

## HIV PLEDGE PROJECT

Penitentiary, Law Enforcement & Drug sectors  
Government Efficiency in HIV response

## QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORT # 13

Reporting period:

October 1, 2014 – December 31, 2014

Cooperative Agreement No.:

AID-121-IO-11-00001

Submitted by:

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<b>1. Context</b>	
Programme/Sub-programme	XCEA01 - Effective HIV/AIDS Prevention and Care among Vulnerable Groups in Central Asia and Eastern Europe
Project Title	Penitentiary, Law Enforcement and Drugs Sectors Government Efficiency in HIV response
Project Starting Date and Duration	1 October 2011; 5 years
Location	Ukraine
UNODC Regional / Country or Thematic Programme Outcome to which this programme/project directly contributes	3.3. HIV prevention and care (as related to injecting drug users, prison settings and trafficking in human beings)
Executing Agency	UNODC Programme Office in Ukraine
Government Counterparts	Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Interior, State Service on HIV/AIDS and Other Socially Dangerous Diseases, State Penitentiary Service and State Drugs Control Service.
Donor(s)	USAID/Ukraine

### Project Summary

USAID/Ukraine is supporting the **HIV PLEDGE** project to reduce HIV transmission among most-at-risk populations (MARPs) through increased access to state-of-the-art HIV, AIDS and drug abuse services, including service delivery within pre-, in-, and post- detention settings. This will be achieved through advocacy and policy activities, strengthening the capacity of narcological services to integrate HIV/AIDS and substance abuse services, and expanding HIV, AIDS and drug dependence treatment services in detention and post-release settings. USAID's funding for these activities builds on and expands UNODC's existing work in Ukraine under its regional programme XCEA01 – "Effective HIV/AIDS prevention and care among vulnerable groups in Eastern Europe and Central Asia".

The **HIV PLEDGE** project works with national stakeholders and other donors to ensure cohesiveness with US-Ukraine Partnership Framework goals. These partners include the Ministries of Health, Justice, and Interior as well as State Services of Ukraine on Drug Control and on countering HIV and AIDS. This project complements and adds value to existing and forthcoming HIV/AIDS initiatives, including those supported by the Global Fund and the United States Government (USG). The programme builds upon achievements and lessons learned from current HIV/AIDS interventions.

The goal of the project is to build support among Ukrainian law enforcement officials and other key Government stakeholders for HIV/AIDS and drug dependence treatment services targeted MARPs, including service delivery within pre-, in-, and post- detention settings. This will be achieved through the following three project objectives: (i) create an environment supportive of evidence-informed and human-rights based HIV and drug dependence treatment programmes for MARPs; (ii) strengthen capacities of the State Penitentiary Service, public health and social services and civil society organizations to provide evidence-informed and human-rights based comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment and care services including drug dependence treatment in prison settings; and (iii) improve capacity of drug dependence treatment system (narcological services) to provide evidence-informed and human-right based integrated HIV prevention and drug dependence treatment services.

## 2. Project objectives, outputs, main activities and achievement for the period under review

**Objective 1:** Create an environment supportive of evidence-informed and human-rights based HIV/AIDS and drug dependence treatment programs among MARPs.

**Output 1.1:** Relevant GOU stakeholders have knowledge and capacity to support development of comprehensive HIV programs for people who use drugs.

**Output 1.2:** The law enforcement sectoral policy framework regarding HIV/AIDS is developed in line with the international guidelines.

**Outputs 1.3:** Cooperative mechanisms between law enforcement, drug control, public health and civil society partners are developed and piloted in selected regions to increase effectiveness of HIV response at the local level.

**Output 1.4:** HIV/AIDS and drugs related modules of the training curricula, manual and materials at the police training institutions are updated with the state-of-the-art evidences.

### Main activities and achievements

Key activities/ milestones	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	Status
1.1.1. Hold national awareness raising workshop for police on harm reduction and OST programmes			X										Postponed
1.1.2. (a) Facilitate participation of Ukrainian law enforcement partners in international conferences on public health, drugs and HIV/AIDS issues: <i>3rd Regional Consultation Meeting on the Role of Law Enforcement in HIV response, Moldova</i>									X				
1.1.2. (b) Facilitate participation of Ukrainian law enforcement partners in international conferences on public health, drugs and HIV/AIDS issues: <i>Conference on law enforcement and public health, Amsterdam</i>	X												Completed
1.1.2. (c) Facilitate participation of Ukrainian law enforcement partners in international conferences on public health, drugs and HIV/AIDS issues: <i>Side event on LE and HIV during CND session in Vienna</i>						X							
1.1.3. Organize study visit to the best practice countries/facilities and centres of excellence													No planned for this year
1.1.4. Knowledge, Attitude, Practices and Behaviour (KAPB) survey among law enforcement officials	X	X	X										In progress
1.1.5. Printing, publishing and dissemination of KAPB survey report					X	X							
1.2.1. Facilitate Technical Working Group on HIV/AIDS and Law Enforcement		X			x			x			x		Completed
1.2.2. Support integration of HIV/AIDS related issues into action plan for the implementation of the National Drug Strategy			X	X	X								Postponed
1.2.3. Support to develop sectoral action plan for the implementation of the 2014-2018 National AIDS Programme		X	X	X	X	X	X						In progress
1.2.4. Develop, publish and disseminate specific guidelines, instructions			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			In progress
1.3.2. Conduct training workshops on OST and NSP for police staff in the pilot regions (Kyiv, Poltava and Kharkiv)					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.3.3. Conduct training for NGOs on building and maintaining effective partnership with law enforcement agencies in the implementation of the community-based HIV prevention programmes among PWUD		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				In progress
1.3.4. Provide small-scale grants to NGOs for piloting effective collaboration & referral schemes involving law enforcement				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
1.4.2. Facilitate technical workshops with police training institutions				X				X				X	
1.4.3. Support the police training institutions to update training modules and materials	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		In progress
1.4.4. (a) Support to integrate HIV education in professional development in-service training programmes for police - <i>ToT for police training institutions on HIV/AIDS</i>							X						
1.4.4. (b) Support to integrate HIV education in professional development in-service training programmes for police - <i>ToTs for police P2P instructors</i>					X	X	X						

### **Activity 1.1.1. Hold national awareness raising workshop for police on harm reduction and OST**

Under this activity the project plans to conduct national awareness raising workshop to promote inter-sectoral collaboration between law enforcement and health care sectors to improve accessibility of OST programmes. It is expected to gather about 50 participants representing OST programmes staff and police units on countering illicit drugs trafficking from all the regions of Ukraine. The workshop aims at raising awareness of the oblast level partners regarding new developments in OST area and strengthening partnership between law enforcement and health sector at national level. Due to the reform of the law enforcement sector and based on consultations with partners from the MoI, the event is rescheduled for the next the quarter 3.

