

TERMS OF REFERENCE

As adopted by CSR 9 in Paris, France
26-27 October 2006

NDPHS Expert Group on Social Inclusion, Healthy Lifestyles & Work Ability (SIHLWA)

I. Background and Rationale

Within the Northern Dimension area, there are significant disparities in health and well-being, including social and economic problems which lead to a high level of mortality, abuse of alcohol and drugs, and the spreading of infectious diseases. Thus, one of the main priorities of the Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being (NDPHS) is to enhance and promote healthy and socially rewarding lifestyles.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Partnership recognises that the building of public policies to enhance health and social well-being in all relevant sectors needs to take place at all levels of society. Also, the creation of supportive physical and social environments should include the continued reorientation of health systems and social care systems. The opportunities for the development of individuals' basic skills related to health and social life are consistent with the Partnership objectives to empower and mobilise people and communities to take action to enhance their well-being.

Thus, pursuant to the following provision for the Committee of Senior Representatives (CSR) as spelled out in the "Declaration Concerning the Establishment of a Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being," adopted by the Ministerial Meeting in Oslo, Norway, on 27 October 2003:

- "In order to carry out its tasks, the Committee of Senior Representatives may establish expert groups, consisting of experts from interested Partners and Participants and other international experts, as appropriate,"

the CSR decided at its meeting in Vilnius, Lithuania on 14-15 April 2005, to establish the Expert Group (EG) on "Non-communicable diseases and promotion of healthy and socially rewarding lifestyles."

The Partnership Annual Conference (PAC) held in Stockholm, Sweden on 18 November 2005 endorsed the recommendation made by the Expert Group's first meeting (held on 16-17 November 2005) to change the originally given name of the Group to "**Expert Group on Social Inclusion, Healthy Lifestyles and Work Ability (EG on SIHLWA)**." This name serves as the general title for the Expert Group's three Sub-groups, which include the Sub-

group on alcohol, the Sub-group on adolescent health and socially-rewarding lifestyles, and the Sub-group on occupational safety and health (OSH).

II. Objectives

The main role of the EG on SIHLWA is to assist in co-ordinating and further developing the Partnership's co-operation in the fields of alcohol and binge-drinking, young peoples' lifestyles, and occupational safety and health. In this capacity, the EG on SIHLWA has the overall objective emphasize the priorities of support national, regional or local programmes in its respective fields of co-operation.

III. Scope of Responsibilities

According to the abovementioned Oslo Declaration, under the guidance of the CSR, an expert group may have an advisory role and/or provide professional input to the preparation and implementation of joint activities carried out within the framework of the Partnership. Also, the Declaration permits expert groups to "facilitate professional exchanges, increase co-ordination among Partners and Participants and monitor joint activities within their area of expertise."

Consistent with these provisions, the EG on SIHLWA has the following scope of responsibilities:

- Promote the principles and objectives of the Partnership in the fields of the three Sub-groups and develop strong partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure that the Partnership achieves maximum results;
- Establish and maintain relations within the Partner Countries and Organisations as well as with international and national organisations, and other institutions, as appropriate;
- Advocate and lobby for the improvement of public health and social well-being, provide and communicate "collective knowledge;"
- Improve the general awareness of and increase positive attitudes towards the Expert Group's field of work;
- Promote public health-oriented service systems and health sector reforms with attention to populations at risk and to take into account response capacity in rural and remote locations;
- Contribute to the development of national policies that respond to the needs and requirements of Partner Countries;
- Map and identify Member Countries' needs for technical and financial support to scale-up national programmes, encourage requests for assistance;
- In association with Partners, and with assistance from the NDPHS Secretariat, support efforts to provide technical and other forms of assistance to government and national partners in planning, implementing and monitoring programmes in SIHLWA's field of expertise. This will include meeting with authorities, visiting Partner Countries at the request of the CSR, and providing information via correspondence;
- Provide feedback and report on progress to the CSR, and provide the NDPHS Secretariat with updated information, when appropriate;
- Other responsibilities, as approved by the CSR or the Partnership Annual Conference (PAC).

