

Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus
Drug Management Guide and Planning for Training: 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

Tuberculosis is a growing health issue in Eastern Europe, and an inexpensive and effective treatment regimen exists promulgated by the WHO. USAID is funding the Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus (RPM Plus) Program to strengthen the drug management aspects of national tuberculosis programs. In Romania, RPM Plus assessed drug management information needs for program managers and other key stakeholders of the Romanian national tuberculosis control program (NTP). RPM Plus is collaborating with the Project Implementation Unit of the GFATM project, established within the National Institute of Pneumology “Marius Nasta” to develop a *drug management guide* for judet TB doctors and pharmacists. This guide will provide the basis for a training program in basic pharmaceutical management.

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Key Words

Tuberculosis, anti-tuberculosis drugs, drug management guide, training, management, Romania.

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ACRONYMS

DMIS	drug management information system
DOTS	directly observed therapy short-course [WHO TB Control Strategy]
DOW	Doctors of the World
E&E	Bureau for Europe and Eurasia [USAID]
GFATM	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis & Malaria
MDR-TB	multi-drug resistant tuberculosis
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
NIP "Marius Nasta"	National Institute of Pneumology "Marius Nasta"
NIRDH	National Institute of Research and Development in Health
NHIH	National Health Insurance House
NTP	national tuberculosis program
RPM Plus	Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus Program [MSH]
TB	tuberculosis
TOT	Training of trainers
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

BACKGROUND

RPM Plus and in-country partners, the Ministry of Health (MOH), National Tuberculosis Control Program (NTP) and the National Health Insurance House (NHIH), are strengthening the drug management information system (DMIS) for the NTP. In the first half of 2004 the NTP organized a series of one day regional meetings for TB program staff from each judet (county) to review and discuss drug management issues and reporting deficiencies. These meetings have been held to develop a common understanding of the issues facing the TB DMIS, to inform about current procedures and to lead to an improvement of ordering practices at the judet level. RPM Plus supported the first of these regional meetings and has worked with the NTP to collect data on drug management and staff training needs through a survey of participants.

In July 2004, RPM Plus began a collaboration with the GFATM Project Implementation Unit to develop a Drug Management Guide (targeted at judet level TB programme staff) that, when complete, will provide the foundation for the planned RPM Plus activities of training of trainers (TOT) and judet level drug management training.

RPM Plus activities for FY03 focus on pharmaceutical management for the treatment of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB), in support of the NTP's plans funded by the GFATM Project and their application to the Green Light Committee for access to concessionary priced, high quality 2nd-line medicines. This work plan includes a training workshop on Pharmaceutical Management for MDR-TB Treatment.

Purpose of Trip

Taking advantage of a mid-November trip to Chisinau, Moldova, Robert Burn will visit Romania before his return to the USA. The purpose of the trip is, with RPM Plus' partners, the National Institute for Research and Development in Health and the NTP, to coordinate the implementation of the next steps of the RPM Plus work plan (training of trainers workshop, drug management (DM) training for judet level TB staff).

Scope of Work

- Establish steps to complete the Drug Management Guide with the NTP;
- Determine the schedule for the TOT workshop to build capacity of NIRDH and NTP staff and local pharmacists to train judet level staff in basic drug management;
- Program RPM Plus support for subsequent training of TB staff, NHIH representatives and pharmacists from judets in DMIS and DM practice.
- Brief/debrief the USAID Mission as requested

ACTIVITIES

- Establish steps to complete the Drug Management Guide with the NTP;

Since the middle of 2004 MSH/RPM Plus has been collaborating with the Project Implementation Unit (PIU) of the GFATM Project to develop a guide for judet level personnel on pharmaceutical management within the national tuberculosis control program. This collaboration takes the form of a contract between the PIU and MSH, funded by the GFATM project with MSH providing technical input in the preparation of the guide. Discussions took place with Dr. Cristi Popa to finalize the contract.

Simultaneously, a schedule for the writing (by members of a team assembled by the NTP) of specific chapters of the guide and review by MSH was established. The initial draft would be prepared and reviewed by the end of January 2005 with the aim of final draft being completed by 21st February 2005.

