

The Russian Federation

National coordination entity	High Level Working Group
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Overview of the progress in TB control activities

The national Tuberculosis (TB) control program has objectives to contain the growth of the epidemic of TB in the short term, to halt and reverse the course of this epidemic in the long term. Political commitment to combating TB is growing. During last several years Russia advanced in implementation of the WHO strategy components. Strengthening of the national TB control programmed recently has become supported by the World Bank project and GFATM grant. It is crucial that advantage is taken of this unprecedented financial support for TB and HIV/AIDS programmes that could facilitate the expansion of revised TB control strategy in the country and TB/HIV control.

- Achievements:

1. Growing political commitment to TB control
2. Revision and development of national policy and strategy in line with WHO recommendations
3. Capacity building (training of medical staff) at the national and regional levels
4. Health education and advocacy (regular World TB Day campaigns since 2000)
5. World Bank loan project on AIDS and TB control
6. GFATM project for TB

- Constraints:

- Public health care and administrative system reforms and related problems of transition
- MDR-TB and TB/HIV
- Inadequate capacities of TB laboratory services
- Inadequate TB monitoring, including MDR-TB and TB/HIV
- Shortage of human resources – average age of staff is over 50 years
- Low cost-effectiveness of remaining some components TB control system
- Lack of national resources and reluctance for expansion of the revised strategy
- Sub-optimal treatment results
- High TB risks among poor and marginalized groups of population
- Persistent use old inadequate treatment lead to low cure rates

Brief description of the National Coordination Activities

Aims and Purposes

- Ensure effective consultation and coordination between Russian and international experts on TB control in the Russian Federation.
- Prepare recommendations on policy and strategy of TB control in the Russian Federation.
- Ensure a mechanism for exchange of information and coordination of joint efforts and resources.
- Ensure identification of the priority areas for cooperation and joint action on TB control.

Results up to date

- Increased funding of TB control activities
- New national regulations (guidelines) based on WHO strategy
- New TB recording and reporting system in comply with international standards
- Recommendations for the national framework for TB/HIV control
- Expansion of the revised TB control strategy:
 - Implementation of DOTS strategy in 37 regions (out of 88) by the end 2004 (Plan for 2005 – countrywide)
 - Implementation of DOTS plus projects in 3 regions

Constraints

- Problems related to transition (administrative and health reform)
- Time-consuming discussions and resistance to change
- Different professional approaches to organization of TB control activities among specialists
- Different terminology and definitions

What are the best practices of the National Coordination Activities up till now?

- Establishment of direct and constructive dialogue between national and international authorities
- Joint revision and development of technical aspects on the national TB control program in line with WHO global TB control strategy
- Joint efforts to reach consensus
- Joint development of a TB Glossary and a strategic 5-year plan and national guidelines
- WB loan project on TB control
- Application to GFATM

What are the current activities for Advocacy, Communication and Social Mobilization?

- Organization of World TB Day campaigns and seminars for journalists
- Organization of national and international meetings, support for participation of Russian representatives in international events and conferences for presentation and discussion of current progress
- Library of TB materials hosted by WHO
- Trainings for health and local government officers

Other relevant information

The High Level Working Group on TB (HLWG) was established by WHO and Russian authorities (the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Justice and the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences) in August 1999. Nowadays, HLWG has representatives from all involved parties including the Ministry of Health and Social Development, the Ministry of Justice and the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, Research Institute of Phthisiopulmonology, WHO and the Council of Europe. Different thematic working groups were created under auspices of the HLWG to work on different technical aspects of TB control in Russia.

The HLWG as an open forum became the main tool to revise and develop the national TB control policy and strategy in line with WHO recommendations. WHO provided technical assistance to the HLWG activities since it was established.

A growing number of international partners and organizations, working in the field of the TB control in Russia (see Annex 2), urged to strengthen the ICC in the country and facilitate cooperation between national and international agencies.

In 2004 the CCM was established comprising national and international partners, governmental and community organizations. In April 2004 the CCM has successfully prepared and submitted country application to GFATM on TB and HIV/AIDS components (4th round).

At the HLWG meeting on 21 June 2004 the country made a decision to establish a National Stop TB Initiative for the improvement of cooperation, attraction of partners and mobilization of resources.