

**Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus
Technical Advisory Group (TAG) – 2nd Meeting on Tuberculosis:
Trip Report**

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About RPM Plus

The Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus (RPM Plus) Program, funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (cooperative agreement HRN-A-00-00-00016-00), works in more than 20 developing countries to provide technical assistance to strengthen drug and health commodity management systems. The program offers technical guidance and assists in strategy development and program implementation both in improving the availability of health commodities—pharmaceuticals, vaccines, supplies, and basic medical equipment—of assured quality for maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, infectious diseases, and family planning and in promoting the appropriate use of health commodities in the public and private sectors.

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Abstract

RPM Plus has been substantially involved in TB activities in the E&E region both at the country and regional level since 1998, providing technical leadership to StopTB partners and technical assistance to countries in streamlining TB drug management systems as part of overall WHO DOTS strategy. In recognition of the RPM Plus role as a leader in pharmaceutical management, RPM Plus Program Manager for TB Andrey Zagorskiy was elected a member of the WHO/Euro Technical Advisory Group (TAG), with the first meeting in 2004 in Sinaia, Romania. In 2005, RPM Plus continued to provide technical leadership in pharmaceutical management for TB to WHO/Euro TAG, and participated in the second meeting in September 2005, in Copenhagen, Denmark.

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Key Words

TB, DOTS, DOTS Plus, TB drug management, donor coordination, StopTB partnerships

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ACRONYMS

ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
CA	Cooperative Agreement
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
DOTS	WHO strategy of TB Control
DOTS Plus	WHO strategy of Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis
DST	Drug Susceptibility Test
E&E	East Europe and Eurasia
EDEP	WHO/Euro DOTS Expansion Plan
GDF	Global Drugs Facility
GFATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria
GLC	Green Light Committee
HLWG	High Level Working Group
ICC	Interagency Coordinating Committee
IDU	Injectable Drug Users
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MDR TB	Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis
NAP	National AIDS Program
NIS	Newly Independent States
NTP	National Tuberculosis Program
PLWHA	People Living with HIV/AIDS
TAG	Technical Advisory Group (WHO/Euro, Headquarters in Copenhagen)
STAG	Strategic Technical Advisory Group (WHO Headquarters in Geneva)
VCT	Voluntary Counseling and Testing
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO	World Health Organization

BACKGROUND

The situation with tuberculosis in Europe-Eurasia region remains very serious with multiple challenges that vary from country to country. In East Europe and Eurasia (E&E) the spread of Multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR TB) and TB–HIV co-infection pose specific challenges, along with low political commitment to TB control, inadequate laboratory and surveillance services, and deficiencies in TB drug management systems, especially in the area of procurement and TB drug quality assurance. Although the DOTS strategy has been adopted by a large number of countries in the region, only 40% of population has access to DOTS, with the average rate of treatment success of 75%; this is still below the World Health Assembly (WHA) target of detecting 70% of infectious cases and successfully treating 85% of those detected by 2005. The recent forecasts made by WHO and reported at the Strategic Technical Advisory Group (STAG) meeting in 2005 show that Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)¹, although feasible globally, may not be achieved in the E&E region due to the above mentioned issues, and in Africa due to TB/HIV epidemic. Recognizing the dramatic situation in E&E region, the WHO/Euro Director declared TB state of emergency in the region.

RPM Plus has been substantially involved in TB activities in the E&E region both at the country and regional level since 1998, providing technical leadership to StopTB partners and technical assistance to countries in streamlining TB drug management systems as part of overall WHO DOTS strategy. In recognition of the RPM Plus role as a leader in pharmaceutical management, RPM Plus Program Manager for TB Andrey Zagorskiy was elected a member of the WHO/Euro Technical Advisory Group (TAG) established in 2003. The first meeting of TAG was held in September 2004 in Sinaia, Romania.

The second meeting of WHO/Euro TAG took place in September 2005, in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Purpose of Trip

RPM Plus program Manager for TB Andrey Zagorskiy traveled to Copenhagen, Denmark, to participate in, and provide expertise in TB drug management to the WHO/Euro TAG meeting during September 27-28, 2005.

