



AFRICA CDC
Centres for Disease Control and Prevention |
Safeguarding Africa's Health

Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention Strategy at a Glance (2017-2021)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Health as a development issue impacts on the economic, social and security of countries and regions when epidemics occur as witnessed during the Ebola outbreak in West Africa between 2014 and 2015. Africa currently faces the triple burden of communicable and Non Communicable Diseases (NCDs), and injury and trauma. Challenges resulting from outbreaks such as Yellow Fever, Cholera, natural and human made disasters are affecting the continent adversely and continue to pose threats to Africa's development aspirations.

Cognisant of these major challenges, the African Union Heads of State and Government (HoSG) at the July 2013 Abuja Special Summit on AIDS, TB and Malaria in Abuja recognized the urgent need to put in place a Specialised Agency to support African Union Member States in their efforts to strengthen health systems and to improve surveillance, emergency response, and prevention of infectious diseases. During this Special Summit, the Assembly requested the African Union Commission to work out the modalities for establishing the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC).

Subsequently, the Africa CDC was established and its statute approved by the 26th Ordinary Assembly of Heads of State and Government in January 2016 and subsequently officially launched on 31 January 2017 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The Africa CDC Governing Statute anchors the institution on the following guiding principles: leadership, credibility, ownership, delegated authority, timely dissemination of information, transparency, accountability, and value-addition. The Africa CDC endeavours to support Member States in improving the health of their people through building the capacity of public health institutes to focus on prevention of infection, surveillance and response to emergencies (including outbreaks, human-made and natural disasters, and public health events of regional and international concern), and building capacity to reduce disease burden on the continent.

Building on these guiding principles and mission, the Africa CDC has developed a five-year strategic plan (2017—2021). This strategic plan describes five strategic pillars, which will help the Africa CDC to achieve its mission and vision. These are Surveillance & Disease Intelligence; Information Systems; Laboratory Systems and Networks; Emergency Preparedness and Response and Public Health Research.

Each of these strategic pillars has several strategic objectives with clearly defined set of activities and performance measures. Functionality and implementation of these pillars will require the support of cross-cutting enablers (workforce, partnership, innovation, finance and leadership and management) that provide the backbone for the operations of the Africa CDC.

These strategic pillars will drive the Africa CDC's work to empower the national public health institutes of Member States and efforts to prevent and control public health events on the continent and to achieve Agenda 2063. To achieve these strategic pillars

and objectives, the Africa CDC will work through its Regional Collaborating Centres (RCC) and Member States (Ministries of Health and National Public Health Institutes).

This Africa CDC Strategic Plan (2017—2021) was developed through an iterative consultative process and an in-depth situational assessment of policy frameworks of the African Union, including **Agenda 2063: the Africa We Want**, the Africa Health Strategy (2016—2030), the Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB and Eliminate Malaria in Africa by 2030, Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and International Health Regulations (IHR-2005).

Health policy frameworks developed by the African Union provide the Africa CDC with an enabling environment to achieve its mandate to support Member States in capacity-development for enhanced preparedness and prompt response to public health threats. These commitments endorsed by AU Heads of State and Government provide the necessary framework to collaborate with Member States and ensure that they promote prevention, surveillance, emergency preparedness and response and translate evidence-based research into policies and interventions.

This Strategic Plan thus seeks to drive the attainment of an integrated and prosperous Africa that has healthy, well-nourished citizens with long life spans in line with the bold aspirations of Agenda 2063. This will be achieved through strengthened health systems, controlling and eradicating all communicable diseases, including Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) and reducing non-communicable and injury and trauma. This Strategic Plan will be implemented through annual operational plans and monitoring and evaluation frameworks.

