

## Meeting of the Finnish-Norwegian Joint Working Group on the Arctic Railway – 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting

Date November 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Time 10:00 am – 12:45 pm  
Location Finnish Ministry of Justice, conference room *Julkisuus*, 1<sup>st</sup> floor,  
(Eteläesplanadi 10, Helsinki)

### Participants

Lindström Sabina	Director-General, Ministry of Transport and Communications (from 10.20 am)
Vihavainen-Pitkänen Marjukka	Senior Adviser, Ministry of Transport and Communications
Rinkineva Ville	Intern, Ministry of Transport and Communications
Niiranen Ari	Director-General, Ministry of the Environment
Noukka Mirja	Division Director, Planning and Projects, Transport Agency
Rimpiläinen Anni	Senior Adviser, Transport Agency
Suvanto Tuomo	Transportation System Specialist, Transport Agency
Jokelainen Timo	Director, Lapland Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment
Lohi Timo	Development Manager, Region of Northern Lapland Municipality
Riipi Mika	County Governor, Regional Council of Lapland
Paltto Heikki	I Vice President, Sámi Parliament
Arnesen Fredrik Birkheim	Director General, Norwegian Ministry of Transportation and Communication
Kvalheim Eirik	Senior Advisor, Ministry of Transportation and Communications
Vaage Jarle J.	Head of Section, Norwegian Railway Directorate
Selmer Eirik	Senior Advisor, Finnmark County Municipality
Vesterinen Nina	Leading expert, Finnish Consulting Group
Forssell Jon	Partner, Capex Advisors
Salokangas Annika	Head of Department, Sitowise
Alho-Tousignant Päivi	Interpreter
Hupli Anne	Interpreter

Via teleconference:  
Kalske Tiia

Senior Adviser, Office of the Finnmark  
County Governor as substitute for:  
Torhild Gjørme, Head of the Agricultural  
Department, County Governor of Finnmark

## Minutes of the Meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018

Representatives from the Finnish and Norwegian ministries and agencies responsible for transport matters of the states, and the representatives of indigenous Sámi people met in Helsinki on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November 2018 to review the situation of the assignment given to the Finnish-Norwegian Joint Working Group on the Arctic Railway.

The working group's assignment is to continue the study on an Arctic railway line (Rovaniemi-Kirkenes routing) and examine the prerequisites of such a project as well as prepare a suggestion for the project's future steps. The basis of this work is the former study on the Arctic rail line, published on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2018.

This meeting was the third meeting of the joint working group, the first one was held in Helsinki on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and the second one in Rovaniemi on 28<sup>th</sup> August 2018. The Finnish Ministry of Transport and Communications convened and chaired the meeting.

### 1. Opening of the meeting

The secretary of the group, Mrs. Marjukka Vihavainen-Pitkänen opened the meeting on behalf of chair Mrs. Sabina Lindström by welcoming the participants and apologising for the chair of being late due to a meeting with the minister.

### 2. Welcome-introductions

The participants of the meeting introduced themselves.

### 3. Approval of Agenda

The agenda of the meeting was approved.

### 4. Report from hearings of some stakeholders

In September, invitations were sent by the Ministry of Transport and Communications to some stakeholders asking whether they wanted to be heard by the steering group. The following parties were contacted: The Finnish Defence Forces, The Finnish Ministry of Defence, The National Emergency Supply Agency, The Confederation of Finnish Industries, The Chamber of Commerce of Lapland, The World Wildlife Fund and The Finnish Association for Nature Conservation. Stakeholders already represented in the steering group were not seen as relevant to be heard separately.

In total, three sessions were held, which involved the Finnish Defence Forces, the Confederation of Finnish Industries and in a joint session the World Wildlife Fund and the Finnish Association for Nature Conversation. A memorandum of these hearings can be found in annex 1 of the minutes. In addition, the Ministry received a written statement from the Finnish Sámi Organisations (The

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Sámi Parliament, The Skolt Sámi Village Committee and the Sámi reindeer owners' association), the Saami Council and the Four Winds association.

## 5. Subgroups' presentation of their findings and future work plans

### 5.1. Financing –subgroup

Mrs. Marjukka Vihavainen-Pitkänen introduced briefly the process of this subgroup after which consultants Jon Forssell and Nina Vesterinen presented findings from studies on financing structures and tourism respectively (annexes 2 and 3). It was agreed that the draft reports would be distributed to the steering group for comments after the meeting.

