

Strategy for the development of THE GREEN BELT OF FENNOSCANDIA until 2020

Background

Green Belt of Fennoscandia (GBF) consists of unique boreal forests and tundra areas along the borders of Finland, Russia and Norway.

GBF provides one of the Europe's most important ecological corridors for species adapting to climate change. The connectivity of its protected areas will be developed by transboundary cooperation.

Trilateral cooperation between Finland, Russia and Norway on the development of the GBF is based on the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2010.

Mainstreaming the biodiversity conservation

The strategy defines the concept of the GBF and agrees on common targets for mainstreaming biodiversity conservation in the society. The strategy for the Green Belt of Fennoscandia until 2020 implements Convention on the Biological Diversity (CBD) and its Aichi Targets and recognizes the GBF as a priority area for trilateral cooperation in this regard.

The strategy has been prepared in a participatory process with key stakeholders from the three countries during the year 2014. It was adopted in each country in 2016.

Implementation of the strategy will include institutional cooperation between national, regional and local authorities, institutions and NGOs, and specific projects implemented with external project funding. Advancing cross-border cooperation is a guiding principle for all implementation activities. National GBF Working Groups in each participating country will be the main decision-making bodies in charge of the implementation of the GBF strategy.





Photo: Markus Sirkka

The concept of the GBF network

The GBF is an ecological network producing valuable ecosystem services and supporting adaptation to climate change. It is also a network of stakeholders in Finland, Russia and Norway cooperating on developing the GBF.

The core of the GBF is formed by the network of existing and planned protected areas (PAs) of differing status along the borders of the three countries, stretching from the Gulf of Finland and the Karelian Isthmus to the Barents Sea. The PA network with surrounding areas ensure both north–south and east–west ecological connections for habitats and species and support their conservation and species migration. The development of the GBF is based on the biological and geological diversity and rich cultural heritage of the region.

The GBF has physical and functional boundaries. The existing and planned protected areas belong to the area inside the physical boundaries of the GBF, whereas the functional boundaries include the cooperation network and especially the stakeholders benefiting from the PAs inside the physical boundaries.

Developments within the GBF concept are implemented through a cooperation network of national, regional and local administrations, protected areas, scientific and educational institutions, the business community and non-governmental organisations, with a special focus on participatory cross-border processes.

Thereby, the GBF is a platform for comprehensive

- trilateral cooperation in biodiversity conservation;
- development of livelihoods and social well-being in the region, based on the region's unique biological and geological diversity and cultural heritage;
- promotion of environmental sustainability in spatial planning and in coordination of development processes in the area;
- trilateral cooperation in research on biodiversity, climate change, culture and social well-being;
- improvement of environmental awareness and increase in participation at all levels.

Through development of its identity and in the context of biodiversity conservation under the CBD, the GBF provides a framework and platform for ecologically, economically, socially and culturally sustainable transboundary cooperation and for developing bioeconomy and social well-being in the border areas.

As a part of the European Green Belt, the GBF forms a mechanism for participation in wider European cooperation on research, nature conservation, and economic and social development.

Strategy for the development of the Green Belt of Fennoscandia

The long-term vision for the year 2020 is to develop the GBF into a widely acknowledged transboundary model area for biodiversity conservation, bioeconomy, social well-being, and environmentally sustainable economic growth generated by the region's unique biological and geological diversity and cultural heritage.

The strategy aims for the following goals and targets:

OBJECTIVES
COMPONENT 1 Biodiversity protection
GOAL 1 Development of a network of protected areas and ecological connections within the three countries to ensure conservation of biodiversity, as well as sufficient north–south and east–west connectivity for migration
TARGET 1.1 A representative PA network is established
TARGET 1.2 Ecological connectivity of the protected areas is strengthened
TARGET 1.3 PAs are managed so that the conservation status of habitats and species is maintained and/or improved
TARGET 1.4 Key species, habitats and physical elements of the ecosystems within the GBF are defined, surveyed with harmonised methods and data are made available
TARGET 1.5 Cooperation in the management of transboundary species populations and habitats leads to maintenance and/or improvement of their conservation status
COMPONENT 2 Research
GOAL 2 Intensified trilateral research cooperation on biodiversity conservation, climate change, culture and social well-being in the GBF
TARGET 2.1 Multidisciplinary and transboundary analysis of the shortage of scientific information is conducted for the whole GBF area
TARGET 2.2 Measures are established for joint monitoring of the changes in biodiversity and ecosystem services under the impact of climate change and other factors
TARGET 2.3 The GBF provides a platform for active research cooperation and dissemination of GBF related research to the research community, decision-makers and general public
COMPONENT 3 Economic and regional development
GOAL 3 Strengthened sustainable economic and regional development based on human capacity building and ecosystem services in the GBF area
TARGET 3.1 The GBF approach is integrated into spatial and development planning in the whole GBF area
TARGET 3.2 GBF-based nature tourism and other environmentally sustainable services and products are developed
COMPONENT 4 Social and cultural development
GOAL 4 Strengthened livelihoods based on the nature values and cultural heritage of the GBF area
TARGET 4.1 Traditional knowledge and cultural heritage are identified and key cultural heritage sites are secured
TARGET 4.2 Active cross-border development of livelihoods based on the GBF is enhanced to secure social well-being and lifelong connections over the border

OBJECTIVES
COMPONENT 5 Institutional development
GOAL 5 Intensified cross-border cooperation within the GBF network
TARGET 5.1 GBF is a well-organized cooperation network with sufficient resourcing ensured
TARGET 5.2 The GBF is a well-known and influential part of the European Green Belt (EGB) network
TARGET 5.3 Twin park cooperation is established for National Parks and other relevant PAs in the GBF area
TARGET 5.4 Platforms are developed for active sharing of best practices and for cooperation with key stakeholders
TARGET 5.5 Good cross-border access and cooperation with border authorities
TARGET 5.6 The GBF is acknowledged in relevant funding programmes as an eligible TARGET for funding
COMPONENT 6 Communication, Education, Participation and Awareness (CEPA)
GOAL 6 High level of awareness of the GBF's unique biological and geological diversity and their conservation among all stakeholders
TARGET 6.1 The GBF brand is developed to support the GBF marketing and self-identity of local people
TARGET 6.2 Environmental awareness is improved among the general public, authorities and businesses operating in the GBF area
TARGET 6.3 A plan for communication, education, participation and awareness (CEPA Plan) for the GBF is prepared, implemented and monitored with good coordination