Scope of Work

- As a member of WHO/Euro Technical Advisory Group, Andrey Zagorskiy provided technical leadership and advised on pharmaceutical management issues to the WHO/Euro TAG, participated in discussion of, and contributed to the WHO/Euro 2006-2015 Strategic TB Plan

¹ MDG Indicator 23: Prevalence and death rates associated with tuberculosis (all forms, excluding HIV-infected: halved with respect to 2000 by 2015), and Indicator 24: Proportion of (smear-positive) tuberculosis cases detected and (proportion of treated cases) cured under DOTS (70%, 85% respectively by 2005)

ACTIVITIES

The overall objective of the Second TAG meeting was to follow-up the recommendations of the First Meeting of the European Technical Advisory Group (TAG) for tuberculosis (September 2004), the Resolution on tuberculosis (TB) endorsed by the 58 World Health Assembly (May 2005), as well as a letter of the Regional Director to all Member States declaring TB as regional emergency, to provide technical advise to WHO and partners on future strategic directions of TB control in the WHO European Region in order to reach the Millennium Development Goals (DG).

Specific objectives of the meeting included:

1. review the progress made in implementation of recommendations from the previous TAG;
2. review the latest draft of the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006-2015 and aligned with recommendations to EURO made by STAG in 2005, provide recommendations on the development of the next Plan to Stop TB in the WHO European Region 2007–2015 (taking into account the relevance of different strategies for controlling and eliminating TB in the countries of the Region);
3. review and provide comments on the new proposed strategy to Stop TB;
4. make recommendations on linkages between overall health system strengthening and TB control in the Region in line with proposed Global Strategy to Stop TB;
5. evaluate the proposed International standards for TB care and make recommendations on its implementation in Europe;
6. consider challenges in achieving the MDG for TB in the WHO European Region and provide recommendation for joint actions with all partners.

TAG members addressed all the above objectives (see TAG program in Annex 1). Challenges in achieving the MDG for TB in Europe were discussed, and recommendations were made on various aspects of TB control. At the time this report was developed, the minutes of TAG meeting and final draft of recommendations to the Strategic Plan were not available. WHO/Euro will publish the final documents in early 2006.

Below are draft recommendations on strengthening pharmaceutical management for TB that Andrey Zagorskiy provided for the Strategic Plan:

I. TAG recommendations for WHO/Europe for 2006

- Appeal to StopTB Secretariat and international donors to expand the GDF mandate to include provision of technical assistance services to strengthen TB commodities supply management systems in the recipient countries (as free grants or for affordable fee)

- Continue to encourage countries to procure TB medicines through the GDF mechanism
- Conduct needs assessment for TB commodities management gaps and requirements for technical assistance by country through the review of the GDF country monitoring reports (for the GDF countries) or through formal studies in non-GDF countries
- Encourage the GFATM to provide assistance to countries preparing the GFATM proposals in identifying and costing out needs for strengthening the TB supplies management systems (through a regional workshop)
- WHO-EURO should consider switching to the term “TB commodity management” instead of the narrow “TB drug management” because one commodity management system should deal with supplying TB programs with specific TB medicines, ancillary medicines, laboratory and diagnostic supplies, vaccines, etc.
- Encourage donors’ country missions to provide technical assistance to countries in strengthening TB commodity management systems through existing mechanisms for technical assistance
- TAG recommends that improved mechanisms should be explored for securing timely physical transfers of approved GLC drugs into the projects
- TAG recommendations for the WHO/Europe 2006-2015 plan
- WHO-EURO should consider integrating TB commodity management component into the new Global Plan (as adapted to EUR) as each new increase in the complexity of chemotherapy and diagnostic methods requires an exponential increase in the capacity to manage relevant commodities
- WHO-EURO should work with the Ministries of Health and National TB Programs on developing and officially approving lists of essential pharmaceuticals and supplies (including laboratory and diagnostic commodities) for TB (develop an “NTP Formulary”) consistent with the latest WHO recommendations and guidelines on diagnosis and treatment, and encourage updating National Essential Medicines Lists or National Formularies based on the NTP needs. Such “NTP Formulary” must be developed by levels of care (including levels of diagnosis and treatment) thus serving as a means of integrating TB services into general health (PHC specifically)
- Work with governments and associations of pharmaceutical manufacturers to ensure the availability of domestic quality assured commodities for TB (based on the NTP Formulary lists) through promoting the WHO pre-qualification process and ensuring government support to complying manufacturers (WHO and partners)
- Bring the TB commodity management systems in WHO/Euro region in compliance with the internationally accepted standards of management

Collaborators and Partners

List of TAG members is in Annex 2.