Regarding the financing structure study, it was noted that the EU dimension was not included in the study. Mr. Forssell stated that this had been noted earlier by the subgroup and that a chapter on the EU grants would be included in the draft report.

As for the possible impacts study on tourism, a clarification was asked on the increase in tourism demand. It was clarified that the increase would be a good 17 million euros annually, meaning that over a 40 year period this could add up to around one fourth of the overall construction costs.

### 5.2. Permissions and Planning –subgroup

Mrs. Anni Rimpiläinen introduced shortly the process of the subgroup on permissions and planning. After this consultant Annika Salokangas delivered a presentation on the need of permissions and planning in such a project in Finland (annex 4). From the Norwegian side Mr. Jarle J. Vaage delivered a similar presentation focusing on the Norwegian planning process (annex 5). The presentations also included an indicative timeline for the planning and construction process, which revealed that even if work was started immediately the time span for construction would be at least 15 years. Noteworthy is that in Norway the next revision of a national 12 year transport system plan will be in 2021 and such a project cannot be included in this plan unless the planning process is at an adequate level.

It was pointed out that the list of relevant Finnish legislation was lacking the Water Act and a need for a water permit. It was agreed that the need for a water permit will be included in the subgroup's report.

It was agreed that the draft report of this subgroup should be ready by 20<sup>th</sup> November.

### 5.3. Impacts on Nature and Indigenous Peoples –subgroup

Mr. Timo Jokelainen introduced the process and findings of this subgroup by delivering a presentation (annex 6). It was stressed that the obligation to negotiate with indigenous peoples stated in international and national legislation is crucial in this project. It was stated that good co-operation with the Sámi organisations is needed in order to fulfil this obligation. Now that the subgroup has listed procedures and legislation relevant to the planning process one proposed way forward is to consult the Sámi organisations whether all relevant legislation has been listed and how to best evaluate impacts on the Sámi homeland and livelihoods. It is important to make good use of the knowledge of the Sámi organisations in how to take these statutory issues into account. It was proposed that the Sámi organisations gave a description on how to duly make the impact assessment.

In addition, impacts on nature, especially waterways, were discussed. It was stated that a railway would have significant impacts on the region's waterways and that these would be addressed at a later stage of planning, namely during the land use planning process. It was pointed out that the Wilderness Act should also be taken into account. In general, it was noted that as part of the ongoing process of drafting the Regional Land Use Plan of Northern Lapland several assessments will be carried out regarding the environment.

## **6. Working group's schedule and follow up actions, directions for the subgroups for completion of their work**

It was suggested that relevant parts of the draft material of the land-use plan could be translated into English. The group agreed that The Regional Council of Lapland will deliver material to the Ministry of Transport and Communications who will then decide on the translations.

The Chair stated that it seems that all subgroups are at a good stage in their work. All the basic information has been gathered and the work that is left mainly consists of finalising reports. It was agreed that all the reports of the subgroups will be public and they will be published as background material for the final report of the steering group. It was agreed that the ministry will distribute a draft version of the final report for comments rapidly. The subgroups' reports will also be sent out to the group for comments and finalised by the beginning of December. In order to have sufficient time for internal discussion in different authorities, suggested conclusion points should be distributed as soon as possible.

## **7. Discussion on format of the report of the working group**

There was some discussion on what is expected from the group, namely is the group only supposed to list possible future actions and draft timelines or also give advice on whether to continue the planning process or not. It was stated that the assignment was to report on follow-up actions and possible timelines.

It was noted that the final report will be quite short and compact, but more details are given in the background material, which will be attached to the actual proposal. The report itself will mainly consist of an overview as well as a list of follow-up procedures and legislation to be taken into account. It was also agreed that all final reports will be published both in English and Finnish.

## **8. Following meetings**

The next meeting will be held in Helsinki on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018 from 09.30 am to 12.30 pm at the Government Banquet Hall, Eteläesplanadi 6, Helsinki.

## **9. Any other business**

The secretariat was reminded that documents and other material of the working group should also be distributed in Finnish. The Chair stated that relevant documents would be translated into Finnish.

## **10. Close of the meeting**

The Chair of the meeting, Mrs. Lindström closed the meeting at 12.23.

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**Annexes:**

- Annex 1: Memorandum of hearings
- Annex 2: Financial structuring Study of the Arctic Rail Line –project
- Annex 3: Possible Impacts of the Arctic Rail Line on Tourism
- Annex 4: Process and permissions in Finland
- Annex 5: Process and permissions in Norway
- Annex 6: Impacts on Nature and Indigenous Peoples –presentation

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