless, new tasks for the offices in Russia should be considered, e.g. giving recommendations before applications are approved or rejected. Likewise, inviting the representatives of the field offices to take part in board meetings as observers could be tried out.

Recommendation: The role of the offices in Russia needs to be specified.

### **Russian co-funding**

The project co-operation has suffered from mainly having been funded by the Norwegian side. Norway has in most cases been the motor of the co-operation. Over the last few years, however, the Russian partners to an increasing degree are contributing with co-funding. This has been combined with a more active participation from the Russian side in coming up with suggestions for how to carry out projects and on what subjects. This is first of all the case for the business projects. For people-to-people projects and cultural projects co-financing may be less required at the time being.

Recommendation: Projects with Russian co-funding, or trustworthy plans for such funding, should be given priority. However, this rule should take into consideration the fact that the capability of paying may differ significantly between different priority areas.

### **Projects initiated at the Russian side**

Still relatively few projects are initiated at the Russian side. In order to improve the mutual character of the Barents co-operation more Russian initiatives (and financing) are needed. Moreover, a more active attitude from the Russian side would improve the relevance and quality of the projects in the Russian context.

Recommendation: Applications with a Russian co-ordinator should be encouraged, among others by the Norwegian Barents Secretariat's field offices in Russia.

### **Indication of motivation**

Some of the projects, as this evaluation has shown, may be criticised for being overly self-interested, thus neglecting the criteria of being to mutual benefit on the Norwegian and Russian

sides of the border. Others, however, may be criticised on opposite grounds, for being unclear on what use the project holder have of the activities. Purely charitable projects (Norwegians helping Russians) are significantly less relevant now than ten years ago. Also, projects mainly motivated by considerations of prestige or symbolic positioning, where a Norwegian organisation or institution wants an offspring, building or programme in Russia to substantiate its own relevance, are less fitting now.

Recommendation: All application and report forms should include an item on how the project holder will benefit from the activity, and a good treatment of this issue should be considered a pre-condition for being granted funds.

### **Multilateral BEAR co-operation**

Some projects would gain considerably from being multilateral instead of bilateral (Russian – Norwegian). Unfortunately, it has proved difficult to raise funds for Swedish and Finnish participation in project activities.

Recommendation: The Barents Secretariat should work closely with the International Barents Secretariat to make all states participating in BEAR contribute more.

### **Dissemination**

Many projects lack dissemination strategies. Since many projects are small, but with great relevance for a wider audience, diffusion of the projects' knowledge, insights and skills would be of great value. In particular this is the case between Russia's federation subjects that have a tradition for learning from each others' best practices.

Recommendation: A new item in the application form should be introduced to make applicants explain how they plan to disseminate the project results. Dissemination plans should be made a requirement for a project to get funded.

### **Procedures for the Barents Secretariat' own project participation**

At present the procedures for the Secretariat's participation in projects is unclear. The practices, however, seem to be impeccable

although appearing as an applicant on the application forms is unfortunate.

Recommendation: The Barents Secretariat should make a clear distinction between its function as a general competence centre for regional transborder co-operation on the one hand and its role as manager of MFA's project funds on the other.

### **Avoid duplication of projects**

The Barents Secretariat's grant programme to a large extent consists in co-financing projects with other financing sources. This is good. However, at times co-financing is difficult to distinguish from project duplication. Some applicants and project holders treat the grant programme simply as the last place they submit their application, either because they were unsuccessful elsewhere, or simply would like to make the project bigger.

This may be due to lack of co-ordination with other sources, and the fact that the niche of the grant programme to distinguish it from other institutions is somewhat unclear.

Recommendation: The Barents Secretariat should improve the co-ordination with other financing sources, like the Northern Dimension Partnership for health and related social issues, Nordic Council of Ministers, BEAC and others in order to clarify niches and roles.

### **Widening the circle of project holders**

Over the last few years the circle of project holders has not been expanded. From one point of view this is good. Very often programmes allow projects to be operating only for a few years despite the fact that endurance and working long-term is what makes results. On the other hand, it is a problem that there are relatively few projects from outside the Kirkenes – Murmansk nexus. Lately, however, new applicants are submitting project proposals. Most probably the Norwegian government's Strategy for the High North has brought forward new interest in co-operation, but still good project applications from all parts of the BEAR should be developed and submitted.

Recommendation: The Barents Secretariat staff should prepare a strategy for the encouragement and development of projects in parts of the BEAR hitherto underrepresented.