BACKGROUND

African Union Member States have made significant progress to reduce the negative impact of diseases, conditions and events by adopting and implementing key strategic policies and frameworks. Various initiatives across the continent for strengthened health systems including disease surveillance, control and prevention, disaster preparedness and response have played an important role in safeguarding Africa's health. The recent success in responding to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa demonstrated the fundamental importance of continental level responses to address health security concerns effectively. However, significant challenges remain in efforts to improve disease prevention and control, primarily because of structural weaknesses in health systems. The health infrastructure lacks adequate human resources capacity, equipment and facilities, limited disease surveillance, insufficient laboratory diagnostic capacities and delayed preparedness and response to health emergencies and disasters. It is in this context that the Africa CDC was established to address these challenges.

Africa CDC Establishment: Legislative and Policy Perspectives

Africa's challenges require collaborative health programmes that are based on accurate information and evidence-based solutions. African leaders meeting during the July

2013 Abuja African Union Special Summit on HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria (ATM) recognized the urgent need to put in place a structure to support African countries in their efforts to effectively respond to emergencies, address complex health challenges, conduct life-saving research and build needed capacity. The Assembly directed the Commission to develop a roadmap with a clear vision and milestones to establish the Africa CDC so as to bring the collective strengths of the African nations to jointly respond to shared health challenges. The Africa CDC was requested to move decisively through a transparent and collaborative process to build the necessary infrastructure, collaboration and partnerships to ensure better health for all countries on the African continent.

The AU HoSG has adopted numerous health policy frameworks since the 2001 Abuja Declaration¹. The Africa Union has provided consistent leadership and direction in combating the disease burden on the continent. The recently adopted Agenda 2063 emphasizes the need to view health as a development issue if the continent is to prosper and achieve its objective (Aspiration 1, Goal 3) that citizens are healthy, well-nourished and have long lives.

The Africa Health Strategy (AHS 2016-2030), an overarching framework that provides strategic guidance for Member States in the implementation of health policies stipulates the role that the Africa CDC will undertake in disease prevention, surveillance, emergency preparedness and response. The Africa CDC mandate is clearly outlined in the Concept Document and the Africa CDC Governing Statute. The AHS emphasises the need to strengthen health systems performance, increase domestic health financing, improve equity and address social determinants of health.

Furthermore, the AHS calls for a paradigm shift towards the establishment of effective disaster preparedness and response management mechanisms. The framework urges Member States to strategically focus on disease surveillance, preparedness and response in line with the IHR (2005). The Framework also seeks to strengthen and periodically review surveillance and emergency preparedness plans for public health as well as natural disasters.

The Catalytic Framework to End AIDS, TB and Malaria (CF-ATM) stipulates the need for Member States to efficiently and effectively utilise allocated resources for health interventions and develop financial mechanisms to sustain funding for health programmes. The AIDS Watch Africa (AWA) platform, an advocacy and accountability high-level platform can be used to leverage the political will and commitment when epidemics arise.

AFRICA CDC STRATEGIC PLAN

African CDC Mandate/Rationale²

¹ Abuja Declaration on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Other Related Infectious Diseases, 2001.

² Special Summit Of African Union On HIV And AIDS, Tuberculosis And Malaria Abuja, Nigeria 12–16 July 2013 & Assembly Decision Au/Dec.499(XXII)

The following vision and mission statement were developed by the Africa CDC Multinational Task Force and endorsed in the Africa CDC Concept Note³.

Vision

A safer, healthier, integrated and prosperous Africa, in which Member States can efficiently prevent disease transmission, implement surveillance and detection, and always be prepared to respond effectively to health threats and outbreaks.

Mission

Strengthen Africa's public health institutions' capacities, capabilities and partnerships to detect and respond quickly and effectively to disease threats and outbreaks based on science, policy and data-driven interventions and programmes.