- Determine the schedule for the TOT workshop to build capacity of NIRDH and NTP staff and local pharmacists to train judet level staff in basic drug management;

This TOT workshop will use the completed drug management guide as the core material in training a cadre of Romanian counterparts, who would then provide short training courses to those professionals involved at the judet level with the management of anti-TB medicines. RPM Plus and the PIU staff agreed on a schedule for the TOT workshop (early to mid March 2005), which would be followed by the first of a series of regional trainings (mid to end March 2005). This timing is subject to the availability of RPM Plus training staff who would implement the TOT.

- Program RPM Plus support for subsequent training of TB staff, NHIH representatives and pharmacists from judets in DMIS and DM practice.

RPM Plus would continue to work on a spreadsheet based tool designed to improve reporting on stocks and consumption of 1st-line medicines, rationalize the monthly order generation process, and provide easily accessible data for the local and central monitoring of the management of drugs within the NTP. It was proposed that this tool be incorporated into the draft drug management guide and the PIU team would consider this. If the introduction of the tool at the judet level is agreed to by all parties (the MOH, NTP and NHIH) then a more detailed program to train staff in its operation will be finalized.

- Brief/debrief the USAID Mission as requested;

Dr. Gariella Paleru was updated on MSH/RPM Plus activities as outlined above. She requested a copy of the drug management guide once this was published.

Collaborators and Partners

Dr. Cristi Popa, National Institute of Pneumology "Marius Nasta"
Ms. Ioana Novac, GFATM Program Implementation Unit
Dr. Cassandra Butu, National Institute for Research and Development in Health

Adjustments to Planned Activities and/or Additional Activities

1. One of the areas of the pharmaceutical management cycle that RPM Plus has been addressing is that of “use” of medicines, and in particular in the context of tuberculosis control programs, the implementation of *incentives* and *enablers* to encourage improved adherence to 1st-line treatment. RPM Plus had learnt that Doctors of the World in Romania were initiating such a scheme and R Burn met with staff of this organisation to learn more and assess the opportunity for collaboration.

DOW has received a contract from the GFATM PUI to monitor and evaluate the incentives scheme being implemented by the Romanian Red Cross. The incentive scheme is being implemented in three counties for about 6,000 TB patients and consists of monthly food coupons (redeemable at participating supermarkets). Similar incentives are offered to county TB managers and general practitioners. The Red Cross will administer, manage and handle the financial aspects of the project and DOW, in addition to evaluating the scheme, would train Red Cross volunteers in DOTS and on health education and promotion for DOTS.

A possible area for collaboration is the design of the evaluation plan, which DOW need in place by the end of the year. Dr. Cochino would send to Alex Beith at RPM Plus further information on the scheme so that an informed assessment of possible collaboration could be made.

2. RPM Plus has been working with the National Institute for Research and Development in Health (NIRDH) as a local partner to facilitate the implementation of activities in Romania. A number of institutional and personnel changes at NIRDH resulted in an assessment of this collaboration and a decision not to renew the contract between MSH and NIRDH which elapsed on 30 September 2004. Final administrative matters were resolved during this visit. One consequence of this decision was that the identification of a partner to provide logistical and technical support to future activities, in particular the forthcoming training workshop on Pharmaceutical Management for MDR-TB, was necessary. RPM Plus met with representatives of TOTEM Communications, a research and communications organisation (which has also worked with the NTP) to discuss possible collaborations. The in-house expertise, previous experience of the TB field and other factors suggest that TOTEM would make a suitable partner.

NEXT STEPS

Immediate Follow-up Activities

1. Finalise draft of contract with PUI and initiate MSH procedures for agreement.
2. Draft allocated sections of Drug Management Guide.
3. Prepare a Scope of Work for the Pharmaceutical Management of MDR-TB workshop to enable a local partner to prepare a budget for the in-country costs of holding the event.

Important Upcoming Activities or Benchmarks in Program

Pharmaceutical Management for MDR-TB course.

