



11 November 2024

VN/31861/2024-YM-1

Mr. Lazare Eloundou Assomo  
Director of World Heritage

## Notice to the World Heritage Committee on the State of Conservation of High Coast / Kvarken Archipelago

In accordance with the § 172 of the Operational Guidelines of the World Heritage Convention, the State Party of Finland informs the World Heritage Committee, through the Secretariat, on a feasibility study that concerns the transboundary World Heritage Site High Coast / Kvarken Archipelago of Sweden and Finland.

The Government Programme of Prime Minister Petteri Orpo's Government (Publications of the Finnish Government 2023:60) aims to improve the reliability and resilience of the transport network across Finland and to promote increased transmission connections to the Nordic and Baltic countries. One measure in the programme is that the Government will draw up a report on the fixed connection in the Kvarken (Vaasa–Umeå). In addition, the Government Programme states that Finland will explore synergies between electricity and hydrogen transmission connections as part of the study on the fixed connection.

The fixed connection from Vaasa to Umeå refers to a transportation connection, e.g. a rail or a road, from the city of Vaasa, Finland over the Kvarken Archipelago and the Gulf of Bothnia to the city of Umeå, Sweden. Currently, there is no fixed connection over the Gulf of Bothnia between Finland and Sweden and the route is operated by ferries.

To implement the Government Programme, the Ministry of Transport and Communications of Finland has given the Finnish Transport Infrastructure Agency (FTIA) the task of conducting a feasibility study on the fixed connection between Vaasa and Umeå by spring 2025. The starting point of the possible connection in Vaasa and the alignment of the connection over the Gulf of Bothnia would most likely be partly situated within the boundaries of the Kvarken Archipelago of the High Coast / Kvarken Archipelago World Heritage Site.

The FTIA oversees the feasibility study and started the work at the beginning of 2024. To support the study, the FTIA appointed a transboundary Coordination Group consisting of members from both Finland and Sweden. The group consists of members from the FTIA, the Finnish Transport and Communications Agency, Ministry of the Environment of Finland, Regional Council of Ostrobothnia in



Finland, the Kvarken Council, The Swedish Transport Administration, The Swedish County Administrative Board, and the Västerbotten Region in Sweden. Other stakeholders are involved in the study through e.g. stakeholder interviews and other stakeholder events.

The goal of the feasibility study is to form an overall picture of the need for and different options for the fixed connection from Vaasa to Umeå, as well as the costs and different impacts of the connection. Preliminary results for the feasibility study are expected by the end of 2024 and the study is to be finalized by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2025. The feasibility study is preliminary in nature and conducted to support decision making in the following planning stages. More detailed studies and assessments, such as Environmental Impact Assessments, will be conducted later in the planning, should the project proceed further after the feasibility study.

The State Party of Finland will keep the Secretariat informed of the results of the feasibility study and the following process.

Yours sincerely,

Juhani Damski

Permanent Secretary

Ministry of the Environment of Finland

### For information

Ministry of Education and Culture of Finland  
Ministry for Culture, Sweden  
Ministry of Climate and Enterprise, Sweden  
The Swedish National Heritage Board  
The Swedish County Administrative Board  
The Swedish Environmental Protection Agency  
Metsähallitus, Parks and Wildlife, Finland  
Regional Council of Ostrobothnia, Finland  
Västerbotten Region, Sweden  
Permanent Delegation of Finland to UNESCO