Guiding Principles

1. **Leadership:** The Africa CDC provides strategic direction and promotes public health practice within Member States through capacity building, promotion of continuous quality improvement in the delivery of public health services as well in the prevention of public health emergencies and threats.
2. **Credibility:** The Africa CDC's strongest asset is the trust it cultivates with its beneficiaries and stakeholders as a respected, evidence-based institution. It plays an important role in championing effective communication and information sharing across the continent.
3. **Ownership:** The Africa CDC is an Africa-owned institution. Member States will maintain national-level ownership of the Africa CDC simultaneously through building up and promoting their own national public health systems through direct programmatic engagement, and through an advisory role in shaping the Africa CDC priorities.
4. **Delegated authority:** In the event of a public health emergency on the continent with cross border or regional implications, the Africa CDC is mandated to deploy responders, in consultation with affected Member States, to support in delivering an effective response. The Africa CDC will take the appropriate steps to notify the Commission of its actions.
5. **Timely dissemination of information:** The Africa CDC leadership will regularly update Member States on ongoing actions and seek their support and collaboration. It shall leverage collaboration and networking to engage Member States in strong partnerships.
6. **Transparency:** Open interaction and unimpeded information exchange between the Africa CDC and Member States is inherent in the mission of the Africa CDC.
7. **Accountability:** The Africa CDC is accountable to Member States in its approach to governance and financial administration.

³ Report of the Commission on the establishment of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention

8. **Value-addition:** In every strategic aim, objective, or activity, the Africa CDC should demonstrate how that initiative adds value to the public health activities of Member States.

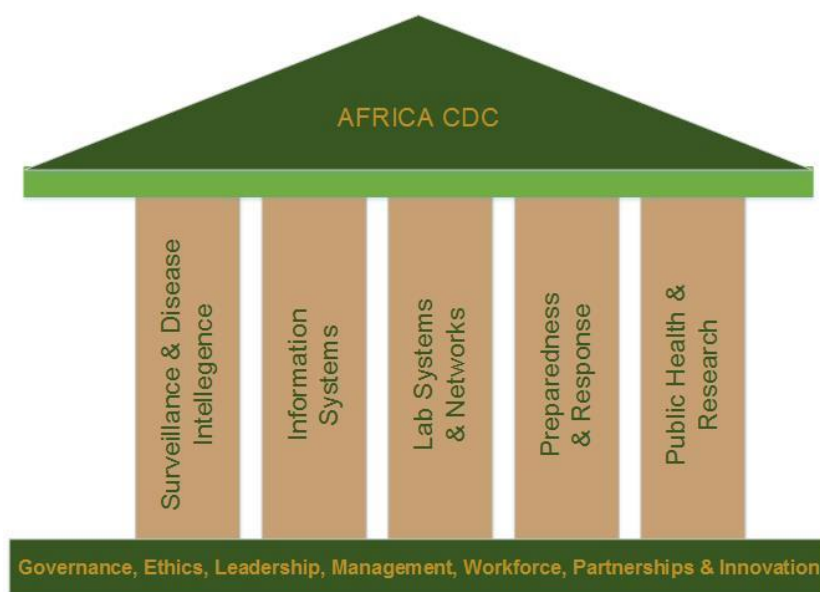
Objectives of the Africa CDC

To achieve its vision, Africa CDC will:

- Establish early warning and response systems to address all health threats, including infectious diseases, chronic diseases, and natural disasters, in a timely and effective manner;
- Strengthen health security in Africa, by helping Member States achieve compliance with the International Health Regulations;
- Map hazards and assess risk of diseases and other health threats for Member States;
- Support Member States in responding to outbreaks and other health emergencies;
- Promote health and prevent disease by strengthening health systems for infectious diseases, chronic disease and environmental health;
- Promote partnership and collaboration among Member States to address emerging and endemic diseases and public health emergencies;
- Harmonize disease control and prevention policies and the surveillance systems in Member States;
- Build public health capacity in Africa by training epidemiologists, laboratorians, and other public health workers through medium and long-term courses.