Within this scope of responsibilities, the EG on SIHLWA will undertake the following activities:

- Conduct ongoing reviews of projects/programmes and activities in Partnership Countries;
- Assist project groups in co-ordinating with relevant stakeholders, promote networking, co-ordinate work with other NDPHS Expert Groups, and seek collaborative relations with other groups and authorities, as relevant and feasible;
- In selected cases, act as a technical referee for new project proposals, project identification, planning, implementation and monitoring. This includes making recommendations on project proposals and implementation, as well as assisting in planning, as requested, including in the development of terms of reference for such reviews;
- Monitor and evaluate the results of projects and activities implemented under the Partnership initiative, in order to ensure that financing is allocated in a way that achieves maximum results;
- Provide professional advice and technical support to relevant authorities, such as by meeting with authorities, visiting Partner Countries and through written correspondence;
- Advise and assist project groups in contacting financing organisations and formulate criteria for future support of projects;
- Establish connections with other NDPHS Expert Groups and promote functioning cooperation with them as prerequisite for successful implementation of future tasks;
- Facilitate external funding together with the SIHLWA Co-ordinator and the NDPHS Secretariat;
- Co-ordinate its activities with other Partnership programmes in areas of mutual interest, as well as with related activities of other international organisations, to avoid the duplication of activities;
- Provide the Partnership website/database with information concerning the Expert Group's work;
- When relevant, review the Expert Group's Terms of Reference and advise on any necessary amendments.

The main tasks for the three SIHLWA Sub-groups shall be as follows:

Sub-group on alcohol

- Develop, facilitate and assist in implementing policies, programmes and activities to promote health, safety and well-being through reduced consumption of alcohol in general and harmful alcohol use in particular;
- Explore ways to prevent the further weakening of alcohol policies leading into increased consumption;
- Develop a strong focus on holistic and comprehensive approaches to alcohol issues in national alcohol policy strategies;
- Support the implementation of the alcohol policy framework for the WHO European Region, including through appropriate monitoring and surveillance.

Sub-group on adolescent health and socially-rewarding lifestyles

- Develop, facilitate and assist in implementing policies, programmes and activities to promote health, safety and well-being of adolescents through socially rewarding healthy lifestyles;
- Focus work on tobacco, alcohol and drug free lifestyles, healthy nutrition and prevention of obesity, increase of physical activity, prevention of accidents and violence, promotion of mental health, etc;
- Implement holistic and participatory ways of intervention as well as multidisciplinary approaches;

- Support the implementation of the WHO European Strategy for Child and Adolescent Health and Development (2005) and WHO European Strategy for the prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (2006), including through appropriate monitoring and surveillance.

Sub-group on occupational safety and health (OSH)

- Develop, facilitate and assist in implementing policies, programmes and activities to promote health, safety and well-being in workplaces and among individuals;
- Provide a link with the Baltic Sea OSH Network (BSN), which is an expert information network;
- Strengthen peer-to-peer networking and collaboration of expert institutions and respective bodies in OSH, between and within countries in the Baltic Sea region;
- Collaborate with the International Labour Organisation Northwest Russia OSH project which provides direct contacts with labour and OSH authorities, and social partners, in North West Russia and at the federal level;
- Use the Barents Newsletter on Occupational Health and Safety, published by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health, as a means for communication.

The official language of the Expert Group on SIHLWA is English. However, where possible, efforts should be made to provide English/Russian interpretation and translation.

IV. Outputs and Results

The general scope of outputs and results from the work of the Expert Group shall be as follows:

- Oversight of the implementation of strategic objectives defined by the group and approved by the CSR;
- To advise the Partnership through the NDPHS Secretariat on related Partnership activities and proposals for various forms of support;
- To facilitate the exchange of information on programmes and projects;
- To provide expert contributions to policy evaluation;
- To promote partnership-building and activities relevant to achieving the goals of the Partnership;
- To promote regional synergies and synergies with other international organisations;
- Monitoring and peer evaluation of ongoing activities;
- Short progress reviews/reports submitted to CSR meetings and annual PAC meetings.

V. Lead Partner

The CSR decides upon the Lead Partner for the EG on SIHLWA. The role of the Lead Partner is to initiate and lead the Expert Group's activities. The Lead Partner also provides financial support to the Group to prompt its activities.

In the case that a Lead Partner decides to step down, prior to its resignation, it should inform the CSR of its intentions and propose a replacement. Accordingly, the CSR will decide whether to approve the proposed replacement, as appropriate.