### **Activity 1.1.2. Facilitate participation of Ukrainian law enforcement partners in international conferences on public health, drugs and HIV/AIDS issues**

The working visit to Amsterdam was organized for representatives of law enforcement and health care sectors of Ukraine in October 3-8, 2014. The group consisted of the following 5 representatives of law enforcement, health care sector and civil society organisation:

1. Demchenko Maksim - Head of NGO "Svitlo Nadii" (Poltava);
2. Matsytskiy Ihor - Head physician of Poltava Oblast Drug Addiction Treatment Facility;
3. Striltsiv Oleksandr - Head of scientific laboratory on criminal police, National academy of internal affairs;
4. Maigur Mykhailo - Chief detective inspector on combating the drug trafficking of the MIA;
5. Nizelkovskiy Gennadii - Head of Poltava oblast unit on combating the drug trafficking.

The working visit was aimed at supporting development of law enforcement sectoral policy regarding HIV/AIDS and facilitating cooperation between police and HIV services at local level. Key experts from law enforcement sector of Ukraine at national and local levels raised their awareness on the role of police in harm reduction and HIV prevention among key affected populations. The best police practices and policies in the field of HIV/AIDS and public health were discussed and analyzed while participating in the Conference "Law Enforcement and Public health" (LEPH-2014) (Amsterdam, October 5-8, 2014).

Recommendations for training programmes for police on HIV/AIDS and harm reductions were developed during working meeting and submitted to the National Academy of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Interior.

Model of cooperation between police, CSOs and health care facilities, implementing in Ukraine was presented for feedback from international community at LEPH-2014 special session *Effective Models to Strengthen Inter-Sectoral Cooperation between Law Enforcement, Health Care and CSO in the Area of Harm Reduction*.

After the working visit, the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between UNODC and the National Academy of Internal Affairs. The MoU contains plan of joined activities aimed at raising awareness of police on HIV/AIDS and development of the sectoral law enforcement policy regarding HIV. Specifically, the plan envisages development and approval of the Instruction for police how to interact with key affected populations, implementation of researches related to HIV and law enforcement, development of training and educational materials, raising awareness and building skills of tutors of the police educational institutions how to teach topics related to HIV/AIDS ([Annex 1.1.2](#)).

### **Activity 1.1.4. Knowledge, Attitude, Practices and Behaviour (KAPB) survey among law enforcement officials**

The research protocol and research instruments for Knowledge-Attitude-Practice-Behaviour Survey regarding HIV/AIDS among police staff are developed and agreed with key partners (officials of the

Ministry of Interior and the Ukrainian Centre for Diseases Control) in previous reporting periods. Due to the political situation and ongoing reform of the law enforcement sector in Ukraine, the methodology of the KAPB survey on HIV/AIDS among police was revised. The consultations with partners from the law enforcement sector and involved sociological company resulted in decision to conduct survey among students of National Academy on Internal Affairs and training courses for sergeants (450 respondents in total). It is expected that the field stage of the research will be finalised in February 2015. The initially developed methodology which covers 450 police staff all over the country will be published and delivered to the Ministry of Interior as an instrument for monitoring and planning the policy regarding HIV/AIDS.

#### **Activity 1.2.1. Facilitate Technical Working Group on HIV/AIDS and Law Enforcement**

The regular meeting of TWG on HIV/AIDS and Law Enforcement was held on December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2014. The meeting brought together 8 representatives of Law Enforcement sector (Ministry of Interior, National Academy of Internal Affairs, and Police Staff Association) and 6 representatives of health care sector (Ukrainian Centre for Socially Dangerous Diseases Control), CSOs (All-Ukrainian Network of PLWH, International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine, AFEW) and international organizations working in HIV/AIDS area (UNAIDS) to wrap up achievements of 2014 in LE and HIV area, and discuss further activities, including sectoral Action plan to implement National HIV/AIDS programme for 2014-2018 and HIV-at-workplace policy for Law Enforcement sector (Annex 1.2.1).

During the meeting the overview of the outcomes of the Second International Conference on Law Enforcement and Public Health was presented to the participants, including advocacy video made by the Law Enforcement and HIV Network (LEAHN). The video provides arguments to support active involvement of police to implementation of the response to HIV/AIDS and was made with active participation of police officers from different countries. It was suggested by the participants to translate the video into Ukrainian and Russian to be used during police training and for advocacy purposes.

#### **Activity 1.2.2. Support integration of HIV/AIDS related issues into action plan for the implementation of the National Drug Strategy**

In 2013-2014 the project provided advisory support to the State Drug Control Service of Ukraine in the development of the new National Anti-drug Strategy that was endorsed by the Government. The Strategy envisages development and scaling up of contemporary evidence informed and human rights based interventions for drug dependence treatment and HIV prevention for PWUDs in the community and prison settings such as OST and NSP. The new strategy presents an opportunity to effectively align national drug control priorities with those of public health policy and international standards and norms, adopting a more balanced approach between drug supply and demand reductions. The State Service for Drugs Control (SSDC) was appointed as a leading state agency for further coordination of the Strategy implementation and development. However, at the end of 2014 the SSDC was abolished by the Government of Ukraine.

Initially it was planned to involve the national consultants to assist to law enforcement to incorporate HIV and AIDS issues and requirements of the state anti-drug strategy in the sectoral policy regarding HIV and policing MAPRs. Due to the reform this activity in postponed till new responsible state agency is appointed for the Strategy implementation.