Strategic Pillars of the Africa CDC

The Africa CDC will operate under five functional pillars:



The Africa CDC will promote and strengthen these functional capacities with the Member States in collaboration with the Africa CDC Regional Collaborating Centres (RCC). To ensure that the Functional Pillars are effectively implemented, cross-cutting enablers will provide the backbone for the operations of the Africa CDC (Workforce, Partnership, Innovation, Finance and Leadership and Management). Each Strategic Pillar of the Africa CDC has an over-arching goal and corresponding objectives for the first 5 years.

Pillar 1: Surveillance and Disease Intelligence

Goal: Strengthen health-related surveillance systems for improved public health decision making and action

Strategic Objectives: (priorities for 2017-2018 in bold)

- 1. Establish event-based surveillance as an important mechanism for early warning, risk assessment, disease predictions and response.**
- 2. Support establishment and strengthening of National Public Health Institutes to coordinate surveillance systems in a multi-sectoral approach and ensure surveillance data informs national policy and public health actions.**
3. Strengthen implementation of the existing surveillance systems (such as IDSR) within member states and ensure linkages with animal, agriculture and environmental sectors.
4. Support countries to strengthen disease-specific surveillance systems for priority diseases (e.g. HIV and AIDS, TB Malaria, Hepatitis and NCD) as appropriate for the African context.
5. Facilitate and strengthen Regional Coordinating Centres (RCC) in promoting inter-country and regional collaboration on surveillance, shared data use, and engagement with laboratory networks.
6. Support enhanced FETP training to strengthen study design knowledge and competency and statistical analysis of meta and demographic data.
7. Assist AU Member States to develop a surveillance workforce sufficient for national responsibilities and continued development of tools that support strengthening of the workforce to support IDSR and IHR requirements.

Pillar 2: Information Systems

Goal: Develop and strengthen information systems that support public health strategies in Africa

Strategic Objectives: (priorities for 2017-2018 in bold)

- 1. Design and implement a continental data-sharing platform for Member States by linking public health institutes in each country through a wide area network managed by Africa CDC for secure electronic transmission of relevant data and reports, enable data queries and provide dashboard reporting to monitor priority objectives and outbreak responses. The network may support functional regional networks within the WAN.**
- 2. Organize, convene and support working groups to develop and promote network domains, and adoption of informatics guidelines and standards to**

enable interconnectivity and electronic transmission of data and information among Africa CDC member institutes.

3. Support training through RCCs on informatics such as geographic information systems, network domains, analytical and management software, and hardware including functional needs assessments and procurement.
4. Establish data observatories at Africa CDC RCCs through training and collaboration.

Pillar 3: Laboratory Systems and Networks

Goal: Strengthen Africa's clinical and public health laboratory systems and networks by continually improving workforce competency to assure quality and safety

Strategic Objectives: (priorities for 2017-2018 in bold)

1. **Support countries and regions to map existing laboratory systems to defined requirements of a tiered national laboratory system (specifically quality, standards, and biosafety), and networks (specifically links to disease surveillance and clinical care (public and private sector).**
2. **Assist countries in developing comprehensive national laboratory strategic and implementation plans and enabling policies, which include regulations of laboratory diagnostic testing and secure and safe handling of highly dangerous pathogens.**
3. **Support Africa CDC Regional Collaborating Centres and national-level laboratory networks to implement modern advanced molecular technologies and multiplex pathogen assays.**
4. Support the introduction of a patient-centred approach for integrated point-of-care diagnostic testing for syndromic management and surveillance at the community level.
5. Develop and manage strain banks as repositories for diagnostic and vaccine development for emerging and re-emerging pathogens.
6. Support laboratory workforce development, which may include the creation of a Field Laboratory Training Programme.

Pillar 4: Emergency Preparedness and Response

Goal: Ensure effective public health emergency preparedness and response

Strategic Objectives: (priorities for 2017-2018 in bold)

1. **Support the development and testing of multi-hazard and multi-sectoral preparedness and response plans for public health emergencies at national, regional and continental levels.**
2. **Support the development of surge capacity at national, regional, and continental levels that integrates capabilities of NPHIs and RCCs.**
3. Support the establishment of functional national public health emergency operation centres (EOC), as part of National Public Health Institutes.
4. Establish and manage national and regional stockpiles for public health emergency response.

