

Input from Working Groups

Background

Following the preparation of the Regional Synthesis and Scenario Assessments, all Working Groups and BRYC were invited to provide comments and reflections. The comments received are reproduced below and are submitted for information to the Barents Regional Council.

Working Group on Economic Cooperation

No formal position was submitted by the Working Group. However, the representative noted that discussions on the future of regional cooperation had taken place previously and that there remains an interest in strengthening cooperation between northern regions in Norway, Sweden and Finland.

The representative also highlighted that identifying and establishing new cooperation arenas has proven challenging in practice, despite a shared interest among stakeholders.

Working Group on Education and Research

The comments received from a Norwegian and a Swedish member of the Working Group support the conclusions presented in the Regional Synthesis.

The contribution particularly highlights:

- Support for prioritising youth and Indigenous participation in future cooperation structures.
- The possibility of exploring Arctic Six as a future framework for cooperation in education and research.

The Arctic Six network consists of the northernmost universities in Norway, Sweden and Finland (Tromsø, Bodø, Umeå, Luleå, Rovaniemi and Oulu). It was suggested that this network could potentially assume a stronger role in facilitating cooperation within education and research in the region.

Working Group on Transport and Logistics

The Working Group on Transport and Logistics expressed appreciation for the work undertaken in the process and recognised the need to identify new forms of cooperation following the end of the Barents cooperation framework.

The Working Group notes that:

- Cooperation on transport and logistics continues through the New North Project, which runs until the end of 2026.
- Preparations are underway for a potential successor project from 2027.
- Platform North already provides a broader cooperation framework involving many of the same stakeholders and includes participation at national level.

The Working Group underlines the importance of maintaining links between regional and national actors and supports the need to establish new and effective formats for dialogue and cooperation as soon as possible in order to preserve existing networks and structures.

The Working Group further encourages the regions to continue prioritising transport and logistics when developing future cross-border cooperation arrangements.