

# Cross-border cooperation in NTFP Production in Barents Region

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Northern Scandinavia and North-East Russia share a similar natural and social environment – a harsh climate, abundant natural resources, low population density and long transportation distances. Realising economical growth possibilities for these regions is linked in sustainable use of local natural resources. Both EU and national politics increasingly introduces initiatives supporting a shift towards a biobased economy. The aim is to create society relying strongly on renewable and sustainable biological resources and to achieve economic growth efficiently at the same time.

## Agroforestry and Non-Timber Products

One of the absolute advantages of Barents region are the wild products of forests. These Non-Timber Forest Products (NTFPs) include f.ex. wild berries, plants, mushrooms and honey. NTFPs of Barents region are considered to be healthy products of a clean, pristine and unique arctic nature. The products are already utilized in niche markets. However the production of NTFPs is not governed nor managed, which has led to insecure availability of raw material. Under these circumstances both larger companies and especially SMEs are hesitant to invest into processing steps, leading to business concepts which concentrate to wholesale marketing of raw materials. Value-added production in the area is scant - jobs and economic viability connected to the production of NTFP consumer products benefit poorly Barents region at the moment.

## Kolarctic CBC – tool for the Cross-border cooperation in Barents region

The Kolarctic CBC 2014-2020 programme aims to promote a viable economy of the region, where the natural resources are used in a sustainable way. In June 2017 Agroforestry in Barents Region project was accepted to be financed from the Programme. Cross-Border cooperation is an essential precondition for the successful project, due to the variation in the environmental conditions, forestry practices and traditional ways of using NTFPs. Agroforestry in Barents Region project combines agricultural and forestry technologies aiming to create diverse, productive profitable, ecologically sound and sustainable land-use system to increase the production of NTFP raw materials and creating NTFP-dependent value-chains and economic vitality to the area.

The project will be financed by the Kolarctic CBC 2014-2020 programme and partners own contribution. Lapland University of Applied Sciences is the lead partner of the project – other partners are Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), Norwegian Institute of Bioeconomy Research (NIBIO) and Northern Arctic Federal University (NArFU) from Arkhangelsk, Russia. The immediate target groups of the project are the private and institutional forest owners and SMEs relying NTFPs.

## NTFP2017 Conference in Rovaniemi

International Conference on Non-Timber Products and Bioeconomy will take place in Rovaniemi 28-30 November 2017. Up-to-date information of the NTFP2017 conference hosted by Natural Resources Institute Finland and Arctic Centre of the University of Lapland can be found at [www.luke.fi/ntfp2017](http://www.luke.fi/ntfp2017).