

The Nordic Council of Ministers (NCM) Co-operation with Northwest Russia

Thematic Programme for Health Promotion and Prevention - Mobilizing Resources for Better Response: Immunodeficiency virus and associated infections (HIV&Co) 2017-2018

1. Description of the Programme

The Programme seeks to help the partners identify those most relevant areas where, on the one hand, significant experiences and knowledge are accumulated, and, on the other hand, where the demand for such experiences and knowledge is strong.

As a starting point, based on its relevance and prioritised position, it is proposed to consider the topic of mobilising resources for better response to infectious diseases, including HIV, TB and associated infections. See the document below for further information about the goals and objectives, geographic coverage, budget and other aspects of the Programme. The expected results focus on contributing by partners to the implementation of tasks and priorities included into Russian federal and regional policies, Nordic Council of Ministers' (NCM) bodies, national health and social authorities. The analysis of current Russian and Nordic priorities and policies resulted in the formulation of the given proposal.

For partners from the Northwest Russia the tasks could be associated with the objectives specified in the Russian HIV Response Strategy 2020, namely, higher coverage with testing on infectious diseases, including HIV, higher level of awareness of the issues related with HIV/AIDS and associated infections, and higher share of healthcare workers who had their qualification and capacities enhanced in the sphere of HIV and associated infections.

The Programme has no open call for proposals and operates on the direct invitation principle. The invitations shall be sent to regional health care authorities.

2. Purpose and objectives of the Programme

Globally, new HIV infections are on decline, yet the WHO European Region registers the growth, which mostly falls on countries of eastern Europe and central Asia. According to many epidemiologists, the HIV epidemic in Russia has acquired distinct features of the generalized process. Low testing coverage, late diagnosis, HIV-associated risky behaviors, and inadequate access to effective

treatment and care, especially for key populations, are some of the causes for the increasing spread of the disease in the population.

Russia's government has developed and adopted a national HIV strategy to escalate response towards the epidemic situation.

The Programme is built in line with the Russian national HIV policies and aims to support its implementation.

The HIV situation in the Nordic countries is characterized by low prevalence. Despite the relatively good rates in the Nordic countries the decline in HIV incidence is slow. Besides, the problem of late diagnosis still persists in the Nordic countries. One of the factors which prevents from reaching the absolute zero in new infections is HIV brought from other countries. The situation is especially alarming in cross-border areas.

The Programme's **purpose** is to scale up concerted Russian-Nordic efforts in prevention of HIV and associated conditions.

Objective 1: To enhance the role of PHC in prevention, diagnosis and counseling for HIV and associated infections

Objective 2: To scale up innovation-based HIV prevention among young people and promote their volunteerism

As political cooperation, networking, mutually beneficial expertise exchange and capacity building is important for both the Nordic Countries and Northwest Russia, the Programme will emphasize such activities as trainings and workshops, conferences and seminars, study tours, testing and documentation of best practices. Establishing cooperation and synergies with other networks, programmes and projects operating in the geographic area of the Programme is welcomed.

Gender equality is an important cross-cutting issue and should be considered in planning activities.

The Programme's expected results are to enhance the role of primary healthcare providers, community-led organisations and educational institutions in HIV response, to increase the HIV testing coverage and to contribute to improved lifestyles in the population, particularly young people.

3. Geographic area

The NCM's cooperation with Northwest Russia focuses on the seven regions closest to the Nordic and Baltic countries: City of St Petersburg, Arkhangelsk Oblast, Kaliningrad Oblast, Leningrad Oblast, Murmansk Oblast, Pskov Oblast, and Republic of Karelia.

The Nordic countries are: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden, including the three self-governing areas: Faroe Islands, Greenland and Åland Islands. The programme should include participation from at least two of the Nordic countries.

4. Format of the Programme

The Programme shall consist of three Work Packages (WPs):

1. WP Coordination
2. WP Primary Health Care Providers
3. WP Young People

The National Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Finland, will be in charge of the administrator tasks. The administrator will be in charge of the Programme, including all work packages. The work packages might be delegated to other entities with supervision from the administrator. The administrator will be directly responsible towards the NCM for all activities carried out and expenses under the Programme.

From the Nordic side, THL acts in partnership with the *Public Health Agency of Sweden* and *Norwegian Public Health Institute*, whose experts will contribute to the Programme implementation through provision of expertise and hosting of study tours.

Direct invitations shall be sent to relevant Northwest Russian regional health authorities with this Programme brief enclosed. In addition, regional external relations bodies and regional representatives of Russia's Foreign Ministry shall be advised.

The Northwest Russian regions will be asked to provide their proposals as requested below, including possible actions, responsible organizations/persons, sources of co-funding, etc.

The Northwest Russian regions will be given one month to decide about joining the Programme. The deadline for the submission of regions' proposals shall be specified in the invitation letter. Partnership agreements will be concluded with the regions involved.

In the Inception Phase of the Programme, the partners of the Programme will be invited together for detailed planning of actions.

5. Eligible partners

Eligible partners are public sector entities, associations in the Nordic countries and in Russia and relevant Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). Partners shall come from the geographical area mentioned in chapter 3.

Eligible participants in Programme activities are civil servants and other representatives of public sector entities, as well as representatives of relevant NGOs and associations.

6. Budget and co-financing

The Programme is financially supported by the NCM.

According to the guidelines for the NCM cooperation with Northwest Russia, the Russian partners should co-finance minimum 30% of the Programme expenses.

Co-financing might be provided as in-kind financing such as working hours, venues, per diems, transportation, etc.

THL should provide an estimate of expected co-financing by Russian partners. The estimated co-financing might for instance include travel and accommodation costs for project participants.

The co-financing requirement might be waived in projects or project activities with NGOs.

7. Terms of participation and selection of regions

Regions must submit their proposals for the implementation of the Programme on their territories before the deadline specified in the invitation letter. The proposals should aim at achieving the purposes and objectives, which are proposed in chapter 2 of the given document. Regions may also submit for consideration their proposals, which do not align with the proposed objectives but have special relevance for the regions. For each proposed action it is necessary to specify a responsible organisation or person, and forms of co-funding. To this end, it is advisable to fill out the template in Annex 1. The proposals must be submitted in the Russian language.

8. Language

The cooperation should be carried out in English and Russian languages. English should be used for reporting to NCM. Russian language is considered necessary for communication with Russian partners and participants. Programme events should be bi-lingual English and Russian. The key documentation related to the Programme (applications, reports, plans) shall be made in English.

9. Reporting

THL, as the administrator of the Programme, will be responsible for reporting to the NCM via NCM's Secretariat in Copenhagen, including the compilation of reporting from the work packages and/or partnering regions as requested by THL.

A Steering Group will be established to monitor the progress of the Programme and discuss and agree actions plans for next reporting periods. The Steering Group will consist of representatives of all partnering organisations and regions.

**Proposals for implementation of NCM's Thematic Programme
 for Health Promotion and Prevention – Mobilizing Resources
 for Better Response: Immunodeficiency virus and associated
 infections (HI&Co), 2017-2018**

Region:			
Organisation/contact person and data:			
Objective 1: To enhance the role of PHC in prevention, diagnosis and counseling for HIV and associated infections			
<i>Actions</i>	<i>Relevance/rationale</i>	<i>Responsible party</i>	<i>Forms of co-funding</i>
Action 1			
Action 2			
....			
Objective 2: To scale up innovation-based HIV prevention among young people and promote their volunteerism			
Action 1			
Action 2			
....			
Objective ...			
Action 1			
Action 2			
....			