#### **Activity 1.2.3. Support to develop sectoral action plan for the implementation of the 2014-2018 National AIDS Program:**

National AIDS programme for 2014-2015 was adopted by the Parliament of Ukraine and signed by the President in October 2014. In the law it is stipulated that the normative documents to strengthen intersectoral cooperation in HIV/AIDS area should be developed by the MoI and about 3000 police officers and students of police educational institutions should be trained on HIV issues annually.

PLEDGE project plans to engage two consultants to provide technical support for law enforcement sector of Ukraine to develop and implement the state policy regarding HIV/AIDS. The 1<sup>st</sup> consultant is recruited to develop draft HIV-at-Workplace Policy for the Law Enforcement Sector in Ukraine. The 2<sup>nd</sup> consultant will be recruited to draft action plan for the MoI for the implementation of the NAP 2014-2018.

#### **Activity 1.2.4. Develop, publish and disseminate specific guidelines, instructions**

The draft *Guidelines for police officers on how to interact with MARPs* was developed and shared among HIV and Law Enforcement TWG members for review and comments. It was suggested to publish informational and educational materials for police HIV and policing of key affected populations and to advocate for official approval by the MoI. The National Academy for Internal Affairs took responsibility to facilitate official approval of the instruction and its adaptation to requirements of law enforcement sector and in accordance with ongoing reform of police in Ukraine. It is expected to present final version of the instruction on February-March 2015.

The project also supported development of the *Methodological materials for police on how to reduce occupational risks related to HIV/AIDS*. The brochure was published in 2000 copies to be disseminated among police, working in public security and drug control areas. It is agreed that 200 copies are to be delivered to the National Academy for Internal Affairs, and 1600 to be disseminated among district police inspectors in the project pilot region and cities, where trainings for police on HIV prevention among MARPs will be conducted. Additionally the electronic (pdf) copy of the brochure was submitted to the Personnel Department of the MoI and disseminated by the Department among 25 oblast level police units with recommendation to be used for police officers training sessions.

PLEDGE is in the process of recruiting a national consultant to develop a handbook for medical personnel of the OST programmes on legal and regulatory issues related to management of the use of controlled substances in the health care settings. The consultant will be recruited in January and first draft of the handbook is expected by March.

#### **Activity 1.3.3. Conduct training for NGOs on building and maintaining effective partnership with law enforcement agencies in the implementation of the community-based HIV prevention & care programmes among PWUD**

The Guidelines and Outline of training workshop for civil society organizations involved in HIV and harm reduction services: *Improving Working Relationships and Collaboration with Police Services* was developed by the Project in 2014. Following the feedback of trainers from Ukrainian CSOs working in HIV/AIDS area, the project plans to involve 2 national consultants to develop training modules that will be used complimentary to the Guidelines for raising awareness of CSOs on building and maintaining effective partnerships with law enforcement in the context of harm reduction service provision. ToR for the consultants have been drafted and cleared; recruitment process will be finalised in the end of January.

#### **Activity 1.3.4. Provide small-scale grants to NGOs for piloting effective collaboration & referral schemes involving law enforcement**

In September 2014 baseline assessment in pilot regions was implemented and advocacy workshops in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Poltava were conducted to discuss the most effective mechanisms of involving law enforcement agencies in implementation of HIV prevention programmes for PWUDs at the local level. To pilot the mechanisms of collaboration and referral schemes, the project will provide grants to three local CSOs in each of the participating regions that will be selected on a competitive basis. Based on the assessment and feedback of advocacy workshops, the Grants programme is developed and Call for Proposals is announced on UNDP site ([http://procurementotices.undp.org/view\\_notice.cfm?notice\\_id=20027](http://procurementotices.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=20027)).

The main objective of the Grant Programme is to solicit applications of civil society organizations working in HIV/AIDS area to enhance the role of police in response to AIDS at local level and develop intersectoral cooperation for improving access of PWUD to evidence based HIV services. The supported pilot projects should focus on the following priority areas:

- rising awareness of local police officers of public security units and units on countering drugs on harm reduction, drug dependence treatment and HIV/AIDS prevention programmes for PWUD, including OST, NSPs, HTC, ART, and IEC for PWUDs & their sexual partners;
- strengthening capacity and building skills of police officers who interact with PWUD to communicate with key affected populations aiming at raising motivation to use HIV/AIDS prevention and drug abuse treatment services;
- implementation of referral scheme that police can use to improve access of PWUD to HIV/AIDS prevention services and harm reduction programmes available in the community;
- strengthening cooperation between police, health sector and local authorities to improve coordination for sustainability of harm reduction and HIV programmes in the community, enhancing activity of coordination council on HIV/AIDS.

The announcement regarding the Grants programme is also published on the popular Ukrainian web-resources for CSOs (<http://gurt.org.ua> and <http://www.civicua.org>), and disseminated among partner NGOs working in HIV and LE area in Ukraine. It is expected that pilot projects in Kyiv, Poltava and Kharkiv will be launched in February-March 2015 after the selection procedure is finalized.

#### **Activity 1.4.3. Support the police training institutions to update training modules and materials**

The Memorandum of Cooperation was signed with the Academy of Internal Affairs in October 2014. The document aims to coordinate activity of the Academy's main partners (UNODC and AFEW) regarding development of training programmes and curricula in line with best practices and international recommendations in area of HIV/AIDS and law enforcement. Inter alia, the Memorandum envisages development of training videos for police on HIV, MARPs and HIV prevention programmes, development of training and educational materials on HIV/AIDS and human based approach to interaction with key affected population. Currently the project is looking for national consultants to develop educational materials on HIV/AIDS and drugs for the Academy in line with International Training Guide on HIV/AIDS for Police.

**Objective 2:** Strengthen capacities of the State Penitentiary Service, public health and social services and civil society organizations to provide evidence-informed and human-rights based comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment and care services including drug dependence treatment in prison settings.

**Output 2.1:** Decision makers and prison management have adequate knowledge, attitudes and willingness to support comprehensive programs on HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment in prison settings.

**Output 2.2:** Policies, guidelines and protocols for management of health, HIV/TB, drug dependence treatment programs in prison settings are revised and updated for the implementation of a comprehensive package of HIV/AIDS services.

**Output 2.3:** Comprehensive package of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services including drug dependent treatment is piloted in selected prison facilities.