VI. Composition of the Expert Group

1. Chair and Vice Chair

The Expert Group appoints its Chair and Vice Chair from the individuals nominated. In doing so, it is responsible for keeping the CSR and the NDPHS Secretariat informed of its decision.

Each Sub-group appoints its Chair and Vice Chair from the individuals nominated. In doing so, it is responsible for keeping the CSR and the NDPHS Secretariat informed of its decision. The OSH Sub-group coordinates the appointment of its Chair and Vice Chair with the Baltic Sea OSH Network Annual Meeting.

The Chairs are responsible for providing effective leadership concerning their Sub-groups' responsibilities spelled out above. In addition, the Chairs are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their Sub-groups meet at appropriate intervals, and that the minutes of meetings and any reports to the Partnership bodies accurately record the decisions taken and, where appropriate, the views of individual Sub-group representatives;
- Ensuring that their Sub-groups reach clear conclusions on the matters they discuss;
- Ensuring that the views of their Sub-groups are passed to the CSR, PAC and the Secretariat;
- Communicating their Sub-groups' views to the media, health care professionals and the public, as requested;
- Briefing new members upon their appointment, as appropriate.

2. Co-ordinator/International Technical Advisor

The Lead Partner shall appoint the Expert Group's Co-ordinator and/or International Technical Advisor (ITA), subject to the approval of the Group. The Co-ordinator and/or ITA is responsible for keeping the CSR and the NDPHS Secretariat informed of The Expert Group's decision. Depending on funding available, the ITA can be Expert Group or Sub-group specific.

The Co-ordinator's/ITA's main function is to provide uniformity, support and advice to projects through site visits and collaboration with relevant external bodies in the Programme field. The Co-ordinator/ITA shall also be actively involved in all of the activities described in the Expert Group's mandate, where appropriate and reasonable. In addition, he or she is responsible for the following:

- Preparing, in co-operation with the Sub-groups' Chairs and in contact with the Secretariat, provisional meeting agendas, meeting documents, and preparing the minutes from the Sub-groups' meetings;
- Keeping the representatives of the Sub-groups informed on a regular about the progress of projects;
- Maintaining continuous dialogue with the NDPHS Secretariat to ensure the co-ordination of activities within the Partnership;
- Contacting the NDPHS Secretariat regarding the input of the EG to relevant Partnership projects and activities, such as the Project Database and Project Pipeline;
- Developing partnerships with other individuals and organisations to ensure wide participation in development issues that the Partnership is addressing.

In selecting the Chair, Vice Chair, and Coordinator/ITA, it is advisable that they represent different countries from the Northern Dimension Area.

3. General Representation

General representation within the EG on SIHLWA shall consist of high-level experts in health- and social-sector administration, from the research community, or the NGO sector. These high-level experts shall be appointed to the Expert Group by the Partner Countries and Partner Organisations. In appointing representatives to the Group, Partner Countries and Organisations will be guided by the following considerations:

- The EG's Sub-groups will include one representative, and not more than one alternate from each Partner Country and Organisation, who has an interest and sufficient expertise in the fields covered by the respective Sub-group;
- EG representatives and alternates will normally serve in the Expert Group for a period prescribed by their respective countries or organisations, preferably for a period of at least two years.

If a representative is unable to attend an Expert Group meeting, he or she shall ensure that an alternate is sent.

If a Partner Country or Partner Organisation changes their appointed representative, it should inform the EG Chair, Co-ordinator and the NDPHS Secretariat immediately.

In addition to the appointed Partner Country and Partner Organisation representatives, the Expert Group is entitled to invite other "eligible participants" and "interested parties" as defined in the Oslo Declaration. The Chair or the Co-ordinator/ITA of a given Expert Group meeting will inform the appropriate representatives in the Group about any additional invitees prior to the meeting, if possible.

4. Sub-groups

The EG on SIHLWA has the right to establish Sub-groups to achieve the objectives of the Group, as appropriate. The establishment of a Sub-group is subject to the approval of the CSR.

As noted above, currently, the EG on SIHLWA has three Sub-groups, which include the Sub-group on alcohol, the Sub-group on adolescent health and socially-rewarding lifestyles, and the Sub-group on occupational safety and health.

