

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE OF THE BARENTS HIV/TB PROGRAMME

Introduction

The Barents TB/HIV Programme was launched in 2020 and will last till the end of 2023. The Barents TB/HIV Programme was established as the result of the merger of the Barents Tuberculosis Programme and Barents HIV Programme. The Barents TB/HIV Programme is part of the Barents Framework Collaboration Programme on Health and Related Social issues 2020-2023 and has been developed to pursue one of the key priorities of cooperation in the Barents Region.

The **goal** of the Barents HIV/TB Programme is Intensification of measures taken against HIV, tuberculosis, and associated infections in the Barents region on the basis of international cooperation

The **objectives** of the Barents HIV/TB Programme are:

- To implement patient-oriented approaches aimed at ensuring adherence to therapy;
- To promote competence building and education for healthcare and social workers on topics related to prevention, diagnosis, treatment and care;
- To ensure a forum for discussions of best practices, and new approaches in the HIV and TB sectors.

Role and functions of the Steering Committee of the Barents TB/HIV Programme

The Steering Committee of the Barents HIV/TB Programme (SC) will be the governing body and will provide strategic leadership and governance oversight of the Programme. The Steering Committee will have the delegated authority of the Joint Working Group on Health and Related Issues (JWGHS) to make decisions that are in accord with the objectives, approach and scope of the Barents HIV/TB Programme.

The Steering Committee:

- Monitors the Barents HIV/TB Programme implementation;
- Ensures the Programme is set to achieve realistic and relevant objectives, and aligned with the 6th Barents Framework Programme;
- Takes the lead to promote policy dialogue and advocacy on issues identified by JWGHS
- Initiates, contributes and otherwise guides and supports planning, development, implementation and monitoring of projects, which aim at achieving the purpose and objectives of the Barents TB/HIV Programme;
- Discusses and makes recommendations on any matter involving the governance and accountability processes of the Barents TB/HIV Programme;
- Liaises and cooperates closely with relevant International organizations (NDPHS, WHO, NCM, ECDC,), civil society organisations and their programmes and projects, and develops collaboration to avoid the duplication of efforts and support the achievement of objectives included in the Barents Framework Programme for Cooperation on Health and Related Social Issues in the Barents Euro-Arctic Region;
- Provides feedback and reports on the progress of the Programme to the JWGHS;

Composition

General representation within the SC shall consist of experts appointed to the SC by Barents Partner Countries or Regions.

The SC may include one or several representatives from each Partner Country or Region. To facilitate continuity and active participation, the Partner Countries and Regions should consider nominating 1-2 alternates for each representative in the SC who will step in for the primary representative when necessary.

The Partner Countries and Regions see to involvement in and attendance of meetings and other events organized within the Barents HIV/TB Programme by their duly nominated experts, including reimbursement of experts' travel costs and work time.

It is expected that the nominated SC members will serve the whole life cycle of the Barents HIV/TB Programme, i.e. four years.

Functions of the Steering Committee members:

- Be an advocate for the Programme, foster positive communication outside of the Steering Committee regarding the Programme's progress and outcomes by doing what they can to promote its outputs;
- Actively participate in meetings through attendance, discussion, and review of minutes, papers and other Steering Committee documents;
- Support open discussion and debate, and encourage fellow Steering Committee members to voice their insights;
- Review the progress of the Programme and advise Barents projects' teams.
- Regularly inform their superiors and authorities about the progress and outcomes of the Steering Committee's work and Barents HIV/TB Programme.

In addition to participating in face-to-face meetings, Steering Committee members are required to engage actively in the Barents HIV/TB Programme's Steering Committee obligations between meetings. All Steering Committee members are expected to participate actively in Steering Committee decisions and deliberations year-round.

The working language of the SC will be English and Russian

Chairpersonship

The Chairpersonship of the Steering Committee shall be drawn from the Partner Countries and Regions on a rotational basis across regions for a maximum period of two years.

The Chairpersonship of the Steering Committee shall be selected by members of the Steering Committee at the first meeting and on the second year after that. A maximum of two terms may be served. The most recent past Chairperson may serve as vice-chairperson for one 2-year term.

The Chair is responsible for providing effective leadership concerning the Steering Committee's overall aims and functions spelled out above. Besides, the Chair is responsible for:

- Chairing the SC group meetings;
- Drawing the agenda for the meeting of the SC;

- Ensuring that the SC meets at appropriate intervals and that the minutes of meetings and any reports to the JWGHS accurately record the decisions taken;
- Encourages broad participation from members in discussion by calling on different people;
- Ending each meeting with a summary of decisions and assignments;
- Ensuring that the views of the SC are passed on to the JWGHS;
- Communicating the SCs views to relevant stakeholders and the public, as requested;
- Briefing new representatives upon their appointment, as appropriate;

Programme coordinator

Programme Coordinator will provide secretariat services to the Steering Committee. These will include;

- Circulation of relevant material to members in good time for preparation for each meeting;
- Drafting of agendas for agreement with the Chairperson;
- Finalizing minutes and recording of decisions made;
- Reporting on progress to the JWGHS;
- Assisting the Chair in monitoring the overall development of activities relevant to the implementation of the Barents TB/HIV Programme;
- Keeping in contact with SC members in-between the meetings;
- Maintaining continuous dialogue with the JWGHS and liaising with other relevant regional and international actors to follow up on on-going activities.

Additionally, when needed, the Programme Coordinator assists to the Steering Committee members and other relevant organisations from the Barents Region in (i) either initiating and evaluating projects or planning and developing projects, (ii) facilitating applications for project financing and, finally, (iii) assists with project implementation.

Meetings and communication

The Steering Committee shall meet regularly, holding at least two meetings per year if possible. The location of meetings will rotate based on the interest expressed by the Partners.

The SC Chair may invite experts from national, international or regional organizations to participate in the Expert Group's meetings as speakers, invited experts or observers.

- The Chair calls the Steering Committee meetings and approves its agendas with support provided by the Programme Coordinator;
- In addition to face-to-face meetings, the Steering Committee communicates regularly via email and through conference calls;
- Minutes of each meeting/conference call is taken by a designated rapporteur and circulated for approval to Steering Committee members in draft form no later than three weeks after the meeting has been held. Upon approval, minutes are circulated.

Decision-making

Wherever possible, the Steering Committee takes its decisions by consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved, a decision can be made by a vote of the simple majority.

Only official members of the SC take part in decision-making.