**Output 2.4:** Updated training curricula, modules and training manuals on evidence-informed and human-rights-based comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment and care in prison settings are available and used by the training staff of the prison training schools.

### Main activities and achievements

Key activities/ milestones	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	Status
2.1.1. (a) Hold advocacy and awareness raising workshops with policy and decision makers: <i>Participation of 2 Ukrainian officials in the Global consultation on HIV and prisons in Vienna, Austria on 16-17 October</i>	X												Completed
2.1.1. (b) Hold advocacy and awareness raising workshops with policy and decision makers: <i>1 advocacy workshop at national level and 3 workshops at regional levels</i>					X		X		X		X		
2.1.2. Provide sponsorships for participation in international conferences on HIV in prisons issues	X												Completed
2.1.3. Organise study tours to Moldova for a group of SPSU representatives								X					
2.1.4. Focused research to feed advocacy (IBBS among inmates)					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.1.5. Develop, publish and disseminate advocacy materials	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress
2.2.1. Facilitate TWG on HIV/AIDS and Prisons for coordination and enhancement of HIV policy in prisons	X	X			X			X			X		Completed
2.2.2. Provide technical assistance to improve legal & normative framework to scale-up HIV services in prisons	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress
2.2.3. Provide technical assistance to updating currently used guidelines & protocols for service provision in prisons	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress
2.2.4. Provide technical assistance to improve M&E system for HIV programmes in prisons				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.2.5. Develop, publish and disseminate specific normative document including sectoral HIV programme for prisons		X	X	X	X	X	X	X					In progress
2.3.2. Conduct trainings for representatives of prisons, NGOs and community social services		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress
2.3.3. Develop comprehensive HIV/TB & drug treatment programme for piloting in the selected facilities	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress
2.3.4. Support the implementation of the comprehensive programmes in the selected facilities				X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
2.3.5. Support a network of service providers with referral and case management mechanisms to ensure continuity of care pre- and post release stages				X								X	
2.4.2. Conduct technical workshops with prison training institution management and academic staff					X							X	
2.4.3. Support to the prison training institutions to update training programs	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			In progress
2.4.4. Train the trainers from the prison training institutions									X				
2.4.5. Twinning partnership with internationally recognised centres of excellence									X				

### **Activity 2.1.1: Advocacy seminars for prison authorities and stakeholders**

(a) On 16-17 October, 2014 the UNODC Office in Vienna conducted the Global Consultation on HIV Prevention and Care in Prison Settings. PLEDGE facilitated the participation of 2 representatives of Ukraine, namely Dr. Volodymyr Kurpita, adviser to the Ministry of Health (former Head of the State Service of Ukraine on HIV-infection, AIDS and other socially significant diseases), and Mr. Igor Pechenoga, a deputy head of the Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine. They took part in plenary and contributed to the group discussion at the sessions focused on such thematic areas as:

- Development and implementation of harm reduction programmes in prison settings;
- Adoption and implementation of alternative to imprisonment policies and strategies;
- UNODC comprehensive package on HIV prevention, treatment and care in prisons and its 15 core interventions;
- Structured dialogue to develop and finalize on the Vienna Statement on HIV in Prisons.

Summary of the outcomes of the meeting is provided in attached **Annex 2.1.1**. More information about the event is available at:

<http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/frontpage/2014/October/discussion-on-hiv-focuses-on-need-for-adequate-response-in-prisons.html?ref=fs1>

(b) Since October 2014 UNODC took part in three working meetings of the steering committee for preparation of the international conference on HIV in penitentiary system. The PLEDGE Project participated in the preparation of the concept note of the conference, drafting main tasks of the event, forming plenary sessions and selecting international experts. In November 2014 the conference, previously dated from 4 to 5 December, was postponed for February-April, 2015. The steering committee will resume its work in January, 2015.

### **Activity 2.1.2: Support participation of penitentiary sector representatives in international conferences on prison reform and HIV in prison settings**

The PLEDGE sponsored 2 participants from the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine (Mr. Vitalii Oshovskiy, 1<sup>st</sup> Deputy Head of the SPSU and Mr. Yevhen Haniukov, Chief of the Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision of the SPSU) to attend International Health and Justice Conference held on 1-3 October 2014 in Portlaoise, Ireland. The participants visited the Midlands Prison and got acquainted with the health promotion programmes there. They have also learned the experience of the Irish Prison Service, the Irish Red Cross and Education and Training Boards in the sphere of prisoner empowerment and improving of lives of former prisoners in communities. During the conference Yevhen Haniukov delivered the presentation "Patients Right Provision in the institutions of the State Penitentiary Service of Ukraine".

The visit provided an opportunity for the counterparts to gain fresh perspectives from across Europe on important health issues in relation to prisoners and others in the criminal justice system relating to prisoner empowerment and life beyond prison; gain insight into the quality of healthcare and innovative practice in Irish prisons; explore approaches to improving the quality of care beyond the prison walls; share information and evidence on 'what works' and best practice, with colleagues from Ireland and other countries, concerning health promotion and health protection in the justice system; understand WHO's latest guidance that Ministries of Health in European Member States are best placed to lead on commissioning prison health services; improve understanding of the importance of close links between Ministry of Health and Ministry of Justice concerning the health of prisoners.

The information on results of the visit was submitted to the SPSU management and professional community through publication on the web sites:

(<http://www.kvs.gov.ua/peniten/control/main/uk/publish/article/745522;jsessionid=D09DEE145E4CA140DC191E44451A0505>) and newsletter of the SPSU.

### **Activity 2.1.3. Facilitate study visit to Moldova for a group of SPSU representatives**

New authorities of the Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision of the SPSU have been considering the opportunity to visit prison institutions of Moldova and learn the sites with NSP, OST, drug dependence treatment models. The concept note of the study tour to Moldova will be prepared in January-February 2015 after agreement of this trip by the leadership of the SPSU.

### **Activity 2.1.4: Focused research to feed advocacy (IBBS among inmates)**

PLEDGE Project is to support IBBS in prisons as an important part of epidemiological control in Ukraine and a tool in identifying bottlenecks in the response to the epidemics in prison setting, evaluating the efficiency of the response and developing proposals on timely adjustment of the response measures. Data on HIV prevalence and coverage with prevention among inmates are also to be used for Global AIDS Response Progress (GARP) and National M&E Plan Reporting and are expected by the end of 2015 calendar year.

