

**EG on HIV/AIDS&AI
First Meeting
Kaliningrad, Russia
4-5 October 2010**



Northern Dimension
Partnership in Public Health
and Social Well-being
www.ndphs.org

Reference	HIV/AIDS&AI 1/6/1
Title	Draft progress report for 2010
Submitted by	ITA in coordination with the Chair
Summary / Note	-
Requested action	Comments and possible additions

Annual progress report

Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections

Submitted by: EG ITA in coordination with the EG Chair

Year covered: 2010 (status as of 27 September 2010)

1. Group leadership and coordination

1.1 Lead Partner and Co-Lead Partner

Lead partner: Finland

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Co-Lead partner: Poland

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1.3 Financial resources for leadership

Finland ensures financing of the chairman on basis of an annual contract between the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health and the EG chair. Funding for ITA activities was covered through a project financed by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs and implemented by National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). (The current project will be completed in December 2010, and a new application has been submitted for 2011-2013.)

2. Participation in the Group's activities

2.1 Participation of Partners and Participants as well as external actors in meetings of the Group

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Observers were invited representing CEC, UNAIDS, WHO, IOM and some other international organizations and NGOs.

3. Progress towards goals and the implementation of operational targets

Goal 2: Prevention of HIV/AIDS and related diseases in the ND-area has improved

Activities have been focused on prevention of HIV and TB among the most vulnerable groups where the spread has been rapid. **Low-threshold service centres for injecting**

drug users and other vulnerable groups have been established in NW Russia (earlier in Estonia and Latvia) in several regions and, after positive experiences, the working concept is now established in new locations such as Leningrad Oblast. A notable activity moderated by the EG has been the cross-border collaboration between Estonia and Russia concerning the Narva-Ivangorod area with particularly high incidence of new infections. Financing has been mainly through Finnish and Norwegian sources.

Planning was started to create a new project on strengthening intersectoral collaboration in HIV and related diseases prevention and care for vulnerable groups. The project would cover Northwest Russia, especially **Kaliningrad**, as well as Poland and Lithuania. The first planning meeting was organised in Vilnius in 13 September. A Logical Framework workshop is planned to be organised in November-December 2010, if funding allows. Specific Terms of Reference has been prepared to apply financing for the planning phase of the project.

Activities concerning **other vulnerable groups** include an ongoing project on HIV surveillance and prevention among men who have sex with men (MSM). Here the Russian participation in the EU-funded project was covered by Norwegian contribution.

In order to update the current situation and identify the most urgent needs and potential new stakeholders a **European conference on HIV/AIDS** will be organised in Estonia in 2011. The initiative for this was approved as a flagship project for the EG in the spring meeting in 2010. Funding has been granted from EU.

Other initiatives and activities cover i.e. a **seminar on Logical Framework Approach** that was organized in Leningrad Region, Russia (June 9-11), to plan a long-term programme to control tuberculosis in the Barents Region. Into it, projects linking HIV and TB are in progress.

Most of these activities are focused on regions in urgent need for enhanced preventive activities and thus respond to the **Operational target 2.2. Geographical areas in urgent need of further local or regional projects are identified, and partners to be involved in these projects are recommended**

For operational target 2.3.: A best practises document developed, a Norwegian-Russian research project "The Governance of HIV/AIDS Prevention in North-West Russia" has been funded which aims to increase knowledge that improves HIV/AIDS prevention strategies in Russia.

Goal 3: Social and health care for HIV infected individuals in the ND area is integrated

Integration of social care into the care and prevention of HIV has always been an essential element in the success. Lack of social support and atmosphere of social exclusion are fuelling the spread of the HIV epidemic. In all projects promoted by the EG this is taken into account in a proper and responsible manner. Good examples are provided by the projects where inter-sectoral collaboration is being enhanced and facilitated. Also, promoting of low-threshold services to the vulnerable groups has a strong social dimension by promoting easy access to services and outreach activities.

Other meetings

Future collaboration to implement the new goals of the NDPHS was discussed in the **Expert Group meeting** in March in Finland. Several ideas and initiatives were proposed, among them:

- Proposal "Empowering public health system and civil society to fight tuberculosis epidemic among vulnerable groups ("TUBIDU") - *submitted to EU, preliminary*

information about financing received after the EG meeting.

