

# **Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Karelia ENPI CBC –programme 2007-2013**

## **Environmental Statement**

### **1. Introduction**

This statement has been produced as a part of the approval of the Karelia ENPI CBC – programme 2007-2013. The statement concludes on the way in which the integration of environmental consideration has taken place as a part of the programming process.

The process of environmental assessment of the Karelia ENPI CBC programme was begun on January 2007 when an opening meeting was held with the programme area's environmental authorities and the guidelines set for drafting the document. Also the public was asked to express their opinion by announcing the process both on local newspapers on both sides of the border and on the programme's website.

The assessment was drafted in parallel with the programme document giving the SEA an opportunity to effect on the content of the programme. The public consultation was held between 24<sup>th</sup> October and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007. It was published on the local newspapers both in Finland and Russia, on the programme's website and on the websites of the regional councils of the programme area on the Finnish side and on the official website of the republic of Karelia on the Russian side.

The whole document was available in English and the summaries in Finnish and Russian. During the public hearing it was noted that the SEA should be available also in Finnish. The document was then translated and the time for giving comments of it prolonged.

The final version of the strategic environmental assessment was prepared taking into account the comments received during the public hearing.

### **2. Contents**

According to Article 9(b) of the Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, the environmental statement has been prepared on the basis of and attached to the final Operational Programme (programme) and include a summary of

- how environmental considerations have been integrated into the programme
- how recommendations and comments from the environmental report have been incorporated into the programme and how the consultation responses to the Environmental report have been considered in both SEA process and the Programme.
- the reasons for choosing the programme as adopted, in the light of the other reasonable alternatives dealt with.

In addition to the three outlined above, the environmental statement provides a decision for how monitoring of the environmental effects of the implementation of the programme (Article 9( c) of the Directive) must be carried out.

### **3. Integration of environmental considerations into the programme**

*To what extent do the aims of the Karelia ENPI CBC Programme 2007-2013 emphasise sustainable development?*

Sustainable development is one of the horizontal principles of the programme and as such it is an essential factor on the programme. Ecologically sustainable development aims at the conservation and promotion of biodiversity and functioning of ecosystems. Economically sustainable development as a horizontal principle means that long-term impacts on the region's economic development and employment are required from projects. Also culturally and socially sustainable development has been noted.

*To what extent is there an environmental impact by projects to be expected?*

At this stage it is hard to assess in detail to which extent an overall significant environmental impact from the programme activities may be expected. The exact locations, nature and impacts of actions cannot be identified, as this depends on specific projects that will be implemented.

If any significant impacts are to be expected these are primarily positive impacts that may contribute to a general minimization of environmental impacts of existing activities and practices across the programme region. Though, the negative environment impact from the programme, for example due to increasing tourism in the region, can not be excluded. Some potential negative impacts have been identified on the environmental assessment but on those cases also mitigation of the negative impacts has been taken into account.

More detailed assessment of environmental impacts may only be done when the cooperation activities financed by the programme become fleshed out in funded initiatives rather than at this stage of the programming. For the purpose of ensuring that the integration of environmental considerations takes place when developing concrete activities under the programme an environmental assessment is expected from all of the applicants.

### **4. Integration of the environmental report and the results from the public consultations into the programme**

*To what extent have the consultation responses to the environmental report been considered in the SEA process?*

The public consultation was held between 24<sup>th</sup> October and 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2007. It was published on the local newspapers both in Finland and Russia as well on the relevant websites. Comments from the regional environmental authorities were asked directly.

Most of the comments received were from the environmental authorities. Only a few came from the public. The comments received were mostly supportive and major corrections were needed neither to the environmental assessment nor to the programme document. For example it was well understood that it is difficult to assess the environmental effects at this point because they depend greatly on the projects implemented under the programme. Based on the public consultation some technical errors were corrected and the indicators were specified more clearly and the description of the local environmental programmes was added. Considering the programme document a description of the SEA process was added and the monitoring of the environmental effects was described in more detail. It also became clear that it is important to keep the sustainable development as one of the horizontal themes of the programme.

*To what extent have the recommendations and comments from the environmental report been considered in the Programme?*

The environmental assessment and the programme document were prepared simultaneously so the environmental issues were taken into account already on the first drafts of the programme and no major changes were needed at the later stages.

Since it has been planned that the calls for proposals shall be thematic the recommendations of the environmental report can be noticed when choosing the themes for implementation and setting objectives for the themes. For example it makes difference whether the projects on local energy consumption concentrate on bio-energy or on peat. It is recommended to monitor also this side of the programme implementation on the environmental report.

## **5. Reasons for choosing the programme, in light of alternatives**

The reason for adopting the programme is that the overall environmental impacts from the programme are deemed to be positive. The only alternative that has been considered at programme level is the 0-alternative.

## **6. Measures for monitoring of the Programme impact**

Environmental monitoring of the programme will take place besides programme level on project level and thematic level.

The environmental effect of a specific call for proposal shall be assessed when setting the objectives for the call also the individual project application shall be assessed from the environmental perspective besides other criteria. The calls for proposals and the projects

shall also be assessed at implementation stage and after the themes and projects have been closed.

A number of indicators for monitoring programmes' environmental impacts have been developed and adopted in the programme.

A progress report of the environment related questions shall be prepared yearly by the Joint Management Authority to the Joint Monitoring Committee.

[The Environmental Statement was approved by the Managing Authority of the Karelia ENPI CBC programme 2007-2013 based on a mandate provided by the Joint Task Force of the Programme on x.x.x. TÄLLAINEN KLAUSUULI OLI ITÄMERI-ohjelman statementissa. Pitäneisikö meilläkin olla. Mutta million voidaan sanoa task forcen antaneen valtuutuksen]