

NDPHS Expert Group on HIV/AIDS (NDPHS EG HIV/AIDS)
Proposal for a mandate (Draft 24.3 2005)

Background:

Under the CBSS' Task Force (TF) on Communicable Disease Control, an important part of the structure was the thematic Program Groups. When the TF mandate expired in 2004, there was wide consensus that these groups were valuable and that measures should be taken to use further their expertise and experience.

Over the 3 years of working under the TF initiative, HIV/AIDS/STI working group reviewed more than 55 proposals, 39 of these were approved and implemented in all parts of Northern European Region. The procedures how the working group reviewed and supported the projects have been simple and allowed rapid implementation. Several international networks on different levels were created and, what is most important, a spirit of cooperation and partnership established. The members of the group were convinced that continuation of the work of the group would help to maintain activities that were initiated and implemented according to the adopted priorities. The group had expressed that willingness with the letter addressing to ND secretariat. As a result of that HIV/AIDS group was invited to continue under the Partnership umbrella. By decision of ND Partnership ministerial meeting in Tallinn, an expert group in the field of HIV/AIDS was established.

Structure and working principles:

Each partner of ND partnership has been asked to appoint, on a voluntarily basis, one national representative to the expert group. The persons who are serving in the HIV/AIDS Group are leading experts in the field of HIV/AIDS. The group members will act as the focal point for national inputs from their respective countries to the working process. Group will invite additional experts, observers and guest to participate in specific meetings, if found appropriate by group.

It is decided to establish a position of International Technical Adviser (ITA) for the HIV/AIDS programme area. The ITA's main function is to give uniformity, support and advice to the projects through site visits and collaboration with relevant external bodies in the programme field. ITA is also actively involved in all activities of the group, described in the mandate of the group.

The work is organized and coordinated by a Chair and ITA. The group will meet 2-3 times per year and between the meetings the inter and intra-group contact will be based on E-mail. In practical terms activities will be all framed in a logical framework.

HIV/AIDS expert group is underlining that one of the important concepts for ND Partnership is seen in close collaboration, and work with other expert groups created under ND.

The expected outputs of the group include:

- Oversight of the implementation of strategic objectives defined by the group and approved by the ND Partnership
- Support and expert contributions to policy evolution

- Partnership building and promotion of activities relevant for the achievement of the goals of the Partnership
- Promotion of coordination and networking of relevant activities
- Monitoring and peer evaluation of ongoing activities

Mandate of the Expert group:

1. Promote the principles and objectives of the ND partnership in the field of HIV/AIDS and develop strong partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure that the ND partnership achieves maximum impact. Establish and maintain good relations within the organization and with international and national organizations as well as other institutions as appropriate.
2. Facilitate project proposal preparation process that expedites relevant technical reviews, negotiate specific terms and conditions and establish assessment mechanisms, with an emphasis on performance and verifiable results.
In this respect, the group can also identify needs and develop initiatives for new projects, identify actors and new partners.
All presented proposals will be voted for approval. If the majority of votes will be in favor of a project proposal, it will be approved and recommended for financing. The group itself will not make any direct interference with the issues regarding project financing. Local support for the project is a necessary prerequisite and that projects should be concordant with the national plans for AIDS prevention and control. All projects will be registered and followed-up using the ND data base.
3. Contribute to the development of national policies that respond to the needs and requirements of Partnership member countries. Map and identify country needs for technical and financial support to scale up the national programme and initiate the process of requesting assistance. In association with partners, working group supports efforts to provide technical and other assistance to government and national partners in planning, implementing and monitoring programs to scale up HIV/AIDS treatment, care and prevention. This can include meetings with authorities, visits in participating countries and written information.
4. As appropriate, to represent ND partnership in different forums to promote its objectives and develop support and commitment especially along the lines of generating involvement of a range of external partners.
5. Monitor and evaluate the results (peer evaluation) of projects and activities implemented under ND initiative, in order to ensure that ND financing is channeled to achieve maximum impact against HIV/AIDS.
6. Provide feedback and report on progress to ND Secretariat.

HIV/AIDS group would like to underline that based on proposal from the group, the newly established Secretariat of ND needs to present an adopted official mandate for the group. That will give opportunities to National representatives in the group to be more effective in their work within ND activities in their respective countries.