- Proposal to organise the European AIDS Congress in Estonia in 2011 - *submitted to EU, preliminary information about financing received after the EG meeting.*
- Project on prevention of HIV among women in collaboration with HIV/AIDS and AI EG and the Primary Health and Prison Health Systems EG. - *under preparation*

The second Expert Group meeting, and first after the change of name of the EG, is to take place in 4-5 October in Kaliningrad.

Several members of the EG took part in the World AIDS Conference in Vienna, July 2010. (*HIV Think Tank and other meetings to be completed in the forthcoming EG meeting*)

The Barents HIV Programme Steering Committee discussed TB/HIV co-infection in March in Finland (the Programme is coordinated by the EG ITA). A preparatory planning meeting for TB collaboration was organised in Archangelsk in April. The second meeting of the Steering Committee will be organised in Murmansk in 10 November.

The Chair and the ITA took part in NDPHS meetings (CSR, Chairs and ITAs, EGTOR etc.)

The project "Further development of low threshold services in Murmansk and Kantalahti" will organise its concluding seminar in Murmansk on the 9th of November. The concluding seminar of the project "Governance of HIV/AIDS Prevention in North-West Russia" will take place in Archangelsk in 2 December. A seminar for authorities and mass media campaign will be organized by the TB/HIV collaboration project in Murmansk in the beginning of December.

Northern Dimension cross-border cooperation in combating HIV and HIV/TB will be presented at the 41st Union World Conference on Lung Health to be held in Berlin, Germany, 11–15 November 2010.

In September 2010, there were 17 projects going on under the umbrella of the EG, nine project proposals had been reviewed or were under consideration by the Group, and 29 projects had been completed. See the project list in Annex 1.

4. Strengths and opportunities, obstacles and weaknesses

The main strength of the Expert Group lies in the high level experts involved as members. Many of them are national HIV coordinators. The group has been very active in preparing project proposals, identifying new and relevant stakeholders in different partner countries. Its work has been based on relevant research background and has had impact on national policies in several partner countries.

The critical weakness is lack of human resources. After the boom in the 1990.s, resources for HIV-prevention have been cut down and possibilities for national experts and advisors to implement activities that are known to have high impact have narrowed significantly. To some extent this can be compensated by providing enabling environment for the expert level collaboration in the region covered by NDPHS.

The current funding mechanisms do not support Russia to actively be engaged in the projects. This concerns in particular the NGOs that could be a very significant reserve for intellectual resources.

**List of Projects of the Expert Group on HIV/AIDS
of Northern Dimension Partnership in Public Health and Social Well-being**

Projects under implementation in September 2010

FINNISH-RUSSIAN PROJECTS

1. "Controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Barents and Northern Dimension Partnership Programme Regions. Phase II." (2008-2010) Coordination: National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland and Ministry of Health and Social Development of the Murmansk Region. Approximate budget EUR 600,000 (3 years). Financier: Finland. NDPHS ID 1165 (*Financing for 2008 and 2010 directly by Finland, for 2009 through NDPHS pipeline*).
2. "Further development of low threshold services in Murmansk and Kantalahti" (2008-2010). Continuation of the Pilot project of the above mentioned programme. Coordination: THL (Finland) and Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre. Approximate budget EUR 300,000 (3 years). Financier: Finland. (*Component 2 of the NDPHS ID 1165*)
3. Strengthening of municipal anti-drug networking in the Murmansk Region (2010–2012). Coordination THL (Finland) and Monchegorsk City Administration. Budget for 2010 - 90,000 EUR + local input. Financier: Finland.
4. HIV prevention among reproductive-aged women in the Republic of Karelia (2010–2012). Coordination: National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland and the Republican AIDS Centre, the Republic of Karelia. Budget for 2010 - 85,000 EUR + local input. Financier: Finland.
5. TB/HIV collaboration in Murmansk. Project planning phase 2009. Implementation 2010–2012. Coordination FILHA, Finland. Budget for 2010 - 106,000 EUR. Financier: Finland.
6. Development of low threshold services in Leningrad Region (2010–2012). Coordination THL and Leningrad regional AIDS centre. Budget for 2010 - 84,000 EUR. Financier: Finland.

