

Protecting unique Barents nature

The aim of the BPAN project is to promote the establishment of a representative network of protected areas for the conservation of boreal and arctic nature, primarily forests and wetlands.

The Barents Euro-Arctic Region, connecting northern parts of Europe and Northwest Russia, boasts one of the largest intact forest ecosystems remaining on Earth. The Barents Region includes extensive areas of boreal forests, mires and tundra. Its northern nature is unique and diverse, but at the same time vulnerable.

The Barents countries - Russia, Finland, Sweden and Norway – face similar challenges in the conservation of northern species and ecosystems. Therefore, the Environment Ministers highlighted the need to establish a representative and effectively managed network of protected areas in the Barents Region in their meeting in Bodø, Norway, in 2010. A representative network of protected areas safeguards biodiversity of species and habitats, supports natural ecosystems and maintains ecosystem services.

The boreal and arctic nature is under increased pressure from land-use, exploitation and climate change.

Protected areas are important tools for biodiversity conservation as well as adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.



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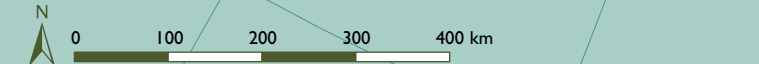
Barents Protected Area Network

The BPAN promotes the establishment of a representative protected area network in the Barents Region



Barents Protected Area Network - BPAN

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Class of protection

- Existing protected areas
- Planned protected areas
- BPAN Pilot sites
- Border of the Barents Region



Unified information on network of protected areas

Representative network of protected areas consists of biologically diverse and well-connected habitats and ecosystems. It is of outmost importance to establish the planned protected areas to secure the valuable nature in the Barents Region.

The main task of the BPAN project is to set a baseline for the state of the network of protected areas. The project provides new unified information and recommendations for decision makers to develop the protected area network.

- The network of protected areas is evaluated by
- classifying protected areas by level of protection
 - carrying out GIS analyses
 - using the CBD Programme of Work on Protected Areas as a framework.

There is a need to assess the benefits, threats and opportunities of the protected areas as part of the BPAN network, and to upgrade their status.

According to preliminary results 13.2 % of the land area in the Barents Region is protected. For biodiversity conservation, the connectivity of the protected areas is of outmost importance.

◀ The BPAN pilot projects are conducted on high conservation value areas in five regions of Northwest Russia. In the pilot projects, field studies and environmental monitoring are carried out in order to provide information on nature conservation to decision makers, authorities and the general public

Transboundary cooperation

Nature has no borders. In the BPAN project, transboundary cooperation is the key to promote nature conservation.

The BPAN project contributes to the Aichi Biodiversity Targets of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) to halt the rate of biodiversity loss by 2020. It is a regional initiative with a special emphasis on transboundary cooperation on nature conservation. As part of the Programme of Work on Protected Areas of the CBD, the Parties have set a conservation target of 17% of terrestrial and inland water areas and 10% of marine and coastal areas by 2020.

The BPAN is a key biodiversity project of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council's Working Group on Environment and its subgroup on nature protection.

The BPAN project is implemented by nature conservation authorities, scientific institutes and nature conservation NGOs in all the thirteen Barents regions in Finland, Sweden, Norway and Northwest Russia. The project is funded by the Nordic Council of Ministers, governments of Finland, Sweden and Norway and the WWF Barents Sea Office, and it runs from 2011 to 2013.

▶ Pilot project of the Arkhangelsk Region is implemented in the largest intact forest landscape in Europe, with the goal to support establishment of the planned Dvina forest nature reserve (zakaznik).



Protected areas in the Barents Region should be a part of the local economies and contribute to the culture and livelihood of the indigenous people and the local communities.