VII. Meetings

The EG on SIHLWA Sub-groups shall each hold at least two meetings per year. The location of meetings will rotate based on the interest expressed by the Partners.

The Sub-groups can organise additional meetings either separately or together with other Sub-groups, as considered necessary and appropriate, given the extent of available funding and other relevant resources.

The NDPHS Secretariat has the right to attend, and submit documents to the Sub-groups' meetings as well as intervene during these meetings.

Should the Sub-groups not be in a position to decide upon additional invitees to their meetings, the Chair may invite persons from international or regional organisations who have an interest in the Sub-groups' fields to meetings or to particular sessions during such meetings.

Except as otherwise herein stated, the Expert Group will determine its own methods of work, including the preparation of agendas, the keeping of records and other procedures. The work of the Expert Group between periodic meetings shall be carried out through correspondence via e-mail and telephone.

VIII. Coordination, supervision and financial aspects

The CSR is responsible for supervising the work of the Expert Group. As to guidance, PAC is responsible for deciding on the political direction of the Group.

For co-ordination purposes, the Chair, Vice Chair and Co-ordinator should hold co-ordination meetings with the Secretariat and other Expert Groups' Chairs and ITAs. If possible, Sub-groups should also be represented. Such meetings may be organised, if necessary, by the Secretariat when preparing for CSR meetings, and in these cases, would be held back-to-back with the CSR meetings, or as deemed necessary.

As the Partnership cannot bear the travel and other costs related to Expert Group representatives' participation in EG meetings, all expenses incurred by the representatives to attend EG meetings will be covered by their respective countries or organisations.

Notwithstanding the above, individual Partner Countries or organisations may provide voluntary support for the attendance of a participant at Expert Group meetings, if sufficient funds are available.

If other sources are interested in supporting the work of the Group, communication and follow-up will be facilitated by the NDPHS Secretariat.

The Lead Partner shall provide financial support to the Expert Group to aid its activities.

IX. Reporting and Decision Making

The EG on SIHLWA is answerable to the CSR and PAC. To this end, it will provide feedback and report to the CSR, as well as PAC, as necessary.

The Expert Group, supported by the Chair and the Co-ordinator and Sub-group Chairs and Vice-chairs, will prepare an annual Progress Report and a proposed Activity Plan for the following year, both to be submitted to the Autumn CSR meeting.

In order to ensure proper co-ordination and transparency, all reports and plans will be shared with all Expert Group members, the Group's Lead Partner, and the NDPHS Secretariat, which can in turn share the reports with other Partner countries and Partner Organisations.

Decisions within the Expert Group on SIHLWA shall be reached by consensus.

Only appointed representatives to the Expert Group take part in decision making.

The outcomes of each Expert Group meeting shall be documented in the meeting minutes and published on the NDPHS website. The Expert Group will ensure that all decisions are communicated to the NDPHS Secretariat and other Partnership bodies, as appropriate, and that the Secretariat will be included as a recipient of all meeting documents and other relevant documents that are circulated to its representatives.

In addition to the existing Terms of Reference, the Expert Group on SIHLWA can elaborate more precise strategies and action plans, which highlight the methods by which the goals and

objectives will be reached. These strategies and action plans can be updated at Expert Group meetings, and any changes will be communicated to the CSR through the NDPHS Secretariat.

X. Relationship with other Expert Groups

The EG on SIHLWA shall seek, when appropriate, to establish and maintain collaborative relationships with other Expert Groups on cross-cutting issues.

Additionally, the EG on SIHLWA shall seek, when appropriate, to establish and maintain working relations with other relevant groups in the Northern Dimension area in a manner that promotes synergies and avoids the duplication of efforts. To this end, and when appropriate, the Expert Group may represent the Partnership in different forums to promote its own objectives and develop support and commitment from potential external partners.

Examples of cross-cutting issues that the Expert Group may wish to work with other Expert Groups on include, but are not limited to the following:

- Social inclusion and healthy lifestyles;
- Policies towards alcohol and drugs;
- Health information and education;
- Reproductive health.

XI. Amendments to the Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed every two years, coinciding with Chairmanship rotation, or on an ad hoc basis, when deemed necessary by the Expert Group.

Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference shall be co-ordinated with the NDPHS Secretariat and approved through consensus in the Group before being submitted to the CSR for adoption.