In order to conduct survey and generate data in timely fashion PLEDGE initiated first meeting of key partners in Prison and M&E field to discuss selection of epi markers to be added, vision of roles and responsibilities in initiating IBBS (December 23, 2014). It was agreed that partners need to set the meeting with Mr. Etnis, Chief of the Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision of the SPSU to sensitize him with a topic and gain agreement to start with IBBS logistics. National HIV M&E Unit (UCDC based) with technical support from PLEDGE N&E Officer is responsible for initiating meeting and delivering presentation about previous similar studies, their results and expectations towards planned study.

### **Activity 2.1.5. Develop, publish and disseminate advocacy materials**

PLEDGE is supporting the WHO-Europe publication “Prisons and Health” (2014 addition) with translation into Russian and layout development do be used by penitentiary decision makers practitioners to improve prison health especially with regard to HIV, TB. Currently translation commissioned by PLEDGE is verified with the WHO’s language team, and after the approval of Russian translation the layout development of “Prisons and Health” will be finished by PLEDGE.

In December 2014 the Order of the Minister of Justice related to the medical service provision in the penitentiary service of Ukraine (Order #138/5/572 from 15 August, 2014) was translated into English (**Annex 2.1.5.**) and disseminated among SPSU’s partners and experts for their information and references.

### **Activity 2.2.1. Facilitate TWG on HIV/AIDS and Prisons**

Technical Working Group meetings on HIV and Prisons with participation of partner organizations which cooperate with SPSU on HIV/AIDS were held on 19 November and 3 December. The representatives of about 15 partner organizations took part in the meetings. Participants discussed such issues as: development of the penitentiary medical sector, views and propositions about the coordinated technical support of SPSU in medical sector; seminar on the infection control, diagnosis, and treatment of TB in pre-trial detention and prison facilities, planned 11-12 December, 2014; issues of the penitentiary medical services provision reforming; formation of working groups under SPSU to prepare the concept of these reforms in medical sphere, and other aspects of cooperation between stakeholders and SPSU in medical sphere. The ToR of the TWG secretary is approved by the head of the Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision. Recruitment will be finished in the next reporting period.

### **Activity 2.2.2. Finalization of the report on legal and normative framework of HIV interventions in prison settings**

The draft of the Ministry of Justice order and other recommendations of the national consultant Ms. Irina Iakovets on updating of penitentiary HIV-related normative framework are still under the in-depth consideration of the new head of the SPSU’s Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision

Mr. Etnis and his experts, as well as under consideration of the deputy head of department for cooperation with government agencies of Ministry of Justice (supervisor body over the penitentiary service) Ms. Svitlana Martynenko. Responsibilities of other national consultants in the framework of this activity are discussing with the authorities and experts of the SPSU's Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision. ToR for them will be agreed in January-February, 2015.

### **Activity 2.2.3. Assessment of currently used guidelines and protocols for service provision in prisons**

The PLEDGE Project continues to discuss with new head of the SPSU's Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision Mr. Etnis and his experts responsibility area of the national consultants on operational guidelines, protocols, regulations on medical units and other issues focused on HIV, AIDS, TB in prison settings. It was agreed that the consultants will be selected in February 2015.

### **Activity 2.2.5: Develop, publish and disseminate specific normative document including guidelines and protocols for service provision in prisons**

The area of responsibility for national consultant to develop sectoral HIV programme was specified and agreed by the head of the Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision, Mr. Etnis. The draft ToR was finalized and selection procedure for local consultant will be finished in January, 2015. There were previous discussions with authorities of Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision about responsibilities of a national consultant to develop a sample HIV programme for regional departments of the SPSU and prison action plans bases on such a regional HIV programme. The consultant on the regional HIV programme will coordinate his/her activity with the above-mentioned consultant on sectoral HIV programme and will be hired about one-two months later in February-March, 2015.

### **Activity 2.3.2. Conduct training for representatives of NGOs and community social services and prison services**

As part preparation to workshops on the delivery of comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment and care services for inmates for medical staff of the pilot prisons a group of local and international trainers was preliminary identified. Project requested advise from UNODC HQ regarding best training modality and candidates for trainers, and in mid January 2015 following suggestions about topics grouping we'll be prepared submit draft time table of trainings for further consideration of the SPSU. These training activities will be co-ordinated with the action plans proposed by the international consultant Ms. Catherine Ritter (mentioned in the activity 2.3.3).

### **Activity 2.3.3. Develop comprehensive HIV/TB & drug treatment programme for piloting in the selected facilities**

The draft report on the action plans in pilot prison settings were finalised by the international consultant Ms. Catherine Ritter and submitted on December 19, 2014 for consideration at the PLEDGE team and UNODC office in Vienna (Annex 2.3.3). The report was finalized with accepting suggestions from Ms. Iakovets and the Kyiv UNODC office recommendations, and new legislation in the field of the medical services in the penitentiary system. The draft action plans for pilot prison institutions will be reviewed by the UNODC office in Vienna and later discussed with the Department of Health Care and Medical-Sanitary Provision and other partners. Selection of consultants to implement HIV-related programmes in the pilot prison settings will be initiated after the approval of action plans developed by the international consultant Ms. C.Ritter for these pilot prison institutions.

### **Activity 2.3.4. Implementation of the comprehensive programmes in the selected facilities**

The modality of implementation of this activity will be designed after the approval of action plans developed by the international consultant Ms. C.Ritter for the pilot prison settings.

#### **Activity 2.3.5. Support functional referral and case management mechanisms to ensure continuity of care during pre- and post release stages**

Conducting of technical workshops on institutionalized referral and case management mechanisms to ensure continuity of care for prisoners during pre- and post release stages will be planned in accordance with the action plans for the pilot prison settings (activity 2.3.3.), other trainings (activity 2.3.2.) and activities (activity 2.3.4.). The preliminary candidatures of the experts to conduct such workshops are under consideration.

