



## EXPERT GROUP ON HIV, TB AND ASSOCIATED INFECTIONS

### Background, composition, objectives, activities, documents and members

#### Background

The spreading of HIV, TB and associated infections continues to pose challenges to enhancing social and health conditions within the [Northern Dimension Area](#). As the extent of policies towards HIV, TB and associated infections varies among the Partner Countries, the need to share experiences and expertise in prevention, health education, case management and testing is considerable. The [Declaration concerning the establishment of a NDPHS](#) places great emphasis on improving the co-operation and co-ordination in the prevention of communicable diseases, such as HIV and tuberculosis. From 2004 until mid-2010, activities in this area were fostered by the then Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and from mid-2010 until October 2015 by the Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections. The meeting documents of these groups can, respectively, be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Following the adoption of the [NDPHS Strategy 2020](#) and the [Action Plan](#) accompanying it, which define objectives, results and linked to them concrete activities, in October 2015 the NDPHS [Committee of Senior Representatives](#) (CSR) converted the Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections to the **Expert Group on HIV, TB and Associated Infections (HIV, TB & AI EG)** by adopting new Terms of Reference for it and tasking it, separately or jointly with other relevant NDPHS Expert Groups, with the facilitation and implementation of the Objective 1: Reduced impact of HIV, TB and associated infections among key populations at risk, including prisoners, through strengthened prevention and access to treatment as specified in the NDPHS Strategy 2020.

Finally, the Expert Group will, together with other bodies of the NDPHS, contribute to achieving the Horizontal results defined in the Action Plan accompanying the NDPHS Strategy 2020.

#### Composition

The HIV, TB & AI EG is comprised of high-level experts who come from national ministries and agencies of Partner Countries and Organisations, the research community, NGOs and other relevant parties. The Expert Group's work is led by the Lead Partner (Finland), supported in discharging its responsibilities by the Co-Lead Partner (Poland). The list of the members of the HIV, TB & AI EG is provided further down.

All [eligible stakeholders](#) are welcome to provide input to the HIV, TB & AI EG's current and future activities. External experts are also invited to participate in the group's meetings, as appropriate.

#### Aims and functions

In accordance with the above mentioned [Declaration concerning the establishment of a NDPHS](#), 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 Expert Group has the following functions:

- Exchange information and knowledge about best practices to assist the partner countries in achieving the objectives defined in the NDPHS Strategy 2020;
- Use available statistical and epidemiological information from official sources to assist decision makers and contribute to the achievement of the objectives defined in the NDPHS Strategy 2020;
- Identify priorities, needs for support in developing policies and gaps in their implementation;
- Initiate projects, provide when possible, support in planning, monitoring and dissemination of results;
- Provide the Partnership website/database/newsletters with information concerning the Expert Group's work;
- Provide feedback and report on progress to the CSR;
- Co-ordinate its activities with other NDPHS structures, relevant groups and international networks in areas of mutual interest in a manner that promotes synergies and avoids the duplication of efforts and supports the achievement of objectives included in the NDPHS Strategy 2020;

- Contribute to proper discharging of the Partnership's responsibilities as the Coordinator for the Health Policy Area in the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region together with other NDPHS structures, as appropriate;
- Be open to innovate and employ new methods of work to improve collaboration between the partner countries and other relevant stakeholders. Document CSR 24/9.3/1 "New approaches for future collaboration within the NDPHS" can provide suggestions in this regard;
- Other relevant responsibilities, as approved by the CSR or the Partnership Annual Conference (PAC);
- Continue close collaboration with the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme and the Barents TB Programme;
- Contribute to the implementation of the EU HIV Strategy, North West Russian Regional Strategy, and Tuberculosis Action Plan for WHO European Region 2016–2020.