### **A new cross-border labour market?**

There is a huge need for labour in Northern Norway. “We are screaming for hands”, as one Finnmark-based Norwegian businessman put it. Although Russian labour is going to be offered ample opportunities for employment in Murmansk in the coming years, there is most probably a chance that segments of the work force would be willing to work in Norway in periods. The softening-up of Norway’s policies on labour migration opens up new possibilities in the BEAR.

Recommendation: Special efforts should be made to prepare good projects on cross-border labour market.

### **Business projects and direct subsidies of Norwegian firms**

Creating tight industrial relations across the borders in the BEAR is a core activity within the Barents co-operation. It is objectives and means at the same time. Serious business activities across the borders are probably one of the most efficient motors to reach the overall objectives of the Barents co-operation. The strengthening of the co-operation’s project portfolio related to business is the major achievement in the period covered by the evaluation.

The development of economic activity in eastern Finnmark is dependent upon the co-operation with Russian counterparts. Public support to business forms part of the Norwegian model of regional development. The Barents co-operation fundamentally bases itself on a plus-sum way of thinking (common benefit). Business activities, by their very nature, also include zero-sum situations in which competition directly leads to loss for the loser.

The Barents Secretariat’s grant programme should not expose itself to criticism for increasing the differences between the Norwegian and the Russian side, or simply exploiting the differences in wage levels that still exist. In such cases, economic gains for the Norwegian firm come at the cost of reduced trust and goodwill. Again, there is a need to define the core objectives of the programme. One answer could be to let the Barents Secretariat’s grant programme have the trust and goodwill niche whereas for instance Innovation Norway caters for Norwegian enterprises that want to go international.

For the Barents co-operation at large it is important to avoid support to activities that may be perceived as being support to Norwegian firms in direct or indirect competition with Russian firms. Norwegian business enjoys a wide variety of government support.

**Recommendation:** The Barents Secretariat is advised to be careful not to approve applications that may consist in subsidising Norwegian firms' activities in Russia in cases where the Norwegian firm is in competition with Russian firms on the other side of the border.

The Barents Secretariat's niche should be to provide support to projects that clearly are to the common benefit and thereby in accordance with the overall objectives and programme theory of the Barents co-operation.

### **Indigenous projects**

The Barents Secretariat is an important funder of projects directed at the Saami population on the Kola Peninsula. The small settlements and communities at the Kola Peninsula are vulnerable, and even small mistakes made within the framework of projects may have serious implications for the local population. There are indications that the Norwegian project holders could have been more sensitive to the local context in Lovozero and Revda. There is thus a need for more knowledge on among others, the way of life, the social structures, the attitudes to ethnicity, and political power at local level in the Lovozero district.

**Recommendation:** An in-depth study of the settlements with a Saami population on the Kola Peninsula (in particular Lovozero and Revda) should be commissioned by the Barents Secretariat. The purpose of the study would be to present knowledge to avoid unintended impacts of project activities and to enhance the accuracy of the funded activities.

# Appendix 1

## List of interviewees

Name	Position	Institution	Project	Type of interview: P: Personal; T: Telephone
Thomas Nilsen	vice-director	Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Kirkenes		P
Margrethe Alnes		Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Kirkenes		P
Laila Dalhaug	advisor	Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Kirkenes		P
Christina Henriksen	advisor	Norwegian Barents Secretariat, Kirkenes		P
Tanja Knutsen	Consultant	Hamarøy Church Office	Break-dancers at the Hamarøy Night	T
Hans Ludvigsen	Senior consultant	The Norwegian Olympic and Paralympic Committee and Confederation of Sports (NIF)	Sports project	T
Liv Inger Somby	journalist	Sámi Radio	Kola Saami Radio	T
Erling Fløtten	Regional director	Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise (NHO)		P
Tore Magnus Gundersen	Development director	Finnmark regional administration, Vadsø		P
Rune Åsheim,	Consul General	The Norwegian General Consulate, Murmansk		P
Vladimir N. Lebedev	First deputy chairman	Regional Sports Committee, Murmansk	Sports project	P
Ilona O. Zetonskaia	Deputy chairman	Regional Sports Committee, Murmansk	Sports project	P
Aleksei V. Filin	director	The Norwegian Barents Secretariat - Murmansk		P