#### **Activity 2.4.3. Provide technical & organizational support to the prison training institutions to update training programs**

The training programmes for 5 penitentiary educational institutions were updated with HIV-related modules and became the part of these institutions' curricula since September, 2014. To support sustainability of these modules the PLEDGE Project is considering the technical support to these institutions. One of the planned activities is assistance in creation of the resource centre in Chernihiv Law College. The administration of this college submitted the commercial quotation that was considered and updated. New quotation is under consideration of the Project and later is going to be shared at the TWG workshop in February 2015.

The PLEDGE Project has prepared a ToR for national consultants to make a film on the prevention of occupational risks among staff and development tolerant and non-discriminatory attitude towards HIV+ inmates. The concept note and preliminary draft scenario of the film is under consideration of the Project. The final propositions concerning film creation will be reviewed at the workshop mentioned above.

#### **Activity 2.4.4. Train the trainers from the prison training institutions**

ToR for trainers to conduct training of trainers (ToT) from the penitentiary education institutions and pilot prison institutions was drafted. This training will help to learn additional information on HIV, AIDS, TB, hepatitis, how to present these topics, and how to protect themselves at their job places from occupational hazards. The candidates for positions of trainers were selected among the authors of the facultative course on protecting staff from occupational hazards. The training of trainers will be planned at the technical workshop planned for February 2015.

#### **Activity 2.4.5. Promote and establish twinning partnership and facilitate academic exchanges and study visits between Ukrainian prison faculties and Centres of Excellence**

After study tour to Switzerland established from 30 August to 5 September, 2014 in the framework of twinning partnership between Chernihiv Law College and Swiss Prison Staff Training Centre (Freiburg) the PLEDGE Project set contacts with authorities of the Swiss Prison Staff Training Centre and Sante Prison Suisse (office for health training under the Swiss Prison Staff Training Centre), and 3 prisons Witzwil, Champ-Dollon, and Hindelbank. During these meetings the heads of the Chernihiv Law College and Swiss Prison Staff Training Centre agreed the draft of the cooperation agreement and promised to sign it during the visit of the director of the Centre Mr. Thomas Noll to Ukraine in 2015.

PLEDGE Project previously discussed the study visit of management and experts from the staff of the Centre in Fribourg to penitentiary institutions in Ukraine and fixed the time of the visit in the period May-July 2015. The time, programme and other terms of the exchange visit will be discussed during the technical workshop in February, 2015.

**Objective 3:** Improve capacity of substance use treatment system to provide evidence-informed and human-right based integrated HIV prevention and drug dependence treatment services.

**Output 3.1:** Policy, legal and normative frameworks, technical guidelines and operational standards are in place to integrate HIV related interventions into the drug dependence treatment service system (narcology system).

**Output 3.2:** Conceptual framework and model of integrated and comprehensive package of HIV prevention and drug dependence treatment services system is piloted and documented for further replication at national level.

**Output 3.3:** Updated narcology training curricula in line with the best international practices.

### Main activities and achievements

Key activities/ milestones	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	Status
3.1.1. Conduct stakeholders meeting to promote reforms in narcology services		X		X									In progress
3.1.2. Provide technical support in drug dependence treatment system capacity, strategic, legal and regulatory framework analysis and improvement for the integration of HIV-related services	X	X	X	X	X	X							In progress
3.1.3. Facilitate the Technical Working Group on HIV/AIDS and Narcology		X			X			X			X		In progress
3.1.4. Develop specific technical guidelines and operational standards for integrated drug use and HIV prevention services		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			In progress
3.1.5. Launch grant programme to support research projects in HIV/AIDS, MAT and harm reduction related areas	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress
3.2.2. Conduct advocacy and coordination meetings in pilot regions		X		X		X		X		X		X	In progress
3.2.3. Develop comprehensive and integrated service provision models				X									
3.2.4. Organise and deliver series of thematic trainings for the staff of the narcology services		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				In progress
3.2.5. Support selected institutions for piloting various models of integrated services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress
3.2.6. Ensure appropriate monitoring, evaluation and documentation of the lessons learned, results and experience with pilot projects	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	In progress
3.3.2. Support experts' working group for the development and updating narcology training curricula, modules and manuals	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	Delayed and postponed
3.3.3. Support to the implementation of the updated curricula and modules	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				In progress
3.3.4. Conduct ToT workshops to promote application of new curricula							X	X					
3.3.5. (a) Promote twinning partnership with internationally recognised centres of excellence and facilitate academic exchanges: <i>Study tour to the USA for 6 scientists and researchers from Ukraine</i>											X		
3.3.5. (b) Promote twinning partnership with internationally recognised centres of excellence and facilitate academic exchanges: <i>National scientific forum on drug dependence treatment and HIV/AIDS</i>								X					

#### Activity 3.1.1. Conduct stakeholders meeting to promote reforms in narcology services

The PLEDGE project held preparatory consultations with new appointed Chief narcologist Dr. Anatoliy Vievskiy, representatives of WHO, UNAIDS, International AIDS Alliance in Ukraine, and Network of PLWH on the round table issues. National partners supported the idea but suggested to postpone the round table until MoH of Ukraine will sort out its activities and appoint key managers. WHO representative recommended to assess compliance of national guidelines on opiate dependence treatment with international recommendations.

In August 2014, under technical and expert assistance of the PLEDGE project the MoH of Ukraine issued order #592 of 22.08.2014 on setting up of Intersectoral Working Group (IWG) on improvement of drug dependence treatment system in Ukraine. In the reported period this group had meetings in October and

November and discussed improvement of cooperation between state funded and private treatment services for drug users.

The PLEDGE project National officer on HIV/AIDS and drug use participated in National Symposium of Psychiatrists, Psychologists and Addiction Psychologists (October 8-9, 2014, Odessa, Ukraine) which had been attended by addiction psychiatrists from all over Ukraine. During panel session on narcology treatment he presented Italian experience of integrated services provision and discussed the need of drug dependence treatment system reform. Participants of the panel session indicated high importance of the reform.

On December 5, 2014 – NGO “Strategic Group of Health System Reform” has presented the first draft of the Strategy of Health Care System Reform. Considering the Strategy has no clear indicators, timeframes and objectives to be achieved, many of participants recommended to continue work on the presented draft. PLEDGE National officer on HIV and drug use attended the presentation and proposed UNODC technical support for Strategy’s chapter on addiction treatment service reform development.