## Role and objectives

The main role of the HIV/AIDS&AI EG is to act as the focal point for national inputs from the Partner Countries and Organisations on issues concerning HIV/AIDS and associated infections. The Expert Group's focus is on surveillance, awareness-raising and policy development, as well as treatment and prevention. The Group works towards containment of the spread of HIV/AIDS and associated infections and, in accordance with the NDPHS Strategy, aims to contribute to the achievement of the two following goals: (i) improved prevention of HIV/AIDS and related diseases, and (ii) integration of social and health care services for HIV-infected individuals. Within these strategic goals, the responsibilities of the HIV/AIDS&AI EG include, but are not limited to the following:

- Working towards the inclusion of policies that emphasize HIV/AIDS and associated infections as a priority issue on political agendas and contributing to the development of national policies that respond to the needs and requirements of the Partner Countries;
- Supporting coordinated and collaborative efforts to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS and associated infections in the Northern Dimension area through maintaining and enhancing expert-level collaboration;
- Promoting the principles and objectives of the Partnership in the field of HIV/AIDS and developing partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders to ensure that the Partnership achieves maximum results;
- In collaboration with suitable implementing agencies, formulating and developing ideas for project proposals, facilitating the project application, and if funding is available, follow up on their implementation;
- Supporting efforts to provide technical and other forms of assistance to partners in planning, implementing and monitoring programs to scale up HIV/AIDS treatment, care and prevention and to mitigate the harms induced by associated infections such as tuberculosis and viral hepatitis.

## Activities

The Expert Group's activities follow the priorities set out in the [NDPHS Strategy 2020](#) and the [Action Plan](#) accompanying it, and the expected results as duly agreed for the Expert Group in the Terms of Reference, and are being implemented in accordance with the NDPHS [Annual Work Plan for 2016](#).

Presently, the Group's activities include:

- Regular reviewing of HIV, TB and AI-related situations and the risk factors in the Partner Countries and promoting initiatives that aim to help the countries to meet the challenges in line with the strategic goals of the group;
- Reviewing and evaluating national HIV, TB and AI-related policies in Partner Countries, identifying policy gaps, and developing proposals for policy response and measures;
- Supporting the implementation of ongoing NDPHS projects that have been established within the NDPHS and facilitating new projects;
- Contributing to the implementation of projects, other than NDPHS projects, and related to HIV, tuberculosis and associated infections prevention and control in the ND area;
- Developing and supporting regional networks involved in prevention activities, in enhancing intersectoral collaboration and in providing adequate services for vulnerable groups according to the strategy adopted by WHO;

- Involving new partners and engaging the European Commission and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control in possible forms of collaboration.

## Meetings

The HIV, TB & AI EG holds on average 2 meetings per year. Specific information about forthcoming and past meetings, including meeting documents and minutes can be accessed on the [Expert Group meetings web page](#).

Documents and minutes of the formerly operating Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and the Expert Group on HIV/AIDS and Associated Infections can, respectively, be found [here](#) and [here](#).

## Calendar

View all calendar events of relevance to the [HIV, TB&AI EG](#). Learn more about [other sections](#) of our Calendar.

## Progress reports

Every year the NDPHS Expert Groups prepare progress reports. These reports are prepared within the framework of the [NDPHS annual reporting mechanism](#) and are submitted to every autumn CSR meeting and/or PAC event (they can be downloaded [here](#)). They take stock of achievements made, describe enabling factors, strengths, obstacles and constraints regarding the Group's work, and also present various recommendations to the CSR and/or PAC.

## Further information

Visit the [NDPHS Database](#), which provides a growing number of papers (publications, newsletters, etc.) and projects, dealing with HIV/AIDS, TB and associated infections issues. It also provides a pool of organisations and experts, which have been working in the area of HIV/AIDS, TB and associated infections. The Database contains four sections. By clicking the links below, you will gain direct access to HIV/AIDS, TB and associated infections activities and expertise in the NDPHS Database, sorted by:

- [Papers](#)
- [Projects](#)
- [Organisations](#)
- [Persons](#)

Please note that you can also submit your own information on HIV, TB and other related activities to the Database ([read more](#)).

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