

The DRSTP Connection

Issue 1 October 1999

To all DRSTP members

First of all let us clarify the following: This is not an ordinary newsletter but rather a forum for project communication distributed only among the PG Secretariat and the National Project Teams of the countries participating in the DRSTP II.

In order to keep a certain level of continuity in the exchange of information on general topics between the PG Secretariat and the NPTs, we will provide general project information in this format from time to time.

Since the distribution is limited to the participants we will address issues concerning project implementation as long as they are of general interest. We therefore urge you to read the DRSTP Connections as certain issues may concern you directly.

The Secretariat is open to any further suggestions for exchange of ideas and materials in this format and we therefore invite all NPTs to take part in this forum. We hope this will increase communication in general matters between the Secretariat and the partner countries.

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Extensive "shopping lists"

The deadline for presenting your country's priority was 15 September, and nearly all countries have been able to provide more details by now. The problem in most cases is still that the objectives seem far too ambitious taking into account the project's framework. Given the fact that there will be a maximum of only six consultancies we would still urge the NPTs to be prepared to downsize some of the plans considerably.

Imagining the practical work involved both for visiting consultants and the National Core Groups, most plans should still be defined more accurately. It is better to have a clear vision before we start. Spending time on sizing down the project in cooperation with a visiting consultant may be a waste of

time if this can be done beforehand between the NPTs and the Secretariat. It may even prove impossible to find experts willing to undertake the missions if the intentions are vague or ambiguous. Only with a clearly defined objective, can we assist you in identifying the right experts!

As you will see from the overview of priorities, three main areas can be singled out: general DDR information for specific groups, prevention and finally, treatment/rehabilitation,

Disseminating up-to-date information on drug demand reduction in general is probably a good idea given that there is a lack of national materials covering this topic from a more general multidisciplinary perspective. Few countries, however, seem to aim at developing training material on specific methodologies for concrete purposes such as local community action against drugs, setting up a specific pilot training project etc.

The Secretariat and the [ASTP Management Committee recommends considering more concrete and action oriented plans for the implementation of the training material. This way the work of the NPTs might become more visible and the outcome more measurable.

The current situation

Albania's main priority is to develop training material on DDR policy development and strategies for relevant professionals. To attempt to increase awareness among professionals seems to be a logical first step in improving the DDR situation at the national level. The Secretariat is awaiting responses from the Albanian NPT to be able to go ahead with the details and finding suitable assistance.

Four countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Romania and Russia) have selected "Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation" as their priority. These concepts are, however, extremely broad. In order to find expert assistance we have therefore found it

necessary to ask for a more focused list as we can imagine that some treatment approaches are of lesser interest than others. The intentions, interests and priorities may vary considerably from country to country and therefore we will need more detailed information on this issue to find a suitable consultant in each case.

The aim may be to provide the target groups with general information about some current, well-evaluated treatment and rehabilitation approaches most commonly developed in Western Europe/US. But the aim may also be to focus on development of a more specific treatment staff training manual suitable for the local conditions and the planning of a pilot project. In this perspective it is obvious that we will have to clarify some of these aspects before we can identify relevant consultants.

Another area is to develop DDR training material (information) for general practitioners and other health care providers. Hungary and Slovakia may have overlapping interests in this, and hopefully some exchange of information and materials can be possible.

Bulgaria and Slovenia plan to develop DDR training at the university level for students/professionals to become involved in the drug field. Slovenia is aiming at a DDR course at the master's level. Bulgaria aims primarily at high-level students. Certainly some common issues may appear along the way and we should see to it that the resources are being used efficiently. As for Slovenia we strongly recommend starting out with an in-depth course in one area as the DRSTP framework may well be too limited for development of a full taught masters course. We are awaiting further comments from Slovenia.

Poland, Latvia and Lithuania are aiming at training material on primary prevention and early intervention in the local community. Latvia has decided to look at a specific local community. This may be very useful in order to become goal oriented and to develop a practical action plan. Poland will address relevant student groups as well as practitioners. Latvia and Lithuania will primarily address practitioners. Latvia will continue their cooperation with the Bergenclinics. Poland would like to become involved in this cooperation as well in

addition to seeking other assistance. Lithuania has developed a good cooperation with Swedish experts in the area of community prevention and hopefully it can be continued. In any case cooperation among the three should be pursued.

Planning for success

Neither the Secretariat nor any of the partner countries will be happy with anything less than a successful implementation and outcome of the DRSTP! Once when we have the "headlines" clear and we know for whom the training materials shall be developed, we can make the final step of the preparations. This is in short to set up a manageable list of content and a suitable level of depth and details. This will of course in the end be the responsibility of the Core Groups in cooperation with the consultants, but the NPTs will in some cases still have to provide the Secretariat with some additional details and clarifications.

The next step

Since we have now received your proposals, the Secretariat will discuss with each country the plans in more detail and then conclude with a letter of agreement between the Secretariat and each NPT on objectives and responsibilities. The faster we can communicate on the final clarification of your plans, the sooner we will be able to start the search for an assisting expert to launch the initial consultancy. Some of you have indicated interest in launching the first consultancy already in October. This may give the process too little time, as we consider it necessary to make sure we have found an agreed point of departure to suit your needs and at the same time make the task feasible in relation to the framework of the project.

How to contact us

The Secretariat is looking forward to the final leg of preparations! Please feel free to contact us with questions or comments! We can be reached by email at:

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We urge you all to use the DRSTP Connection!