### **Activity 3.1.2. Drug dependence treatment system capacity, strategic, legal and regulatory framework analysis and improvement for the integration of HIV-related services**

During the reporting period the PLEDGE project recruited a national consultant to develop draft concept and strategy of drug dependence treatment system improvement. The first draft of the strategy will be presented to stakeholders during round table on narcology system reform in February 2015 and finalized in mid February 2015.

The PLEDGE has also initiated discussion with the Ombudsman’s office on joint collaboration to assess compliance with human rights principles of the dependence treatment services in Ukraine. In October and November the meetings with appointed specialists were held to present the aims of assessment. Project will have political, administrative and other kinds of support for this assessment. Consultant’s ToR was drafted collaboratively and submitted to Head of the UNODC programme office in Ukraine for consideration. After ToR finalization consultant will be contracted.

### **Activity 3.1.3. Facilitate the Technical Working Group on HIV/AIDS and Narcology**

During reporting period skype conference call was initiated with the members of TWG on HIV/AIDS and narcology to discuss OST related situation in ATO area. Participants were also briefed about the PLEDGE activities in the pilot regions. PLEDGE participated in the meeting on December 25, 2014 with UCDC and International HIV/AIDS Alliance to discuss issues of improvement of MoH Order #200 on OST provision to set up rules of OST initiating and continuing of treatment in line with international recommendations and Decree of GoU #333 from May 2013

### **Activity 3.1.4. Develop specific technical guidelines and operational standards for integrated drug use and HIV prevention services**

National consultant to assess the compliance of national regulations and clinical guidelines on opiate dependence treatment with international guidelines commenced his assignment in December 2014, and the first draft assessment report is expected on January 15, 2015. Report will be presented during round table on narcology system reform in February 2015 and finalized in the mid February 2015.

### **Activity 3.1.5. Launch grant programme to support research projects in HIV/AIDS, MAT and harm reduction related areas**

Deadline of proposals’ submission for Call for proposals to grant research programmes addressing critical gaps in research on HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and related health issues among PWUD and inmates of prison facilities was extended till October 29, 2014 since no proposals were submitted within initial

deadlines. Information about extended period for submission was shared with partners, via local UNDP website, and resource for civil society organizations [www.gurt.org.ua](http://www.gurt.org.ua).

Appraisal committee was set up of experts from UNODC HQ HIV/AIDS & drug treatment sections, WHO office in Ukraine, UNAIDS office in Ukraine, UNODC office in Ukraine (PLEDGE). Project received 13 proposals, 6 of them were considered eligible for further evaluation at the appraisal committee. However, after review at appraisal committee none of them was recommended for granting. Experts recommended re-announcing Call for proposals and organizing workshop on development of research methodology for potential applicants.

### **Activity 3.2.2. Conduct advocacy and coordination meetings in pilot regions**

PLEDGE organized and held three coordination meetings with staff of the pilot clinics, NGO which is implementing the project and local consultants for drafting local treatment protocols in Poltava, Kharkiv and Kiev in November 2015. Participants shared information about pilot projects achievements, drafts of local protocols, and obstacles they faced with during implementation.

Practical aspects of organization and management of the integrated treatment and continuum of care for people who use drugs, normative regulations regarding integrated service provision, local treatment protocols and standards, patients' routes and monitoring system composition were discussed at the meetings.

### **Activity 3.2.3. Develop comprehensive and integrated service provision models**

PLEDGE made preparations for 5 days study visit of Heads of pilot clinics and addiction psychiatrist of these clinics (6 people) to Berlin, Germany to learn practical aspects and approaches to comprehensive and integrated services provision. Visit's agenda (for January 26-30, 2015) is formed with special focus on psychological, social support and re-socialisation technologies for PWID. Department of Drug use disorders treatment of Council of Berlin City, treatment centres, drug consumption rooms, housing premises and medical practices which provide comprehensive and integrated services for drug users will be visited as well.

### **Activity 3.2.4. Organise and deliver series of thematic trainings for the staff of the narcology services**

Project continued series of trainings for 18 staff of pilot drug treatment clinics with the training "Work on motivation to initiate and retain in treatment; Effective counselling strategies through cognitive-behavioural interventions - pragmatics and practical skill building" (November 24-25, 2014). Training needed quite preparation with translation efforts from Project, since tuition process was to be organised with interactive usage of video and handout provided by trainer. The training, which was delivered by Prof. Igor Koutsenok, UNODC HQ, was highly scored by participants, and they requested additional training on neurophysiology and pathophysiology to improve their understanding the nature of addiction.

### **Activity 3.2.5. Support selected institutions for piloting various models of integrated services**

Project held three meetings to provide technical assistance for NGO "Many Years" which had been selected to provide services under CFP of "Mainstreaming and integration of HIV prevention and care interventions into drug dependence treatment services in Kyiv City Narcological Dispensary" to finalize their work plan, and practical approaches towards implementation of HIV related services into clinical practice.

On November 19, 2014 monitoring visit to BF "Blago" /Kharkiv/ was conducted. Development of local service provision protocols is delay from actual activity plan. Two local consultants to develop OST provision local protocol and TB treatment local protocol will be contracted to spur up the process. Condom dissemination and rapid HIV testing (RHT) started at clinical sites at the beginning of December 2014 in

cooperation with International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine under GFATM support. Drafts of local HIV and TB treatment protocols were presented to medical staff of the clinic for feedback and further improvement.

Technical support to BF “Light of Hope” /Poltava/ was provided in local service provision protocols development, professional revising, and provision of expertise of State Expert Centre by MoH of Ukraine.

**Activity 3.2.6. Ensure appropriate monitoring, evaluation and documentation of the lessons learned, results and experience with pilot projects**

The Call for proposals (CFP) for implementation science research is under development with technical support from UNODC HQ in Vienna. Finalization is expected by the end of February 2015.