5. Facilitate and promote sustained partnerships for multi-sectoral coordination and collaboration.

Pillar 5: Public Health Research

Goal: Strengthen public health science and improve public health decision-making and practice to achieve positive health outcomes

Strategic Objectives: (priorities for 2017-2018 in bold)

1. **Establish Africa CDC public health research agenda with goals and objectives to address priority health issues, which may include certain suitable capacities.**
2. **Strengthen public health research capacity within public institutions in partnership with academic institutions in Member States.**
3. Promote collaboration and coordination among existing networks to conduct research on priority issues of public health research.
4. Re-characterize the known burden of disease and other health concerns from a continental and/or regional perspective (core epi, clinical descriptive).
5. Assess the effectiveness of existing public health interventions on health conditions that have been prioritized by the health policy instruments of the African Union.
6. Support research on surveillance methodologies-quality interventions and innovative technologies.
7. Apply multi-sectoral/cross-cutting One Health strategies to the Africa CDC public health research agenda.

PLANNING, BUDGETING AND FINANCING

Predictable and assured funding for the specialized organ is pertinent for its functionality. Currently the proposed source of funding for the Africa CDC include the additional 0.5% of the operational budget of the African Union; voluntary contributions and donations from Member States; financial support from the Africa Private Sector and contributions from development partners and foundations around the world. The Africa CDC intends to come up with other innovative mechanisms to fundraise and will be involved in partnerships with various stakeholders within the continent to ensure sustainable financing.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Africa CDC will continuously monitor and annually report on implementation of the Strategic Plan. RCCs, Member States, and key stakeholders will identify specific targets for annual reports. Africa CDC will also conduct and publish detailed evaluations in June 2019 (mid-term) and December 2021 (end term). The table below highlights the monitoring and evaluation responsibilities of the Africa CDC strategic plan at various levels.

Communication Strategy

Africa CDC will work to increase understanding of its programmes and activities, promote its visibility, and establish its brand across the African continent. Different approaches will be employed to reach all stakeholders, including public institutions, private institutions, and impacted populations. Key objectives will be to strengthen political commitment to Africa CDC and public health among African and global leaders, help mobilize resources, notify stakeholders quickly and effectively during health emergencies, and build partnerships for Africa CDC across the continent.

Stakeholder Level	Roles and Responsibilities	Monitoring Cycle
Africa- CDC (Continental level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develops annual implementation plans 	Annual
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leads the process of design, roll out and updating of M&E Systems 	Plan Inception and on-going
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidates semi-annual and annual reports from the five RCCs and reports to AU Policy Organs and Partners 	Semi-annual Annual
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors compliance with Africa-CDC monitoring and evaluation standards and procedures and lead in data quality assurance checks at all levels 	Continuous
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides technical capacity building 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tracks and updates progress on Strategic Plan Implementation 	Semi-annual Annual
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for the Midterm and end of Strategy Evaluation 	June 2019 Dec 2021
African Union Commission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Department of Strategic Planning to provide Planning, Monitoring & Evaluation Technical and Capacity building Support 	As necessary
Regional Collaborating Centres (RCCs) (Regional level)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall planning, implementation and monitoring of Africa- CDC programs based on the Strategic Plan 	Continuous
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide technical and Capacity building Support to Member States 	Continuous
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Receive and consolidate reports from MS 	Semi –Annually
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step down Africa-CDC monitoring and evaluation standards and systems to Member States 	Continuous
National level (Member States)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Utilize existing structures for the facilitation and coordination of semi-annual and annual monitoring and reporting 	Continuous

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tracks progress towards the attainment of targets as underpinned in the Plan and report to RCCs on progress.	Continuous
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