

Resolution made by the Joint Meeting of the Steering Committees of the Barents HIV/AIDS Programme and Barents Tuberculosis Programme

In response to the request on how to merge the Barents TB Programme and Barents HIV Programme Steering Committees (SC) made by the Joint Working Group on Health and Related Social Issues (JWGHS) of the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR) at its 26th meeting on 22 March 2018 in Kirkenes (Norway), the Steering Committees of the Barents HIV Programme and Barents Tuberculosis Programme convened on 11 September 2018 in Syktyvkar City (Russia) to a joint meeting. The aim of the meeting was to discuss possible solutions for future implementation, identify the best possible option of merging the Barents Tuberculosis and Barents HIV/AIDS Programmes, outline areas of cooperation for the future, and prepare a written proposal to be presented at the 27th JWGHS meeting.

The underlying causes for the possible merger were:

- The need to rationalize and optimize the use of resources;
- The possibility to revitalize HIV collaboration in the Barents Region;
- The attempt to support integration of HIV and TB services;
- The attempt to increase impact of the Barents cooperation;
- Last but not least, to possibly address the increasingly growing problem of the HIV/TB co-infection in Russia.

Having examined the HIV and tuberculosis situation in Russia and particularly in the Northwest Russia, including co-infection of HIV and tuberculosis;

Having considered the progress of the Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programmes;

Having recognized the importance of cooperation among the Barents partners in the field of HIV and TB control;

Having thoroughly discussed various options, formats and areas of the cooperation in the field of HIV and TB control in the Barents region in the future;

The Steering Committees of the Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programmes **agreed that merging of the two programmes** – Barents HIV Programme and Barents Tuberculosis Programme – would be the most reasonable solution. It is advisable to ensure the balance between HIV-related questions and TB-related questions in the Barents cooperation in the future.

The Steering Committees of the Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programmes **proposed the following areas** for the cooperation within the future Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programme:

- 1) Patient-oriented approaches both in the HIV and TB sectors aimed at ensuring adherence to therapy;
- 2) Competence building and education for healthcare workers on topics related to diagnosis, treatment and care of HIV infection and tuberculosis;
- 3) Monitoring of state of affairs - updating on epidemiological situations, discussing and analyzing best practices, and new approaches in the HIV and TB sectors.

The Steering Committees of the Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programmes agreed:

- a) To continue the discussion of other possible and feasible areas of cooperation, planning of concrete actions
- b) To start the development of the new Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programme after the areas of cooperation and possible actions will have been agreed
- c) To propose to the JWGHS the development of the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the SC of the new Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programme
- d) To hold another joint meeting in the first quarter of 2019 in order to continue the discussion and planning.

The Steering Committees of the Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programmes recognize that for the implementation of the newly planned actions within the Barents HIV and Tuberculosis Programme full commitment of all partner countries and regions will be needed including the provision of human and financial resources.