

WWF Wants Cross Border Study With Norway

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Russian division of the World Wildlife Fund is concerned about Norway's plans to drill for oil and gas in the Barents Sea and is requesting that Russia's Foreign Ministry get domestic organizations involved in evaluating the environmental impact of oil and gas projects on the shelf.

The WWF press service sent the request to the ministry on Jan. 15, Interfax reported. The effort is sparked by the fact that the Norwegian Petroleum and Energy Ministry is holding hearings on issues involved in drilling work in the southeastern Barents Sea. WWF says technology for the safe extraction of hydrocarbons on the Arctic shelf is lacking.

Environmentalists say that the Norwegian section of the sea is a breeding ground for cod and haddock that grow there and are caught by both Norwegian and Russian fishing firms.

"Our communication proposing the conduct of a trans-border environmental impact

evaluation is prompted by the fact that last year we obtained the results of an independent modeling of oil spills in the Russian sector of the Barents Sea (the Prirazlomnoye project), which foresaw a large-scale potential zone of pollution and most importantly the lack of preparedness and effective technology for eliminating oil spills in the Arctic," said Alexei Knizhnikov, the coordinator of the WWF Russia program for oil and gas sector environmental policy.

Knizhnikov said that the WWF wants the experience of evaluating the consequences of such accidents to be applied in Norway. "Aside from the threat of trans-border pollution, we want to evaluate the impact on our 'common' water bio-resources — cod, haddock, capelin, herring, and sea bass," Knizhnikov said.

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