Adjustments to Planned Activities and/or Additional Activities

At WHO's request Andrey Zagorskiy stayed an additional day in Copenhagen to review the draft resolution of the TAG meeting and contribute recommendations aimed at strengthening pharmaceutical management to WHO/Euro Strategic Plan for 2006-2015.

NEXT STEPS

Immediate Follow-up Activities

- RPM Plus will review the draft WHO/Euro Strategic TB Plan for 2006-2015

Recommendations

- The WHO/Euro TAG meetings are important for the future of TB control in the region; USAID E&E Bureau and regional missions, as well as other international donors may benefit from attending these meetings
- TAG recommendations (see above) pertaining to strengthening TB drug management systems may require additional donor funding to ensure provision of technical assistance

Agreement or Understandings with Counterparts

- RPM Plus will continue to provide technical leadership in pharmaceutical management to WHO/Euro TAG with funds available from USAID/G

Important Upcoming Activities or Benchmarks in Program

- RPM Plus will facilitate sessions on drug management at the WHO Course for TB Managers in Warsaw in October 2005
- RPM Plus will participate in 12th TB Control Training and Education Collaborative for the WHO European Region in November 2005

ANNEX 1.

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR EUROPE

WELTGESUNDHEITSORGANISATION
REGIONALBÜRO FÜR EUROPA



ORGANISATION MONDIALE DE LA SANTÉ
BUREAU RÉGIONAL DE L'EUROPE

ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ ЗДРАВООХРАНЕНИЯ
ЕВРОПЕЙСКОЕ РЕГИОНАЛЬНОЕ БЮРО

Technical Advisory Group (TAG) – 2nd Meeting on Tuberculosis

Copenhagen, Denmark, 27-28 September 2005

PROGRAMME

27 September 2005 – Day 1

08:45-09:00	Registration
	Chairperson Kai Vink
09:00-09:30	Opening and objectives of the meeting G. Magnusson, R. Zaleskis
09:30-09:50	Summary of recommendations from the 1 st TAG Meeting (28-29 September 2004) and progress by EURO J. Scholten
09:50-10:30	Discussion
10:30-11:00	Tea/coffee break
11:00-11:20	Recommendations made by STAG in 2005 K. Vink
11:20-11:50	Discussion
11:50-12:10	Overview of the WHO-recommended Global Strategy to Stop TB L. Blanc
12:10-12:40	Discussion

12:40-13:00	Overview of the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006-2015 E. Nathanson
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:30	Discussion on the Global Plan to Stop TB
14:30-14:50	Current situation in Europe and future challenges in coordination with the Global Strategy to Stop TB and the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006-2015 R. Zaleskis
14:50-15:30	Discussion
15:30-16:00	Tea/coffee break
16:00-16:40	Continuation of discussion on coordination of the European activities related to the Global Strategy to Stop TB and the Global Plan to Stop TB 2006-2015
16:40-17:00	Overview of the proposed International Standards of TB Care M. Grzemska
17:00-17:30	Discussion
17:30	Closure for the day

28 September 2005 – Day 2

09:00-09:30	Challenges in reaching the Millennium Development Goals in Europe and epidemiologic models with diverse intervention scenarios C. Dye
09:30-10:30	Discussion
10:30-11:00	Tea/coffee break
11:00-11:20	What is EURO doing to reduce TB incidence, prevalence and mortality? What more should we do to reach the Millennium Development Goals?

P. de Colombani

11:20-12:10	Discussion
12:10-12:30	Establishment of the European Laboratory Strengthening Task Force (LSTF) and outcomes of the first LSTF's meeting F. Drobniewski
12:30-13:00	Discussion
13:00-14:00	Lunch
14:00-14:20	Overview of the WHO's health system's strengthening strategy N. Menabde
14:20-14:50	Discussion
14:50-15:10	Health systems strengthening and TB control A. Mosneaga and Y. Yurasova
15:10-15:40	Discussion
15:40-16:10	Tea/coffee
16:10-17:10	Conclusions and recommendations
17:10	Closure of the meeting

ANNEX 2. List of participants

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