**Activity 3.3.2. Support experts' working group for the development and updating narcology training curricula, modules and manuals**

This activity aimed at the adaption of updated curricula to requirements of ‘Law of Ukraine on Higher Education’, which was approved by Parliament of Ukraine last August. During previous FY the post-graduate curricula of Kharkiv Medical Academy of Post Graduate Education Narcology Department was updated in accordance with UNDOC recommendations, approved by Scientific board of the Academy and recommended for using at other narcological departments of other medical institutions. Kharkiv Narcology Department is appointed by MoH as leading one among all educational facilities on drug dependence treatment services provision; and curricula which are developed or updated by them are recommended as model educational programme for narcological departments of medical universities in Ukraine and there is no need to submit updated curricula for approval to MoH of Ukraine.

At the same time, Prof. Ivan Sosin, Head of Narcology Department of the Kharkiv Medical Academy of Post-Graduate Education has informed us that narcological and psychiatric departments in Donetsk, Odessa, Zaporozia and Rivne are under reorganization and might be combined in one in every university. Thus there is no clear understanding how updated curricula will be introduced at other Narcological Departments and this activity is postponed.

Updated curricula are available for teaching at Kharkiv Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education Narcology Department since September 2014, and by the end of December 2014 31 medical doctors received training according to the new curricula.

**Activity 3.3.3. Support to the implementation of the updated curricula and modules**

In the framework of this activity technical support to set up of training resource centre at the drug dependence treatment department of Kharkiv Medical Academy of Post Graduate Education (KMAPE) is planned. Special lecture hall will be renovated and equipped with computers, free Internet connection, presentation equipment, and library. At the moment Prof. Sosin and PLEDGE are negotiating with KMAPE IT section about technical issues of equipment which should be procured for the centre.

### **3. Unanticipated positive results**

- On December 1, 2015 UNODC supported advocacy action (<http://dkvs-college.org/index421.html>) to commemorate the World AIDS Day in the Chernihiv Law Collage. The event was conducted according to the agreed programme with involvement of the International HIV/AIDS Alliance in Ukraine, other partner organizations, as well as students and staff of the college. UNODC ensured dissemination of various HIV related literature and publications among the participants.
- The PLEDGE National Project Officer on HIV and drug use participated in the training workshop on OST organised by the Ukrainian Centre for Disease Control for physicians, counsellors and social workers in October. He facilitated a session and presented comprehensive package of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services for PWIDs.
- The PLEDGE project staff actively participated in the meetings of the National Multisectoral Working Group that was tasked to draft a National Strategy for ensuring access of most-at-risk groups (PWIDs, SW, MSM, prisoners) to HIV prevention services. Feedback and comments were provided to the draft Strategy on ensuring access to HIV prevention services for MARPs. The letter was officially submitted to the State Service on HIV/AIDS and other diseases on 26 December.
- In December Ukrainian Centre for Disease Control shared for public discussion the draft of changes to the MoH Order #200 on OST provision. The PLEDGE project staff has provided recommendation and suggestion regarding improvement of the Order to the UCDC relevant officers.
- On 9 December 2014 within the regional campaign "Women Against Violence" and international action "16 Days to Elimination of Violence Against Women" the PLEDGE project co-facilitated national round table meeting on "The Right to Protection" aimed at enhancing the mechanisms for protection of rights of women who use drugs and lowering to zero the incidents of violence committed by law enforcement personnel towards these women in Ukraine. The meeting was organised by HIV service NGO coalition in Ukraine with the financial and technical support of UNAIDS, UNFPA and the European Commission in the framework of the regional advocacy campaign conducted by the Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) and the project "Capacity building of NGOs to the growing needs of women who use drugs".
- On 21 November the PLEDGE project staff (National M&E Officer) participated in the meeting of the National M&E Group and contributed to the finalization of the National M&E Plan for 2014-2018.
- On 26 November the PLEDGE project staff (National Project Office on HIV/Law Enforcement) presented UNODC developed Training manual for law enforcement officials on HIV service provision for people who inject drugs at the specialized training for tutors of the National Police Academy organized by AFEW in Kyiv.
- UNODC facilitated field visit of the USAID staff to Kharkiv on 10-11 December. The purpose of the visit was to monitor project progress in the pilot region and conduct interviews with project partners in Kharkiv. During the visit USAID staff has also piloted Site Improvement Monitoring System (SIMS) tools and instruments at Kharkiv narcology centre.

### **4. Major problems encountered and steps taken to solve them**

- Ukraine's law enforcement sector is being reformed: district police departments will be united with road police and the law enforcement staff will be decreased by 23,000 police officers. The system for police officers employment and primary training will be reorganized. It will influence on implementation of HIV related activities where police should be involved. The project has strengthened its collaboration with the National Academy of Internal Affairs and several project related activities are being continued directly with the Academy.

- Institutional and structural reforms as well as changes/replacements in key management positions that are being conducted by the Government affects the ability of the project to smoothly run and implement its planned activities. During the reporting period the Government decided to abolish the State Service on HIV/AIDS and other dangerous diseases by transferring its functions to the Ministry of Health. Similarly the State Service on Drugs Control is being merged with the State Service on medical product and drugs control under the Ministry of Health. While the new Minister of Health is appointed in December, there are still several uncertainties and misunderstandings with regard to the new functional and structural set up of the Ministry and division of responsibilities. The project faces challenges with regard to the MoH focal point who is in charge of issues related to drug dependence treatment, HIV prevention among vulnerable groups, etc.

The PLEDGE project has contributed to the draft and joined the UNAIDS in sending official letter to the Prime Minister advocating the establishment of the dedicated department within the MoH that could take over the functions of the State Service on HIV/AIDS.

## **5. Staffing, management and coordination arrangements**

The functions of the Advocacy and Communication Officer had been performed by Venny Ala-Siurua, International UN Volunteer until she left the team in July 2014. Since Venny's departure it has become a strong need to recruit additional national officer to strengthen our team capacity to adequately develop and implement our communication strategy, to comply with the USAID branding and marking requirements and improve the office and programme visibility and public relations. In the reporting period clearance was obtained from HQs to recruit additional national officer to be in charge of Advocacy and Communication issues within the PLEDGE team. A position of Advocacy and Communications Officer was announced on November 11, 2014. Later on a recruiting procedure was initiated with respect to UN rules and regulation. As a result selection panel has recommended signing service contract with Yelyzaveta Rubach. Reference check was successfully conducted; currently job offer to the candidate is under preparation. Ms. Rubach is expected to join the team in early February 2015.