NORWEGIAN-RUSSIAN PROJECTS

7. "Cross action between STI Clinic in Archangelsk and Olafia Clinic in Oslo". Coordination: Norway. Approximate budget for 2009: NOK 300,000. Financier: Norway (B504). NDPHS ID 1392
8. Face the problem. Peer education. Coordination: Pertinax Group, Norway, partners in Archangelsk Region. Financier: Norway (B1001; NOK 135,000 granted in 2010).
9. Research project "The Governance of HIV/AIDS Prevention in North-West Russia". Coordination: Norwegian Institute for Urban and Regional Research, Norway. Approximate budget: EUR 622,500. Financier: Research Council of Norway. Training and dissemination component of the project is financed by the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs through NDPHS project pipeline. NDPHS ID 535 and 551.
10. Educational project "New View" in the sphere of the HIV/AIDS and drug addiction prevention, organization of voluntary group for the specialists, working with teenagers and young people, students of higher and special educational institutions. Coordination: Norwegian Sami Mission, partner "New Beginning", Murmansk Region. (Project B816; granted NOK 200,000 in 2009). NDPHS ID 1171
11. "HIV and co-infections in Murmansk region, seminar". Coordination: University Hospital of Northern Norway. Project region: Murmansk Oblast, Russia.
12. Prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and opportunistic infections in Northwest Russia with particular focus on capacity and capability building of partner consortium and local

government. Coordination: DanChurchAid office in St. Petersburg, partners Botkin Hospital, Humanitarian Action Foundation and PSP-fund Ravnovesie. Financier: Norway. NDPHS ID 1393

13. "Camp Murmansk 2010". Health promotion, education and information concerning HIV and AIDS. Coordination: NGO New Beginning and Murmansk Regional AIDS Centre, University of Bergen, Norway. Financing: Norway. NDPHS ID 1397

NCM PROJECTS

14. Promoting Testing for and Treatment of Communicable Diseases among Vulnerable Groups in the Kaliningrad Region (2009- Jan 2011). Coordination: NCM Kaliningrad office and Ministry of Health of the Kaliningrad Region. Approximate budget 250,000 EUR. Financing NCM and Ministry of Health of the Kaliningrad Region. NDPHS ID 1138
15. Social partnership against drug addiction, HIV/AIDS in Northwest Russia (2009–2010). (Archangelsk and other north-western regions of Russia). Financing NCM and Archangelsk regional government.

EU PROJECTS

16. "European MSM Internet survey on knowledge, attitudes and behaviour as to HIV and STI". Start in 2009, duration 30 months. Coordination Robert Koch Institut, Germany. Partners in 20 countries, including Poland, Estonia, Lithuania and Portugal. Approximate budget EUR 1.2 million. Financier EU and others. NDPHS ID 1389 (AFEW)
17. H CUBE project. A network project to study and face HBV, HCV and HIV/AIDS in participating countries. Ten countries participate including Poland and Lithuania. (<http://www.hcube-project.eu/h3/index.php?pag=9>).

Projects under consideration (in September 2010)

1. Empowering public health system and civil society to fight tuberculosis epidemic among vulnerable groups ("TUBIDU"). (Prevention of IDU- and HIV-related TB epidemic in the partner countries - Estonia, Latvia, Bulgaria, Romania, Leningrad Oblast). Applied from EU. *Preliminary information about financing received.*
2. European AIDS Congress 2011 in Estonia. Proposal submitted by National Institute for Health Development, Estonia. Applied from EU. *Preliminary information about financing received.*
3. Speak AIDS. Social marketing, Baltic countries and Poland involved in the proposal. The idea is that each country identifies 3-5 vulnerable populations, makes a survey among them and develops a social marketing prevention campaign among these groups.
4. Prevention and management of HIV/AIDS and opportunistic infections in NW Russia - with specific focus on combating drug abuse. Proposal submitted by DanChurchAid. Applied from NCM.
5. Enhancing of HIV prevention in Murmansk prisons and among ex-inmates and their families. Coordinators - the Murmansk Low Threshold Support Centre and THL. Applied from Finland.
6. Controlling the spread of HIV/AIDS in the Barents and Northern Dimension Partnership Programme Regions. Phase III. Coordination of Barents HIV/AIDS Programme and the HIV/AIDS Expert Group of NDPHS (2011–2013). Applied by THL from Finland.
7. A project on HIV, TB and prisons to be developed together with the Primary Health and Prison Health Systems Expert Group (PPHS). This idea will be developed further under the new Barents Tuberculosis Programme.
8. Project on HIV among women under the HIV/AIDS&AI EG in collaboration with the

PPHS EG. This initiative will be taken further by the ITA of PPHS Group, and it will probably include Poland and Baltic countries.

9. Strengthening intersectoral collaboration in prevention and care of HIV and related diseases among vulnerable populations in Northwest-Russia, Lithuania, Poland. Under preparation.

29 Projects completed by the end of 2009