		office.		
Natalia Iu. Ivanova,		Murmansk City Youth Commission		P
Anna D. Prakhova		Working group of indigenous peoples,		P
Irina S. Filippova	director	Kola Saami Radio, Lovozero	Kola Saami Radio	P
Valentina V. Sovkina	vice-director	vocational school No. 26, Lovozero		P
Vladimir N. Ivanitskiy	director	vocational school No. 26, Lovozero		P
Larisa P. Avdeeva,	Director	Saami National-Cultural Centre, Lovozero		P
Aleksandr A. Kobelev	Chairman	Kola Saami's Public Organisation (OOSMO)		P
Sergei L. Krutikov, (also conversation with the chief engineer and one worker), Murmansk	director	BR Electronics	BR Electronics	P
Evgeniy G. Galkin,	Department Head	International and external economic department, Murmansk regional government,		P
Rune Johansen,	Administration manager	Kimek	Kimek Offshore	P
Harald Sandhåland	Senior advisor	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		P
Robert Kvile	Deputy Director General	Ministry of Foreign Affairs		P
Rune Rafaelsen	General Secretary	Barents Secretariat		T
Lisbeth Sandtrøen,	Former rector of Vardø upper secondary school	Now: Kirkenes upper secondary school	Reindeer Project	T
Geir Torbjørnsen	Sales director	Barel Electronics	Barel Raduga	T
Sigbjørn Eriksen,	former member of the Barents Secretariat Board	Nordland Region Council		T
Odd-Erling Smuk	Businessman		Reindeer Project	T
Stein Ovesen,	Chairman of the Barents	Troms Region Council		T

	Secretariat board			
Mona Johnson	Head of International Relations Office	Finnmark University College, Alta	Barents Plus	P
Galina Komarova	Head of International Relations Office	Arkhangelsk State Technical University	Barents Plus	P
Natalia Podrazhanskaya	Deputy Head of International Relations Office	Arkhangelsk State Technical University	Barents Plus	P
Mikhail Smirnyakov	Head of International Relations Office	Murmansk Humanities Institute	Barents Plus	P
Alexander Krylov	Head of International Relations Office	Pomor State University	Barents Plus	P
Marie Sneve Martinussen			Natur og Ungdom	T
Nikolay Belugin Tatiana Lefman Denis Dobrynin		Arkhangelsk regional youth environmental organisation Actas	Russian-Norwegian Informational Environmental Youth Centre	P
Hans Borchsenius		Norsk Energi	Capacity-Building on Joint Implementation for Energy Efficiency Centres in Russia	P
Vadim Yeremeyev		Energy Efficiency Centre	Capacity-Building on Joint Implementation for Energy Efficiency Centres in Russia	P
Naida Murtazalieva		Energy Efficiency Centre	Capacity-Building on Joint Implementation for Energy Efficiency Centres in Russia	T
Evgeniya Kamenetskaya	Country Director	Save the Children Norway, Murmansk Office	Mobile street work for children and youth in Murmansk	P
Inna Ryzhkova	Head of International Relations Office	Murmansk State Pedagogical University	Barents Plus	P
Per Paulsen		Husbanken, avd.	The Barents	T

		Hammerfest	Symposium 2006 – Our Homes in the North	
Nikolai Berezchnoy	Vice Governor	Murmansk oblast' government	The Barents Symposium 2006 – Our Homes in the North	P
Knut Nilsen		Døves fylkeslag, Troms	Work and Training for Deaf Youth	T
Irina Melnik Natalia Dudko (+ 3 others)		Children's Creative House, Polyarny	Work and Training for Deaf Youth	P
Enver Djuliman		Norwegian Helsinki Committee	Human Rights and Multicultural Understanding in the Barents Region	P
Irina Norina		Severomorsk Municipal Administration	Human Rights and Multicultural Understanding in the Barents Region	P
Randi Karlstrøm		KFUK/KFUM Finnmark	Finnmark KFUK-KFUM: Dream, dance and democracy in the borderland	P
Ilya Scherbakov	District Secretary	YMCA, Apatity	Finnmark KFUK-KFUM: Dream, dance and democracy in the borderland	T
Tatyana Karelina		Training centre of service of employment of the population on Murmansk region	Kimek – capacity building of Russian personnel within the oil and gas industry	P
Aleksey Filin	Director	Barents Secretariat, Murmansk		P
Andrey Shalyov	Director	Barents Secretariat Office, Arkhangelsk		P
Ludmila Istomina	Consultant	Barents Secretariat Office, Arkhangelsk		P