ANNEX 1. REQUEST FOR COUNTRY CLEARANCE

TO: Gabriella Paleru, USAID/Romania

FROM: Management Sciences for Health (MSH) Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus (RPM Plus) Program

SUBJECT: Travel of MSH/RPM Plus Senior Program Associate Robert Burn for the period of November 20-23, 2004. RPM Plus Cooperative Agreement No.: HRN-A-00-00-00016-00

COPY: Anthony Boni/ Global HSPR/CTO RPM Plus
Kama Garrison / Global USAID
Delna Ghandhi / USAID E&E Bureau
Douglas Keene, Director, MSH/RPM Plus
Maria Miralles, Deputy Director, MSH/RPM Plus
Andrey Zagorskiy, Project Manager for TB, MSH/RPM Plus

1. The RPM Plus Program requests country clearance for MSH/RPM Plus Senior Program Associate Robert Burn to Bucharest, Romania from November 20-23, 2004.

2. Background:

RPM Plus and in-country partners, the Ministry of Health (MOH), National Tuberculosis Control Program (NTP) and the National Health Insurance House (NHIH), are strengthening the drug management information system (DMIS) for the NTP. A steering group met in November, 2003 in order to begin prioritizing identified DMIS needs and plan specific activities to integrate data collection, analysis and use for drug management.

Subsequently, in the first half of 2004 the NTP organized a series of one day regional meetings for TB program staff from each judet (county) to review and discuss drug management and reporting. These meetings have been held to develop a common understanding of the issues facing the TB DMIS, to inform about current procedures and to improve ordering practices at the judet level. RPM Plus supported the first of these regional meetings and has worked with the NTP to collect data on drug management and staff training needs through a survey of participants.

In July 2004, RPM Plus collaborated with the NTP on the development of a Drug Management Guide (targeted at judet level TB programme staff) that, when complete, will provide the foundation for the planned RPM Plus activities of training of trainers (TOT) and judet level drug management training.

3. Purpose of Proposed Visit:

Taking advantage of a mid-November trip to Chisinau, Moldova, Robert Burn will visit Romania before his return to the USA. The purpose of the trip is, with RPM Plus' partners, the National Institute for Research and Development in Health and the NTP, to coordinate

the implementation of the next steps of the RPM Plus work plan (training of trainers workshop, DM training for judet level TB staff).

4. Scope of work for Robert Burn for this visit is as follows:

- Brief/debrief the USAID Mission as requested;
- Establish steps to complete the Drug Management Guide with the NTP;
- Determine the schedule for the TOT workshop to build capacity of NIRDH and NTP staff and local pharmacists to train judet level staff in basic drug management;
- Program RPM Plus support for subsequent training of TB staff, NHIH representatives and pharmacists from judets in DMIS and DM practice.

5. Anticipated contacts:

USAID/Romania; officials and specialists from the Romanian Ministry of Health and Family; National TB Program; National TB Institute; National Institute for Research and Development in Health.

6. Logistics:

Robert Burn will arrive in Bucharest on November 20, 2004. He will depart Romania on November 23, 2004. No Mission assistance is required.

7. Funding:

The in-country work will be paid for with USAID Europe and Eurasia Bureau funds.

8. Action:

Please advise Anthony Boni, USAID/G/PHN/HN/HPSR, that Robert Burn has received country clearance to travel to Romania as planned by replying via e-mail to aboni@usaid.gov, tel. (202) 712-4789, fax (202) 216-3702. Please send carbon copies to Kama Garrison at kgarrison@usaid.gov, [Robert Burn at rburn@msh.org](mailto:rburn@msh.org); [Andrei Zagorskiy at azagorskiy@msh.org](mailto:azagorskiy@msh.org), [Douglas Keene at dkeene@msh.org](mailto:dkeene@msh.org), Maria Miralles at mmiralles@msh.org and Meriel Jimenez at mjimenez@msh.org.

Thank you in advance for Mission cooperation.

ANNEX 2. PERSONS MET

Persons met during TDY	
National Tuberculosis Control Programme/ Institute of Pneumology “Marius Nasta”—Program Implementation Unit, GFATM Project	Dr. Cristian Popa, Pneumologist Ms. Ioana Novac, Project Assistant, PIU-TB
Doctors of the World in Romania Project	Dr. Emil Andrei Cochino, Coordinator
USAID	Dr. Gabriella Paleru Senior Health Specialist
TOTEM Communications	Dr. Raluca Teodoru, Client Service Director
National Institute for Research and Development in Health	Dr. Cassandra Butu - Chief of the Training and Consultancy department

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