The protection of terrestrial ecosystems in the Barents Region should continue and focus on areas with high biodiversity values.

High conservation value forests (HCVFs) in the Barents Region should be preserved.

The ecological connectivity of boreal forests in the Barents Region should be increased.

**EXPERT CONCLUSIONS**

I. Protection of terrestrial ecosystems in the Barents Region

There is a need to establish more conservation areas in the Barents Region:

- The establishment of protected areas should continue in the Barents Region in line with long-term national and regional conservation plans.
- More work is needed to protect areas with the greatest biodiversity benefits in order to fulfill the Aichi Target 11 by 2020.
- In order to preserve the full range of biodiversity in the Barents Region, there is a need to apply the ecosystem approach, and to promote access to open data on protected areas and valuable ecosystems.
- Furthermore, the protected area systems should be developed at different geographical scales, from global and ecoregional to regional and local levels.

II. Mapping of forests with high conservation values (HCVFs) in the Barents Region

High conservation value forests should be integrated into conservation planning:

- High conservation value forests (HCVFs) that are included in existing and planned protected areas should be guaranteed strong protection.
- HCVFs and especially HCVFs that are located in well-connected landscape matrices should be given high priority when deciding which areas should be included in protected areas.
- HCVFs that for various reasons are not given priority for inclusion in protected areas should be managed in a way that contributes to biodiversity conservation in the forest landscape as a whole, using other effective area-based conservation measures.
- The Strategy for Protection of Intact Forests in the Barents Region (2015) should be finalised and implemented.

III. Enhancing connectivity of boreal forests in the Barents Region

Strong connectivity between protected areas is crucial for maintaining biodiversity and sustaining ecosystem services:

- Connectivity should be increased in particular between the more isolated protected areas in the southern and middle boreal zones.
- Adaptation to climate change needs more attention. The boreal forests of the Scandinavian Mountains and the Ural Mountains still host well-connected HCVFs that provide possible dispersal corridors for species towards north and to higher altitudes.
- Guidelines for identifying well-connected forest areas and tools for implementing measures to ensure better connectivity should be further developed and applied in practice.
- Co-operation between different stakeholders should be established and further developed in order to combine biodiversity conservation and other use of forest areas such as forestry operations and development of infrastructure.
- A comprehensive assessment of the connectivity of forested areas in the Barents Region is needed, including further descriptions of the natural features and land use of each region.

Main report of Bpan phase I


Main report of Bpan phase II

